

Anguttara Nikaya (The Numeric Discourses)

Scott Foglesong Commentaries from Sutra Study

NOTE: I have studied the Theravada suttas (sutras) as part of a study group for some years now. During one year, we devoted ourselves to the Numeric Discourses (Anguttara Nikaya). These documents come from my notes from that study period. There isn't commentary on every single sutta in the Anguttara Nikaya, to say the least, but here's what I have.

The only complete translation of the Anguttara Nikaya in English at the moment is that of the Pali Text Society. It's available through Pariyatti Press--here's the [link](#) here. (I understand that Bhikkhu Bodhi is in the process of writing a new translation that will complement his magisterial renderings of the Samyutta Nikaya and the Majjhima Nikaya (in partnership with Bhikku Nanamoli.)

There's also a fine set of online translations (not complete) by Thanissaro Bhikkhu, to be found at the [Access to Insight](#) website. This is the [link](#) to the section on the [Samyutta Nikaya](#).

http://web.archive.org/web/20130427040503/http://www.scottfoglesong.com/buddhism/an_commentary/an_top.htm

Anguttara Nikaya suttas summary

I. Asava (III, 2, §12 and numerous times thereafter)

A. Flow, flux—in Chinese it is 'lou', which is 'to leak', what happens when there is an ill-fitting door that admits rain. In Tibetan, it is 'zag pa', which means 'contamination'.

B. Piaget's notion

To a child, objects and subjects are all one big blur. Gradually the child learns the skills of accommodation to objects, and increasingly differentiates between the operations of accommodation and assimilation—especially itself as subject.

Reality is then constructed as one containing autonomously existing subjects and objects, with an interface between them across which something seems to flow. It is this flow, perhaps, that is the *asava* of Buddhism.

C. Four types (Shambhala Dictionary lists only three; no Ditthasava)

1. Kamasava "sensual flux"

Neither objects nor subjects are now regarded as inherently existing.

Another way of seeing this is as *kamatrishna*, which is craving (trishna) for sensual desire—I suppose desire therefore as a flux or flow between subject and object.

2. Bhavasava "life flux"

We no longer see life as inherently good so we want to live forever, or inherently bad so we want to kill ourselves.

This is *bhavatrishna*, the craving for existence. There is also a craving for self-annihilation as well, which would have to be under this heading.

3. Ditthasava "view flux"

We see reality as spacelike, not imposing apparently autonomous patterns on it.

4. Avijjasava "ignorance flux"

This is probably the root flux—it isn't separate so much as it is a comprehensive way of speaking about the other three.

Avidya—which conditions *trishna*, is the root of everything unwholesome.

II. The Parable of the Wheelwright (III, 2, §15)

This is the first of the many stories in this Book which remind me vividly of Jesus's ability to make a critical point through an easy-to-understand story that holds the attention.

Here the story is about looking deeply to understand the difference in the well-prepared and deeply-known issue, and that which is hasty or superficial. This is incredibly valuable in the modern world given that so often we are encouraged to make the 'quick' wheel—that is, the one that looks good but upon further investigation is shown to be noticeably inferior to the one that was made over a long period of time. This is becoming more and more difficult for modern people to accept given this emphasis in our culture on outcome—we confuse the end product with the process all the time, and figure that if it looks good, it is good.

III. Topsy-Turvy Brained (III, 3, §30)

I've had a lot of fun with this one, noting that I have students that fall nicely into mostly the first two categories. Especially given the metaphors of the people sitting with pot of water in his lap (or a pile of food in his lap), and the way they get up and knock the pot of water off the lap (or have a pot of water that is turned upside down.)

IV. Yama, Lord of Death (III, 4, §35)

The ruler of the hells (naraka). Yama was originally a king of Vaisali, who, during a bloody war, wished himself the ruler of hell. In accordance with this wish he was reborn as Yama. His eight generals and his retinue of eighty thousand accompany him in the hell realm. Three times a day he and his helpers have molten copper poured in their mouths as a punishment. This will last until their evil deeds have been expiated. Yama sends human beings old age, sickness and approaching death as his messengers to keep them from an immoral, frivolous life. Yama resides south of Jamdubvipa in a palace made of copper and iron. Yami, Yama's sister, rules over the inhabitants of the hells.

NOTE: discussions on hells and Jamdubvipa is in the section on cosmology.

V. Great Hell (III, 4, §35, §v)

There is a much more detailed description of this in the Majjhima Nikaya, iii, 184. The Great Hell has four walls from which flames surge out and dash against the opposite walls. People in the Great Hell attempt to traverse out of one of the four doors (one in each wall) and go through horrible pains in

order to reach the door—but they do not. Eventually they do come out of the door, and they reach other hells:

- A. Hell of Excrement
- B. Hell of Hot Embers
- C. Wood of Simbali Trees (bristling with thorns)
- D. Wood of Sword-Leaf Trees (leaves cut off hands)
- E. River of Caustic Water

VI. Buddhist Cosmology (The Four Great Kings, III, 4, §36; The Sphere of Infinite Space III, 12, §114)

- A. Mount Meru (Sumeru)

In both Hinduism and Buddhism this is the center of the universe and the meeting/dwelling place of the Gods.

- B. Four Great Kings

These live in the realm of desire (at the lowest level of the six deva realms—the deva realms are immediately above the region of humans); they are powerful deities that are guardians of the four cardinal directions

- 1. Vaishravana (Kubera) to the north
- 2. Dhritarashtra to the east
- 3. Virudhaka to the south
- 4. Virupaksha to the west
- 5. The names differ in different cultures.

- C. Devas of the Thirty-Three

These live on the summit of Mount Meru.

Their realm is immediately above that of the Four Great Kings. The actual number of devas seems to be murky but they are ruled over by a council of 33, who sit in the Hall of Righteousness in the palace of Vishnu (or Indra).

- D. Asuras

These are wrathful deities, as opposed to devas, which are peaceful deities. Devas always have to be on guard against asuras.

- E. Petas (Pretas)

These are the hungry ghosts—they are too good for rebirth in hells (naraka) but too bad for rebirth as an asura. Animals, pretas, and humans inhabit the same realm, but pretas are traditionally invisible.

F. Sakka (Shakra)

Also known as Indra, king of the Gods.

G. Devas and Time-Dilation

The various realms of the devas involve a time-dilation in which the higher you go, the more time you spent relative to those below. The standard cycle (kalpa) is quite long to begin with, but then the life of a Deva of Infinite Space is 20K cycles, then then one of Infinite Consciousness is 40K cycles, and one in the sphere of Nothingness is 60K cycles.

VII. Saddhamma (III, 4, §42)

Means "the true doctrine".

VIII. Yakka (Yaksha) (III, 6, §56)

A yakka is a supernatural being who lives in the forest in solitary places, and often disturbs the meditation of monks by making noise. (I would therefore consider my downstairs neighbor's television as a yakka.)

IX. Vacchagotta (III, 6, §57)

This would appear to refer to Vaccagotta the wanderer who is not the same as the disciple. The disciple was one of the 41 'great monks' mentioned in the Anguttara. This one is a wandering ascetic, who also appears in the Samyutta nikaya, asking the Buddha if there is anything such thing as the self or not, which the Buddha declined to answer.

X. Kalama Sutta (Those of Kesputta) (III, 7, §65)

A. Bikkhu Bodhi on the Kalama

In this issue of the newsletter we have combined the feature essay with the "Sutta Study" column as we take a fresh look at an often quoted discourse of the Buddha, the Kalama Sutta. The discourse -- found in translation in Wheel No. 8 -- has been described as "the Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry," and though the discourse certainly does counter the decrees of dogmatism and blind faith with a vigorous call for free investigation, it is problematic whether the sutta can support all the positions that have been ascribed to it. On the basis of a single passage, quoted out of context, the Buddha has been made out to be a pragmatic empiricist who dismisses all doctrine and faith, and whose Dhamma is simply a freethinker's kit to truth which invites each one to accept and reject whatever he likes.

But does the Kalama Sutta really justify such views? Or do we meet in these claims just another set of variations on that egregious old tendency to interpret the Dhamma according to whatever notions are congenial to oneself -- or to those to whom one is preaching? Let us take as careful a look at the Kalama Sutta as the limited space allotted to this essay will allow, remembering that in order to understand the Buddha's utterances correctly it is essential to take account of his own intentions in making them.

The passage that has been cited so often runs as follows: "Come, Kalamas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing, nor upon tradition, nor upon rumor, nor upon scripture, nor upon surmise, nor upon axiom, nor upon specious reasoning, nor upon bias towards a notion pondered over, nor upon another's seeming ability, nor upon the consideration 'The monk is our teacher.' When you yourselves know: 'These things are bad, blamable, censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill,' abandon them...When you yourselves know: 'These things are good, blameless, praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness,' enter on and abide in them."

Now this passage, like everything else spoken by the Buddha, has been stated in a specific context -- with a particular audience and situation in view -- and thus must be understood in relation to that context. The Kalamas, citizens of the town of Kesaputta, had been visited by religious teachers of divergent views, each of whom would propound his own doctrines and tear down the doctrines of his predecessors. This left the Kalamas perplexed, and thus when "the recluse Gotama," reputed to be an Awakened One, arrived in their township, they approached him in the hope that he might be able to dispel their confusion. From the subsequent development of the sutta, it is clear that the issues that perplexed them were the reality of rebirth and kammic retribution for good and evil deeds.

The Buddha begins by assuring the Kalamas that under such circumstances it is proper for them to doubt, an assurance which encourages free inquiry. He next speaks the passage quoted above, advising the Kalamas to abandon those things they know for themselves to be bad and to undertake those things they know for themselves to be good. This advice can be dangerous if given to those whose ethical sense is undeveloped, and we can thus assume that the Buddha regarded the Kalamas as people of refined moral sensitivity. In any case he did not leave them wholly to their own resources, but by questioning them led them to see that greed, hate and delusion, being conducive to harm and suffering for oneself and others, are to be abandoned, and their opposites, being beneficial to all, are to be developed.

The Buddha next explains that a "noble disciple, devoid of covetousness and ill will, undeluded" dwells pervading the world with boundless loving-kindness, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity. Thus purified of hate and malice, he enjoys here and now four "solaces": If there is an afterlife and kammic result, then he will undergo a pleasant rebirth, while if there is none he still lives happily here and now; if evil results befall an evil-doer, then no evil will befall him, and if evil results do not befall an evil-doer, then he is purified anyway. With this the Kalamas express their appreciation of the Buddha's discourse and go for refuge to the Triple Gem.

Now does the Kalama Sutta suggest, as is often held, that a follower of the Buddhist path can dispense with all faith and doctrine, that he should make his own personal experience the criterion for judging the Buddha's utterances and for rejecting what cannot be squared with it? It is true the Buddha does not ask the Kalamas to accept anything he says out of confidence in himself, but let us note one important point: the Kalamas, at the start of the discourse, were not the Buddha's disciples. They approached him merely as a counselor who might help dispel their doubts, but they did not come to him as the Tathagata, the Truth-finder, who might show them the way to spiritual progress and to final liberation.

Thus, because the Kalamas had not yet come to accept the Buddha in terms of his unique mission, as the discloser of the liberating truth, it would not have been in place for him to expound to them the Dhamma unique to his own Dispensation: such teachings as the Four Noble Truths, the three characteristics, and the methods of contemplation based upon them. These teachings are specifically intended for those who have accepted the Buddha as their guide to deliverance, and in the suttas he expounds them only to those who "have gained faith in the Tathagata" and who possess the perspective necessary to grasp them and apply them. The Kalamas, however, at the start of the discourse are not yet fertile soil for him to sow the seeds of his liberating message. Still confused by the conflicting claims to which they have been exposed, they are not yet clear even about the groundwork of morality.

Nevertheless, after advising the Kalamas not to rely upon established tradition, abstract reasoning, and charismatic gurus, the Buddha proposes to them a teaching that is immediately verifiable and capable of laying a firm foundation for a life of moral discipline and mental purification. He shows that whether or not there be another life after death, a life of moral restraint and of love and compassion for all beings brings its own intrinsic rewards here and now, a happiness and sense of inward security far superior to the fragile pleasures that can be won by violating moral principles and indulging the mind's desires. For those who are not concerned to look further, who are not prepared to adopt any convictions about a future life and worlds beyond the present one, such a teaching will ensure their

present welfare and their safe passage to a pleasant rebirth -- provided they do not fall into the wrong view of denying an afterlife and kammic causation.

However, for those whose vision is capable of widening to encompass the broader horizons of our existence, this teaching given to the Kalamas points beyond its immediate implications to the very core of the Dhamma. For the three states brought forth for examination by the Buddha -- greed, hate and delusion -- are not merely grounds of wrong conduct or moral stains upon the mind. Within his teaching's own framework they are the root defilements -- the primary causes of all bondage and suffering -- and the entire practice of the Dhamma can be viewed as the task of eradicating these evil roots by developing to perfection their antidotes -- dispassion, kindness and wisdom.

Thus the discourse to the Kalamas offers an acid test for gaining confidence in the Dhamma as a viable doctrine of deliverance. We begin with an immediately verifiable teaching whose validity can be attested by anyone with the moral integrity to follow it through to its conclusions, namely, that the defilements cause harm and suffering both personal and social, that their removal brings peace and happiness, and that the practices taught by the Buddha are effective means for achieving their removal. By putting this teaching to a personal test, with only a provisional trust in the Buddha as one's collateral, one eventually arrives at a firmer, experientially grounded confidence in the liberating and purifying power of the Dhamma. This increased confidence in the teaching brings along a deepened faith in the Buddha as teacher, and thus disposes one to accept on trust those principles he enunciates that are relevant to the quest for awakening, even when they lie beyond one's own capacity for verification. This, in fact, marks the acquisition of right view, in its preliminary role as the forerunner of the entire Noble Eightfold Path.

Partly in reaction to dogmatic religion, partly in subservience to the reigning paradigm of objective scientific knowledge, it has become fashionable to hold, by appeal to the Kalama Sutta, that the Buddha's teaching dispenses with faith and formulated doctrine and asks us to accept only what we can personally verify. This interpretation of the sutta, however, forgets that the advice the Buddha gave the Kalamas was contingent upon the understanding that they were not yet prepared to place faith in him and his doctrine; it also forgets that the sutta omits, for that very reason, all mention of right view and of the entire perspective that opens up when right view is acquired. It offers instead the most reasonable counsel on wholesome living possible when the issue of ultimate beliefs has been put into brackets.

What can be justly maintained is that those aspects of the Buddha's teaching that come within the purview of our ordinary experience can be personally confirmed within experience, and that this confirmation provides a sound basis for placing faith in those aspects of the teaching that necessarily transcend ordinary experience. Faith in the Buddha's teaching is never regarded as an end in itself nor as a sufficient guarantee of liberation, but only as the starting point for an evolving process of inner transformation that comes to fulfillment in personal insight. But in order for this insight to exercise a truly liberative function, it must unfold in the context of an accurate grasp of the essential truths concerning our situation in the world and the domain where deliverance is to be sought. These truths have been imparted to us by the Buddha out of his own profound comprehension of the human condition. To accept them in trust after careful consideration is to set foot on a journey which transforms faith into wisdom, confidence into certainty, and culminates in liberation from suffering.

B. Soma Thera: Introduction and Notes to a Translation

Preface

The instruction of the Kalamas (Kalama Sutta) is justly famous for its encouragement of free inquiry; the spirit of the sutta signifies a teaching that is exempt from fanaticism, bigotry, dogmatism, and intolerance.

The reasonableness of the Dhamma, the Buddha's teaching, is chiefly evident in its welcoming careful examination at all stages of the path to enlightenment. Indeed the whole course of training for wisdom culminating in the purity of the consummate one (the arhat) is intimately bound up with examination and analysis of things internal: the eye and visible objects, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and tactile impressions, the mind and ideas.

Thus since all phenomena have to be correctly understood in the field of Dhamma, insight is operative throughout. In this sutta it is active in rejecting the bad and adopting the good way; in the extracts given below in clarifying the basis of knowledge of conditionality and arhatship. Here it may be mentioned that the methods of examination in the Kalama Sutta and in the extracts cited here, have sprung from the knowledge of things as they are and that the tenor of these methods are implied in all straight thinking. Further, as penetration and comprehension, the constituents of wisdom are the result of such thinking, the place of critical examination and analysis in the development of right vision is obvious. Where is the wisdom or vision that can descend, all of a sudden, untouched and uninfluenced by a critical thought?

The Kalama Sutta, which sets forth the principles that should be followed by a seeker of truth, and which contains a standard things are judged by, belongs to a framework of the Dhamma; the four solaces taught in the sutta point out the extent to which the Buddha permits suspense of judgment in matters beyond normal cognition. The solaces show that the reason for a virtuous life does not necessarily depend on belief in rebirth or retribution, but on mental well-being acquired through the overcoming of greed, hate, and delusion.

More than fifty years ago, Moncure D. Conway, the author of "My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East," visited Colombo. He was a friend of Ponnambalam Ramanathan (then Solicitor General of Ceylon), and together with him Conway went to the Vidyodaya Pirivena to learn something of the Buddha's teaching from Hikkaduve Siri Sumangala Nayaka Thera, the founder of the institution. The Nayaka Thera explained to them the principles contained in the Kalama Sutta and at the end of the conversation Ramanathan whispered to Conway: "Is it not strange that you and I, who come from far different religions and regions, should together listen to a sermon from the Buddha in favor of that free thought, that independence of traditional and fashionable doctrines, which is still the vital principle of human development?" -- Conway: "Yes, and we with the (Kalama) princes pronounce his doctrines good."

Supplementary Texts

"Friend Savittha, apart from faith, apart from liking, apart from what has been acquired by repeated hearing, apart from specious reasoning, and from a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, I know this, I see this: 'Decay and death are due to birth.'"

Samyuttanikaya, Nidanavagga, Mahavagga, Sutta No. 8

"Here a bhikkhu, having seen an object with the eye, knows when greed, hate, and delusion are within, 'Greed, hate, and delusion are in me'; he knows when greed, hate, and delusion are not within, 'Greed, hate, and delusion are not in me.' Bhikkhus, have these things to be experienced through faith, liking, what has been acquired by repeated hearing, specious reasoning, or a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over?" -- "No, venerable sir." -- "Bhikkhus, this even is the way by which a bhikkhu, apart from faith, liking, what has been acquired by repeated hearing, specious reasoning, or a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, declares realization of knowledge thus: I know that birth has been exhausted, the celibate life has been lived, what must be done has been done and there is no more of this to come."

Samyuttanikaya, Salyatanavagga, Navapuravagga, Sutta No. 8

XI. Sabbath (Sorts of Sabbath, III, 7, §70)

The term 'sabbath' is actually 'uposatha', which are days of special observance.

Uposatha days are times of renewed dedication to Dhamma practice, observed by both lay people and monastics throughout the world of Theravada Buddhism.

For monastics, these are often days of more intensive reflection and meditation. In many monasteries physical labor (construction projects, repairs, etc.) is curtailed. On New Moon and Full Moon days the fortnightly confession and recitation of the Patimokkha (monastic rules of conduct) takes place.

Lay people observe the eight precepts on Uposatha days, as a support for meditation practice and as a way to re-energize commitment to the Dhamma. Whenever possible, lay people use these days as an opportunity to visit the local monastery, in order to make special offerings to the Sangha, to listen to Dhamma, and to practice meditation with Dhamma companions late into the night. For laity not closely affiliated with a local monastery, it can simply be an opportunity to increase one's efforts in meditation while drawing on the invisible support of millions of other practicing Buddhists around the world.

The calendar of Uposatha days is calculated using a complicated traditional formula that is loosely based on the astronomical (lunar) calendar, with the result that the dates do not always coincide with the actual astronomical dates. To further confuse matters, each sect within Theravada Buddhism tends to follow its own calendar.

For example, the Vesakha Puja that I celebrated on May 11 was an uposatha.

XII. Thousandfold World System (Abhibhu, III, 8, §80)

This description is helpful given that there is a later mention of it at III, 13, §123 (§126 in some renderings)—right after the typical closing sentence of "the monks were indeed satisfied and delighted..." there is this rather fascinating addition: "Moreover when this pronouncement was uttered the thousandfold universe was shaken." Another translation is: "That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words. And while this explanation was being given, the ten-thousand fold cosmos quaked."

XIII. Recital (III, 9, §85)

This is the twice-monthly uposatha—see the section above on the 'Sabbath'

XIV. The Unclothed (III, 16, §151)

There is a marvelous image in here: "He refuses food when a couple are eating, or from a pregnant woman, from one giving suck, from one having intercourse with a man."

Book of the Sevens

3 – 4: The seven powers are clearly a core teaching. They pop up in numerous other sutras:

D iii, 253. Sangiti Sutra is almost a mini-Anguttara Nikaya. There are lists, grouped by number – ones through ten. In the section on sevens we have the seven powers, the *balani*.

M ii, 12. There are five powers – faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom.

S V, 193. 48 Indriyasamutta: Connected Discourses on the Faculties. Faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom. A group of sutras on these powers.

Vism 491 – 493. List overall 22 faculties, which include the standard five above. Incidentally this section contains a very thorough analysis of the Four Noble Truths.

In the sutra:

1. Faith: in the Tathagata's awakening & the Buddha as arahant, baghava. There is a standard epithet for the Buddha in this list.
2. Energy: working to be rid of wrong things & gain in right things.
3. Conscientiousness: shamed by any misconduct; firmly guided by personal integrity.
4. Fear of blame: the disciple fears to be blamed for any of the issues of personal integrity.
5. Mindfulness: remembers & is alert.
6. Concentration: enters the jhanas and is aloof from sense desires.
7. Wisdom: wise in the Dhamma. (Not book learning, of course.)

In S V, 193 each of the five (- fear of blame & conscientiousness) are explored repeatedly. There are numerous sutras which describe these five faculties—in terms of being a stream-enterer or an arahant. It is in the understanding of these faculties—origina, cessation, and way leading to cessation—that is the main point.

One definition is found at S 48, 12 (2) (page 1674):

One who has completed and fulfilled these five faculties is an arahant. If they are weaker than that, one is a non-returner; if still weaker, a once-returner; if still weaker, a stream-enterer; if still weaker, a Dhamma-follower; if still weaker, a faith-follower.

Add S 48,13:

Thus, bhikkhus, due to a difference in the faculties there is a difference in the fruits; due to a difference in the fruits there is a difference among persons.

An even more precise breakdown is at S 48, 15:

Arahant...Nibbana in the interval...Nibbana upon landing...Nibbana without exertion...Nibbana with exertion...bound upstream for the Akanittha realm...once-returner...stream-enterer...Dhamma-follower...faith-follower.

5: There are lists of five faculties as well (- conscientiousness & fear of blame)

6: Expands those lists:

Virtue: following the Five Precepts

Listening: listen carefully and remember thoroughly

Bounty (Generosity): lives at home with a mind free of meanness.

The others are as in the Seven (Five) Powers.

7: Points out that these seven treasures are not subject to fire, water, rajahs, robbers, enemies, heirs. This is a point that Jim has made on numerous occasions: we may think of physical possessions, money, fame, etc., as being issues that will make us happy. And they very well might from one point of view. But they aren't permanent; they are in fact just as much suffering and impermanence as anything else is, and really no different. But the Buddhadharma is the refuge, the true happiness that can be found that isn't subject to removal, impermanence, and so forth.

13: This one has a practical side—stay away from homes in which the family makes you feel unwelcome or is begrudging.

14: M I, 477. These are people classified not by their place in the path (sotapanna, etc) but by their dominant faculty.

Liberated-in-both-ways: freed from the physical body by immaterial attainments and from the mental body by the path of arahantship. But there is contact with the body.

Liberated-by-wisdom: taints are destroyed by seeing with wisdom. No contact with the body.

Body-witness: there is contact with the body, some of the taints are destroyed by seeing with wisdom (but not all!). So there is still work to be done.

Attained-to-views: no contact with the body; some taints are destroyed, and has reviewed and examined the teachings of a tathāgata.

Liberated-by-faith: no body contact; some taints are destroyed, has faith rooted in the Tathāgata.

Dhamma-follower: no body contact, taints not destroyed, but has gained a relative acceptance of the Tathāgata's teachings.

Faith-follower: no body contact, taints not destroyed, but has sufficient faith in the Tathāgata.

15: I love the fun of the one who goes to high ground as "becoming completely cool." Note: it's a rendering of "Nibbana."

16: More people becoming completely cool. Descriptions of Nibana-with-remainder and the like.

19: If the Vajjians should not kidnap and make live with them women and girls of their *own* clan, is there some implication that it might be acceptable for them to do this from another clan?

20: Interesting that here the Buddha is doing a little political advising—in that the Vajjians are stronger than the Magadhans. In the dictionary it is said that it was through this teaching that Ajatasattu was converted to Buddhism—which makes him sound quite opportunistic given that he would be gratified by the Buddha's advice.

Ajatasattu reigned 494 – 462 BCE, thus during the last eight years of the Buddha's lifetime.

21 – 22: these sutras are found in DN, the Mahaparnibbana Sutta.

31 – 33: A good example of chanting – all's the same save the last two items in the list:

Reverence for Buddha
Reverence for Dharma
Reverence for Sangha
Reverence for Training (Vinaya)
Reverence for Concentration
Earnestness – conscientiousness – fair speech
Goodwill – fear of blame – good friendship

42: Interesting take on the Eightfold Path – seven are 'adornments' to right concentration. I suppose this could be said of each one in turn.

44: I am very pleased by the ending of this sutra, in which the animals go free. It brings up an interesting question – is there an ethical stance as regards sacrifice in other religions? Here the brahmin has thought that he was creating merit, when actually it was demerit – by the Buddha's words. So here we have a sharp difference of opinion. What about the guy in GMBS who belongs to a group which uses psychedelics as a spiritual practice? What about this as a cover—the way a surprising number of the "medical marijuana" people are healthy young men who just want to get stoned.

More notes: I am intrigued in the way the same phrase might be repeated verbatim—as in Uggatasasira's first line to the Buddha; the text implies that he just repeated himself twice more & the Buddha replied the same way each time. Even in chanting, why? Or are there subtle differences—using words like "fulfilling" instead of advantageous.

My remarks about these other practices—I would also wonder about certain other ones. I think that the Buddha would probably condemn the use of drugs in religious observance—primarily perhaps because you could not truly know your motivations. Huston Smith's new book could prove to be very helpful in this regard.

It's certainly true that in the case of sacrifice, there isn't much wiggle room—just the thought alone creates demerit, not to mention the word, or worse yet, the deed.

There's an implication in the second part—the fires of greed, hatred, and delusion—that seems to say that the true motivation is not actually known—demerit comes from these, and they guide our thinking.

David Sunseri has recently addressed this issue in the GMBS when he has stated that we cannot "be each others's teachers" without having access to a realized teacher—otherwise we are a collective set of ideas, all backed up by our delusions—despite how well-meaning, noble, or sincere our intentions.

Later: I brought this up in the sutra group and it brought up some interesting reactions. One of these was a sense that perhaps my bringing up drugs and the like might be considered rather judgemental. In that it's probably true; obviously I don't approve of using drugs at all, and certainly not as a spiritual practice.

Jim later on talked to me about it and he pointed out that other people might have a different definition of "spiritual practice" from mine—one that might incorporate altered states of mind, or finding mysterious powers or going to other realms. If that is what is being sought then perhaps they might see drugs in this light. Thus it makes more sense to try to understand this sort of thing from their point of view. However, I wonder where we draw the line on whether this is Dharma or not. David Sunseri has spoken about times when some of his teachers tried some of the mind-changing drugs during the

1970s when they were all the rage, and they would say things like: very interesting, but it isn't enlightenment.

46: I find it hard to believe that the translator could have been unaware of the double-entendre in "the mind turns back from falling into sex-ways" and "nor is distended thereby."

"Ill in impermanence": connection between impermanence & suffering; because things are impermanent, we suffer (wanting this to be permanent.) There are some distinctions between various schools. *All* impermanence is *all* suffering would be difficult, wouldn't it? This represents part of the divide between Hinayana and Mahayana. In Mahayana, you see suffering as a kind of failure to see the Nirvana in everything.

47: Worth noting that to long for deva rebirth is most definitely a hindrance. Further note: rebirth in a deva body is lumped in with sexual wishes. Is there something about devas?

48: This is a slightly different spin from the usual: the desire for a partner (sexual) puts us into bondage to the opposite (or same) sex. Note that various jokes about marriage: the old ball & chain.

49: Apparently this volume has a different translator—which I noted at the beginning when Savatthi was mentioned as the capital of Kosala. Here the word "Observance" is used for Uposatha, whereas in some other volumes it has been translated as "Sabbath."

50: How about this one for a strong message about the ability of the lay disciple (and women!) to reap the fruits of practice. She was practically an arahant—she just needed to free herself of the higher fetters.

51: About the questions the Buddha doesn't answer. D I, 188: is the world eternal, not eternal. World infinite or not infinite. Soul same as body, soul one thing & body another. Tathāgata after death, not after death, both, neither. In D I, 188 the Buddha says "that is not conducive to the purpose—does not lead to Nibbana."

M I, 426 (Culamalunkya Sutta)—the same set of speculative views. This brings up the simile of the arrow, in which the Buddha rebukes Malunkya for insisting on answers to these views, & the arrow which shoots the man & he insists on being told everything about the arrow and the surgeon, and the person who shot it, so forth. And he dies before he can be treated.

S iv, 375 (Connected Discourses on the Undeclared) (Chapter X, Book IV). These are a whole series of sutras on this same basic topic.

#1: Khema. The nun Khema answers by talking about the ability to count the grains of sand in the Ganges or the gallons of water in the ocean.

#2: Sariputta describes these concerns as "involvement with form...feeling...perception...volition...consciousness." Several other sutras expand on this—delight and involvement with the aggregates. Also in existence, clinging, craving.

#7: the question is asked *why* other spiritual teachers & their disciples *will* answer these questions. The answer is that they view the aggregates as the self—especially the six senses.

52: I find this confusing: "If it were not, it would not be mine..." and so forth. It seems to refer to non-self and impermanence—also clinging to notions of existence.

I must say that in this sutra the translator's decision to translate Nibbana as "the cool" works rather well. But did this create a metaphor where none actually exists?

53: Conze talks quite a bit about the signless; it's an important doctrine even if not discussed enough—indeed, Brahmā Tissa didn't include it in his discourse about the various levels and types of enlightenment among humans. Freed-both-ways, wisdom-freed, seer-in-body, view-winner, faith-freed, Dhamma-follower. See my notes to #14 for a full description of these.

Signless: don't take things as significations of other things—the Mahayana makes a big deal out of it. Perfection of Wisdom talks about it. Musical structures set up expectations—but one could hear music as a sequence of sounds, without all those expectations being met/unmet. Seems like this is a Mahayana doctrine, but occurs here in the Theravada scriptures: is this original to the Hinayana or is it under the influence of Mahayana?

55: This reminds me of one of the more basic benefits found by ceasing from falsehood—you don't have to remember what it is you said.

56: The true Dhamma (Saddhamma) will last only if we keep it—it cannot last if we don't. Hence study & practice. Reading sutras becomes a critical practice for the preservation of the Saddhamma to be found in them; practicing meditation and keenly observing the precepts. If we don't do this, Saddhamma will be lost.

58: How this starts—so delightful as a how-to in order to avoid sleepiness, and then hints around at the twelve links of interdependent transformation.

59: Here's another of those keep-women-in-line affairs. This almost sounds like the kind of advice my mother used to give my sister. (Everything except for *woman's burden*, in fact.)

60: I love the way this one shows how the ill-wish rebounds immediately back to the wisher.

61: This causation chain brought up a question. ¶15 reads "aversion and dispassion are perforce destroyed..." at first this surprised. Then I realized we're thinking more of understanding the undesirability of conditioned things, of name-and-form, etc.

63: The idea of faith as a pillar is wonderful—and gives some new life to the view of Ashoka's pillars. I note here the use of "Dhammas" as individual teachings—things that are heard and learned. See page 72, ¶14.

64: It's worth noting that #7, the person who knows noble from base persons, in practicing the Dhamma, is best when he practices both for self and others—there is a bit of the bodhisattva here.

This brings up that Nikaya (Hinayana) Buddhism cannot be thought of as selfish. When you consider that the constant exhortation is *compassion* and *wisdom*, there is really no way that it can be thought of as selfish except perhaps in the very limited sense of seeking enlightenment for oneself. In fact, Mahayana Buddhism tends to lessen or discount enlightenment in preference for the bodhisattva vows, just as a way of dealing with the problem of enlightenment and non-enlightenment.

67: It isn't what you *want*—it's what you *do*. If you work diligently on the Path you'll "make-become", whether or not you have wished to be free of the cankers. You don't really see how much progress there has been on any given day, but you can see the progress over an extended period of time.

68: This is filled with forceful and surprisingly violent imagery. Especially at the end: 60 monks' mouths gush blood, 60 leave the religious life, and 60 obtain release.

70: A dewdrop on a blade of grass which evaporates almost the instant the rising sun's light strikes it; thus is the length of the lifespan.

Bubble in the water
Trace in the water after drawing a stick through it
Mountain river
Gob of spittle, spat out
Lump of meat, cooked in a pot
Cow being led to the slaughter—each footstep closer to death.

It's worth noting again that the lifespans in the Buddha's day seem to be roughly comparable to our own—60 – 80 being average and 100 being very long.

Book of the Eights

1. amity = metta.

The footnote refers to the phrase "exercised, augmented, and set going" as occurring other places – D ii, 103; M iii, 97; S I, 116 – but I find it as a difficult translation. M iii, 97: "when he inclines his mind towards realizing any state that may be realized by direct knowledge, he attains the ability to witness any aspect therein, there being a suitable basis."

Of the eight advantages, eleven are given at A v, 342

A iv, 150	A v, 342
Ok	Sleeps happy
OK	Wakes happy
OK	No evil dreams
OK	Dear to humans
OK	Dear to non-humans
OK	Devas guard him
OK	Fire, poison, sword don't affect him
	Quick mental concentration
	Serene complexion
	Makes an end without bewilderment
	Reaches Brahma-world at death if not an arahant already.

In the gatha:

"But, like the starry host beside the moon" A iii, 34:

"As stainless on her sky-bound course, the moon
Outshines in splendor all the stars' array:
Just so the virtuous, believing man
In charity outshines the mean on earth."

A iii, 365: "As the light of the stars is not worth a sixteenth part the light of the moon and the light of the moon is counted chief..."

A v, 22: "Just as of all starry bodies whatsoever the radiance does not equal one-sixteenth part of the radiance of the moon and the moon's radiance is reckoned chief of them..." (in reference to seriousness.)

"He but one being love, good follows thence" – this reminds me of the 'finger-snap' sutras in the Book of the Ones.

In Kurt Vonnegut's "The Sirens of Titan", irresponsible playboy-turned-space-wanderer Malachi Constant is being unmercifully exposed and humiliated by Winston Niles Rumfoord. "Tell me—tell all of us—just one good thing you ever did in your life." Malachi hesitates, then eventually stammers out "uh...I had a friend..."

"Those royal sages...ample sacrifice...the Bolts withdrawn": this is another dig at Brahmanic practices—the merit is as the stars to the light of the moon.

2. Each of the conditions for wisdom has some aspect:

- a. Living near the teacher: having a teacher of teachers. See b.
- b. A v, 16: elder monks who know much, well-versed in the sayings, who know the teachings thoroughly. Then these can be asked questions.
- c. This implies to me the need for meditation as an integral part.
- d. The precepts: we must have an ethical base.
- e. Basic book wisdom: know the tenets, not only in letter, but in meaning.
- f. Here we connect with A iv, 3: the seven powers. The power of energy: "he is steadfast, firm in advance, nor lays aside the yoke of righteousness."
- g. Guarded speech: we don't just chit-chat aimlessly. More importantly is the fourfold meditation. Noble silence: this is both the second jhana and one's basic meditation subject (Note to M I, 161).
- h. Contemplation of the five skandhas and dependent origination.

"eight conditions, eight causes conducive to getting wisdom."

First of all, this tells us clearly that *prajña* is dependently arisen. It is not inherent. We must create the appropriate conditions, provide the causes, for this *prajña* to arise and, having arisen, for it to grow and continue.

Second, it makes clear that causes & conditions persist over time—these eight items will persist and assist in a continual manner.

Third, it demonstrates our ownership of our karma, in that we can turn aside ignorance and strive for *prajña*.

Fourth, it shows that *prajña*, as dependently arisen, interexists with phenomena and states that we don't normally connect with a state of *prajña*, such as ethical behavior.

Fifth, it supports the Threefold Training in that *silā*, *samādhi*, and *prajña* are facets of the same jewel.

3-4: I note that talkativeness is an unendearing quality, as is abusing and insulting one's colleagues in the "godly life."

6: The ordinary folk want gain, fame, praise, contentment and rebel against the opposite. From a Mahayana point of view, all of this is Buddha-nature & the labels are obscurations. Another way to consider this is that it's *all* subject to change, no matter what the label. (This is more Hinayana.)

8: Vessavana is the same royal deva who appeared before Nanda's mother.

"...whatsoever be well-spoken, all that is the word of the Exalted One..."

I see here more evidence behind the difference in the Buddhist distinction of "authentic" teachings and the Christian—or many other faiths. Whether or not the Buddha *actually said* something or other, it is that it be "well-said", i.e., following the Three Dharma Seals—and if it meets this criterion, then it *is* the word of the Buddha. Thus there is no problem with sutras such as the Lotus, Vimalakirti, etc., which are obviously from much later but which are said to have been spoken by the Buddha and reported back *evam me suttam*.

10: This reminds me so much of situations at school in which "fancy" students get into a dissolute lifestyle and begin pulling in the "plain" ones—those who are probably very impressed by the attention and don't realize that these smiling, sparkling people are actually leading them astray—and that the "fancy" people are probably heading down the tubes.

Continuing here with my observations about problematic students, the water-pipe metaphor in this sutra is highly effective, in that the problem may not appear until it is tested. Then it is discarded: I note that the more impressionable students don't usually stay in the outer-sparkle circle for long. They see what it is and they move on. Soon enough the sparkle types either realize what they're doing and stop, or else they leave (either of their own free will or through flunking out.)

11: In his teaching to the brahmin, the B describes his stages on the night of his enlightenment:

First Watch: his own rebirths & future lives.

Second Watch: Interdependent Transformation and Karma

Third Watch: the Four Noble Truths

I should add that in the third watch of the night, upon the complete realization of the Noble Truths, the Buddha was fully realizing what he had realized in the first watch (previous lives) and second watch (karma and impermanence.)

The full realization of dependent origination is contingent upon those prior realizations in the sense of its being the Grand Unified Theory.

"Ignorance being removed, knowledge arose; darkness being removed, light arose."

It's wonderful to see this statement—ignorance and darkness are hiding our states of knowledge. The Dharma rain acts as a solvent.

19: "Even so in this discipline of Dhamma there is a graduated training, a graduate practice, a graduate mode of progress..." this speaks well of the slow, steady process of purification and insight instead of only single illumination.

"Just as the ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt; even so this discipline of Dhamma has but one flavor, the flavor of release..." important and very memorable line.

25: A nice observation on the Refuges here: when you have found refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, you are a lay disciple.

27: As misogynistic as the attribute of women as scolding might be, it is not without its merit.

36: The three bases are giving, morality, and meditation.

39: At S V, 391 there are four streams (yields) of merit—the three Jewels, and virtues known to the noble ones as the fourth. Essentially the same as the first four in this sutra, but encompasses all the precepts.

The actual list in this sutra seems a bit boggled; because it combines five gifts with eight yields of merit; the fifth of the five gifts is the eighth yield.

Refuge in Buddha

Refuge in Dhamma

Refuge in Sangha

Refraining from killing

Refraining from stealing

Refraining from sexual misconduct

Refraining from lying

Refraining from intoxicants

Thus we can see one of the sources for combining the refuges with the precepts—there they’re together in one group, as “eight streams of merit.”

35: The inability to attain sufficient merit by gifts alone. Thus Bodhidharma and the emperor of China.

36: The various levels of rebirth listed take us to the top of the sense-sphere realms, those which lie directly above the human realm. But no farther because he doesn’t reach the realms of “making mind become”—i.e., the realms corresponding to the jhanas.

Deva Realms (Sense-Sphere Realms)

Bodhi	PTS	Head Deva’s Name
Paranimittavasavatti	Power over other’s creations	Vasavatti
Nimmanarati	Delight in creating	Sunimmita
Tusita	Tusita	Santusita
Yama	Yama	Suyama
Tavatimsa	Devas of the Thirty	Sakka
Four Great Kings	Four Royal Devas	

37: A iii, 172 lists five gifts of a good man.

A iv, 243	A iii, 172
Gives clean things	
Gives what is choice	
Gives what is proper	
Gives at fitting times	Gives in time
Gives with care	
Gives repeatedly	
Giving calms his mind	
After giving is glad	
	Gives in faith
	Gives in deference
	Gives with unconstrained heart
	Gives without hurt to self and others

38: A iii, 46 is similar, with the “good” of the good man being listed as five benefits—parents, wife & children, employees, friends, brahmins & recluses. This one adds: ghosts of his forebears, rajah, and devas.

40: The alternate rendering of “immediate” instead of “very trifling” strikes me as much more sensible. He’s discussing what happens pretty soon—the next birth at the very latest—and so it makes sense as ‘right away’ or ‘immediate.’

I like this statement of the version of the eight precepts, which define speech-related issues more closely: lying, backbiting, harsh speech, frivolous speech.

41: These eight precepts are more along the lines of a monk: they are the lay householder five, plus:

- One meal a day
- No shows or entertainments
- Low beds

42: Deva time compared to human (devas of the four kinds) is:

50 human years = 1 deva day. Therefore:

18,250 human years = 1 deva day.

Devas of the Four Kings live 500 years. Thus the deva lives for 182,500 deva days, which works out to 273,062,500 human days.

Devas of the Thirty: quadruples the time. (100 human years – 1 day, and lifespan = 1000 years.)

Yama devas: 200 human years = 1 deva day; lifespan = 2000 years.

Tusita devas: 400 human years = 1 deva day; lifespan = 4000 years.

Delight in creating: 800 human years = 1 deva day; lifespan = 8000 years.

Power over creations: 1600 human years = 1 deva day; lifespan = 16000 years.

So this table gets gives us a sense of how many human years a deva lives, and how many times a human lifespan the deva's lifespan is:

Deva	Lifespan in Human Years	X Avg. Human Life (70 yrs.)
Four Kings	25,000	357.14
Devas of the Thirty	100,000	1,428.57
Yama	400,000	5,714.29
Tusita	1,600,000	22,857.14
Delight in creations	6,400,000	91,428.57
Power over creations	25,600,000	365,714.29

In terms of modern cosmology, even the life of a deva in the Paranimittavasatti realm (power over other's creations) still fits comfortably within the lifespan of the Earth—25.6 million years.

Thus although devas are long-lived to be sure, they aren't really all *that* long-lived and there is plenty of room for many rebirths.

46: These "fairies" are the devas, just as is the first samyutta of the Samyutta Nikaya.

46-50: While it's true enough that these can be seen as using the Dharma to 'keep women in their place', it is also true that part of the virtues of a woman lie in her being a lay-disciple who is capable of rebirth among the devas. In this way it strikes me as being quite forward-thinking, in that the women are at least not considered as being wholly chattel.

51: I love this story of Pajapati's bringing the Buddha around on the issue of womens' ordination. Interesting that he adds some fairly stringent new rules & states that Saddharma will last only 500 years instead of the 1000 he had originally prophesized. But we are at 2500 years now, and Saddharma has lasted—maybe a little beat up here and there—but still strong.

52: Here the Buddha requires that a monk who is to be the nun's advisor must be considerably accomplished—thus the training of the nuns is being taken quite seriously.

53: A good test of what may be Dhamma:

Dhamma leads to:

Dispassion

Release from bondage

Dispersion of rebirth

Wanting little
Contentment
Frugality
Solitude
Exertion

...and in no case to their opposites.

54: These attributes for the householder are intriguing.

a) alertness: being good at your profession, being deft & tireless. Here is work as a spiritual practice—doing what you do as well as you can, with alertness.

b) wariness: protecting your justly-obtained wealth. I don't see this as hoarding, but just sensibility. NOTE: for me this means getting rid of the damned debts, which eat away at my justly acquired small amount of money.

c) good company

d) even life: not squandering income, not living beyond his means. Micawber to David Copperfield. But we are not misers, either: if his earnings be great and he live meanly, then he isn't being even, either. In short, live within your means, neither spendthrift nor unnecessarily stingy.

In general, this sutra is almost a recipe for living a balanced, healthy life:

- 1) Handling income properly
- 2) Right livelihood
- 3) Not squandering wealth
- 4) Having virtue, charity, faith, wisdom.

There is nothing ascetic about it. This sounds almost as though the Buddha may be talking to a very young man who needs some solid, fatherly advice.

62: A ii, 97 clarifies that he examines the meanings of the teachings he has memorized.

The upshot here is that for one to teach, one must have a pleasant voice, a good enunciation, be urbane in speech, distinct, free from hoarseness and informative, be one who instructs, incites, rouses, and gladdens one's fellows in the godly life.

63: Here the training is clear: cultivate the Brahma-viharas and the four foundations of mindfulness. This sutra almost seems a blueprint for Vipassana training.

64: Perhaps in making a visit to Gaya, the Buddha was waxing nostalgic.

69: This reminds me of the Buddha's answer to the question of whether he was a man or a god: "I am awake."

81: A chain of dependence. Any one lower down which is lacking destroys the next one down (and all those thereafter.)

Mindfulness & self-possession
Conscientiousness & fear of blame
Control of the senses
Moral practice
Right concentration

True knowledge and vision
Aversion and dispassion
Emancipated knowledge and vision

82: I rather passed right over this sutra on first reading, and then this time around it revealed itself in one aspect. Go to the corner of Powell and Market. You'll hear preachers haranguing the crowd. Preachers will preach no matter what, in any circumstances, whether they be welcome or not. Missionaries have often been distinguished by downright obnoxious behavior, aggressive and arrogant.

But now consider the Buddha. He will preach the Dhamma only when the conditions are truly right—a monk is a believer, visits him, sits down to listen, asks questions, listens attentively, bears Dhamma in mind while listening to answers, tests the truth of what is heard, walks in conformity with the Dhamma. This last implies that he lives in the teachings—the compassion born of true understanding of dependant origination.

83: This is another amazing sutra, given how the message winds up being so different from the questions. Those questions all seem to be of the "First Cause" type—where are all things rooted, their cause & origin, and so forth. The Buddha's answer lies firmly in the realm of dependent origination, and not the sign-on-the-dotted-line style of "all things are rooted in God."

86: I find this sutra strange to the point of incomprehensibility.

91: Here the Eightfold Path is listed as giving us the complete understanding of passion—so it really is the way out. In the long following list, we see that it is not only understanding, but exhaustion & abandonment and so forth. And then for other very negative states.

Book of the Nines

1. This is similar to Book of the Eights, #83—which I have notes on. This one has a different set of steps, however: here we don't have such a strong root in dependent origination. What are the conditions that "wing to awakening?"

Good friends
Virtue & living in the precepts
Listening & obtaining talk which helps open the heart
Perseverance and energy
Development of wisdom

Reflection on foul things
Reflection on metta
Mindfulness of breathing
Reflection on impermanence and no-self

It seems that the first group of five is long-time stuff, whereas the second group is specific activities that need to be done.

3: Tells the same group of conditions, but in regards to a story of a young monk who wanted to sit in a pretty mango grove, but didn't realize that his mind would be plagued by troublesome thoughts.

4: The Buddha was prone to backaches!

The Buddha outlines four acquisitions which must be evenly balanced:

Faith
Virtue
Calm of mind (samatha)
Insight into things (vipassana)

Then there are listed five benefits to the giving and hearing of Dhamma talks:

- a. The Teacher (Buddha) is esteemed, loved, and revered.
- b. One is a partaker in the word and meaning of the Dhamma.
- c. One sees more and more the profound import of the Dhamma.
- d. One's compatriots revere one more and more.
- e. One aids the monks to obtain the fruits of the holy life.

5. The "bases of sympathy" are very interesting—in esp. that last one, which is "equal treatment." He says that the best equality is that which exists between stream-enterers...arahants. Seems that it isn't some vapid "all equal" affair, but more subtle.

7-8: The marks of the arahant have the same first five, but the remaining four differ in these two suttas:

doesn't kill—doesn't steal—no intercourse—no lying—no savings
#7: not astray through desire, hate, delusion, fear
#8: not disavow Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, training

9: This is simple enough: the standard eight types (stream-enterer..arahant & those on the path to those states) and the everyday man.

10: Changes the 'everyday man' of #9 to one who has immediate prospects of becoming one of the eight types.

11: In S iii, 132 Channa "takes his key". In M iii, 127 it is apparently a key to a cell.

In the first four similes (earth, water, fire, wind) the notion is that one of the four might receive foul or fair things (thrown on the earth, dissolved in the water, burnt by the fire, blown upon by the wind) and not feel horror or disgust at foul things or take special pleasure with the fair things.

In M I, 423-4 "The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rahula" the Buddha teaches Rahula to develop meditation that is like these four elements, that is not horrified, humiliated, or disgusted from what arises.

I am here reminded of the story of Hui Neng's verse in answer to the "prize-winning" verse to become the successor to Hung Jen, the 5th Patriarch. Shen Hsiu's verse was:

The body is the Bodhi-tree
The mind is like a clear mirror standing.
Take care to wipe it all the time,
Allow no grain of dust to cling to it.

Hui Neng's verse is reactive to this:

The Bodhi is not like a tree,
The clear mirror is nowhere standing.
Fundamentally not one thing exists:
Where then is a grain of dust to cling?

I find Hui Neng's response much closer to both Sariputta's words in this sutra and the Buddha's advice to Rahula. In M I, 424 the Buddha says: "when you develop meditation that is like the [earth, water, fire, wind], arisen agreeable and disagreeable contacts will not invade your mind and remain." In the current sutta, Sariputta says: "even so, Lord, like the [earth, water, fire, wind], I abide with heart, large, abundant, measureless, feeling no hatred, nor ill-will."

Thus in both cases "the clear mirror is nowhere standing" and therefore we don't have to "take care to wipe it clean all the time." The Bodhi-mind cannot be defiled by negatives or positives—it is "large, abundant, measureless."

Page 251: the simile of carrying a bowl of fat. In the Visudhimagga, (195-196) there is a discussion on the general foulness of the body, which culminates in some rather amusing verses, given a downright delectable translation by Bhikkhu Ñanamoli:

This filthy body stinks outright
Like ordure, like a privy's site;
This body men that have insight
Condemn, so object of a fool's delight.

A tumor where nine holes abide
Wrapped in a coat of clammy hide
And trickling filth on every side,
Polluting the air with stenches far and wide.

If it perchance should come about
That what is inside it came out,
Surely a man would need a knout
With which to put the crows and dogs to rout.

13: The questions are about karma—may karmic results ripen in various ways. At M ii, 220 the Buddha goes through these questions with the Jains, who say you can't delay or change karmic action. The Buddha goes through this and points out how this makes their position almost intolerable, and doesn't allow possibility of growth. Thus the Buddha's message could never be the immutability of karma. It seems almost as if Mahkohittha has been asking him if he teaches as a Jain. His reply, of course, is that he teaches the Four Noble Truths.

14: In this question-answer session, Sariputta appears to be examining his pupil Sanridhi. The subject has a dependent origination nature to it.

15: The description of the body recurs at S iv, 83 but without the "nine gaping wounds" (but with craving identified as the 'tumor's root.'). At M I, 500, the Buddha points out that "it should be regarded as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumor, as a dart, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as void, as not self."

At M ii, 17 the Buddha points out that one should think of the body that "this consciousness of mind is supported by it and bound up with it."

20: Wending to the end of the sutra we discover that even the tiniest moment, a finger-snap, of knowledge of impermanence, is worth more than even fantastically rich almsgiving, if that does not have these thoughts of impermanence.

It's also worth noting that in this sutta the same distinction between arahant, paccekabuddha, and Buddha (Tathāgata) that one finds throughout the Lotus Sutra.

While it's true enough that iv, 395 (top of 265) this sounds almost like a pep-talk to encourage Anathāpindika towards the founding of a monastery, a note that the sutta is placed in Jetavana—so it was already built. Thus he was using it as an example, presumably.

And then he goes on to say how much better if the precepts are taken and kept, had a moment of metta, and finally just seen the barest glimmer of impermanence. Even the creation of Jetavana was nothing in comparison.

This sutta helps to understand the relationship between the Buddha and Anathāpindika; it seems clear that he wasn't treated only as a convenient 'angel.'

21: Apparently only in Jambudipa do paccekabuddhas and Buddhas arise, thus bringing the teaching. Points of Controversy 73 discusses this. Why would only one of the four continents be places for Buddhas?

23: Another linked set.

Craving - pursuit - gain - decision - passion and desire to do - tenacity - possession - avarice - hoarding - many (blows, slanders, etc.)

27: The "four possessions of the Streamwinner" appear to be the "mirror of Dhamma"—but I didn't find them in the passage listed.

However, in A iii, 211 they are listed as:

1. Faith in the Buddha
2. Faith in the Dharma
3. Faith in the Sangha
4. Ariyan (noble) virtue

This set is also listed in this sutra.

The fivefold dread and hatred is that which results from not observing the precepts—breaking each brings dread and hatred into this world and the next.

29: Note that among the nine bases of strife are those in which someone aids your enemy—all the others (6) are about hurting you or a loved one.

The First Noble Truth gives an example of suffering as being obliged to suffer the presence of someone we dislike. It isn't that we do away with the person—or our presence. We do away with the craving (in regards what would be 'right' about our absence or the other's.)

30: In dispelling the bases of strife, the idea of "what's the gain to him from this" is stated in D iii, 262 as "what good would it do [to harbour malice]?" So the actual original is given in A v, 150:

Kut'ettha labbha (= sakkā)

Which could possibly be translated as "it can't be helped" or, "But how can that be?"

It almost sounds to me as though the overall sense of the phrase is: "so what?"

31: "Nine gradual endings" is rendered "succession cessations" in D iii, 266.

It's interesting that the fourth jhana involves the cessation of (I guess observable) respiration.

32: This is an excellent source for a basic description of the jhanas and the four spheres—together with the complete surmounting of them all.

Christopher Titmuss refers to the Four Jhanas as:

1. Inner happiness
2. Sublime joy
3. Equanimity
4. Neither pleasure nor pain.

34: It's interesting that for a person engaged in the four jhanas or the four formless realms, any kind of sense-desire thoughts that come up are to be viewed as a disease. From the point of view of these higher meditative absorptions, this is absolutely true.

This may help to explain some of the vividness and intensity which seems to so often accompany descriptions of the sense desires: the author (or re-teller) is speaking from the meditative standpoint, whereas we may be reading it with a non-meditative mind.

35: I'm struck with how clearly this defines the object of meditation—that whatever it is, the image needs to be extremely clear. If it isn't, then absorptions and formless realms are not possible.

In the Visudhimagga, the creation of the kasina is important—it appears to be some sort of drumlike or disk-shaped object made of clay, which is used as an object of meditation.

37: This one is almost Zen-like in the question: how can he be percipient and yet sense not the sphere?

Ananda's answer is a bit clearer than your average Zen master. He points out that passing beyond form perception is the key here: there is the seeing of the 'sphere' as a form, as a label, as an inherent thing—but when one abides mentally in the formless realms, he is fully percipient but does not see in the crude "form" way asked by Udayin.

Christopher Titmuss says: "The realm of limitless space takes the form out of form, the thingness out of things."

38: There is another version of this at S iv, 93 (IV: 116 (3) – Going to the End of the World).

Bhikkhus, I say that the end of the world cannot be known, seen, or reached by traveling. Yet, bhikkhus, I also say that without reaching the end of the world there is no making an end to suffering,...That in the world by which one is a perceiver of the world, a conceiver of the world—this is called the world in the Noble One's discipline...

Notes on this: the world of the Buddha's teaching is "the world of experience," identified with the six sense bases, because they are a necessary condition (internal) for experience and thus for the presence of a world. Thus as long as the six sense bases persist, the world is always spread out before us as the range of our perception.

You carry the six senses with you wherever you go—and so you cannot reach the end of the world by traveling. So the only way to arrive at the end of the world is to bring an end to the six sense bases. Because they are conditioned, they are part of the chain of causation which has arisen from ignorance and craving.

So the end of the world can be reached by the Noble Eightfold Path.

In S I, 62 (2:6) the young deva Rohitassa says to the Buddha:

How well this was stated by the Blessed One: 'As to that end of the world, friend, where one is not born, does not age, does not die, does not pass away, and is not reborn—I say that it cannot be known, seen, or reached by traveling.'

The Buddha responds to this:

However, friend, I say that without having reached the end of the world there is no making an end to suffering. It is, friend, in just this fathom-high carcass endowed with perception and mind that I make known the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world, and the way leading to the cessation of the world.

*The world's end can never be reached
By means of traveling [through the world],
Yet without reaching the world's end
There is no release from suffering.*

*Therefore, truly, the world-knower, the wise one,
Gone to the world's end, fulfiller of the holy life,
Having known the world's end, at peace,
Longs not for this world or another.*

Bhikkhu Bodhi discusses this and points out:

"The Buddha shows; 'I do not make known these four truths in external things like grass or wood, but right here in this body composed of the four great elements.'" Bodhi says of this: "...it may well be the most profound proposition in the history of human thought."

See Ñānanda, SN-Anth 2:70-83 (Wheel 183-185).

Returning to the AN, we see that the Buddha points out that even the attainment of the formless realms is insufficient to completely reach 'the end of the world.' It is only when we pass completely beyond the sphere of neither perception nor non-perception, abide in the complete ending of perception and feeling, cankers completely destroyed, that we can be said to come to the world's end.

39: This sutta adds a notion to the principle of refuge—that the four jhanas and the four formless realms also constitute refuge, which makes sense. It is in these states that we are able to draw near the Unconditioned.

40: Here is a good description of the need for solitude—the metaphor of the forest elephant bothered by the others.

41: A I, 26 mentions that Tapussa (or Tapassu as he is called there) was a merchant.

There are several interesting aspects to this sutta. The first is that the Buddha did not really accept the renunciation of the material life of sensual pleasures until he was fully enlightened. The second—stemming from the first—is that sensual pleasures and desires therefore distracted him all the way through achieving the four absorptions and the four formless realms.

42: Pañcālācanda was a young deva. In S I, 48 (S 2:7) his verse appears. Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation is quite different:

*The one of broad wisdom has indeed found
The opening in the midst of confinement,
The Buddha who discovered jhana,
The withdrawn chief bull, the sage.*

There are two kinds of confinement: by the five hindrances and by the five cords of sensual pleasures. IN S I, 48 it appears that the hindrances have been referred to (according to one of the commentaries although I see no reason to suspect that), but in the sutta it is definitely the five cords—Ananda describes them quite carefully.

But the opening in the cords is the jhana—and then the further openings the remaining absorptions and then the formless realms. Once we reach past the final formless realm we have escaped—found the full opening and used it.

The deva Pañcālācanda had obtained the first jhana in a previous existence. In D iii, 205 he is called a yakkha, who are often seen as tormentors, or malevolent. This could be a different entity in D iii, 205—or else he's a non-tormenting yakkha, or else he is but this is catching him in a more philosophic mood.

43 – 61: This is an extraordinary chanting set, going through the four absorptions and four formless realms, each with its own specific advantage.

62: This is part of a longer list which is found at A iv, 148—there are such as pride, arrogance, indolence as well as these.

63: This is a mini-guide to practice. The five lay precepts are called "five sources of weakness", which upon working on putting them away, you then cultivate the four foundations of mindfulness.

Note that this places sila as a prerequisite to samadhi. That is often the case, I've noticed. Hsing Yun in "Lotus in a Stream" (page 51):

The Buddha taught that all growth towards higher consciousness depends on three things: morality, meditation, wisdom. Generally speaking, meditation is based on morality and wisdom is based on meditation. Morality is the necessary foundation for meditation and wisdom.

64: Here the hindrances are to be put away, then the four foundations of mindfulness may arise.

65: Now the five strands (cords) of sense-desire are to be put away, then come the four foundations.

66: And now the five skandhas are to be put away, then arise the four foundations.

67: Five lower fetters:

Individuality-group view (false view of individuality)
Perverted ideas about rite & ritual
Doubt
Sensuality
Malevolence

68: Five courses (modes or realms) of existence:

Hell
Animals
Petas
Human
Devas

69: Five forms of meanness. Buddhaghosa Visudhimagga 683 calls these: five kinds of avarice—about dwellings, families, gain, Dhamma, and praise: the inability to share any of these things.

70: Upper fetters:

Passion for form
Passion for formless
Pride
Agitation
Ignorance

Note: S v, 192 says: "The four establishments of mindfulness are to be developed for direct knowledge of these five higher fetters, for the full understanding of them, for their utter destruction, for their abandoning."

This applies to all of these suttas, I should think. It implies that the four foundations aren't just afterwards, but take part in the process of letting go the list of five <somethings> that these suttas discuss. See sutta #36, which states this dependence.

71: At M I, 101 there is a somewhat more complete way of describing this mental barrenness (or probably it's a better translation):

...a bhikkhu is doubtful, uncertain, undecided, and unconfident about the [Teacher, Dhamma, Sangha, training]...

At D iii, 238 the translation is:

...a monk has doubts and hesitations about the [Teacher, Dhamma, Sangha, training], is dissatisfied and cannot settle his own mind.

A iii, 248 is the same as the “five mental barrenness” part of this sutta.

A v, 17 gives yet another slightly different rendering:

...a monk has doubts and waverings about the [Teacher, dhamma, Sangha, training]. He is not drawn to [him, it], he is not sure about [him, it].

72: M I, 101 helps make clear that there is a distinction between lust for the body (one’s own) and lust for forms (others bodies and other physical things.)

The bondage of wanting to become a deva is interesting—I should think that this would be commonly considered a goal in the Brahmanical circles. That is, practice with a specific view of achieving some kind of fortunate rebirth.

Book of the Tens

1: "Why, Ananda, freedom from remorse is the object..."

D i, 73 makes comparisons to various kinds of being freed—being freed from debt, from sickness, from bonds, from slavery, from the perils of the desert—these comparisons are to being freed of the five hindrances.

S iv, 351: "...since I have been restrained in body, speech, and mind, and since, with the breakup of the body, after death, I shall be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world."

The chain of object and profit:

1. Good conduct (sila)
2. Freedom from remorse
3. Joy
4. rapture
5. Calm
6. Happiness
7. Concentration
8. Knowing and seeing things as they really are
9. Revulsion and fading of interest
10. Release by knowing and seeing

Thus good conduct (sila) leads *gradually* up to the summit.

NOTE: in the Book of the Elevens this is stretched out by splitting "revulsion and fading of interest."

2: This repeats #1 but with the important proviso that each of the objects and profits arise automatically from the previous—there is no need to wish the next into existence. This would seem to imply that the last is contained in the first—the entire chain arises from the first.

However, I should think that a little bit of sila would result in a little bit of knowing and seeing—sort of like a small amount of current flowing through a wire. Increasing the sila is like increasing the current in the wire.

3: The "concentration" of #s 1 – 2 now becomes 'right (samma) concentration'.

"Suppose, monks, a tree that has lost its branches..."

This ties in well with my observation for #2—if the tree does not have sufficient support, it doesn't grow well. The degree of growth is in fact proportional to the branches and foliage providing support.

4 – 5: Repetitions of #3, spoken by Sariputta and Ananda, respectively.

6: The translator of this volume is Woodward (same as I and II) and he renders the four formless realms differently from the middle volumes:

- Sphere of unbounded space
- Sphere of infinite intellection
- Sphere of nothingness
- Sphere of neither-perception-nor-non-perception

The level of concentration appears to be that of the "ninth" level—i.e., moving beyond the realms altogether.

7: Sariputta gives a concrete example of this ability to perceive while unaware. The sparks in a flame—they come and go, one arises while another dissolves.

This appears to be concentration so fine as to capture the dharmas themselves—the very finely-grained thought-instants. They are as the sparks in a fire; the perception may be the same, but is seen in individual sparks. Thus our awareness is of these short, disconnected thought-sparks. We put them together and say "earth" or "water" or "wind" or "fire", but really they are just the individual sparks.

8: The 'complete' monk needs to be as follows:

1. A believer
2. virtuous
3. learned
4. a dhamma-preacher
5. a frequenter of debates
6. confident in teaching Dhamma
7. expert in discipline
8. a lodger in solitude
9. an attainer of the four jhanas
10. a destroyer of the cankers

Thus he is "altogether charming."

9: The same as the above, but #9 is replaced with the formless realms instead of the four jhanas.

10: The same as #8, but from #8 in the list it goes:

8. recaller of previous births
9. one who possess the deva sight
10. a destroyer of the cankers

11: Five factors in the monk, and five factors in the lodging, that lead to the heart's release. Thus we can think of these as 'internal and external'

1. Monk is a believer in the Enlightened One. (Faith)
2. Monk is little troubled by disease and sickness
3. Monk has a smooth digestion
4. Monk is honest
5. Monk dwells resolute in energy
6. Lodging neither too far nor too near a village
7. Lodging is quiet at night
8. Lodging is free from bugs and exposure to the elements
9. Lodging is such that alms, robes, medicaments, etc., can be acquired
10. There are elder monks in the dwelling who can help.

12: A monk gives up in five factors and is complete in five other factors.

He gives up:

1. Sensual desire
2. Hatred
3. Sloth & torpor
4. Worry & flurry
5. Doubt

Complete in:

1. Sum total of a master's virtues
2. Sum total of a master's concentration
3. Sum total of a master's insight
4. Release
5. The release by knowing and seeing.

13: Two different sets of fetters: those pertaining to this world and those pertaining to a higher world.

Of this world:

1. View of individual-group
2. Doubt-and-wavering
3. Wrong handling of habit-and-ritual
4. Sensual desire
5. Hatred

Pertaining to a higher world:

1. Lust of objective form
2. Lust of the formless
3. Conceit
4. Excitement
5. Ignorance

14: Five mental obstructions and five bondages of the heart. Note: I'd be interested to see the original of "bondages of the heart" to determine if there really is this distinction between mind and heart, or if it's more an issue of translation.

Five mental obstructions:

1. Doubts and waverings about the Buddha ("teacher" in the text)
2. Doubts about Dhamma
3. Doubts about Sangha
4. Doubts about training (Vinaya)
5. Is vexed with co-mates in the brahma-life.

Five bondages of the heart:

1. Not dispassionate in things sensual
2. Not dispassionate in body
3. Not dispassionate in the matter of objective form
4. Eats a great deal and is prey to torpor

5. Leads brahma-life with a view to rebirth in a deva realm.

15: Various comparisons to illustrate how seriousness is chief of all states:

Object	Chief
All creatures	Arahant, Tathagata
Footprints	Elephant's footprints
Rafters	Roof peak
Root scents	black gum
Wood scents	red sandalwood
Flower scents	jasmine
Petty princes	universal monarch
Starry bodies	the Moon
Clear autumn sky	the Sun
Great rivers	the ocean

16: Ten persons worthy of worship, gifts, salutations, field of merit:

1. Wayfarer (we assume here the samana, or wandering monk)
2. Arahant
3. Fully enlightened one
4. Paccekabuddha
5. One released in both respects
6. One released by insight
7. One who has testified to the truth in his own person
8. One who has won view
9. One released by faith
10. One who is a son by adoption (i.e., son who is converted)

On this last:

A iv, 373: "he who has become one of the clan"

The commentary says of this: One endowed with exceedingly powerful insight and thought, with immediate prospects of attaining to the state of the Streamwinner and the Way.

17: "Monks, do ye live warded...ten states that make for warding."

D iii,266 translates this as "ten things that give protection."

1. Virtue – follow Patimokkha, observe faults, etc.
2. Hear much, bear in mind what is heard, store up.
3. Have friendships with the lovely.
4. Be pleasant and agreeable to speak to, be patient
5. Be shrewd and energetic in all sangha undertakings
6. Delight in Dhamma and rejoice in further Dhamma and Discipline
7. Dwell resolute in energy for abandonment of bad qualities and the furtherance of good qualities.
8. Be content with the supply of robes, lodging, alms, medicaments
9. Be concentrated, possess mindful discrimination, good memory
10. Be possessed of insight, understanding dependent origination

18: This is a repetition of #17 with a few expansions and further explanations.

Primarily, each section ends with the idea that the senior monks look upon him as one fit for encouragement, as do those of middle standing and the novices.

19: D iii, 269 gives an expansion which defines each of the lists that need expanding.

1. Got rid of five factors – the five hindrances of sensual desire, ill-will, sloth-and-torpor, worry-and-flurry, doubt
2. Six factors: equanimous in regards to the six senses.
3. The one guard: mindfulness
4. Four supports: one thing to be pursued, one thing endured, one thing avoided, one thing suppressed.
5. Individual beliefs: those held by the majority of brahmins and ascetics have been let go, released.
6. Abandons quests for sense-desires, rebirth, the holy life
7. Pure of motive: has abandoned thoughts of sensuality, ill-will, cruelty
8. Tranquillized emotions: enters into state that is beyond pleasure and pain, the fourth jhana.
9. Emancipated in heart: liberated from greed, hatred, delusion.
10. Liberated by wisdom: understands that greed, hatred, and delusion are abandoned and are incapable of growing again.

20: Kammasadhamma is referred to as a market down in D ii, 55. Although the notes refer to M i, 532 this is not available in the Nanamoli translation—perhaps some kind of textual disagreement with the PTS edition.

This sutra is the expansion of #19 that I already cited from the Digha Nikaya.

On #5, “individual beliefs”, this includes stuff like the world is eternal or not, world finite or not, body and life are one thing or not, life after death or not.

21: The ten powers of the samana that allow him to claim leadership, roar his lion’s roar in the companies and set rolling the Brahma-wheel:

1. The causal occasion (or not) of a thing: dependent origination
2. Karma: the fruit of actions past, future, and present
3. Knows every “bourn-going faring-on” as it really is. This I take to mean the rebirth destination.
4. Knows the world as it really is, in diverse shapes and forms.
5. Knows the diverse characters of beings.
6. Knows the state of faculties of other persons, other beings.
7. Knows the fault, purification, and emergence of attainments in meditative absorption, liberation, and concentration.
8. Ability to recall past births and existences.
9. Has deva-sight; sees beings rising, existing, and passings of all sorts.
10. Destroys the cankers in this very life, attains the heart’s release, the release by insight.

22: Although mostly a repeat of #21, this contains a wonderful description of what the Mahayana would come to call prajñāparamita—but it’s not unique to Mahayana. Pañña (prajña) is after all the third of sila-samadhi-pañña.

“There is the possibility of his knowing or seeing or realizing that which can be known, seen, or realized.”

23: Faults to be abandoned:

Fault in body: abandon in body

Fault in speech: abandon in speech

To be abandoned with Insight:

1. Lust
2. Malice
3. Delusion
4. Wrath
5. Grudge
6. Depreciation
7. Spite
8. Selfishness
9. Wrongful envy
10. Wrongful longing (wishing to be thought of as being other than you are.)

These faults to be abandoned by insight are those which must be fully understood, realized.

24: This is a kind of gloss on #23, in which the discussion is of one who prates about being freed from the ten faults abandoned by insight, and yet is not really freed of them. This is compared to one who says he’s rich but is poor: sooner or later he has to pony up and we all see that he’s actually poor.

25: This applies to the physical kasina objects that are used to induce self-hypnosis, which seems to aid in then achieving higher realms.

The earth-device (kasina) appears to be a clay disk which is set on the ground before one. (See Visuddhimagga for details.)

26: the “Maiden’s Questions” are 3 i, 126:

“Is it because you are sunk in sorrow
That you meditate in the woods?
Because you have lost wealth or pine for it,
Or committed some crime in the village?
Why don’t you make friends with people?
Why don’t you form any intimate ties?”

(There are more questions with answers from the Buddha.)

28: It’s nice to read that it is a nun who seems to understand the teachings so well and points them out to the monks. The Buddha backs her up as well.

29: “Yet even for the Great Brahma, there is change and reverse”—here is a clear statement against any notion of eternity on the part of a God—even one as lofty as Brahma. Here’s the whole paragraph:

As far, monks, as the thousandfold world-system extends, therein the Great Brahma is reckoned chief. Yet even for the Great Brahma, monks, there is change and reverse. So seeing the learned Ariyan

disciple feels revulsion; in him so feeling revulsion interest in the topmost fades, not to speak of the low.

In the Nyanaponika Thera/Bhikkhu Bodhi translation (page 245) it reads like this:

As far, monks, as this thousandfold world system extends, Mahabrahma ranks there as the highest. But even for Mahabrahma change takes place, transformation takes place. When seeing this, monks, an instructed noble disciple is repelled by it; being repelled, he becomes dispassionate towards the highest, not to speak of what is low.

The "stations of mastery" are those areas in which the arahant sees things as they really are.

30: Pasenadi needs to have some reassurance here, it would seem.

31: The ten reasons for the existence of the Patimokkha (Vinaya):

1. excellence of the Sangha
2. well-being of the Sangha
3. control of ill-conditioned monks
4. comfort of well-behaved monks
5. restraint of visible cankers
6. protection against future life cankers
7. to give confidence to those of little faith
8. betterment of the faithful
9. establish true dhamma
10. support the discipline.

When the obligation is suspended:

Question: a eunuch cannot be a monk. Why not?

Note: the whole of chapter IV (31 – 40) appears to have been brought in from the Vinaya.

44: In discussing how a monk should admonish another monk, it seems to me that this advice applies to everybody:

1. Am I practicing purity of body? Am I pure of body?
2. Do I practice purity of speech? Am I pure of speech?
3. Is my heart free of malice towards this person?
4. Have I taken the teachings to heart?
5. Do I follow the rules myself?
6. Do I speak at the right time?
7. Is this the truth?
8. Do I speak gently?
9. Am I concerned with profit to myself?
10. Is my heart kind or malicious?

47: The reasons for doing evil and good deeds are nice and clear here. Evil deeds result from:

lust
malice
delusion

inattention
wrong thought

Good deeds result from the opposite of those.

50: The monks got into arguments!

51: The metaphor here is putting out the blaze if one's turban is on fire. Put out the thoughts that are unskilled:

1. Covetousness
2. Malevolence
3. Sloth and torpor
4. Restlessness
5. Doubt
6. Wrathfulness
7. Soiled thoughts
8. Passionate body
9. Sluggishness
10. Uncontrolled behavior

At S v, 440 the metaphor is similar: if one's clothes or head were ablaze.

59: The various thoughts that must be compassed about bring up some interesting questions. Here are those things:

1. Evil unprofitable states arising shall not overpower
2. Idea of impermanence
3. Idea of non-self
4. Idea of the foul
5. Idea of danger in things
6. Straight and crooked way of the world
7. Composition and decomposition of the world
8. Origin and ending of the world
9. Idea of abandoning

I am taking #s 7 – 8 in the sense of dependent origination as well as the sense of "the world" as being our perceptual universe.

60: This one's a great discourse on the key points of the doctrine:

1. Impermanence: the five khandhas
2. Not-self: of the six senses as "not the self"
3. Foul: the icky parts of the body
4. Disadvantage: diseases and troubles of the body
5. Abandoning: of lustful, malicious, harmful thinking
6. Revulsion: destruction of craving

7. Ending: ending of craving
8. Distaste: not clinging to systems, mental standpoints, dogmatic bias
9. Impermanence of all compounded things
10. Concentration on in-breathing and out-breathing.

According to this, those teachings healed the sick monk. While this sounds silly on the surface, the sickness of samsara is not silly—and this is the prescription for its cure.

61: This is a sutra of two linked sets: the set of that which feeds ignorance, and the set of that which feeds release by knowledge.

Ignorance is fed by:

1. The Five Hindrances
2. The Three Wrong Ways of Practice
3. Non-restraint of the sense-faculties
4. Lack of mindfulness and self-composure
5. Lack of thorough work of mind
6. Lack of faith
7. Not listening to true Dhamma
8. Not following after the very man

Release by Knowledge is fed by:

1. The seven limbs of wisdom
2. The four arisings of mindfulness
3. The three right ways of practice
4. Control of the sense-faculties
5. Mindfulness and self-possession
6. Thorough work of mind
7. Faith
8. Listening to true Dhamma
9. Following after the very man

62: Adds before ignorance, "craving to become".

Why the difference? Because either can be understood as a deeply rooted karmic influence over happiness and sadness.

65 – 66: Both these sutras address the very simple fact of birth itself as being the primary cause of suffering. Keep in mind that to a brahmanical type, this isn't obvious—we might be suffering due to the actions of a deity, or due to some special bad luck. These sutras point out that suffering is everyone's lot—there are many different kinds.

66 in particular brings up "discontent" versus "content"—the same phenomenon can be viewed as suffering or not, wholly dependent on one's contentment or lack thereof.

67: Here's another of those instances where the Buddha has a tired back. So he hands over a dharma talk to Sariputta and lies down to help ease and stretch his back.

69: Here once again is the admonition I enjoy so much, that monks should not speak of "rajahs, robbers, and great ministers"—i.e., politics and robbers popped in there together.

72: I am gratified by the statement: "noise is a thorn to musing." I can certainly attest to the truth of this sentiment.

There are ten thorns:

1. One desiring seclusion: society
2. Concentrating on mark of foul: concentration on mark of fair
3. Guarding sense doors: sight of shows
4. Monk life: consorting with women
5. First jhana: sound
6. Second jhana: thought directed and sustained
7. Third jhana: zest
8. Fourth jhana: in-and-out breathing
9. Ending of awareness-and-feeling: awareness-and-feeling
10. Lust malice, and delusion (thorns for all, in all situations.)

76: An important statement: without birth, decay, and death an arahant or Buddha cannot arise in the world.

78: A major dig here at the Jains, calling them immoral, shameless, reckless and so forth. Definitely a moment of higher-than-usual intolerance and invective on the part of the Buddha.

80: By asking: how can this be? (What harm is it) we can sharply check feelings of ill-will towards another. It helps to avoid being groundlessly annoyed.

But there can be grounded annoyance as well—we don't just take it with a smile.

81: What we're detached from: the five skandhas, rebirth, decay, death, passions, and mind's barriers are broken down.

Simile of the lotus, which grows in muddy water but is not soiled by it. Dhammapada 58:

Just as in a heap of rubbish
Cast away on a roadside
A lotus could there bloom
Of sweet fragrance, pleasing to the mind.

84: Another helpful list of stuff to abandon to reach spiritual maturity:

1. wrath
2. grudging
3. detracting other's virtues
4. spite
5. envy
6. stinginess
7. craftiness
8. trickiness
9. wicked desires
10. muddled wits

85: Even more qualities holding us back:

1. inconsistency
2. immorality
3. disbelief
4. little learning
5. foul-spoken
6. having wicked friends
7. slothfulness
8. of muddled wits
9. fraudulence
10. not forbearing
11. weak in wisdom

86: And more:

1. conceit (in one's erudition)
2. covetousness
3. malice
4. sloth-and-torpor
5. unbalance
6. doubt-and-wavering
7. delight in doing things
8. love of gossip
9. delight in sleep
10. delight in society
11. of muddled wits

87: And more:

1. disputatious
2. not fond of the training
3. of evil desires
4. wrathful
5. disparaging
6. crafty
7. a deceiver
8. unobservant of teachings
9. not given to seclusion
10. longing for appreciation and deference

This one—talking about the way in which the monk without having abandoned these qualities wishes to be treated like a fine, senior monk—reminds me of some students who want to be treated like fine professional musicians but who frequently behave like rank amateurs.

The one truly worthy of this kind of honor gets it whether he wishes for it or not.

88: A list of things that can go wrong if one is unpleasant to one's spiritual friends:

1. Fail to attain the unattained
2. Fall away from what has been attained
3. True Dhamma is not made clear
4. Overconceit arises about knowledge of true Dhamma
5. No delight in the religious life
6. Commit some foul offence
7. Fall into some grievous sickness
8. Go out of the mind with distraction
9. Makes an end with mind confused
10. Winds up with rebirth in hell realms

89: "Sariputta and Moggallana have wicked desires...."

S i, 149:

"What wise man here would seek to define
An immeasurable one by taking his measure?
He who would measure an immeasurable one
Must be, I think, an obstructed worldling."

From Spk (commentary to the Samyutta Nikaya):

The immeasurable one is the arahant: one takes his measure by determining: 'He has this much virtue, this much concentration, this much wisdom.' The states that make for measurement are lust, hatred, and delusion, and with their removal it is impossible "to measure" the arahant by means of lust, hatred, delusion, etc.

M i, 298:

"Lust is a maker of measurement, hate is a maker of measurement, delusion is a maker of measurement. In a bhikkhu whose taints are destroyed, these are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, done away with so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Of all the kinds of immeasurable deliverance of mind, the unshakeable deliverance of mind is pronounced the best. Now, that unshakeable deliverance of mind is void of lust, void of hate, void of delusion.

"Lust is a something, hate is a something, delusion is a something....deliverance of mind through nothingness...

"Lust is a maker of signs, hate is a maker of signs, delusion is a maker of signs...signless deliverance of mind..."

Notes to M i, 298:

Makers of measurement: understood as such in that they impose limitations upon the range and depths of the mind.

Makers of signs: these brand a person as a worldling. But it may also mean that these defilements cause the mind to ascribe a false significance to things as being permanent, pleasurable, self, or beautiful.

Names of the hells: these seem to be the inverse of the heavens, in that there is a concentric series in which you stay for longer and longer periods. Sounds sort of Dantean.

90: The destruction of the cankers is known due to these insights:

1. Seeing all compounded things as impermanent
2. Seeing all compounded things like unto burning charcoal
3. Thoughts flow to seclusion
4. Four arisings of mindfulness
5. Four best efforts made to grow
6. Four bases of psychic power
7. Five faculties
8. Five powers
9. Seven limbs of wisdom
10. Noble eightfold path

91: I don't usually find the sutras dull, but this one is dull.

92: Five guilty dreads—breaking the precepts. The four limbs of stream-winning are confidence in the Three Jewels and Noble Virtue. The "Ariyan Method" is the understanding of dependent origination, including the twelve links.

93: Where questioned as to what is the Buddha's view, or *his* view, Anathapindika explains dependent origination.

94: It isn't what you practice, but that the practice bears fruit. So if practicing austerieis makes unprofitable states wax and profitable ones wane, then avoid austerieis. But if they do the reverse, then practice them.

96: Both 95 and 96 concern themselves with the Buddha's silence when asked certain questions. Here Ananda sums up well the reason: "fixing on view, relying on view, obsession on view..."

99: This story of one who wishes to do intense practice without first having tamed the mind is instructive: you can't do this well if you are prone to lustful and/or malicious thoughts. You must work up to it with your practice.

100: In a list of ten conditions that must be abandoned to realize arahantship, I note "stinginess" which isn't all that common, but which certainly fits.

102: The seven limbs of wisdom:

1. Mindfulness
2. Investigation of Dhamma
3. Energy
4. Zest
5. Tranquillity
6. Concentration
7. Equanimity

103: In this and on to 112, there is a Tenfold Path—that is, the Eightfold Path plus Right Knowledge and Right Release.

104: Places Right view squarely as the root of all the others in the Noble Eight(Ten)fold Path.

105: Ignorance is given as the root of Wrong View.

106: Right View wears out Wrong View, and so on through the list. I consider this one important in that it makes clear that these are not dualistic states: you do not have *all* Right view or *all* Wrong View. The two exist together. But a concentration on, attention to, Right View, *wears out* the other states—as does the same for all the others. Obviously focus on the reverse would wear out Right View and so on.

107: The same as above but the metaphor is *washing* away rather than wearing away.

108: as a purge.

109: As an emetic causing vomiting.

110: Ejecting wrong view.

117: The gathas are Dhammapada 85 – 89. Note that the “hither shore” is Wrong View and the rest, while the “far shore” is Right View and the rest.

121: Right View likened to the dawn, as the harbinger of profitable states, just as dawn is harbinger to the sun’s arising.

174: Breaking the precepts in general (plus overall more hindrances) is laid squarely at the feet of lust, malice, and delusion.

176: Here is a definition of the anti-sex precept that is interesting:

Sex with girls under protection by family
Lawfully guarded girls
Engaged girls
Spoken-for girls

There’s really nothing here worth quibbling with in the slightest.

The general point to this sutra is that all the purification rites in the world won’t help you if your behavior in body, speech, and mind isn’t also pure. It’s the action that counts: we can’t go to church later and pray away our faults.

202: Women attain a better birth by good karma, just like men.

205: There is an excellent definition of karma here:

“Monks, beings are responsible for their deeds, heirs to their deeds, they are the womb of their deeds, kinsmen of their deeds, to them their deeds come home again.”

And later: “Whatever deed they do, be it lovely or ugly, of that they are the heirs.” See #208: you manage your karma here and now.

206: Karma further defined: “I declared, monks, that of intentional deeds done and accumulated there can be no wiping out without experiencing the result thereof...”

211: Note that encouraging others to break the precepts is just as bad as breaking them yourself.