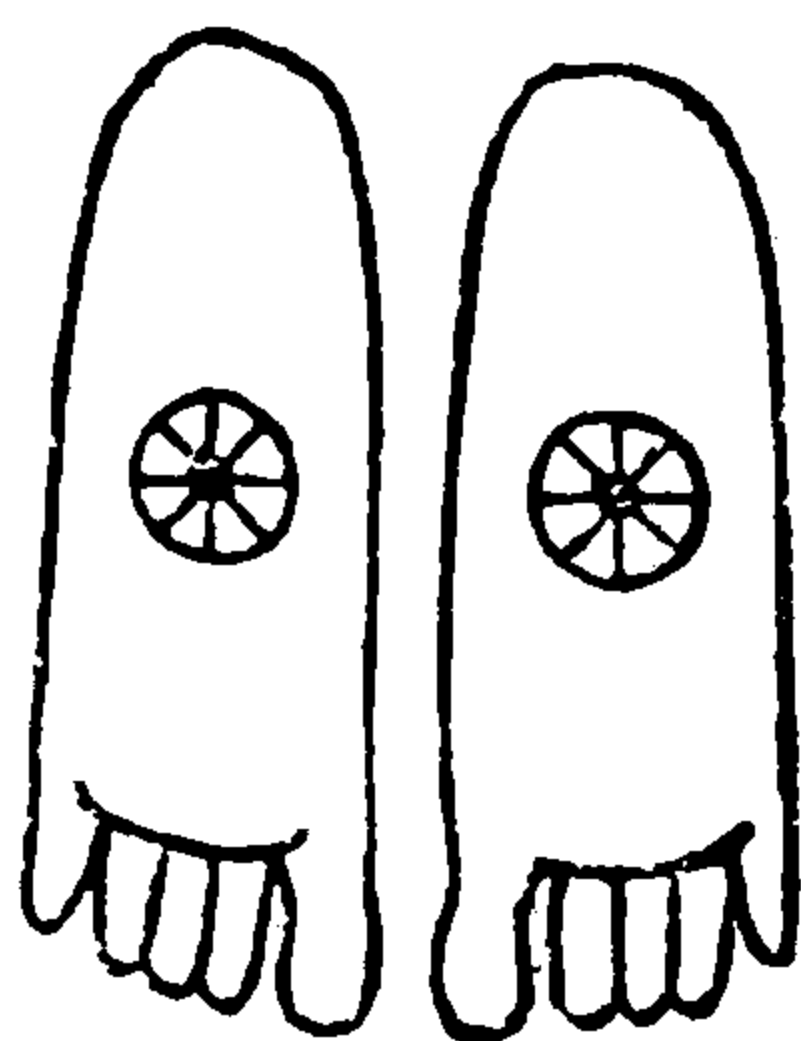


SERMONS & SAYINGS  
OF THE BUDDHA



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OF THE  
BUDDHA



# SERMONS AND SAYINGS OF THE BUDDHA

By  
SUDHAKAR DIKSHIT



*Published by*  
**CHETANA**  
for the  
BUDDHA JAYANTI CHARITIES SOCIETY, BOMBAY

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Printed by G. G. Pathare at Popular Press (Bom.) Private Ltd., Tardeo Road, Bombay 7, and published by K. T. Vaidya for Chetana Ltd., 34 Rampart Row, Bombay 1 (India).

## **Foreword**

The 2,500th Buddha Jayanti souvenir publications, issued by the Buddha Jayanti Charities Society, Bombay, are not planned as scholarly works on Buddhism. Their main object is to present in simple language the essence of the teaching of the Buddha. The present book, as well as the others that are to follow in this series, while based upon the Buddhist classics and canonical works, are not literal translations of the texts referred to in the various chapters. The authors of these books have only tried to put into easy prose the central ideas of the texts upon which they have drawn and have purposely eschewed complicated turns of expression and archaic phraseology. It is hoped that scholars of Buddhism will pardon these shortcomings, which arise mainly out of our avowed object of placing before the ordinary men and women

the universality of the Buddha's teaching. If these publications succeed in creating an awareness of Buddhism in the common man, our purpose will be well served.

Harekrushna Mahtab,  
Chairman,  
The Buddha Jayanti Charities Society,  
Bombay.

## Preface

The *Sermons and Sayings of the Buddha* are gems of “purest ray serene”, picked up at random from the vast treasures of the *Digha-Nikaya*, *Majjhima-Nikaya*, *Anguttara-Nikaya*, *Udana* etc. It may be that there are numerous verses and chapters in these noble works which could be considered more illuminating than those selected by us. But then such a selection as this, of its very nature, can never be fully representative. It is no more than a drop from an ocean, but it has the same flavour, the flavour of the ocean.

The short pieces put together in this volume are not literal translations of the texts on which they are based. As our learned Chairman, Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, has aptly pointed out in his Foreword, the writings published in the present series were not designed to be translations of the Buddhist texts. Our object has been to present in simple language the kernel of Buddhist thought in such a manner that the common man may be

able to grasp it without difficulty. The success of our endeavour is, therefore, to be judged by the reaction of the common man and not that of the spiritual mentor or the literary critic.

Sudhakar Dikshit.



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# 1

## **The First Sermon**

Giving his first sermon to his first five disciples at Sarnath, near Banaras, the Enlightened One said:

Bhikkhus, those who are in search of Truth must always avoid the two extremes. The first extreme to be avoided is the life of luxury and passion, as it enslaves man to gross needs and debases his human qualities. The second extreme to be avoided is the life of self-torture through penance, because it is not only



painful, but useless. The middle path is the best: it produces insight and mental calm, which ultimately lead to Nirvana.

And what is the middle path? It is a state of self-discipline, through an eightfold endeavour. I call it the "eightfold path"—consisting of right understanding, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right vocation, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. One who follows this eightfold path develops an insight and a mental calm which ultimately lead to Nirvana.

Bhikkhus, now I will tell you the four Aryan (noble) Truths. These are: sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the uprooting of sorrow and the eightfold path.

1. SORROW IS EVERYWHERE: Old age, disease and death; frustration, dejection and despair—all lead to sorrow. And any contact with this world of sorrow leads only to sorrow.

2. DESIRE IS THE CAUSE OF SORROW: Desire is a selfish, blind force which demands more and more and is never satisfied. Dejection and frustration are its very essence. It is ever unfulfilled and therefore always produces sorrow.



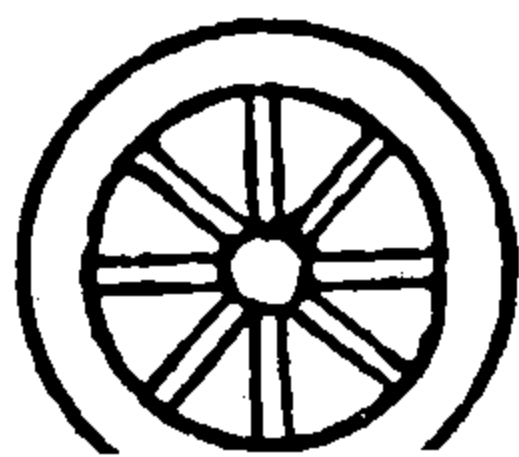
3. DESIRELESSNESS UPROOTS SORROW: The only way to uproot sorrow is to strike at its root—desire. If desire is abandoned sorrow too will be eliminated.

4. THE EIGHTFOLD PATH disciplines the mind and destroys desire. By right understanding, aspiration, speech, conduct, etc., man can curb selfish desire and can rise above himself.

These are the FOUR ARYAN TRUTHS, bhikkhus. By realising them, knowledge and wisdom came to me and I achieved enlightenment.

Thus spoke the Enlightened One and the five bhikkhus expressed their delight at this utterance.

—*Majjhima-Nikaya*





## 2

### **Pleasures of the Senses**

What satisfaction do men get from the pleasures of the senses?

There are five pleasures of the senses: To see with the eye desirable sights; to hear with the ear agreeable sounds; to smell with the nose sweet odours; to taste with the tongue pleasant flavours and to feel by touch what is pleasurable. All these five pleasures while offering satisfaction also arouse passion.

What are the perils from the pleasures of the senses?

Take the case of a respectable young man, who has adopted a calling, but is unable to make a fortune in spite of hard work. He grieves because he cannot enjoy the pleasures of the senses.

If, on the other hand, he succeeds in his calling and makes a fortune, he becomes anxious to preserve it. He becomes anxious to preserve the pleasures of the senses which he has accumulated, and is in constant fear



of thieves and robbers. And if, in spite of his watchfulness, his fortune is stolen or robbed, he grieves over the loss. He grieves because the pleasures of the senses have been snatched from him.

Thus the man who hankers after the pleasures of the senses is fated to grieve if he does not succeed in obtaining them; he is fated to grieve even if he obtains them, for the anxiety to preserve them gnaws at his heart and destroys his peace; he is fated to grieve again when the pleasures of the senses are snatched from him.

It is the lust for pleasures of the senses that is the root of all sorrow and suffering. It is for this that kings fight with kings, citizens fight with citizens, brothers fight with brothers and men fall prey to destruction and death.

Such are the perils from pleasures of the senses.

It is because of the lust for pleasures of the senses that men become thieves, robbers and adulterers and suffer untold miseries by way of punishment.

It is only because of the lust for pleasures of the senses that men go astray in deed and



word and thought and suffer not only in their earthly life, but even after death, when the woes of Hell overtake them.

What is the way to save oneself from the pleasures of the senses?

The only way of deliverance from pleasures of the senses is to shed all desire for them. Those who do not understand the true nature of the satisfaction and the perils from pleasures of the senses cannot instruct others about the way of deliverance from them.

Take for example the pleasure derived from visible forms. A woman in the prime of her youth may offer visual pleasure by her charm. In fact anything charming gives visual pleasure.

Suppose, later on, the same woman is seen in decrepit old age, with her body emaciated, or is seen suffering from a serious malady, stinking in her own offal and urine, or is seen as a corpse flung into the charnel-ground, being devoured by hawks and vultures—all the pleasure that her charm once gave is converted into pain and toilsome sorrow. The only deliverance from such pain and sorrow lies in shedding the desire for visual pleasure.



There are four states of bliss or ecstasy which the man enjoys who has found deliverance from the pleasures of the senses.

In the first stage he divests himself of the pleasures of the senses and the wrong states of consciousness born of them. He develops an inward aloofness, but continues to observe and reflect.

In the second stage he rises above reflection and develops a concentration that leads to inner peace.

In the third stage he sheds away completely satisfaction and dissatisfaction, joys and sorrows, and prepares himself for final emancipation.

In the fourth stage, which is the stage of emancipation, he evolves an alert mindfulness, which is beyond everything transitory and beyond all known experience. He gains deliverance from all feelings.

Verily, the way of true deliverance is to shed all desire.

Thus spoke the Blessed One and the bhikkhus rejoiced in what the Blessed One said.

—*Maha-Dukkha-Kkhandha-Sutta*



### 3

## **Pleasures of Renunciation**

Once when the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, he addressed the bhikkhus as follows:

In the days before I became enlightened it occurred to me to sort out my thoughts into two separate groups. Into one group I put thoughts relating to the pleasures of the senses and to violence, and into the other group thoughts relating to renunciation and non-violence.

When there arose within me a thought about the pleasures of the senses, I immediately recognised that it would do harm both to myself and to others. This reflection helped me to drive away the thought about the pleasures of the senses.

Now, remember, whatsoever you think about much will ultimately mould your mind. If you think much about the pleasures of the senses, your mind will be moulded accordingly and thoughts of renunciation will not find an



abode in your mind; and the same will happen if you think much about harm and hurt and violence and revenge.

As in the last month of the rains, when the countryside is covered with rich crops, the cowherd has to keep a sharp eye on his cattle, beating them off here, herding them there, driving them with a stick, or checking their way, even so did I control my thoughts, inclined to pleasures of the senses, and wrong states of mind.

When there arose within me a thought of renunciation, I immediately recognised that it would not harm myself or others. I realised that this thought would help me towards Nirvana.

Then, by day and night, I dwelt on the thought of renunciation and my mind was moulded accordingly. And thoughts of love and goodwill towards all came to me.

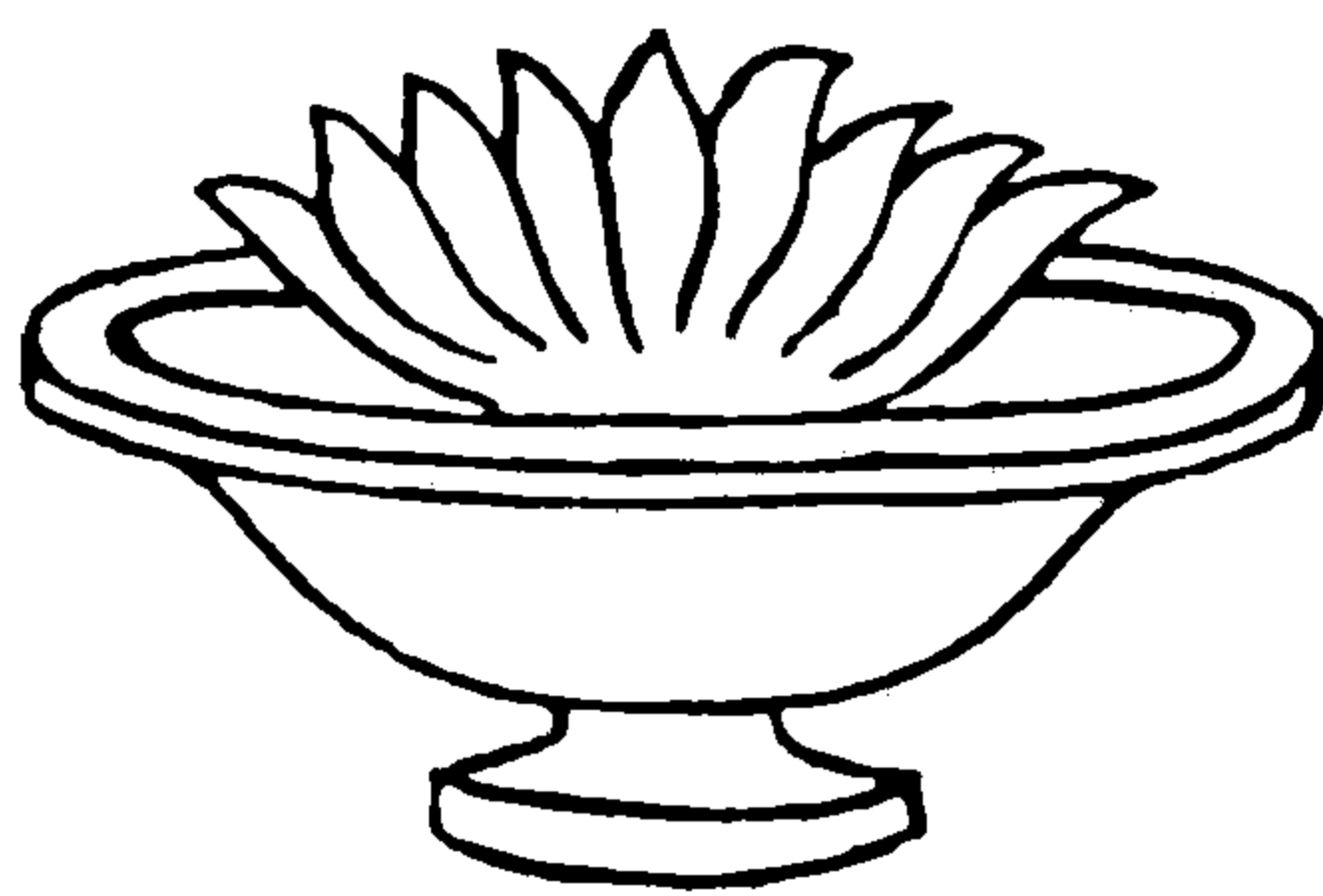
As in the last month of summer, when the crops have been reaped and garnered in the village and the cowherd has only to see, sitting under a shady tree, that his cows are all there in the open field, even so bhikkhus, I had only to watch that right states of my



mind were there.

Constant effort in avoiding thoughts of pleasures of the senses and dwelling upon the thought of renunciation gave me an inner peace that knew no distraction, a steadfastness of mind that never wavered. Thus, shedding the pleasures of the senses and wrong states of mind I entered the state of ecstasy which is Enlightenment.

—*Dvedha-Vitakka Sutta*





## 4

### **The Wise Man**

If you meet a man who tells you what is to be avoided and who reproaches you, follow that man, for he is wise. Let him reproach you, let him forbid what is improper and let him teach what is proper, for he is the wise man, a beloved of God, though hated by the bad people.

The wise man always rejoices in the Dhamma, lives in the Dhamma and has a purposeful mind.

The wise man does not waver in praise or blame and stands firm like a solid rock unshaken by the wind.

The wise man, filled with the knowledge of Dhamma, is deep, still and serene like a lake; he never appears elated or downcast.

If there is a man who hankers not after wealth or power, either for himself or for others, then he is a wise man.

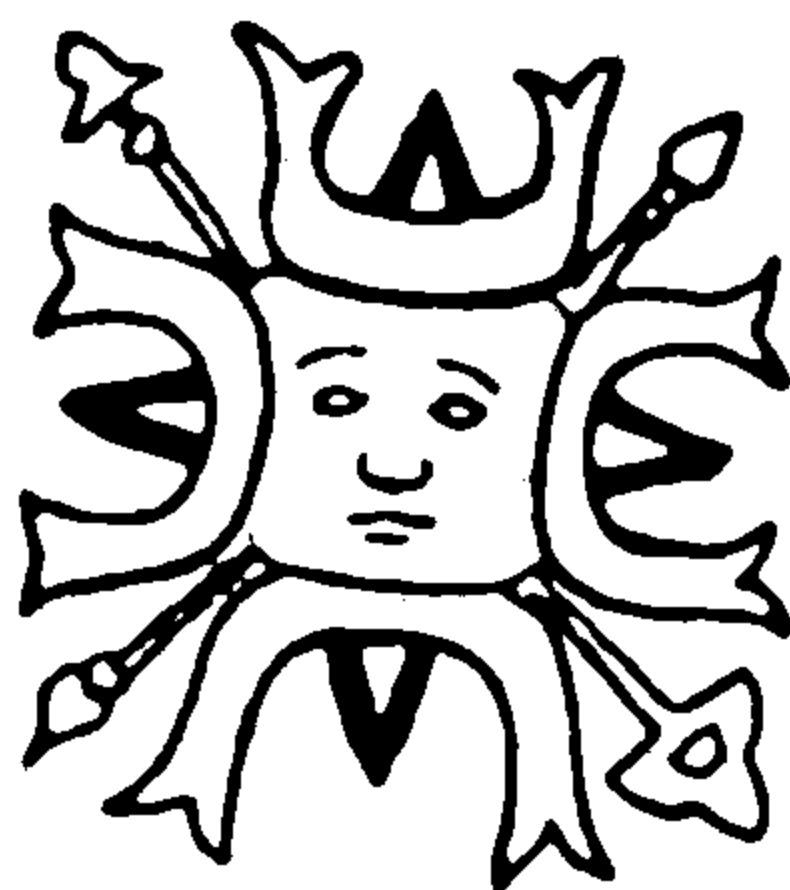
The wise man should leave the darkness of the ordinary life and adopt the bright state



of the bhikkhu. He should go from home to a homeless state and in his retirement seek enjoyment where enjoyment seemed difficult. The wise man should leave all pleasures behind and call nothing his own. He should purge his mind of all vices.

The wise man, who clings to nothing and rejoices in his freedom from attachment, who has conquered his appetites, will win Nirvana even in this world.

—*Sutta-Pitaka*





## 5

### **The Fool**

Long is the night to him who is awake, long is the path to him who is tired. Even so, long is life to the foolish one who does not know the true Dhamma.

If a traveller does not come across anyone who is his superior or at least equal, let him keep to his solitary journey firmly, for there is no use having the company of a fool.

“These are my sons; this is my wealth”—such thoughts torment only a fool, who does not know that he himself does not belong to himself; much less his sons and his wealth.

The fool who knows that he is foolish is wise to that extent. But the fool who considers himself to be wise is indeed a fool.

If a fool lives with a wise man all his life, he will be able to perceive as much of the truth as the spoon lying in the soup may perceive of its taste.

But if a man of understanding be associated with the wise even though for only a

minute, he will soon perceive the truth, like the tongue tasting the soup.

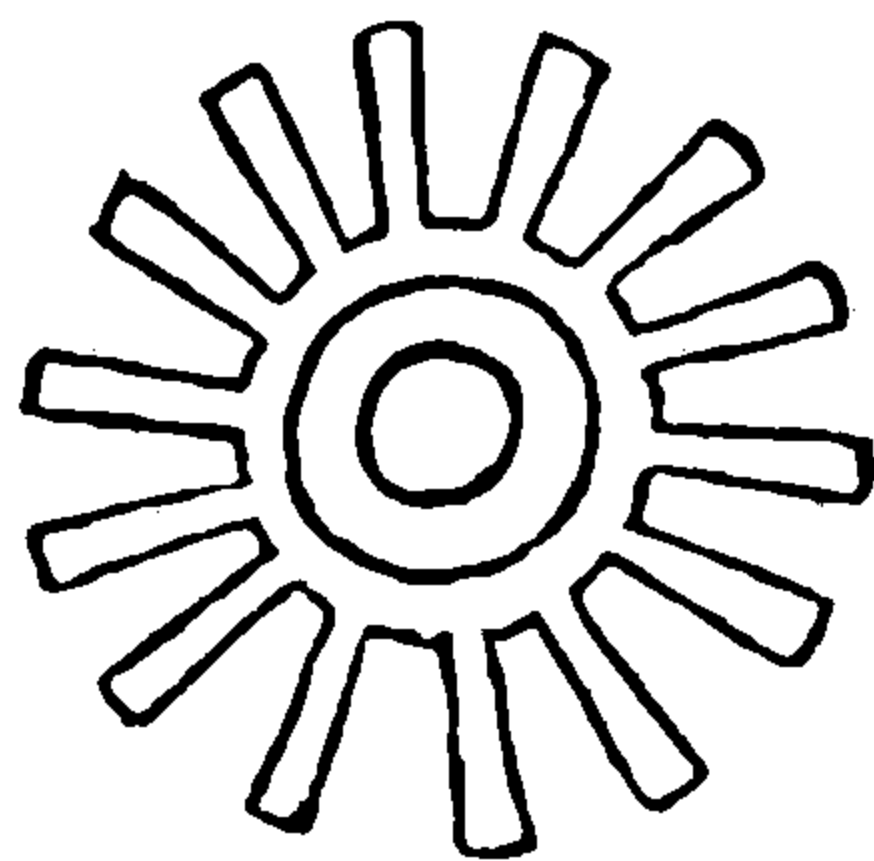
Fools are the greatest enemies of their own selves, for their foolish deeds bear bitter fruits for them.

That deed is wrong after doing which one repents and the result of which one receives with tears.

And that deed is good after doing which one has not to repent and the reward of which one receives with a smile.

As long as an evil deed does not bear its fruit, the fool thinks it is honey, but when the deed bears fruit the fool suffers untold grief.

—*Sutta-Pitaka*





## 6

### **Friends: False and True**

Speaking to the young householder Sigala, the Enlightened One said—

There are four kinds of friends who are in reality foes in the garb of friends. These are: the out-and-out robber; the one who is good at mere words; the one who is sweet-tongued; and the one who is a wastrel.

The first one, who is out-and-out a robber, tries to get much by giving little; he does his duty, but only out of fear; he follows you, but only for his own profit.

The second one, who is good at mere words, greets you with stories of his past achievements; he tempts you with hopes of future successes; he talks and talks, but when need arises he fails to act as a friend and for this also he blames his own ill-luck.

The third one, who is sweet-tongued, is compliant in evil deeds, but not in good; he sings your praises to your face, but speaks ill of you behind your back.

The fourth one, who is a wastrel, will join you in drinking and other evil ways, like gambling and loafing.

These four kinds of friends, O young householder, are really foes in the garb of friends.

Listen, now I will speak to you of four kinds of friends who are true-hearted—

These true-hearted friends are: the one who helps you unsolicited; the one who is unchanged in your prosperity or penury; the one who tells you what is good for you; and the one who has affection for you.

Of these, the first becomes your refuge in times of fear and watches over you when you are slack.

The second one tells you his secrets and keeps yours. He does not leave you when you are in trouble, but he sacrifices himself for your good.

The third one keeps you from wrongdoing and puts you on the right path, whether you like it or not. His object is not to please you but to do you good.

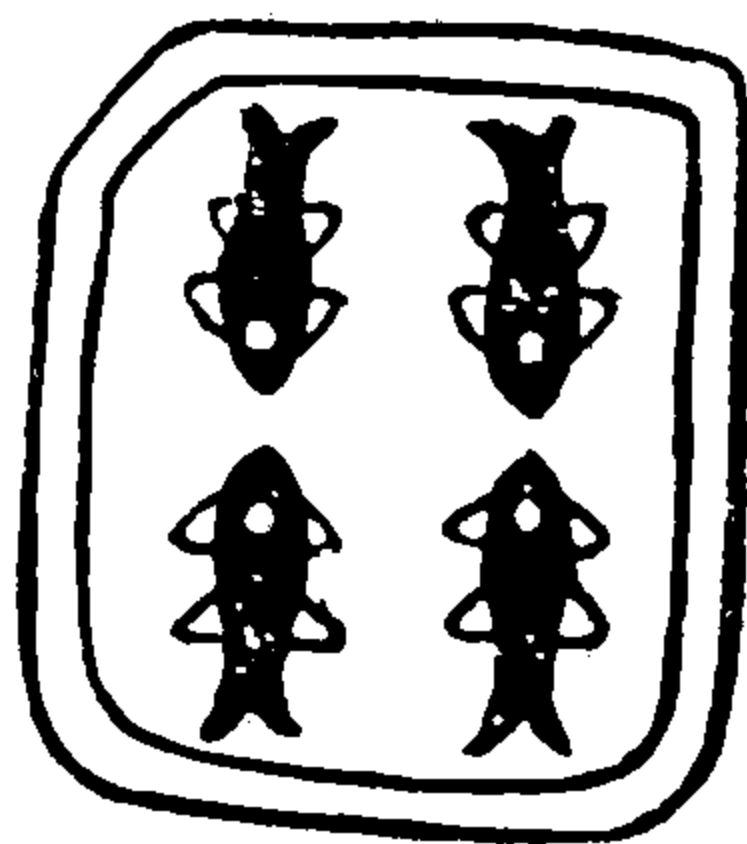
The fourth one is happy in your happiness and miserable in your misery. He de-

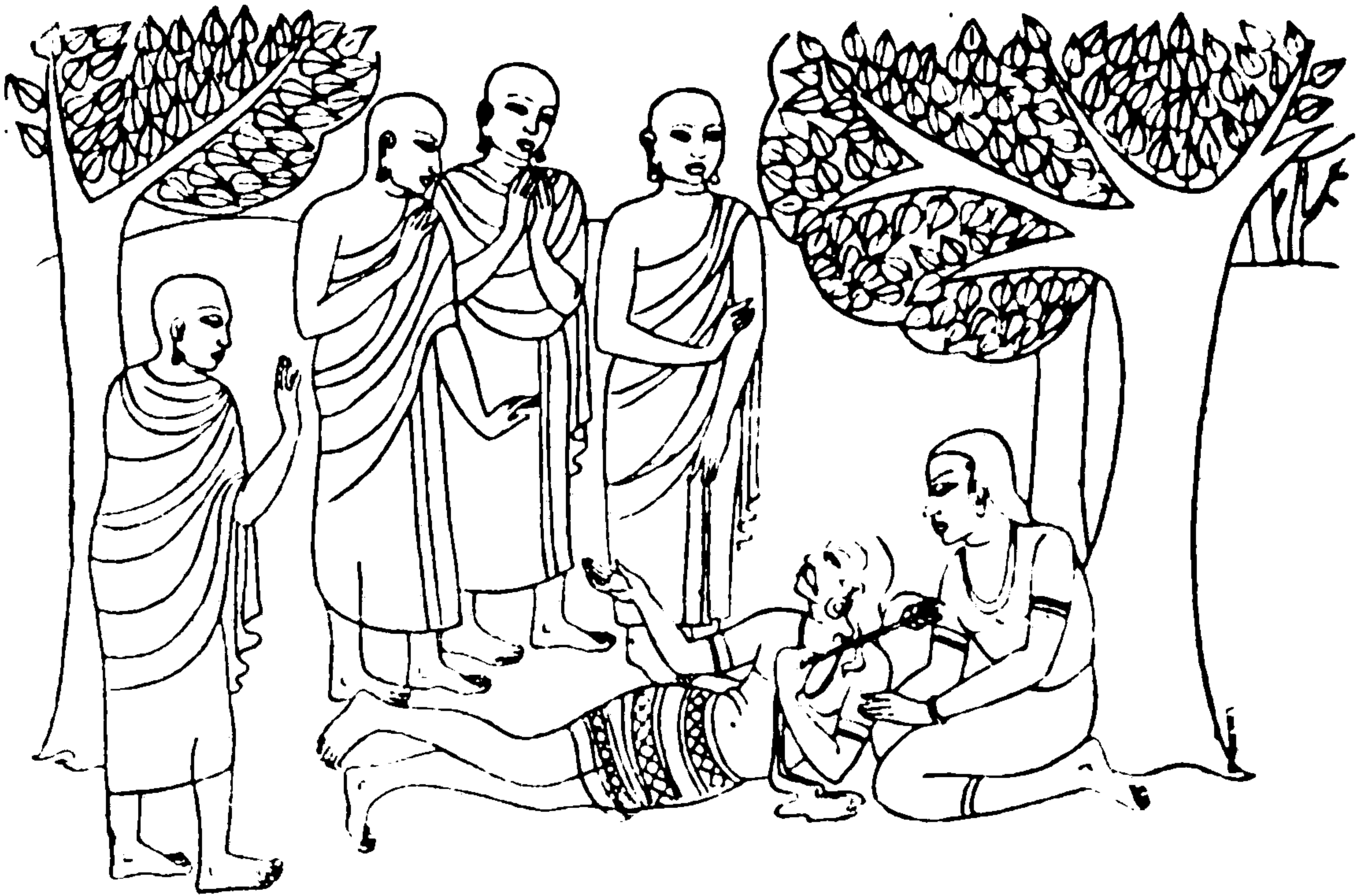


fends you against slanderers and commends you ever with a true heart.

I have spoken to you, Sigala, of friends false and true. So, beware and be guided in your choice of friends. Avoid false friends and abide with those who are true, for they will help you in cultivating righteousness and prepare your mind for the training of the Dhamma.

—*Digha-Nikaya*





## 7

### **The Irrelevant**

The reverend Malunkya-putta, a monk, while meditating one evening, had the following reflection:

The Enlightened One has never expounded his views on many important questions and has even evaded answering them. He has never explained whether the world is eternal or non-eternal, infinite or finite; whether life and the body are the same thing or two separate things; whether or not a truth-finder



passes to another life after death. I will go to him and have his answers. And if his answers are not satisfactory, I will discard the robes of a bhikkhu and become a layman again.

Malunkyaputta then went to the Enlightened One and put before him all his questions and said that if he did not receive satisfactory answers he would give up his recluseship and become a layman.

The Enlightened One said: Malunkyaputta, did I ever promise you that if you became my disciple I would tell you whether the world was eternal or non-eternal and answer your other similar questions?

No, Gautama.

Did you ever stipulate that on your becoming my disciple I should answer all these questions?

No, Sir.

It is clear that I never made a promise nor did you make a stipulation that, as a condition precedent to your becoming my disciple, I should expound all these matters to you. Malunkyaputta, if a man were to say to the Truth-finder that he would not become

his disciple until his questions were answered. then probably he would die waiting for and without getting any answer from the Truth-finder.

Similar is the case of a man in great pain, with a poisoned arrow transfixing deeply his chest, who does not allow the physician and friends to take the arrow out, saying: First I want to know who shot the arrow, whether he was a Brahmin or of any other caste. I want to know his name, lineage, height, colour and the town from which he came. I want to know if his bow was long or short, his bowstring of bamboo, or hemp, or sinew and what kind of feather had his bow-shaft, of vulture, or falcon or peacock... The man would never get to know all this before death overtook him because of the poison from the arrow transfixing his chest.

In the same way, Malunkyaputta, if a man were to say that he would not follow the higher life under the Truth-finder unless his pack of questions had been answered, he would get no answer before he was overtaken by death.

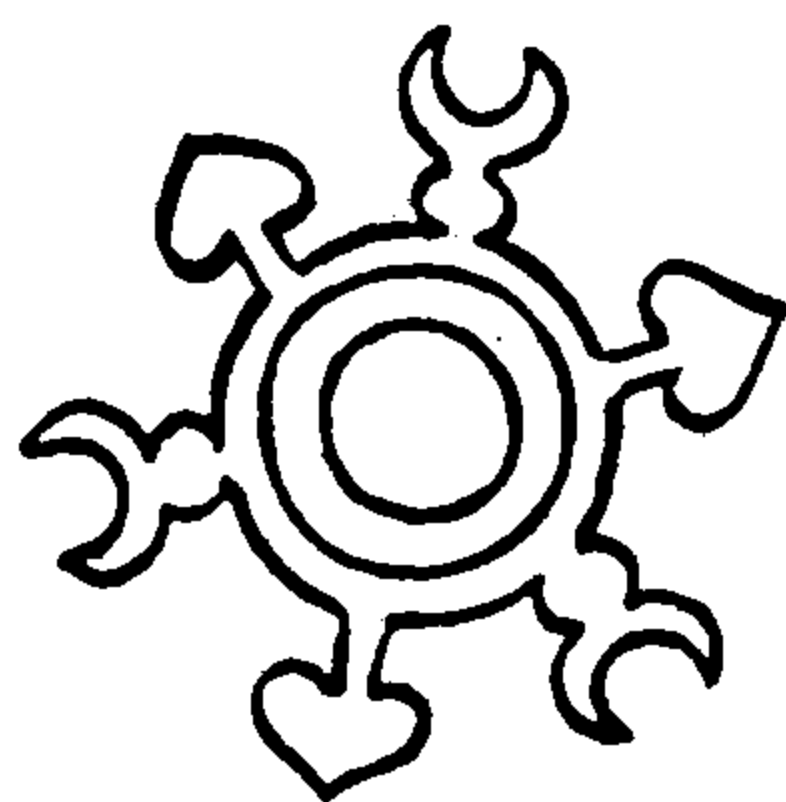
The higher life is not based on the know-

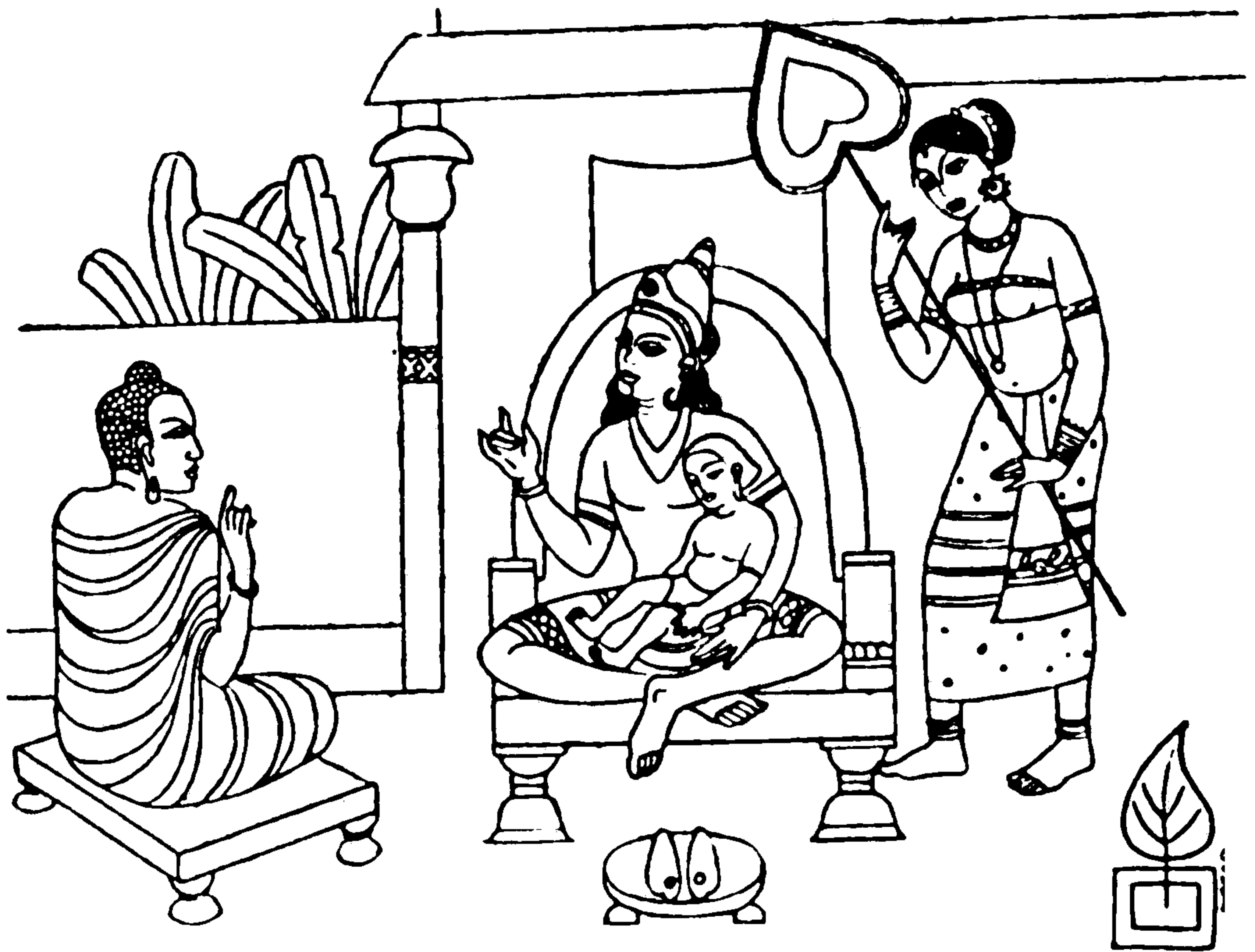


ledge of whether the world is eternal or non-eternal. In this as in all the questions that are vexing you, there abides the fact of birth, decay and death; there abides the fact of sorrow, which my teaching is designed to exterminate here and now.

I have not taught the things you want to know because they are not fundamental to higher life and therefore are irrelevant. I have taught about the origin of sorrow and the way to end sorrow. This alone is profitable for human beings and is relevant to their higher life. This alone leads to Nirvana.

—*Cula-Malunkya Sutta*





## 8

### **Choosing One's Words**

Once when the Blessed One was staying at Rajagaha, Prince Abhaya invited him to dinner at his palace. The dinner over, the prince asked the Blessed One:

Sir, would a Truth-finder say anything which could be disagreeable to others?

Buddha: This question requires clarification, O Prince.



Prince: Sir, I had been advised by the Nigantha to confute you and was told that you would not be able to bear my confutation.

When the Prince was talking to the Lord he was also caressing his little son, who was on his lap. The Blessed One looked at the baby and said:

Prince, if, due to the inattention of an attendant, your little son were to swallow a pebble or a piece of stick what would you do?

Prince: I would remove it, Sir. I would insert my finger in his throat and pull it out, even if blood flowed. And I must do this out of pity for the child.

Buddha: The same is the spirit of the Truth-finder, O Prince. He never says anything which he knows to be false and unprofitable and also displeasing. He never says anything which he knows to be true, but unprofitable and also displeasing. But should it be true and profitable, he says it even though it be displeasing and distasteful to others.

Also, O Prince, the Truth-finder never says anything which is false and unprofitable, though pleasing. He never says anything, which though true, is unprofitable, even if it

be pleasing. But if it is true and profitable and also pleasing, then he says it on the proper occasion. And this he does out of pity for creatures.

Prince: When learned scholars and Brahmins come to you Sir, to ask questions, are you able to divine their questions beforehand and reflect over them, or do you answer offhand?

Buddha: Prince, in reply to this let me ask you another question: Do you know all about the several parts of a chariot?

Prince: Yes Sir, I know all about them.

Buddha: If people ask you, Prince, what a particular part is, have you previously to reflect what their question will be and what should be your answer? Or will you answer offhand?

Prince: My answer will come offhand, Sir.

Buddha: In the same way, O Prince, when learned scholars come to the Truth-finder to ask questions, his answers come offhand.

The Prince made obeisance before the Blessed One and prayed to being accepted as a disciple.

—*Abhaya-Rajkumar-Sutta*



## 9

### **Righteousness and Unrighteousness**

Once when the Enlightened One was on an alms-pilgrimage in Kosala he came to a village named Sala.

The Brahmin householders of the village gathered together and decided to question the Enlightened One. And the following talk took place:

Gautama, tell us why after death some people are reborn in misery and suffering, while others are reborn in happiness and joy?

Because some are wicked and unrighteous and deserve to be born in misery and suffering; while those who are righteous deserve to be born in happiness and joy.

This answer Gautama, is too condensed. Pray develop it for us?

Householders, listen: there are three forms of unrighteousness of the body, four forms of unrighteousness of speech and three forms of unrighteousness of thought. Similarly

there are corresponding forms of righteousness.

Bodily unrighteousness is of three kinds: (i) One may take life and be cruel to living creatures; (ii) One may take what is not one's own by committing theft or robbery; (iii) One may indulge in sexual intercourse outside wedlock and entice and pollute girls and women.

Unrighteousness of speech is of four kinds: (i) One may tell lies, saying that one knows what one actually does not know, or saying that one does not know what one actually knows—thus deliberately lying for some selfish interest or gain. (ii) Or, one may be a slanderer, talking scandal of others and setting one man against another, thus causing discord. (iii) Or, one may have a bitter tongue, speaking rough and harsh words that hurt others and provoke anger. (iv) Or, one may be a gossip, talking uselessly and without heed of facts and without mentioning the sublime Dhamma.

Unrighteousness of thought is of three kinds: (i) One may be greedy coveting other people's things. (ii) Or, one may be wicked of heart, wishing ill to other people. (ii) Or, one may be wrong in outlook and conceptions,



always disbelieving in sacrifice, charity and other virtues, disbelieving Brahmins or bhikkhus, disbelieving all that is considered to be good and pure.

Householders, remember: people who act unrighteously in any of these ways are reborn after death in misery and suffering.

And what is righteousness? It is the contrary in every point of the unrighteous ways enumerated before you. People who live righteous lives are reborn after death in happiness and joy.

At the close of this discourse the Brahmin householders of Sala praised the Enlightened One for showing them the right path.

—*Saleyyaka-Sutta*





10

## **Against Lying**

One evening, the Enlightened One happened to visit the revered Rahula, who seeing him coming placed a seat for him and brought water to wash his feet.

The Enlightened One poured the water



over his feet himself and while pouring it asked Rahula: Do you see this small trinkle of water?

Yes.

Minute in the same manner is the recluship of those who do not shrink from telling deliberate lies.

Then throwing away the remaining water, the Enlightened One said: Do you see this water now thrown away.

Yes, Sir.

Thrown away in the same way is the recluship of those who do not shrink from telling deliberate lies.

Then upsetting the pot the Enlightened One said: Do you see this upset pot?

Yes, Sir.

Upset in the same way is the recluship of those who do not shrink from telling deliberate lies.

Putting up the pot again, the Enlightened One said: Do you now see this pot empty and void?

Yes, Sir.

Empty and void in the same way is the recluship of those who do not shrink from

telling deliberate lies.

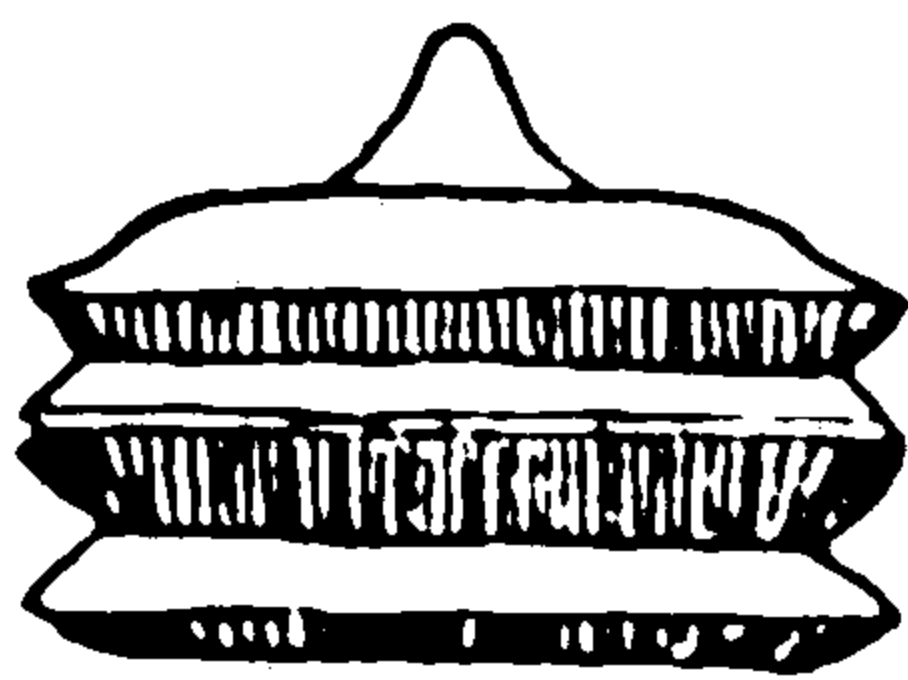
What is a mirror for, Rahula?

To reflect, Sir.

Rahula, you must reflect again and again —while thinking a thought, while speaking a word, while doing an act. Whenever you do anything you must reflect, whether your deed will harm you, or others, or both. If reflection tells you that a deed is harmful, it is a wrong deed which will lead to sorrow: such a deed should be abandoned. But if reflection says that a deed is good for you, or for others, or for both, it must be done. The same holds good for thoughts and words also.

All true recluses and Brahmins, Rahula, attain purity only by reflection. Therefore, train yourself through reflection, O Rahula, through constant reflection of thought and word and deed.

—*Ambalatthika-Rahul-Ovada*



## On Endurance

Once upon a time, O bhikkhus, there was a lady named Vedehika, who lived in the town of Savatthi. She had the reputation of being a good householder, meek in nature and gentle and sweet by temperament.

Vedehika had a slave woman, named Kali, who was not only a good worker but also clever and far-sighted. One day it occurred to Kali that she should test the goodness of her mistress. She wanted to know whether Vedehika was genuinely as good as her reputation, or had she some ill-temper lurking in her heart.

Then, O bhikkhus, with a view to test her mistress, Kali got up late next morning. Vedehika thereupon mildly rebuked Kali for her laziness, and the frown on her forehead showed displeasure. The slave girl kept quiet, but thought that her mistress perhaps had an inward ill-temper which she did not show because her work was always good. Suppose I



were to test the mistress a little further, said Kali to herself.

Then, O bhikkhus, the slave girl Kali got up even later next day. Vedehika thereupon again showed her displeasure not by mere frowning this time, but in strong words. Kali kept quiet, and thought the mistress was not rough with her because she was a good worker. But for that, she would have shown worse ill-temper. Suppose I were to test the mistress a little further, she said to herself.

Then, O bhikkhus, Kali got up still later next day. This time Vedehika flew into a rage and, picking up the unfastened bolt of a door, she struck Kali on her head. Thereupon the slave girl, with blood streaming from the wound in her skull, went about in the neighbourhood crying and shouting thus: "See Sirs, the deed of the one who is known to be meek and gentle. How she broke the head of a poor slave woman merely for getting up late."

Then, O bhikkhus, after some time an evil reputation spread abroad about Vedehika and people started saying that she was a woman of violent temper, callous and cruel.

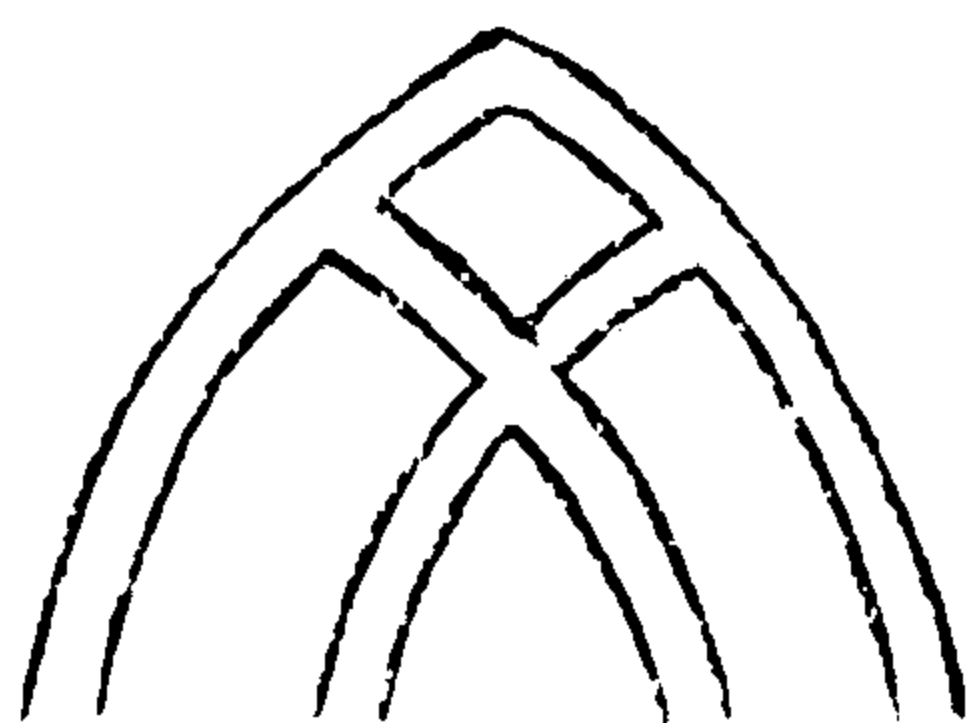
One can be mild and gentle so long as

nothing unpleasant happens. It is only when unpleasant things happen that the real test of one's meekness or goodness can be made.

There are five ways in which one may be addressed: 1. In or out of season. 2. Truthfully or untruthfully. 3. Profitably or unprofitably. 4. Mildly or harshly. 5. And, in love or in hate.

It should be your duty, bhikkhus, to remain unmoved howsoever you be addressed. It should be your duty to have goodwill and love in your heart, howsoever you be addressed or howsoever you be treated.

—*Kakacūpama-Sutta*



## **Sacrifice: Right and Wrong**

Once when talking to a princely disciple about sacrifices, the Blessed One said:

O Prince, at a sacrifice where oxen and goats and fowls are slain, those who partake in the sacrifice have wrong views, wrong intentions, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong endeavour, wrong mindfulness and wrong rapture.

Such a sacrifice, O Prince, can not bring any profit, nor fame nor moral upliftment.

It is just as if a farmer were to enter a forest taking with him his plough and there sow seeds that are broken and rotten—in unfavourable soil, among uprooted stumps and out of season.

Would these seeds grow into plants, O Prince, and would they expand and yield fruit?

No indeed, Master, answered the Prince.

So is it Prince, with the sacrifice at which oxen and goats and fowls are slain.



But where, O Prince, animals are not slain, those who partake in the sacrifice have right views, right intentions, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness and right rapture.

Such a sacrifice, O Prince, brings profit and fame and moral upliftment.

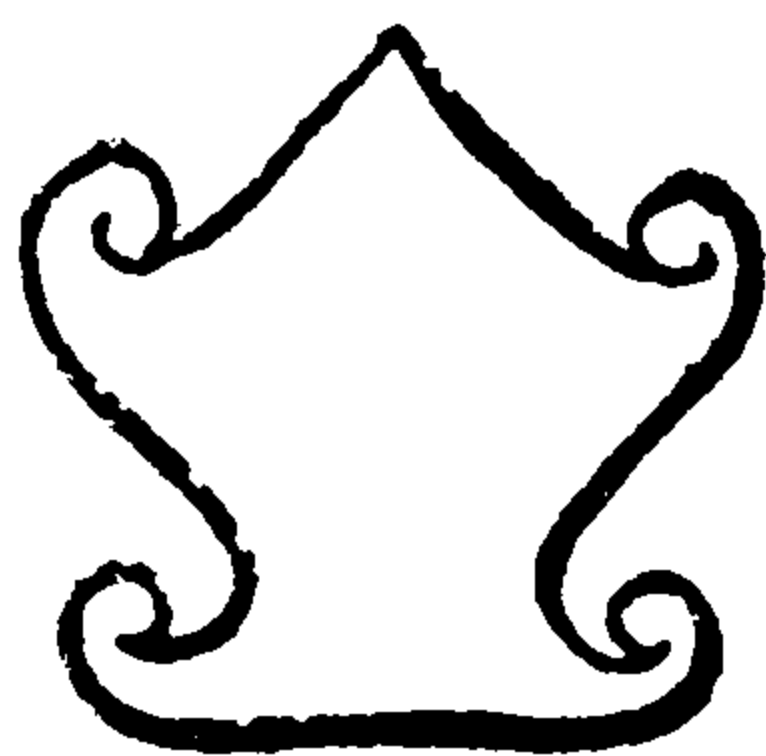
It is just as if a farmer were to enter a forest taking with him his plough and there sow seeds that are unbroken and unspoilt—in favourable soil, well cleared of stumps and in due season.

Would these seeds grow into plants, O Prince, and would they expand and yield fruit?

They would indeed, Master, answered the Prince.

So is it Prince, with the sacrifice at which no creatures are put to death. Those who partake in such a sacrifice uplift their character.

—*Digha-Nikaya*



## **The Twin Verses**

All that we are is the result of our own thought. All that we are is founded on our thoughts and is made up of our own thoughts.

Pain follows evil thoughts and actions, just as the wheel follows the foot of the bullock that draws the cart.

All that we are is the result of our own thought. All that we are is founded on our thoughts and is made up of our own thoughts.

Happiness follows pure thoughts and actions, just as the shadow follows a man wherever he goes.

Hatred will never cease in those who harbour such thoughts as "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me." And hatred will cease in those who do not harbour such thoughts.

For hatred can never cease by hatred. It can cease only by love. This is the eternal law.

People do not realise that we must all come to an end some day, and they hate and

quarrel. But hatred and quarrels cease with those who realise this fact.

He who seeks pleasures, who is idle and immoderate in food, whose senses are uncontrolled, will fall a victim to Mara, like a weak tree falling before a strong wind. But he who denies pleasures, is moderate in food, whose senses are under control, will not fall a victim to Mara, but will face him like a mighty rock facing the strong wind.

He who wishes to put on the yellow robe of a bhikkhu must first cleanse himself of sin and cultivate virtue, otherwise he is not worthy of the yellow robe.

He who takes untruth to be truth and takes truth to be untruth will never arrive at the truth. And passion will break through his unreflecting mind as the rain breaks through an ill-thatched house.

He who does evil will mourn in this world and also in the next and will suffer the results of his evil deeds.

He who is good and virtuous will be happy in this world and also in the next, for goodness will beget goodness.

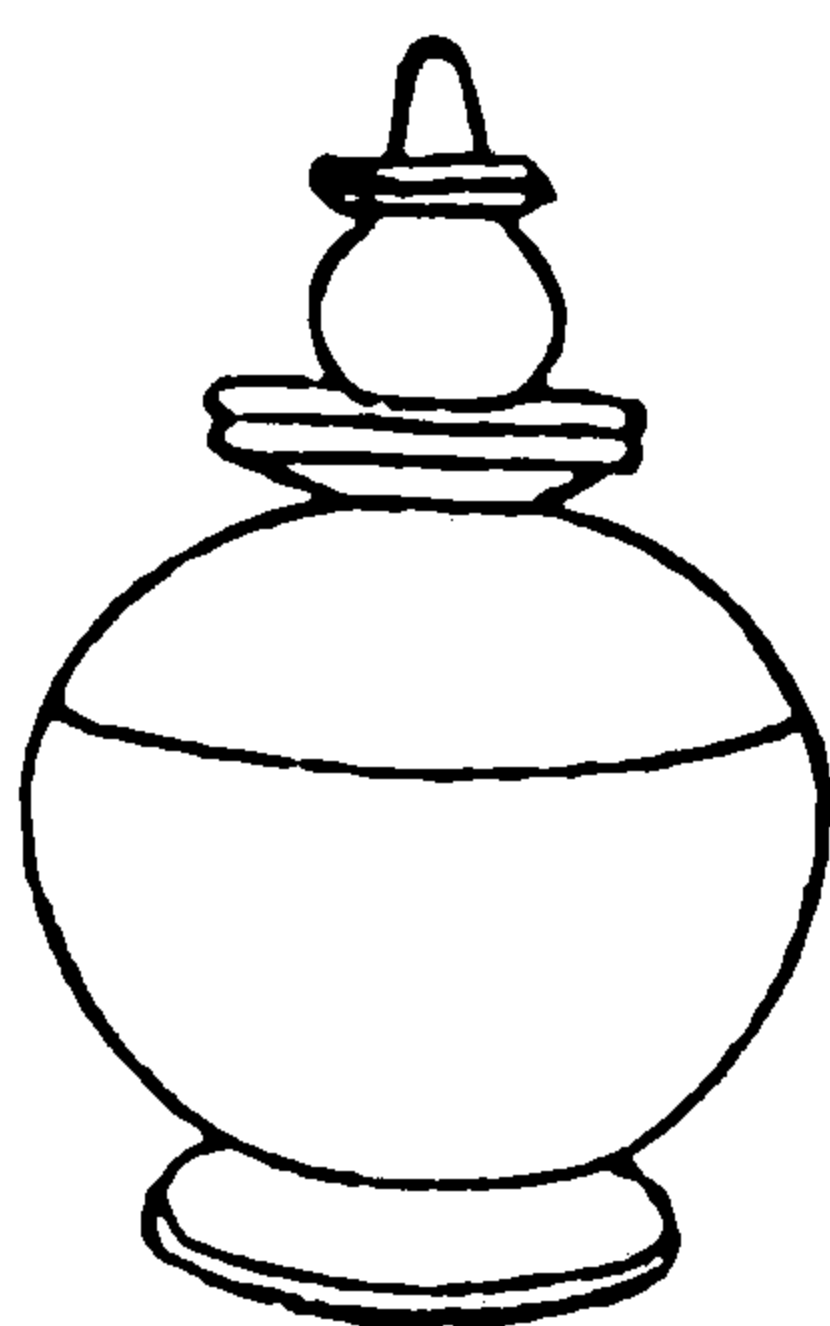
The thoughtless man, even if he recites



large portions of the Dhamma, will have no share in religious life, because he does not practise what he preaches. He is like a cowherd counting the cows belonging to others.

But the virtuous man, who practises Dhamma, will have a share of religious life, even if he be able to recite only a very small portion of it, for he has gone beyond passion and hatred, acquired serenity of mind and is not attached to anything in this world or the world to come.

—*Sutta-Pitaka*



## 14

### **Reflection**

What are the states of mind that make a man ill-tempered?

Take the case of one who has evil inclinations, who praises himself and speaks ill of others, whose heart is full of malice, distrust and anger. Such a one will have an obstreperous temper.

Take the case of another who is meek by nature and eager to learn what is good. Such a person will have a sweet temper and a loving disposition.

Each man must argue about himself in this manner:

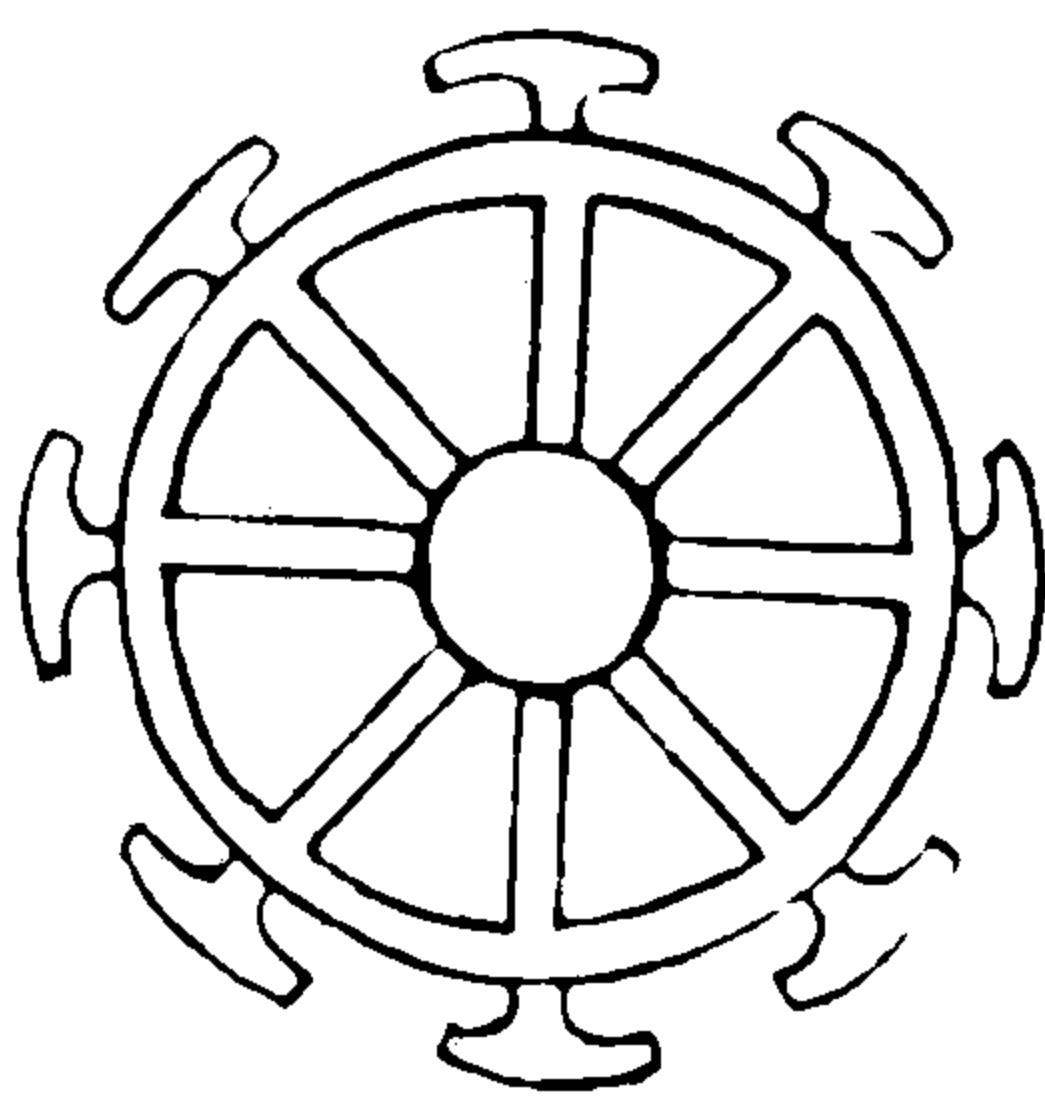
One who has evil inclinations is disagreeable to me. If I am inclined to evil I shall be disagreeable to others. Realising this, each man should discipline his heart and reform himself.

If a woman sees the reflection of her face in a mirror and finds a wart, or a blemish that mars her beauty, she tries her utmost to be

rid of it. Even so everyone should try to be rid of evil and discipline the mind into following the path of virtue.

Everyone should reflect thus: Are there any evil inclinations within me? And if he finds such inclinations lurking within him he should make every effort to put them away.

—*Anumana-Sutta*





## **How to Govern Thought**

Once the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus:

Bhikkhus, those who apply themselves to higher thought should review from time to time the following five phases of mind:

1. When there arise in your mind wrong thoughts associated with hatred and anger, you should divert the mind to a phase associated with what is right. By doing so, wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.
2. If, even after diverting the mind to a right phase, the wrong thoughts continue as before, then you should try to study the evils such thoughts may cause. By such study the wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.
3. If, in spite of a study of the evils that

wrong thoughts may cause, such thoughts persist, then you should ignore them and not allow your mind to dwell on them. By such ignoring, the wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.

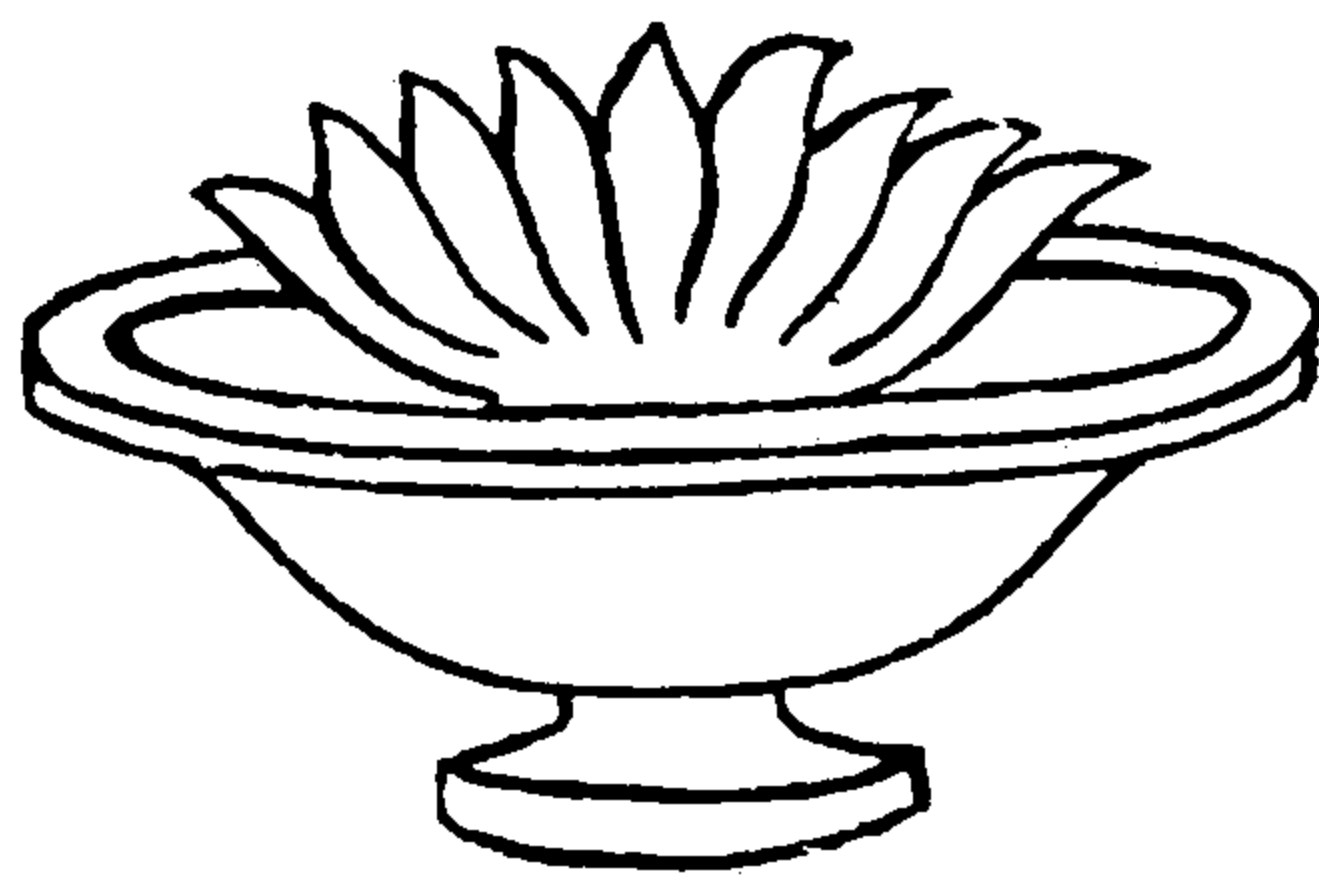
4. If, even in spite of such ignoring, the wrong thoughts continue, then you should try to know in what mould they are cast and how they are caused. As you do so, the wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.
5. But if, in spite of all this, the wrong thoughts arise and persist, then with teeth clenched and with full determination you should dominate them. By so doing, the wrong thoughts will certainly disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.

When at last a bhikkhu has become victorious over his wrong thoughts, by adopting any of these five ways, he becomes the master of his mind, conquering desire and thus ending all evil for all time.

Thus spoke the Blessed One and the bhikkhus rejoiced in what he said.

Remember bhikkhus, the only way to become victorious over wrong thoughts is to review from time to time the phases of one's mind to reflect over them, to root out all that is evil and to cultivate all that is good.

—*Vitakka-Sanathana-Sutta*





## 16

### **How to End Suffering**

One day the Reverend Kassapa asked the Blessed One:

Is suffering wrought by onself, Master Gotama?

No, Kassapa.

Is then suffering wrought by another?

No, Kassapa.

Then, does the suffering, wrought neither by oneself nor by another, result from mere chance?

Indeed not, Kassapa.

Does this mean Gotama, that there is no suffering?

I do not say that there is no suffering, for Kassapa there is suffering.

Well then, Blessed One, you do not know suffering; you do not see it—said Kassapa a bit dejected and annoyed.

It is not, Kassapa, answered the Lord, that I do not know suffering and cannot see it; for I know it and see it too.

Yet, my Master, in answer to all my questions you have said, "No, Kassapa. Indeed not." You admit that there is suffering; you know it; you see it—why not, then explain to me the cause of suffering and teach me how to end suffering?

The Blessed One then said:

Every doer of a deed experiences its results. This is suffering wrought by oneself. But when one does and another suffers due harassment of feelings, it is called suffering wrought by another.

I avoid both these dead ends and teach the Dhamma of the middle path.

Listen, O Kassapa, all constructions are conditioned by ignorance and conditioned by constructions is human consciousness. And all name-and-form is conditioned by consciousness and conditioned by name-and-form are the human senses.

The senses condition all human contact and contact conditions feeling. Feeling in its turn conditions craving and craving conditions grasping.

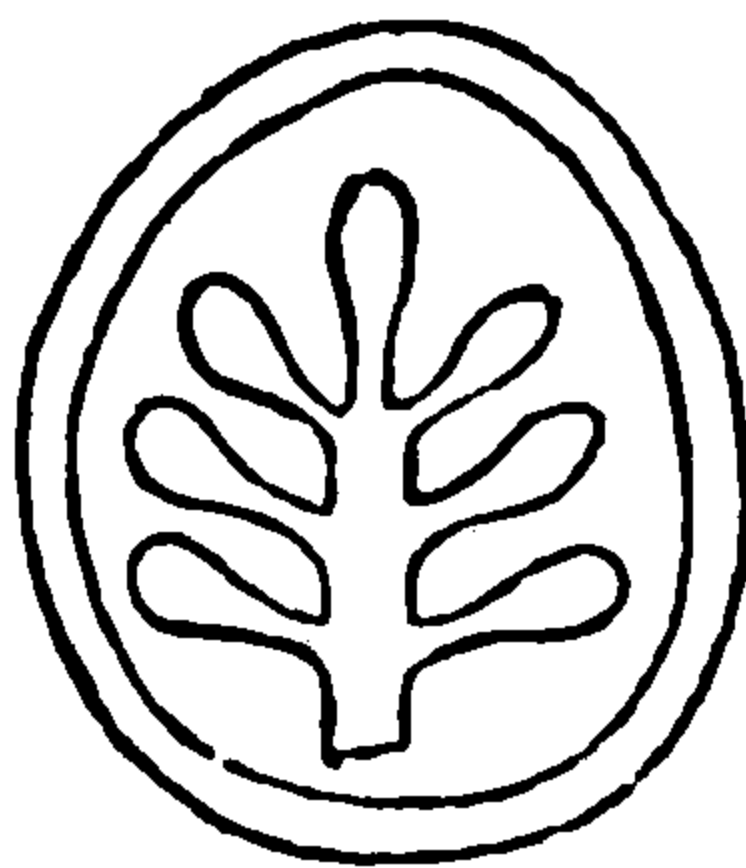
Grasping, O Kassapa, conditions becoming; becoming conditions birth, and birth con-

ditions old age, suffering, sorrow, despair and lamentation. Thus, O Kassapa, all evil originates.

How to break this inexorable chain of evil, Blessed One?

Ignorance, Kassapa, is the origin of all evil. If ignorance is removed there will be no constructions and consequently no consciousness, no name-and-form, no sense-hungers, no contacts, feelings, craving, grasping, becoming and birth. And thus old age, suffering, sorrow, despair and lamentation will stop for ever, Kassapa.

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*





## **Meditation and Contemplation**

Bhikkhus, to become fit for meditation, to be able to enter the first stage of meditation, one must get rid of six things. What six things?

These six things are: Craving for pleasures of the senses, ill-will, sloth, flurry and worry and suspicion.

There are, bhikkhus, four stages in meditation. What four stages?

First is the stage in which a bhikkhu, after getting rid of the pleasures of the senses and of the wrong states of mind, abides in solitude. He will, in due course, find that solitude will lead to analysis and investigation and this will lead to happiness.

In the second stage of meditation the mind becomes one-pointed as a result of analysis and investigation. Now the bhikkhu enters the meditation which is beyond analysis and investigation. He is in the stage of contemplation, which leads to rapture.

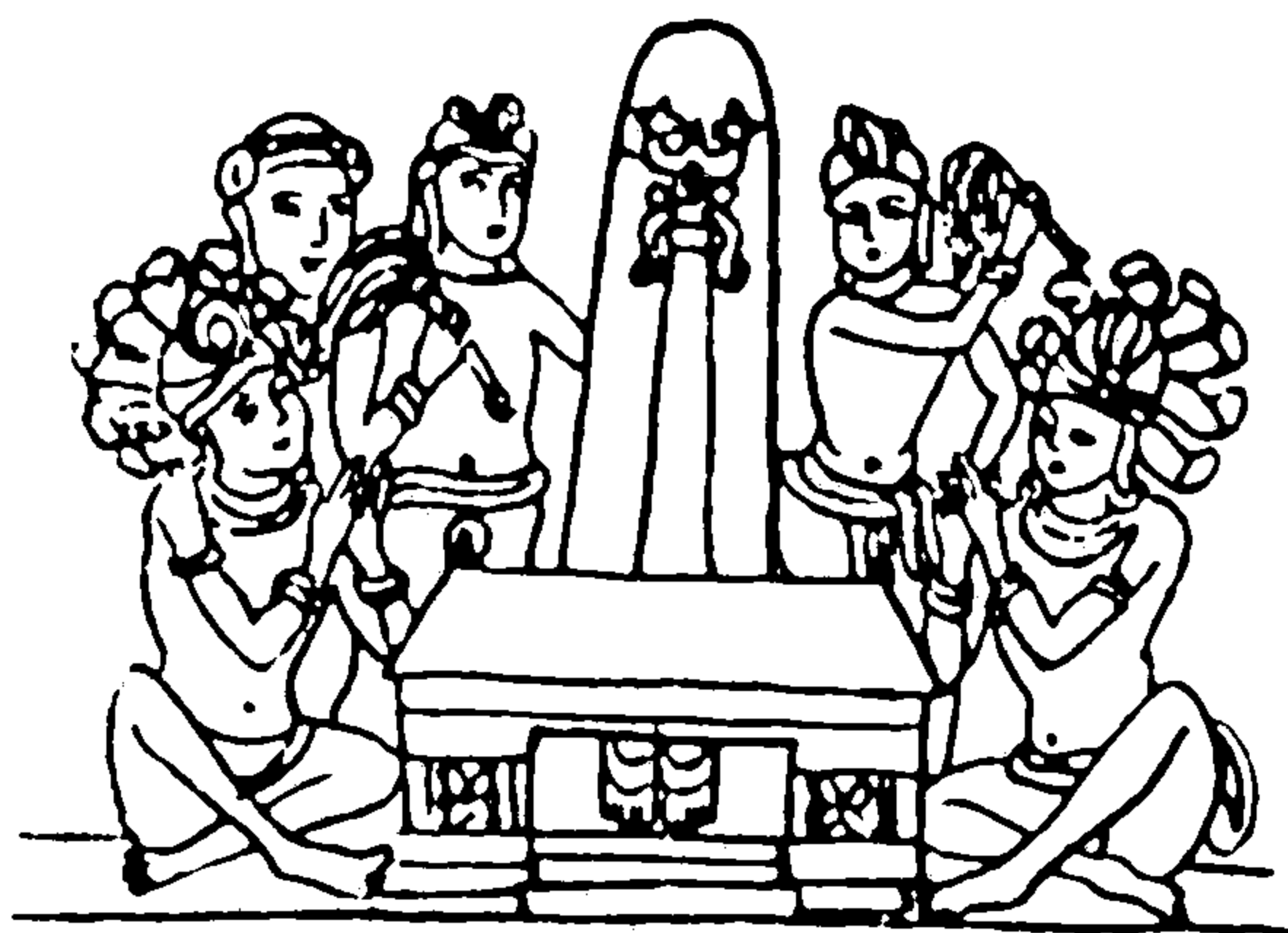
In the third stage of meditation the bhikkhu reaches a state in which he is indifferent to rapture, indifferent to everything and yet alert. He acquires a poise, a deep ease, in which he abides, knowing everything but needing nothing.

In the fourth stage of meditation the bhikkhu completely gets rids of both happiness and sorrow and abides in the utter purity of the Self.

These, bhikkhus, are the four stages of meditation.

Bhikkhus, just as the river Ganga flows and gravitates towards the ocean, even so a bhikkhu passing through these four stages of meditation will flow and gravitate towards Nirvana.

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*



## **Things to be Contemplated**

Bhikkhus, these five things must be contemplated by all men and women, householders as well as bhikkhus.

1. Old age will come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it.
2. Disease can come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it.
3. Death will come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it.
4. All things that I hold dear are subject to change and decay and separation, and I cannot avoid it.
5. I am the outcome of mine own deeds and whatever be my deeds, good or bad, I shall become their heir.

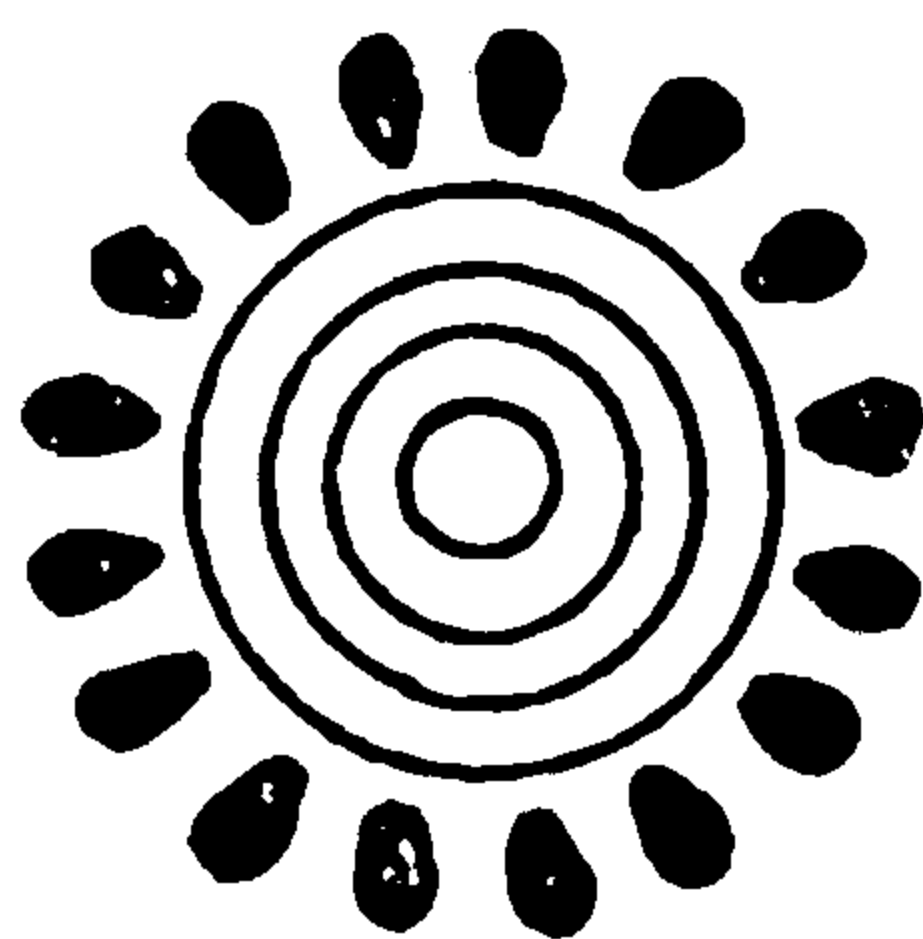
Bhikkhus, by contemplating old age the pride of youth can be curbed, or at least reduced; by contemplating disease the pride of health is curbed, or at least reduced; by contemplating death the pride of life is curbed, or at least reduced; by contemplating the



change and separation of all things dear, the passionate desire for possession is curbed, or at least reduced; and by contemplating that one is the result of one's own deeds, the evil propensities of thought, word and deed are curbed, or at least reduced.

One who contemplates these five things can curb, or at least reduce, his pride and passion and thus be able to tread the path of Nirvana.

—*Anguttara-Nikaya*



## **The Ideal Recluse**

Once when the Enlightened One was camping at Assapura he addressed the bhikkhus as follows:

Bhikkhus, you are known as recluses. You must, therefore, know the true vocation of a recluse and the states of consciousness that make a man a recluse.

What are these states of consciousness which really make the true recluse and the true Brahmin? These consist of a fivefold training:

1. Train yourselves to be scrupulous and conscientious.
2. Train yourselves in thought, and word and deed. Be frank and open and do not speak or think ill of others.
3. Train yourself to guard your senses. Control and curb the appetites of the senses.
4. Train yourselves to moderation in diet. Do not eat for pleasure, but out of neces-

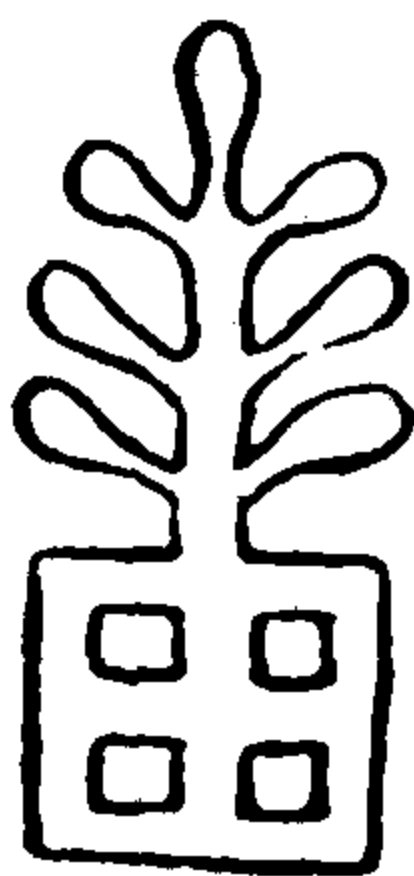
sity.

5. Train yourselves to be vigilant, ever-mindful and self-possessed.

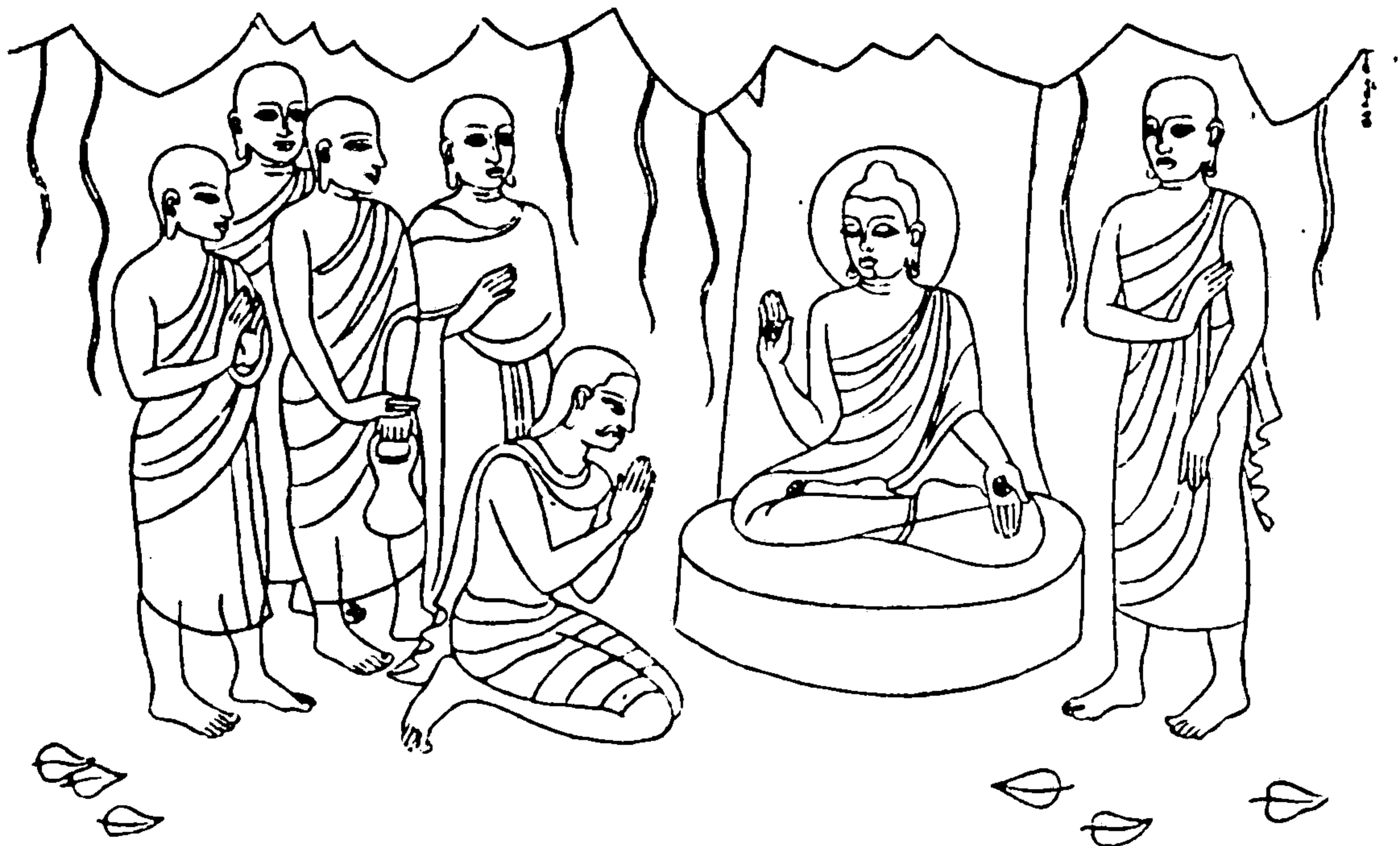
One who can train himself thus is a true recluse and a true Brahmin, for he knows the states of consciousness that make a man a true recluse and a true Brahmin; he abides in these states and walks on the path of the fivefold training.

Thus, spoke the Enlightened One and the bhikkhus rejoiced in what he said.

—*Maha-Assapura-Sutta*







## 20

### **True Retirement**

Once when the Enlightened One was staying in the Anga country, there came to him a retired householder who had given all his property to his sons and had retired from active life. The Enlightened One greeted him saying: "Pray be seated, householder." This made the retired householder very angry and he entered into argument with the Enlightened One, asking why he addressed him as a householder when he had actually retired and given over all his wealth.

The Enlightened One then said:

There is a difference, householder, be-

tween giving over and giving up. Listen, I will tell you.

There are eight states of consciousness which conduce to “giving up” and these are:

(1) All killing should be banned, by holding life sacred.

(2) Theft should be banned, by never taking what is not given.

(3) Lying should be banned, by strictly adhering to truth.

(4) Slander should be banned, by not speaking ill of others.

(5) Greed should be banned, by never coveting what belongs to others.

(6) Taunts should be banned, by speaking only sweetly.

(7) Anger should be banned, by peace and placidity.

(8) Arrogance should be banned by humility.

These, householder, are the eight ways of giving up.

The householder then requested the Enlightened One to expound these states in detail and the Enlightened One said:

When I said killing should be banned by

holding life sacred, and theft and lying, etc., should be banned, I did not fully exhaust the things to be given up. For a universal giving up, the Noble Path provides fuller instruction.

What is the universal giving up, please explain, said the householder, and the Enlightened One spoke thus:

1. A dog famished with hunger finds his way to a slaughter-house and the butcher there throws before him a bone without any trace of flesh on it. Can the hunger of the dog be satisfied with that?

No, Sir.

In the same way the pleasures of the senses cannot satisfy the inner hunger of man. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

2. A vulture flies high into the sky with a piece of flesh and other vultures keep on attacking it to snatch that piece of flesh. What do you think the vulture should do?

If it does not let go the piece of flesh it may be mortally wounded and the attacking vultures may snatch it, said the householder.

In the same way, the pleasures of the

senses should be given up. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

3. A man carries a blazing hay-torch against the wind. If he does not drop it, will the flame not burn his hand and the rest of his body? What should he do, householder?

He should drop the torch, Sir.

In the same way the pleasures of the senses should be given up. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

4. Suppose there is a deep pit filled with burning coal. And a man who is fond of life and does not want to die is dragged to this pit by two strong men. He will try his utmost to get out of the grip of the stalwarts for fear of being thrown into the burning pit.

Yes, Sir.

The pleasures of the senses are like the burning pit, that must be avoided. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

5. A man may dream of delightful woods and lakes, none of which will be seen when he rises from sleep.



Similar are the pleasures of the senses. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

6. Suppose a man has taken a loan from somebody and from the borrowed money he buys himself jewels and fine clothes and then appears in the market-place to make the folks feel that he is wealthy. And then the money-lender takes back from him all his property in satisfaction of his claim.

The pleasures of the senses are like a loan that has to be paid back. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

7. Suppose in a jungle near a town there is a tree laden with ripe fruit, but no ripe fruit have fallen below it. A hungry man in search of fruit comes along and, having not found any fallen, climbs the tree with the intent of eating the fruit to his fill and taking away more in his pouch. Suppose a second man comes along meanwhile and he too is desirous of eating the fruit, but is unable to do so because he does not know how to climb the tree. The second man then decides to fell the tree with

his axe so that he may eat the fruit to his fill. What should the first man, who is at the top of the tree, now do, householder? Should he not climb down quickly to avoid being hurt or killed when the tree falls to the axe of the second man?

Yes, Sir.

The pleasures of the senses are like the fruit hanging on the tree. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

Giving up the pleasures of the senses, realising their perils, is the universal giving up, followed by those who tread the right path. While giving over your wealth to your sons, have you given up all in the manner now described by me? Speak, householder.

On hearing this the retired householder realised the pettiness of his giving up and took refuge in the Enlightened One.

—*Potaliya-Sutta*

## Devotee's Prayer

Who is the real devotee?

The real devotee is one who is upright and honest, who is gentle of speech and free from conceit.

The real devotee is one who is full of contentment, who has few wants and whose senses are under control.

And such a devotee has earned the right to pray in these words:

As a mother protects her child even at the risk of her own life, so let there be mutual protection and goodwill limitless among all beings. Let goodwill limitless prevail in the whole world—above, below and around, untarnished with any feeling of disharmony and discord.

—*Metta-Sutta*

## **The Parable Of the Cloth**

If a cloth is stained and dirty, it can never be dyed well, whether the dyer dips it into green, or yellow, or red, or any other colour.

What is the reason for this, bhikkhus?

The reason is that the cloth is not clean.

Even so, bhikkhus, woe must be expected to ensue when the mind is stained and the heart is not pure.

If a cloth is unstained and clean it will be dyed well, whether the dyer dips it into green, or yellow, or red, or any other colour.

What is the reason for this, bhikkhus?

The reason is that the cloth is clean.

Even so, bhikkhus, bliss may be expected to ensue when the mind is unstained and the heart is pure.

Now, what are the impurities?

They are greed, malevolence, anger, malice, jealousy, deceit, pride and indolence.

—*Vatthupama-Sutta*



## **The Parable of the Log**

Bhikkhus, do you see that log of wood being carried forward in the flow of the river Ganga?

Now, Bhikkhus, if this log does not ground on this bank or on the bank yonder, if it does not sink in the river, if it does not get rotten from within, if it does not get caught in a whirlpool, nor is it picked up by somebody—it will surely float down to the sea; it will surely gravitate towards the sea.

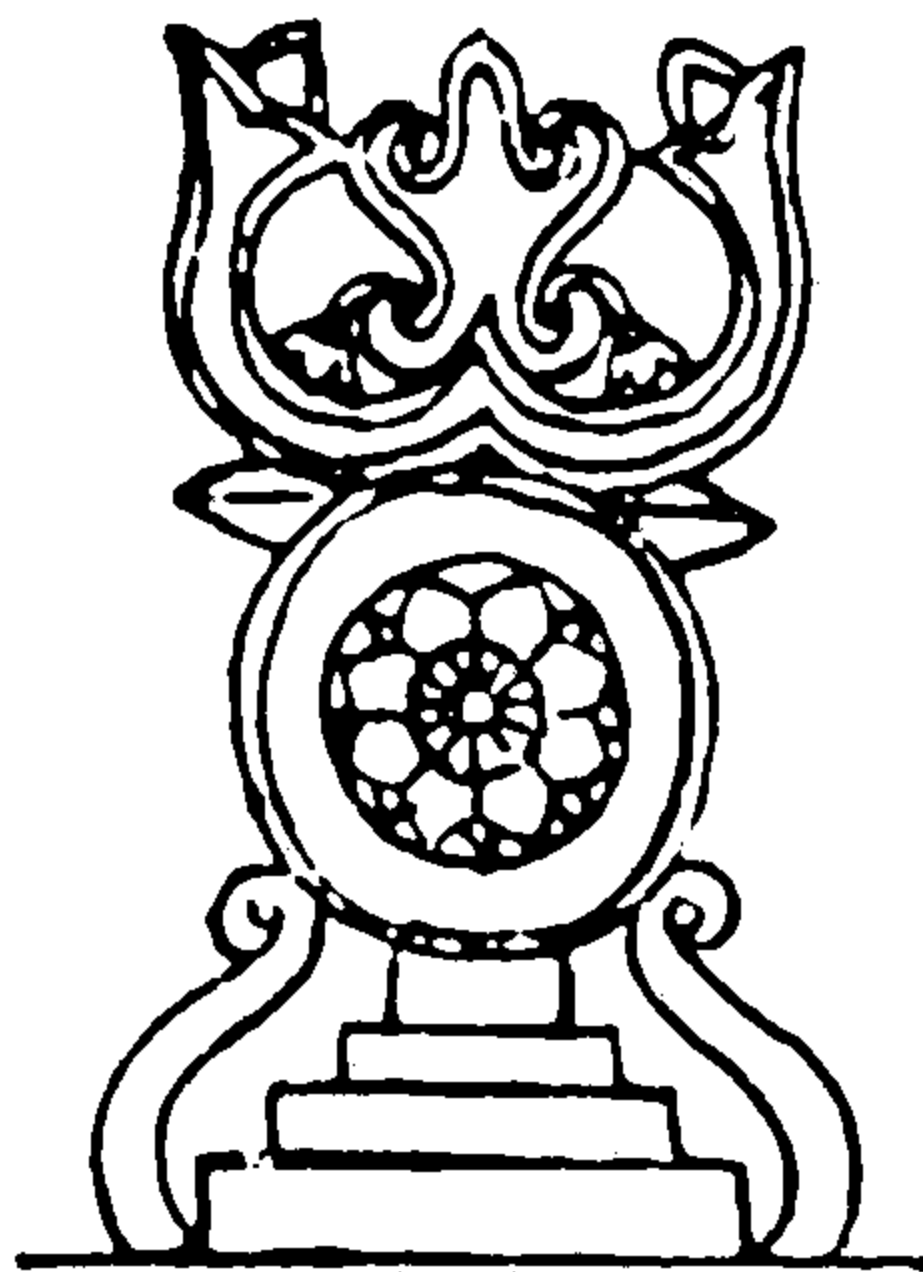
Even so, Bhikkhus, if you do not ground on this bank or the bank yonder, if you do not sink in mid-river, if you do not get rotten from within, if you are not caught in a whirlpool, nor captured by somebody—you will surely float down to Nirvana; you will surely gravitate towards Nirvana.

The true follower of the Dhamma floats and gravitates towards Nirvana. He avoids the shores of the objective and subjective sense spheres; he does not sink down in the

delight of passion; he does not fall a prey to covert actions of sin that cause a rot in his within; he does not get caught in the whirlpool of sensual pleasures, nor is he captured by sorrows and pleasures.

Bhikkhus, remember, a true follower of the Dhamma avoids and conquers all impediments in the way of Nirvana and, like the log floating down to the sea, gravitating towards the sea, he floats and gravitates towards Nirvana.

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*



## **The Parable of the Mirror**

Once the Blessed one was staying at the Jeta Grove near Savatthi. There he addressed the monks on the subject of one's own improvement. The Blessed One said:

Bhikkhus, though you may not be adept in reading the thoughts of others and in reforming them, you can certainly take this simple resolve: "I will be skilled in reading mine own thoughts and in reforming mine own self."

And how can you acquire such skill? In this way:

A woman or a man or a young lad who is fond of self-decoration examines his reflection in a mirror and removes stains and specks from his face. And when the face is clean and beautiful he says, "Now I am clean and beautiful."

Even so, bhikkhus, self-examination proves fruitful. You must look into the mirror of your own consciousness and should ask

yourselves: “Am I or am I not greedy? Am I or am I not malevolent in my heart? Am I or am I not slothful? Do I or do I not have an excited mind? Do I live in doubt and fear or have I crossed doubt and fear? Am I wrathful or not? Are my thoughts clean or are they soiled? Am I in control of my senses or under their control?”

Bhikkhus, if on such self-examination you find that you are greedy, malevolent of heart, slothful, excited in mind, labouring under doubt and fear, wrathful, with your thoughts soiled and your senses uncontrolled—then exert yourselves hard to banish these wicked and harmful states.

When one's turban is burning bhikkhus, one must act quickly to extinguish its fire. Even so one must act quickly to banish the wicked and harmful states from one's mind and heart.

—*Sutta Pitaka*



## **The Parable of Timber**

Talking of man's release from worldly bondages the Blessed One spoke thus:

Suppose, bhikkhus, a man is in need of sound timber and he goes about in search of it.

He comes near a mighty tree, strong and tall, capable of yielding sound timber. But the man passes by this tree and cuts away wood and bark that is not sound and takes it away with him.

What would you say of such a man? What would you think of him, who could not see the difference between sound timber and branch-wood and twigs? His need of sound timber would ever remain unfulfilled.

In the same way, O brethren, the real holy life does not inhere in name and fame; nor even in the observance of moral rules: nor even in scholarship, knowledge and insight.

The true holy life inheres in the release of the heart from all bondage.

—*Majjhima-Nikaya*

## **The Powers of a Learner**

Once the Exalted One addressed the bhikkhus on the powers of a learner. He said:

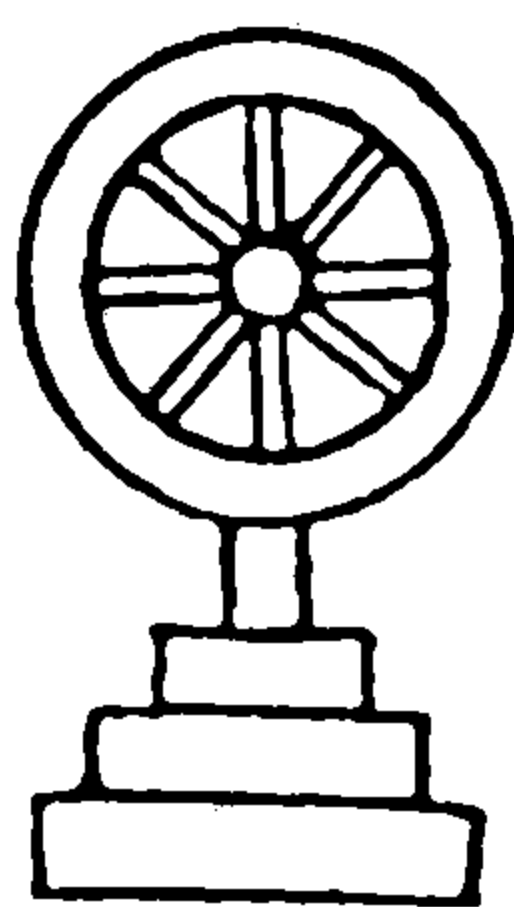
There are five powers of a learner—

1. The power of faith: The true learner has faith in his teacher and believes in his enlightenment and his ability to teach the Supreme Truth.
2. The power of conscientiousness: The true learner is naturally conscientious and has qualms of conscience when acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
3. The power of fear: The true learner is afraid of the blame that comes from acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
4. The power of energy: The true learner has an abiding energy to discard all wrong things and adopt the right ones.
5. The power of insight: The true learner has an insight into the real nature of things and he sees the decay inherent in

growth and thereby prepares himself to destroy the root cause of sorrow.

Listen, bhikkhus, if you want to destroy sorrow and abide in the supreme truth, you must cultivate the powers of faith, conscientiousness, fear, energy and insight; for these, O bhikkhus, are the five powers of a true learner.

—*Anguttara-Nikaya*



## **The Root of Amity**

Once when the Blessed One happened to visit Kosambi he learnt about disputes prevailing among the bhikkhus of that locality. He called the disputing bhikkhus to his presence and addressed them thus:

Bhikkhus, you are disputing among yourselves and hurling taunts at one another, because you do not seem to know the states of consciousness which lead to harmony and peace.

Bhikkhus, there are six states of consciousness which conduce to unity and harmony.

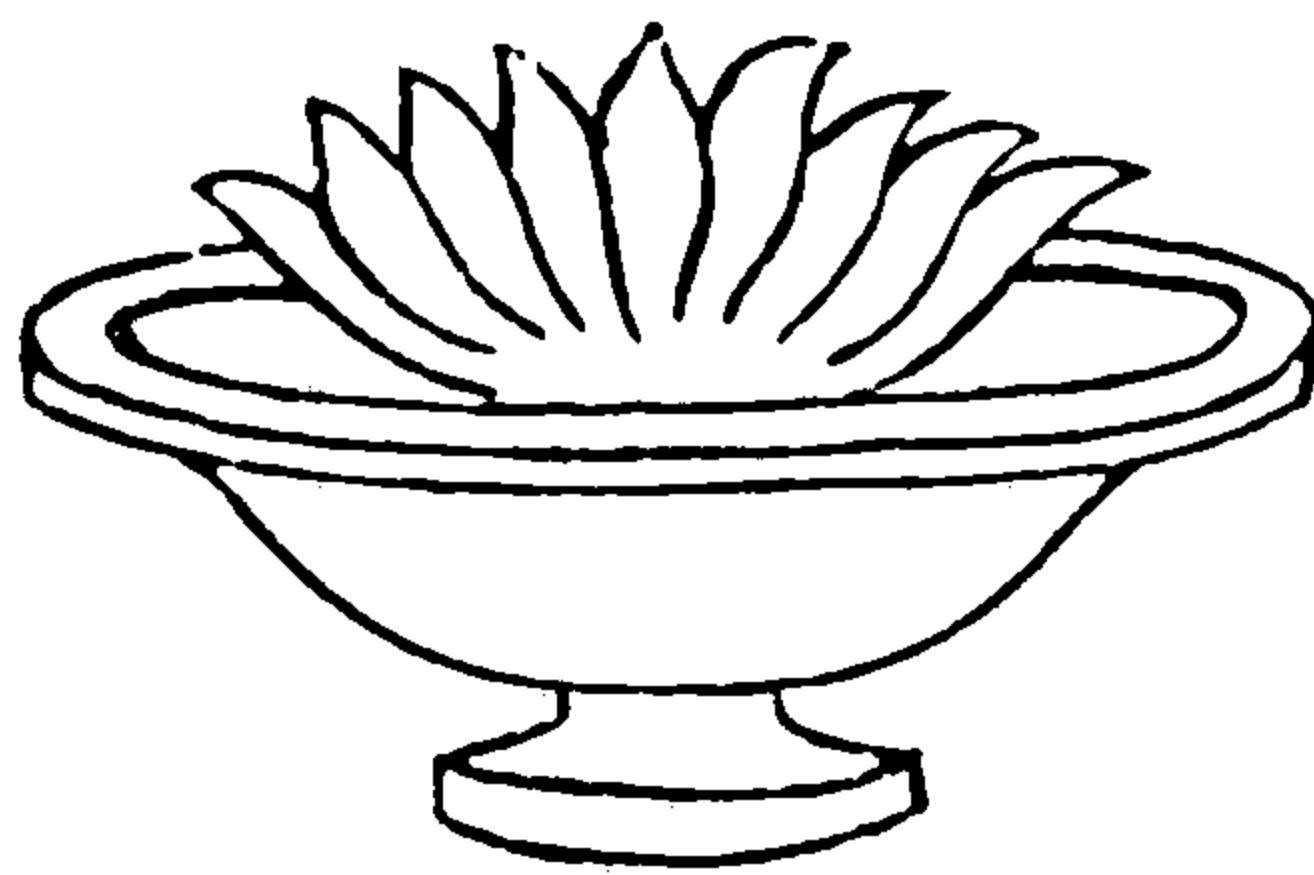
1. Acts of goodwill towards fellow beings.
2. Words of goodwill sincerely spoken.
3. Thoughts of goodwill sincerely harboured.
4. Sharing with others of all that you have, down to the last crumb of bread.
5. Sharing with others your higher life of flawless virtue.
6. Removing all evil around you with the noble saving creed of love.



These are the six states of consciousness which, being in themselves friendly and respectful, lead to accord, amity and love.

Listen, bhikkhus, these six states of consciousness lead to super-knowledge. Each of these leads, successively a step further; and while there is something further to be done let there be no falling back in your steps.

—*Kosambiya-Sutta*



## **Why Bathe In Holy Rivers ?**

Sundarika Bharadwaja, a Brahmin, asked the Enlightened One whether he bathed in the river Bahuka. The following conversation then took place:

Brahmin, what is there in the river Bahuka? What can bathing in it do?

Gautama, the river Bahuka is considered by folks to be sacred and capable of washing away the sins of men.

The Enlightened One then said:

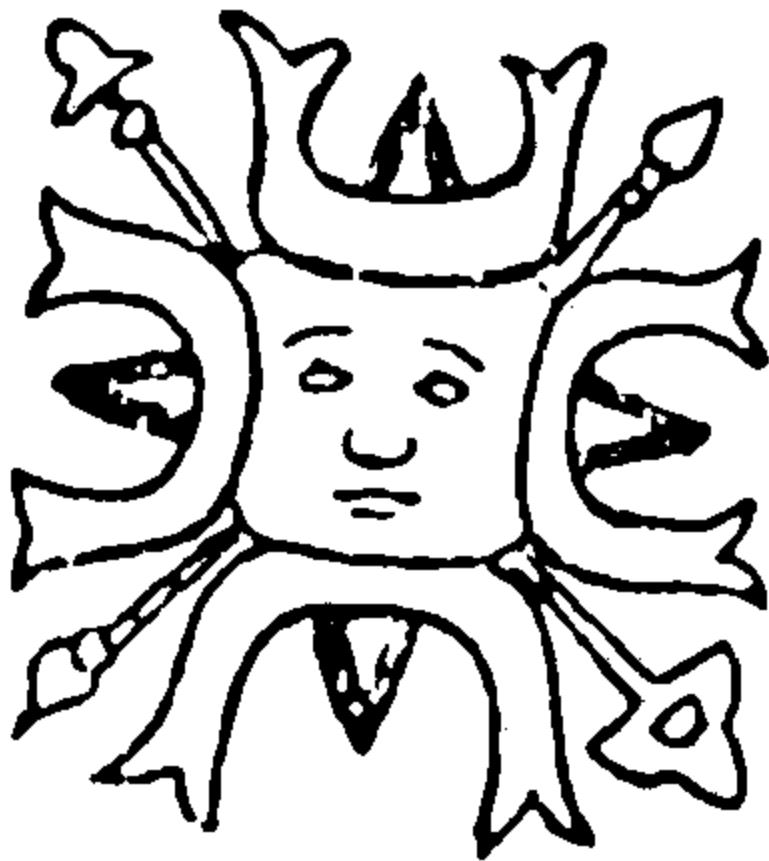
The fool may bathe in the Bahuka or the Saraswati or the Bahumati, he may dip in their waters constantly; or he may make pilgrimages to Prayaga or Gaya, yet he cannot cleanse his dark folly, nor can a sinner wash away his sin.

What can the rivers do? What can Prayaga do? They cannot wash away the evil deeds of the guilty, nor can they make a sinner holy. And for the pure of heart every day is holy, because their deeds are good and they make

all creatures secure and happy.

Remember, Brahmin, if you do not tell lies and harm no living things, if you do not take what is not given, if you dwell in faith and are not callous—then why seek Gaya? The well in your home is Gaya!

—*Vatthupama-Sutta*



## 29

### **Training**

Two things, bhikkhus, I have achieved: not to be self-complacent in good states and not to shrink back weakly in the struggle.

And without shrinking back, bhikkhus, I struggled on and on. I said to myself: I may be reduced to mere skin, sinews and bones, my flesh and blood may dry up, but I shall win what has not been won. And thus, through untiring diligence and endeavour I won awakening; I won complete freedom from bondage.

Bhikkhus, I want you to struggle on and on saying to yourselves: I may be reduced to mere skin, sinews and bones, my flesh and blood may dry up, but I shall win what has not been won.

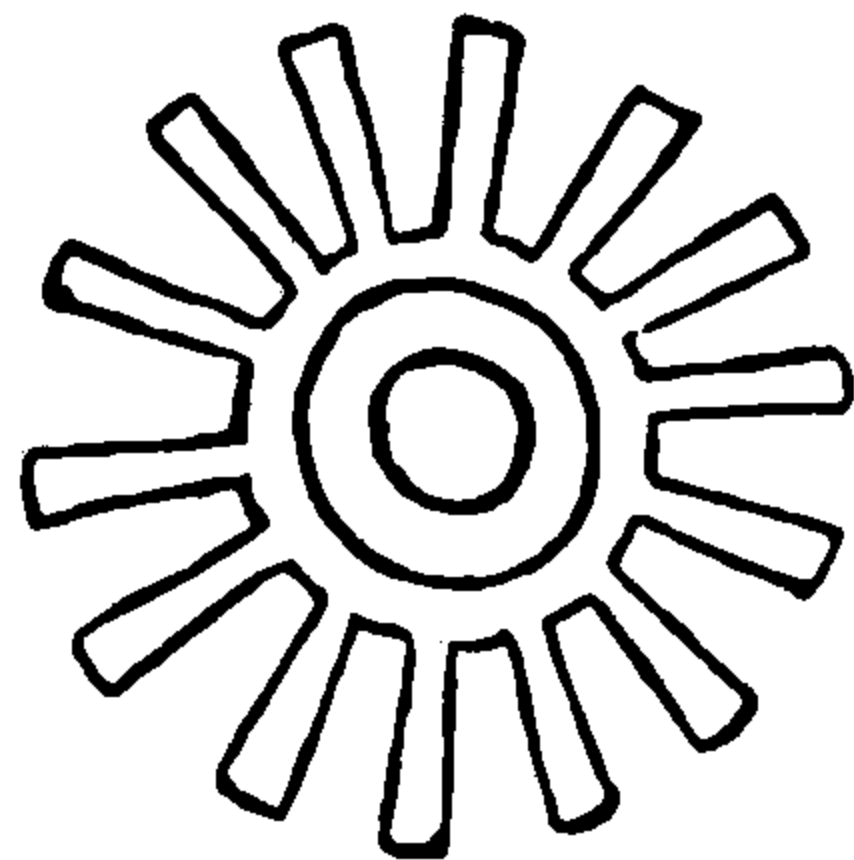
And thus through untiring diligence and endeavour you too, bhikkhus, by your own super-knowledge, will here and now attain that for which men go from home into homelessness.



Listen, bhikkhus, this is how you must train yourselves: We shall not be self-complacent in good states; we shall not shrink back in the struggle. Let us be reduced to mere skin, sinews and bones, let our flesh and blood dry up, but we shall win what has not been won. We shall win the awakening and complete freedom from bondage.

This is how you must train yourselves, bhikkhus.

—*Anguttara-Nikaya*



## The Noble Quest

There are two quests, Bhikkhus—the noble and the ignoble.

What is the ignoble quest?

Take the case of a man who, being himself subject to rebirth, pursues objects which are quite as transitory. Himself subject to decay, disease, sorrow and death, he pursues objects which are no less subject to these evils. He wants wife, children, cattle, property, gold, etc.—all of which are fleeting and impermanent. Such a quest is the ignoble quest.

What is the noble quest?

Take the case of a man, who, being himself subject to rebirth and the round of decay, disease, sorrow and death, avoids pursuing objects which suffer from these evils. He endeavours to acquire the peace and bliss of Nirvana which alone is not subject to decay, disease, sorrow and death. Such a quest is the noble quest.

—*Ariya-Pariyesana-Sutta*

## **Dhamma like the Ocean**

Once the Enlightened One compared the discipline of his teaching to the mighty ocean and said:

Bhikkhus, there are eight wonderful things about the mighty ocean and the same exist in our noble eightfold path:

1. The mighty ocean flows and slides imperceptibly in its immense fulness and there are no abrupt rises or falls in it.

Even so, in the Dhamma discipline the training is gradual and there is no abrupt penetration of knowledge.

2. The mighty ocean is ever stable and does not overpass its boundary.

Even so, my disciples are stable in thought and never transgress the boundary of discipline.

3. The mighty ocean throws upon its shore the corpses of the dead.

Even so persons who are impure have no place in my order and are thrown out

of it.

4. The mighty ocean assimilates great rivers like Ganga and Yamuna which lose in it their name and identity.

Even so, the four castes after joining my order are merged in it and lose their identity.

5. The mighty ocean neither overflows nor diminishes in size, whether there is a heavy downpour of rain from the sky or not.

Even so there is no overflow nor shrinkage in the state of Nirvana to which my order leads.

6. The mighty ocean is of one flavour throughout, the flavour of salt.

Even so, the Dhamma is of one flavour, the flavour of emancipation.

7. The mighty ocean is the treasure-house of innumerable gems—pearls, rubies, quartzes etc.

Even so, the Dhamma has many gems, such as the four arisings of mindfulness, the four bases of power, the five faculties, etc.

8. The mighty ocean is the abode of creatures

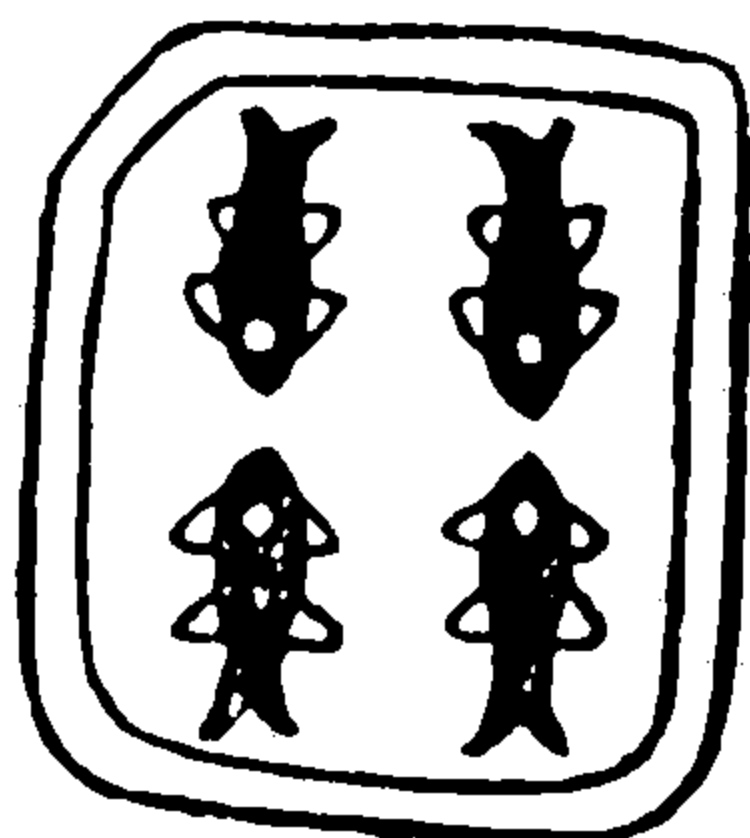


of great size.

Even so, the Dhamma is the abode of followers of great achievements.

These, bhikkhus, are the eight strange and wonderful things that exist in our noble eightfold path; therefore, O bhikkhus, delight in the discipline of the Dhamma.

—*Udana*



## The Test of Dhamma

Speaking of the test of Dhamma to Mahapajapati, the Blessed One said—

These are not Dhamma:

The teachings and doctrines that conduce to passion, not to dispassion; to bondage, not to detachment; to increase of worldly possessions, not to their decrease; to greed, not to abstention; to discontent, not to content; to company, not to solitude; to slothfulness, not to energy; to delight in evil, not to delight in good—of such teachings and doctrines you may say firmly: “These are not Dhamma. This is not the message of the Master.”

But these are Dhamma:

Of whatever teachings and doctrines you can assure yourself that they are the opposite of these things, you may then say firmly: “These are Dhamma. This is the message of the Master.”

—*Vinaya-Pitaka*

## Teaching of Dhamma

Once a village headman asked the Enlightened One:

Is the Tathagata equally compassionate towards all beings?

Yes, headman, answered the Enlightened One.

But does the Enlightened One teach Dhamma to some in full and to others not in full?

Now headman, suppose you had three fields, one very fertile, one mediocre and one of poor soil, which of these three fields would you sow first?

First the very fertile one, Lord, then the mediocre and lastly the poor one.

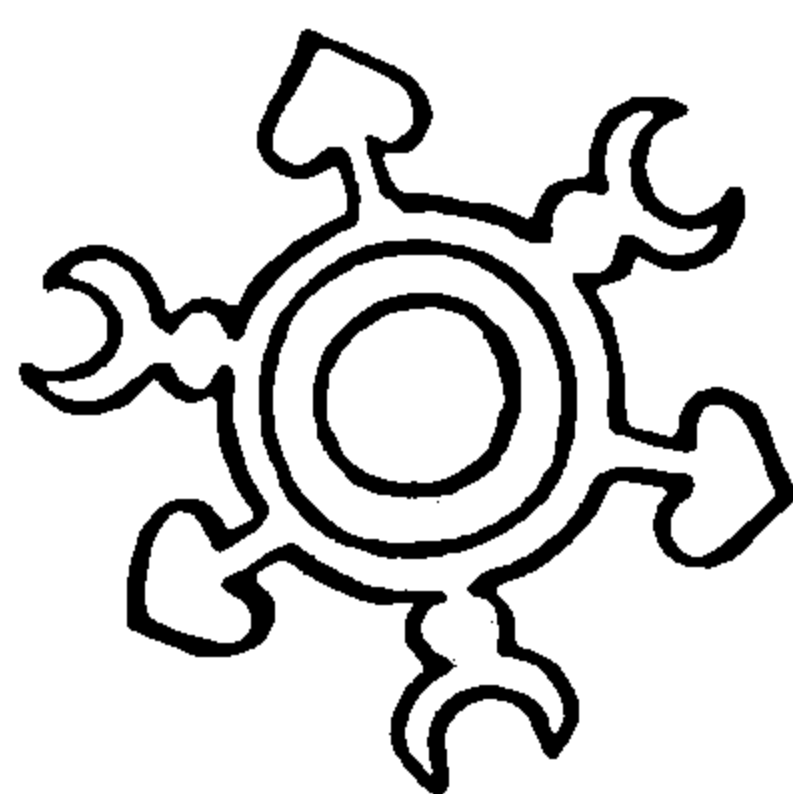
In the same way, headman, to the bhikkhus, who are like the fertile field, I teach the Dhamma in full. And why? Because they always dwell with me for shelter and refuge and for light.

Then I teach the men and women lay

followers, who are like the mediocre field. And why? Because they also dwell with me for shelter and refuge and for light.

Then, do I teach the Brahmins and followers of other sects who are like the poor field. And why? Because if they were to understand the Dhamma they would find true shelter and refuge and the light that would guide them in their lives.

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*





## **What is Nirvana ?**

O brethren! there is an abode where there is no earth, nor water, nor air.

There is an abode, O brethren! where there is no world of infinity-of-space, nor world of infinity-of-intelligence, nor world of cognition or non-cognition, nor this world nor the world yonder, neither sun nor moon.

That abode, O brethren! has neither coming nor going, neither birth nor death. Without origin and without annihilation and beyond thought is that. The destruction of all sorrow is that.

That abode, O brethren! is unborn, uncreated, unmanifested and unconditioned. Unless it were that, there could not be cognised in this world birth, creation, manifestation and conditioning.

That abode is Nirvana.

—*Udana*



## 35

### **What is Revealed?**

Once the Blessed One was staying in the Simsapa Grove, near Kesambi. There, taking a few simsapa leaves in his hand, he said:

Brethren, what do you think? Which are more in number, these simsapa leaves that I hold in my hand or those that are in the grove above?

Few, very few in number, O Lord, are the simsapa leaves that you hold in your hand, and more, far more, are those that are

in the grove above.

Then the Blessed One expounded the truth of revelation in the following words:

Just so, brethren, the things that I have revealed to you are few, very few, in comparison with those things which I have known and understand but not revealed to you. And why, brethren, have I not revealed them to you?

I have not revealed many things to you, because they are not conducive to the perfect state, because they are not concerned with the holy life and because they do not lead to cessation of bondage, to perfect calm, to perfect wisdom—to Nirvana. That is why I have not revealed them to you.

And what have I revealed to you, brethren? I have revealed to you that there is sorrow everywhere, that desire is the cause of sorrow, that desirelessness uproots sorrow and that the discipline of Dhamma destroys desire. I have revealed to you only what is conducive to the perfect state, only what is concerned with the holy life, only what results in cessation of bondage and leads to perfect calm, to perfect wisdom—to Nirvana.

—*Sutta-Nikaya*

## **The Self**

Body, bhikkhus, is not the Self. If body were the Self it would not be subject to sickness, as it is subject to sickness.

Similarly, bhikkhus, feeling is not the Self, perception is not the Self, consciousness is not the Self and the constructions are not the Self. For they all tend to sickness.

Now, what do you think, bhikkhus: is the body permanent or impermanent?

It is impermanent, Blessed One.

And is the impermanent painful or comforting?

Painful, Blessed One.

Now, bhikkhus, is it fit to consider that which is impermanent, changing and painful in this manner: this is mine, this am I, this is my Self?

No Blessed One, it is not.

In the same way, bhikkhus, it will be wrong to consider as Self, feeling, perception, consciousness, constructions etc., for they are

all subject to sickness and change.

Listen, bhikkhus: whatever is body is subject to change; it is past, present and future. Whether gross or subtle, subjective or objective, good or bad, far or near, all body should be viewed thus: This is not mine, this I am not, this is not Self.

The follower of Dhamma therefore disregards body; he disregards feelings, perceptions, consciousness and constructions. By such disregarding he becomes passionless; by passionlessness he becomes free and in freedom he gets the knowledge: I am free of birth and death and free of change.

—*Vinaya-Pitaka*





## The Tathagata

If a fire were blazing in front of your eyes, Vaccha, would you be able to see it? asked the Blessed One.

Yes, Lord Gautama.

And would you also know the reason for the blazing of the fire?

Yes, Lord. The reason is the fuel of grass and wood.

And would you also know, Vaccha, if the fire were to be put out?

Yes, Blessed One.

And when the fire is put out would you also know the direction it had gone to from the place when it blazed—east or west, north or south?

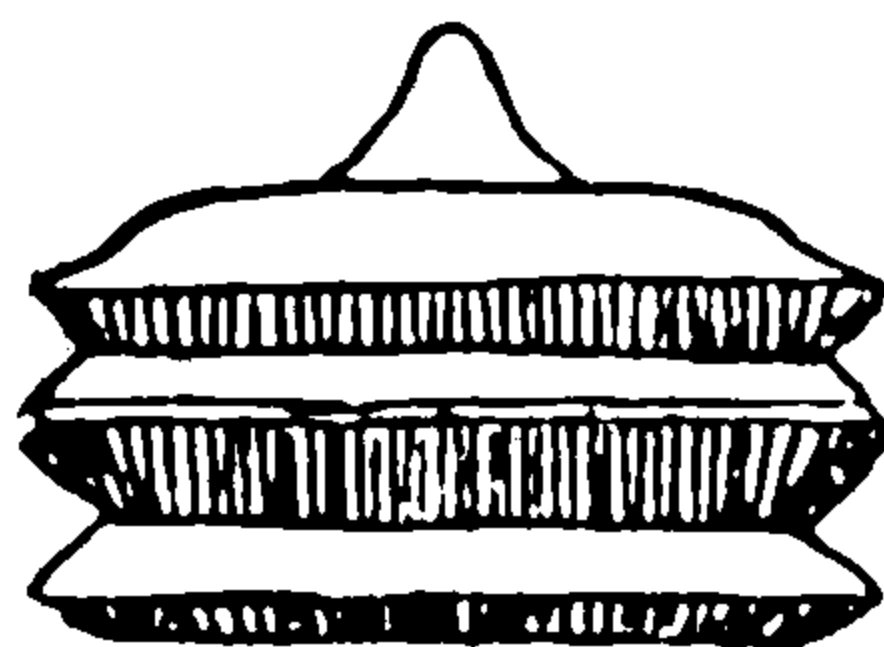
This question does not apply, Lord. The fire blazed because it was fed with grass and wood. It went out when all the fuel was consumed.

Even so, Vaccha, is the case of the Tathagata.

The consciousness by which one defines the Tathagata, the feelings perceptions and impulses with which one may define him—all those have been got rid of by the Tathagata. Freed from consciousness, feelings, perceptions and impulses, the Tathagata is unfathomable and immeasurable like the ocean.

The Tathagata is incomprehensible, even when actually present. He is the Uttermost Person to whom human limitations do not apply. It cannot be said that he *is*, or *is not*, or both *is* and *is not*, or neither *is* nor *is not*.

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*



## **All Things are on Fire**

Once while sojourning at Gaya the Enlightened One addressed the bhikkhus as follows:

All things, O bhikkhus, are on fire. The eye is on fire and the eye-consciousness and the forms it sees and the impressions it receives are all on fire.

And wherefore are they on fire?

They are on fire with passion, with hatred, with anger, with infatuation, and with birth, old age and death, and with sorrow, lamentation and despair.

The ear is on fire, bhikkhus and the ear-consciousness—the sounds it hears and the echoes it receives are all on fire.

Similarly, O bhikkhus, the nose is on fire, the tongue is on fire, the body is on fire the mind is on fire—all things are on fire.

And wherefore are they on fire?

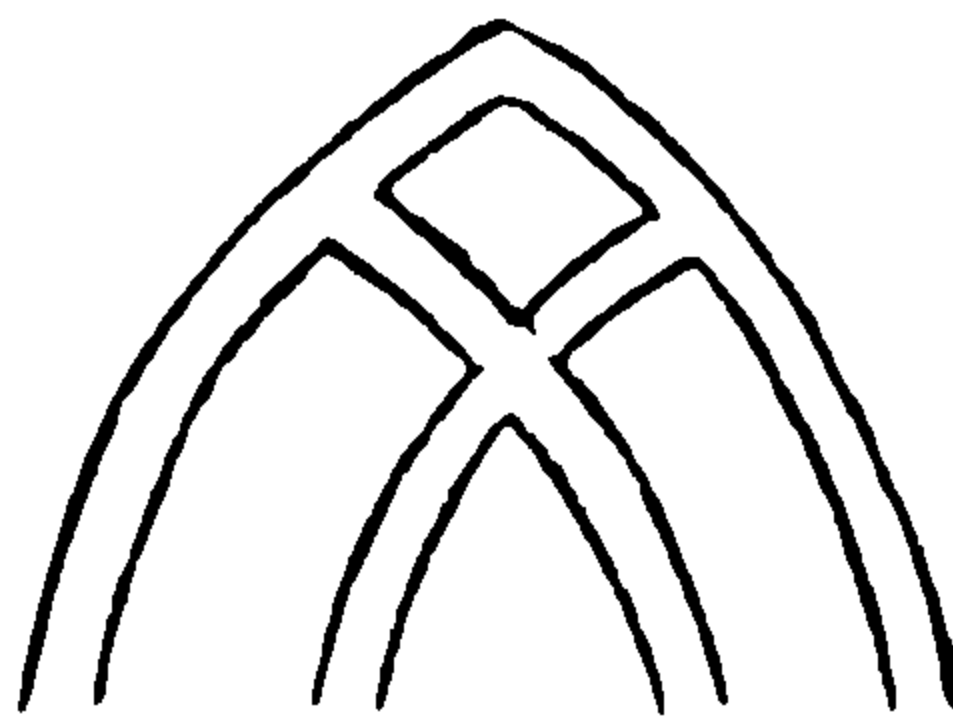
They are all on fire with passion, with hatred, with anger, with infatuation, and with

birth, old age and death, and with sorrow, lamentation and despair.

Understanding this, O bhikkhus, the wise man conceives an aversion for the eye and the eye-consciousness, conceives an aversion for forms and impressions that the eye receives and conceives an aversion for all eye-sensations, pleasant or unpleasant or indifferent.

Similarly, O bhikkhus, the wise man conceives an aversion for the consciousness of the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. And this aversion destroys passion and makes him free. And when he is free he knows that his cycle of rebirths is exhausted and that he is no more worldly.

—*Maha Vagga*



## **Crossing Over**

Bhikkhus, I will teach you the Dhamma for crossing over, for getting across and not lagging behind. Now, listen:

Think of a man who while travelling comes across a deep and wide stretch of water, the yonder shore of which is safe and secure, while the shore where he stands is unsafe and full of danger and fear.

And there is neither a bridge across the water nor a boat for crossing it. What shall the man do?

Determined to cross over from the danger of this shore to the safety of the other, the man prepares a raft out of sticks and grass and with the help of the raft makes his way across the water.

After crossing over it occurs to him that the raft has been very useful and he wonders whether he should take it along with him on his head or on his shoulders.

What do you think, bhikkhus, of this

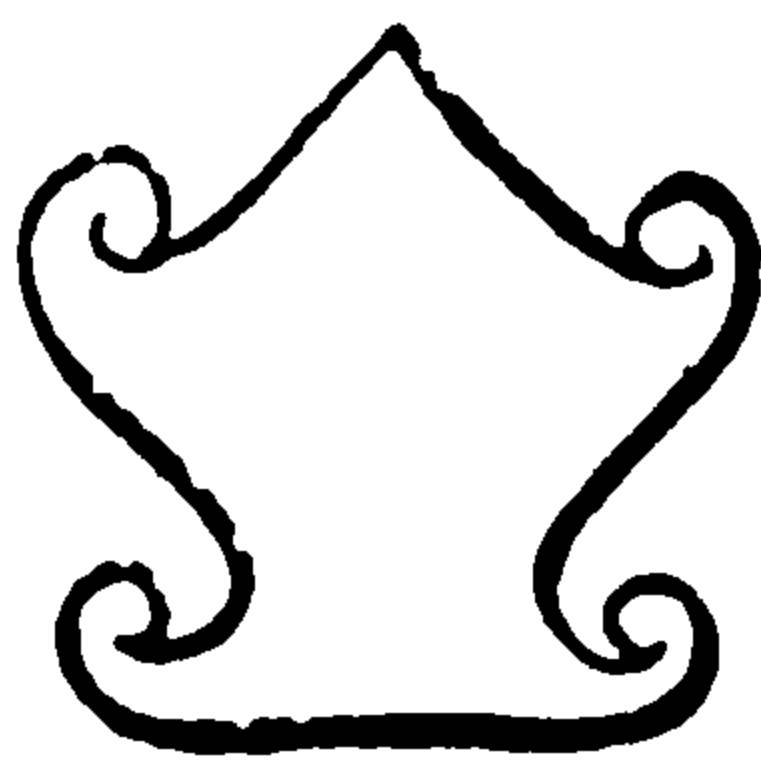


man? What should he do to the raft? Should he carry it on his head or his shoulders in his further journey?

No, Blessed One.

Like this raft, bhikkhus, is the Dhamma I have taught you. It will help you in crossing over and getting across and not lagging behind. And when you have reached the other shore you must discard even the right states of mind taught by the Dhamma.

—*Majjhima-Nikaya*



## **Rivers of Life and Death**

Bhikkhus, there are four kinds of persons in this world.

There is the person who goes with the stream and there is the person who goes against the stream. Then, there is the person who has attained poise of the Self, and lastly there is the person who, having crossed the stream, stands on dry land.

The person who indulges in pleasures of the senses is the one who goes with the stream.

The person who does not succumb to pleasures of the senses is the one who goes against the stream. He shuns evil actions and exerts himself for self-purification.

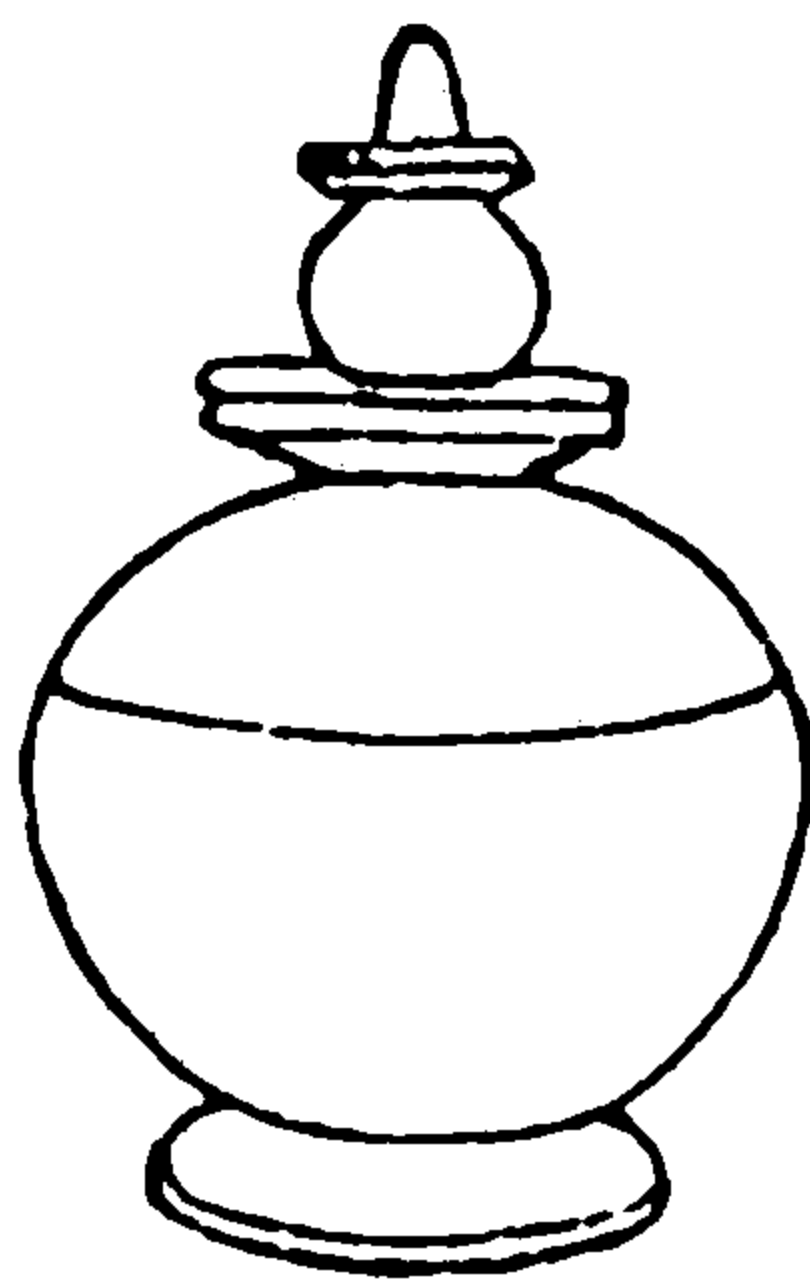
And who is the person, bhikkhus, who has attained poise of the Self? He is the one who has destroyed the five fetters that bind him to the world. He is the one who has spontaneously risen to Nirvana and will not return to the world any more.

And lastly, bhikkhus, hear of the person

who has crossed over and gone beyond. Hear of the person, bhikkhus, who, through his super-knowledge has realised freedom of heart and mind, who has destroyed all that is fluxious and who, therefore, stands on the dry land of supreme wisdom and abides there.

These, bhikkhus, are the four kinds of persons in this world.

—*Anguttara-Nikaya*



## **The Last Sermon**

Before the Enlightened One discarded his mortal coil, he addressed his disciple Ananda in the following words:

What, Ananda, do the bhikkhus expect that I should not attain utter Nirvana unless I have given them full instructions about it? Ananda, I have preached the truth to each and all without any distinction or reservation.

I have never had a closed fist as a teacher and I have never kept anything back. Further, I do not for a moment think that I lead the Order or that the Order is dependent upon me. Why then should I be expected to leave any instructions?

I am now grown old and my life's journey is drawing to the close. Just as a worn-out cart can be made to move along only with great difficulty and care, so can my body be kept going for some time.

Therefore, Ananda, the bhikkhus of the Order should not lean upon my help or any

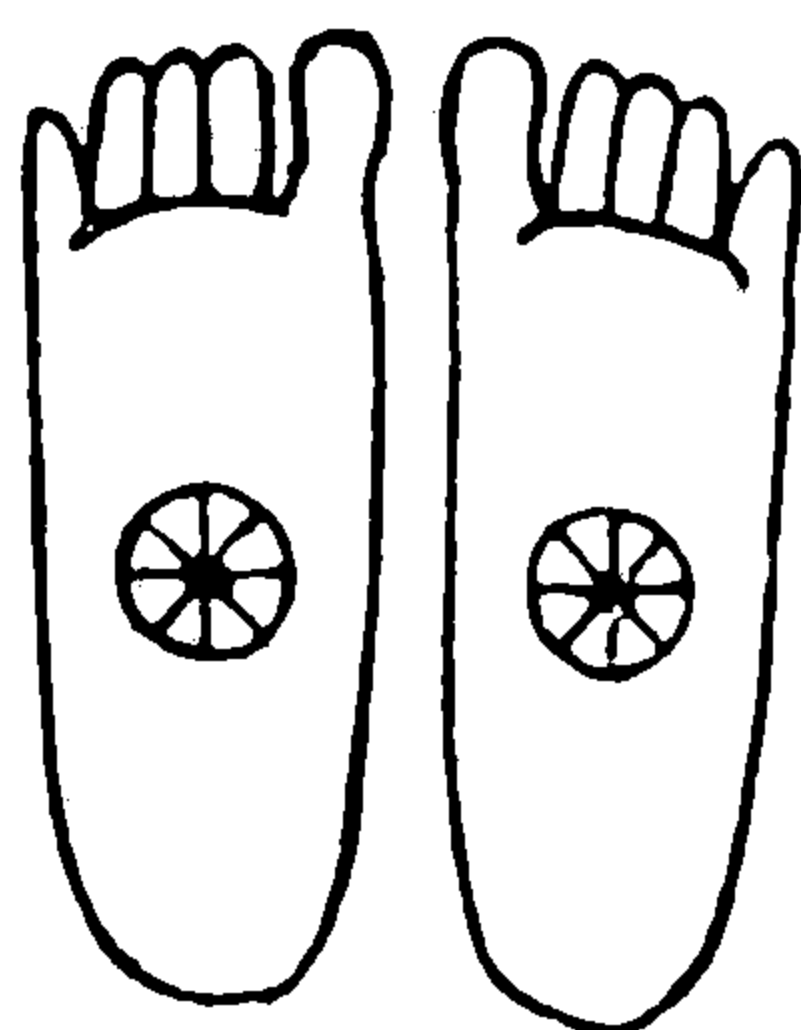
external help. You must rely upon your own selves and you must be your own lamps to show you the path.

Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Seek salvation only in the Truth. Do not look for any assistance outside yourselves.

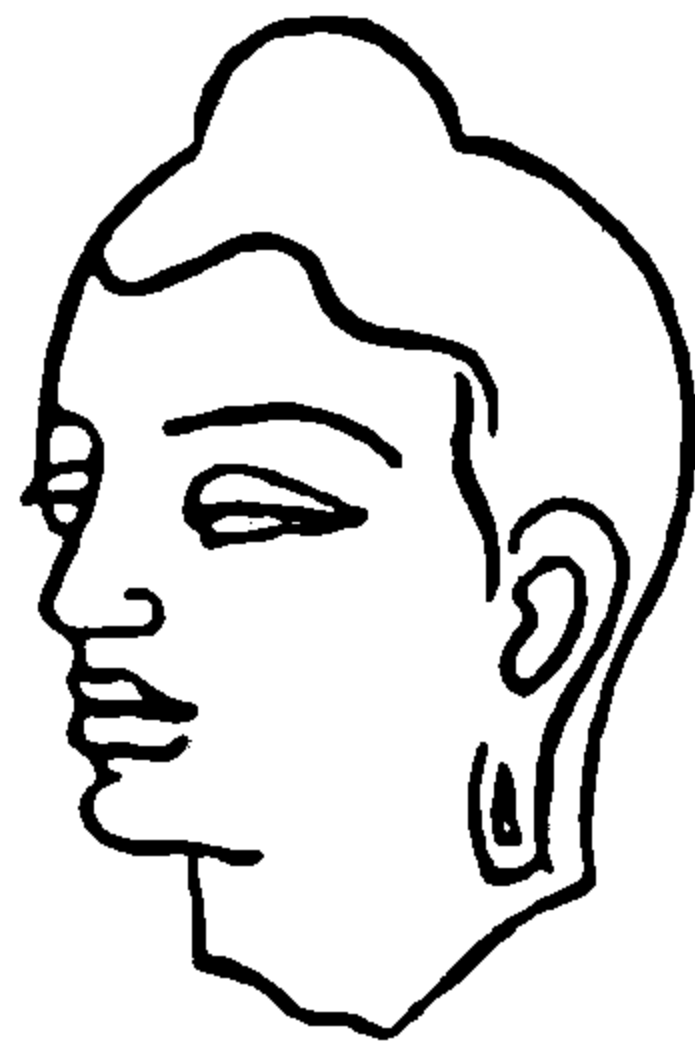
Overcome the grief and pain that arise from the cravings of the body, overcome the grief and pain that arise from the pleasures of the senses, overcome the grief and pain that arise from the craving due to ideas, intellect or emotions. Be strenuous, thoughtful and mindful, whenever cravings in any form arise.

Whoever they are Ananda, either now or after I am no more, who go along having the Self as lamp, having the Self as refuge and no other refuge; having the Dhamma as lamp, having the Dhamma as refuge and no other refuge, those bhikkhus will attain Nirvana.

—*Digha-Nikaya*







42

## **Sayings of the Buddha**

That which is most needed is a loving heart.

\* \* \* \*

Health is the highest gain; Nirvana the highest bliss.

\* \* \* \*

To serve the wise and not to serve the foolish is the greatest blessing.

\* \* \* \*

There is no fire like desire, there is no misfortune like hatred, there is no happiness like tranquility.

\* \* \* \*

The man whose mind is free of craving has no fear.

Let no one deceive another; let no one hate another; let no one do or wish harm to another.

\* \* \* \*

What is merit?

Absence of greed, absence of ill-will is merit. Right understanding is merit.

\* \* \* \*

What is bondage? Not bonds of iron or hemp or wood—but attachment is bondage.

\* \* \* \*

Just as a cornfield is ruined by weeds, man is ruined by attachments.

\* \* \* \*

Who is happy? One who is tranquil, who avoids both victory and defeat.

\* \* \* \*

Victory breeds hatred; the vanquished live in sorrow. Only he is happy who has given up victory and defeat.

\* \* \* \*

Grief comes of what is pleasing, fear comes of what is pleasing. One who is liberated from the love for the pleasing is also liberated from grief and fear.

When a tree is burning with fire, how can birds live on it? Truth cannot live where passions rage.

\* \* \* \*

Put away, O bhikkhus, whatever is not yours. Your welfare and peace lie in such a putting away. And what is it that is not yours? The material body is not yours, nor feelings, perceptions or consciousness. Put away each one of them.

\* \* \* \*

What neither mother nor father can do, what no other relative could do, a well-controlled mind does. It can elevate man.

\* \* \* \*

By oneself alone is one defiled and by oneself alone is one purified. Impurity and purity depend upon oneself. No one can defile or purify another.

\* \* \* \*

Men are ashamed of what they need not be ashamed of and are not ashamed what they should be ashamed of.

\* \* \* \*

The evils of the body are theft, adultery and murder. The evils of the tongue are lying,

abuse and slander. The evils of the mind are greed, hatred and jealousy.

\* \* \* \*

To refrain from all evil, to achieve good deeds and to purify the mind—this is the teaching of the Tathagata.

\* \* \* \*

Speak the truth, do not be angry, give when asked—even when there is little.

\* \* \* \*

As rust which forms in iron eats it up, even so one's own evil actions lead to an evil destiny.

\* \* \* \*

Suffering is the accumulation of evil.

\* \* \* \*

One who brings sufferings on others can never be happy.

\* \* \* \*

Thoughtfulness is the path to the Eternal; thoughtlessness the path to death.

\* \* \* \*

Man makes his prison within himself, therefore he must seek his deliverance within himself only.

The one for whom craving exists not,  
who knows and has no doubt, who has attained  
the deathless—him I call a Brahmin.

\* \* \* \*

Not by matted hair, not by birth, does a  
man become a Brahmin; he in whom there is  
truth and Dhamma is the Brahmin.

\* \* \* \*

Like a rock that remains unmoved in the  
strong wind, a learned man remains unshaken  
in praise or blame.

\* \* \* \*

Who is the man of knowledge? He who  
does not depend on fine distinctions of words,  
he who is free from fear, he who stands by  
the Dhamma—he is the man of knowledge.

\* \* \* \*

A thousand speeches consisting of words  
without meaning are valueless before a single  
word with meaning—the word on hearing  
which one gets peace.

\* \* \* \*

A person without learning will grow grey.  
He grows, but his intelligence does not grow.

\* \* \* \*

First you should settle in your own self



what is good; then alone you may instruct others.

\* \* \* \*

Let us live happily, we who own nothing.

\* \* \* \*

Being surrounded by darkness you are not seeking a lamp!

\* \* \* \*

Just as one looks at a bubble, just as one looks at a mirage, one who looks at the world in the same way—him the Lord of Death cannot find.

\* \* \* \*

This world has become blind. Here few see clearly.

\* \* \* \*

There is not an evil deed in the world that can be hidden.

\* \* \* \*

Do not let yourself be deceived, Ananda, life is a long agony, it is only pain: and the child is right to cry as soon as it is born. This is the first truth.

\* \* \* \*

Material form is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering

is not the Self.

\* \* \* \*

The royal chariots wear out, and so too the body ages; but the true Dhamma does not age.

\* \* \* \*

In this body, six feet in length, with its senses and thoughts and ideas, abides the world, the origin of the world and the ceasing of the world and also the way that leads to its ceasing.

\* \* \* \*

The Buddha can only tell you the way; it is for you yourself to make the effort.

\* \* \* \*

Whatever be the cause of your sorrow and suffering, do not hurt another.

\* \* \* \*

By giving away our food to the hungry we get more strength, and by giving away our clothes to the poor we gain more beauty.

\* \* \* \*

Have faith in the Truth and live it. For no one can alter the Truth and improve it, and it ever remains the same.

Now listen, this is *Dhamma*: If this is, that comes to be; from this that arises; if this is not that does not come to be; if this ceases that too ceases.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

*Dhamma* is the wheel whose spokes are pure conduct; justice is the uniformity of their length; wisdom is the tyre; and modesty and serenity are the hubs in which the axle of Truth is fixed.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

It is not necessary for a true follower to go from home and resign from worldly duties. But it is necessary for him to free himself from the illusion of self, to clean his heart of desire.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

Bhikkhus, a lotus, whether blue or red or white, though born in water stands unsoiled by water when it reaches the surface. Even so, bhikkhus, stands a Tathagata, for though born in the world he has overcome the world and he lives unsoiled by the world.

\*                      \*                      \*                      \*

Bhikkhus, as a Tathagata speaks, so he does; as he does, so he speaks. This is why

he is called a Tathagata.

\* \* \* \*

The truth is one indeed, there is not another.

\* \* \* \*

He who has no distinction of *I* or *me*, he who pines not for what he has not—he indeed is a bhikkhu.

\* \* \* \*

Not to consider “I am this” is freedom.

\* \* \* \*

*I* is the cause of *my*. Had *I* not been, *my* would not have been. If *I* is not, *mine* will be annihilated.

\* \* \* \*

The stopping of becoming is Nirvana.

\* \* \* \*

I say that Nirvana is the destruction of old age and death.

\* \* \* \*

When name and form have been understood completely, then, bhikkhus, there is nothing else to be done.



