

# **Becoming Buddha**

## **Cross River Meditation Center**

### **Foundations of The Buddha's Dhamma Retreat**

**April 22 to April 25, 2021**

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Welcome

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## Session 7

### Bahiya Sutta

# WELCOME

Dear Fellow Retreatantss,

Thank you for allowing me the honor of leading our Becoming Buddha – Becoming Awakened Foundations of the Buddha’s Dhamma Sparing 2021 retreat. Matt, Jen, Ram, Kevin, Davis, and I hope to establish a most skillful and peaceful retreat environment.

Much like the setting of the first Buddhist Sangha, a retreat guided by the Eightfold Path will provide refuge from the entanglements of the world and the opportunity to deeply engage with the Buddha’s Dhamma. To that end, be mindful of the eight factors of the Eightfold Path.

The Buddha’s words offer simple and profound guidance:

- Be mindful of wrong view and remain in Right View.
- Be mindful of wrong intention and remain in Right Intention.
- Be mindful of wrong speech and remain in Right Speech.
- Be mindful of wrong action and remain in Right Action.
- Be mindful of wrong livelihood and remain in Right Livelihood.
- Be mindful of wrong effort and remain in Right Effort.
- Be mindful of wrong mindfulness and remain in Right Mindfulness
- Be mindful of wrong meditation and practice Right Meditation.

Thursday dinner and Sunday lunch will be an opportunity to practice Right Speech. Our meals on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday breakfast will be taken in Noble Silence. All other times please support yourself and others in the Dhamma and observe Right Speech.

Retreats guided by the Buddha’s Dhamma are not retreats from the Dhamma or from the opportunity for skillful interaction with each other, and so are not silent.

Our retreat environment will be very similar to the Buddha’s Sangha 2,600 years ago. The first Sangha was guided by a simple observance: When gathered as a sangha be mindful of the Dhamma and support others in remaining mindful of the Dhamma.

As with the first Sangha, the Eightfold Path will guide our thoughts, our speech, and our actions, providing the ongoing experiential opportunity to deepen and refine mindfulness of all aspects of the Path.

A retreat guided by the Buddha's Dhamma is an auspicious time to engage deeply in the Dhamma. Continually referring to the Foundations of what the Buddha actually taught will serve to establish, maintain, and deepen an authentic and immediately effective Dhamma practice.

Remaining mindful of Right Speech in your conversations with each other during our retreat is the most practical and effective way of beginning to integrate the Eightfold Path and Become Awakened. Supporting each other in maintaining Right Speech is one aspect of Right Speech and unites and supports our retreat Sangha within the guiding framework of the Eightfold Path.

The Buddha's words from the Magga Vibhanga Sutta:

"And what is Right Speech?

- Abstaining from lying
- Abstaining from divisive speech
- Abstaining from abusive speech
- Abstaining from gossip
- Abstaining from idle chatter

This, friends, is Right Speech."

This is your retreat. This truly is an auspicious time. Gently leave the world, its "spiritual" concepts and ideologies, and its fabricated distractions behind. This is your opportunity to engage wholeheartedly with these profound teachings. The world will still be the world Sunday afternoon. By recognizing and abandoning clinging to wrong views you may very well be quite different!

Be mindful of Right Speech and the entire Eightfold Path. Deepen your understanding. Be gentle with yourself and in your skillful interactions with others. This is how practical understanding is developed within the Framework of The Eightfold Path.

Take true refuge in the Buddha, his Dhamma, and our wonderful and well-focused Sangha.

Peace.

John Haspel

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# FOUNDATIONS OF THE BUDDHA'S DHAMMA RETREAT SCHEDULE

(subject to impermanence):

## Thursday

3:00 pm to – 5:30 pm Check-in

- 5:30 Dinner – Right Speech
- 7:00 to 9:00 – Jhana meditation, Dhamma Talk, Sangha Q&A, and Discussion, with John Haspel
- The importance of retreat and taking refuge in the Buddha, his Dhamma, and a well-focused Sangha, Developing Right View from Wrong View.
- Bhaddaheratta Sutta - An Auspicious Day
- Nothing Personal – A Buddha's Analysis Of Self – Dhatu Vibhanga Sutta

## Friday

- 6:45 To 7:15 am – 30-minute Jhana meditation (Optional) With Matt Branham
- 7:30 – Breakfast – Noble Silence
- 8:45 to 9:15 – QiGong with Matt Branham
- 9:30 to 11:00 – Jhana Meditation and Dhamma Talk, Sangha Q&A, and Discussion, with John Haspel
  - The Buddha's Noble Search For The Noble Path – Ariyapariyesanna Sutta
- 12 noon Lunch – Noble Silence
- 1:30 to 2:00 – QiGong with Matt Branham
- 2:15 to 4:00 – Jhana Meditation and Dhamma Talk, Sangha Q&A, and Discussion, with John Haspel
  - Nagara Sutta – The Buddha Describes His Awakening
- 5:30 – Dinner – Noble Silence
- 7:00 to 9:00 – Jhana Meditation and Dhamma Talk, Sangha Q&A, and Discussion, with John Haspel
  - The Meaning of Becoming – What Is Awakening – Loka, Bhava, and Mula Sutas

## Saturday

- 6:45 To 7:15 am – 30-minute Jhana meditation (Optional) With Matt Branham
- 7:30 Breakfast – Noble Silence
- 8:45 to 9:15 – QiGong with Matt Branham

- 9:30 to 11:00 – Jhana meditation, Dhamma Talk, Sangha Q&A, and Discussion, with John Haspel
  - Patikkasamuppada Sutta – Dependent Origination – Ignorance of Four Noble Truths
- 12 noon – Lunch – Noble Silence
- 1:30 to 2:30 – Qigong with Matt Branham
- 2:30 – 5:30 – Quiet Time
- 5:30 Dinner – Noble Silence
- 7:00 to 8:30 – Jhana meditation, Dhamma Talk, Sangha Q&A, and Discussion, with John Haspel
  - Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Four Noble Truths – Context For Dhamma Practice
  - Sacca Vibhanga Sutta – Analysis Of Four Noble Truths
- 8:30 Mindful Social – Right Speech In Practice

## Sunday

- 6:45 To 7:15 am – 30-minute Jhana meditation (Optional) With Matt Branham
- 7:30 – Breakfast – Noble Silence
- 8:45 to 9:15 – QiGong with Matt Branham
- 9:30 to 11:00 – Jhana meditation, Dhamma Talk, Sangha Q&A, and Discussion, with John Haspel
  - Magga-Vibhanga Sutta – Analysis of The Eightfold Path
  - Bahiya Sutta
- 12 noon Lunch – Right Speech
- 1:00 pm – Closing Talk and Sangha Appreciation (Group Hug and Pic)

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# ARAHANT SUTTA

“And when one has seen the five clinging-aggregates as they really are, the arising and the passing away, understanding the attraction and the distraction, seeing the arising of desire and the continued delusion, and being delivered from the five clinging-aggregates, this one is released from clinging, all defilements are destroyed, what must be done has been done, perfection is attained, the burden has been put down, the highest goal attained. This one is liberated by perfect insight”

End of Sutta

# Session 1

- Bhaddaheratta Sutta - An Auspicious Day
- Nothing Personal – A Buddha’s Analysis Of Self – Dhatu Vibhanga Sutta

## THE BHADDEKARATTA SUTTA – MINDFULNESS OF WHAT IS OCCURRING

### INTRODUCTION

The Bhaddekaratta Sutta teaches the importance of being mindfully present of life as life unfolds. Everything the Buddha taught during his forty-five-year teaching career was taught in the context of developing understanding of Four Noble Truths and release from clinging to self-referential views rooted in ignorance of these four truths.

The title of this Sutta means “an auspicious day.” An auspicious day in this context refers to a day that is significantly favorable towards developing awakening as the Buddha defines awakening: Developing a profound understanding of Dukkha and recognizing and abandoning all self-referential views rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths.

Here the Buddha references The Five Clinging Aggregates of form, feelings, perceptions, mental fabrications, and confused consciousness to describe an ignorant view of self. The Buddha teaches the importance of not being distracted to the past or to the future and to remain mindfully present with life as life occurs.

My comments below are in italics.

### THE BHADDEKARATTA SUTTA

The Buddha was staying in Savatthi, at Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s monastery. There he addressed the monks: “Friends, I will teach you the meaning of an auspicious day:

- Do not chase after the past or project your thoughts to the future.
- Not entangled with the world, be mindful only of what is occurring.
- Free of distraction, well-concentrated, develop compassion informed by wisdom.
- Mindfully engage with what is skillful.
- The future is uncertain and death occurs equally for all.
- Those who remain mindfully engaged with life as life occurs throughout the day have had a truly auspicious day.

“And how does one avoid chasing after the past? One does not get carried away with the delight that ‘in the past, I had such a form (body), in the past, I had such a feeling, in the past, I had such a perception, in the past I had such a fabrication, in the past I had such a consciousness.’ This is called not chasing after the past.

“And how does one not project their thoughts onto the future? One does not get carried away with delight that ‘in the future I might have such a form, in the future I may have such a feeling, in the future I might have such a perception, in the future I might have such a fabrication in the future, I might have such a consciousness.’ This is called not projecting thoughts onto the future.

*Notice the I-making through self-referential views in these statements.*

“And how does one become entangled with the world? An uninstructed ordinary person lacking understanding of the dhamma sees form as the self or the self as form. Confused, they see feeling as self or the self as possessing feeling. Confused, they see their perceptions as self or the self as possessing perceptions. Confused, they see their fabrications as self or their self as their fabrications. Confused, they see their consciousness as self or their self as their consciousness. This is what is meant by becoming entangled with the world.

“And how is one not entangled with the world? A follower of the dhamma, who is well-versed and well-trained in the dhamma does not see form as self or the self possessing form. With Right View established they do not see feeling as the self or the self possessing feelings. With Right View established they do not see perceptions as self or the self possessing perceptions. With Right View established they do not see fabrications as self or the self possessing fabrications. With Right View established they do not see consciousness as the self or the self possessing consciousness. This is called not being entangled with the world.

“To develop an auspicious day remain present with your life as your life occurs. Do not chase the past or project your thoughts to the future. Remain free of entanglements with the world and mindful of what is occurring. Be mindful of impermanence and uncertainty. Those that do so will have an auspicious day. So says this Peaceful Sage.”

End of Sutta

## **NOTHING PERSONAL – A BUDDHA’S ANALYSIS OF SELF – DHATU-VIBHANGA SUTTA**

INTRODUCTION

The significance and proper application of the Dhatu-Vibhanga Sutta will be lost if the context provided by a clear understanding of Dependent Origination and Four Noble Truths is ignored.

Overall, this sutta shows the Buddha's view on the complete and impersonal ordinariness of human life. The objects of life that are constantly personalized through self-identification are shown to be common, fleeting, and having no substance worth self-identification.

This sutta should be seen as a broad and far-reaching analysis of Five Clinging-Aggregates and how ignorance of Four Noble Truths creates fabricated views and an ongoing personalized experience of stress and sufferings.

In this sutta, the Buddha describes the six properties that constitute a person. Notice that there is no reference to a soul, or ground of being, or inner Buddha-Nature or Buddha-Hood, all themes common to modern Buddhism. As shown in this sutta, and many others, these are all aspects of fabricated self-identification craving for self-establishment in imaginary and speculative non-physical realms. As taught by the Buddha, the craving for self-establishment in these imaginary and speculative non-physical realms are to be seen clearly as fabrications arising from ignorance of Four Noble Truths.

Understanding this most profound sutta relieves the fear and aversion that arises from the desire for continued self-establishment in impermanent objects, events, views, and ideas fabricated from ignorance of Four Noble Truths. This fear born of desire often gives rise to clinging tenaciously to fabricated views of what Buddhism should be and results in the many adaptations, accommodations, and embellishments to the Buddha's Dhamma common to modern Buddhism.

In the Nagara Sutta, the Buddha describes the singular importance of recognizing that it is self-referential views stuck in ongoing thinking rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths that results in common and pervasive human suffering. After six years wandering Northern India seeking understanding, Siddhartha Gotama finally realized that it was self-referential views craving for and clinging to impermanent objects, events, views, and ideas that originate and continue confused and deluded thinking and ongoing stress and suffering. The Buddha taught one path, an Eightfold Path, that provides the framework and ongoing guidance to recognize and abandon all self-referential views rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths. The Buddha shows in this sutta the great freedom and calm that is developed through becoming "Rightly Self-Awakened."

My comments below are in italics.

## **DHATU-VIBHANGA SUTTA – AN ANALYSIS OF THE SIX HUMAN PROPERTIES**

On one occasion the Buddha was wandering among the Magadhans. He entered Rajagaha and went to the potter Bhaggava. He asked Bhaggava "If it is no inconvenience for you, friend, I will stay for one night in your shed."

"It is no inconvenience for me, but the wanderer Pukkusati has already taken up residence there. If he gives his permission, you may stay there as you like."

Pukkusati, a fellow Sakyan, had gone forth into homelessness and was developing the Buddha's Dhamma. The Buddha approached Pukkusati and asked him if he could stay one night in his shed.

Pukkusati replied, "This shed is roomy my friend, stay as you like."

The Buddha entered the shed and sat on a pile of leaves and grass. Folding his legs crosswise and holding his body erect he set mindfulness to the fore and began Jhana. Pukkusati joined him in meditation for most of the evening.

As morning approached, the Buddha had the thought "How inspiring Pukkusati behaves! Let me question him on his understanding.

"Venerable Pukkusati, out of dedication to whom have you gone forth? Who is your teacher and whose dhamma are you practicing?"

"My teacher is Gotama the contemplative, a Sakyan son. He is known far and wide as a Buddha, a rightly self-awakened one who is consummate and clear knowing and of pure conduct. He is an expert of worldly affairs, and the unsurpassed teacher of those fit to be taught. I have gone forth with dedication to him as my teacher and it is his Dhamma that I am practicing."

"Friend Pukkusati, where is the Buddha staying now?"

"Wanderer, I have heard that the Buddha is in Savatthi."

"Have you met the Buddha; would you recognize him?"

"No, I have never met the Buddha and I would not recognize him."

The Buddha understood Pukkusati's devotion. Without identifying himself he said to Pukkusati "I will teach you the Dhamma, friend. Listen and pay close attention as I speak.

“A person has six properties, six media of sensory contact leading to eighteen distinct considerations. Furthermore, a well-focused Dhamma practitioner establishes four wise determinations. Having established these four wise determinations this one has stilled the distraction of fabricated speculation and supposition. When the distraction of fabricated speculation and supposition has stilled, this one is said to be a sage at peace. A well-focused Dhamma practitioner should not neglect wise discernment, should always guard the truth, should always be devoted to unbinding, and train their minds only for calm.

“This is my summary and analysis of these six properties:

1. The earth property.
2. The liquid property.
3. The fire property.
4. The wind property.
5. The space property.
6. The consciousness property.

“A person has these six properties.

“Furthermore, a person has six media of sensory contact:

1. The eye.
2. The ear.
3. The nose.
4. The tongue.
5. The body.
6. The intellect.

“A person has these six media of sensory contact. (*The Six Sense-Base*)

“Furthermore, a person has eighteen considerations:

- On seeing form with the eye, one considers form as a basis for pleasure, or form as a basis for disappointment, or form as a basis for equanimity.
- On hearing sound with the ear, one considers sound as a basis for pleasure, or sound as a basis for disappointment, or sound as a basis for equanimity.
- On smelling an aroma with the nose, one considers aroma as a basis for pleasure, or aroma as a basis for disappointment, or aroma as a basis for equanimity.
- On tasting flavor with the tongue, one considers taste as a basis for pleasure, or taste as a basis for disappointment, or taste as a basis for equanimity.
- On feeling a tactile sensation with the body, one considers feeling as a basis for pleasure, or feeling as a basis for disappointment, or feeling as a basis for equanimity.

- On cognizing an idea with the intellect, one considers the idea as a basis for pleasure, or the idea as a basis for disappointment, or the idea as a basis for equanimity.

“These are the six considerations that are conducive to pleasure, six considerations that are conducive to disappointment, and six considerations that are conducive to equanimity. A person has these eighteen considerations.

“Furthermore, a wise Dhamma practitioner has four determinations:

1. The determination for discernment.
2. The determination for truth.
3. The determination for relinquishment.
4. The determination for calm.

“A wise Dhamma practitioner has these four determinations.

*The first determination is in reference to awakened Right View: A profound and penetrating understanding of stress and suffering. The second determination refers to developing understanding of Four Noble Truths that supports Right View. The third determination is the relinquishment of craving for and clinging to all self-referential and fabricated views ignorant of Four Noble Truths. The fourth determination refers to the culmination of the Buddha's Eightfold Path and the establishment of a calm mind free of the agitation and distraction of ignorance.*

“A Dhamma practitioner should not neglect discernment, should guard the truth, be devoted to relinquishment, and train only for calm.

“And how does one not neglect discernment? Through mindfulness of the six properties:

“And what is the earth property? The earth property can be internal or external. The internal earth property is anything within oneself that is hard, solid, and sustained by craving – head, hair, body, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, tendons, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs, intestines, contents of the stomach, feces, and anything else internal within oneself that's hard solid and sustained by craving. This is called the internal earth property. Both internal earth property and external earth property are simply earth property.

“Internal and external properties are simply one property” refers to the confused and magical thinking that would establish a self both internally as physical form and externally in non-physical imaginary realms. The common compulsion of establishing a self in external, non-physical form is explained further on as simply continued fabrication. Any ideological and imaginary self-referential establishment is fabricated self-establishment, occurring only in the mind. This type of fabricated compulsive thinking continues distraction and can only support becoming further ignorant of Four Noble Truths.

*The reference here and below to “sustained by craving refers to self-identification with the impermanent, common, and ordinary physical phenomena mentioned. Seeing this clearly, one can understand that there is nothing unique or personal about any of these impermanent phenomena. This understanding supports the cessation of establishing and defining a “self” through self-reference and clinging to ordinary, common, and impermanent objects, events, views, and ideas. This teaching and sutta show the only useful and non-distracting insight the Buddha teaches – insight into Three Marks Of Existence.*

“This is how the earth property should be seen by one with right discernment: ‘this is not me, this is not mine, this is not what I am, this is not my self.’ When one sees this as it has come to be with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the earth property and, through lack of sustenance, the earth property fades from the mind. [10]

*It is craving for and clinging to self-referential views ignorant of Four Noble Truths that sustain self-identification with any and all of these properties.*

“And what is the liquid property? The liquid property can be internal or external. The internal liquid property is anything belonging to oneself that is liquid, watery, and sustained by craving – bile, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, oil, saliva, mucus, urine, and anything else internal, within oneself that is liquid, watery, and sustained by craving. This is called the internal liquid property. Both internal and external liquid property are simply liquid property.

“This is how the liquid property should be seen by one with right discernment: ‘this is not me, this is not mine, this is not what I am, this is not my self.’ When one sees this as it has come to be with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the liquid property and, through lack of sustenance, the liquid property fades from the mind.

“And what is the fire property? The fire property can be internal or external. The internal fire property is anything belonging to oneself that is fire, fiery, and sustained by craving. The internal fire property is that by which the body is warmed, ages, consumed by fever, that which is eaten, drunk, chewed, and savored that is digested, or anything else internal, within oneself, that is fire, fiery and sustained, is called the internal fire property. Both internal and external fire property are simply fire property.

“This is how the fire property should be seen by one with right discernment: ‘this is not me, this is not mine, this is not what I am, this is not my self.’ When one sees this as it has come to be with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the fire property and, through lack of sustenance, the fire property fades from the mind.

“And what is the wind property? The wind property can be internal or external. The internal wind property is anything belonging to oneself that is wind, windy, and sustained by craving. The internal wind property is rising or falling wind, wind in the stomach, wind in the intestines, wind that courses through the body, in-and-out breathing, or anything else internal, within oneself,

that is wind, windy and sustained, is called the internal wind property. Both internal and external wind property are simply wind property.

“This is how the wind property should be seen by one with right discernment: ‘this is not me, this is not mine, this is not what I am, this is not my self.’ When one sees this as it has come to be with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the wind property and, through lack of sustenance, the wind property fades from the mind.

“And what is the space property? The space property can be internal or external. The internal space property is anything belonging to oneself that is space, spatial, and sustained by craving. The internal space property is the holes of the ears, the nostrils, the mouth, the throat passage whereby what is eaten, drunk, consumed, and tasted gets swallowed, and where it collects, and whereby it is excreted from the body, or anything else internal, within oneself, that is space, spatial, and sustained. This is called the internal space property. Both the internal and external space property are simply space property.

“This is how the space property should be seen by one with right discernment: ‘this is not me, this is not mine, this is not what I am, this is not my self.’ When one sees this as it has come to be with right discernment, one becomes disenchanted with the space property and, through lack of sustenance, the space property fades from the mind.

“And what is the consciousness property? Consciousness free of fabrication remains pure and bright. What is perceived by consciousness? One perceives pleasure. One perceives pain. One perceives neither pleasure nor pain.

“In dependence on sensory contact that is to be felt as pleasure, there arises a feeling of pleasure. (*Due to self-identification*) One perceives ‘I am sensing a feeling of pleasure.’

“That is to be felt” refers to holding the intention for self-identification with whatever is the focus of desire.

“In dependence on sensory contact that is to be felt as pain, there arises a feeling of pain. (*Due to self-identification*) One perceives ‘I am sensing a feeling of pain.’

“In dependence on sensory contact that is to be felt as neither pleasure nor pain, there arises a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain. (*Due to self-identification*) One perceives ‘I am sensing neither pleasure nor pain.’

“neither pleasure nor pain” is a feeling of disinterest, ambiguity, boredom – characteristic of a mind disjoined from its body.

“Through refined mindfulness, one understands that with the cessation (*of self-identification*) of that very sensory contact the feeling of pleasure has arisen independently of that contact. What is to be felt as pleasure ceases— is stilled (*Through restraint and lack of self-reference*).

*By developing restraint at the six sense-base one is able to remain well-concentrated and mindful of what is occurring and simply observe the arising and passing away of ordinary and impersonal phenomena. The result of the development of restraint at the six sense-base is a mind established in Right View.*

“Through refined mindfulness, one understands that with the cessation (*of self-identification*) of that very sensory contact the feeling of pain has arisen independently of that contact. What is to be felt as pain ceases— is stilled.

“Through refined mindfulness, one understands that with the cessation (*of self-identification*) of that very sensory contact the feeling of neither pleasure nor pain has arisen independently of that contact. What is to be felt as neither pleasure nor pain ceases— is stilled.

*Understanding the process of how a mind ignorant of Four Noble Truths fabricates wrong views of “self” brings an understanding of the Buddha’s meaning of “Anatta” – the Not-Self Characteristic.*

“Just as when two sticks are brought together and agitated, heat and fire are born dependent on contact and agitation. When the sticks are separated and the agitation ceases, heat subsides and fire is extinguished.

“In this same manner, an agitated mind, lacking concentration, in dependence on contact will feel feelings of pleasure, or feelings of pain, or feelings of neither pleasure nor pain.

“A wise Dhamma Practitioner understands that with the cessation of (*self-referential*) sensory contact, feelings of pleasure, or pain, or neither pleasure nor pain are stilled.

“Now there remains only a mind established in equanimity, luminous, pure, supple, and spacious. Just as if a skillful goldsmith were to take raw gold, and through skillful effort transform this raw gold into a refined and flawless ornament, malleable and luminous. The gold would now suit the Goldsmith’s purpose.

“In this same manner, one whose mind is established in equanimity, luminous, pure, supple, and spacious, knows that ‘If I were to direct my thinking toward non-physical dimensions of infinite consciousness, or infinite space, or infinite emptiness or nothingness, or the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, I would know these (*distracted mind-states*) as fabricated.

*Any self-referential, ideological, imaginary non-physical establishment should be seen as fabricated and arising from ignorance of Four Noble Truths and immediately abandoned.*

“A wise Dhamma practitioner does not fabricate, or mentally construct, for the sake of self-establishment in this physical realm or any (*fabricated or imaginary*) non-physical realm. Fabrications abandoned; this one is not sustained through craving. This one is released from clinging to anything in the world.

“(*Released from wrong views ignorant of Four Noble Truths*) This one is no longer agitated; their mind is calm and well-concentrated. This one knows their mind is calm and well-concentrated. This one knows ‘Birth is now ended, a life well-integrated (*with the Eightfold Path*) has been lived, my task is complete, there is nothing further in this world.’

“Nothing further in this world” refers to having developed the profound understanding that there is now, and never was, anything of the world that could be seen as me, mine, myself, or any variation of self-identification. “Nothing further in this world” also refers to the profound understanding that there is nothing further beyond this world in a non-physical, ideological, and imaginary sense to crave for or cling to.

“Friend, Pukkusati, when sensing a feeling of pleasure, understand it as impersonal and as such impermanent. Understanding thus, craving and clinging vanish. Likewise, when sensing a feeling of pain, or sensing a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, understand these feelings as impersonal and as such impermanent. Understanding thus, craving and clinging vanish. Understanding brings the awareness that pleasure, pain, and neither pleasure nor pain are impersonal and as such impermanent and are not craved after or self-identified with.

“Self-identified with” is clinging to what is craved after. As shown in Dependent Origination, it is craving originating in ignorance of Four Noble Truths that leads to clinging to and maintaining ignorance.

“When feeling pleasure, pain, or neither pleasure nor pain, a wise Dhamma practitioner remains disjoined (*through lack of self-identification*) from these feelings. This one understands feelings in the body are limited to the body. This one understands feelings limited to human life are limited to human life. This one understands that with the ending of life and the break-up of the body that all that is experienced and not joined to will grow cold and end right then.

“Just as an oil lamp burns in dependence on wick and oil, from the termination of wick and oil it would be un nourished and cease. In this same manner when a wise Dhamma practitioner is feeling a feeling limited to the body they understand ‘I am sensing a feeling that is limited to this body.’ When wise Dhamma practitioner is feeling a feeling limited to human life they understand ‘I am sensing a feeling limited to human life.’ This wise Dhamma practitioner understands that with the ending of life and the break-up of the body that all that is experienced and not joined to will grow cold and end right then.

*These last two paragraphs refer to the freedom and peace developed through the recognition and relinquishment of all self-referential views. The Buddha is describing a mind established in Right View and free of any ignorance of Four Noble Truths, a mind free of fear fueled by desire, a mind resting in equanimity.*

“In this manner, when one has the highest determination for understanding, for the knowledge of the arising and passing away of suffering and stress, this one has achieved the greatest noble understanding.

“This Dhamma practitioner has gained release from all views ignorant of Four Noble Truths. Their mind has established Right View now resting in pure truth. This view will no longer fluctuate due to distraction. This one knows whatever is deceptive and remains free from associating with deception. This Dhamma practitioner is established with the highest determination for truth. This is the foremost unbinding from wrong views and is the highest Noble Truth.

“Formerly, when still ignorant of Four Noble Truths, this Dhamma practitioner foolishly craved after mental acquisitions and created self-identities clinging to these mental acquisitions. This Dhamma practitioner has completely abandoned them. Through the Eightfold Path, this one has cut fabrications off at the root of ignorance. Like the stump of a palmyra tree, now deprived of the conditions of sustenance, fabrications will no longer arise.

“Likewise, when still ignorant of Four Noble Truths, this Dhamma practitioner foolishly was driven by desire and self-infatuation, by ill-will and hatred, by delusion and ignorance, and created self-identities clinging to these unskillful qualities. Now, this Dhamma practitioner has completely abandoned them. Through the Eightfold Path, this one has cut fabrications off at the root of ignorance. Like the stump of a palmyra tree, now deprived of the conditions of sustenance, fabrications will no longer arise.

“This Dhamma practitioner has established the highest determination for calm – for the calming of greed, aversion, and deluded thinking. This one has established the Highest Noble Calm. This Dhamma practitioner knows to never neglect Right View, to always guard the Truth and to always train for establishing a calm and well-centered mind. [14]

“This Dhamma practitioner understands where, through wise restraint, the currents of speculation and supposition do not flow, this one is known as ‘a sage at peace.’

“With reference to what I am saying to you, all of the following is speculation and supposition:

- I am.
- I am this.
- I will be.

- I will not be.
- I will have this form.
- I will not have this form.
- I will have psychic powers.
- I will not have psychic powers.

*Common in many modern Buddhist doctrines, the acquisition of supernatural powers is often presented as a sign of “awakening” or higher knowledge. Here, and many other suttas, the Buddha is showing that grasping after or clinging to anything in this manner is simply continued self-reference rooted in ignorance.*

“Speculation and supposition are diseases, a cancer, an arrow. By abandoning all speculation and supposition this Dhamma Practitioner is known as a ‘sage at peace.’

“A sage at peace is no longer distracted or agitated by birth, aging, sickness, death, sorrow, regret, greed, aversion, or deluded thinking. With no distraction or agitation, what would this Dhamma practitioner crave for or cling to?

“This Dhamma practitioner understands where the currents of speculation and supposition do not flow. When, through wise restraint, the currents of speculation and supposition do not flow, this one is known as ‘a sage at peace.’

“Now, friend Pukkusati, you should remember my brief analysis of the six properties.”

Then the thought occurred to Venerable Pukkusati: ‘Surely the Great Teacher has come to me! Surely the Rightly Self-Awakened one has come to me! Pukkusati rose and bowed to the Buddha and said: ‘I was foolish, confused, and unskilled to address you merely as friend. Please accept my apology so that I may restrain myself in the future.’

The Buddha replied ‘Yes, confusion overcame you. But, most importantly, you have recognized your confusion and, in accordance with my Dhamma, have made the strong determination to end your confusion. It is just this determination and discipline that one grows in the Dhamma and practices restraint in the future.

“Great Teacher, please accept me into the order to follow your Dhamma.

“Do you have an alms bowl and robes?”

“No” Replied Pukkusati.

“Then gather a bowl and robes and I will give you the going forth.”

Pukkusati was delighted. He bowed to the Buddha and left in search of an alms bowl and robes for his ordination. While searching, a runaway cow trampled and killed Pukkusati.

A large group from the Sangha found the Buddha and told him of Pukkusati demise. They asked the Buddha what Pukkusati's future state would be.

"Friends, Pukkusati was wise. He practiced the Dhamma in accordance with my instruction. He never pestered me with un-related issues. He has abandoned the five fetters of:

1. Self-identification.
2. Grasping at rituals and practices.
3. Doubt and uncertainty.
4. Sensual craving.
5. Deluded thinking.

"He is now free of fabricated views will never again be subject to the suffering born of ignorance.

Those that heard these words of the Buddha were delighted.

End of Sutta

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## Session 2

### **The Buddha's Noble Search For The Noble Path – Ariyapariyesanna Sutta**

#### INTRODUCTION

The Ariyapariyesana Sutta is one of the most significant suttas in the Sutta Pitaka. Recounting Siddhartha Gotama's own experience during his search for understanding, the Ariyapariyesana Sutta provides continual guidance on establishing and maintaining an authentic, practical, and effective Dhamma practice. This sutta also clearly explains the underlying motivation for the development of the many confusing and contradictory "dhammas" and the Buddha's consistent teaching method of clearly describing the difference between his Dhamma and other common and popular dhammas of his time.

I use the word “Dhamma” to define teachings that the Buddha developed through his Noble Search and “dharma” to describe modern Buddhist practices that have adapted, accommodated, diminished, embellished, and often contradict and confuse the original teachings of an awakened human being.

In this remarkable Sutta, the Buddha uses his own search for understanding as a profoundly wise and compassionate example for our search for understanding. In this sutta, the Buddha teaches that a Noble Search must have a focused direction that does not simply reinforce ignorance. The framework and guidance of the Eightfold Path support recognizing and abandoning the fabrications that have arisen from ignorance as described in the Paticca Samuppada Sutta, the primary sutta on Dependent Origination.

There are many important themes represented in this sutta. Siddhartha describes his studying with two very popular and powerful teachers who hoped to have him join their community. Siddhartha did not succumb to self-identifying with popular or commonly practiced dharmas. Despite the common attraction and distraction, he maintained his Noble Search for a singular Noble Path.

Siddhartha was not seeking a Dhamma that his associates were enamored with or that he could have a significant position in. He avoided giving legitimacy to a dharma simply due to a charismatic leader, general popularity, or a compulsive non-dual all-religions-are-one view.

He was not seeking a dharma that reaffirmed familiar, popular, but fabricated views.

No understanding can develop from that which is inherently impermanent and is clearly prone to continuing confused and deluded thinking that supports the Three Defilements of craving, aversion, and continued delusion.

He was engaged in a Noble Search that avoided further confusion, distraction, self-reference, and suffering.

His Noble Search was for a Noble Path that culminates in peace and understanding free of fabricated (wrong) views rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths. Significantly, he continued his search until he established seclusion and disentanglement from the influence of common dharmas.

While engaging in a realistic meditation practice that avoided further distraction, he was able to recognize the fabricated views rooted in his own ignorance by directly developing concentration, by directly developing Jhana. As described here, he attained the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke: the unbinding from views ignorant of Four Noble Truths.

Attaining the “unborn” does not directly relate to physical birth. Most significantly it relates immediately to becoming empty of clinging to ignorant views which would provoke continually “giving birth” to the ongoing experience of suffering, Dukkha, rooted in views ignorant of Four Noble Truths.

As the Buddha describes in the Nagara Sutta, he was finally able to recognize the feedback loop of self-referential views bound by thinking rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths. He became “Rightly Self-Awakened” and freed himself from all wrong views that would provoke the birth of another moment rooted in self-referenced ignorance.

Siddhartha Gotama, now Buddha, begins his teaching career by instructing the group of five friends he previously wandered around Northern India with, all seeking understanding. He explains to them his disappointing and unproductive experience from his studying with teachers who taught self-establishment in imaginary non-physical planes. He explains to them that searching for understanding where only craving, clinging, confusion, distraction, and ongoing disappointment can be found is an ignoble search leading to the many confusing, contradictory, and ignoble paths.

Essentially, the Buddha teaches that to engage in a search that is itself directed by ignorance will only ignore ignorance and continually obscure wisdom. A life spent in ignorance of Four Noble Truths is a life spent in an ignoble search for peace, satisfaction, and understanding where peace, satisfaction, and understanding cannot be found.

As recounted and taught in the Ariyapariyesana Sutta, Siddhartha Gotama eventually became Rightly Self-Awakened by first realizing that understanding cannot be found by searching in dharmas rooted in ignorance and inherently prone to confusion, delusion, and ongoing disappointment, or using rituals and practices that are themselves rooted in craving, aversion, and delusion that are inherently impermanent and ever-changing, reinforce self-identification, and are shrouded behind the veil of ongoing ignorance.

Becoming stuck in the feedback loop of self-referential views reverberating off of ongoing thinking ignorant of Four Noble Truths – as described in the Nagara Sutta – is the initial condition that supports the fabricated wrong views that give rise to the compulsion to adapt, accommodate, and embellish a Rightly Self-Awakened human being’s Dhamma.

Siddhartha eventually developed profound understanding and awakened Right View from recognizing and abandoning “spiritual” or “religious” practices that constitute an ignoble search. By recognizing and abandoning beliefs and practices rooted in ignorance, Siddhartha discovered the simple and direct Eightfold Path that provides focused guidance for Noble Search.

In this way, it becomes obvious that the recognition and development of the practice and development of Jhana meditation is singularly paramount to integrating the entire Eightfold Path as an authentic, useful, and effective Dhamma practice.

Engaging in the Noble Search brings the possibility for all human beings to become Rightly Self-Awakened through integrating the Noble Eightfold Path.

My comments within the sutta below are in italics.

## **ARIYAPARIYESANA SUTTA – SIDDHARTHA’S NOBLE SEARCH FOR THE NOBLE PATH**

On one occasion the Buddha was in Savatthi at Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s Monastery. He adjusted his robes and taking his alms-bowl he left for town for his daily meal.

A large group of monks approached Ananda: “It has been a long while since we heard a Dhamma talk from the Great Teacher. It would be for our long-term benefit to hear a Dhamma talk from the Awakened One.”

“Venerable ones, perhaps if you went to the hermitage of Rammaka you will get to listen to a Dhamma talk from the Buddha.”

“We will do as you say, Venerable Ananda.”

The Buddha returned from alms and asked Ananda to accompany him to the Eastern Park and the palace of Migara’s mother for the days abiding. Then, having spent the day in seclusion, the Buddha asked Ananda to accompany him to the Eastern Gatehouse to bathe.

Having bathed, Ananda said to his Teacher “The hermitage of Rammaka is nearby. It is pleasant and delightful. There are many there awaiting your teaching. It would be of benefit to them if, out of sympathy, you were to go there.”

The Buddha agreed and they left for Rammaka’s hermitage. As they approached, they heard a Dhamma discussion underway. The Buddha waited for the discussion to end. Hearing silence he cleared his throat and knocked to announce his arrival. Upon entering, he sat on a prepared seat and addressed the sangha.

“For what discussion were you all gathered here?”

“Great Teacher, we were discussing you, and then you arrived.”

“Good! It is fitting that you have gone forth from good families, from home to homelessness, and gather for Dhamma discussion. When you gather as a sangha you should always discuss the Dhamma, or practice Noble Silence.

*(Noble Silence is practiced when gathered as a sangha and is also an aspect of the stilling of self-talk developed in the second level of meditative absorption, the second level of Jhana). Noble Silence is inquired and initiated by Right Speech*

“Friends, there are two types of searching for understanding. There is ignoble searching and Noble Searching.

“And what is ignoble searching?

Ignoble searching occurs when a person, subject to birth, seeks happiness in what is also subject to birth.

*The profound nature of this statement cannot be overlooked. All things that arise are prone to cessation. Seeking happiness by craving for or clinging to anything in the impermanent world is also clinging to or joining with stress, disappointment, and ongoing unsatisfactory experiences.*

Ignoble searching occurs when a person, subject to sickness, seeks happiness in what is also subject to sickness.

Ignoble searching occurs when a person, subject to aging, seeks happiness in what is also subject to aging.

Ignoble searching occurs when a person, subject to death, seeks happiness in what is also subject to death.

Ignoble searching occurs when a person, subject to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion, seeks happiness in what is also subject to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion.

*Seeking for understanding in what is subject to confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing disappointing and unsatisfactory experiences will only continue confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing disappointing and unsatisfactory experiences. A search or practice seeking to establish a permanent though “improved” or “enlightened” view of self in any physical or non-physical realm directly contradicts an awakened view of Three Marks Of existence and can only further confusion, distraction, delusion, and suffering.*

“What is subject to birth?

- Spouses and children are subject to birth.
- Men and women slaves are subject to birth.
- Animals of all types are subject to birth.
- Gold and silver (*material wealth*) are subject to birth.

“When these are seen as acquisitions one becomes attached and infatuated with these acquisitions. Seeking happiness with what is subject to birth is an ignoble search.

*Identifying anything as me, or mine, or joining with by clinging to any object, event, thought, or idea is an acquisition. Wishing for permanence in what is inherently impermanent is rooted in craving, aversion, and deluded thinking – the Three Defilements that arise from ignorance of Three Marks of Existence.*

“Likewise, these are all subject to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion. Seeking happiness with what is subject to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion is ignoble searching.

“And what is Noble Searching?

Noble Searching is, while being subject to birth, seeking to understand the suffering of birth, seeking the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding. This is Noble Searching (*Unbinding from views rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths*)

Noble Searching is, while being subject to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion, seeking what is free of sickness, of aging, of death, free of sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, free of greed, aversion, and delusion. This is Noble Searching.

Noble searching is seeking the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding. This is Noble searching.

*Unbinding from views rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths is Awakened Right View:*

- Understanding Stress (Dukkha)
- Understanding the origination of stress
- Understanding the cessation of stress
- Understanding the Path leading to the cessation of stress.

“Friends, before my self-awakening, when I was still an unawakened Bodhisatta (*Sanskrit: Bodhisattva*) being subject to birth, to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion, I was seeking happiness with what is

subject to birth, to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion.

*This one statement clearly describes the distraction inherent in the common Mahayana Buddhist “Bodhisattva” path that contradicts and displaces the Noble Eightfold Path.*

“Then the thought occurred to me, ‘Why do I, being subject myself to birth, to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion, seek what is likewise subject subject to birth, to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion?’

“What if I, being subject to birth, were to seek to understand the suffering of birth, seeking the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding.

*Some translations call the “unborn” the “deathless” as referring to the cessation of self-identification bringing the “death” of loss and disappointment. “Unborn” is more descriptive of becoming empty of ignorance of Four Noble Truths that would otherwise give “birth” to another moment rooted in ignorance and prone to confusion, delusion, and ongoing unsatisfactory experiences.*

“What if I, being subject to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion, were to seek understanding of the suffering of sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion?

“What if I were to seek the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding?

*Siddhartha Gotama here is describing his thought-process prior to going forth into homelessness.*

“So, at a later time while still a young man, black-haired, early in my life, my parents crying, I shaved off my hair, put on a robe made of rags, and went forth from home to homelessness. *(At the age of twenty-nine)*

“Having gone forth seeking understanding of these things, seeking what is skillful, seeking unexcelled and lasting peace, I went to Alara Kalama. On arrival, I said to him, ‘friend Alara, I want to practice your dharma and discipline – to become your disciple.’

“Alara said to me ‘You may stay. My dharma is such that an observant person can soon understand and integrate my knowledge and realize it for themselves through their own direct knowledge.’

“From reciting and repetition I quickly learned his dharma. I could affirm that I knew his dharma.

“I thought that it is not through the mere conviction that Alara Kalama declares that I understand and have integrated his dharma and realized it for myself through direct knowledge. Alara Kalama certainly understands and has integrated this dharma.

“So I went to Alara and asked him ‘What is the culmination of your understanding and integration of this dharma. Alara declared that the culmination of his dharma was (*establishment in*) the dimension of nothingness.

“Then I thought ‘Not only does Alara Kalama have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. I also have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. What if I were to strive to realize for myself this dharma through direct knowledge?

“I quickly developed understanding and fully integrated Alara Kalama’s dharma, having realized for myself the dimension of nothingness through direct knowledge. I then asked Alara if this was the culmination of his understanding and integration of this dharma?

“Alara told me this was the culmination of his understanding and integration of his dharma. He then said that it was a great gain for his sangha to have a companion such as myself in their sangha. He then asked me to lead their sangha together.

“Alara Kalama my teacher, placed me on the same level as himself paying me great honor. But, I had the thought that this dharma does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, or to unbinding. This dharma only seeks to establish a reappearance in the dimension of nothingness.

*Siddhartha here is evaluating the value of reaching the culmination of Alara’s dharma. He is cautious about continuing an ignoble search due to a fabricated vested interest from previous effort and association and praise from Alara Kalama.*

“I found this dharma unsatisfactory and so I left Alara Kalama and continued the Noble Search.

“As I continued the Noble Search I went to Uddaka Ramaputta. Upon arrival I told him ‘Friend Uddaka, I want to practice your dharma and discipline – to become your disciple.’

“Uddaka replied ‘You may stay. My dharma is such that an observant person can soon understand and integrate my knowledge and realize it for themselves through their own direct knowledge.’

“From reciting and repetition, I quickly learned his dharma. I could affirm that I knew his dharma.

“I thought that it is not through the mere conviction that Uddaka Ramaputta declares that I understand and have integrated his dharma and realized it for myself through direct knowledge. Uddaka Ramaputta certainly understands and has integrated this dharma.

“So I went to Uddaka and asked him ‘What is the culmination of your understanding and integration of this dhamma. Uddaka declared that the culmination of his dhamma was (*establishment in*) the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

“Then I thought ‘Not only does Uddaka Ramaputta have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. I also have conviction, persistence, mindfulness, concentration, and discernment. What if I were to strive to realize for myself this dharma through direct knowledge?

“I quickly developed understanding and fully integrated Uddaka Ramaputta’s dharma, having realized for myself the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception through direct knowledge. I then asked Uddaka if this was the culmination of his understanding and integration of this dharma?

“Uddaka told me this was the culmination of his understanding and integration of his Dharma. He then said that it was a great gain for his sangha to have a companion such as myself in their sangha. He then asked me to lead their sangha together.

“Uddaka Ramaputta, my teacher, placed me on the same level as himself paying me great honor. But, I had the thought that this Dharma does not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, or to unbinding. This Dharma only seeks to establish a reappearance in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Siddhartha evaluates Uddaka Ramaputta’s dharma as he did before with Alara Kalam’s dhamma.

*Perception is a belief based on observation framed by view. If a view is rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths, then perception is based on fabrications arising from ignorance. The imaginary mental establishment in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception is simply the denial of stress, or continued ignorance, rather than recognition and abandonment of this initial ignorance. The establishment and defense of perceptions arising from fabricated views is the common and pervasive strategy of a mind rooted in ignorance used in order to continue to ignore its own ignorance.*

“I found this Dharma unsatisfactory and so I left Uddaka Ramaputta and continued the Noble Search.

This recounting of Siddhartha's Noble Search leaves out his time spent in severe ascetic practices while wandering with five other seekers. This is referenced below as he also dismisses asceticism as these practices did not bring the understanding he was seeking.

"Seeking the unexcelled peace arising from skillful understanding, I wandered through the Magadhan country and arrived in Uruvela. This place was delightful with inspiring forests, a clear-flowing river with shallow banks, and nearby villages for alms. This seemed just right for developing Jhana. [5]

"Friends, (*while practicing Jhana*) being subject to birth, to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion, I realized the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding. Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.'

"Then I had the thought 'This Dhamma that I have attained is deep, hard to see, and hard to realize. This Dhamma is peaceful, refined, and beyond mere conjecture. This Dhamma is subtle and is to be directly experienced by the wise. But the world delights in attachment, is excited by attachment, is devoted to attachment, and worships attachment. For a world delighting in attachment, excited by attachment, devoted to attachment, worshipping attachment, conditioned towards self-identification from dependence on ignorance, this Dhamma is hard to see.

"The awakened state is also hard to realize. The awakened state is:

- The resolution of all fabrications.
- The relinquishment of all acquisitions.
- The ending of craving.
- The development of dispassion.
- The development of cessation.
- The development of unbinding.

"If I were to teach the Dhamma and others would not understand me, that would be tiresome for me, troublesome for me.

"Just then this realization, never known before, occurred to me:

'I'll dismiss teaching that which, only with great difficulty, I attained. This Dhamma is not easily realized by those overcome by greed, aversion, and delusion.

'This Dhamma is difficult to understand, subtle, deep, contrary to common belief. Those delighting in passion, their minds obscured in darkness, will not understand.'

*The following portion of this sutta uses metaphor to portray a significant realization that arose in Siddhartha's, now a Buddha, an awakened human being's mind. The use of metaphor to portray troubled mind states or significant realizations is used throughout the Pali Canon.*

“Then, Brahma Sahampati became aware of my thoughts: ‘The world is lost, destroyed! The Arahant, the Rightly Self-Awakened One is inclined to dwelling in ease and not teaching his Dhamma!’

“Brahma Sahampati left his realm and came to me. He knelt on his right knee, bowed, and said ‘Rightly Self-Awakened One please teach your Dhamma! Please teach your Dhamma! There are those with just a little dust in their eyes. They are suffering because they will not hear your Dhamma. There are those that are able to understand your Dhamma.’

“Brahmā Sahampati continued: ‘In the past, there appeared among the Magadhans an impure Dhamma devised by the ignorant. Teach your Dhamma to end the pain of birth, sickness, aging, death. Teach your Dhamma to end sorrow, regret, distress, despair, to end greed, aversion, and delusion. Teach your Dhamma so they can also realize the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding.

‘Just as one standing on a high peak might see people below, you, the wise one, with profound vision, must take your place in the palace of the Dhamma. Free from suffering, look on those suffering, oppressed with birth and aging.

‘You have conquered ignorance! Be a great teacher and wander without entanglements. Teach your Dhamma, there will be those who will understand.’

“Mindful of Sahampati's plea and out of compassion for all beings, from my awakened state, I looked out onto the world. I saw beings with little dust in their eyes, and beings with much. I saw uncluttered beings and dull beings. I saw beings with good qualities and beings with bad qualities.

“I looked out onto the world and I saw beings hardened in their views, disgraced, in danger.

“I looked out onto the world and I saw those who would be easy to teach my understanding, my Right View.

“It is as if a pond is permeated with red, white, and blue lotus, born and growing immersed in the water. They flourish permeated with cool water from their root to tip never standing above the surface. Even so, some might rise up and emerge from the murky water.

“Seeing thus, I decided to teach my Dhamma, to open to the world the Path To Cessation. Those with eyes to see and ears to hear could come forth in conviction. Those lacking the eyes

to see or ears to hear the pure Dhamma I would not teach my refined and pure Dhamma. *(It is an aspect of Right Speech to avoid idle or unnecessary speech. Teaching the Dhamma to those who likely will not hear the Dhamma is idle and unnecessary speech.)*

“I would teach the pure Dhamma tirelessly and untroubled. Brahmā Sahampati was pleased. He bowed and disappeared

“Then the thought occurred to me, ‘Who should I first teach the Dhamma to? Who will quickly understand? I thought of Alara Kalama, wise, intelligent, competent, but I heard that he had passed a week ago. I thought what a great loss it was to my friend, Alara. He would have quickly learned my Dhamma.

“Then I thought of Uddaka Rāmaputta. He too is wise, intelligent, competent. But I heard he had passed just last night. It was a great loss to my friend Uddaka, as well. He too would have quickly learned my Dhamma.

“I then thought of the five friends I wandered with while attending to ascetic practices. I knew they were in the Deer Park at Isipatana. I took my leave to wander in stages to Isipatana. Along the way, I encountered Upaka, the Ajivaka. He noticed my composure, my complexion bright. He inquired ‘On whose account have you gone forth? Who is your teacher? In whose Dhamma do you delight?’

“I told Upaka ‘I have left the world behind through my own understanding. I am released from all wrong views, from all phenomena. Empty of ignorance, I am free of craving. My realization is taught by none – to whom should I declare as my teacher? I have no teacher as one like me cannot be found. I have no counterpart for I am an Arahant in the world. I am the unexcelled teacher, Rightly Self-Awakened. The fires of passion are cooled. I am unbound. I will set the wheel of the true Dhamma rolling. I am traveling to Kasi. In a world afflicted with the darkness of ignorance, I beat the drum of wisdom!’”

“Upaka replied ‘From what you claim you must be the ultimate conqueror.’

“Conquerors like me have abandoned greed, aversion, and delusion. I have conquered all evil qualities. You are correct, Upaka, I am a conqueror.”

“Upaka, unconvinced, shaking his head, took his leave.

“I continued to the Deer Park. From afar, my five friends saw me. I was no longer gaunt from ascetic self-denial. Thinking that I was living luxuriously they decided to not show me respect. As I approached they noticed my awakened state. Standing in respect, they took my robe and bowl and prepared a seat. One of my friends took a bowl and began to wash my feet. They, however, addressed me by my familiar name.

“Friends, do not address the Tathagata, a Rightly Self-Awakened One in this way. I am Rightly Self-Awakened, a worthy one. Listen carefully, my friends: I have realized the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding. I will teach you my understanding. Practice as I instruct you and shortly you will also realize the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding.

“The group of five replied: ‘From your practice of the austerities you did not attain any superior state or any higher knowledge or vision worthy of a noble one. How can you now, living luxuriously, straying from your exertion and backsliding into abundance, have attained any superior state or any higher knowledge or vision worthy of a noble one?’

“I replied: ‘The Tathagata is not living luxuriously, or strayed from his exertion, or backslid into abundance. The Tathagata is a worthy one, Rightly Self-Awakened. Listen carefully: I have realized the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding. I will teach you my understanding. Practice as I instruct you and shortly you will also realize the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding, for yourselves right here and now.’

“A second and a third time they doubted me and questioned me in this same manner. I then asked them ‘Have I ever claimed to be a Rightly Self-Awakened One before?’

“You have never before claimed to be Rightly Self-Awakened One.”

“I replied again: ‘The Tathagata is not living luxuriously, or strayed from his exertion, or backslid into abundance. The Tathagata is a worthy one, Rightly Self-Awakened. Listen carefully: I have realized the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding. I will teach you my understanding. Practice as I instruct you and shortly you will also realize the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding, for yourselves right here and now.’

“And so, I convinced them of my knowledge and wisdom. Over time, living on alms, I instructed the group of five. Being subject themselves to birth, to sickness, to aging, to death, to sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, to greed, to aversion, to delusion, and (*now*) understanding the suffering of birth, of sickness, of aging, of death, of sorrow, regret, pain, distress, despair, of greed, of aversion, of delusion, they attained the unborn and the unexcelled release of the yoke, the unbinding.

*It must be remembered that this sutta is not meant to be a complete historical account of the Buddha's six years of searching for understanding. It is meant to describe the difference between Noble Search and ignoble search. As such, the entire Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta is not recounted. What is presented here can be seen a summary of the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.*

The group of five finally realized that their prior search was an ignoble search as they were seeking understanding where none can be found.

“Friends, craving and clinging arises from the five senses:

1. Forms known from the eye, agreeable, pleasing, enticing, enchanting, are linked to sensual desire.
2. Sounds known from the ear, agreeable, pleasing, enticing, enchanting, are linked to sensual desire.
3. Aromas known from the nose, agreeable, pleasing, enticing, enchanting, are linked to sensual desire.
4. Tastes known from the tongue, agreeable, pleasing, enticing, enchanting, are linked to sensual desire.
5. Tactile sensations known from the body, agreeable, pleasing, enticing, enchanting, are linked to sensual desire.

“This is the craving and clinging that arises from the five senses.

*(Craving and clinging arising from the five senses is also known as “The five strings of sensuality”)*

“Any contemplative, any brahman, any seeker who clings to sensuality in this manner, infatuated and enchanted with sensuality without understanding the suffering that follows, or the path to cessation, should be known as unfortunate and having met ruin.

“They have lost their minds and the world will have its way with them. It is as if a wild deer were caught in a heap of snares. This deer has met misfortune and ruin – a hunter could do with them what they will.

“In the same manner, any contemplative, any brahman, any seeker who clings to sensuality in this manner, infatuated and enchanted with sensuality without understanding the suffering that follows or the path to cessation should be known as unfortunate and having met ruin. They have lost their minds and the world will have its way with them.

“Now, know this, friends, any contemplative, any brahman, any seeker who no longer clings to sensuality in this manner, not infatuated or enchanted with sensuality, understanding the suffering that follows (*craving and clinging*) and the path to cessation, should be known as fortunate and will not meet ruin.

“They have control of their minds and the world will not have its way with them. It is as if a wild deer avoided a hunter’s snares. This deer has not met misfortune and has avoided ruin – a hunter could not do with them what they will.

“In the same manner, any contemplative, any brahman, any seeker who does not cling to sensuality in this manner, is not infatuated or enchanted with sensuality, who understands the suffering that follows (*craving and clinging*) and the path to cessation, should be known as fortunate and will not meet ruin.

“They have control of their minds and the world will not have its way with them.

“It is as if a wild deer is living carefree in all ways. Why is it carefree? Because it has gone beyond the hunter’s range. In the same way, those engaged in the Noble Search established in seclusion from sensuality and unskillful mental qualities enter and remain in the First Jhana. This First Jhana is experienced as rapture born of that very seclusion. It is accompanied by directed thought and evaluation. They have become lost to Mara, lost to (*the effects of*) wrong views.

“Furthermore, those engaged in the Noble Search enter and remain in the Second Jhana. This Second Jhana is experienced as rapture and pleasure born of concentration. Free of directed thought and evaluation. With internal assurance, the joy of concentration permeates their entire mind and body. They have become lost to Mara, lost to (*the effects of*) wrong views.

“Furthermore, those engaged in the Noble Search enter and remain in the Third Jhana which is equanimous and mindful, a pleasant abiding. With the fading of rapture, this pleasant abiding permeates their entire mind and body. They have become lost to Mara, lost to (*the effects of*) wrong views.

“Furthermore, those engaged in the Noble Search enter and remain in the Fourth Jhana which is pure equanimity and mindful. Being pure, neither pleasure nor pain is seen. They sit permeated in mind and body with pure, bright awareness. They have become lost to Mara, lost to (*the effects of*) wrong views.

“And further still, those engaged in the Noble Search, with complete abandonment of self-identification to form, with the fading of aversion, with the cessation of craving here and there, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. They have become lost to Mara, lost to (*the effects of*) wrong views.

“And further still, those engaged in the Noble Search, with complete abandonment of the dimension of infinite space, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. They have become lost to Mara, lost to (*the effects of*) wrong views.

“And further still, those engaged in the Noble Search, with complete abandonment of the dimension of infinite consciousness, they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. Knowing ‘there is nothing,’ they have become lost to Mara, lost to (*the effects of*) wrong views.

“And further still, those engaged in the Noble Search, with complete abandonment of the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. They have become lost to Mara, lost to *(the effects of)* wrong views.

“And further still, those engaged in the Noble Search, with complete abandonment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling.

*The Buddha here is teaching his five friends the foolishness of seeking to establish a “self” in non-physical realms which h are clearly seen as ignoble, fabricated, and rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths*

“Free of reaction, knowledge and wisdom well-established, greed, aversion, and delusion are completely overcome. They have become lost to Mara, lost to *(the effects of)* wrong views.

“Having engaged in the Noble Search, they are unattached to anything in the world *(or fabricated from worldly influences)*. They are as carefree as a deer far removed from a hunter’s range. Why are they are as carefree as a deer far removed from a hunter’s range? Because they have completed the Noble Search and, through their own efforts, gone beyond Mara’s reach, they have gone beyond the reach of ignorance *(of Four Noble Truths)*.

“Those who have engaged in the Noble Search, who have completed the *(Eightfold)* Path are said to be Rightly Self-Awakened.”

This is what the Great Teacher said. The group of five were delighted from hearing these words.

End of Sutta

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## Session 3

### Nagara Sutta – The Buddha Describes His Awakening

The Buddha was at Savatthi at Jeta’s Grove, Anathapindika’s monastery. There he addressed those gathered:

“Friends, before my awakening, when I was only an unawakened Bodhisatta, (Sanskrit: Bodhisattva) I came to the realization of the difficulties of the world. The world is born, it ages, it

dies, it falls away and returns, but there is no understanding of ending the stress and suffering of aging and death. When will the world understand the cessation of the stress and suffering from aging and death?

“Then I had the thought: What initiates aging and death? What is the requisite condition that aging and death are dependent on for arising?”

“From my appropriate mindfulness came a breakthrough of understanding: From birth as the requisite condition comes aging and death.

“Then I had the thought: What initiates birth? What is the requisite condition that birth is dependent on for arising?”

“From my appropriate mindfulness came a breakthrough of understanding: From becoming as the requisite condition comes birth.

“Then I had the thought: What initiates name-&-form? What is the requisite condition that name-&-form is dependent on for arising?”

Name-and-form (Pali Nama-Rupa) means self-identification through clinging to forms and self-referential views.

“From my appropriate mindfulness came a breakthrough of understanding: From consciousness as the requisite condition comes name-&-form.

In the Paticca-Samuppada-Vibhanga Sutta, the sutta on Dependent Origination [2] the Buddha shows that it is ignorance of Four Noble Truths that is the condition that the arising of mental fabrications are dependent on, and that the arising of consciousness is dependent on mental fabrications. Consciousness then in this context is ordinary ongoing thinking arising from ignorance. What arises from ignorance can only further ignorance.

“Then I had the thought: What initiates consciousness? What is the requisite condition that consciousness is dependent on for arising?”

“From my appropriate mindfulness came a breakthrough of understanding: From name-&-form as the requisite condition comes consciousness.

What the Buddha is beginning to describe here is the feedback loop caused by self-referential views and relying on these views, rooted in ignorance, to describe reality. This much like “I think; therefore, I am” the famous quote from Rene Descartes who hoped to find an irrefutable statement. His reasoning was that since he could not refute his own existence it must be that his (self-referential) thoughts prove that he existed (as a substantial and sustainable “self.”

Lacking understanding the resulting reality described ignores (continues ignorance) any thought, word, or idea that arises that would challenge these views now conditioned by ongoing ignorance. Once established, a framework for recognizing this feedback loop is now necessary in order to recognize and abandon these wrong views.

When the Dhamma is developed it is clearly understood that what constitutes a “self” is always in a constant state of becoming. Consciousness rooted in ignorance can only continue this feedback loop furthering ignorance. The world becomes the mirror feeding back wrong views. As the Buddha’s path is developed consciousness is framed by the Eightfold Path and becoming awakened, becoming Buddha, is now possible.

“Then I had the thought: This consciousness turns back at name-&-form and goes no farther. It is to this extent that there is birth, aging, death, falling away and returning. This is where ignorance is established. From (self-referential views) name-&-form is the requisite condition that brings consciousness and from (self-referential views) consciousness is the requisite condition that brings name-&-form.

“Then I had the thought: The six-sense base (five physical senses and consciousness) is dependent on the condition of name-&-form, dependent on self-referential views, and this is the origination of the entire mass of suffering.

The Buddha is stating that it is being stuck in the feedback loop of self-referential views, seeing all objects, events, views, and ideas from the perspective of “ME” and how objects, events, views, and ideas may affect ME one way or another i.e: not getting what is wanted, receiving what is not wanted, ongoing disappointing and unsatisfactory experiences, all arise from the initial ignorance of Four Noble Truths.

“Vision arose, understanding arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illuminating insight arose within me with regard to things never known before.

“Then I had the thought: What is the condition that the cessation of the stress of aging and death is dependent on?

“From my appropriate mindfulness came a breakthrough of understanding: From the cessation of birth (birth of ignorance) as the requisite condition comes the cessation of the stress of aging and death.

“From my appropriate mindfulness came a breakthrough of understanding: From the cessation of consciousness (thinking rooted in ignorance) as the requisite condition comes the cessation of name-&-form.

“From my appropriate mindfulness came a breakthrough of understanding: From the cessation of name-&-form as the requisite condition comes the cessation of consciousness.

“I have attained the following path to awakening:

- From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of consciousness.
- From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form.
- From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media.
- From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact.
- From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling.
- From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving.
- From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging and maintaining.
- From the cessation of clinging and maintaining comes the cessation of becoming.
- From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth.
- From the cessation of birth, then aging & death, sorrow, regret, pain, distress, & despair all cease.

“This is the cessation of the entire mass of stress. Vision arose, understanding arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illuminating insight arose within me with regard to things never known before.

The confusion that often arises in modern Buddhism is taking these teachings out of the context of Dependent Origination and The Four Noble Truths. Each of these statements, when seen in the proper context, shows that ignorance of Four Noble Truths originates the process of becoming stuck in a feedback loop of wrong views, a thicket of views.

When wisdom and understanding is developed through the Eightfold Path then “giving birth” to further views rooted in ignorance ceases and the conditions that the stress of aging and death, of sorrow, regret, pain, distress, & despair are dependent on all cease.

“In this way I saw a timeless path to be traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones. And what is this timeless path traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones? Just this noble eightfold path:

“Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Meditation.

“This is the ancient timeless path traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones. I followed this path. Following it, I came to direct knowledge of (the stress of) aging & death, direct knowledge of the origination of (the stress of) aging & death, direct knowledge of the cessation of (the stress of) aging & death, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of (the stress of) aging & death.

“I followed this path. Following it, I came to direct knowledge of birth... becoming... clinging... craving... feeling... contact... the six sense media... name-&-form... consciousness, direct knowledge of the origination of consciousness, direct knowledge of the cessation of consciousness, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of consciousness. I followed that path.

“Following it, I came to direct knowledge of fabrications, direct knowledge of the origination of fabrications, direct knowledge of the cessation of fabrications, direct knowledge of the Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of fabrications. Knowing this directly, I have revealed it to monks, nuns, male lay followers & female lay followers, so that this undefiled life has become powerful, rich, detailed, well-populated, wide-spread, proclaimed among many beings.”

End of Sutta

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## Session 4

# DEPENDENT ORIGINATION – THE PATICCA SAMUPPADA VIBHANGA SUTTA

### INTRODUCTION

Everything the Buddha taught was taught in the context of Dependent Origination (this article) and the ongoing stress, suffering, and distraction that results from ignorance of Four Noble Truths.

His first teaching was taught to describe the results of this common ignorance and the singular path the Buddha taught to recognize and abandon ignorance.

- From ignorance of Four Noble Truths, all manner of suffering arises

As has been shown in the Nagara Sutta, the Buddha “awakened” to the profound understanding that the common human problem of the underlying unsatisfactory nature of life is rooted in ignorance. In the ancient language of the Pali Canon this unsatisfactory experience is known as Dukkha. The origination of Dukkha is explained in the Buddha’s teaching of Dependent

Origination. Dependent Origination shows that it is ignorance of Four Noble Truths, through twelve observable causative links, that all manner of confusion, delusion, and suffering, in a word, Dukkha, arises. [

Dependent Origination is the Buddha's teaching on how personal phenomena arises within the environment of Anicca, impermanence. The entirety of the Dhamma is to bring understanding of Four Noble Truths. It is within the context of Four Noble Truths that understanding of Dependent Origination develops. Understanding Dependent Origination brings awareness of the relationship between the Five Clinging-Aggregates and the impermanent phenomenal world

The Five Clinging-Aggregates are physical and mental factors that through individual intentional clinging a personality is formed. This self-created ego-personality perceives that it is a permanent, substantial, and sustainable self. Once formed the ego-self tenaciously insists on establishing it's "self" in every object, event, view, and idea that occurs.

Dependent Origination directly shows the 12 causative links that determine the experiences of a self-referential ego-personality. In the Paticca-Samuppada-Vibhanga Sutta, the Buddha presents the 12 causative links of Dependent Origination. Each of these 12 links are required, or "dependent" on the prior condition in order to give rise to a "self" that will experience dukkha. Rooted in ignorance, (of Four Noble Truths) it is through a continued confused and deluded "wrong view" that "anatta" continues to establish itself in every object, event, view, or idea that occurs. This is known as continued "I-making," or simply, conceit.

The importance of these teachings is to understand that the origination of all clinging views of an ego-self are rooted in ignorance. Once understood, craving and clinging can be abandoned and the 12 causative links in the chain of dependencies unbound. The process of ongoing confusion and stress comes to an end.

Once Dependent Origination is clearly understood, seeking understanding through magical, mystical or esoteric teachings will be seen as distraction and continued I-making.

Once Dependent Origination is clearly understood, the distracting futility of modern Buddhism substituting rituals, precepts, and practices rooted in ignorance as "Dharma" practice are abandoned.

Attempts to attract the attention of gods and devas, or to establish the self in a "higher" or more pleasant realm, will be seen as rooted in ignorance and abandoned.

The Buddha awakened to the profound understanding that from ignorance, through twelve observable causative conditions, the ongoing process of stress and suffering is formed. He summarized this understanding when he presented his first teaching.

The Buddha's first discourse was the foundational teachings of The Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths summarize the entire Dhamma.

The First Noble Truth describes the condition caused by ignorance, the noble truth of dukkha (unsatisfactoriness, stress, unhappiness, disenchantment).

The Second Noble Truth describes the truth of individual craving and clinging as the origination of a personal experience of dukkha.

The Third Noble Truth states that cessation of individual contributions to dukkha is possible.

The Fourth Noble Truth is the truth of the Eightfold Path leading to the cessation of dukkha.

It is the development of The Eightfold Path that unbinds clinging to ignorant views, ends dukkha, and brings awakening.

Nibbana (Sanskrit: Nirvana) is a Pali word, that describes the awakened mind state. Nibbana means extinguished or unbound. Cessation of dukkha is the extinguishing of all wrong views that initiate craving, and the unbinding of all clinging attachments.

As seen in the previous section The Buddha taught three linked characteristics of life in the phenomenal world, or "Three Marks of Existence. These three characteristics are Anicca, Anatta, and Dukkha – impermanence, not-self, and stress.

All things in the phenomenal world are subject to impermanence, including what appears as self. All things in the phenomenal world arise and fade away WITHIN the phenomenal world. Nothing is permanent and nothing arises of its own accord.

The Buddha avoided any attempt to define a self in any manner. He simply and directly taught that wrong views rooted in ignorance that establishes a self are "Anatta," Not-Self.

The Buddha left unanswered any questions that would seek to make permanent and substantial that which is inherently impermanent and insubstantial.

The Buddha never addressed questions directly that would not lead to ending craving and clinging and cessation of dukkha. Answering questions about the nature of self originating from a deluded belief (in self) would only reinforce delusion and lead to more delusion, confusion suffering. These questions were consistently left unanswered as they were improper questions rooted in ignorance.

The Buddha described these questions as arising from “Inappropriate views not fit for attention. These views will continue to generate confusion and suffering.”

The Buddha teaches what is fit for attention while maintaining the context of The Four Noble Truths:

- Understanding Stress.
- Understanding the Origination of Stress.
- Understanding the Cessation of Stress.
- Understanding the path leading to the cessation of Stress.

“As one attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned: identity-view, doubt, and grasping at precepts and practices.”

Grasping at precepts and practices refers to assuming an inherent “ground of being.” From this assumed fabrication preserving the self through engaging in ritualistic or ideological practices becomes reasonable.

If engaging or following popular doctrines, teachers, or rituals develops further self-grasping, it should be recognized as deluded and abandoned.

The continued preoccupation with defining and maintaining a self creates ongoing confusion and suffering. Understanding views rooted in ignorance brings liberation.

As one develops an understanding of the Dhamma, it is important to always be mindful of the context and intent of the teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha consistently emphasized to be mindful of what he taught and why: “I teach the origination of Dukkha and the path leading to the cessation of Dukkha, nothing more.”

The Buddha avoided any issues that would prove to be a distraction to his stated purpose. In fact, The Buddha could have nearly as accurately stated: “I teach the origination of distraction and the cessation of distraction.” It is the ongoing preoccupation with Dukkha that distracts from life as life occurs. It is the self-referential preoccupation with stress and unhappiness that distracts from a life of lasting peace and happiness. It is the distraction of dukkha that prevents awakening.

Life in the phenomenal world is often experienced as both arbitrary and personal and predetermined and unavoidable.

Dependent Origination explains the process of the formation of an ego-personality, a “self,” and the personalization of impersonal worldly events.

Holding the view that discrete impersonal objects, events, views, and ideas are occurring to “you” or for your benefit or detriment is the personalization of impersonal worldly events. This is “I-making.”

Recognizing and abandoning the ongoing process of I-making brings the refined mindfulness of an awakened human being.

An awakened human being experiences life fully present with life as life occurs without the confining craving and clinging conditioned mind that clouds perception and maintains confusion and unsatisfactoriness.

Understanding the process of “I-making” develops the heightened wisdom, heightened virtue, and heightened concentration necessary to refine thinking and reverse the formation of the ego-personality.

Dependent Origination is the Buddha’s teaching on how (apparently) personal phenomena arises within the impersonal environment of impermanence.

The purpose of the Dhamma is to end ignorance through developing a profound understanding of The Four Noble Truths. It is within the context of Four Noble Truths that understanding Dependent Origination develops.

Understanding Dependent Origination brings awareness of the relationship between the Five Clinging-Aggregates and the phenomenal world. The Five Clinging-Aggregates are physical and mental factors that cling together to form a personality identified as self – an ego-personality. Dependent Origination explains the 12 causative links that determine the experiences of the ego-personality.

The Five Clinging-Aggregates are the personal experience of confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing disappointment.

In the Paticca-Samuppada-Vibhanga Sutta, the Buddha presents the 12 causative links of Dependent Origination. Each of these 12 links are required to cause the “self” to experience Dukkha.

Notice the direct teaching here on how confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing disappointment – Dukkha – originates in ignorance. From this initial ignorance – of Four Noble Truths – the feedback loop of self-referential views maintained by confused thinking continues. Also notice there is nothing in this sutta that could be seen as a creation myth or to suggest a doctrine of interdependence, interconnectedness, or inter-being.

It is from a misunderstanding, misapplication, or complete dismissal of this fundamental sutta that resulted in contradictory and confusing alterations and adaptations to the Buddha's Dhamma.

My comments below are in italics.

## **THE PATICCA-SAMUPPADA-VIBHANGA SUTTA**

The Buddha was at Savatthi, at Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. There he addressed those assembled: "Friends, I will describe in detail Dependent Origination. Listen carefully. And what is Dependent Origination?"

- From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.
- From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.
- From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-and-form.
- From name-and-form as a requisite condition comes the six-sense-base.
- From the six -ense-base as a requisite condition comes contact.
- From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.
- From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.
- From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging and maintaining.
- From clinging and maintaining as a requisite condition comes becoming.
- From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.
- From birth as a requisite condition comes aging, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress and despair."

Then the Buddha describes in slightly more detail, and in reverse order, each of the 12 links:

"Now what is aging and death? Aging is decrepitude, brokenness, graying, decline, weakening of faculties. Death is the passing away of the Five Clinging-Aggregates, the ending of time, the interruption in the life faculties.

"Now what is Birth? Birth is the descent, the coming forth, the coming to be. Birth is the appearance of the six sense-bases and the Five Clinging-Aggregates.

"Now what is becoming? Becoming is sensual becoming, form becoming and formless becoming."

*This is explaining that the belief in a self is reinforced by sensory contact and is proliferated by believing in an individual sustainable personality being born, i.e.: becoming a permanent form. This belief is rooted in ignorance of the Four Noble Truths.*

*The Buddha is explaining becoming the personal experience of suffering – Five Clinging-Aggregates.*

*It is also ignorance of The Four Noble Truths to hold the belief that an ego-personality becomes formless at death but survives physical death as the same personality, either in an eternal formless state or being reborn as the same “soul.”*

*Becoming, birth, sickness, old age, death, and non-becoming is the environment of Dukkha caused by ignorance. The links of clinging, craving, feeling, contact, the six-sense-base, name-and-form, consciousness, and fabrications are all part of the process of a self arising from ignorance. This process is maintained by continued ignorance, furthering karma.*

*The Buddha then describes how clinging to the notion of self maintains this feedback loop of the six-sense base establishing a self and maintaining the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth.*

*“And what is clinging and maintaining? There are four types of clinging: Clinging to sensory stimulus, clinging to views (conditioned thinking), clinging to precepts and practices, and clinging to a doctrine of self.”*

*The Buddha is cautioning against developing or maintaining practices that are given validity simply from the “positive” feeling developed or the “positive” or commonly accepted views reinforced. Engaging in rituals or practices that continue a doctrine of self in any realm, physical or otherwise are to be recognized as rooted in ignorance and abandoned.*

*The Buddha here has taken a methodical route from the ultimate result of ignorance, suffering, back to the Second Noble Truth or the origination of individual contributions to Dukkha – craving and clinging. Along the way, he describes what is clung to: a self that is dependent on continued craving and continued clinging to sensory stimulus to be maintained.*

*Profound understanding of any one of these links begins to unravel the entire causative chain. For example, a profound understanding that phenomena contacting senses develops feelings, and that feeling develops craving (for more self-affirming contact with worldly phenomena) brings dispassion for constant sensory stimulation.*

*This develops the understanding that contact framed by ignorance via sensory stimulus is the direct result of the belief in an ego-self, (name & form) and not an inevitable life experience.*

*Seeing this process clearly de-personalizes the life experience. From this understanding, life experience no longer will define and maintain an ego-personality.*

*The implications of this realization can be unsettling at first if one is engaging the Dhamma to “fix” a flawed self. There is nothing substantial to fix, or to actualize. What is impermanent and insubstantial is to be seen as such and simply abandoned.*

*Remember that what is abandoned when this process of I-making is interrupted is only a fabricated ego-personality that is stuck in confusion and unsatisfactory experiences. Once understood the release from the burden of an ego-personality brings the continual experience of lasting peace and happiness.*

*It is also important to remember that the teachings on Dependent Origination are given to develop understanding of Four Noble Truths. Dependent Origination explains the process of how all personal phenomena arises so that understanding of the distraction of dukkha is understood. Dependent Origination teaches Right View while pointing out that holding wrong (ignorant) views is the cause of all confusion and suffering.*

*The establishment of anatta, an ego-personality, within an environment of anicca, resulting in the unsatisfactoriness and confusion of dukkha, is not an arbitrary or chaotic development from which there is no liberation.*

*There is no substantive difference between impermanence, individual confusion, and resulting in individual suffering.*

*The Four Noble Truths are universal truths applicable to all human experience.*

*Understanding Dependent Origination within the context of The Four Noble Truths is the key to unbinding from the endless karmic entanglements caused by the desire to maintain an ego-self.*

The Buddha describes how craving arises from feeling, and how feeling is caused by contact:

“And what is craving?

“There are six classes of craving: Craving for forms.

- Craving for sounds.
- Craving for smells.
- Craving for tastes.
- Craving for physical sensations.
- Craving for ideas.

“And what is feeling?

“Feeling has six classes as well:

- Feeling arising from eye-contact.
- Feeling arising from ear-contact.
- Feeling arising from nose-contact.
- Feeling arising from taste-contact.
- Feeling arising from body-contact.
- Feeling arising from intellect-contact.

“This is called feeling.

“And what is contact?

- Phenomena contacting the eye.
- Phenomena contacting the ear.
- Phenomena contacting the nose.
- Phenomena contacting the tongue.
- Phenomena contacting the body.
- Phenomena contacting the intellect.

“This is contact with the six-sense-base.

“And what is name and form?

- Feeling
- Perception
- Intention
- Attention (all mental aspects)
- Contact.

“Discriminating self-referential consciousness is name. The elements of water, fire, earth, and wind, that which makes up physical forms is called form.

“Name-and-form is discriminating consciousness bound to or clinging to physical form.

“And what is consciousness?

“There are six classes of consciousness:

- Eye-consciousness.
- Ear-consciousness.

- Nose-consciousness.
- Tongue-consciousness.
- Body-consciousness.
- Intellect-consciousness.

*Through the six-sense base contact with the world is made and mental fabrications, including objectifying a self-referential ego-self, is formed.*

“And what are fabrications?”

“There are three fabrications:

- Bodily fabrications.
- Verbal fabrications.
- Mental fabrications.

*All three fabrications are caused by a wrong view of self. Fabrications result in a personality bound to physical form that is perceived as “I” or “me”.*

The Buddha describes ignorance:

“And what is ignorance?”

- Ignorance is not knowing stress.
- Not knowing the origination of stress.
- Not knowing the cessation of stress.
- Not knowing the (Eightfold) path leading to the cessation of stress.
- “This is called ignorance.

*All confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing disappointment and suffering – Dukkha – arise from ignorance of Four Noble Truths.*

*The Buddha relates Dependent Origination back to his first teaching, on Four Noble Truths, and teaches that from ignorance of Four Noble Truths comes all confusion and suffering.*

*Gaining understanding of The Four Noble Truths is wisdom. Wisdom brings an end to ignorance and an end to the distraction, confusion, and suffering caused by ignorance. Wisdom brings an end to the delusion of a permanent, substantial, and sustainable self.*

*When all ignorance is abandoned awakening arises.*

The Buddha continues:

- Now, from the remainderless fading & cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications.
- From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness.
- From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-and-form.
- From the cessation of name-and-form comes the cessation of the six-sense-base.
- From the cessation of the six sense-base comes the cessation of contact.
- From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling.
- From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving.
- From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging and maintaining.
- From the cessation of clinging and maintaining comes the cessation of becoming.
- From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth.
- From the cessation of birth comes the cessation of sickness, aging, death, sorrow, pain, distress, despair and confusion. Wisdom brings the cessation to the entire mass of stress and suffering.

End of Sutta

The Eightfold Path is a path that develops heightened wisdom, heightened virtue and heightened concentration. All three qualities of mind are requisite conditions to end ignorance. Developing these three qualities through the guidance and framework of the Eightfold Path creates the conditions for the cessation of ignorance.

Dependent Origination describes the ongoing process rooted in ignorance that fabricates an ego-personality and how an ego-personality, how anatta, is maintained by craving and clinging. This is perhaps the most significant difference between the Buddha's teachings and religious and philosophical systems, including most later-developed Buddhist schools.

A modern example of this is the misunderstanding and misapplication of Dependent Origination used to develop a doctrine of interdependence, interconnectedness, and inter-being between individual and insubstantial ego-personality's. These modern doctrines only encourage and maintain craving and clinging.

All human beings are "connected" through the common problem of delusion and suffering. This is described as The First Noble Truth. On an elemental level, all things in the universe share common characteristics.

All things are impermanent, insubstantial, and unsustainable – including whatever may be interconnected. Creating something more of this simple fact such as doctrines of universal interdependence, interconnectedness, and inter-being leads to contradictory and confusing doctrines that perpetuates clinging and furthers "I-making."

Notice that there is no actual beginning in time or birth of a “soul” or any individual entity. Dependent Origination is not a creation myth. The process of becoming an ego-self begins in ignorance, produces delusion and suffering, and (the process) can be brought to cessation through wisdom and understanding.

The single issue is ignorance. What occurred prior to ignorance is speculative distraction. What might occur post ignorance is speculative distraction. This type of speculative distraction arises from “Inappropriate views not fit for attention. These views will continue to generate confusion and suffering.”

Much of the mystical aspects and contradictions of modern Buddhism developed to provide establishment for this type of speculation and resulting distraction.

Wrong views are formed and deluded beliefs created to provide substance to what is inherently insubstantial. Having arisen from ignorance, only continued ignorance can sustain ignorance and perpetuate Dukkha.

Dependent Origination shows that from a wrong or ignorant view the manifestation of an ego-personality is fabricated. Fabricated, the process of continued fabrication can be brought to an end.

It is within an impermanent environment that a sense-based and sensory-sustained consciousness arises. Here stress arises as consciousness continually struggles to maintain a permanent and substantial view of self. It requires constant vigilance and continual fabrication to maintain the establishment of an ego-self. It is the stress of maintaining wrong views that distracts from recognizing the mirage-like nature of these views.

Through understanding Dependent Origination, it is seen that clinging to a view of self occurs. Keeping this self comfortable, safe, engaged, and continually established then becomes the sole purpose for existence.

Maintaining wrong views is continual distraction. Maintaining wrong views is continual dukkha.

From clinging and maintaining as a requisite condition comes becoming (ignorant).

From the cessation of clinging and maintaining comes the cessation of becoming (ignorant).

The Eightfold Path provides the framework and Right View for observing and interrupting Dependent Origination. In order to see this process clearly any notion of “I” or “me” of being the ignorant individual that begins Dependent Origination must be abandoned.

This is another convenient form of self-establishment, of “I-making.”

Here is a seeming paradox: The ongoing ignorance of an ego-self must be recognized and abandoned through the development of wisdom. It is also wrong view to conclude that it is an ego-self that is gaining wisdom. There is nothing substantial or sustainable to gain wisdom. The views of an ego-self are rooted in ignorance.

Ignorance or the products of ignorance can never give rise to wisdom, to understanding.

Awakening occurs when ignorance of Four Noble Truths is supplanted by the profound knowledge of origination of Dukkha and the experience of cessation of Five Clinging-Aggregates.

The developed skills of concentration and mindfulness and the ongoing direction and guidance of the Eightfold Path diminishes “I-making” or conceit. It is from this perspective that Dependent Origination can be usefully and effectively understood.

The Buddha was asked on one occasion “is the one who acts the same one who experiences the result of an act?” (Notice the self-identification in the question)

The Buddha responds “To say the one who acts is the one who experiences is one extreme. To say the one who acts is someone other than the one who experiences is the other extreme.” (This is the belief in outside forces such as creation, reward, or punishment bringing individual experiences.)

The Buddha continues: “I teach the Dhamma from the middle, a middle way. I avoid those extreme views and teach that (individual) ignorance brings all manner of delusion and suffering. Whoever declares that pleasure and pain are self-made, whoever declares that pleasure and pain are other made, are deluded. All experiences are dependent on contact and contact is (initially) dependent on ignorance.” (Samyutta Nikaya 22.46)

This brings up another contradictory teaching of later-developed Buddhist schools that misunderstand or misapply Dependent Origination. The ego-self, anatta, has no “inherent nature.” There is no Buddhahood or Buddha-Nature for the ego-self to aspire to. This doctrine creates confusion and further establishment of the ego-self. If there is an inner Buddhahood or Buddha-Nature how could it succumb to utter ignorance? These are simply deluded doctrines rooted in ignorance.

It is the ego-self that has no substantial nature. Developing understanding of what is perceived to be an ego-self is paramount so that all attempts at continuing to establish anatta – Five Clinging-Aggregates – are abandoned.

There is nothing in the Buddha’s teachings that support the notion of an inner Buddha-Nature or doctrinal “inter-being.” Once awakened, a human being is free of craving, clinging, delusion and

ongoing suffering. This includes clinging the ego-self to an imaginary idea of an inner, obscure, Buddha-Nature.

All human beings have the potential to awaken, to develop full human maturity. This does not imply an inherent Buddha-Nature. It does show that awakening is possible to anyone who can recognize and abandon all self-referential views including that establish an inherent Buddha-Nature or Buddhahood.

This is what the Buddha taught. Being free of all clinging views is lasting peace and contentment. This is enough!

To reiterate, I am not disparaging later-developed teachings. I am providing clarity as to what the Buddha taught and in the context that he presented his Dhamma.

In the Simsapa Sutta, the Buddha explains the refined purpose of the Dhamma: “And what have I taught? ‘I teach the nature of dukkha (stress). I teach the origination of dukkha (craving and clinging originate dukkha). I teach that cessation of dukkha is possible. I teach that The Eightfold Path is the path leading to the cessation of dukkha: This is what I have taught.”

The Buddha describes the insubstantiality of the mental/physical form in the Dhammapada, v.46 as “Having known this body likened unto foam and understanding thoroughly its nature is mirage-like”

Any establishment of a self in any inner or exterior realm including clinging to the notion of an inner Buddha-Nature or Buddhahood is clinging to a mirage.

Dependent Origination shows that continued confusion and suffering is dependent on continued ignorance. Dukkha originates in a series of 12 “dependencies” rooted in ignorance. Developing wisdom and understanding through the Eightfold Path brings an end to ignorance. This is how one Becomes Buddha.

Jhana meditation is very effective in interrupting the compulsion to continually maintain ignorance and the establishment of an ego-personality. Mindfulness of the breath settles the mind and develops deep and skillful concentration. As distraction lessens and non-distraction develops it becomes possible to observe Dependent Origination as it occurs.

Useful insight is insight into the formation of self-referential, impermanent, ego-self-sustaining views arising from ignorance. Useful insight is insight into The Marks Of Existence.

Aversion to the Dhamma often arises as the Dhamma points directly to seeing clearly the insubstantial nature of self. All manner of adaptations and accommodations have been made to the Buddha’s original teachings to avoid this aversion. These general hindrances are included in

the chapter on Hindrances. Hindrances arise from the ego-personality's need to continually establish and maintain its existence in every object, event, view, and idea that occurs.

Hindrances are also an important aspect of the Satipatthana Sutta, the sutta on the Four Foundations of Mindfulness presented further on. The Buddha recognized the tendency of an ignorant mind to develop strategies to avoid his Dhamma and substitute anything that allows for continuation of ignorant wrong views.

Ignoring hindrances to the Buddha's Dhamma continues ignorance. The refined mindfulness taught by the Buddha brings recognition of all hindrances. The refined mindfulness taught by the Buddha brings recognition of the confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing suffering that originates in, and is dependent on, ignorance.

End Of Sutta

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## **Session 5**

# **BECOMING EXPLAINED – THE LOKA, BHAVA, AND MULA SUTTAS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is much confusion as to the meaning of "becoming." Due to this confusion, great license is taken in interpreting what is meant by becoming as taught by the Buddha. This confusion and the following misapplication of the Dhamma can be avoided by simply looking at the Buddha's own words from the following three sutta's.

Depending on the context, becoming can refer to immediately giving birth to another moment rooted in ignorance giving rise to further confusion, deluded thinking, and suffering, giving rise to further becoming a "self" prone to suffering.

In the context of remaining ignorant and future becoming, becoming refers to the becoming that would give rise to a future birth, lacking present self-identification, but continuing the experience of suffering rooted in ignorance. Continuing the impersonal experience of suffering does not

establish a “permanent self.” Continuity obscures impermanence but does not negate impermanence.

In the overall context of impermanence and the arising and passing away of all phenomena, becoming and non-becoming refers to the arising – becoming – and the passing away – non-becoming – of stress.

Consciousness rooted in ignorance and influenced by the five physical senses can only reinforce deluded wrong views unless the Eightfold Path is developed to interrupt the ongoing process of becoming. It is for precisely this reason that the Buddha taught an Eightfold Path.

Consciousness rooted in ignorance “conditions” thinking in such a way that continually either ignores or “embraces” suffering as described in the Loka Sutta: “The world is aflame. Rooted in ignorance the world is afflicted by sensory contact and perceives suffering as ‘self.’ Rooted in ignorance, it misunderstands ‘self’ and becomes anything other than ‘self.’”

The twelve observable causative links of Dependent Origination:

- From ignorance as a requisite condition comes fabrications. (when this is that is)
- From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.
- From consciousness as a requisite condition comes Name-And-Form.
- From Name-And-Form as a requisite condition comes to Six Sense Base.
- From the Six Sense Base as a requisite condition comes contact.
- From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.
- From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.
- From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging and maintaining.
- From clinging and maintaining as a requisite condition comes becoming.
- From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.
- From birth as the requisite condition comes sickness, aging, death, sorrow, regret, pain, distress, and despair. Such is the origination of the entire mass of confusion, deluded thinking, and suffering.

My comments within the suttas are in italics.

## THE LOKA SUTTA

The newly awakened Siddhartha, now Buddha, was enjoying the peace of release. Established in concentration he observed the world around him. He noticed human beings aflame with the fires born of the defilements of passion, aversion, and deluded consciousness.

Realizing the significance of what he was seeing he thought:

“The world is aflame. Rooted in ignorance the world is afflicted by sensory contact and perceives suffering as ‘self.’ Rooted in ignorance, it misunderstands ‘self’ and becomes anything other than ‘self.’

“Becoming anything other than self, the world clings to becoming, is afflicted by becoming, and yet delights in that very becoming. Where there is delight there is fear. Where there is fear there is stress.

*Fear arises from clinging to what is delightful and fearing the loss of what is delightful.*

“The life integrated with the Eightfold Path is lived for the abandoning of becoming. Those that say that escape from becoming is by non-becoming are never released from becoming, I declare.

“Stress (Dukkha) arises in dependence on becoming ‘self.’ With the ending of clinging to ‘self’ and maintaining ‘self,’ no stress will arise.

“Look at the world: Human beings afflicted with ignorance crave for and cling to becoming. All forms of becoming, anywhere, in any way, are impermanent, stressful, always subject to change.

“Knowing this – the arising and the passing away – from Right View craving for becoming and non-becoming is abandoned.

*The arising and the passing away refers to all phenomena. All phenomena is impermanent including the phenomenon of “self.” As the Buddha teaches in the Anatta-Lakkhana Sutta in the next chapter: “Now what is impermanent, what is painful since subject to change, is (not) fit to be regarded as: ‘This is mine, this is I, this is my self?’”*

“From the abandonment of craving for becoming and non-becoming comes unbinding. For those unbound from lack of clinging and maintaining there is no further becoming. They have conquered ignorance, completed the task, and have gone beyond becoming. (a self rooted in ignorance)

*In this context self-referential views resulting in self-identifying as “I am suffering” results in craving for becoming anything other than a “suffering self” and craving for non-becoming. Rather than understanding impermanence and that all phenomena arises and passes away impersonally, wrong views of self obscures impermanence creating the appearance of a continuing self and continues the experience of dukkha. This describes the interrelationship of the Three Marks of existence and the feedback loop the Buddha describes in the Nagara Sutta.*

End Of Sutta

# THE BHAVA SUTTA

Even during the Buddha's time, there was confusion regarding the meaning of becoming. Here, Ananda, the Buddha's cousin and chief attendant asks for clarity:

On one occasion Ananda went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat to one side. He was unsure of the meaning of becoming and so asked the Buddha, "Becoming, becoming, to what extent is there becoming?"

"Ananda, if there were no karma ripening within the feeling-property, would the feeling-property be noticed?"

*Karma is the present unfolding of past intentional actions moderated by the present quality of mindfulness. The "feeling-property," "form-property," and the "formless-property" relates to the Five Clinging-Aggregates. The form/formless property also relates to the arising and passing away of stress. Karma and rebirth are explained in detail further on.*

"No, wise teacher."

"In this way karma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of human beings rooted in ignorance and bound by craving is established in wrong view. Established in wrong view, renewed becoming is produced.

"If there is no karma ripening in the form-property, would the form-property be noticed?"

*This one sentence contains the implication of the entire Dhamma. With no karma left to "ripen" there are no self-referential views clinging to form. With no self-referential views remaining – no self-identity clinging to impermanent phenomena – the form-property now is simply a reference point for life dispassionately unfolding.*

"No, wise teacher."

"In this way karma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of human beings rooted in ignorance and bound by craving is established in wrong view. Established in wrong view, renewed becoming is produced.

"If there is no karma ripening in the formless-property, would the formless-property be noticed?"

"No, wise teacher."

“In this way karma is the field, consciousness the seed, and craving the moisture. The consciousness of human beings rooted in ignorance and bound by craving is established in wrong view. Established in wrong view, (ignorance) renewed becoming is produced.”

*With past intentional actions (karma) providing the environment for ongoing thinking (consciousness) rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths and sustained – given sustenance – by craving, one can only “become” continually subject to confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing disappointing and unsatisfactory experiences – dukkha.*

End of Sutta

This sutta also points to what for many is another confusing aspect of the Dhamma: Is it not craving/desire to desire awakening? This is simply a wrong view giving rise to another extreme view. The brilliance of the Buddha is his realization that in order to overcome the common human problem of conditioned thinking – ongoing “consciousness” rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths – there would need to be a way – a “path” – that would provide the framework to recognize conditioned thinking within conditioned thinking.

Right Intention, the second factor of the Eightfold Path, is holding the intention – being mindful of the intention to recognize and abandon craving and clinging rooted in ignorance. Right Intention can be seen as desire but it is certainly skillful desire as intention determines the direction and ultimate conclusion of one’s Dhamma practice.

This is the purpose of the entire Middle Way Eightfold Path. The refined mindfulness of the Eightfold Path, given direction by Right Intention and supported by the concentration developed through Right Meditation – Jhana meditation – brings the ability to recognize the feedback loop of self-referential views and inclines the mind towards becoming awakened.

The problem of becoming awakened while continuing to be affected by conditioned mind is resolved by developing the framework of the Eightfold Path for ones’ Dhamma practice, and one’s life. This is illustrated in the Mula Sutta in the following chapter.

## **THE MULA SUTTA**

In this sutta the Buddha asks the assembled monks a rhetorical question:

“Monks, if those of other sects ask you ‘In what are all phenomena rooted, how do they come into play, what is their origination, how are they established, what is their foundation, what is their governing principle, what is their defining state, what is their heartwood, where do they gain footing, and what is their cessation?’ On being asked this you should reply:

“All phenomena are rooted in desire.

“All phenomena come into play through attention.

“All phenomena have contact as their origination.

“All phenomena have feeling as their establishment.

“All phenomena have concentration for their foundation.

“All phenomena have mindfulness as their governing principle.

“All phenomena have discernment as their defining state.

“All phenomena have release as their heartwood.

“All phenomena gain footing in impermanence.

“All phenomena have unbinding as their cessation.

End Of Sutta

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## Session 6

### ANALYSIS OF FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS – THE SACCA-VIBHANGA SUTTA

In the Sacca-Vibhanga Sutta, one of the Buddha’s chief disciples, Sariputta, presents a complete analysis of the Four Noble Truths including a simple and direct explanation of the Eightfold Path.

In this sutta, one of the Buddha’s chief disciples, Sariputta, teaches in plain and simple terms the qualifications one should look for in choosing a skillful Dhamma teacher and what an authentic Dhamma practice must be based on: “Sariputta is able to declare, teach, describe, set forth, reveal, explain, and make plain the Four Noble Truths in detail.”

The reference in this sutta to established brahmins, disincarnate “beings”, and imagined creator gods as having no more understanding of Four Noble Truths as ordinary human beings is common throughout the Buddha’s Dhamma.

A critical aspect of the Dhamma is that ignorance that arises within, and is resolved within individual human beings through their own individual Right Effort, as described in this sutta, through direct engagement with an Eightfold Path. The Buddha referred to imaginary, disincarnate beings, devas, and gods to show that even though these fabricated beliefs were as widespread then as they are today, they are merely metaphors for a confused, distracted, and conflicted minds lacking understanding of Four Noble Truths.

Simply put, an awakened human being’s Dhamma, as seen here and throughout the Buddha’s Dhamma, resolves solely within the mind and body of each individual Dhamma practitioner.

My comments below are in italics.

## **ANALYSIS OF FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS – THE SACCA-VIBHANGA SUTTA**

On one occasion the Buddha was staying at the Deer Park in Isipatana. He addressed those gathered: “Friends, it was here that I set in motion the unexcelled Wheel Of Dhamma. My Dhamma cannot be corrupted by any brahmin, deva, Mara, Brahma, or any one in the entire world.

No one can corrupt the revelation, declaration, the description, the structure, the explanation, and the clear and direct teaching of Four Noble Truths:

1. The Noble Truth of stress and suffering.
2. The Noble Truth of the origination of stress.
3. The Noble Truth of the cessation of stress.
4. The Noble Truth of the Eightfold Path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.

“Friends, associate with wise disciples such as Sariputta and Moggallana. Sariputta and Moggallana are well-trained, focused, wise, and sympathetic to those developing a life integrated with the Eightfold Path.

“Sariputta is like a mother giving birth and Moggallana is like the nurse that attends to the baby. Sariputta trains others on developing the Dhamma, Moggallana, to the highest culmination.

*This last may seem to show Sariputta as a lesser teacher. The Buddha always held Sariputta as his most effective Dhamma teacher. When seen clearly it is much more difficult to introduce an*

*ordinary person to the Dhamma than to continue to support the development of one already engaged with the Eightfold Path. Both Sariputta and Moggallana were critical support to the Buddha and the original Sangha.*

“Sariputta is able to declare, teach, describe, set forth, reveal, explain, and make plain the Four Noble Truths in detail.”

Having said these words, the Buddha left for the days abiding.

Sariputta then addressed those gathered: “Friends, it was here that the Tathagata set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma. This Dhamma cannot be corrupted by any brahman, deva, Mara, Brahma, or any one in the entire world. No one can corrupt the revelation, declaration, the description, the structure, the explanation, and the clear and direct teaching of Four Noble Truths:

1. The Noble Truth of stress and suffering.
2. The Noble Truth of the origination of stress.
3. The Noble Truth of the cessation of stress.
4. The Noble Truth of the Eightfold Path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.

Friends, what is the noble truth of stress and suffering?

- Birth is stressful.
- Sickness is stressful.
- Aging is stressful.
- Death is stressful.
- Sorrow, regret, pain, distress, and despair are all stressful.
- Not getting what is desired is stressful.
- Receiving what is undesired is stressful.
- In short, the Five-Clinging-Aggregates are stressful.

*The Five Clinging-Aggregates are the ongoing personal experience of stress and suffering in an impermanent world – the personal experience of Anicca, anatta, and Dukkha. It is the Eightfold Path that develops useful Vipassana, useful introspective insight, into these Three Marks Of Existence.*

“And what is birth? Whatever takes birth. The descent, the coming-to-be, the coming forth, the arising of the Five-Clinging-Aggregates, the fabrication of sensuous realms of diverse beings. This is called birth.

*One of the grossest misunderstandings of the Buddha’s Dhamma is what he taught as Karma and Rebirth. Rather than teaching Karma and Rebirth as a magical and mystical system of*

*behavior modification through reward and punishments, reward based on ambiguous “merit” and good deeds with the ultimate reward in a vague realms of emptiness or nothingness or eternal establishment in some form of Buddhist “heaven” and punishment similar to all other salvific religions in some type of “hell”, the Buddha taught that Karma is the conditioning of past intentional acts manifesting in the present moment that is moderated by the present level of mindfulness. If what is held in mind continues to be rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths than individual experience of what one is “giving birth” to in the present moment can only “give birth” to continued ignorance in the present moment. Holding in mind the framework and guidance of the Eightfold Path will “give birth” to a present-moment-experience that continues the non-distracted development of wisdom of Four Noble Truths*

*Many translations state “acquisition of (sense) spheres of the diverse beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth” rather than the content-relevant “the fabrication of sensuous realms of diverse beings. This is called birth.” The improper (relevant to context) translation encourages a subtle grasping-after establishment on speculated and imaginary non-physical realms that the Buddha consistently and emphatically taught to abandon.*

“And what is aging? Aging is (*increasing*) decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, diminishing of mental faculties, of diverse beings. This is called aging.

“And what is death? Death is the passing away, the breaking up, the disappearance, the completion of time, the casting off of the body, the interruption of the life faculty, and the dissolution of the Five Clinging-Aggregates of diverse beings. This is called death.

“And what is sorrow? Sorrow is sadness, this suffering of misfortune, being touched by pain. This is called sorrow.

“And what is regret? Regret is the grieving, the crying, the weeping, the wailing, the regret of suffering from misfortune, of being touched by pain, this is called regret.

“And what is pain? Pain is bodily pain. bodily discomfort, pain or discomfort from bodily contact this is called pain.

“And what is distress? Distress is mental pain and mental discomfort, pain or discomfort from mental contact. This is called distress.

“And what is despair? Despair is despondency and desperation of anyone suffering from misfortune or touch by a painful thing. This is called despair.

“And what is the stress of not getting what is desired? In those beings subject to birth, the wish arises, ‘May I not be subject to birth, may birth not come to me.’ Wishing does not bring cessation. This is the stress of not getting what is desired.

“Furthermore, in uninformed human beings subject to birth, sickness, aging, death, sorrow, regret, pain, distress, and despair the wish arises ‘O, may I not be subject to birth, sickness, aging, death, sorrow, regret, pain, distress, and despair. May these not befall me.’ These things are not avoided by wishing. This is the the stress of not getting what is desired.

*The result of continued grasping after continued establishment of a fabricated view of self clinging to any impermanent phenomena, including the fabricated phenomena of external realms and the fabricated belief of salvific intervention of beings from external imaginary realms is what is referred to here. Wishing to avoid any experience that is determined by simply having a human life is rooted in self-referential wrong views self and always results in continued distraction and continued stress and suffering.*

“And what are the Five Clinging-Aggregates that continue stress?

1. The clinging-to-form-aggregate.
2. The clinging-to-feeling-aggregate.
3. The clinging-to-perception-aggregate.
4. The clinging-to-fabrication-aggregate.
5. The clinging-to-consciousness-aggregate.

“These are the Five Clinging-Aggregates that continue stress.

“This, friends, is the Noble Truth of Stress.

“And what is the Noble Truth of the origination of stress? The very craving that makes for becoming father ignorant, craving clinging to passion and delight (*after what is craved including adapted, accommodated and/or embellished modern dharmas*), entranced here and there with craving for sensuality, craving for continued becoming (*further ignorant*), craving for non-becoming (*escape from the effects of ignorance rather than cessation of ignorance, annihilation into nothingness, emptiness, non-duality*). This is called the Noble Truth of the origination of stress.

*Wise and skillful disciples understand that the Dhamma is practiced within individual life as life unfolds. Each moment holds the potential to become further ignorant or become further awakened.*

“And what friends is the Noble Truth of the cessation of stress? The renunciation, the relinquishment, the release, the letting go, he remainderless fading away and complete cessation of craving. This is called the Noble Truth of the cessation of stress.

“And what is the Noble Truth of the path of Dhamma practice that leads directly to the cessation of stress? This path is the Noble Eightfold Path:

1. Right View. Right View is knowledge with regard to stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard to the cessation of stress, knowledge with regard to the Eightfold Path of practice leading to the cessation of stress. This is Right View.
2. Right Intention. Right Intention is maintaining mindfulness of the intention for renunciation, for freedom from ill-will, for harmlessness, for cessation. This is Right Intention
3. Right Speech. Right Speech is abstaining from lying, abstaining from divisive speech, abstaining from abusive speech, and abstaining from gossip and idle chatter. This is right Speech.
4. Right Action. Right Action is abstaining from taking life, abstaining from stealing, and abstaining from sexual misconduct. This is Right Action.
5. Right Livelihood. Right Livelihood is when a skillful disciple of the Noble Ones has abandoned dishonest livelihood and provides for themselves with honesty. This is Right Livelihood.
6. Right Effort. Right Effort is when a skillful disciple of the Noble Ones (internally) generates the skillful desire, who is persistent, who remains mindful of their intent for the non-arising of unskillful qualities that have yet arisen, who remains mindful of their intent for the abandoning of unskillful qualities that have arisen, who remains mindful for maintaining non-confusion and for increasing, developing, and the culmination of skillful qualities that have yet arisen. This is Right Effort.
7. Right Mindfulness. Right Mindfulness is when a skillful disciple of the Noble Ones remains mindful of the body in and of itself while remaining ardent, alert, and mindful of putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. Right Mindfulness is when a skillful disciple of the Noble Ones remains mindful of feelings in and of themselves while remaining ardent, alert, and mindful of putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. Right Mindfulness is when a skillful disciple of the Noble Ones remains mindful of thoughts in and of themselves while remaining ardent, alert, and mindful of putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. Right Mindfulness is when a skillful disciple of the Noble Ones remains mindful of the (present) quality of mind in and of itself while remaining ardent, alert, and mindful of putting aside greed and distress with reference to the world. This is right mindfulness.
8. Right Meditation. Right Meditation is when a skillful disciple of the Noble Ones has established seclusion from sensuality and unskillful mental qualities. The enter and remain in the First Jhana. This First Jhana is experienced as rapture born of that very seclusion. It is accompanied by directed thought and evaluation.

*This first Jana is simply the initial pleasant calming that occurs from taking refuge in seclusion and becoming mindful of the breath in the body.*

“Furthermore, the ending of the defilements depends on the Second Jhana which is the stilling of directed thought and evaluation. This Second Jhana is experienced as rapture and pleasure born of concentration. Free of directed thought and evaluation, the joy of concentration permeates their entire mind and body.

*This second Jhana is a deepening awareness of the mind calming in the body as a point of concentration.*

“Furthermore, the ending of the defilements depends on the Third Jhana which is the fading of rapture. They remain equanimous, mindful, alert, sensitive to pleasure. With the fading of rapture, this pleasant abiding permeates their entire mind and body.

*This third Jhana is characterized by the stilling of directed thought and evaluation and now able to experience the subtle pleasure of a mind calmly united with the body. This is a pleasant abiding free of comparison to what is no longer present.*

“Furthermore, the ending of the defilements depends on the Fourth Jhana which is the abandoning of evaluation. They enter and remain in the Fourth Jhana which is pure equanimity and mindful. Being pure, neither pleasure nor pain is seen. They sit permeated in mind and body with pure, bright awareness. The Fourth Jhana which is a pleasant abiding. This is Right Meditation.

*This fourth Jhana is simply a deepening level of concentration and resulting pleasant abiding that remains at peace no matter what arises. This pleasant abiding is the defining characteristic of a well-concentrated mind having integrated the Eightfold Path.*

“This is the Noble Truth of the Eightfold Path of practice that leads directly to the cessation of stress.

“Friends, it was here that the Tathagata set in motion the unexcelled Wheel Of Dhamma. This Dhamma cannot be corrupted by any brahman, deva, Mara, Brahma, or any one in the entire world. No one can corrupt the revelation, declaration, the description, the structure, the explanation, and the clear and direct teaching of Four Noble Truths.”

This is what Venerable Sariputta said. Gratiified, those in attendance were delighted in Venerable Sariputta words.

End Of Sutta

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## **Session 7**

### **MAGGA-VIBHANGA SUTTA: ANALYSIS OF THE PATH**

# INTRODUCTION

In the Nagara Sutta the newly awakened Siddhartha Gotama, now a Buddha, explains the path he discovered and then taught as the path to becoming free of ignorance and become Rightly Self-Awakened:

“In this way, I saw a timeless path to be traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones. And what is this timeless path traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones? Just this noble eightfold path:

Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Meditation.”

The Eightfold Path is the Fourth Noble Truth, [2] the truth of the path developing the cessation of confused and deluded thinking ignorant of Four Noble Truths. It is ignorance of Four Noble Truths that results in all manner of distracting, disappointing, and unsatisfactory experiences.

“Timeless” refers to the timeless nature of these Four Truths. These Four Truths remain true throughout the unfolding of time. Ongoing ignorance requires a reference to linear time, a mind constantly reverberating between past experiences and future desires, distracted from what is occurring. (Thank You, Jen for this description!)

The Buddha awakened to Dependent origination which clearly states that from ignorance of Four Noble Truths all manner of confusion, deluded thinking, and ongoing suffering (Dukkha) arises. Everything the Buddha would teach for his forty-five-year teaching career was taught in the context of Dependent Origination [3] and Four Noble Truths to develop profound insight of Three Marks Of existence.

The single path the Buddha taught to overcome ignorance of Four Noble Truths is this Eightfold Path. Adapting, accommodating, embellishing, diminishing, or dismissing outright the Eightfold Path only results in a “spiritual” or “religious” practice that can only ignore an awakened human being’s teaching. This is a common, subtle, and powerful strategy of a mind rooted in ignorance of these Four Truths to continue to ignore its own ignorance.

The simple and direct path that an awakened human being established as the “Heartwood of His Dhamma” brings a calm and peaceful mind, a mind resting in equanimity, to anyone who avoids distraction and wholeheartedly engages with the path.

The title of this sutta literally means Suffering-Analysis.

My comments within the theSutta here in italics.

# MAGGA-VIBHANGA SUTTA

## THE ANALYSIS OF THE EIGHTFOLD PATH

I have heard that at one time the Buddha was staying in Savatthi at Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery.

There he addressed those assembled:

"Friends, I will now give you a detailed analysis of the Noble Eightfold Path. Listen mindfully.

This is the Noble Eightfold Path:

1. Right View
2. Right Intention
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Meditation

And what is Right View?

- Knowledge with regard to stress
- Knowledge with regard to the origination of stress
- Knowledge with regard to the cessation of stress
- Knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress

"This, friends, is Right View.

"And what is Right Intention?

- Being mindful of the intention to recognize and abandon wrong views
- Being mindful of the intention to remain free from ill will
- Being mindful of the intention to remain harmless to all beings

"This, friends, is Right Intention

"And what is Right Speech?

- Abstaining from lying
- Abstaining from divisive speech
- Abstaining from abusive speech
- Abstaining from gossip
- Abstaining from idle chatter

“This, friends, is Right Speech.

“And what is Right Action?

- Abstaining from taking life
- Abstaining from taking what is not freely given
- Abstaining from sexual misconduct

“This, friends, is Right Action.

“And what is Right Livelihood?

- Right Livelihood abandons dishonest livelihood.
- Right Livelihood is honest Livelihood.

“This, friends, is Right Livelihood.

“And what is Right Effort?

- Right Effort is effort developing the skillful desire and ongoing persistence to avoid unskillful qualities that are not present.
- Right Effort is effort developing the skillful desire and ongoing persistence to to abandon unskillful qualities that are present
- Right Effort is effort developing the skillful desire and ongoing persistence to establish skillful qualities that are not yet present
- Right Effort is effort developing the skillful desire and ongoing persistence to end confusion and increase the full development of skillful qualities that are present

“This, friends, is Right Effort.

“And what is Right Mindfulness?

- Right Mindfulness is remaining mindful of the body free of distraction, ardent, alert, and mindful of abandoning greed and reaction to worldly events.

- Right Mindfulness is remaining mindful of feelings arising and passing away free of distraction, ardent, alert, and mindful of abandoning greed and reaction to worldly events.
- Right Mindfulness is remaining mindful of mental qualities arising and passing away free of distraction, ardent, alert, and mindful of abandoning greed and reaction to worldly events.
- Right Mindfulness is remaining mindful of the quality of mind arising and passing away free of distraction, ardent, alert, and mindful of abandoning greed and reaction to worldly events.

“This, friends, is Right Mindfulness.

“And what is Right Meditation?

- For one who has developed Right Meditation their concentration increases, and they withdraw from the need for sensual stimulation
- For one who has developed Right Meditation their concentration increases and they withdraw from unskillful mental qualities
- For one who has developed Right Meditation their concentration increases and they enter and remain in the first Jhana, the first level of meditative absorption, which is joyful engagement and pleasure in the Dhamma born from withdrawal, and accompanied by directed thought and mindful evaluation.
- For one who has developed Right Meditation their concentration increases and their directed thoughts and mindful evaluation quiets. They enter and remain in the second Jhana, the second level of meditative absorption, which is joyful engagement and pleasure born of deepening concentration free from directed thought and mindful evaluation and confident within.
- For one who has developed Right Meditation their concentration increases and their joyful engagement fades. Equanimity arises with mindfulness of pleasure in a mind united with the body. They enter the third Jhana. The wise know this as equanimous and mindful – a pleasant abiding.
- For one who has developed Right Meditation their concentration increases, their mind rests in equanimity, neither pleasure nor pain have a footing. They enter and remain in the Fourth Jhana. Their mindfulness and equanimity is pure, free of wrong views rooted in ignorance of Four Noble Truths.

This, monks, is Right Meditation.”

This is what the Buddha declared. Those gathered were gratified and delighted at his words.

End Of Sutta

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# THE MINDFULNESS OF BAHIYA

## INTRODUCTION

It is by being fully present with dispassionate mindfulness that we are able to truly see our attachments. In this brief teaching, the Buddha taught Bahiya to put aside all views of self arising from confused and deluded thoughts based on clinging and craving.

To truly understand any problem, the problem must be observed clearly, without discriminating thought and without a view of self attached to what is observed. This includes the immediate and mundane problems of the ever-changing physical world, and the individual and immediate problem of the distraction of stress and unhappiness.

In Dhamma practice, as dispassionate mindfulness develops, the distraction of the physical world and the distraction of our own individual stress and unhappiness is understood as the same distraction. The ego-personalities' need for the people and events of the phenomenal world to be different than they appear to be is the distraction of stress.

It is the distraction of stress that leads to mindlessness and maintains stress and unhappiness, and the confusion of the ego-personality.

It is the very first teaching when the Buddha set the wheel of truth in motion that he describes the truth of all stress and unhappiness:

“Now this, monks, is the Noble Truth of stress, disappointment, unhappiness and suffering: birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful; separation from the loved is stressful; not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful.”

As a consequence of being born in this world, we are all subject to stress arising from impermanence and clinging. The five clinging aggregates describe the mental/physical components of the ego-personality in the phenomenal world. This is a Noble Truth in that it transcends time. It was true at the time of the Buddha and it is true today.

In describing the Noble Truth of Stress the Buddha is teaching to see clearly and with dispassion that these experiences are inevitable and are to be understood as impermanent manifestations of non-self or the ego-personality. Stress arises from the ego-personality wanting

these and all other experiences to be different than they are. The ego-personality is what has taken form through the five clinging-aggregates.

By putting aside all views of self, by letting go of the attachment to the ego-personality, no views are left to influence the experience of the present moment. Clear vision and Right View then define our experience.

This is mindfulness of the Buddha's Dhamma. Whole-hearted practice of Jhana meditation within the framework of the Eightfold Path is what the Buddha taught to develop dispassionate mindfulness free of the ego-personalities discriminating and discursive views.

Through knowledge developed through whole-hearted engagement with the Dhamma the distraction of the world is overcome, stress and unhappiness are abandoned, and lasting peace and happiness prevails.

Bahiya was right to understand the immediacy of needing to awaken through the Dhamma. No one can know when sickness, aging and death will arise and this is why the Buddha gave these final instructions moments before he himself passed:

“Impermanence and decay are relentless. Strive diligently for your own salvation.”

## **BAHIYA SUTTA**

Bahiya was revered in his community as a person of great understanding. One day in seclusion Bahiya entertained the idea of whether he was an Arahant, an enlightened being, or was he lacking in some key understanding.

In meditation, a female deva told him that he was not yet an Arahant. In fact, his current practice did not have the qualities that could give rise to enlightenment. (the deva is metaphor for Bahiya's own heightened awareness) He asked the deva (insight arose within him) if there was one in the world who knew the way to enlightenment.

The deva told Bahiya of the Arahant, a rightly self-awakened one who teaches his Dhamma. The Buddha was in Savatthi at the time. Bahiya immediately left to find the Buddha and learn the Dhamma.

He came upon a group of monks and asked if they knew where to find the Buddha. The monks told Bahiya that the Buddha was on his alms round. Bahiya went into town and came upon the Buddha. Bahiya feared impermanence and uncertainty and was concerned that he or the Buddha may die before he, Bahiya, received the Dhamma.

The Buddha was serene, at peace. Bahiya placed himself at the Buddha's feet and asked: "Teach me the Dhamma Awakened one. Teach me the Dhamma for my long-term welfare and lasting happiness."

The Buddha replied, "This is not the time, Bahiya, I am on my alms round."

Bahiya pleaded "Awakened one, no one can know for sure the dangers there may be for you or for me. Teach me the Dhamma for my long-term welfare and lasting happiness."

A second time the Buddha responded, "This is not the time, Bahiya, I am on my alms round."

Again, Bahiya pleaded "Awakened one, no one can know for sure the dangers there may be for you or for me. Teach me the Dhamma for my long-term welfare and lasting happiness."

Finally, the Buddha relented: "I will teach you the Dhamma, Bahiya. Listen carefully to my words. Train your self in this manner: In what is seen, there is only the seen. In what is heard, there is only the heard. In what is sensed, there is only the sensed. In what is cognized, only the cognized.

This is how you should train yourself. When for you there is in what is seen only the seen, in what is heard only the heard, in what is sensed only the sensed and in what is cognized only the cognized, then Bahiya there is no you in connection with what is seen, heard, sensed or cognized, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor there nor anywhere in-between. This and only this is the end of stress and unhappiness."

Upon hearing the words of the Buddha Bahiya's mind cleared. Clinging and grasping, greed and aversion ended, and all self-referential views were extinguished. Bahiya awakened gaining full human maturity.

Shortly after Bahiya's encounter with the Buddha and his enlightenment, he was attacked and killed by a cow. The Buddha, upon hearing of Bahiya's death instructed some monks to retrieve the body, to cremate it properly and to prepare a memorial to Bahiya.

When completed the monks, knowing Bahiya's awakening, asked the Buddha what Bahiya's future state would be. The Buddha replied:

"Monks, Bahiya was wise. He practiced the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma and did not pester me with issues not related to the Dhamma. Bahiya, monks, is totally unbound."

"Where water, earth, fire, & wind have no footing there the stars don't shine, the sun isn't visible. There the moon doesn't appear. There darkness is not found. And when a sage, a brahman

through great wisdom and discernment, has realized [this] for himself, then from form & formless, from bliss & pain, he is freed.”

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## SAFETY PROTOCOLS

***These restrictions are subject to impermanence and may very well be lessened or abandoned.***

- The Ministers have asked that all guests wear a mask when interacting with Won Dharma staff and practice social distancing.
- Upon arrival stop at Won Dharma Center office to check-in, and for a temperature check by Won staff. Anyone with a temperature above 100 will be asked to leave the property. Furthermore, each guest will be asked to have a temperature check daily, administered by the Won staff.
- We will remain on Won Dharma Center grounds throughout our retreat.
- Upon arrival, change your travel clothes, place in a bag, and don not wear again while on retreat. Laundry facilities are also available.
- Wearing masks in our residence and during sessions is encouraged but not required. When not wearing a mask, indoors or out, please maintain a reasonable distance from each other.
- Wash hands before and after each session.
- Reasonable social distancing will be observed. Our group of approximately 10 attendees will be able to sit approximately 3 to 4 feet apart during our sessions.

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