

Listening Beyond the Ear

Right view through listening and skillful consideration

[The nature of noble discipleship]

Pali passages selected and translated by Piya Tan ©2003

Introduction

1 The early Buddhist canon

The Buddha called his disciple *sāvaka* (Skt *śrāvaka*), meaning “listener” or “hearer,” showing the importance listening to the Dharma. The Suttas are full of stories of people who become stream-winners (*sotāpanna*), the first stage of sainthood, simply by listening to the discourses of the Buddha and his awakened disciples.

It is possible to listen to these teachings even today since they have been carefully and skillfully collected and handed out through a chanting tradition called the *bhāṇaka* (reciter) system¹ and later written down² some two decades before the beginning of the Common Era.³ However, we have to listen beyond our ears, that is with both our head and heart (analytically and openly), by listening to their exposition and by reading them ourselves.

The early teachings of the Buddha and his early disciples are written down in a scriptural language (a *Kunstsprache* or literary language) called **Pāli**, specially used for the purpose. In the early sacred texts, these teachings are known as “the Teaching and the Discipline” (*dhamma, vinaya*),⁴ or “the True Dharma” (*saddhamma*).⁵ In the Mahā’padesa Sutta (A 4.180), the Buddha uses *Sutta* to refer to the Dharma.⁶

A canonical system of categorizing the teachings is called the *aṅga* (“limb or part”) system, of which originally there were probably three,⁷ then four, later nine, and the Sanskrit tradition even twelve limbs.⁸ Buddhaghosa, in fact, mentions seven different classification systems.⁹ The best known system comprises 9 classes of texts, called “**the Teacher’s ninefold teaching**” (*nav’aṅga satthu, sāsana*), of which the first three here form the oldest classification.¹⁰

- (1) *Sutta*, “Pāṭimokkha Sutta,” ie the monastic code. [Comy: The two Vinaya Vibhaṅga; Niddesa.]
- (2) *Geyya*, (lit “songs”) “sung verses,” ie Suttas with verses, eg the Sigāl’ovāda Sutta (D 31) (Childers DPL).
- (3) *Veyyākaraṇa*, “Suttanta” (the discourses). [Comy: Abhidhamma Piṭaka; Suttas without verses and all discourses not included in the other classes.]

¹ On the *bhāṇaka* system, see Adikaram 1946:24-32 (ch 3); Norman 1983:8 f.; Lamotte 1988a:124-140; Hinüber 1996 §§49, 228;

² The Dīpavaṃsa states that during Vaṭṭa, gāmaṇī Abhaya’s reign (29-18 BCE), the monks who had orally memorized the Tipiṭaka and its Commentaries went on to write them down on ola (palm) leaves due to threat of famine, war and the growing power of the newly established Abhaya, giri Vihāra that enjoyed the king’s favour (Dīpv 20.20 f). The Mahāvamsa briefly refers to the writing down of the sacred texts at this time (Mahv 33.100 f).

³ See Adikaram 1946:79; Lamotte 1988a:365-371.

⁴ D 2:30; S 5:457; A 1:283.

⁵ M 1:47; S 2:43; A 1:18. Note that the “Abhidhamma” was not mentioned during the 1st Council and as a collection is clearly a post-Buddha compilation. See Warder 1970:10 f, 218-224; Lamotte 1988a:179-191; Hinüber 1996 §129. Monograph: Erich Frauwallner, *Studies in Abhidharma Literature and the Origins of Buddhist Philosophical Systems*. Albany: State University of NY Press, 1995, esp ch 1 (The Earliest Abhidharma).

⁶ A 4.180/2:167-170.

⁷ M 122.20/3:115. The three limbs or classes are: (1) *sutta*, (2) *geyya*, (3) *veyyākaraṇa*.

⁸ “Limbs” (*aṅga*): see Lamotte 1988a:140-149; Hinüber 1996 §10.

⁹ VA 16, DA 1:15, AA 3:5, DhsA 18. See Lamotte 1988a:141 f.

¹⁰ V 3:8; M 1:133; A 2:5, 3:186; see also prec n for Comy refs. For detailed study on *aṅga*, see Sujato, A *History of Mindfulness*, 2004:42-47 (ch 4).

- (4) *Gāthā*, “stanzas.” [Comy: Dhammapada; Thera,gāthā; Therī,gāthā; the Sutta Nipāta sections that do not bear “Sutta” in their titles.]
- (5) *Udāna*, “Verses of Uplift.” [Comy: Book 3 (82 suttas) of the Khuddaka Nikāya.]
- (6) *Iti,vuttaka*, “Thus-said Discourses” (compiled by the laywoman Khujj’uttarā) [Comy: Book 4 (112 suttas) of Khuddaka Nikāya. They open with *Vuttam h’etaṃ Bhagavatā*.]
- (7) *Jātaka*, “The Birth Stories” (verses only; the stories are commentarial). [Comy: The 500 Jātaka stories:¹¹ Book 10 of Khuddaka Nikāya.]
- (8) *Abbhuta,dhamma*, “wonderful events” (ie an early biography of the Buddha). [Comy: All Suttas involving marvellous and extraordinary events, eg the Acchariya Suttas (A 4.127-130/2:130-133).
- (9) *Vedalla*, “questions-and-answers, catechisms.” [Comy: All Suttas in the form of question-and-answer that invoke joy and satisfaction, such as Cūla Vedalla Sutta (M 1:299), Mahā Vedalla (M 1:292), Sammā,diṭṭhi Sutta (M 1:46), Sakka,pañha Sutta (D 2:263), Saṅkhāra,bhājanīya Sutta (M 3:99), Mahā Puṇṇama Sutta (M 3:15)

By the time of the 3rd Buddhist Council (held in Pāṭaliputta) under emperor Asoka in 250 BCE, the word *tipiṭaka* (“the three baskets”) is used to describe the canonical collection of Vinaya, Sutta and Abhidhamma.¹² **The Vinaya Piṭaka** (“the Basket of Discipline”) contains mostly legal texts and disciplinary case studies but also various other aspects of the Teaching. **The Sutta Piṭaka** (“the Basket of Discourses”) contains the bulk of the teachings of the Buddha and his early disciples and as such is the most important collection for our purpose of Sutta study. **The Abhidhamma Piṭaka** (“the Basket of Higher Doctrine”) is basically an anthology of technical texts rearranged (sometimes revised) into systematic lists minus their colourful metaphors and mythology.

Of special interest to us as students desirous of awakening is the Sutta Piṭaka, comprising five corpora (=corpuses) or collections—the *Pañca,nikāya*:

Dīgha Nikāya	“the Long Discourses”	34 suttas
Majjhima Nikāya	“the Middle-length Discourses”	152 suttas
Saṃyutta Nikāya	“the Connected Discourses”	2889 suttas (traditionally said to be 7762) ¹³
Aṅguttara Nikāya	“the Numerical Discourses”	2344 suttas (traditionally said to be 9557) ¹⁴
Khuddaka Nikāya	“the Minor Discourses”	15 books (Dhammapada, Sutta Nipāta, etc) ¹⁵

2 Studying the Dharma

In his article, “Liberation: Relevance of Sutta-Vinaya” (1999), **Dhammavuddho**¹⁶ suggests that one should begin Sutta study with the Aṅguttara Nikāya, followed by the Saṃyutta, the Dīgha and finally the Majjhima (1999:11 f). Of the 15 books of the Khuddaka, Dhammavuddho regards these six as “reliable books”: Dhammapada, Sutta Nipāta,¹⁷ Thera,gāthā, Therī,gāthā, Iti,vuttaka and Udāna (1999:3). However, we can also add the Jātaka verses, but the stories are clearly commentarial.

Unfortunately, we do not currently (2003) have any good and complete translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya.¹⁸ However, as for the Sutta Discovery series, we have selected suttas and passages dealing with

¹¹ Current total: 547 Jātaka “paracanonical” stories. There are other apocryphal Jātaka like the Fifty Jātakas (*Paṇṇāsa Jātaka*) of SE Asia.

¹² On the development of the Tripiṭaka, see Lamotte 1988a:149-191; Warder 1970:201-224 (ch 7).

¹³ DA 22 f.

¹⁴ DA 22 f.

¹⁵ The Myanmar Canon includes the Sutta,saṅgaha, Nettippakaraṇa, Peṭakopadesa and Milinda,pañha.

¹⁶ That is, Bhikkhu Hye of Malaysia.

¹⁷ The Sutta Nipāta, esp the last two chapters (Aṭṭhaka,vagga and Pārāyana,vagga), contains some of the oldest passages in the Canon. See Norman 1983:63-70.

¹⁸ Even the *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, tr Nyanaponiks & Bodhi (Oxford: Altamira & Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1999), perhaps the best annotated translation of A that we have, is only an anthology of selected passages.

related teachings of current interest. An open intertextual approach has the great advantage of examining such related topics as a coherent set.

Timely personal sutta study and reflection is a powerful spiritual tonic and energizer. Communal sutta study when properly prepared and executed is a strong catalyst for spiritual friendship. Either approaches or both of them can serve as an effective part of devotional exercise (*pūjā*) or as a prelude to meditation. In this study, we will discover that the humble sutta study promises even higher fruits. “Reading the Suttas is just like sitting next to the Buddha and listening to Him.” (Dhammavuddho 1997:6).

3 Stream or ear?

Peter Masefield,¹⁹ in his groundbreaking *Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism* (1986), discusses some interesting ideas regarding how the early disciples gain right view (become awakened) “at the end of a specially tailored initiation by the Buddha” and states that, “on the basis of actual cases recorded [in the Pali Canon], acquisition of the goal of the path was as much the outcome of an oral teaching as had been the path’s entrance,” such progress and attainment occurring “often within minutes and hardly ever in more than seven days” (1986:xvii). In fact, the notion of **the Dharma as “sound and listening”** pervades his whole book:

The suggestion that the Dhamma consisted of sound is confirmed most of all by the fact that those who participated in it and who had contact with it as a supermundane entity were called *sāvakas*, hearers, and said to be *sutavant*, who have heard the sound (of the Dhamma), in virtue of which they are further said to possess the *Dhammasota*, the Dhamma-ear (S 2:43 = 45 = 58; cp A 3:285 ff, 5:329 ff). That *sota* should be understood here as “ear” rather than as “stream” can be seen from the fact that the *Dhammasota* is said, in a context of hearing (*savanena*) the Dhamma, to save the one possessing it (A 3:348 ff; A 5:140). For just as the Buddha causes people to see *nibbāna* (M 1:510 ff), by means of causing the *Dhammacakku*, the Dhamma-eye, to arise within them, so too does he cause them to hear that same Dhamma by means of causing the *Dhammasota*, the Dhamma-ear, to arise within them. This is why the gift of the Dharma is likened to a blissful sound (Rawlinson, p 124 n25). (Masefield 1986:49; emphases added, slightly edited)

The term *sot’āpanna* (the first stage saint) has popularly been rendered as “stream-winner,” “stream-entrant” or similar translations. In the Sāmyutta, there are six suttas all entitled **Pācīna Sutta** (S 45.91-96/ 5:38 f) comparing the Noble Eightfold Path to the Ganges, to the Yamunā, to the Aciravatī, to the Sarabhū and to the Mahī (the sixth sutta, to all the five rivers). The Commentaries, although glossing *sot’āpanna* as *magga* (the path), ignore such “stream” imageries in the Suttas, for example, *magga, sotam āpanno* (DA 313), *sota, saṅkhatena āpannā* (AA 2:349), and *ariya, magga, sotam āpannā* (AA 5:44).²⁰

It is of great interest to find that the term *sota* is not only the Pali equivalent of Vedic *srotas*, or stream, but also of Vedic *śrotas*, or ear, the organ of hearing, the act of hearing or listening to, conversancy with the Veda or sacred knowledge itself (SED sv; cp also *śrotiya*, learner in the Veda), and derived from √śru, the very same root from which *sāvaka* itself is derived. This, together with the fact that *sotāpanna* is often found written *śrotāpanna* [or *śrota, āpanna*], rather than *srotāpanna* in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit [see Edgerton’s *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*], suggests that in *sotāpanna* we may have a reference to Vedic *śrotas* rather than to *srotas*. This being so, we should have to understand the term *sotāpanna* to mean rather **“one who has come into contact with (or undergone) the hearing.”** Such an understanding would, it may be noted, be consonant with the above commentarial explanations of the term which might be rendered, respectively, as “one who has come into contact with (or undergone) the hearing associated with the ariyan eightfold path,” “one who has come into contact with (or undergone)

¹⁹ Interestingly, both Masefield and Dhammavuddho are resident in Australia.

²⁰ Tr respectively as “attained to the path stream,” “attained to what is regarded as the stream,” “attained to the stream of the noble path.”

the hearing associated with the path” and “one who has come into contact with (or undergone) the fruition by way of the path, the so-called hearing.”

That *sota* in the term *sotāpanna* might mean “hearing,” rather than “stream,” may find further support through the presence in the Nikāyas of the term *Dhammasota* which we earlier had cause to suppose were derived from Vedic *śrotas* rather than *srota*. For it was through attainment of the *Dhammasota*, or Dhamma-ear, that one came to hear the sound of the Deathless, just as it was through attainment of the *Dhammacakku* [Dhamma-eye] that one came to see *nibbāna*...

(Masefield 1986:134; emphases added, slightly edited)

In his 1999 article, Dhammavuddho, too, states that *sot’āpatti* [*sot’āpanna* = “stream-winner”], usually rendered as “stream-entry,” could also be translated as “ear-entry” (1999:6), suggesting that one could gain the first stage of Sainthood through skillfully listening to the Dharma (the thesis of his article). Having said that, it is important here that we should read **the Sāriputta Sutta 2** (S 55.5) in the *Sotāpatti Saṃyutta*, where the stream (*sota*) and the stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) are defined by Sāriputta, in reply to questions asked by the Buddha himself:

“Sāriputta, ‘The stream, the stream,’ so it is said. What now, Sāriputta, is the stream?”

“The stream, venerable sir, is this noble eightfold path itself, namely, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.”

“Sadhu, sadhu! [Excellent! Excellent!] Sāriputta! The stream is indeed this noble eightfold path itself, namely, right view, ... right concentration.

Now, Sāriputta, ‘Stream-winner, stream-winner,’ so it is said. What now, Sāriputta, is the stream?”

“The streamwinner, venerable sir, is one who is endowed with this noble eightfold path itself: this venerable one of such a name, of such a clan.”

“Sadhu, sadhu! Sāriputta! The streamwinner, venerable sir, is indeed one who is endowed with this noble eightfold path itself: this venerable one of such a name, of such a clan.”

(S 55.5/5:347 f)²¹

The closing sentence—“this venerable one of such a name, of such a clan” (*āyasmā evaṃ nāmo evaṃ gotto ti*)—appears puzzling. The Commentaries are silent here. I venture to say that this sentence confirms that streamwinning is a common attainment for lay followers. Of course, there are those who, on entering the stream, would go on to attain higher states, even arhathood itself. (The vocative *āyasmā* is not a problem here, as it is common enough that laymen, too, besides monks, are addressed as such.)²²

4 Right view

4.1 TWO CONDITIONS FOR RIGHT VIEW. The **Mahā Vedalla Sutta** (M 43) comprises an interesting and insightful dialogue (question-answer) between Mahā Koṭṭhita (the questioner) and Sāriputta (the answerer) covering various points of the Dharma, some of which are rather subtle. Here is the section on right view:

13 [Mahā Koṭṭhita:] “Friend, how many conditions are there from which right view arises?”

[Sāriputta:] “Friend, there are two conditions from which right view arises: **the voice of another and skillful attention.**²³

²¹ Cf UA 306: “‘stream-winner’ means one, having entered, having attained to the stream that is the path, remains in the fruit of stream-winning” (*sotāpanno ti magga, saṅkhāta, sotam āpajjivā pāpunivā ṭhito sotāpatti, phalaṭṭho ti attho*). See also Gethin 2001:247-252 (§7.4 The path as a ‘stream’).

²² See **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97) = SD 4.9(5).

²³ “The voice of another,” *parato, ghoso*; “skillful attention,” *yoniso manasikāra*. Comy says that *parato, ghoso* is the teaching of the beneficial Dharma, such as (Sāriputta) hearing the verse beginning *ye dhammā hetu-*

14 ... Here, friend, right view is assisted by **moral virtue, by learning, by discussion, by calm and by insight**.²⁴ Right view assisted by these five factors has liberation of mind for its fruit, liberation of mind for its fruit and benefit. It has liberation by wisdom for its fruit, liberation by wisdom for its fruit and benefit.²⁵ (M 43.14/1:294)

4.2 WHAT REALLY IS VIPASSANĀ? According to the Mahā Vedalla Sutta (M 43), right view has to be supported by moral virtue, by learning, by discussion, by calm and by **insight** (*vipassanā'nuggahitā*, M 43.13/1:294). So much has been said in the name of “Vipassanā,” some even proclaiming it to be “the only way.”²⁶ The short but definitive **Samatha, vipassanā Sutta** (A 2.3.10) in the Sama, citta Vagga is helpful and quoted in full here:

Samatha, vipassanā Sutta (A 2.3.10/1:61)

10 Bhikshus, there are these two things that comprise supreme knowledge.²⁷ What are the two? Calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*).²⁸

Bhikshus, when **calm** is cultivated, what benefit does it bring? The mind is developed. When the mind is developed, what benefit does it bring? All lust is abandoned.

Bhikshus, when **insight** is cultivated, what benefit does it bring? Wisdom is developed. When wisdom is developed, what benefit does it bring? All ignorance is abandoned.

Bhikshus, a mind defiled by lust cannot free itself, and wisdom defiled by ignorance cannot grow. Thus, bhikshus, through the fading away of lust there is **the liberation of mind** (*ceto, vimutti*); through the fading away of ignorance, there is **the liberation by wisdom** (*paññā, vimutti*).²⁹ (A 2.3.10/1:61; cf Dh 372)

p, pabhavā... [Whatever things that arise from a cause...] (V 1:40), gains spiritual penetration. These two conditions are necessary for disciples to gain right view of insight and the right view of the supramundane path. But Pratyeka Buddhas (*pacceka, buddha*) gain awakening and fully self-awakened Buddhas gain “omniscience” solely in dependence on skillful attention without the voice of another. (MA 2:346; also MA 2:12; DA 1:107)

²⁴ That is, *sīlānuggahitā*, *sutānuggahitā*, *sākacchā'nuggahitā*, *samathānuggahitā*, *vipassanā'nuggahitā*, respectively.

²⁵ In terms of the noble eightfold path, right view is the understanding of the Four Noble Truths according to reality. Comy: Right view here refers to the path of Arhathood. “Liberation of the mind” and “liberation by wisdom” both refer to the fruit of Arhathood that arises when one fulfills the these five factors.

²⁶ On the “only way,” see “Taking Oneself as Refuge” §3d, in this series set (Sutta Discovery 2003).

²⁷ “Comprise supreme knowledge,” *vijjā, bhāgiya*, lit “have a part of knowledge,” “partake of supreme knowledge” (A:ÑB 42). According to A:ÑB (1999:280 n3), “supreme knowledge” (*vijjā*) here may refer to “the three knowledges” (*te, vijjā*) or an “eightfold division.” The three knowledges are: (1) the knowledge of the recollection of past lives; (2) the knowledge of the passing away and rebirth of beings according to their karma; (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes. The “eightfold division” are: (1) insight knowledge (*vipassanā, ñāṇa*); (2) the power of creating of a mind-made body (*mano.mayā iddhi*); (3) psychic powers (*iddhi, vidhā*); (4) the divine ear (*dibba, sota*); (5) the knowledge of reading the minds of others (*parassa ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*); (6) the divine eye (*dibba, cakkhu* or *cutūpapāta, ñāṇa*); (7) the knowledge of the recollection of one’s past lives (*pubbe, nivāsānussati ñāṇa*); (8) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya ñāṇa*) (A 3.100.1-10/1:253-256).

²⁸ “Calm” (*samatha*) is the “one-pointedness of the mind” (*cittassa eka-g, gatā*), ie mental concentration culminating in the absorptions (*jhāna*). “Insight” (*vipassanā*) is “the knowledge that comprehends the formations” (*saṅkhāra, pariggāhaka, ñāṇa*) as impermanent, unsatisfactory and not self” (AA 2:119).

²⁹ “Liberation of mind” and “liberation by wisdom,” respectively, *ceto, vimutti* (or, liberation by concentration, ie through destruction of the mental hindrances) and *paññā, vimutti* (liberation through insight) (A 1:60). One who is “liberated by wisdom” “may not have reached the 8 Liberations (*vimokkha*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70.16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into two types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain **the 8 liberations** (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*), which include the 4 formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called “liberated both ways,” that is, liberated from the physical body by means of the form-

When **calm** is developed by itself, independent of insight, it temporarily suppresses the 5 mental hindrances³⁰ and heralds the “higher mind” of the absorptions, characterized by the absence of lust. When calm is developed **together with insight**, they give rise to the noble path that uproots the underlying latent tendencies (*anusaya*) of sensual lust (by the path of Non-return) and of attachment to becoming (by the path of Arhathood).³¹

It is clear from this sutta that “Vipassanā” is not a goal but an aspect of personal development: **the cultivation of insight (*vipassanā*) leads to wisdom (*paññā*)**. As such, Dhammavuddho has proposed that *vipassanā* should be rendered as “contemplation” (1997:13 n6). Ajahn Sujato puts it succinctly,

Notice that samatha brings about the fading of lust, *vipassanā* the fading of ignorance. Lust is a term for the emotional aspect of the defilements; ignorance is a term for the intellectual aspect. At their most general, then, *samatha* may be regarded as pertaining to emotional development, *vipassanā* as pertaining to intellectual development. The terms “emotional” and “intellectual” are meant here in their broadest possible connotation. They have been chosen because they offer an established usage, easily understood, which approximates to this context. No doubt we risk trivializing the concept of *samatha* and *vipassanā*; but perhaps we may succeed instead in dignifying the contemporary impoverished understanding of the emotions and the intellect.

By using the word “emotional” we no more mean being moody and impulsive than by “intellectual” we mean mere reasoning and rational thinking. Rather, we refer to that whole side of experience, half of our mind or world which deals with feelings and intuitions, the soft feminine side, and that which deals with understanding and analysis, the penetrating masculine side. All of us contain both of these aspects within us. Each of these aspects contains some good and some bad and must be developed in a balanced way if we are to achieve liberation – we cannot enlighten only half our mind.

Many similes can illustrate this mutual support. *Vipassanā* only is like trying to cut down a tree with a razor blade; *samatha* only is like using a hammer. Both together [are] like using a sharp axe – both penetrating and powerful. Or *samatha* is like the underside of a postage stamp – it sticks – while *vipassanā* is like the top – it informs. Or *samatha* is like the left foot, *vipassanā* like the right foot – one can only move one foot forward by leaning on the other. Or *samatha* is like the cool breeze at the mountain top, and *vipassanā* is like the view of the countryside. Or *samatha* is like the hand which clings to the next rung up the ladder, *vipassanā* like the hand which lets go of the rung below. This simile contains a warning – if one lets go of both ends before reaching the top, one is likely to end up as a crumpled heap at the foot of the ladder.

(Ajahn Sujato, “A pair of swift messengers,” 19 f)

5 Entering the path

5.1 FIVE BENEFITS OF LISTENING TO THE DHARMA.

less absorptions, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood. Arhats like Sāriputta and Moggallāna are “liberated both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*). The differences between the two types of liberation are given in **Mahā-nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kīṭāgiri S** (M 1:477 f). For full list of the 8 liberations, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15.35/ 2:70 f). For full list of the 8 liberations, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15.35/2:70 f) = SD 5.17.35. See also D 3:262, 228; **Vi-mokkha S**, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120.37/3:103 = SD 3.4.37.

³⁰ “Mental hindrances” (*nīvaraṇā*): sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*), sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkuccha*), spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*) (A 3:62; Vbh 378).

³¹ The Aṅguttara Commentary takes “calm” in the latter sense and says that “The mind develops into the path-consciousness (*maggā, citta*). Lust (*rāga*) is abandoned due to its opposing the path-consciousness, and the path-consciousness opposing lust. At a moment of lust there is no path-consciousness, at the moment of path-consciousness there is no lust. When lust arises, it obstructs the arising of the path-moment, cutting off its basis; but when the path arises it uproots and eradicates lust.” (AA 2:119)

Dhamma-s,savanna Sutta

(A 5.202)

- 1 Bhikshus, there are these five benefits from listening to the Dharma. What are the five?
 2 (1) One hears what is unheard before.
 (2) One clarifies what one has heard.
 (3) One clears one's doubts.
 (4) One straightens one's views.
 (5) One's mind is becomes calm.

These, bhikshus, are the five benefits from listening to the Dharma. (A 5.202/3:248)

5.2 FIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENTER THE PATH.

Vimutt'āyatana Sutta

[Dharma-inspired joy as the basis for liberation]

(A 5.26/3:21-24; D 33.2.1(25)/3:241)

1 Bhikshus, there are these five spheres of liberation where the unliberated mind of a monk, dwelling heedful and exertive, finds liberation; or where the mental influxes, not wholly destroyed become wholly destroyed, where the unattained and unsurpassed safety from the yoke is attained.

What are the five?

2 (1) Here, bhikshus, the Teacher or a respected colleague in the holy life teaches the Dharma to a monk.

And as that monk **listens to the Dharma** taught either by the Teacher or the respected colleague in the holy life, he thus grasps of the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma.³²

Grasping the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma,

joy arises in him;	
on account of joy,	zest arises;
on account of zest,	the body becomes tranquil;
on account of the tranquil body,	he feels happiness;
on account of a happy mind,	he attains samadhi [mentally concentrates].

This, bhikshus, is the first sphere of liberation where the unliberated mind of a monk, dwelling heedful and exertive, finds liberation; or where the mental influxes, not wholly destroyed become wholly destroyed, where the unattained unsurpassed safety from the yoke is attained.

3 (2) Furthermore, bhikshus, *neither the Teacher nor a respected colleague in the holy life teaches the Dharma to a monk.*

But he himself **teaches the Dharma in detail to others**, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.³³

Bhikshus, just as this monk [22] teaches the Dharma in detail to others, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory, he grasps the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma.

Grasping the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma,

joy arises in him;	
on account of joy,	zest arises;
on account of zest,	the body becomes tranquil;
on account of the tranquil body,	he feels happiness;

³² *Yathā yathā, bhikkhave, tassa bhikkhuno satthā dhammaṃ deseti, aññataro vā garuṭṭhāniyo sa, brahm.acārī tathā tathā so tasmim dhamme attha,paṭisaṃvedī ca hoti Dhamma,paṭisaṃvedī ca.*

³³ *“Api ca kho yathā, sutam yathā, pariyattam dhammaṃ vitthārena paresam deseti. “Mastered it in theory,” yathā, pariyattam.*

on account of a happy mind, he attains samadhi [mentally concentrates].

This, bhikshus, is the second sphere of liberation where the unliberated mind of a monk, dwelling heedful and exertive, finds liberation; or where the mental influxes, not wholly destroyed become wholly destroyed, where the unattained unsurpassed safety from the yoke is attained.

4 (3) Furthermore, bhikshus, neither the Teacher nor a respected colleague in the holy life, nor he himself teaches the Dharma.

Nor does he himself teach the Dharma in detail to others, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.

But **he recites the Dharma in detail**, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.³⁴

Bhikshus, just as this monk recites the Dharma in detail, he grasps the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma. [D 3:242]

Grasping the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma,

joy arises in him;	
on account of joy,	zest arises;
on account of zest,	the body becomes tranquil;
on account of the tranquil body,	he feels happiness;
on account of a happy mind,	he attains samadhi [mentally concentrates].

This, bhikshus, is the third sphere of liberation.

5 (4) Furthermore, bhikshus, neither the Teacher nor a respected colleague in the holy life, nor he himself teaches the Dharma.

Nor does he himself teach the Dharma in detail to others, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.

Nor does he recite the Dharma in detail, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.

But he himself **carefully considers, initiates his application, sustains his application, [23] to the Dharma**, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.³⁵

Bhikshus, just as this monk carefully considers, initiates his application, sustains his application, to the Dharma, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory, he grasps the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma.

Grasping the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma,

joy arises in him;	
on account of joy,	zest arises;
on account of zest,	the body becomes tranquil;
on account of the tranquil body,	he feels happiness;
on account of a happy mind,	he attains samadhi [mentally concentrates].

This, bhikshus, is the fourth sphere of liberation where the unliberated mind of a monk, dwelling heedful and exertive, finds liberation; or where the mental influxes, not wholly destroyed become wholly destroyed, where the unattained unsurpassed safety from the yoke is attained.

6 (5) Furthermore, bhikshus, neither the Teacher nor a colleague in the holy life teaches the Dharma, nor he himself teaches it, nor does he recite it, nor does he reflect on it.

Nor does he himself teach the Dharma in detail to others, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.

Nor does he recite the Dharma in detail, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.

Nor does he apply his mind, initiate his application, sustain his application, to the Dharma, just as he has heard it, just as he has mastered it in theory.

But he himself **properly grasps some concentration-sign**,³⁶ having properly considered it, having applied his mind to it, having well penetrated it with wisdom, he grasps of the spirit of the Dharma and the letter of the Dharma.

³⁴ *Api ca kho yathā,sutaṃ yathā,pariyattaṃ dhammaṃ vitthārena sajjhāyaṃ karoti.*

³⁵ *Api ca kho yathā,sutaṃ yathā,pariyattaṃ dhammaṃ cetasā anuvitakketi anuvicāreti manasā'nupekkhati.*

The awakening-factor of effort (*virīya*)...

The awakening-factor of zest (*pīti*)...

The awakening-factor of tranquillity (*passaddhi*)...

The awakening-factor of concentration (*samādhi*)...

The awakening-factor of equanimity (*upekkhā*) are developed to perfection at that time. [96]

These, bhikshus, are the seven awakening factors that are developed to perfection.

Bhikshus, when a noble disciple listens to the Dharma, giving it attention with resolve, directing his whole mind to it, he is open-eared; then the five mental hindrances are not present in him. At that time, the seven awakening factors are developed to perfection.

— evaṃ —

6 Measure not others

Miga,sālā Sutta

(A 6.44/3:347-351= 10.75/5:137-144)

[A 5:137]

1 At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove near Sāvaththī. Then in the morning, the venerable Ānanda, having dressed himself and taking robe and bowl, went up to the female lay-disciple Migasālā and sat down on the prepared seat.

Then the female lay-disciple Migasālā, having gone up to the venerable Ānanda, saluted him and sat down on one side. Sitting thus on one side, the female lay-disciple Migasālā said this to the venerable Ānanda:

2 “How, venerable Ānanda, should this teaching given by the Blessed One be understood— [138] that is, regarding the fact that one who lives the holy life [of celibacy] and one who does not would both meet the same destiny in the next life?”

Venerable sir, my father³⁹ Purāṇa⁴⁰ lived the holy life, living apart,⁴¹ abstaining from sexual intercourse and from women. When he died, the Blessed One declared that he arose as a once-returner in the Tusita Heaven.

Venerable sir, my beloved paternal uncle,⁴² Isidatta, is not celibate, contented with his wife, but when he died, the Blessed One declared that he too arose as a once-returner in the Tusita Heaven.

How, venerable Ānanda, should this teaching given by the Blessed One be understood—that is, regarding the fact that one who lives the holy life and one who does not would both meet the same destiny in the next life?”

[Ānanda:] “Sister, it is just as the Blessed One has declared.”

3 Then the venerable Ānanda, having received his almsfood from the female lay-disciple Migasālā, rose from his seat and left.

4 Then the venerable Ānanda, having returned from his almsround and finished his meal, went up to the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the venerable Ānanda related his conversation with Migasālā to the Blessed One. [139]

³⁹ “Father,” *pitā*.

⁴⁰ Purāṇa and Isidatta (see next para). In **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89.18/2:124) and **Thapataya S** (S 55.6/5:348-352) both are “chamberlains” or keepers of the women’s quarters (*thapataya*; Skt *sthatapaya*) of king Pasenadi. Comy to Thapataya S says that at the time (in the Thapataya S) Isidatta was a once-returner, Purāṇa a stream-winner content with his own wife (ie one who is chaste but not celibate) (SA 3:278). Since they are lay saints, king Pasenadi addressed them as “reverend sirs,” *bhante* (M 89.18/2:123 = SD 4.9 & Intro (4) there). See also S:W 5:303 n1, S:B 1955 n326.

⁴¹ “Living apart,” *anācārī*. This is a pun: (1) “living alone, leading a solitary life”; (2) “living distant from evil.”

⁴² “Beloved paternal uncle,” *pettā piyo*. I would have preferred to render this as “beloved father’s brother” but it is ambiguous who here is the “beloved” where the Pali clearly refers to the “uncle.”

“But how, Ānanda, is Migasālā, a female lay-disciple Migasālā who is immature, unintelligent, motherly, with a mere mother’s wit, to have the knowledge of the diversity⁴³ of individuals?⁴⁴

Ānanda, there are these ten kinds of persons existing in the world. What are the ten?

5a (1) Here, Ānanda, a certain person is **immoral** (*dussīla*) and he does not understand according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that immorality of his ceases without remainder. He is not shaped by what he has heard; and he is not shaped by great learning⁴⁵ that he has not understood with right view; and he wins not even temporary liberation.⁴⁶ After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes decline, not excellence;⁴⁷ he goes the way of decline, not the way of excellence.

5b (2) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person is **immoral** but he understands according to reality [140] that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that immorality of his ceases without remainder. He is shaped by what he has heard; and he is shaped by great learning that he has well understood with right view;⁴⁸ and he wins temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes excellence, not decline; he goes the way of excellence, not the way of decline.

5c Now, Ānanda, those who are measurers would measure thus:

‘The very characteristics of this person are the same as those of the other, but why is the one lowly and the other exalted?’

Such a thought, Ānanda, is to their loss and pain for a long time.

5d Now, Ānanda, this person is immoral... *but* wins temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes excellence... This person, Ānanda, is more advanced and more excellent than that certain previous person. What is the reason for this?

Because, Ānanda, the Dharma stream⁴⁹ carries along⁵⁰ this person [with the Dharma-ear].⁵¹ Who would know this,⁵² except the Tathāgata?

⁴³ “Diversity,” *paro,pariya* fr *para + pariya*, lit “lower and higher (states).” Closely related to *paroparā = parôvarā* (**Anusota S**, A 4.5/2:6) whose Comy glosses as *parôparā ti parôvarā uttama,lāmakā kusalākusalā ti attho*, “*paroparā = parovarā*, which means ‘excellent or low (evil),’ “wholesome or unwholesome” (AA 3:5). Cf *parôvara = para avara*, “high and low, far and near” (Sn 353, 475, 704, 1048, 1148; cf SnA 1:350). See PED: *paro-pariya & pariya*.

⁴⁴ *Kā c’Ānanda Migasālā upāsikā bālā avyattā ammakā ammakā,paññā ke ca purisa,puggala,paropariye nāṇe*, lit “But, Ānanda, who is the female lay-disciple Migasālā, immature, unintelligent, motherly, with a mere mother’s wit, to have the knowledge of the diversity of individuals?” Here I have rendered its sense into English. The idiomatic Pali here might sound somewhat strong to the modern feminist and seems to be out of this sutta’s context, esp when the Buddha later tells Ānanda “not to be a measurer of persons” (*mā puggalesu pamāṇikā*), not to say out of character of the Buddha himself. It might have been edited or added during a time when the status of women in India sank to low ebb. On the other hand, this could be a dramatic script done by the recensionists simply to reflect Migasālā’s lack of spiritual attainment. In other words, it is the recensionists speaking here louder than the Buddha.

⁴⁵ “Great learning,” *bahu,sacca*, lit “much listening”: *sacca* here comes from *suta* (heard) + *ya*.

⁴⁶ “Temporary liberation,” *sāmāyika vimutti*, or more specifically, *sāmāyika ceto,vimutti* (temporary liberation of mind), refers to the mundane meditative attainments (*lokiya samāpatti*), ie the absorptions (*jhāna*) and formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*), ie the form and formless absorptions. It is so called because the mind has momentarily abandoned (*tad-aṅga pahāna*) its opposing mental hindrances and is resolved upon its object.

⁴⁷ “He undergoes decline, not excellence,” *hānāya paretī no vīsesāya*. “Excellence,” *vīsesa*, alt tr “distinction.” It refers to any of the absorptions (*jhāna*) or any of the four stages of sainthood: stream-winner (*soṭ’āpanna*), once-returner (*sākad’āgāmī*), non-returner (*anāgāmī*) and arhat (*arahanta*) (D 1:156). For definitions, see for example **Āṇāpānasati S** (M 112.9-12/3:80). Cf the story of Sāriputta’s meeting with Assajī: when Sāriputta realizes that he does not any higher excellence (*upari,vīsesa*), i.e. any higher attainment than stream-winning, he decided to meet the Buddha himself (DhA 1:94).

⁴⁸ “Truly understood through his views,” *diṭṭhiyā pi suppaṭividdham*.

⁴⁹ “Dharma stream,” *dhamma,sota*. Obviously here, the Buddha is referring either to stream-winning or one on the way to become one. Hare (S:WH 5:96 etc) renders it as “ear of Dharma”; while Hare (S:WH 3:248 etc) & Bodhi (S:B 1:564 etc) both render it as “stream of Dharma.” Occurrences: *~m samāpanna* (S 2:42, 43, 45, 58 f, 80); *~samāpanna* [“entered the stream of Dharma”] (A 3:285-288, 5:356 f, 360); *~m upānaya* [“carried along by the stream of Dharma”] (Ap 1:101 Subhadda Thera 9); *~o nibbahati* [“the stream of Dharma carries (one) along”] (A 3:350 f,

As such, Ānanda, be not measurers of persons, hold not onto the measure of persons! A person, Ānanda, is ruined by holding on to the measure of persons but I, Ānanda, and those like me, may take the measure of persons. [141]

6 (3) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person is **morally virtuous** (*sīlavā*) but he does not understand according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that moral virtue of his ceases without remainder. He is not shaped by what he has heard; and he is not shaped by great learning; which he has not understood with right view; and he wins not even temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes decline, not excellence; he goes the way of decline, not the way of excellence.

7a (4) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person is morally virtuous and he understands according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that moral virtue of his ceases without remainder. He is shaped by what he has heard; and he is shaped by great learning that he has well understood with right view; and he wins temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes excellence, not decline; he goes the way of excellence, not the way of decline.

7b Now, Ānanda, those who are measurers would measure thus:

‘The very characteristics of this person are the same as those of the other, but why is the one lowly and the other exalted?’

Such a thought, Ānanda, is to their loss and pain for a long time.

7c Now, Ānanda, that person is morally virtuous...and wins temporary liberation...

Because, Ānanda, the Dharma stream carries along this person [with the Dharma-ear]. Who would know this except the Tathāgata.

As such, Ānanda, be not measurers of persons, hold not onto the measure of persons! A person, Ānanda, is ruined by holding on to the measure of persons but I, Ānanda, and those like me, may take the measure of persons.

8 (5) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person has **strong lust** (*tibba,rāga*) and he does not understand according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that lust of his ceases without remainder. He is not shaped by what he has heard; and he is not shaped by great learning that he has not understood with right view; and he does not win temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes decline, not excellence; he goes the way of decline, not the way of excellence.

9a (6) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person has strong lust but he understands according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that lust of his ceases without remainder. He is shaped by what he has heard; and he is shaped by great learning; and he has well understood with right view; and he wins temporary liberation. [142] After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes excellence, not decline; he goes the way of excellence, not the way of decline.

9b Now, Ānanda, those who are measurers would measure thus:

‘The very characteristics of this person are the same as those of the other, but why is the one lowly and the other exalted?’

Such a thought, Ānanda, is to their loss and pain for a long time.

5:140, 143). Comy here explains *dhmma,soto nibbahati* as “*sūraṃ hutvā* (having become a hero) *pavattamāna*, -*vipassanā,ñāṇaṃ* (keeping up insight knowledge), *ariya,bhūmiṃ sampāpeti*, “Insight knowledge, having become strong, takes him along to reach the noble ground (level of the aryas)” (AA 3:375; cf Masefield 1986:79) [I have to thank Nina van Gorkom on her research assistance here.] The Pali *sota* has two Skt forms: (a) *śrotra* → *śrotas* √sru → *suṇāti* (he hears), the ear; (b) *śrotas* → *srotas* √sru → *savati* (it flows), stream (of water). Comparing the Pali occurrences of the sentences with their BHS cognates or parallels in the Āgama should provide insight into their usages. Dhammavuddho thinks that *sot’āpatti* [*sot’āpanna* = “stream-winner”] usually rendered as “*stream-entry*” could also be translated as “*ear-entry*” (1999:6), suggesting that one could gain the first stage of sainthood through skillful listening to the Dharma (the thesis of his 1999 article). See Intro (3).

⁵⁰ “Carries...along,” *nibbahati*. Hare thinks that “*Nibbahati* is either from √barh, to increase, or √vah, to carry, with *nis*, ‘out,’ ‘to completion’.” (A:WH 3”248 n1). See prev n.

⁵¹ “Dharma-ear,” *dhmma,sota*. See Intro (3) above.

⁵² “This,” *tad antaraṃ* (v1 *tad anantaraṃ*). Comy: *tad antaraṃ taṃ karaṇaṃ*, “this reason” (AA 3:375).

9c Now, Ānanda, that person is morally virtuous...and wins temporary liberation...

Because, Ānanda, the Dharma stream carries along this person [with the Dharma-ear]. Who would know this, except the Tathāgata?

As such, Ānanda, be not measurers of persons, hold not onto the measure of persons! A person, Ānanda, is ruined by holding on to the measure of persons but I, Ānanda, and those like me, may take the measure of persons.

10 (7) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person is **angry** (*kodhana*) and he does not understand according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that anger of his ceases without remainder. He is not shaped by what he has heard; and he is not shaped by great learning that he has not understood with right view; and he does not win temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes decline, not excellence; he goes the way of decline, not the way of excellence.

11a (8) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person is angry but he understands according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that anger of his ceases without remainder. He is shaped by what he has heard; and he is shaped by great learning that he has well understood with right view; and he wins temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes excellence, not decline; he goes the way of excellence, not the way of decline.

11b Now, Ānanda, those who are measurers would measure thus:

‘The very characteristics of this person are the same as those of the other, but why is the one lowly and the other exalted?’

Such a thought, Ānanda, is to their loss and pain for a long time.

11c Now, Ānanda, that person is morally virtuous...and wins temporary liberation...

Because, Ānanda, the Dharma stream carries along this person [with the Dharma-ear]. Who would know this, except the Tathāgata?

As such, Ānanda, be not measurers of persons, hold not onto the measure of persons! A person, Ānanda, is ruined by holding on to the measure of persons but I, Ānanda, and those like me, may take the measure of persons.

12 (9) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person is **restless** (*uddhata*) and he does not understand according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which that restlessness of his ceases without remainder. He is not shaped by what he has heard; and he is not shaped by great learning that he has not understood with right view; and he does not win temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes decline, not excellence; he goes the way of decline, not the way of excellence.

13a (10) Here again, Ānanda, a certain person is restless but he understands according to reality that liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom by which his restlessness ceases without remainder. He is shaped by what he has heard; and he is shaped by great learning that he has not understood with right view; [143] and he wins temporary liberation. After death, when the body has broken up, he undergoes excellence, not decline; he goes the way of excellence, not the way of decline.

13b Now, Ānanda, those who are measurers would measure thus:

‘The very characteristics of this person are the same as those of the other, but why is the one lowly and the other exalted?’

Such a thought, Ānanda, is to their loss and pain for a long time.

13c Now, Ānanda, that person is morally virtuous...and wins temporary liberation...

Because, Ānanda, the Dharma stream carries along this person [with the Dharma-ear]. Who would know this, except the Tathāgata?

As such, Ānanda, be not measurers of persons, hold not onto the measure of persons! A person, Ānanda, is ruined by holding on to the measure of persons but I, Ānanda, and those like me, may take the measure of persons.

13d “But how, Ānanda, is Migasālā, a female lay-disciple Migasālā who is immature, unintelligent, motherly, with a mere mother’s wit, to have the knowledge of the diversity of individuals?⁵³

⁵³ See §4 & n.

Ānanda, these are the ten kinds of persons existing in the world.

Whatever moral virtue, Ānanda, that Purāna possesses, that too Isidatta would possess. But here Purāna would not know of Isidatta's destiny.

Whatever wisdom, Ānanda, that Purāna possesses, that too Isidatta would possess. [144] But here Purāna would not know of Isidatta's destiny.

Thus, Ānanda, both these persons are low⁵⁴ in one factor.

— evaṃ —

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⁵⁴ “Lowly,” *hīna*.