

॥ နမော တဿ ဘဂဝတော အရဟတော သဗ္ဗာသမ္ဗုဒ္ဓဿ ॥
 ॥ नमो तस्स भगवतो अरहतो सम्मासम्बुद्धस्स ॥
 නමෝ තසස භගවතො අරහතො සමමාසම්බුද්ධසස.
 ५ नमो तसुस भगवतो अरहतो सम्मासम्बुद्धसुस५
 Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

1

Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta

or **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana Sutta** The Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Truth

S 56.11 = Mv 1.6.17-31 + 32-37

Short name: **Dhamma,cakka Sutta**, The Dharma-wheel Discourse

Theme: The Buddha's first discourse

Translated by Piya Tan ©2002, rev 2010

The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong in the broken places.
 But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle
 and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too
 but there will be no special hurry.

(Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms*, 1929 ch 34)

1 The group of 5 monks

1.1 MEETING THE 5 MONKS

1.1.1 After the 49 day-retreat in the vicinity of the Bodhi tree,¹ the Buddha leaves to look for the group of 5 monks (*pañca,vaggiya bhikkhu*) to break the good news of his awakening and teach them the newly discovered Dharma. On the way, he meets Upaka, who has the honour of hearing the Buddha's first declaration of awakening, but fails to fathom its significance.² The Buddha continues his journey to the deer grove at Benares (Bārāṇasī) in stages and finally reaches **Isi,patana** (modern Sarnath), about 7 km north of Benares.³ As is the custom, he rests in the outskirts of Vārāṇasī and waits until morning to enter the city. Having collected his almsfood, taken his wash and eaten his meal, he heads straight for the hermitage where the 5 monks reside.

1.1.2 The oldest record we have of the first discourse is clearly that found in **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26),⁴ but these passages there widely differ from what is given in the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta or, briefly, "Dhamma,cakka Sutta" [§16.3 n]. This does not suggest any historical conflict: it merely means that while the latter records only the very first "official" teachings to the 5 monks, the former gives a more elaborate account of the "noble quest" and the attaining of the 9 abodes (the 4 dhyanas, the 4 attainments and cessation).

Clearly, the Buddha gives the 5 monks numerous teachings, many of which must have been left un-

¹ On these 7 weeks, see **Dhamma & Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1 (5).

² On Upaka's non-returning, see SD 12.1 (4+5).

³ The distance the Buddha travels here should be noted: it is some 200 km from Gayā to Benares, and by road the distance is about 250-300 km, which will take some 10 days by foot (Nakamura, 2000:241). It would not be surprising if the Buddha has taught many others along the way, but what records we have of this must have been lost.

⁴ M 26,29-43 (SD 1.11).

recorded, but the essential ones have been handed down to us in the Dhammacakka Sutta and the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta, with the full background narrative given in the Mahāvagga of the Vinaya. However, we may say that the Dhammacakka Sutta as the “first discourse” specifically addresses the group of 5 monks to clear the air, or rather their minds, in preparation for greater things to come. [2.1.2]

1.2 TEACHING THE 5 MONKS. It is said that the Buddha gives his first discourse on the night of the full moon day of Āsāḷha (June-July),⁵ a festival still celebrated today amongst south-east Asian Buddhists as **Āsāḷha Pūjā**. The first sangha that arises from this momentous discourse comprises Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji. Since Āsāḷha Pūjā commemorates the teaching of the first discourse, it is often known as “Dharma day.”⁶

1.3 The Jātaka Commentary and Milinda,pañha mention “the 5 teachers” of the Bodhisattva, actually totalling 12, since the first “teacher” is really the group of 8 brahmins (Rāma, Dhaja, Lakkhaṇa, Mantī, Yañña or Koṇḍañña, Suyāma, Bhoja or Subhoja, Sudatta) who examines the Bodhisattva’s bodily marks during the nativity. The other three are Sabba,mitta (the deva who is said to inspire the Bodhisattva to go forth), Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāma,putta (J 1:56; Miln 237). **Koṇḍañña** is the youngest of the 8 brahmins who visit the Bodhisattva at his nativity.

While seven others hold up two fingers, prophesying that the child would become either a world ruler (if he lives the household life) or a world teacher, a buddha (if he goes forth). Koṇḍañña alone holds up only one finger, certain that the child would leave home to become a buddha. When the Bodhisattva renounces the world, Koṇḍañña approaches the sons of the other 7 brahmins (who have died by then) and invites them to renounce the world and follow the Bodhisattva.

Only four of them—Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji—join him and together they are known as **the “group of 5”** (*pañca,aggiya*) (J 1:56 f). As such, Koṇḍañña is the eldest of them, his familiarity with the Buddha going back to even when the latter is newly born.⁷

⁵ V 1:10 ff; S 5:420 ff.; Mvst 3:330 f; Lalv 540(416) f. The Pali names of the ancient **Indian calendar** follow Vism 621 and its Ṭikā (based on Nāṇamoli’s *A Pali-English Glossary of Buddhist Technical Terms*, 1994), with the Skt names (within brackets) and number of days added:

Season	Sub-season	Month	Days	Equivalent
	Hemanta	Māga,sira (Skt Mārga,śīrśa)	30	Nov-Dec
Hemanta (cold)	(winter)	Phussa (Puṣya)*	30	Dec-Jan
	Sisira (cool)	Māgha (Maghā) Phagguna (Phālguna)*	30 30	Jan-Feb Feb-Mar
Gimhāna (heat)	Vasanta (spring)	Citta (Caitra) Vesākha (Vaiśākha)	30 31	Mar-Apr Apr-May
	Gimha (summer)	Jeṭṭha (Jyaiṣṭha) Āsāḷha or Uttar’āsāḷha (Āṣāḍha)	31 31	May-Jun Jun-Jul
	Vassanā (rains)	Sāvana (Śrāvaṇa) Poṭṭha,pāda (Proṣṭha,pada)*	31 31	Jul-Aug Aug-Sep
Vassāna (rains)	Sārada (autumn)	Assa,yuja (Āśva,yuja) Kattika (Kārttika)	30 30	Sep-Oct Oct-Nov

[*Puṣya also called Pauṣa; Phālguna also called Phaggu; Proṣṭha,pada also called Bhādra,pada.]

Note: The Indian month begins on the first day of the waning moon and ends on the full moon.

⁶ **Visākha Pūjā**, also “Buddha day,” “Vesak day” (Singapore), “Wesak day” (Malaysia) (traditionally said to be on the fullmoon day of May), commemorates the Buddha’s nativity, awakening and parinirvana. **Māgha Pūjā** is often called “sangha day”: see **Dīgha,nakha S** (M 74), SD 16.1 (6).

⁷ It is on this account—his age—that he is declared by the Buddha as the “longest-standing” (*rattaññū*) of the monks (A 1:23,17). Coincidentally, he is also the eldest of the monks. On the significance of this, see SD 1.2 (1.3).

1.4 According to **the Mahîsāsaka Vinaya, the Saṅgha,bheda,vastu** and its Tibetan counterpart in **the Dulva** (Tibetan Vinaya), the 5 monks—Koṇḍañña,⁸ Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji—are the Bodhisattva’s former companions, who have been sent by the Buddha’s father to look after him.⁹ According to the Ekottara Āgama, the 5 monks have been following him since his birth,¹⁰ which further associates them with the Buddha’s family and native country.

1.5 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta Commentary similarly associates the 5 monks with the Buddha’s home country, reporting that in his early youth, Koṇḍañña is one of the brahmins who predict the child Siddhattha’s future spiritual career at his birth, but the other four of this group of 5 monks are the sons of the other sooth-saying brahmins at the Buddha’s naming ceremony just after his birth (MA 2:87).

1.6 According to the **Lalita,vistara**, however, they are Uddaka Rama,putta’s disciples who have witnessed how the Bodhisattva quickly achieved what they have been seeking for a long time.¹¹ The fact that he, however, does not rest satisfied with this achievement motivates them to leave Uddaka and follow the Bodhisattva. **Analayo**, in his comparative study of **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta**, adds that

The Lalitavistara’s presentation seems more convincing, since if the five had been ordered to attend on the Bodhisattva, one would not expect them to abandon their mission once the Bodhisattva decided to stop his self-mortifications. If, however, they had followed him on their own accord and in the hope to benefit from his realizations, the decision to leave him once he had (from their perspective) given up striving becomes understandable. (2006:111)¹²

2 The 1st discourse: contents and purpose

2.1 THE SUTTA’S TEACHINGS

2.1.1 To prepare the 5 monks for the first discourse, if we are to follow **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26), the Buddha first lists the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*kāma,guṇa*), that is, the physical body, which needs to be transcended, as it were, before we can attain the 4 dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments, and finally, the cessation of perception and feeling, here equated the attainment of nirvana. This is, in fact, a neat summary of the Buddha’s spiritual progress from the world to awakening itself.

Understandably, this passage serves as a sort of preamble to the first discourse (S 56.11), which is given to the 5 monks when they are finally ready to hear a proper formulation of the essence of the Buddha’s awakening.¹³

2.1.2 The Buddha’s first discourse serves 3 purposes: firstly, the Buddha clears up the unfortunate misunderstanding that has arisen between himself and his former colleagues regarding extremes and the middle way. The discourse refutes the constant criticism by rival sects of the alleged laxity of the Buddhist monastic rules. It also warns novices in advance of the dangers of extremes in practice, and to keep to the middle way. In other words, it deals with:

⁸ On Koṇḍañña, see **Naḷaka,pāna S** (M 68), SD 37.4 (1.2.2).

⁹ T1421 = T22.104a19, tr Bareau 1963:146; Gnoli 1977:99; and a tr of Tibetan Dulva in Rockhill 1907:28.

¹⁰ EĀ 24.5 = T2.618b14, tr Bareau 1988:79.

¹¹ Lefmann 1902; Foucaux 1884:212.

¹² See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,26-30/1:171-173), SD 1.11(6). For further details on the 5 monks, see **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59), SD 1.2 (1).

¹³ (S 56.11/5:420-424), SD 1.1. See (M 26,31-42/1:173-175), SD 1.11 (7).

- (1) the exhortation on avoiding the extremes of sensual indulgence and of self-mortification [§§2-3];
- (2) the proclamation of the middle way, i.e. the noble eightfold path [§4];
- (3) the statement of the 4 noble truths [§§5-12];
- (4) the declaration of the Buddha's supreme awakening [§13-15]; and
- (5) the exultation of the devas [§§17-19].
- (6) Koṇḍañña's attainment of the divine eye [§16].

The 4 truths are succinctly stated in the extant early texts,¹⁴ but there are innumerable places in the early Buddhist scriptures where they are explained again and again, with greater detail and in different ways.

2.1.3 The 4 noble truths are the briefest synthesis of the entire teaching of the Buddha, since all those manifold doctrines of the Pali Canon are, without any exception, included therein. If we study the 4 noble truths with the help of the various references and explanations in the early Buddhist Scriptures, we get a fairly good and accurate account of the essential teachings of the Buddha according to the early texts.¹⁵

2.2 THE SUTTA'S PURPOSE

Scholars have noted that the first discourse, the **Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11), is strangely "tucked away almost inconspicuously" in the Sacca Saṃyutta (eg S:B 1520), and which centres around the 4 noble truths and the noble eightfold path (which are teaching models of the second period).¹⁶ The first-period suttas are usually unstructured but point directly to the awakening truths, such as the teachings of the Aṭṭhaka Vagga and the Pārāyana Vagga of the Sutta Nipāta.¹⁷

In the case of the first discourse, it is possible that the Buddha has given the 5 monks other teachings in preparation for what has been formalized as the Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta. Surely, the 4 noble truths are not the only teaching the Buddha has given to his first monk disciples. The Vinaya, in fact, records that before the Buddha delivers the first discourse, he has to persuade the 5 monks that he is now awakened, unlike before.¹⁸

However, no details are given, except that the Buddha declares to them: "Bhikshus, do you agree that I've not spoken to you like this before?" We might safely assume here that other teachings are also given prior to the first discourse itself. However, the first discourse is recorded by the council elders and reciters in such a manner as to highlight its primacy and significance.¹⁹ We are grateful to them that they have shared their memory of the first teachings with us so that we have a good idea of what happened in the first years and the teachings that first arose in this world-cycle for our benefit.

3 The middle way

3.1 THE 2 EXTREMES

3.1.1 Significantly, the Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta opens by addressing the prevalent views of the day: the physicalist and the eternalist [§]. **The physicalist view** is a materialist and annihilationist one, that is, they believe that the "soul" (mind, or consciousness, etc) is identical with the body, so that when

¹⁴ Eg **Dukkha S** (S 22.104/3:158 f), SD 42.20.

¹⁵ On the lateness of Dhammacakka Pavattana S (S 56.11), see **Notion of diṭṭhi**, SD 40a.1 (2.2).

¹⁶ On the 2 periods of the Buddha's ministry, see SD 401.1 (1.3).

¹⁷ See **Notion of diṭṭhi**, SD 40a.1 (1.3).

¹⁸ Mv 1.6.10-16 (V 1:8-10)..

¹⁹ See **Notion of diṭṭhi**, SD 40a.1 (2.2).

the body dies, it dies, too.²⁰ In other words, the body is meant to be enjoyed, and we should sow wild oats while we can, as it were. In fact, the sensual life of the young Bodhisattva broadly hints at this kind of materialistic philosophy.²¹

3.1.2 The eternalist view is essentially the same today as it is in the Buddha's time. There is a belief in some kind of eternal entity (Brahman, soul, divine essence) and its source or creator (usually some kind of God-idea). Among the Indian eternalists of the Buddha's time, however, there is a popular belief that the body is basically bad, evil or unsatisfactory, or at best provisional (here, it concurs with much of the eternalist views of our times), so that with its destruction (deliberate or natural), we would inherit some kind of divine body or heavenly birth.

3.1.3 These 2 extreme views and practices are also criticized in **the Cūḷa Dhamma Samādāna Sutta** (M 45), and which lists 4 ways of "undertaking things" (*dhamma samādāna*), that is, one's spiritual progress, as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| (1) conduct that is pleasant now, | but resulting in future pain; |
| (2) conduct that is painful now, | but ripening in future pain; |
| (3) conduct that is painful now, | but ripening in future pleasure (or happiness); and |
| (4) conduct that is pleasant now, | and ripening in future pleasure (or happiness). |

The first refers to a life of sense-indulgence, while the second is that of self-mortification. These two kinds of practices should be given up and avoided. The third undertaking refers to when we have great difficulties with greed, hate or delusion, but we still we do not abandon our mental cultivation. The fourth undertaking, is the ideal one, as it is easy all the way, and the spiritual fruition is easily obtained, too.²²

3.1.4 The Buddha rejects both the physicalist and the eternalist views as being extremes [3.2]. However, note in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta that while "the devotion to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures," or more briefly, "the devotion to sensual pleasures" (*kāma,sukh'allikānuyoga*) is described as being "low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable]" (*hīno gammo puthujjaniko anariyo anatta,samhito*) [§3], "the devotion to self-mortification" (*atta,kilamathānuyoga*) is said to be only "painful, ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable]" (*dukkho anariyo anatta,samhito*) [§3]. This is because despite being "painful," self-mortification, with some moral virtue, can bring about a divine afterlife; but such a goal is nevertheless "ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable]," because we are still caught up in samsara, and not liberated from suffering.²³

3.2 WHAT IS THE MIDDLE WAY?

3.2.1 In this sutta, the "middle way" (*majjhimā paṭipadā*) is declared to be the noble eightfold path. According to **Rupert Gettin**,

what the Bārāṇasī discourse appears to do is present a kind of apologetic and polemic in one. What is taught by the Buddha is truly a spiritual life (*brahma-cariyā*) in that it is free of vulgar

²⁰ See **Sandaka S** (M 76,7/1:515), SD 35.7.

²¹ See eg **Sukhumala S** (A 3.38/1:145 f), SD 63.7.

²² M 45/1:305-309 (SD 32.4).

²³ See SD 51.1 (1.2.1.3+1.2.1.4); also **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (4.1).

sensual indulgence, on the other hand it is distinct from what Bronkhorst [1986] characterizes as the old severely ascetic main stream meditation tradition. From the point of view of the Bārāṇasī discourse, this is now superseded by the new middle way. What is important about the first discourse is the “middleness” of what the Buddha teaches. From this point of view, the *ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo* is largely incidental to the discourse. (Gethin 2001:199 f; see 198-201)

3.2.2 Gethin goes on to point out that the application of the expression “the middle way” to the avoidance of sensual indulgence and of self-torture occurs in only four other passages. Only two of these concern the noble eightfold path exclusively, that is, **the Araṇa,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 139) and **the Rāsiya Sutta** (S 42.12), both of which describe the noble eightfold path as the “middle way” in exactly the same terms as the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.²⁴

The other usages of “the middle way” mentioned by Gethin (2001:200 ff) include the following:

- (1) **The Acelaḥka Paṭipadā Suttas 1 & 2** (A 3.151+152), where three “ways” (*paṭipadā*) are given: that of indulgence (*āgālhā*), that of burning (*nijjhāmā*), and that of the middle way.²⁵
- (2) **The Dhamma,dāyāda Sutta** (M 3), “Here, brothers, greed (*lobha*) is bad, hate (*dosa*) is bad. There is the middle way for the abandonment of greed and hate It is this very noble eightfold path.”²⁶
- (3) **The Kaccāna,gotta Sutta** (S 12.15), **the (Pabajjā) Acela(ka) Kassapa Sutta** (S 12.17), **the Aññātara Brāhmaṇa Sutta** (S 12.46) and **the (Sabba) Jāṇussoṇī Sutta** (S 12.47), where the Buddha comments on the extremes of “all exists” (*sabbam atthi*) and “nothing exists” (*sabbam n’atthi*), and of eternalism (*sassata*) and annihilationism (*uccheda*) [3.1], and “not following either of these extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dharma by the middle” (*ete te ubho ante anupagamma majjhena tathāgato dhammam deseti*). The “middle” here refers to dependent arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*).²⁷
- (4) **The Sampasādaniya Sutta** mentions the 2 extremes, followed by the attaining of the 4 dhyanas, without mentioning the eightfold path (D 28).²⁸

3.2.3 Gethin adds that “[t]his ‘middle’ would seem to be rather more significant for the subsequent development of Buddhist thought than the specific notion of the *ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo* as the middle way between sensual indulgence and self-torture” (Gethin 2001:200 f). Furthermore, **A K Warder** points out that this is best exemplified in Nāgārjuna’s **Mūla,madhyamaka Kārikā**, where dependent arising appears to represent the “middle way” par excellence.²⁹ In fact, the canonical text most frequently quoted by Nāgārjuna is the Nidāna Saṃyutta (S 12), especially **the Kaccā(ya)na,gotta Sutta** (S 12.15).³⁰

4 The truths: terminology and scope

4.0 THE 4 TRUTHS IN PERSPECTIVE

4.0.1 Meaning and purpose of life

²⁴ Respectively, M 139,4/3:230 f, (SD 7.8); S 42.12,4/4:330 (SD 91.3).

²⁵ A 3.151+152/1:295-297.

²⁶ M 3,8/1:15 (SD 2.18).

²⁷ Respectively, S 12.15/2:17 (SD 6.13); S 12.17/2:20 (SD 18.5); S 12.46/2:75 f (SD 83.9); S 12.47/2:76 f (SD 68.6).

²⁸ D 28,19/3:113 (SD 14.14). This Sutta is not mentioned by Gethin.

²⁹ Warder, 1973:78-88.

³⁰ S 12.15/2:17 (SD 6.13) qu at S 22.90/3:134 f (SD 56.5). For a similar note on the middle way, see SD 10.16 (1.3.4). See also **Notion of ditṭhi**, SD 40.1 (10.1.1).

4.0.1.1 The 4 noble truths are systematically and heuristically structured—for the sake of identifying and solving problems—as follows:

The meaning of life:

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|--|------------------------------------|------|
| (1) the noble truth [reality], that is, suffering | <i>dukkha ariya,sacca</i> | [§5] |
| (2) the noble truth, that is, the arising of suffering | <i>dukkha,samudaya ariya,sacca</i> | [§6] |

The purpose of life:

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| (3) the noble truth, that is, the ending of suffering | <i>dukkha,nirodha ariya,sacca</i> | [§7] |
| (4) the noble truth, that is, the path leading to the ending of suffering | <i>dukkha,nirodha,gāmini,paṭipadā ariya,sacca</i> | [§8] |

4.0.1.2 The first two truths answer the question, “**What is the meaning of life?**” Life is impermanent, changing, and altering all the time. Whatever is impermanent cannot really satisfy us, especially when we hope to desire for some kind of permanent thing or state. Whatever is impermanent and unsatisfactory has no abiding essence. We have no control over such states. We do not even have real control over our own body or life. Our body becomes defiled and decays as it will and, in due course, our life ends when it will. This natural process is formulated in the dependent arising formula.³¹

4.0.1.3 The last two truths answer the question, “**What is the purpose of life?**”—to grow mentally and spiritually, and to fully awaken to true reality. To do this, we need to prepare our body and speech as the bases for a calm and clear mind. When our mind attains true stillness, it sees into true reality. This is the wisdom that liberates us from the endless cycle of suffering, fuelled by craving and ignorance. The state of unconditioned awakening is called nirvana. The progress of awakening is described in the dependent ending formula.³²

4.0.2 Teaching unique to the Buddha

4.0.2.1 Early Buddhism has no “Buddhist creed”—like most God-based religions—and the 4 truths should never be understood as one. They do not represent “truth claims” that we, on becoming a Buddhist, must assent to, whether religiously or intellectually. This likely confusion lies in the word “truth” (*sacca*). As with many Indian terms—more so with early Buddhist terminology—we need to appreciate the polysemy of many of its key terms. [4.4.5]

4.0.2.2 The word *sacca* not only means “truth,” but it also means “real,” especially as “true reality, as against “virtual reality.” We know, for example, that a mirage is real all right, but what we see or experience of a mirage does not really exist, but a trickery of space, heat, light and perception. We can, then, speak of the “4 true realities” (*catu,sacca*) that the Buddha fully and finally understands on the night of the great awakening.

4.0.2.3 The Buddha makes no claims that the 4 truths are *his* truths, or that *he* is a divine agent or prophet of any kind. However, we do not see any other religions or system in human history that has formulated such a succinct understanding of the meaning and purpose of life like those embodied in the 4 noble truths. In this sense, these truths—in terms of discovery and formulation—are uniquely or peculiarly

³¹ See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.

³² On dependent ending, see **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (19.3.2).

“Buddhist.” The technical term here for this is *sāmukkaṃsa* or *sāmukkaṃsika*, that is, “it is the Dharma teaching unique to the buddhas, namely, suffering, its arising, its ending, the path.”³³ [8.2].

4.0.2.4 The 4 noble truths may be teachings unique or peculiar to the Buddha(s), but its veracity and validity apply to all alike, Buddhist or not. Historically, these truths are not even “Buddhist,” which is a modern category. **The Dhamma Niyāma Sutta** (A 3.134) records the open declaration of this truth by the Buddha himself:

Bhikshus, whether there is the arising of tathagatas [buddhas thus come] or not, this element remains [is fixed], the fixedness of things, the order of things, that	
all formations are unsatisfactory ...	<i>sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā</i>
all formations are impermanent ...	<i>sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā</i>
all dharmas [principles behind all things] are non-self. ³⁴	<i>sabbe dhammā anattā</i>

4.0.2.5 This third line refers to the law of conditionality (*paccayatā*), the natural order of causes and effects.³⁵ Everything in this universe exists or occurs as the results (plural) of series and networks of causes and effects. Due to the limit of the powers of our own minds to accommodate such a gargantuan process of events, we usually only choose to see a particular event or aspect of an event and see “that” as the cause or effect of things. The point is that nothing arises from a single cause or produces a single effect. All events in the universe are, in some way, connected with one another—this is called “change” or “impermanence.”

4.0.2.6 It also means that no abiding entity called a “soul” or whatever is found either *within* the 5 aggregates (our mind-body being) [4.1.1(8)] or *without* it, such as the view that “the self is the world” (*so attā so loko*).³⁶ In other words, we can only conclude that *sabbe dhammā anattā* means that “all dharmas (phenomena *and* the principles behind their conditionality) are non-self.” Nirvana, as we will see, does not fit anywhere in such a notion.

4.0.2.7 As Buddhists, we are simply committed to working to “practise the Dharma in accordance to the Dharma” (*dhammānudhamma,paṭipatti*), that is, following the Buddha’s Dharma (as teaching) for the sake of seeing the real dharma (true reality).³⁷ Dharma, in the former sense, is that formulations and explications of the truths, but these are not dogmas, but prescriptions for us to test, to “come and see” (*ehi,passika*).³⁸ Dharma, in the latter sense, is true reality, which when directly seen brings about our awakening and liberation. Thus, any Buddhist teaching should be seen directed to the truths of suffering and its ending³⁹ [8.1].

³³ *Yā buddhānaṃ sāmukkaṃsika dhammadesanā, taṃ pakāsesi dukkhaṃ samudayaṃ nirodhaṃ maggaṃ*. That is, only the Buddhas discover, formulate and teach them: V 1:16, 18, 2:156; D 1:110, 148; M 1:380; A 3:184, 4:186, 5:194; DA 1:277 (explained) = AA 4:101 (ad A 4:186); MA 3:92,9 = UA 283,13: Comys resolve it as *sāmaṃ ukkaṃsika*, “drawn up or raised by oneself”; ThaA 137; PvA 38, 195; VvA 50. See **(Dasaka) Uttiya S** (A 10.95,3.1) n, SD 44.13.

³⁴ See SD 26.8 (1).

³⁵ See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.

³⁶ *So attā so loko*: as in **Pārileyya S** (S 22.81/3.98 f), SD 6.1; **Puñṇāma S** (S 22.82/3:182 f), SD 17.11; **Atta Loko S** (S 24.3/3:204 f), SD 97.13. In other suttas—such as **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,15), SD 3.13—we see the form, *so loko so attā*, “the world is the self.” The two forms are prob synonymous since they refer to identity of “self” and “world.”

³⁷ On *dhammānudhamma,paṭipatti*, see **(Sotāpatti-y)Aṅga S** (S 55.50) SD 70.1(1) & **(Sotāpatti) Phala S** (S 55.55,2 (4)) + SD 3.3(4.1) (2(4)).

³⁸ On *ehi,passika*, see SD 15.9 (2.4).

³⁹ **Anurādha S** (S 22.86/119), SD 21.13.

4.0.2.8 Traditionally, then, what the Buddha directly sees is true reality, what he teaches to us, and what liberates us from suffering are all called by the same name: **the Dharma or dharma**, the most polysemic word in all Buddhism. Here, for our purposes in our spiritual quest for nobleness, it is sufficient to usefully limit its senses to those of “true reality,” “teaching” and “way to awakening.”⁴⁰

4.1 THE LISTS OF SUFFERINGS

4.1.1 Sutta list of sufferings. A key passage in the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta defines the first truth—the noble truth that is suffering—as a list of these 8 sufferings:

- (1) birth is suffering,
- (2) decay [old age] is suffering,
- [] [disease is suffering,]⁴¹
- (3) death is suffering,
- (4) grief, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair are suffering,⁴²
- (5) to be with the unpleasant is suffering,⁴³
- (6) to be without the pleasant is suffering,⁴⁴
- (7) not to get what one desires is suffering,
- (8) —in short, the 5 aggregates of clinging⁴⁵ are suffering. [§5]

4.1.2 The 8 sufferings. In the Chinese Mahāyāna texts, this list (including “disease,” but excluding “grief, lamentation, etc”) are called “the 8 sufferings” (*aṣṭa,duḥkhatāḥ*). Buddhaghosa lists **the 8 occasions invoking urgency** (*aṭṭha saṃvega,vatthu*), as follows: birth (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), sickness (*vyādhi*), death (*maraṇa*), suffering of loss (*apāya,dukkha*), suffering of the past rooted in the round of rebirth (*atīte vaṭṭa,mūlaka dukkha*), suffering of the future rooted in the round of rebirth (*anāgate vaṭṭa,mūlaka dukkha*), and suffering of the present rooted in the search for food (*paccuppanne āhāra,pariyetṭhi,mūlaka dukkha*) (Vism 4.63/135).

4.1.3 The 3 kinds of suffering

SD 1.1(4.1)

(Sāriputta) Dukkha Sutta

The (Sāriputta) Discourse on Suffering | S 38.14/4:259

Traditional: S 4.4.1.14 = Saṃyutta 4, Saḷāyatana Samy 4, Paṭhama Paṇṇāsaka 1, Jambukhādaka Vg 14

Theme: The 3 kinds of suffering [unsatisfactoriness]

3 “Suffering, suffering’ (*dukkha*), avuso Sāriputta, so it is said. What, avuso Sāriputta, is suffering?”

3.2 “There are 3 kinds of suffering (*dukkhatā*), avuso, namely:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| (1) bodily suffering [the suffering of pain], | <i>dukkha,dukkhatā</i> |
| (2) the suffering that is the formations, | <i>saṅkhāra,dukkhatā</i> |
| (3) suffering due to change. | <i>vipariṇāma,dukkhatā</i> |

⁴⁰ See DEB respectively: dhamma (2.1), dhamma (6) and (dhamma (2.7).

⁴¹ Only in the Vinaya & Saṃyutta versions; not mentioned in Comys.

⁴² Found in most MSS but not in Be and Ce.

⁴³ “The unpleasant,” *appiya*, also tr “what one loves not.”

⁴⁴ “The loved,” *piya*, also tr “what one loves.”

⁴⁵ *Pañc’upadāna-k,khandha*, viz, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness (S 3:47; Vbh 1) & SD 17. What is briefly mentioned here is elaborated in the second discourse, **Anatta,lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59), SD 1.2.

These, avuso, are the 3 kinds of suffering.

4 But, avuso, there is a way for the full understanding of these 3 kinds of suffering.

5 What, avuso, is the way for the full understanding of these 3 kinds of suffering?

5.2 It is this very noble eightfold path, avuso, that is the way for the full understanding of these 3 kinds of suffering, that is to say:

(1) right view,	<i>sammā diṭṭhi</i>
(2) right thought [right intention],	<i>sammā saṅkappa</i>
(3) right speech,	<i>sammā vācā</i>
(4) right action,	<i>sammā kammantā</i>
(5) right livelihood,	<i>sammā ājīva</i>
(6) right effort,	<i>sammā vāyāma</i>
(7) right mindfulness,	<i>sammā sati</i>
(8) right stillness [concentration].	<i>sammā samādhi</i>

This, avuso, is the noble eightfold path that is the way for the full understanding of these 3 kinds of suffering.”

6 “Good is the path, avuso! Good is this way for the full understanding of suffering!⁴⁶
And, avuso, it is indeed sufficient for the sake of diligence.”

— evaṃ —

4.1.3.1 The (Sāriputta) Dukkha Sutta (S 38.14) categorizes suffering into 3 kinds:

- (1) “physical suffering,” or, the suffering as pain, that is, affective suffering (due mostly to physical) (*dukkha, dukkhatā*, lit “the suffering of pain”),
- (2) “suffering due to change,” that is, suffering as change, or temporal suffering (due to the uncertainty or ending of pleasant feeling) (*vipariṇāma, dukkhatā*), and
- (3) “suffering due to formations,” suffering as conditions, or existential suffering, that is, the inherent inadequacy of conditioned existence, that is, of the 3 worlds (the sense-world, the form-world, and the formless world), on account of rise and fall of phenomena (*saṅkhāra, dukkhatā*).⁴⁷

4.1.3.2 The 1st is bodily pain and mental displeasure, arising from past karma and present conditions; the 2nd is pleasant feeling, which brings suffering when it ends, that is, suffering arising from change, and the third is all conditioned phenomena of the 3 worlds:⁴⁸ all existence is oppressed by the rise and fall, the unsatisfactoriness, and the non-self nature of events.

In the above list [§5], **the 3 main categories of suffering** are as follows:

- (1) birth, decay, disease, death, grief etc;
- (2) not to be with the pleasant, to be without the pleasant; and
- (3) the 5 aggregates.

⁴⁶ *Bhaddako avuso maggo bhaddikā paṭipadā etasam dukkhatam pariññāya.*

⁴⁷ D 33,1.10(27)/3:216; S 38.14/4:259; S 45.165/5:56; Vism 16.34-5; Nett 12. See also Gethin, 1998:60-62.

⁴⁸ The 3 worlds are the sense world (*kāma, loka*), the form world (*rūpa, loka*), and the formless world (*arūpa, loka*). See **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (5.2) & **The person in Buddhism**, SD 29.6b (7.2). For details, see **Viññāṇa-ṭṭhiti**, SD 23.14.

The way to end suffering, “in short” (*saṅkhittena*)—that is, *essentially*—lies in a full understanding of the 5 aggregates.⁴⁹

The 3 kinds of suffering in some detail are explained in **the Visuddhi,magga**.⁵⁰ [6.1.1]

4.1.4 The 4 kinds of sufferings

4.1.4.1 We can also speak of a set of **4 kinds of suffering** (or 4 sufferings)—birth, decay, disease and death—which are often found listed as the first four in the lists of sufferings in the Sutta [eg §5]. These are the sufferings or painful realities that characterize all worldly life. In other words, they are physical suffering, that is, *dukkha,dukkha*, or the suffering of the body.

4.1.4.2 In other words, these 4 sufferings are actually only the manifestations or symptoms of real suffering. According to the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta, the suffering that we should really deal with is that of the 5 aggregates (*pañc’upādāna-k,khandhā dukkhā*) [§5(8)]. These are the sufferings that are close to the very roots of suffering—craving and ignorance. When we understand the nature of the 5 aggregates, they help us loosen our clinging to the world, and the world’s grip on us. Mental cultivation and insight wisdom finally awaken and liberate us from real suffering.

4.1.4.3 Those liberated in this way are also freed from birth, decay, disease and death. We can call these 4 sufferings “symptomatic suffering(s)” because they are only the signs and symptoms of real suffering. Then, we call “suffering due to change” (*vipariṇāma,dukkha*)—the second of the 3 kinds of suffering [4.1.3]—“emotional suffering” or “imagined suffering,” because these are our own reactions to loss and changes in ourself and in others (including our mood changes), in things and the environment.

4.1.4.4 The arhats—because they are fully awakened to true reality—are free from real suffering. They are free from birth, decay, disease and death, in the sense none of these symptoms affect their minds in any way. Only their bodies (what remains of their 5 aggregates), because they are physical, continue regenerating itself (in this last life), continue to decay, sometimes fall sick, and finally dies (“final” in the literal sense, since there is no more rebirth; hence, no more redeath).

When we understand this, we have a good idea why nirvana—the final state of the Buddha and the arhats—are also “described” (for the convenience of the understanding of the unawakened) as being the opposites of birth, decay, disease and death—nirvana is thus non-birth, non-decay, non-disease and non-death, that is to say [cf 4.2.2.3]:

<i>ajāta</i>	or <i>abhūta</i>	“birth-free”	being unborn, being free of rebirth, hence, no redeath;
<i>avyādhi</i>	or <i>ajarā</i>	“decay-free”	not subject to change, bodily or mental, or disease and dis-ease;
<i>asoka</i>	or <i>abhaya</i>	“fear-free”	without craving, there is no fear, nor danger from the world;
<i>amara</i>	or <i>amata</i>	“death-free”	without rebirth, there is no redeath, the cycle is finally broken.

The most popular of these terms for nirvana are *ajāti, ajarā, abhaya* and *amata*.⁵¹

Further discussions follow [4.2.2].

⁴⁹ See eg *Pañca-k,khandha*, SD 17.

⁵⁰ Vism 16.34 f/499,14-21.

⁵¹ M 26,12 (SD 1.11); S 45.7/5:8, 47.41/5:184; U 8.3/80; It 2.2.6/37 f; Tha 219; Thī 512.

4.2 JĀTI AND ITS CONTEXT.

4.2.1 Jāti refers to rebirth itself. In the early after-centuries, Buddhist scholastics and commentators tend to interpret *jāti* as gestation or as the process of being born, that is, the pain which we bear in our mother's womb up to the moment of being born. Scholars have noted that the Sarvāstivādins have a propensity to interpret *jāti, dukkha* as the suffering in a mother's womb and at birth, despite the fact that the original concept of *jāti* is found in **Vasubandhu**.⁵²

It is clear from the early texts, however, that *jāti* (birth) generally refers to *rebirth* itself. This is clearly evident from two key early suttas, **the Mahā, satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22) and **the Sammā, ditṭhi Sutta** (M 9), thus:

And what, bhikshus, is birth?

The birth, becoming, descending (into a womb), (arising,)⁵³ generating, manifesting of the aggregates, obtaining the sense-bases in various beings, in various groups of beings, here and there—this, bhikshus, is called birth.⁵⁴ (D 22,18/2:305), SD 13.2, = (M 9,26/1:50), SD 14.1

4.2.2 Jāti jarā vyādhi maraṇa

4.2.2.1 Toshifumi Gotō, in his 2005 study,⁵⁵ shows that early Buddhist conception of “the 4 sufferings”—birth, decay [ageing], disease and death—that is, the first four in the list of 8 or 9 sufferings, closely parallels Yājñavalkya's characterization of the *Ātman* [the abiding “self”].⁵⁶ Comparing the four attributes of the *ātman* in Yājñavalkya doctrine, as found in the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad,⁵⁷ namely, *ajāra* (undecaying), *amāra* (undying), *abhāya* (fearless) and *amṛta* (immortal). [4.1.4]

At a glance, these four words appear to be colourful qualifiers without any discernible difference in meaning. In the Buddha's time (and before that), however, these words “express the essential qualities of the *Ātman* which transcends this very fear (*bhaya*) [the fear of death]” (Gotō 2005:84). Indeed, such notions as the *Ātman* or eternal soul is to overcome the fear of death, and of the after-death state, just as the Almighty God-idea is used to overcome psychological insecurity with God serving as a protective “heavenly father.”⁵⁸ Hence, the *Ātman* makes one “fearless” (or, unfearing, fearfree) (*abhāya*).

4.2.2.2 According to the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, when a person attains Brahman, he becomes *amṛta*. Although here *amṛta* means “immortal,” it does not mean that someone alive who does not die on earth (for which the word *amāra*, “undying” is used), but that there is no more death at all. This is because *punar-mṛtyú* (repeated death in a heavenly world resulting in rebirth on earth, or “redeath”) is

⁵² See eg Muroji 1966:181-196; Gotō 2005:81-85.

⁵³ *Nibbatti*, so Ke & M 3:249.

⁵⁴ *Yā tesam tesam sattānam tamhi tamhi satta, nikāye jāti sañjāti Okkanta [nibbatti]* abhinibbati, khandhānam pātubhāvo āyatanānam paṭilābho, ayam vuccati jāti.* *Ke & M 3:249.

⁵⁵ “Yājñavalkya's characterization of the *ātman* and the four kinds of suffering in early Buddhism.”

⁵⁶ The Upaniṣads describe the *Ātman*, thus: “This immense. unborn self is none other than the one consisting of perception here among the vital functions (*prāṇa*). There, in that space within the heart, he lies—the controller of all, the lord of all, the ruler of all!” (*Sa vā eṣa mahān aja ātmā yo'yaṃ vijñānamayaḥ prāṇeṣu. Ya eṣo'ntar hṛdaya ākāśas tasmīṃ śete, sarvasya vaśī, sarvasyeśānaḥ, sarvasyādhipatiḥ*, BĀU 4.4.22).

⁵⁷ BĀU 4.4.30-31; also BĀU (Mādhyandina ed) 3.8.8, amongst other negated qualifiers of *etād... akṣāram*, “this imperishable one.” See Gotō 2005:72-74.

⁵⁸ On Buddhism and the God-idea, see **Te, vija S** (D 13), SD 1.8 (5).

transcended. In this case, according to Upaniṣads, Ātman is absorbed into Brāhman.⁵⁹ The term *amāra* (“undying”), however, is not attested anywhere in Vedic literature, except in later literature.⁶⁰

In philosophical terms, these two terms—*amata* (“immortal, death-free”) and *amara* (“undying”)—probably reflect the way that Vedic thinkers and the early believers understood of the Buddha’s realization of *nirvana*. Evidently, the Buddha consciously uses these terms as qualifiers of *nirvana* so that the brahmins and believers of the Vedic system—his main intended audience—could understand his teachings through conceptual familiarity. Other similar expressions include the teaching being referred to as “the door of immortality” (*amata, dvāra*).⁶¹

4.2.2.3 Gotō concludes his 2005 essay by showing the correspondence between the Vedic and the Buddhist terms, thus:⁶²

<u>Upaniṣad qualifiers for Ātman</u>			<u>Buddhist terms for suffering</u>	
<i>ajāra</i>	“undecaying”	→	<i>jāti</i>	birth, rebirth
<i>amāra</i>	“undying”	→	<i>jarā</i>	ageing, decay
<i>abhāya</i>	“fearless”	→	<i>vyādhi</i>	disease
<i>amṛta</i>	“immortal”	→	<i>maraṇa</i>	death

Here, we see how the Upanisadic adjective *ajāra* (undecaying) is related to the Pali noun *jarā* (decay), by referring to opposite qualities. Similarly, the Upanisadic *amāra* (undying) (used almost exclusively as an epithet of Ātman) is related to the Pali *maraṇa* (death) in reflecting contrary qualities. The Upanisadic *amṛta* (immortal) points to the opposite of the Pali *jāti* (birth, rebirth). The Upanisadic *abhāya* (fearless), however, is replaced by the Pali *vyādhi* (disease), “a more concrete notion for our usual life” (Gotō 2005:84). **Gotō** concludes:

The conception of life and world in early Buddhism have thus inherited the reflections on birth and death in the old Upaniṣads, and further explicated them. The predominance of the pessimistic view of life in early Buddhism⁶³ can be explained from this historical background; it is rooted in the negative discussions about re-dying (*punar-mṛtyú*) in the heavenly world since the Brāhmaṇa period.

The teaching of Gotama Buddha, which aims to deliver the ordinary people from their concrete suffering, tends to observe phenomena of human life more realistically than his forerunners and endeavors to elucidate the causality of existence in Saṃsāra without admitting the existence of “the eternal subject of existence,” ie Ātman, thus resulting in the doctrine of Pratīyasamupāda. (Gotō 2005:85)

4.2.2.4 By the time of the Buddha, mystical speculations and religious philosophy had developed for over a millennia, and these traditions were widespread, well known and well respected. Most of the great

⁵⁹ BĀU (Mādhyandina ed) 4.4.8 f (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 14.7.2.8 f), BAU (Kāṇva ed) 4.4.6 f. Gotō 2005:75 f, 80.

⁶⁰ Eg Manu, smṛti 2.148 = Viṣṇu, smṛti 30.46 (*sā* [scil *jāti*] *ajar’amarā*); in the meaning of “god” (Baudhāyana-Dharma, sūtra 4.8.7).

⁶¹ Mv 1.5.7 (V 1:5 f) = D 2:39 = M 1:168 f = S 1:137 f; It 80; Vv 1035/5.14.27. See Sakamoto-Gotō, JIBS 41,1 1992: 471 n2. See also CPD: *amata-dvāra* & *amata-nibbāna*. On *amata, dvāra*, see **Cūḷa Gopālaka S** (M 34,12/1:227,11*), which Comy glosses as the “noble path’ (*ariya, magga*)..

⁶² This set of the four words occurs also in Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3:8,8 (Mādhyandina ed, lacking in Kāṇva ed) among other negated qualifiers of *etād ... akṣaram*, “this imperishable one.”

⁶³ By “pessimistic” here, Gotō is evidently referring to the recurring early Buddhist statements on the universality of suffering, etc, not that the Buddha teaches a negative life-view without happiness or salvation: see Gotō 2005 §8.

sages—such as those from whom arose the Upaniṣads—were recluses living apart from society, but greatly influenced the wise, wealthy and powerful. With the rise of urbanism, such teachings were taken up by more worldly specialists—especially the brahmins—who used such ideas to introduce their own teachings and rituals for the purpose of controlling the masses, especially the wealthy and powerful, and to attract funds and services of society. Many knew such undercurrents, but few could do anything about them. The Buddha was surely the foremost of those who clearly and consistently spoke against these false ideas and wrong ways.

To reach out to the masses, especially the wiser and the readier, he employs languages and figures that are familiar to his audience, both the brahmins and believers in the Vedic system, and those against the brahmins and their ways. In doing so, he easily and effectively reaches out to them with his teachings.⁶⁴ In many ways, the Buddha has to be innovative to counter and correct the highly influential and falsely profound mystical talk of imaginative visions which impress the ignorant and gullible masses of his days and even today.

4.2.2.5 One of the Buddha’s favourite skillful means is to demystify the religious garble of the brahminical teachings into the plain language of the people,⁶⁵ and demythologize the beguiling rituals into beneficial practices for personal cultivation and self-reliance.⁶⁶ Above all, the Buddha has to expose the ideologies of karma and dharma as brahminical self-aggrandisement and class exploitation.⁶⁷

Karma, declares the Buddha, is not right ritual action, but personal accountability in doing good and avoiding bad.⁶⁸ Dharma is not social hierarchy to being ritual and mental slaves to the brahmins and their false faith,⁶⁹ but reciprocal social responsibility,⁷⁰ and above all, working for a good society that allows its members to become true individuals capable of self-awakening to the highest happiness here and now.⁷¹

4.3 SAMUDAYA AND NIRODHA. The terms *samudaya* [§§6, 10] and *nirodha* [§§7, 11] are commonly translated respectively as “origin” and “ending, cessation.” However, from the teachings of this Sutta, which underlies the Buddha’s Teaching as a whole, they are better rendered as “arising” and “non-arising.” **Payutto** makes an important note:

Generally speaking, the word ‘cease’ [or ‘end’] means to do away with something which has already arisen, or the stopping of something which has already begun. However, *nirodha* in the teaching of Dependent Origination (as also in *dukkhanirodha*, the third of the noble truths) means **non-arising**, or non-existence, of something because the cause of its arising is done away with. For example, the phrase ‘when *avijjā* is *nirodha*, *saṅkhārā* are also *nirodha*,’ which is usually taken to mean, “with the cessation of ignorance, volitional impulse ceases,” in fact means that ‘when there is no ignorance, or no arising of ignorance, or when there is no longer any problem with ignorance, there is no volitional impulses, volitional impulses do not arise, or there is no longer any problem from volitional impulses.’ It does not mean that ignorance already arisen must be done away with before the volitional impulses which have already arisen will also be done away.

⁶⁴ See “Did the Buddha ‘borrow’ ideas from the Upaniṣads?” SD 6.15 (5); **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3), SD 21.3 (3).

⁶⁵ Eg the ignoble and the noble quests, **Ariya Pariyesanā** (M 26,5-13), SD 1.11.

⁶⁶ On the true “brahmin” as the arhat, see Sn 620-647 in **Vāsetṭha S** (M 98 = Sn 3.9), SD 37.1.

⁶⁷ **Aggañña S** (D 27), SD 2.19; **Te,vijja S** (D 13), SD1.8.

⁶⁸ **Vāsetṭha S** (M 98 = Sn 3.9), esp Sn 612-619 + SD 37.1 (1.3).

⁶⁹ **Assalāyana S** (M 93), SD 40a.2.

⁷⁰ **Sigāl’ovāda S** (D 31), SD 4.1.

⁷¹ **Esukārī S** (M 96), SD 37.9.

Where *nirodha* should be rendered as **cessation** is when it is used in reference to the natural way of things, or the nature of compounded things. In this sense it is a synonym for the words *bhaṅga* (breaking up), *anicca* (transient), *khaya* (cessation) or *vaya* (decay). For example, in the Pali it is given: *imaṃ kho bhikkhave tisso vedanā aniccā saṅkhatā paṭiccasamuppannā khaya-dhammā vayadhammā virāgadhammā nirodhadhammā*—“Bhikshus, these three kinds of feelings are naturally impermanent, compounded, dependently arisen, transient, subject to decay, dissolution, fading and cessation” [S 4:214]. (All factors occurring in the Dependent Origination cycle have the same nature.) In this instance, the meaning is “all conditioned things (*saṅkhāra*), having arisen, must inevitably decay and fade according to supporting factors.” There is no need [here] to try to stop them, they cease of themselves.

As for *nirodha* in the third noble truth (or the Dependent Origination cycle in cessation mode), although it also describes a natural process, its emphasis is on practical considerations. It is translated in two ways in the Visuddhimagga [Vism 16.18/495]. One way traces the etymology to *ni* (without) + *rodha* (prison, confine[s], obstacle, wall, impediment), thus rendering the meaning as “without impediment,” “free from confinement.” This is explained as “free of impediments, that is, the confinement of *saṃsāra*.” Another definition traces the origin to *anuppāda*, meaning “**not arising**,” [and goes on to say “*nirodha* here does not mean *bhaṅga*, breaking up and dissolution.”]⁷²

Therefore, translating *nirodha* as “cessation,” although not entirely wrong, is nevertheless not entirely accurate. On the other hand, there is no other word which comes so close to the essential meaning as “cessation.” However, we should understand what is meant by the term.

(Payutto 1994:106-108; slightly edited with emphases added)

4.4 TRANSLATING *ARIYA, SACCA*

4.4.1 *Ariya*. In Brahmanism, the term *ariya* (Skt *ārya*) refers to the “noble” people who migrated into India, while in Buddhism it is used in a spiritual sense. The Buddha wisely uses this well-known word, but gives it a new meaning, reflecting his own vision, and to encourage others to turn away from a racially delimiting for a spiritually liberating life.

4.4.2 “Why noble?” In the first discourse, each of the 4 truths is called an *ariya, sacca*, a “noble-truth.” Although the popular translation “noble truth” is a possible meaning, British philologist **K R Norman** thinks that it is “one of the least important, and ... one of the least likely.”⁷³ The commentators interpret it as: “truth of the noble one or noble ones” or “truth for a noble one,” that is, “truth that will make one a noble,” or, sometimes, “noble truth,”⁷⁴ or the “Noble Ones’ Truths.”⁷⁵ Here, the “noble ones” are those who are partially or fully awakened: streamwinners, once-returners, non-returners and arhats, along with the Buddha.

Strictly speaking, it is problematic to speak of a truth as being “noble,” as such a quality properly refers to living beings. It is more meaningful, for example, to speak of the “noble ones,” who are so called precisely because they have gained insight into these truths. While Norman prefers the translation,

⁷² This bracketed reading is untraceable in the Visuddhi, magga.

⁷³ Norman 1990:13; also 1982, 1997:16.

⁷⁴ Eg DA 2:542; AA 2:145, 281; SnA 1:278, 300; UA 283; ItA 1:62, 85, 118; ThaA 1:205, 3:49; VvA 215; VbhA 84 f, 122.

⁷⁵ Norman 1990:12.

“truth of the noble one (the Buddha),” he accepts that the term may be deliberately polysemous. If we speak of “truth for a noble,” by extension, we can also speak of “ennobling truth.”⁷⁶

4.4.3 “Realities.” Rupert Gethin, another British scholar, comments, “The word *satya* (Pali *sacca*) can certainly mean truth, but it might equally be rendered as ‘real’ or ‘actual thing,’” hence, we have “4 ‘true things,’ or ‘realities’” (Gethin 1998:60). This explanation is especially helpful because the first discourse speaks of the truths as follows: the first is “to be understood”; the second is “to be abandoned”; the third is “to be realized”; and the fourth is “to be cultivated.”

Note that the second truth is a *truth* or *reality* to abandon: it is not a truth to be abandoned. What is to be abandoned here is *craving*, as a result of which we are *ennobled*; hence, an “ennobling truth.” On the other hand, we must be careful not to describe craving itself as “ennobling.” However, they are certainly truths that the noble saints have realized, or having realized (according to their functions), we become noble saints. Hence, they are “the realities *for the noble one(s)*.”

4.4.4 “Action plan.” Peter Harvey notes, “It is also apparent that these Ennobling Realities are not something that Buddhists should respond to with ‘belief.’ To ‘believe’ them is to mishandle them, rather than to treat them appropriately by respectively understanding, abandoning, realizing and developing them.” (2007: 320). The 4 noble truths are, in short, an “action plan” for a practising Buddhist.

4.4.5 Pali polysemy and modern English idiom

4.4.5.1 Brian Levman, in his PhD thesis remarks of **Pali polysemy**:

... the phonological fluidity of the lingua franca is mirrored in the richness of its semantic fabric. One word could and did have several meanings Nevertheless, to what extent the polysemy can be used to elucidate the meaning of the early Buddhist texts is problematical. We have seen that the Buddha and his disciples were not adverse to this phenomenon of semantic polysemy. Unlike the Vedic tradition, where words were fixed and absolute sonic effusions of the absolute, language in the early Buddhist suttas mirrors the interdependent nature of life; there was nothing absolute about the meaning and one used words in full awareness of their conventional applicability and usefulness in describing intergrading phenomena—like milk, cream, curds, or the various kinds of self ... without being misled by their supposed reality. (2014:465)

4.4.5.2 Modern English tends to be narrow and exacting when defining technical usages of terms, or even in the usage of words in reference to certain ideas. Amongst the users of ancient Indian languages—the teachers and compilers of the early Buddhist texts, to be more specific—however, it is not uncommon for them to be aware of more than one meaning to a word. Those who use such words are aware of their **polysemy**, and are conscious of all the meanings simultaneously as they use it.⁷⁷

Often, the more “exact” we try to be in our translation of a word from a certain context, the more likely we are to render it so narrowly that it fails to reflect the meaning or usage in other contexts. The translation of *ariya, saccāni* as “noble truths” is one such term. When we use this translation, we are excluding all their other senses. In fact, this translation—while not wrong in itself—is probably the least important of all the possible meanings.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Further see (Khandha) Dukkha S (S 22.104/3:158 f), SD 42.20 (2).

⁷⁷ On polysemy in Pali, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2). See also Dh 97 @SD 10.6 (1.2.1) & the “Open door” verse, SD 12.2 (3).

⁷⁸ See Norman 1990:12 f. c

4.4.5.3 It helps, then, for us to be aware of the polysemy of Pali terms,⁷⁹ as a rule—and to simultaneously apply them as we use them in their contexts. This, of course, means that we should be well aware of their usages and the nature of the teachings that they convey. This does not mean that all the senses apply all the time. The skill of a good sutta commentator or Dharma teacher is his ability to tease the proper or intended sense of the term or passage. Indeed, when we use an English translation—especially when it seems to be an exacting one—we need to be able to see in between the words despite themselves.

The translation “**noble truth**” is too well known and familiar to go away. Indeed, its simplicity is immediately appealing to the public or beginner, than, say, “ennobling truths,” or even “the noble ones’ truths.” Even technically, it is still acceptable, as it is a literal translation of *ariya,sacca* as “noble-truth.” In normal English, it is acceptable to dispense with the hyphen (or it could stay, if we are sticklers to technicality). We should nevertheless be fully aware of the helpful explanations and definitions scholars have provided us with above. We simply need to define our terms and choose the simplest, sharpest razor there is to cut through ignorance and suffering.⁸⁰

5 The nature of the truths

5.1 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF REALITY

5.1.1 The details of the Buddha’s spiritual experience in terms of the 4 noble truths are recounted in such suttas as **the Bhaya Bherava Sutta** (M 4)⁸¹ and **the Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36).⁸² These truths are first expounded to the world at Benares (**Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta**, M 141)⁸³ and taught throughout his 45-year ministry as “the teaching special to the Buddhas” (M 56).⁸⁴ Both **the Tathā Sutta 1** (S 56.20) and **the Tathā Sutta 2** (S 56.27) declare that “the 4 noble truths are true, not false, not otherwise,”⁸⁵ but the latter adds: “therefore, they are called ‘noble truths’.”⁸⁶

5.1.2 The noble truths are concisely presented in such texts as **the Sammā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (M 9),⁸⁷ and in detail in **the Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 141). Sāriputta’s unique presentation is recorded in **the Mahā Hatthi, padôpama Sutta** (M 28),⁸⁸ 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 4 noble truths” (M 28).

5.1.3 The Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta fully and clearly explains the functions of each of the 4 noble truths, thus:

⁷⁹ See SD 10.16 (1.3.1).

⁸⁰ **Occam’s razor** or **Ockham’s razor** (Lat *lex parsimoniae*) is the law of parsimony, economy or succinctness. It is a principle urging us to select from among competing hypotheses and ideas that which makes the fewest assumptions and thereby offers the simplest explanation of the effect. On how we define words or give them meaning, see **Saññā**, SD 17.4 (2.3).

⁸¹ M 4,31/1:23.

⁸² M 36,42/1:249 (SD 1.11).

⁸³ M 141,2/3:248.

⁸⁴ M 56,18/1:380.

⁸⁵ *Imāni kho bhikkhave cattāri ariya,saccāni tathāni avitathāni anaññathāni*, S 56.20/5:430 f = S 56.27/5:435.

⁸⁶ **Tathā S 1:** *Tasmā ariya,saccānī ti vuccanti* (S 56.27/5:435).

⁸⁷ M 9,14-18/1:48 f.

⁸⁸ M 28/1:184-191.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------|----------------|
| (1) The first noble truth, | that is, suffering | is to be <i>understood</i> . | [§9] |
| (2) The second noble truth, | that is, the arising of suffering | is to be <i>abandoned</i> . | [§10] |
| (3) The third noble truth, | that is, the ending of suffering (nirvana) | is to be <i>realized</i> . | [§11] |
| (4) The fourth noble truth, | that is, the way to the ending of suffering | is to be <i>cultivated</i> . | [§12; 6.2.2.1] |

5.1.4 The Sutta is also unique in presenting **the 3 phases** (*ti,parivaṭṭa*) of each of the truths, namely:

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| (1) the knowledge (ie, understanding) of the truth, | <i>sacca,ñāṇa</i> |
| (2) the knowledge of the task to be done regarding each truth, and | <i>kicca,ñāṇa</i> |
| (3) the knowledge of the accomplishment of these tasks. | <i>kata,ñāṇa</i> |

5.1.5 When these 3 phases are applied to each of the 4 truths, they total as the 12 aspects or modes (*dvādas'ākāra*). The commentarial version of these phases is called **"the 3 good truths"** (*saddhamma*):

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| (1) the true Dharma as <u>theory</u> | <i>pariyatti.saddhamma</i> | (textual aspect), |
| (2) the true Dharma as <u>practice</u> | <i>paṭipatti.saddhamma</i> | (moral virtue and meditation), and |
| (3) the true Dharma as <u>realization</u> | <i>paṭivedha.saddhamma</i> | (sainthood and freedom). ⁸⁹ [6.2] |

5.2 TRUTH AND REALITY

5.2.1 The truth "that is"

5.2.1.1 "Truth" (*sacca*) here refers to a formulation of the reality (*tathā*) that exists in and around us. It is not merely a formulation, but our apprehension of the nature of reality. At first, we apprehend it theoretically; then, through practice, and finally, realizing the true nature of reality for ourselves.

5.2.1.2 In doctrinal terms, the 4 noble truths are a formulation of true reality—along with the attending wisdom and freedom—that the Buddha realizes on his awakening. I have translated *ariya,sacca* as **"the noble truth that is ..."** rather than the more familiar "the noble truth of ..." because they are not merely theoretical statements, such as "the theory of relativity" (which refers to an impersonal observation). But the noble truths are *healing truths*. Above all, the fourth noble truth is that of the way out of suffering, that is, the practice that leads to spiritual freedom.

5.2.1.3 The sense of **"that is"** here should be properly understood: it is not a disjunctive but a copula (equalizer). When we say "the noble truth that is suffering (*dukkha*)," it means that "noble truth = suffering," that is to say: the existence and reality of suffering *when understood* constitutes a knowing that enables us to that extent. It makes us see it for what it really is: we have experienced suffering, and thus understood it. It is just like saying, "the noble truth, that is, suffering," but it should be understood in this way. The same principle applies to the three noble truths with their respective functions.

⁸⁹ Here, these 3 good truths are applied to the progress of the saints of the path. Worldlings (the unawakened) who apply these 3 good truths, still need to attain the path, ie, attain at least streamwinning. See VA 225; AA 5.33; cf Nm 143 for the first two. For a variant, where the last 2 functions are inverted, see **Mahā Saḷ'āyatanika S** (M 149,-10.6/3:289) + SD 41.9 (2.4) & **Abhiññā S** A 4.251/2:246 f [A:B 5:254], SD 85.3.

5.2.2 Scholarly notes

5.2.2.1 This approach is supported by the difficulties resulting from taking these 4 realities as “truths of,” as made clear in this observation by **Analayo**:

A closer examination of the Pāli version of this first discourse brings to light a curiosity, as the discourse presents the second noble truth of the origin of *dukkha* as something that needs to be abandoned.⁹⁰ Yet what needs to be abandoned is the origin of *dukkha*, not the noble truth itself. Hence in this case it would seem possible that not only the qualification “noble,” but the whole expression “noble truth” may not have been part of the earliest version of this statement.

(Analayo, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya*, draft, 2006, ad M 3:348)⁹¹

5.2.2.2 For the phrase, *taṃ kho paṇ'idaṃ dukkha, samudayaṃ ariya, saccaṃ pahātabbaṃ*,⁹² Bodhi renders it as “this noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned” (S:B 1845). **Woodward** has earlier on noted, “but we must omit *ariya-saccaṃ*, otherwise the text would mean ‘the Ariyan truth about the arising of Ill is to be put away’” (S:W 5:358 n1). **Norman** adds that

what the Buddha said was that pain should be known, its origin given up, its cessation realized, and the path to its cessation practised. Woodward therefore did not go far enough. He should have suggested the removal of the word *ariya-saccaṃ* from all four items in the ‘gerundival’ set.”
(Norman 1982:385)

5.2.3 The truths as experience

Early Buddhism is a path to spiritual healing, awakening and freedom. In other words, it is a practical system where we seek to directly discover true reality, to which the Buddha himself has awakened. As reality can only be a personal experience, its expression or words are called a “truth.” The fourfold statement of the Buddha’s direct experience of reality is called *the 4 noble truths*, which is at best a theoretical statement pointing to the “realities” of suffering, its arising, its ending and the way to its ending.

Hence, the “truths” are simply *signboards*: they are the fourfold reality that we must work with. No matter how well defined the terminology may be, it is still not the experience. The name is not the thing named. For one who has experienced true reality, there is no need of words for it.

5.3 THE TRUTHS AND MEDICAL HEALTH

5.3.1 We all easily notice that the noble truths have a familiar sequence, reflecting that of medical formula or regime. In the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (S 56.11), we have the familiar “teaching” sequence of suffering → arising → ending → path. However, there is an ancient version of the formula which follows the “practice” sequence, found in **the Mahā Saḷāyatanika Sutta** (M 148) and other suttas, laid out thus: **suffering** → **arising** → **path** → **ending**. [6.2.2.2]

In both formulas, especially the older “practical” sequence of the Saḷāyatanika Sutta, we see a clear correlation with the sequence of medical treatment, thus:⁹³

⁹⁰ *Taṃ kho paṇ'idaṃ dukkha, samudayaṃ ariya, saccaṃ pahātabbaṃ* (S 56.11/5:422,12).

⁹¹ See also his important fn there.

⁹² S 56.11/5:422,12.

⁹³ See SD 10.16 (1.4.3.3).

<u>The noble truths</u>			<u>Medical treatment</u>
(1) suffering	(<i>dukkha</i>)	3 kinds [6.1.3]	disease
(2) arising	(<i>samudaya</i>)	craving	diagnosis
(3) path	(<i>magga</i>)	the eightfold path	prescription and treatment
(4) ending	(<i>nirodha</i>)	nirvana	cure and good health

5.3.2 There is no strong evidence that such a medical regime existed in ancient India, especially before the Buddha's time. Surely such a formula would be well known and recorded in some ancient tradition or text. As such, it is unlikely that the Buddha had borrowed this idea from outside. It is more likely that he has come up with this formula on his own.

That the Buddha would have easily come up with this practical sequence (or the theoretical one) is because he is himself familiar with medicine and medical health. The kshatriya or warrior clan, used to martial arts and battling, surely knew of health and healing methods, to treat their bodily wounds and mishaps.

Moreover, in both the Vinaya (eg, **the Bhesajja Khandha**) and⁹⁴ the suttas (eg, **the Sīvaka Sutta**, S 36.21),⁹⁵ we have accounts that evince a great familiarity with traditional medicine and medical health.⁹⁶

Important early Buddhist teachings, such as those of the 4 elements (earth, water, fire and wind) are the basis for traditional Indian and Asian medicine.⁹⁷ The early suttas also show a great familiarity with medical knowledge,⁹⁸ the human anatomy, especially the internal components of the human body.⁹⁹ And we also have accounts of the works of the greatest of the ancient Indian doctors, **Jīvaka**.¹⁰⁰

5.3.3 This is not surprising at all, since even extant Ayurvedic treatises stem from a later period, after the Buddha.¹⁰¹ Indeed, despite brahminical and non-Buddhist attempts to credit otherwise, modern scholars have shown that traditional Indian medicine is clearly rooted in Buddhist monastic medicine.¹⁰²

6 Mastery of the 4 noble truths

6.1 THE 3 TYPES OF SUFFERING

6.1.1 The (Sāriputta) Dukkha Sutta (S 38.14) categorizes suffering into 3 kinds:

- (1) affective suffering (due to physical and mental pain) (*dukkha, dukkhatā*, literally, “the suffering of suffering”),
- (2) temporal suffering or “suffering in change” (that is, due to the ending of pleasant feeling”) (*vipariṇāma, dukkhatā*), and

⁹⁴ Mv 6 = V 1:199-252.

⁹⁵ S 36.21 + SD 5.6 (1).

⁹⁶ On the Buddha as a “doctor,” see Sn 560; also SD 43.7 (2.2); also **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 63,5.2), SD 5.8. On early Buddhism and Indian medicine, see SD 1.1 (5.3).

⁹⁷ Teachings on the 4 elements are very common, eg **Maha Hatthi, padōpama S** (M 28,6-27) + SD 6.16 (3) & **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140,13-18), SD 4.17. See also SD 3.11 (4).

⁹⁸ See SD 36.9 (5).

⁹⁹ See eg **Giri-m-ānanda S** (A 10.60,6), SD 19.16.

¹⁰⁰ See eg **(Majjhima) Jīvaka S** (M 55) + SD 43.4 (2).

¹⁰¹ For a detailed discussion, see Wezler 1984; cf Oldenberg 1881:374 n2; Har Dayal 1932:159; Filliozat 1934:301.

¹⁰² See Zysk 1982, 1998, 2011.

(3) existential suffering or “suffering due to formations” or “suffering of conditionality,” in the inherent inadequacy in conditioned existence (*saṅkhāra,dukkhatā*).

(S 38.14/4:259; also S 45.165/5:56; D 3:216)

Here, (1) **“Affective suffering”** is bodily painful feeling and mental painful feeling, or more simply, “ordinary suffering,” something we feel negatively affecting our body or our mind.¹⁰³ **The (Sāriputta) Dukkha Sutta** (S 38.14) calls this “the pain of pain” or “the suffering as pain” (*dukkha,dukkha*), that is, a natural feeling arising on account of the impermanent nature of the body and mind manifested by way of both “*nature*” (past karma) and “*nurture*” (present conditions).

In psychodynamic¹⁰⁴ terms, this is related to “neurotic conflict between impulse and prohibition with a stable self-structure and whole-object relations,¹⁰⁵ as well as to ‘ordinary human unhappiness,’ which Freud once said was the exchange for resolution of neurotic suffering.”¹⁰⁶ It would be interesting to be able to make some comparative study of these two approaches to pain and suffering.

(2) **“Temporal suffering”** is bodily pleasant feeling and mental pleasant feeling, either of which brings suffering when any of them end.¹⁰⁷ It thus includes mental or psychological suffering. Psychodynamically, this corresponds to “the borderline condition and the functional psychoses, when disturbance in the sense of self-continuity, fluctuating drives and affects, contradictory and dissociated ego states, lack of a stable self-structure, and lack of constant relations with the object world are the core problem” (ib).

At this stage of personality development, prior to individuation¹⁰⁸ and stability in object relation, *change* is the deepest and most pervasive threat to the fragile self. Every experience of separation or loss we experience threatens the reality and integrity of our notion of self, a notion that still depends on perceiving some immediate presence and benefit of external objects.

(3) **“Existential suffering”** is related to all conditioned phenomena of the 3 worlds¹⁰⁹ because they are oppressed by the rise and fall of all phenomena. According to Buddhaghosa, this (*saṅkhāra,dukkha*) refers to “the equanimous feeling and the remaining formations of the 3 planes.”¹¹⁰

To the western or westernized minds, this is an entirely new category of psychopathology. At this level, “object-seeking as such is experienced as pathogenic, contradictory as that may sound in terms of normal developmental theory.”¹¹¹ The very attempt to connect a self and objects that shows some

¹⁰³ Vism 16.34 f/499.

¹⁰⁴ Psychodynamic here is “a free label for (a) all those psychological systems and theories that emphasize processes of change and development and/or (b) those systems and theories that make motivation and drive central concepts” (A S Reber’s *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology*, 1985; A S Reber, E Reber & R Allen, 4th ed, 2008). Also: “Of or relating to the psychoanalytic approach in which unconscious motives are a focus” (D Matsumoto, *Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology*, 2009)

¹⁰⁵ In simple terms, object relation refers to how we relate to others.

¹⁰⁶ Jack Engler 1984:44.

¹⁰⁷ **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.24/1:393), SD 40a.9.

¹⁰⁸ On a simple level, individuation refers to a healthy emotional evolution into a mature person, and on a higher level, to the attainment of streamwinning: see SD 8.7 (4).

¹⁰⁹ The 3 worlds are the sense world, the form world and the formless world: see **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (5.2).

¹¹⁰ *Upekkha,vedanā c’eva avasēsā ca te,bhūmakā saṅkhārā udaya-b,baya,paripīḷitattā saṅkhāra,dukkham* (Vism 16.35/499).

¹¹¹ Jack Engler 1984:44.

constancy and continuity¹¹² becomes a therapeutic problem. In other words, if we try to see or seek any succour or stability in the 5 aggregates,¹¹³ we would simply be disappointed, to say the least.¹¹⁴

6.1.2 The key goals of object relations development are identity and object constancy, that is, a healthy sense of self and wholesome relationship with externals (people and things). Under “normal” circumstances, we are likely to be fixated to an idea (about ourselves or others) and personal development is basically stagnant.

Normalcy, in other words, is a state of arrested development: the worldling is as if mad (*ummattako viya hi puthujjano*, MA 1:25). “Moreover,” adds Engler, “it can be viewed as a pathological condition insofar as it is based on faulty reality testing, inadequate neutralization of the drives, lack of impulse control, and incomplete integration of the self and the object world.”¹¹⁵

In simpler terms, we are mentally undeveloped, even unhealthy, if we fail to relate wholesomely to the external world, or we fail to understand and appreciate our strengths and limitations in relating to others and to things, or we lack adequate self-control, or we fail to feel a sense of harmony between ourselves and our environment.

6.1.3 The Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta (S 56.11) defines the first noble truth as follows:

Now this, bhikkhus, is **the noble truth that is suffering**:

birth is suffering,
decay is suffering,
[disease is suffering,]
death is suffering;
grief, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair are suffering;
to be with the unpleasant is suffering;
to be without the pleasant¹¹⁶ is suffering;
not to get what one desires is suffering,
—in short, the 5 aggregates of clinging are suffering. [§5]

In this list, the 3 categories of suffering are as follows:

- (1) affective suffering: birth, decay, disease, death, grief etc;
- (2) temporal suffering: not to be with the pleasant, to be without the pleasant;
- (3) existential suffering: the 5 aggregates.

These 3 kinds of suffering are elaborated in **the Visuddhi, magga** (Vism 16.34 f/499).¹¹⁷

¹¹² Joseph D Lichtenberg, “The development of the sense of self,” *Journal of American Psychoanalytic Association* 23,3 1975:453-484.

¹¹³ See SD 17.

¹¹⁴ For an ACT (acceptance and commitment therapy) view of this, see **Buddhism as a method of self-healing**, SD 43.1 (4.2).

¹¹⁵ Jack Engler 1984:44; also Muzika 1990. For an Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) perspective, see **Buddhism as a method of self-healing**, SD 43.1 (3).

¹¹⁶ “The loved,” *piya*, also tr “what one loves.”

¹¹⁷ Further see n at §5 below. On the relationship between suffering and feeling (*vedanā*), see SD 17.3.

6.2 THE 3 PHASES AND 12 ASPECTS

6.2.1 The 3 good truths. The Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta makes a unique declaration: that the Buddha's mastery of the 4 noble truths comprises 3 phases (*ti,parivaṭṭa*) and 12 aspects (*dvādas'ākāra*) [§§9-12]. **The 3 phases** (*ti,parivaṭṭa*) are:

- (1) the knowledge of each truth (*sacca,ñāṇa*),
- (2) the knowledge of the task to be done regarding each truth (*kicca,ñāṇa*), and
- (3) the knowledge of the accomplishment of these tasks (*kata,ñāṇa*).

These 3 phases of each of the 4 truths total up as their 12 aspects (*dvādas'ākāra*). The Commentarial version of these 3 phases are called the 3 **"good truths"** (*saddhamma*) [5.1.5], namely,

sacca,ñāṇa: the true teaching as theory (textual learning), *pariyatti saddhamma*
kicca,ñāṇa: the true teaching as practice (moral virtue and concentration), *paṭipatti saddhamma*
kata,ñāṇa: the true teaching as realization (wisdom). *paṭivedha saddhamma*
 (VA 225; AA 5.33; cf Nm 143 where only the first two are listed)

6.2.2 A comparative study

S 56.11 (Pali) [§§9-12]		SĀ 379 (Saṃyukta Agama)	
The first noble truth: suffering	<i>dukkha</i>	The first noble truth: suffering	苦諦
Suffering should be known	<i>pariññeyya</i>	The second noble truth: craving	集諦
Suffering has been known	<i>pariññāta</i>	The third noble truth: nirvana	滅諦
		The fourth noble truth: the path	道諦
The second noble truth: craving	<i>taṇhā</i>	Suffering should be known	當知
Craving should be abandoned	<i>pahātabba</i>	Craving should be abandoned	當斷
Craving has been abandoned	<i>pahīna</i>	Nirvana should be realized	當作證
The third noble truth: nirvana	<i>nibbāna</i>	The path should be cultivated	當修
Nirvana should be realized	<i>sacchikātabba</i>		
Nirvana has been realized	<i>sacchikata</i>	Suffering has been known	已知
The fourth noble truth: the path	<i>patipadā</i>	Craving has been abandoned	已斷
The path should be cultivated	<i>bhāvetabba</i>	Nirvana has been realized	已作證
The path has been cultivated	<i>bhāvita</i>	The path has been cultivated	已修

6.2.2.1 Both the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta (S 56.11) and its Chinese parallel in the Saṃyukta Āgama (SĀ 379) list the 3 phases and 12 aspects of the 4 noble truths. While agreeing in content, they however differ in sequence. This comparative table shows their relationship [diagram above].¹¹⁸

6.2.2.2 The Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta (S 56.11) sequence of the 4 truths presents each of them in the format of *theory, practice and realization*. This is likely to be the kind of "truth-process" that would arise in an average person who is being taught these truths or who is learning the Dharma, or who

¹¹⁸ Cf Choong 2010:62. For a later canonical 16-cycle model of the awakening process, see **Oram,bhāgiya Ss** (S 45.179), SD 50.11, and **Uddham,bhāgiya Ss** (S 45.180), SD 50.12.

is mindful enough to reflect on the spiritual significance of his experiences. Since the last set concerns *cultivation*, this is clearly a “gradual” truth-process of learning them.

We have at least two sequences of the truths. We have just mentioned the better known “**Dhamma,-cakka**” sequence or theoretical sequence is familiarly listed as “1-2-3-4,” that is,

suffering→arising→ending→path. (S 56.11,5-8), SD 1.1

Then, there is the “**Saḷ-āyatanika**” sequence or practical sequence, which is given as “1-2-4-3,” thus:

suffering→arising→path→ending, (M 149,11) + SD 41.9 (2,4)

which is more natural in terms of the *practice* progress of insight. The sequence itself is also found in **the Āgantuka Sutta** (S 45.159), **the Pariññeyya Sutta** (S 56.29), and other suttas,¹¹⁹ although not as numerous as those with the theoretical sequence.

The “**Saḷ-āyatanika**” (M 149) sequence or practice sequence of the 4 truths (arranged as 1-2-4-3), along with their explanations, recurs on their own in **the Abhiññā Sutta** (A 4.251).¹²⁰ Although the Dhamma,cakka sequence of functions is better known, it is likely that the Saḷ-āyatanika sequence is much older. In other words, it is probably the original sequence, which later, for the sake of easier teaching, follows the theoretical (or teaching) sequence. Understandably, the later Dhamma,cakka sequence (1-2-3-4) is better known throughout Buddhist literature, as it is a more convenient teaching model.¹²¹

6.2.2.3 The Āgama version (SĀ 379) presents the sequence in sets according to the 3 phases. According to this scheme, the 4 noble truths (as a set) should first be “examined” (諦 *dī*). However, 諦 also means “truth,” which applies better here. In the second set of 4 truths, the operative word is the verb 當 *dāng* (simplified as 当), meaning, “to be, ought to, should,” referring to the “practice” aspects of the truths, that is, they are accepted and acknowledged in our lives, but we have not fully internalized them yet. Only in the third set or stage, do we truly “know” or “realize” (知 *zhī*) the 4 truths.

The Āgama (SĀ 379) version, as such, lists the 4 noble truths according to commentarial notion of the threefold “good truths” (*saddhamma*) as already mentioned above, namely,

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| • knowing the “truths” | <i>sacca,ñāṇa,</i> | or, understanding them in theory | <i>pariyatti;</i> |
| • knowing the “duty” | <i>kicca,ñāṇa,</i> | or, putting this theory into practice | <i>paṭipatti;</i> |
| • knowing their “accomplishment” | <i>kata,ñāṇa,</i> | or realization regarding the truths | <i>paṭivedha.</i> |

The Āgama sequence of the 3 phases and 12 aspects of the noble truths, as shown above, apparently reflects a “sudden” process.

6.2.2.4 In fact, there is a short but unique **Gavam,pati Sutta** (S 56.30), which supports such an approach. In reply to a monk’s question, the monk Gavam,pati declares thus:

¹¹⁹ S 45.159/5:52, SD 74.10; S 56.29/5:436.

¹²⁰ A 4.251/2:246 f [A:B 4.254], SD 85.3. See also esp **Mahā Niddesa**: Nm 1:21, 40, 94, 149, 2:271, 349, 456, 460, 494; **Cūḷa Niddesa**: Nc:Be 31, 35, 64, 85, 90, 232. **Paṭisambhidā,magga** has both sequences: Dhamma,cakka seq, Pm 1:46, 48; Saḷ-āyatanika seq, 1:4, 184×2, 187, 294×3. **Vibhaṅga**: Vbh 426×12, 427×14, 428; Kvu 86, 88, 107, 108, 170, 216×2; Peṭk 143; **Nett** 311/59, 651/111×2, 656/111, 661/112, 897/175; Miln 69.

¹²¹ There is another sequence, a unique one, arranged as 1-4-2-3, found in **Sela S** (Sn 559 = Tha 828 = M 92,19, SD 45.7). This unique sequence is clearly the result of poetic licence. See also SD 41.9 (2.4).

Avuso, I have heard and learned this before [from] the Blessed One himself:

“Bhikshus, one who sees suffering, also sees the arising of suffering, also sees the ending of suffering, also sees the path leading to the ending of suffering.

One who sees the arising of suffering, also sees suffering, also sees the ending of suffering, also sees the path leading to the ending of suffering.

One who sees the ending of suffering, also sees suffering, also sees the arising of suffering, also sees the path leading to the ending of suffering.

One who sees the way leading to the ending of suffering, also sees suffering, also sees the arising of suffering, also sees the ending of suffering.” (S 56.30/5:436 f), SD 53.1

This passage, a hapax legomenon (not found anywhere in the Nikāyas)¹²² is quoted by Buddhaghosa (along with Pm 1:119) in his **Visuddhi, magga** (Vism 22.93) to prove that path-knowledge (*magga, ñāṇa*) performs 4 functions in a single moment.¹²³ On the strength of a single passage, it is difficult to accept such a view as being as canonical, especially where we do not have the full context of Gavampati’s quoting the Buddha (to whom does this statement refer?)¹²⁴

6.2.2.5 What is relevant here, however, is what scholars have observed in the comparative study of early Buddhist texts (the Pali Nikāyas and the Chinese Āgamas). Scholars like Norihisa Baba (2004) and Analayo (2010a) have noted the tendency of Āgama discourses to incorporate passages in the Pali that are found only in its commentarial literature (Baba 2004:946).¹²⁵

7 Versions of the Sutta

7.1 In 1938, N Aiyaswami Sastri examined 11 texts considered to be versions of the Buddha’s first discourse.¹²⁶ N J Smith of Australia, in his Internet paper entitled “The 17 versions of the Buddha’s first discourse” (2001),¹²⁷ made a list of the 17 versions, giving each of them a code, their references and the approximate date of each (if known).¹²⁸

The Pāli versions (P), which were written down about 500 years after the Buddha, that is, around the first century BCE, are:

Pali1, Pali2	Sutta:	S 5:420-435.
Pali3	Vinaya:	V 1:10-12.

The Chinese versions (Chin) with translation dates are:

Sutta:

Chin1	T109	(T2.503b-c, 2nd cent CE),
Chin2	T99.379	(T2.103c-104a, 5th cent CE) = SA 379,

¹²² The only other place in the Canon for this is in the Abhidhamma: Kvu 2.9.19/220.

¹²³ Vism 22.93/690, where he also qu Pm 1:119,1-3 (a late canonical Abhidhamma-style work); see also Vism 22.92-/689 f. In **Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 142), eg, separate alms-giving is mentioned to each of the 8 kinds of saints (eg the arhat-to-be and the arhat), showing that the transition from the former to the latter is *not* “a mind-moment,” ie, not immediate.

¹²⁴ Technically, we can safely say that this refers *only* to the attainment of the fruition of arhathood, not to the other stages of the path.

¹²⁵ Cf Alex Wayman 1980.

¹²⁶ “The first sermon of the Buddha.” *New Indian Antiquary* 1,8 Nov 1938:473-492.

¹²⁷ Last revised 11 Dec 2002. <http://www.bigfoot.com/~josmith.1/buddhism/budaword/from chinese/index.html>.

¹²⁸ Here slightly edited.

Chin3 T110 (T2.504a-b, 8th cent CE) and
Chin6 T125.19.2 (T2.593b-c, 4th cent CE) = EĀ 19.2.

Vinaya:

Chin4 T428 (T22.788-9, 5th cent CE) and
Chin5 T1421 (T22.104-5, 5th cent CE).

The Sanskrit versions (Skt):

Skt1 Mahāvastu 3:330-335, S2 (late 2nd cent BCE according to Peter Harvey, 1992:89),¹²⁹
Skt2 Lalita, vistara 540 (416-8), (between 200 BCE and 200 CE ibid p15), and
Skt3 Raniero Gnoli¹³⁰ who dates the characters to the 6th-7th century (1977: xiii, 134-139).
N Dutt¹³¹ dates the Gupta script of this text as from the 6th century CE (1984: i).

The Tibetan versions (Tib). The dates of the translation of the Tibetan texts from the Sanskrit are generally accepted as 8th century CE, that is, not long after the great debate whether to follow Chinese or Indian Buddhism. According to Aiyaswami Sastri (1938:476) from the Narthang edition of the Kanjur (bKah hGyur):

Sūtra:

Tib1 mDo xxvi 88-91,
Tib2 mDo xxvi 431-4, and
Tib3 mDo xxx 427-32 (believed to be translated from the Pali).

Vinaya:

Tib4 Dulva iv ff 64-7, and
Tib5 Dulva xi 69-72.

Beijing ed (Ōtani repr, Tokyo, 1956)¹³² P747 P21.259
P1003 P39.1

7.2 Aiyaswami Sastri (1938:475) points out that some of the Tibetan Sūtra and Vinaya texts are nearly identical and correspond as follows: Tib1 = Tib4 and Tib2 = Tib5. This is also the case with the Pali versions: Pali1 = Pali3. It is probable that the Sūtra texts in these cases were merely replications of the Vinaya texts.¹³³ In this case, there would be only two versions in Pali and three in Tibetan, and the total would actually come to 14 distinct versions.

¹²⁹ P Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism, Teachings, History and Practices*, UK: Cambridge Univ Press, 1992.

¹³⁰ R Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Sanghabhedavastu* Part 1. 2 vols 1977-78. Rome: ISMEO, 1977:134-9.

¹³¹ Dutt N, *Gilgit Manuscripts* vol 3 pt 2, 2nd ed, 1984, Sri Satguru Publications, India.

¹³² Citations which follow given as "P" Sūtra no, followed by "P" Vol.Page.

¹³³ "Being an oral tradition originally, it is probable that the story of the Buddha was told chronologically, as a story. This can be seen in the Vinaya texts and the later Mahāparinibbāna Sutta. Only later would the discourses (suttas) have been extracted and grouped according to various categories, probably first topically (as in the Saṃyutta Nikāya) and then later by number of items [or topics] (as in the Aṅguttara Nikāya)." (N J Smith)

7.3 The details of the main sections of the sutta are given here according to Pali1:

Section 1	The two extremes and the middle path: The two extremes to be avoided are self-indulgence and self-mortification. The middle way, which avoids the two extremes, is the noble eightfold path.
Section 2	The second delivery of the discourse
Section 3	Definition of the 4 noble truths
Section 4	The twelve aspects: The 4 noble truths are considered in three phases, a statement of what they are in <u>theory</u> , their <u>practice</u> , and their attainment or <u>realization</u> .
Section 5	The Buddha's declaration of his awakening: It is only after having realized the twelve aspects as they really are that Siddhattha claimed full awakening (become Buddha).
Section 6	Koṇḍañña's realization of the Dharma-eye.
Section 7	Prefixing of Koṇḍañña's name to Añña Koṇḍañña (Koṇḍañña who knows).
Section 8	The gods' exultation at hearing the discourse.
Section 9	Naming the discourse.
Section 10	Realization of the Dharma-eye.

7.4 Smith collates the 17 versions into these 8 classes:

1. Pali2
2. Skt3
3. Tib2 (=Tib5) and Chin3
4. Chin2
5. Pali1 (=Pali3), Tib3, Skt1, Skt2, Chin1, Chin5
6. Chin4
7. Tib1 (=Tib4)
8. Chin6.

As can be seen, Class 5 is the class with texts from each language source. Pali2 is the other Pali text and Chin6 is the other Chinese text that Smith regards as variants and they each form a class of their own. These are the only two texts in our corpus that have only one section.

8 The age of the Sutta

8.1 THE FIRST DISCOURSE

8.1.1 The very first sutta

8.1.1.1 On account of the well-structured and, in part, very technical, parts of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, it is unlikely to be historically the earliest discourse spoken by the Buddha to the group of 5 monks. It is certainly a record of the first teachings of the Buddha as *remembered* by the council elders. However, it only gives us a part of the first discourse given by the Buddha.

8.1.1.2 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26) preserves perhaps the most ancient record we have of the very first discourse given by the Buddha to the 5 monks—this is a general instruction on the nature of

birth, decay, disease, death, sorrow and defilement.¹³⁴ If this is not the original form of the “1st discourse” itself, it must be *the gist* of the Buddha’s first teachings to the 5 monks or *a key section* of the 1st discourse—we cannot really be sure. However, this is certainly older than the teachings of **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11).

8.1.2 The first 3 discourses traditionally believed to have been given by the Buddha are **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11), **the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59) and **the Āditta,pariyāya Sutta** (S 38.28). They are not only historically related, but flow coherently into one another in that sequence.

The first discourse is a systematic statement of the Buddha’s discovery of “suffering and its ending,”¹³⁵ and what is merely mentioned, “in short, the 5 aggregates of clinging¹³⁶ are suffering” [§5], is elaborated in the second discourse, **the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59),¹³⁷ that is, the aggregates are explained in full. In the third discourse, **the Āditta,pariyāya Sutta** (S 35.28),¹³⁸ the focus shifts to the “all” (*sabba*), that is, the 6 sense-bases, a teaching specifically given in **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23).¹³⁹

8.2 THE SUTTA’S POPULARITY. The importance of the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta is attested by the numerous versions of it in various Buddhist canons. A list of 17 versions of it is found above [6]. The Sutta is clearly well known enough by Asoka’s time—alluded to in his **Bhabru-Bairat edict**¹⁴⁰—to have it recommended as a *vinaya,sāmuḥkaṃsā* (“an extract of the training” or “the exalted teaching”), which scholars have rightly identified as **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana**,¹⁴¹ which after all is a “summary” of the unique teaching (*sāmuḥkaṃsikā dhamma,desanā*) of the Buddha on the 4 noble truths.¹⁴²

8.3 The Sutta is analyzed in **the Sacca Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 141) and **the Vibhaṅga** (Vbh 99-105). It is also commented on in **the Visuddhi,magga** (Vism 16.32-83) and **the Sammoha,vinodanī** (VbhA 93-122). **Rewata,dhamma**, a Burmese monk who lived in Britain, has written a detailed study of this text based on its commentaries, entitled *The First Discourse of the Buddha*.

8.4 THE SUTTA’S TITLE. The very first discourse of the Buddha as recorded in the account of his public ministry in **the Vinaya** (V 1:10-12), however, appears to be a later account. **The Saṃyutta account**,¹⁴³ the

¹³⁴ M 26,30/1:173 (SD 1.11).

¹³⁵ **Anurādha S** (S 22.86/119), SD 21.13.

¹³⁶ *Pañc’upadāna-k,khandha*, namely, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness (S 3:47 Vbh 1): see SD 17. What is briefly mentioned here is elaborated in the second discourse, **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59), SD 1.2. See above here.

¹³⁷ SD 1.2. On its possible origin, see **Assaji S** (S 22.88) @ SD 42.8 (2.3).

¹³⁸ SD 1.3.

¹³⁹ SD 7.1.

¹⁴⁰ M Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature* v2 1933 (rev):606 f (App III on p16).

¹⁴¹ Sujato [2013](#). For earlier refs, see eg H Oldenberg’s *Vinaya* ed, V:O 1879:xiv, xl n; T W Rhys Davids, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc* (JRAS) 30,3 Jul 1898:629; Oldenberg, *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (ZDMG) 52 1898: 634; J Bloch, ZDMG 63 1909:325; A J Edmunds, *Buddhist Bibliography*, 1904 & JRAS 1913:385-387; D Kosambi, *Indian Antiquary* 41 1912:40; E Hultzsch, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* v1: *Inscriptions of Asoka* (new ed), Oxford, 1925:xxv, xlili f, 172 ff; H G A van Zeist 1966 in *Ency Bsm* 2:182; N A Jayawickrama, *Pali Buddhist Review* 1,3 1976:138; see also A Cunningham, *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* v1 [1877](#):22 f. (See Winternitz 1933:580 for more refs.)

¹⁴² Here we have the better known use of *sāmuḥkaṃsā*, but in a quite different sense: the *sāmuḥkaṃsikā* teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, arising, ending, the path (*yā buddhānaṃ sāmuḥkaṃsikā dhammadesanā, taṃ pakāsesi dukkhaṃ samudayaṃ nirodhaṃ maggaṃ*). This is from a stock passage referring to the Buddha gradually bringing a listener to ever higher or deeper teachings, so that they are ready to listen to the 4 noble truths. In this context, too, as noted by Sujato (2013), the meaning of *sāmuḥkaṃsā* as either “extract” or “exalted” fits well.

11th sutta of the Sacca Saṃyutta (Connected Discourses on the Truths), is the older one. In both cases, however, the title is not as we know it today. The Sanskrit version is found in **the Lalita,vistara** (Lalv 540.-426 f) and **the Mahavastu** (Mvst 3:330 f).

8.5 “Spoken by the Tathagata.” The title “Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta” appears only in the Commentaries (eg J 1:92, DA 1:2, etc). In other versions, such as the PTS edition, the title is given as *Tathāgatena vuttā* (spoken by the Tathāgata). **Sujato**, in his “general integrated sutta theory” (GIST),¹⁴⁴ notes:

This is, on the face of it, a bit odd, for most of the discourses are, of course, attributed to the Buddha. However, the terms “Spoken by the Buddha” and “Spoken by the Disciples” occur in the Chinese recensions. Perhaps the label *tathāgatena vuttā* referred originally, not to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta specifically, but to a section within a collection of discourses that consisted purely of teachings given directly by the Buddha himself. (Sujato, 2004:38)

In his footnote, Sujato says that “this line of reasoning suggested itself independently to both Rod Bucknell and myself” (2004:77 n11).

8.6 THE RĀSIYA SUTTA (S 42.12.4-5) is a short discourse recording the Buddha’s teaching to Rāsiya the headman and is practically identical to the opening section of **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** [§§3-4], that is, the avoiding of the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification for the middle way, and the noble eightfold path. At the end of the long anthology of teachings given to Rāsiya, he takes refuge in the three jewels without any mention of his attainment (S 42.12,4-5/4:330 f).

8.7 THE (KHANDHA) DUKKHA SUTTA (S 22.104) is perhaps the most succinct discourse on the 4 truths, and might be even amongst the oldest, if not the oldest, text we have of the teaching. It does not use the qualifier *ariya* (“noble”), as found in “4 truths” formula given in the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta, which was probably modelled on it or built up from it.¹⁴⁵

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SD 1.1(8)

*Miga,dāya Pañca,vaggiya Desanā

The teaching to the group of 5 monks at the Deer Park
Theme: The first meeting between the Buddha and the group of 5 monks
Pabbajjā Kathā, The talk on the going-forth, **Mv 1.6.10-16** (V 1:8-10)

Introduction

8.8 The Mahā,vagga, the first of the two chapters (the other is the Culla,vagga) comprising the Khandhaka of the Vinaya, records the early ministry of the Buddha. **The Mahā,vagga** (the great chapter) begins with the Buddha’s awakening. It begins with the Buddha’s awakening and early events; followed by the first teachings and foundation of the monastic order. Then, there are accounts of various ways the first monks are accepted into the early community, and the rule attending the monastic ordination procedures.

¹⁴³ S 56.11/5:420-424.

¹⁴⁴ See *The GIST*, 2004:37 f.

¹⁴⁵ S 22.104/3:158 f (SD 42.20).

The Culla,vagga or Cūḷa,vagga (the lesser chapter) deals with the rules and procedures for the proper living conduct (including the health) of monastics, including the ordination of nuns. The Cullavagga closes with an account of the 2nd council, held at Vesālī, marking the origins of the Theravāda.

8.9 The Mahā,vagga preserves accounts of the events leading up to the first discourse, and its immediate events. It records the Buddha in his quest for awakening, attended by the 5 monks. When the Buddha learns that neither self-indulgence nor self-mortification will bring him the answer he seeks, he realizes the vital significance of healthy body supporting a healthy mind in such a difficult quest.

Essentially, this is a joy-based meditation or dhyana which calms and clears his mind, so that he is able to see directly into true reality, and so awakens to full liberation. From his awakening experience, he formulates the eightfold path, which, in practical terms, is *the* middle way for all who follow his teaching in quest of awakening.

8.10 The Bodhisattva’s abandoning the painful self-mortifying meditations and way of life is seen by the 5 monks as backsliding. They abandon him, but he perseveres, and alone gains awakening under the bodhi tree. Seeking for the most suitable students,¹⁴⁶ the Buddha realizes that the 5 monks, who have diligently attended to him, are the ones whom he should first teach his discovery.

However, when the Buddha approaches the group of 5 monks in the deer park outside Benares, they still nurse their misapprehension that he has fallen back to a life of luxury (*bahulla*). The Buddha manages to convince them that he is now a different person, and they are willing to listen. He opens his first discourse to the 5 monks by telling them to avoid the two extremes, and how this would benefit them in their quest for awakening.

The purpose of the first discourse, then, can be said to be that of clearing the minds of the 5 monks of their misapprehension so that they are open and ready for the real teaching that would awaken them—this is, of course, the teachings of the second discourse—that of the 3 characteristics, especially non-self.

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*Miga,dāya Pañca,vaggiya Desanā

The Teaching to the Group of 5 Monks at the Deer Park

(Mv 1.6.10-16)

The Buddha meets the 5 monks

[Mv 1.6.10] Then, the Blessed One, walking on tour, in due course, approached the group of 5 monks in the deer park at Isi,patana, outside Benares.

The group of 5 monks saw the Blessed One coming in the distance. Seeing him, they agreed among themselves,¹⁴⁷ saying:

¹⁴⁶ See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26), where the Buddha reflects on the most suitable students to teach (M 26,22-24), SD 1.11.

¹⁴⁷ “Agreed amongst themselves,” *aññamaññam katikam saṅghapesum*: only Be has *katikam*.

“Avuso, this recluse Gotama is coming, he lives in luxury, [V 1:9] he is wavering in his striving, he has reverted to a life of luxury [abundance].¹⁴⁸ He should neither be greeted, nor stood up for, nor should his bowl and robe be received. All the same, a seat may be laid out; he may sit down if he wants to.”

11 However, as the Blessed One gradually approached the group of 5 monks, they, not keeping to their own agreement, approached the Blessed One.

One received his bowl and robe, one put out a seat, one brought water for washing the feet, a foot-stool, a foot-stand.¹⁴⁹

The Blessed One sat down on the seat made ready, and the Blessed One, while he was sitting down, washed his feet.¹⁵⁰ Then, they addressed the Blessed One by name¹⁵¹ and with the word, “avuso [friend].”¹⁵²

The Buddha announces his awakening

12 When this was said, the Blessed One spoke thus to the group of 5 monks:

“Do not, bhikkhus,¹⁵³ address a Tathagata [one thus come] by name, and with word ‘avuso.’

A Tathagata, bhikkhus, is an arhat [worthy one], fully self-awakened.

12.2 Give ear, bhikkhus, the death-free has been found; I instruct, I teach dharma.¹⁵⁴

Practising in keeping with what is instructed, having soon realised here and now by your own super-knowledge that supreme goal of the holy life,¹⁵⁵ for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from home into homelessness, may you abide in it.”¹⁵⁶

13 When this was said, the group of 5 monks spoke thus to the Blessed One:

“But surely, you, avuso Gotama, did not come to a superhuman state,¹⁵⁷ to the distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones,¹⁵⁸ by this conduct, by this course, by this practice of austerities.¹⁵⁹

¹⁴⁸ *Bahullarā*, lit “muchness,” VA 964 takes it to mean abundance of robes, etc. Clearly here, it simply means “luxury,” in ref to the Bodhisattva’s breaking his fast, taking a meal and resorting to the middle way.

¹⁴⁹ “Foot-stand,” *pāda,piṭṭha*, a stool (*ṭhapanaka*) to put the washed foot or feet on (VA 913). Cf V 4:231, 310.

¹⁵⁰ Described in **Brahmāyu S** (M 91,20/2:139), SD 63.8.

¹⁵¹ Here, we have a precedence of showing respect to elders and teachers by not addressing them by name.

¹⁵² “Avuso,” anglicized of *āvuso* (masc) (voc related to *āyu*, “age”), meaning “brother” (only to equals or juniors) amongst Buddhists, or “friend,” with non-Buddhists. Seniors are usu addressed as “bhante” (angl of *bhante*, “sir”) for both laymen and monastics. This usage is remarkably similar to [Chinese](#) 老 *lǎo*, meaning “old in age or for a long time,” esp as suffix to surnames, eg, 张老 *Zhāng lǎo*, 王老 *Wáng lǎo*, 李老 *Lǐ lǎo*. See **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16) where the Buddha declares *āvuso* should no longer be used, and that monastics are to address one another according to seniority (D 16,6.2) + n, SD 9.

¹⁵³ Note that the Buddha is recorded here as addressing the 5 monks as *bhikkhave*. An interesting anachronism, but with narrative licence! We should imagine that the Buddha is confident of the conversion of the “5 monks.”

¹⁵⁴ *Arahaṃ bhikkhave tathāgato sammā,sambuddho, odahatha bhikkhave sotam, amatam adhigatam, aham anusāsāmi, aham dhammam desemi.*

¹⁵⁵ This supreme goal (*brahma.cariya,pariyosāna*) is said to be the “unshakeable liberation of mind” (*akuppā cetō,vimutti*): see **Mahā Sārōpama S** (M 29,7), SD 53.8; **Cūḷa Sārōpama S** (M 30,23), SD 53.9, where it refers to the fruition of arhathood (MA 2:232); a related term, *asamaya,vimokkha*, “permanent liberation,” refers to the 4 paths, the 4 fruits, nirvana. The “unshakeable liberation of mind” is the one dharma that “should be realized” (*sacchikātabba*) (D 34,1.2(10)), see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,18.7) n, SD 1.11; **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,-14.2) SD 1.1.

¹⁵⁶ *Yathā’nusiṭṭham tathā* [in all MSS except Se] *paṭipajjamānā na cirass’eva yass’atthāya kula,puttā sammad eva agārasmā anagāriyam pabbajanti, tad anuttaram brahma.cariya,pariyosānam diṭṭh’eva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharissathā’ti. Viharissati*, although future, clearly functions in an exhortatory mode.

¹⁵⁷ “A superhuman state” (*uttari manussa,dhamma*). It refers to the attainments of dhyana and of noble sainthood (VA 2:489). False claims to any such state by a monastic entails “defeat” (*pārājika*), immediate loss of

So, how can you now come to a superhuman state, to the distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, when you live in luxury, wavering in striving, and having reverted to a life of luxury?"

The triple statement

14 When this was said, the Blessed One spoke thus to the group of 5 monks:

"A Tathagata, bhikshus, does *not* live in luxury; he does *not* waver in striving; he does *not* revert to a life of luxury.

14.2 *A Tathagata, bhikshus, is an arhat, fully self-awakened.*

Give ear, bhikshus, the death-free has been found; I instruct, I teach dharma.

Practising in keeping with what is instructed, having soon realised here and now by your own super-knowledge that supreme goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from home into homelessness, may you abide in it."

15 But, a **second time**, the group of 5 monks spoke thus to the Blessed One:

"But surely, you, avuso Gotama, did not come to a superhuman state, to the distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, by this conduct, by this course, by this practice of austerities.

So, how can you now come to a superhuman state, to the distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, when you live in luxury, wavering in striving, and having reverted to a life of luxury?"

15.2 And a **second time**, the Blessed One spoke thus to the group of 5 monks:

A Tathagata, bhikshus, is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

Give ear, bhikshus, the death-free has been found; I instruct, I teach dharma.

Practising in keeping with what is instructed, having soon realised here and now by your own super-knowledge that supreme goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from home into homelessness, may you abide in it."

15.3 And a **third time**, the group of 5 monks spoke thus to the Blessed One:

"But surely, you, [V 1:10] avuso Gotama, did not come to a superhuman state, to the distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, by this conduct, by this course, by this practice of austerities.

So, how can you now come to a superhuman state, to the distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, when you live in luxury, wavering in striving, and having reverted to a life of luxury?"

The Buddha convinces the 5 monks

16 When this was said, the Blessed One spoke thus to the group of 5 monks:

"Have you, bhikshus, ever known me to have spoken to you like this before?"¹⁶⁰

"Not like this, bhante."¹⁶¹

monkhood: Pār 4 (V 3:91, 101). On the Buddha's superhuman states, see **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12,34+43 etc), SD 49.1 = *SD 2.24.

¹⁵⁸ "The distinction of knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones," *alam-ariya ñāṇa, dassana, visesa*. See **(Anuruddha) Upakkilesa S** (M 128,15) SD 5.18; **(Pabbajita) Abhiṇṇa S** (A 10.48,2(10) SD 48.9.

¹⁵⁹ *Tāya pi kho tvaṃ āvuso gotama iriyāya [Se cariyāya] tāya paṭipadāya tāya dukkara, kārikāya n'ev'ajjhagā uttari manussa, dhammā alam-ariya, ñāṇa, dassana, visesaṃ.*

¹⁶⁰ *Abhijānātha me no tumhe bhikkhave ito pubbe eva, rūpaṃ bhāsitaṃ etan'ti.* Be:Ka Ce Se *bhāsitaṃ etan'ti.* Only Be *pabhāvitam etan'ti.*

¹⁶¹ *No h'etaṃ bhante.*

16.2 “A Tathagata, bhikshus, is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

Give ear, bhikshus, the death-free has been found; I instruct, I teach dharma.

Practising in keeping with what is instructed, having soon realized here and now by your own super-knowledge that supreme goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from home into homelessness, may you abide in it.”

16.3 And the Blessed One was able to convince the group of 5 monks.¹⁶²

Then, the group of 5 monks listened to the Blessed One again, gave ear to him and settled their minds for direct knowledge.¹⁶³

[The Vinaya account then continues with §2 of S 56.11 below.]

— — —

Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta

The Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Truth

Or, The First Discourse • S 56.11 = Mv 1.6.17-31

[420] 1 Spoken by the Tathāgata.¹⁶⁴

[Thus have I heard.]¹⁶⁵

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in the deer grove¹⁶⁶ at Isipatana near Benares. **[421]**

The 2 extremes

2 [Mv 1.6.17] Then, the Blessed One addressed the company of 5 monks, thus:

“Bhikshus, there are these **2 extremes** to be avoided by one who has gone forth. What are the two?

3 THE 2 EXTREMES:

- (1) The devotion to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures¹⁶⁷—it is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable],¹⁶⁸ and

¹⁶² From here, **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,29-43), SD 1.11, account diverges. This simply shows that there are other teachings given to the group of 5 monks.

¹⁶³ *Atha kho pañca,vaggiyā bhikkhū bhagavantam sussūsimsu, sotam odahimsu, aññā cittam upaṭṭhāpesum.* “Settled their minds for direct knowledge,” *aññā cittam upaṭṭhāpesum.* **Lohicca S** (D 12) mentions two cases of failures in the practice of self-mortification (D 12,16/1:230, 17/231), SD 34.8. On Koṇḍañña as the first to attain *aññā*, see below, **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,20), SD 1.1.

¹⁶⁴ *Tathāgatena vuttā.* PTS ed has this title. See Intro (1) above.

¹⁶⁵ Most MSS omit. The PTS ed has *tathāgatena vuttā*, “spoken by the One Thus Come” as title. See prev n.

¹⁶⁶ “Deer grove,” *miga,dāya*, or “deer park,” the best known of which is this one outside Benares (S 5:421), where the first discourse is given, as recorded in **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,1/4:420), SD 1.1; another in Bhesakalā forest, near where Nakula,pitā and Nakula,mātā live: see **Anumāna S** (M 15,1/1:95) SD 59.3; **Māra Tajjanīya S** (M 50,1/1:332), SD 36.4; **Nakula,pitā S** (S 22.1/3:1), SD 5.4; **Sama,jīvi S** (A 4.55,1/2:61), SD 5.1; **Nakula S** (A 6.16/3:-295), SD 5.2; **Nakula,mātā S** (A 8.48,1), SD 5.3; and another outside Nādikā [Ñātikā]: see **Cūla Gosiṅga S** (M 31,1), SD 44.11, **Mahā Gosiṅga S** (M 32,1),SD 44.12. For other refs, search CSCD using “migadāy*.” On tr of *dāya*, see SD 49.1 (6) (§1 & §42).

(2) the devotion to self-mortification—it is painful, ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable].¹⁶⁹

3.2 Bhikshus, without turning to either of these extremes, there is **the middle way**¹⁷⁰ awakened to by the Tathagata [thus come], that gives rise to vision, to knowledge, to peace, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana.¹⁷¹

The middle way

4 [Mv 1.6.18] And what, bhikshus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, that gives rise to vision, to knowledge, to peace, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana?

4.2 It is **this very noble eightfold path**,¹⁷² that is to say,

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) right view, | <i>sammā diṭṭhi</i> |
| (2) right thought [right intention], | <i>sammā saṅkappa</i> |
| (3) right speech, | <i>sammā vācā</i> |
| (4) right action, | <i>sammā kammantā</i> |
| (5) right livelihood, | <i>sammā ājīva</i> |
| (6) right effort, | <i>sammā vāyāma</i> |
| (7) right mindfulness, | <i>sammā sati</i> |
| (8) right concentration. | <i>sammā samādhi</i> |

4.2 This, bhikshus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, that gives rise to vision, to knowledge, to peace, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana.

The 4 noble truths¹⁷³

5 [Mv 1.6.19] (i) Now this, bhikshus, is **the noble truth [reality] that is suffering**:¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁷ Comy on **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28,18/3:113,19) glosses *kāma* here as “the objects of sense-pleasure” (*vatthu, kāmesu*, DA 896,27). On *vatthu, kāma* and *kilesa, kāma*, see SD 38.4 (3.1.2); SD 41.4 (2.3.1).

¹⁶⁸ “Low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable],” *hīno gammo puthujjaniko anariyo anattha, saṃhito*. On *gamma = gāma, dhamma*, see **Gavesī S** (A 5.180,17) n, SD 47.16. See foll n.

¹⁶⁹ On these **2 extremes**, see (3.1). Note that while “the devotion to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures” (*kāma, sukhaḥallikānuyoga*) is described as being “low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable]” (*hīno gammo puthujjaniko anariyo anattha, saṃhito*), “the devotion to self-mortification” (*atta, kilamathānuyoga*) is said to be only “painful, ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable]” (*dukkho anariyo anattha, saṃhito*).

This is because despite being “painful,” self-mortification, with some moral virtue, can bring about a divine afterlife; but such a goal is still “ignoble, not connected with the goal [unprofitable],” because we are still caught up in *samsara*, and not liberated from suffering. See **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (4.1). On *sukhaḥallikānuyoga*, see **Pāsādika S** (D 29,23/3:130), SD 40a.6.

¹⁷⁰ *Majjhima paṭipadā*.

¹⁷¹ See **Araṇa, vibhaṅga S** (M 139,3/2:230), SD 7.8, where the statement is made in an exhortative tone.

¹⁷² For a def and details of the 8 limbs that is the eightfold path, see **Sacca Vibhaṅga S** (M 141,23-31/3:250-252), SD 11.11; **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,21/2:311-313), SD 13.2; also **Mahā Cattārisaka S** (M 117/3:71-78), SD 6.10. See also Gethin 2001:190-226 (ch 6) for an insightful study.

¹⁷³ On a notion that the 4 truths might originally not have been part of this Sutta, see Bronkhorst 1993: 106-111.

¹⁷⁴ On the list of sufferings, see (4.1).

(1) birth	is suffering; ¹⁷⁵	<i>jāti pi dukkhā</i>
(2) decay ¹⁷⁶	is suffering;	<i>jarā pi dukkhā</i>
(3) disease	is suffering; ¹⁷⁷	<i>vyādhī pi dukkhā</i>
(4) death	is suffering;	<i>marañam pi dukkhaṃ</i>
[grief, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair	are suffering]; ¹⁷⁸	<i>[soka, parideva, dukkha, domanass'- upāyāsā pi dukkhā]</i>
(5) to be with the unpleasant ¹⁷⁹	is suffering;	<i>appitehi sanpayogo dukkho</i>
(6) to be without the pleasant ¹⁸⁰	is suffering;	<i>piyehi vippayogo dukkho</i>
(7) not to get what one desires	is suffering,	<i>yam p'iccharaṃ na labhati tam pi dukkhaṃ</i>
(8) in short, <u>the 5 aggregates of clinging</u> ¹⁸¹	are suffering.	<i>saṅkhittena pañc'upādāna-k, khandhā pi dukkhā</i>

6 [Mv 1.6.20] (ii) Now this, bhikshus, is **the noble truth [reality] that is the arising of suffering**.¹⁸² it is this craving that leads to renewed existence [rebirth], accompanied by pleasure and lust, seeking pleasure here and there; that is to say,¹⁸³

- (1) craving for sensual pleasures,
- (2) craving for existence,
- (3) craving for non-existence [for extinction].

¹⁷⁵ In the early after-centuries, commentators tend to interpret *jāti* as gestation or as the process of being born it, but it is clear from the early texts that it generally refers to *rebirth* itself. See (4.2).

¹⁷⁶ *Jarā*, incl old age, aging.

¹⁷⁷ *Vyādhī pi dukkhā*: Only in the Vinaya & Saṃyutta versions; not mentioned in Comys. Vism Comy: "Disease is omitted here [eg D 22,18/2:305; S 56.11,5/5:421, etc] because no individual is meant, and there are persons in whom disease does not arise at all, such as the venerable Bakkula [M 124]. Otherwise, it may be taken as included in suffering itself. For, in the ultimate sense, disease is bodily pain conditioned by the imbalance of the elements" (VismAT 527). This is a common characteristic in later literature: see **M Hara**, 1977 & 1980.

¹⁷⁸ Found in Ee Se (esp in daily chant) and other MSS but not in Be and Ce. This addition is prob late, as it is not found in the Chinese versions. The Chinese often speak of the "8 sufferings" (*bākū*), which refers to the 8 as numbered above.

¹⁷⁹ "The unpleasant," *appiya*, also tr "what one loves not."

¹⁸⁰ "The loved," *piya*, also tr "what one loves."

¹⁸¹ *Pañc'upadāna-k, khandha*, viz, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness (S 3:47; Vbh 1). What is briefly mentioned here is elaborated in the second discourse, **Anatta, lakkaṇa S** (S 22.59), SD 1.2.

¹⁸² On the translation of this term, see (4.3).

¹⁸³ Comy to **Bhāra S** (S 22.22), SD 17.14: "Seeking delight here and there" (*tatra, tatrābhinandīnī*) means having the habit of seeking delight in the place of rebirth or among the various objects, such as forms. "**Craving for sense-pleasures**" (*kāma, taṇhā*) means lust for the 5 cords of sense-pleasures. Lust for form-sphere existence or formless-sphere existence, attachment to dhyana, and lust accompanied by the eternalist view: this is called "**craving for existence**" (*bhava, taṇhā*). Lust accompanied by the annihilationist view is "craving for annihilation [extermination]" (*vibhava, taṇhā*). (SA 2:264). **Bodhi**: "This explanation of the last two kinds of craving seems to me too narrow. More likely, craving for existence should be understood as the principal desire to continue in existence (whether supported by a view or not), craving for extermination as the desire for a complete end to existence, based on an underlying assumption (not necessarily formulated as a view) that such extermination brings an end to a real 'I.'" (S:B 1052 n38). There is actually a simpler explanation: they are also unconscious cravings; hence, we are unlikely to even know that we have such views; see SD 49.2 (3.2.2.3). On craving for sensual pleasures, see **Kāma-c, chanda**, SD 32.2.

7 [Mv 1.6.21] (iii) Now this, bhikshus, is **the noble truth [reality] that is the ending of suffering**.¹⁸⁴ 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 it.¹⁸⁵

8 [Mv 1.6.22] (iv) Now this, bhikshus, is **the noble truth [reality] that is the path leading to the ending of suffering: [422]** it is this very noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

The 3 phases and 12 aspects¹⁸⁶

(1) THAT WHICH SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD

9 [Mv 1.6.23]

(a) 'This is *the noble truth that is suffering*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before,¹⁸⁷ there arose in me vision [the eye], there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.¹⁸⁸

(b) 'This noble truth that is suffering¹⁸⁹ is *to be fully understood*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(c) 'This noble truth that is suffering *has been fully understood*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(2) THAT WHICH SHOULD BE ABANDONED

10 [Mv 1.6.24]

(a) 'This is *the noble truth that is the arising of suffering*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(b) 'This noble truth that is the arising of suffering¹⁹⁰ *should be abandoned*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(c) 'This noble truth that is the arising of suffering *has been abandoned*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

¹⁸⁴ On the tr of this term, see (4.3).

¹⁸⁵ *Yo tassā,y'eva [or tassa-y-eva] tañhāya asesa,virāga,nirodho cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo.*

¹⁸⁶ The 3 phases (*ti,parivaṭṭa*): see (6.2) above.

¹⁸⁷ "Things unheard before," *ananussutesu dhammesu*. Apparently, this statement on "things unheard before" refers to the fact that the liberating Dharma has been forgotten in India up to the Buddha's time. On *ananussutesu*, see **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,9a) n, SD 1.1.

¹⁸⁸ *Idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariya,saccan ti me bhikkhave pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhurū udapādi ñāṇaṃ udapādi paññā udapādi vijjā udapādi āloko udapādi*. The five key Pali terms are *cakkhu*, *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā*, and *āloka*, all synonyms of liberating knowledge. *Vijjā* is derived from *vindati*, "to know," but Comy glosses it as *paṭivedha*, "penetration," as though it derived from *vijjhati*, "to pierce," acknowledge its sense here as a kind of liberating knowledge. (SA 2:22). As at **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,2/19.2), SD 49.8a.

¹⁸⁹ It is the suffering rather than the "truth" that is to be understood (*pariññeyya*). See Norman 1982:377-391.

¹⁹⁰ It is the arising rather than the "truth" that is to be abandoned (*pahātabba*). See Norman id.

(3) THAT WHICH SHOULD BE REALIZED

11 [Mv 1.6.25]

(a) 'This is *the noble truth that is the ending of suffering*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before,¹⁹¹ there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(b) 'This noble truth that is the ending of suffering *should be realized*'¹⁹²—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(c) 'This noble truth that is the ending of suffering *has been realized*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(4) THAT WHICH SHOULD BE CULTIVATED

12 [Mv 1.6.26]

(a) 'This is *the noble truth that is the path*'¹⁹³ *leading to the ending of suffering*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(b) 'This noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering *should be cultivated*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

(c) 'This noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering *has been cultivated*'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what was unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.

The supreme awakening

13 [Mv 1.6.27] So long, bhikshus, as my knowledge and vision of these 4 noble truths as they really are in their 3 phases and 12 aspects were not thoroughly purified in this way, **[423]** I did not claim to have awakened to the incomparable full awakening in this world with its gods, its maras and its brahmas, this generation with its recluses, its brahmins, its rulers,¹⁹⁴ its people.

14 [Mv 1.6.28] But when my knowledge and vision of these 4 noble truths as they really are in their 3 phases and 12 aspects are thoroughly purified in this way, then I claim to have awakened to the incomparable full awakening *in this world*.

14.2 [Mv 1.6.29] The knowledge and vision arose in me:

'Unshakable is my freedom of mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for me)!'¹⁹⁵

15 The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, the monks rejoiced in the Blessed One's word.

¹⁹¹ "Things unheard before," *ananussutesu dhammesu*. Apparently, this statement on "things unheard before" refers to the fact that the liberating Dharma has been forgotten in India up to the Buddha's time. On *ananussutesu*, see **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,9a) n, SD 1.1.

¹⁹² It is the ending rather than the "truth" that is to be realized (*sacchikātabba*). See Norman id. See Intro (6.2.2).

¹⁹³ It is the path that is to be cultivated ("walked") rather than the "truth." See Norman ib.

¹⁹⁴ *Deva*, here in the sense of "devas by convention" (*sammatti,deva*), ie, kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are "gods by rebirth" (*upapatti,deva*) and "gods by purification" (*visuddhi,deva*), ie, the Buddhas, pratyeka-buddhas and arhats. (Nc 307; KhA 123)

¹⁹⁵ *Akuppā me ceto,vimutti. Ayaṃ antimā jāti, n'atthi dāni ounabbhavo'ti*. See SD 4.25 (2.3-2.4).

Koṇḍañña

16 And while this discourse [explanation] was being given,¹⁹⁶ there arose in the venerable Koṇḍañña the dust-free, stainless Dharma eye,¹⁹⁷ thus: “Whatever is of the nature to arise is also of the nature to cease.”¹⁹⁸

The heavens exult

¹⁹⁹**17** [Mv 1.6.30] And when the wheel of truth [dharmacakra] had been set in motion by the Blessed One, the earth-bound devas let their voice be heard, thus:²⁰⁰

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth that cannot be stopped²⁰¹ by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

18 Having heard the cry of the earth-bound devas, the devas of the 4 Great Kings let their voice be heard, thus:

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

18.2 Having heard the cry of the 4 Great Kings, the devas of the 33 let their voice be heard, thus:

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

18.3 Having heard the cry of the devas of realm of the Thirty-three, the Yāma devas let their voice be heard, thus:

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

18.4 Having heard the cry of the Yāma devas, the Tusita [Contented] devas let their voice be heard, thus:

¹⁹⁶ *Imasmiñ ca pana veyyākaraṇasmim bhaññamāne*. As tt, *veyyākaraṇa* means “the expositions, ie, elaboration of brief teachings of the Buddha,” such as **Bhadd’eka,ratta S** (M 131), SD 8.9. But at this very early stage in the Buddha’s ministry, it is clearly non-technical, and mean simply, “discourse” or “explanation.” On the 9 limbs of the Teacher’s teaching, see SD 30.1 (4).

¹⁹⁷ “Dharma-eye,” *dhama,cakkhu*. The opening of the Dharma-eye refers to the perception of the law of change, denoting the attainment of streamwinning, thus putting us irrevocably on the path of awakening. It is, as such, spiritually superior to the divine eye (*dibba,cakkhu*) (D 2,95/1:82), which is an advanced form of clairvoyance, but it is inferior to the wisdom eye (*paññā,cakkhu*) which is the wisdom of the arhat. **Cūḷa Niddesa** mentions 5 kinds of eyes: (1) the physical eye (*maṃsa,cakkhu*); (2) the divine eye (*dibba,cakkhu*); (3) the wisdom eye (*paññā,cakkhu*) of the arhats; (4) the buddha eye (*Buddha-cakkhu*); and (5) the universal eye (*samanta,cakkhu*), the omniscience of the Buddhas (Nc 235; It 2.2/52): see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133), SD 10.8 (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76), SD 35.7.

¹⁹⁸ *Yarṃ kiñci samudaya.dhammaṃ sabban taṃ nirodha,dhamman ti*. §16 connects directly into §20, and makes good sense even without §§17-18, which were prob interpolated later.

¹⁹⁹ This whole section on the devas’ exultation [§§17-19] is prob a later addition, as the Sutta still stands without it, ending at §15 (with the traditional ending marker). On the first discourse as a probable reconstruction, see **Notion of diṭṭhi**, SD 40a.1 (2.2).

²⁰⁰ “Let their voice be heard,” *saddaṃ anussāvesuṃ*. *Anussāvesumi* is aor of *anussāveti*, “to cause to be heard, proclaim.” The meaning is that they exulted, shouted in joy.

²⁰¹ “Cannot be stopped,” *appaṭivattiyarṃ*, lit, “not to be turned backwards,” ie irreversible.

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

18.5 Having heard the cry of the Tusita devas, the Nimmāṇa,rati devas [who delight in creating] let their voice be heard, thus:

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

18.6 Having heard the cry of the Nimmāṇa,rati devas, the Para,nimmita,vasavatti devas [who delight in the creation of others] let their voice be heard, thus:

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

18.7 Having heard the cry of the Paranimmita,vasavatti devas, the devas of Brahmā’s host let their voice be heard, thus:²⁰²

“In the Deer Grove at Isipatana near Benares, the Blessed One has set in motion the unsurpassed wheel of truth [424] that cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

19 [Mv 1.6.31] Thus, at that very moment, that very second,²⁰³ in that very instant, the cry spread as far as the Brahmā world, and this ten thousandfold world system shook, quaked and trembled, and a boundless glorious radiance appeared in the world surpassing the divine majesty of the devas.²⁰⁴

Aññā Koṇḍañña

20 Then, the Blessed One uttered this Udāna [inspired utterance]: “*Aññasi vata bho Koṇḍañña!* Master Koṇḍañña has indeed understood!”

In this way, the venerable Koṇḍañña received the name “Aññā²⁰⁵ Koṇḍañña” [Koṇḍañña who has understood].²⁰⁶ — evaṃ —

²⁰² It is interesting and important to note that the list of exulting devas stops here with the Brahmās of the 1st dhyana. The reason for this is that, as there is still some level of mentation here—by way of initial and sustained applications (*vitakka,vicāra*)—these Brahmās are still in contact with the sense-world. In the realms beyond the 1st dhyana, thought-process as we know it ceases completely so that these beings enjoy the glory of their meditative state as pure light or profound peace for as long as their karma fuels it. See **Bhava Ss 1-2** (A 3.76-77), SD 23.13 (3).

²⁰³ *Tena khaṇena tena layena tena muhuttana*. Ce Se Ke omit *tena layena*. See SD 17.2b (1.1.1.1).

²⁰⁴ *Itiha tena khaṇena tena layena tena muhuttana yāva brahma,lokā saddo abbhuggacchi. Ayañ ca dasa.sahas-si,loka.dhātu saṅkampi sampakampi sampavedhi, appamāṇo ca uḷāro obhāso loke pāturahosi atikkamma devānaṃ devānubhāvan ti*.

²⁰⁵ In the earliest sense, *aññā* simply means “knowledge,” evidently here it refers to “final knowledge” (Jayatilleke 1963:432) since it has brought Koṇḍañña his final liberation. On this account, Aññā (or Aññāta) Koṇḍañña is declared by the Buddha to be the “longest-standing” (*rattaññū*) of the monks (A 1:23). On the origin of his sobriquet & surname: Aññā or Aññāta Koṇḍañña, see V 1:12,18 = S 5:424,10; S 1:193,31 f. It is possible that *aññāta* is the honorific or nickname he received as the first to awaken after the Buddha, while *añña* is his personal name; see A:W 2:16 n2. On Aññāsi Koṇḍañña, cf V 1:12,17) = A 1:23,17 (cf AA 1:136-148); J 1:82,11; U 77,1 (Aññāta Koṇḍañña; UA); MA 2:37,19; DhA I 97,1; ThīA 3,8 (~*pamukhā aṭṭhārasa brahma,koṭṭiyō*); DhA 1:87,1 (do); UA 371; DhsA 35,21 (do). Author of Tha 673-688 (Tha:RD 284-287); Ap 1.48,24-50,5. Cf M 2:43, 3:29; S 1:24.

²⁰⁶ Here Koṇḍañña becomes a streamwinner. Later, he, along with the other 4 monks, attains arhathood: see **An-atta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59,24/3:68), SD 1.2. Having become a streamwinner, he then requests for the going-forth (*pabbajjā*) and the ordination (*upasampadā*). The Buddha admits him with the words: “Come, O bhikshu! Well-pro-

SD 1.1(9)

Pañca,vaggiya Pabbajjā

The going-forth of the group of 5 monks

Theme: The first arhats and the formation of the noble sangha
Pabbajjā Kathā, The talk of going-forth, Mv 1.6.32-37 (V 1:12 f)Comments

9.1 The Buddha’s first Dharma discourse, given to the group of 5 monks, ends with a report of Koṇḍañña’s consequent attaining of streamwinning. The Mahāvagga (“great chapter”), which preserves the same materials, continues where the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta ends. The Mahāvagga is the first of the two chapters of the Khandhaka, the section of the Vinaya recounts the details of the early years of the Buddha’s ministry.

9.2 The following account—provisionally entitled **Pañca,vaggiya Pabbajjā** (“the going-forth of the group of 5 monks”)—is a narrative of their attaining the Dharma-eye (here, meaning “streamwinning”).²⁰⁷ Interestingly, this account (which is strictly *not* a sutta) has no actual teachings by the Buddha, except for generally mentioning that the Buddha “exhorted, instructed” (*ovādi anusāsi*) them [§§33, 35, 36].

Clearly this refers to miscellaneous teachings, especially those related to clarifying or elaborating on the first sermon. In fact, immediately after this account, a more sustained teaching follows (Mv 1.6.38-48). We know this teaching famously as **the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59),²⁰⁸ which closes with the 5 monks becoming (along with the Buddha), the first arhats in the world.²⁰⁹

9.3 This narrative, being a part of the Vinaya, is clearly a late canonical work. It must have been put together, like the rest of the Vinaya, as a sort of after-thought. While the Vinaya was compiled as a record and guide to monastic discipline for a time when the Buddha is no more living, accounts such as the first two discourses of the Buddha and their attendant events were put together so that the Buddhist community—including we today who are reading this—have a complete, or at least, a good idea, of the early teachings of the Buddha and record of his public ministry.

— — —

claimed is the Dharma of the Blessed One; live the holy life for making a complete end of suffering (*ehi bhikkhu, svākkhāto bhagavato dhammo, cara brahma, cariyam sammā dukkhassa anta, kiriyāya*)” (V 1:12). This is Koṇḍañña’s ordination and the earliest form of ordination conferred by the Buddha. After further instruction, Vappa and Bhaddiya attain the first-stage sainthood (streamwinning) and are admitted as monks; and, in due course (on the same day, according to the Vinaya), Mahānāma and Assaji, too, become streamwinners and are ordained. (V 1: 11 f; J 1:82; DA 1:2; AA 1:100; Lalv 540 (416) f; Mvst 3: 330 f). See Intro (1).

²⁰⁷ On the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*), see SD 49/8b (7.5).

²⁰⁸ S 22.59/3:66-68 ≈ Mv 1.6.38-47 (V 1:13 f), SD 1.2.

²⁰⁹ That is, in our epoch of this world-cycle (*kappa*), on which, see SD 2.19 (9) & SD 49.8 (15.2).

Pañca,vaggiya Pabbajjā

The Going-forth of the Group of 5 Monks

Mv 1.6.32-37

Koṇḍañña's renunciation

[Mv 1.6.32] Then, the venerable Añña Koṇḍañña,
 having seen dharma,²¹⁰ attained dharma, understood dharma, plunged into dharma,²¹¹
 having crossed over doubt, having cleared away uncertainty, having won moral courage,
 independent of others, in the Teacher's Teaching,²¹²
 said this to the Blessed One:
 "May I, bhante, receive the going-forth²¹³ in the Blessed One's presence, may I receive ordination?²¹⁴"
 32.2 "Come, bhikshu,"²¹⁵ said the Blessed One, "Well taught is the Dharma. Live the holy life for the
 utter ending of suffering!"²¹⁶ So this came to be this venerable one's ordination.

The renunciation of Vappa and Bhaddiya

33 Then, the Blessed One exhorted, instructed those remaining monks with Dharma-talk.

²¹⁰ "Dharma" (*dhamma*) here refers to the 4 noble truths (*catu,sacca,dhamma*). Having seen the truth for himself, he cuts off the fetter of doubt and now has "the noble and liberating view that accordingly leads the practitioner to the complete destruction of suffering" (*yā'yaṃ diṭṭhi ariyā niyyānikā niyyāti tak,karassa sammā,dukkha-k,khayāya, Kosambiya S, M 48,7/1:322*), SD 64.1.

²¹¹ These 4 phrases—*diṭṭha,dhammo patta,dhammo vidita,dhamma pariyogā|ha,dhammo*—says BA, refer to the "4-truth dharma" (*catu,sacca,dhamma*) (BA 13 f, 16), ie, suffering is "seen" (*diṭṭha*), its arising (craving) is "understood" (*vidita*), the path is attained (*patta*), its ending (nirvana) is plunged into (*pariyogā|ha*)." For this collation to work, the middle two phrases need to be switched around.

²¹² This para thus far: *Atha kho āyasmā aññāta,koṇḍañño diṭṭha,dhammo patta,dhammo vidita,dhammo pariyogā|ha,dhammo tiṇṇa,vicikiccho vigata,kathaṃ,katho vesārajja-p,patto apara-p,paccayo satthu,sāsane* is stock: Mv 1.6.32-37 (V 1:12) (streamwinning of Koṇḍañña, Vappa & Bhaddiya), Mv 1.6.36 (V 1:13) (streamwinning of Mahānāma & Assaji); **Yasa's father** (Mv 1.7.10 @ V 1:16,26), SD 11.2(7); **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3,2.21-22/1:110); **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5,29/1:149); **Cūla Saccaka S** (M 35,24/1:234, 26/1:235); **Upāli S** (M 18/1:380); **Mahā Vaccha,gotta S** (M 73,10/1:491); **Dīgha,nakha S** (M 74,15/1:501); **Brahmāyu S** (M 91,36/2:145); "a fortunate group of 20 friends," **Tiṃsa Bhikkhu S** (S 15.13,5), SD 48.3; **Sīha S** (A 8.12,9/4:186); **Ugga S 1** (A 8.21/4:209); **Ugga S 2** (A 8.22/4:214); **Kuṭṭhi S** (U 5.3/49).

²¹³ *Pabbajjā*. At this early stage, this simply means "acceptance" into the noble sangha (*ariya,sangha*), as the candidate is qualified, as a streamwinner, etc. Only later, when the admission is institutionalized, esp for new converts, who "go forth" (*pabbajjā*), ie, the initial going forth from home into homelessness, and also admission as a novice (*sāmaṇera*).

²¹⁴ *Upasampadā*, admission as a monk (*bhikkhu*). At this early stage, the *upasampadā* is obviously unknown, and is here mentioned after the fact by the Vinaya compilers. Here, the qualified candidates (at least streamwinners) are admitted by a simple but full recognition, "Come!" (*sg ehi* or pl *etha*).

²¹⁵ This *ehi bhikkhu* admission is the first and oldest way by which one becomes a monk. The Buddha himself admits the candidate, as here and below [§§34.2, 37.2]. They are all streamwinners, and are thus *de facto* or "noble" (*ariya*) sangha members (not the institutionalized "conventional" order, *sammuti,sangha*, introduced later). See **Pabbajjā**, SD 45.16 (1).

²¹⁶ Note here and below [§§32.2, 34.2 37.2] that the *ehi* formula closes with "for the utter end of suffering" (*sammā dukkhassa anta,kiriyāya*), signifying that the candidates are not yet arhats, whose *ehi* formula lacks this phrase: see **Pabbajjā**, SD 45.16 (122).

Then, while they were being exhorted, instructed by the Blessed One with Dharma-talk,
the dust-free, stainless **Dharma-eye** [vision of truth]²¹⁷

arose in the venerable Vappa²¹⁸ and in the venerable Bhaddiya,²¹⁹

that “whatever is of the nature to arise, all that is of the nature to end.”²²⁰

34 They, *having crossed over doubt, having cleared away uncertainty, having won moral courage, independent of others, in the Teacher’s Teaching, said this to the Blessed One:*

“May we, bhante, receive the going-forth in the Blessed One’s presence, may we receive ordination?”

34.2 “**Come, bhikshus,**” said the Blessed One, “**Well taught is the Dharma. Live the holy life [V 1:13] for the utter ending of suffering!**”²²¹

So this came to be these venerable ones’ ordination.

35 Then, the Blessed One, eating the food brought back by these,²²² exhorted, instructed those remaining monks with Dharma-talk, saying:

“Let the group of six²²³ live on whatever the three monks bring when they have walked for alms-food.”

The renunciation of Mahānāma and Assaji

36 Then, while they were being exhorted, instructed by the Blessed One with Dharma-talk,
the dust-free, stainless **Dharma-eye** arose in the venerable Mahānāma²²⁴ and to the venerable Assaji,²²⁵
that “whatever is of the nature to arise, all that is of the nature to end.”

37 They, *having crossed over doubt, having cleared away uncertainty, having won moral courage, independent of others, in the Teacher’s Teaching, said this to the Blessed One:*

“May we, bhante, receive the going-forth in the Blessed One’s presence, may we receive ordination?”

37.2 “**Come, bhikshus,**” said the Blessed One, “**Well taught is the Dharma. Live the holy life for making an utter end of suffering!**”

So this came to be these venerable ones’ ordination.

²¹⁷ Comy says that the “Dharma-eye” (*dhamma,cakkhu*) [SD 49.8b (7.5)] is the path of streamwinning. In **Brahmā-yu S** (M 91,36/2:145), it refers to the 3 paths (*tiṇṇaṃ maggānaṃ*), ie, culminating in non-returning; in **Cūḷa Rāhul’-ovāda S** (M 147,9/3:280), the destruction of cankers (*āsava-k,khaya*). The following sentence: “All that is subject to arising is subject to ending,” shows the mode in which the path arises. The path takes ending (nirvana) as its object, but its function is to penetrate all conditioned states as being subject to arising and ending. (MA 3:92)

²¹⁸ Vappa’s verse is at Tha 61; see also MA 2:192; AA 1:147; ThaA 150; VA 965; J 1:82.

²¹⁹ Bhaddiya does not seem to have any Tha; but see VA 965; MA 2:192; AA 1:147; J 1:82.

²²⁰ *Yaṃ kiñci samudaya,dhammaṃ sabbantaṃ nirodha,dhamman’ti.*

²²¹ This is the earliest form of admission into the monastic community, performed by the Buddha himself: see SD 45.16 (1.2).

²²² Koṇḍañña, Vappa and Bhaddiya.

²²³ The Buddha and the 5 monks.

²²⁴ Mahānāma does not seem to have any Tha; but see VA 965; MA 2:192; AA 1:147; J 1:82.

²²⁵ Assaji is the elder whom Sāriputta meets and, impressed by his peaceful demeanour, asks for teachings and is converted, along with Moggallāna (V 1:39 f): he meets the wanderer Saccaka, **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35/1:227), SD 26.5, and **Assaji S** (S 22.88/3:124-126) + SD 42.8 (1) Assaji; see also MA 2:270, 271. C A F Rhys Davids, in *Sakya, or Buddhist Origins* (1928:122 ff), attr the *ye dhammā hetu-p,pabhavā* verse (Mv 1.23.5) to Assaji; see also her *Gotama the Man*, 1928:76 f, 108, 242; *A Manual of Buddhism for Advanced Students*, 1900:215. Her pioneer works, however, are very dated.

— evaṃ —

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[See SD 1, Main Bibliography]

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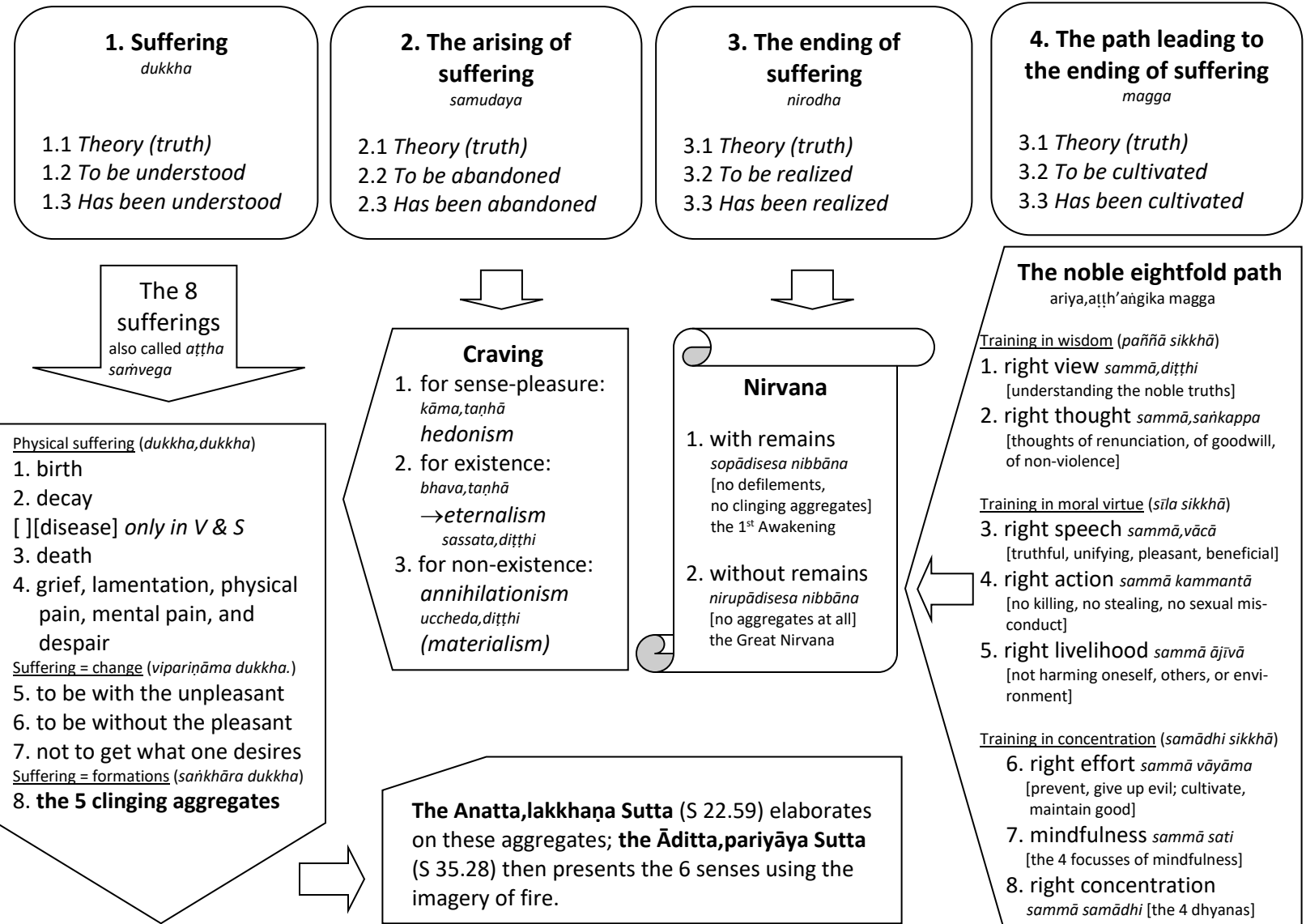
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1. The Truths and the Path

Saccā & magga

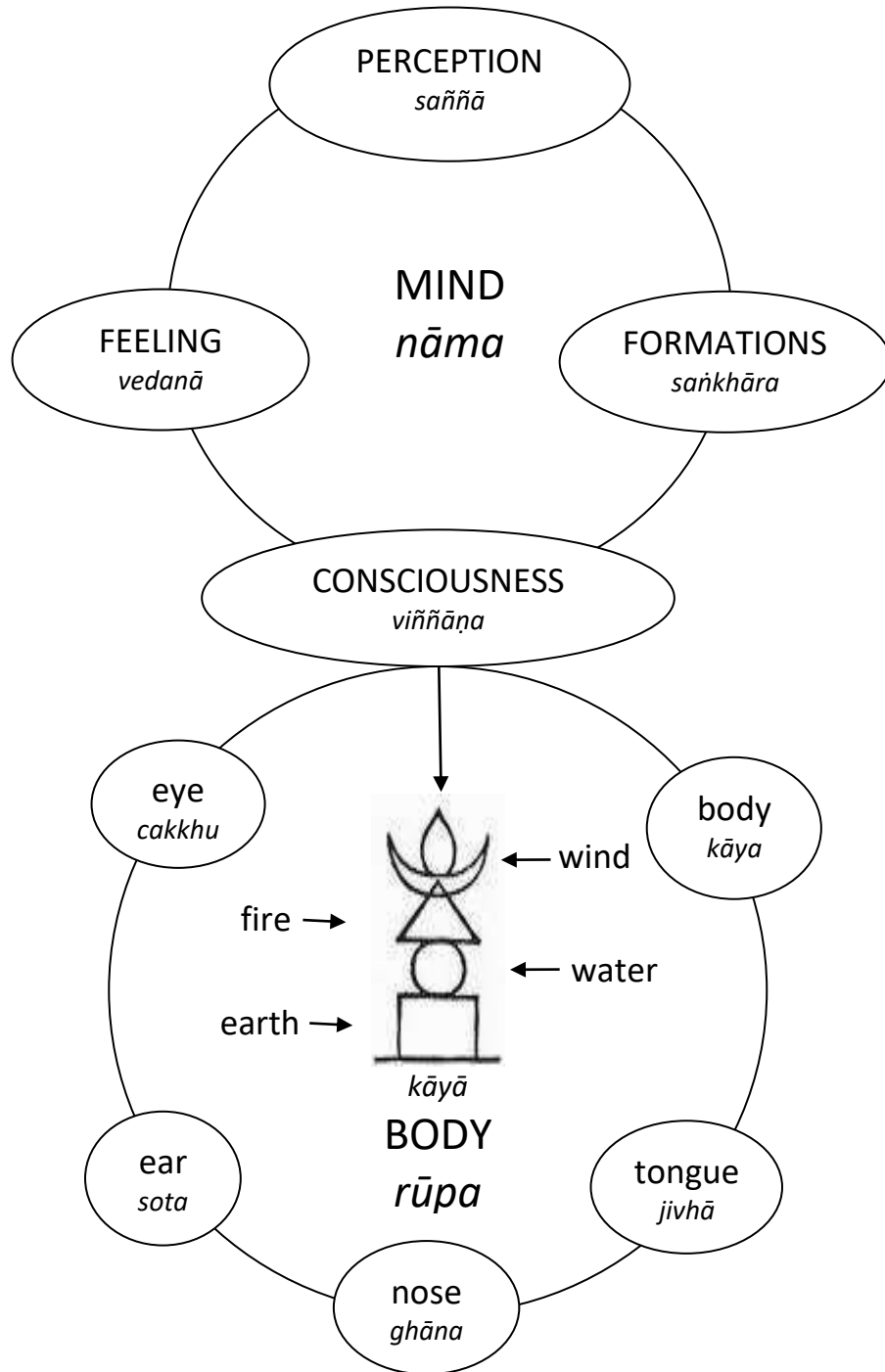
Levels of knowing

1. Truth *sacca,ñāṇa*:
heard, thought
2. Practice *kicca,ñāṇa*:
cultivated
3. Realization *kata,ñāṇa*
self-realized

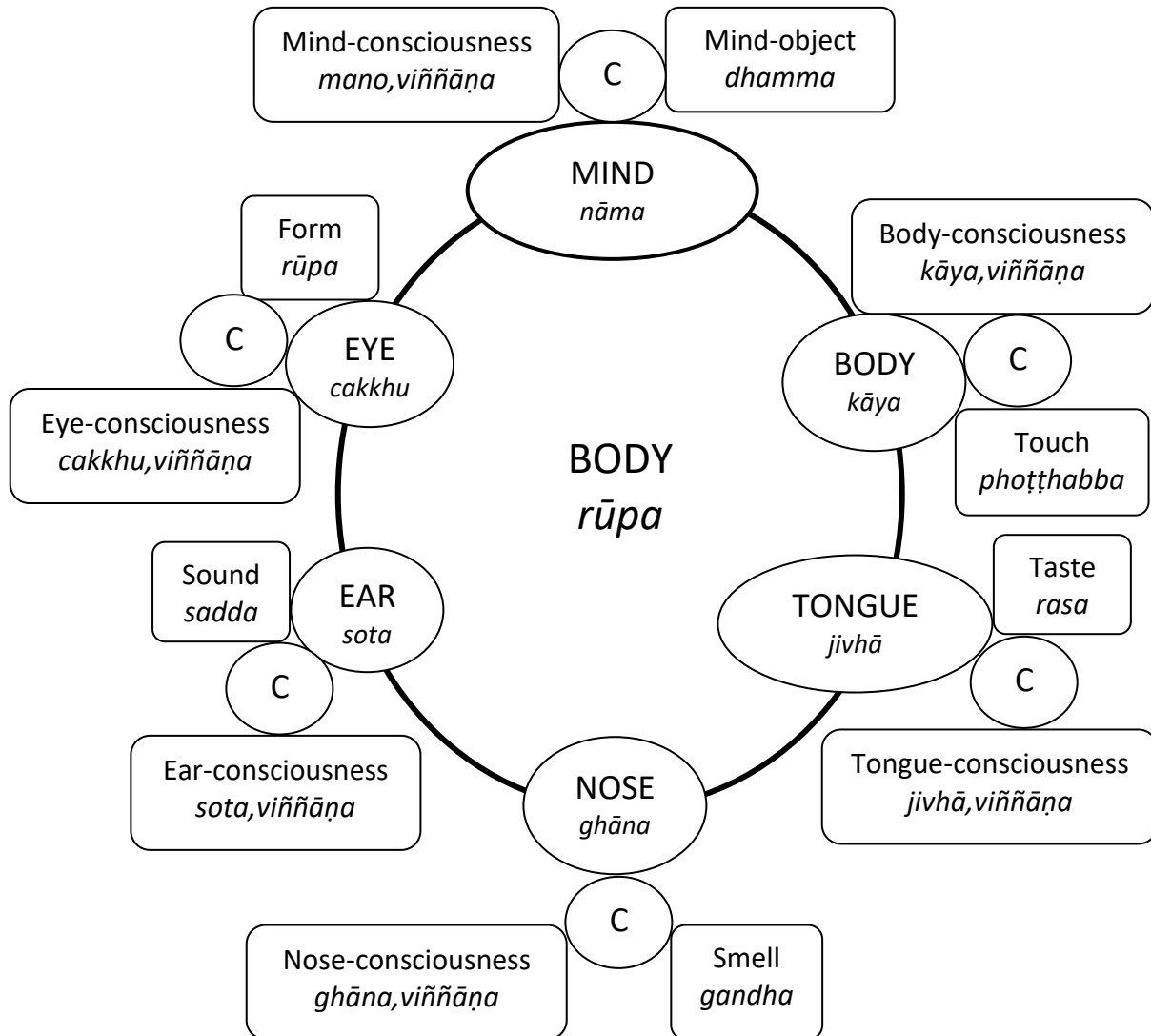


*See §5(i) n.

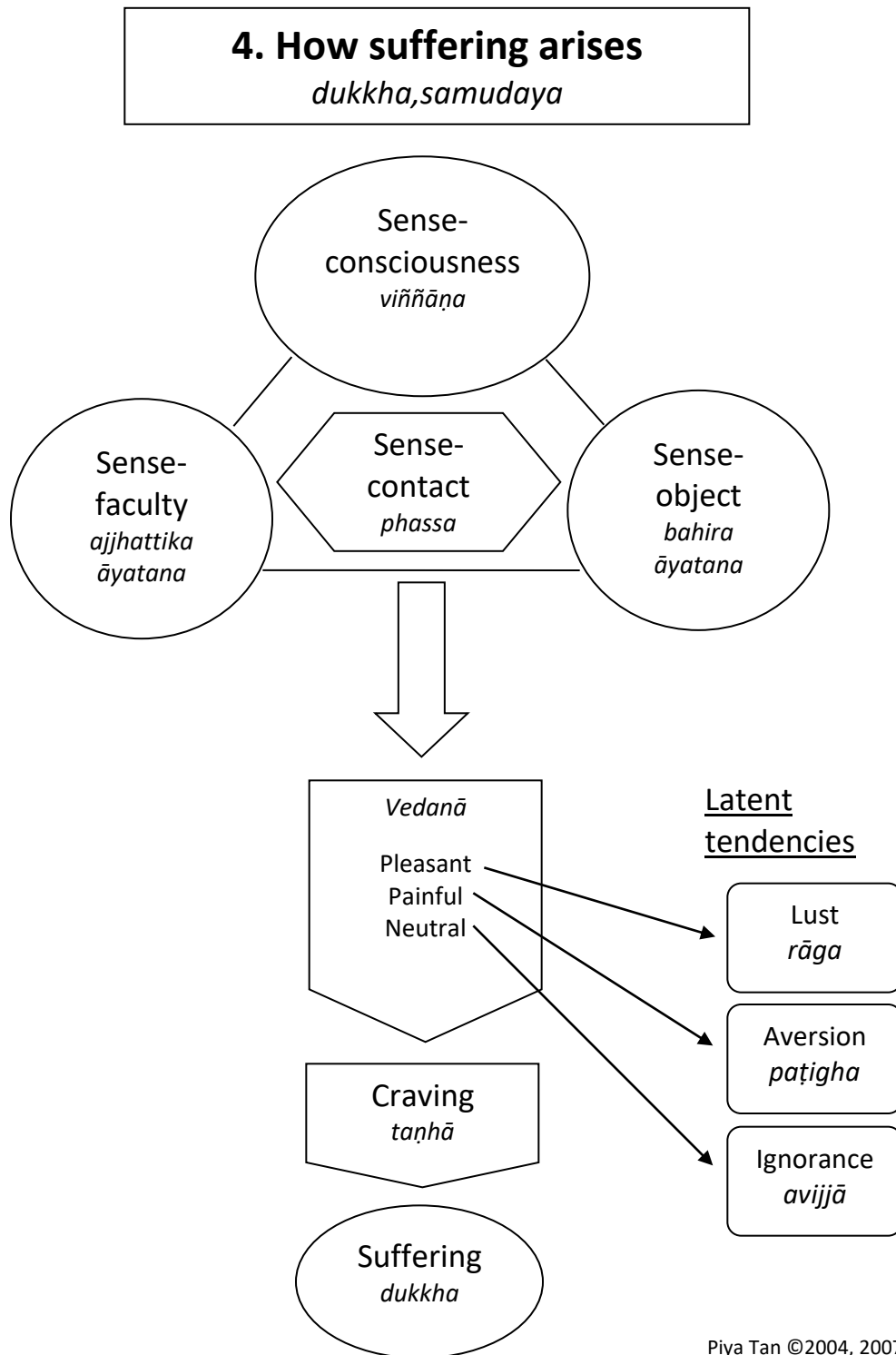
2. The 6 Senses and the 5 Aggregates
saḷ'āyatana & pañca-k,khandha



3. The 18 Elements
aṭṭhārasa āyatana



C = respective sense-contact or stimulus



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For a diagram of the 6 sense-faculties, see **Indriya, bhāvanā Sutta** (M 152), SD 17.13 Table 3a.