

ENTERING THE STREAM AND BEYOND

SUTTA STUDY WORKBOOK

Aggacitta Bhikkhu

Name : _____

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*This workbook is made available to the participants of
Entering the Stream and Beyond
Sutta Study with Meditation Workshop.
We hope that you will treasure this workbook and make good use
of it to broaden and deepen your knowledge of the suttas and
practise the Dhamma more effectively.*

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CONTENTS

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Preamble.....	1
Structure of the Workbook	2
The Material for this Workbook	4
About the English Translations.....	4
Acknowledgements.....	5

WHEN & WHAT?

The Event of Entering the Stream	7
When	8
Nakhasikhā Sutta (SN 13.1)	8
The First Five Stream-enterers	9
Yasa's Going Forth.....	11
Yasa's Father	15
The Meeting with King Bimbisāra.....	18
Suppabuddhakuṭṭhi Sutta (KN 3.43)	19
The Story of the Going-Forth of Sāriputta and Moggallāna	24
Paṭhamagilāna Sutta (SN 35:74).....	29
What	31
Ariyasāvaka Sutta (SN 12.49)	31
Kosambi Sutta (SN 12.68)	33
Sāriputta Sutta (AN 10.7).....	34
Samādhi Sutta (AN 10.6)	36
Discussion D1a	37
Discussion D1b	38

Discussion D1c.....	38
Discussion D2a	39
Discussion D2b	39

HOW?

Conditions for Entering the Stream	41
Sotāpattiphala Sutta (AN 5.60)	42
Cankī Sutta (MN 95).....	42
Dutiyasāriputta Sutta (SN 55.5)	44
Mahāvedalla Sutta (MN 43)	45
Bodhirājakumāra Sutta (MN 85).....	46
Āvaraṇanīvaraṇa Sutta (SN 46.38)	48
Paṭhama-sammattaniyāma Sutta (AN 5.151)	48
Tatiya-sammattaniyāma Sutta (AN 5.153)	50
Okkantisaṃyutta (SN 25).....	51
Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2)	52
Discussion D3a	53
Discussion D3b	55
Discussion D3c.....	55

THEN WHAT?

The Qualities of a Stream-enterer	57
Paṭhama-giṇṇakāvasatha Sutta (SN 55.8)	58
Ānanda Sutta (SN 55.13)	60
Veḷudvāreyya Sutta (SN 55.7)	62
Kāḷigodha Sutta (SN 55.39).....	67
Nandiya Sutta (SN 55.40)	67
Kosambiya Sutta (MN 48)	68
Dutiyānāthapiṇḍika Sutta (SN 55.27)	74

Sarada Sutta (AN 3.95)	75
Pahīna Sutta (AN 6.90).....	76
Sāleyyaka Sutta (MN 41)	76
Mahākammavibhaṅga Sutta (MN 136).....	79
Saupādisesa Sutta (AN 9.12)	80
Tatīyasikkhā Sutta (AN 3.89).....	84
Tapussa Sutta (AN 6.119).....	86
Upādiyamāna Sutta (SN 22.63)	88
Discussion D4a	89
Discussion D4b	90
Discussion D4c.....	91

BUT WHY?

The Difficulty of Authenticating a Stream-enterer	93
Kosambi Sutta (SN 12.68)	94
Kāyasakkhī Sutta (AN 9.43)	96
Ubhatobhāgavimutta Sutta (AN 9.45).....	98
Ratana Sutta (KN 1.6, 5.13)	102
Discussion D5a	105
Discussion D5b	106
Discussion D5c.....	107

AND SO?

Feedback from Participants	109
Discussion D6a	110
Discussion D6b	111

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF PĀLI TERMS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ABBREVIATIONS

WORKSHOP OUTLINE

Day 1

1. Introduction & Overview of Workshop
2. Introduction to Section 1: **WHEN & WHAT?**
The Event of Entering the Stream
3. Discussion D1 Interspersed with Guided Meditation
4. Presentation of Findings for D1
5. Facilitator's Summary & Conclusion of D1
6. Q&A
7. Discussion D2 Interspersed with Guided Meditation
8. Same format as above
9. Introduction to Section 2: **HOW?**
Conditions for Entering the Stream
10. Discussion D2 Interspersed with Guided Meditation
11. Same format as above
12. Facilitator's Summary & Conclusion for Day 1
13. Sharing Merits, Making Aspirations

Day 2

1. Recap of Day 1, Intro to Day 2
2. Same format as above for Sections 3, 4 and 5
3. Facilitator's Final Summary and Conclusion
4. Sharing Merits, Making Aspirations

Note: For each day lunch is scheduled at 12pm and tea-break 3:30pm.

INTRODUCTION

Preamble

Since the practice of vipassanā meditation gained world-wide popularity among lay people in the mid-70s, many serious meditators began to aim for stream-entry as their minimum goal on the path. I was one of them.

In the course of my endeavour I renounced the worldly life in 1978 and eventually received full ordination as a bhikkhu from the venerable Mahasi Sayadaw at the end of 1979 while I was meditating in his centre in Rangoon (now called Yangon). There I learned Burmese and became fluent enough to be an English translator for Sayadaw U Paṇḍita, my principal teacher in the Mahasi tradition. It was there also that I accumulated much knowledge in its theory and practice.

After going in and out of the centre mainly due to visa problems, I finally left in 1982 soon after the venerable Mahasi Sayadaw's demise. However, that was not the end of my link with the tradition, for I was in Shwe Taung Gon Paṇḍitārāma for about a year (1993-4) under Sayadaw U Paṇḍita's compassionate care for a lung injury I had incurred.

Towards the end of my stay there, I wrote an article in answer to a question posed by a Malaysian nun, Sayalay Vivekanandī, who was then meditating there. It was later

published as a booklet in Malaysia by Buddhist Wisdom Centre, Petaling Jaya, in 1995, entitled *Cessation Experiences and the Notion of Enlightenment: Tentative Findings of a Preliminary Research*.

That article was mostly based on the theory and practice of the Mahasi tradition, with just a few cursory examples from the suttas without any proper referencing. This was because it was a reply from a more knowledgeable meditator to a curious one, not a scholarly treatise meant for scholars. As the title shows, it is an inquiry about cessation experiences and their relationship to the event and the stages of enlightenment (or awakening, as I now prefer to call it). The title also implies that a sequel will follow, which is long overdue. I hope that this workbook will be the springboard for that to happen soon.

Structure of the Workbook

'Entering the Stream and Beyond' Sutta Study with Meditation Workshop aims to investigate what the Pāli suttas say about how to enter the stream and what it entails to become a stream-enterer. The workshop is designed for interactive participation through guided open mindfulness sessions, and the stimulation of intellectual analysis and discussion among the participants based on the contents of this workbook. Relevant excerpts from the suttas are arranged into four sections that systematically examine the nature of

stream-entry and what it entailed during the Buddha's time.

Section 1 investigates the **When and What** of stream-entry: the process of entering the stream and the nature of the breakthrough experience.

Section 2 looks at the **How** of stream-entry: the conditions necessary for its attainment.

Section 3 scrutinises the **Then What** of stream-entry: the qualities of a stream-enterer so that we can check whether the character and conduct of someone who believes that he or she is one, really tallies with these qualities.

Section 4 enquires into the **But Why** of stream-entry: why it is so difficult to authenticate its attainment by using what some modern meditation traditions regard as the ultimate criterion of repeated "fruition attainments".¹

Section 5 throws the question **And So?** to the participants to gauge how much they were able to comprehend and retain of the contents of the workshop, and if they had obtained any significant benefits from it.

Discussion topics are given at the end of each section. Participants are required to contemplate how to answer them prior to the workshop proper. The Buddhist organisations hosting the various iterations of the workshop are en-

1. My first booklet, *Cessation Experiences and the Notion of Enlightenment*, describes this issue in detail from a knowledgeable meditator's objective and cautious perspective, but without any specific sutta references.

couraged to hold their own pre-workshop sessions for registered participants so that they may better benefit from the actual event. Answers should be based on the relevant textual excerpts found in the workbook and not simply on unsubstantiated personal opinion.

An Appendix with a glossary of key Pāli terms relevant to this workshop is provided. The definitions are excerpted and abridged from an online version of Āyasmā Ñāṇatiloka's *Buddhist Dictionary*.

The Material for this Workbook

The original material for this workbook was collected over several years, mostly in Pāli. When I decided to do a workshop based on what I had collected, I arranged the excerpts into four sections and looked for the corresponding English translations. After the first draft was completed, I scrutinised Harvey's article, "Saṅgha of Noble Sāvakas", and Ṭhānissaro's *Into the Stream* to see if I missed out anything. Indeed I did and duly added a few significant excerpts.

About the English Translations

Most of the excerpts are taken from Āyasmā (Bhikkhu) Bodhi's translations in the Wisdom Books series. A few are from Āyasmā Ānandajoti (Bhikkhu)'s translations found on his website, Ancient Buddhist Texts, and one from Āyasmā (Bhikkhu) Brahmāli's on the Sutta Central website.

Sometimes I have abridged or modified them, and have marked them as such. For the references to Āyasmā Bodhi's translations, please see the Bibliography. For those to the other two, the respective URLs have been inserted alongside the excerpts. Those translations without any attribution are my own.

I use *Āyasmā* as an honorific for the contemporary bhikkhus whom I cite but retain *Venerable* for the bhikkhus mentioned in the suttas to blend with the usage by the various translators.

Acknowledgements

My gratitude goes to the following individuals who helped to vet an early draft of the workbook: Āyasmā Ṭhitavijjo especially for inserting the page numbers of Āyasmā Bodhi's translations, Āyasmā Ariyadhammika and Ayyā Dhammādinna for their useful feedback and meticulous proof-reading, and Looi Sow Fei, my long-time editor, for polishing the English.

We also express our heartfelt gratitude to Chew Son Hin, Ng Beng Lean and their respective families for sponsoring the printing of this workbook. *Sādhu, anumodāma* (we rejoice) in your generous gift of the Dhamma.

Aggacitta Bhikkhu
September 2022

1

WHEN & WHAT?

The Event of Entering
the Stream

When

IN the suttas, stream-entry (*sotāpatti*) is denoted by the arising of the Dhamma-eye or vision of the Dhamma (*dhammacakkhu*)² as the following excerpt implies.

Nakhasikhā Sutta (SN 13.1)

1 THE FINGERNAIL (CDB)

“So too, bhikkhus, for a noble disciple, a person accomplished in view (*ditṭhisampanna*) who has made the breakthrough, the suffering (*dukkha*) that has been destroyed and eliminated is more, while that which remains is trifling. The latter does not amount to a hundredth part, or a thousandth part, or a hundred thousandth part of the former mass of suffering that has been destroyed and eliminated, as there is a maximum of seven more lives. Of such great benefit, bhikkhus, is the breakthrough to the Dhamma, of such great benefit is it to obtain the vision of the Dhamma.”

There are many separate accounts of the first people entering the stream (*sotāpatti*) while listening to a Dhamma

2. However, the commentaries say that *dhammacakkhu* could also refer to any of the four stages of awakening. For example, the commentary to Rāhulovāda Sutta (MN 147) states that in Upāliovāda Sutta (MN 56) and Dīghanakha Sutta (MN 74) it refers to the first path (i.e. stream-entry), but in Brahmāyu Sutta (MN 91) to the three fruits (this was explicitly stated by the Buddha in the Sutta), and here (MN 147) to the four paths and fruits (not stated in the Sutta).

talk, recorded in the Vinaya Piṭaka.³ The following are selected excerpts to show the context as well as salient characteristics of the event.

In his first sermon the Buddha discoursed on the Middle Path and the Four Noble Truths, including a list of the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path.⁴ Below is my abridged translation of the relevant parts pertaining to the process of entering the stream.

THE FIRST FIVE STREAM-ENTERERS

16. And while this exposition was being spoken, there arose in the Venerable Kondañña the dust-free, stainless Dhamma-eye (*dhammacakkhu*) [that saw]: “Whatever has the nature of origination, all that has the nature of cessation (*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ*)....”

18. Then the Venerable Kondañña—who had seen, attained, understood, and penetrated the dhamma, gone beyond doubt, dispelled uncertainty, attained fearlessness, and become independent of others in the Teacher’s Sāsana—said to the Blessed One: “May I, Bhante, obtain the going forth in the presence of the Blessed One, obtain the full ordination?”

3. Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvaggapāḷi, 1. Mahākhandhako, 6. Pañcavaggiyakathā.
4. A brief account is also found in Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11).

“Come bhikkhu,” said the Blessed One, “Well-ex-pounded is the Dhamma; live the lofty life to completely make an end of dukkha.” Just that, was the venerable’s full ordination.

19. Then the Blessed One exhorted and instructed the remaining bhikkhus with a Dhamma talk. And then while the venerable Vappa and the venerable Bhaddiya were being exhorted and instructed by the Blessed One with the Dhamma talk, there arose [in them] the dust-free, stainless Dhamma-eye [that saw]: “Whatever has the nature of origination, all that has the nature of cessation.”

They who had seen, attained, understood, and penetrated the dhamma, ... said to the Blessed One: “May we, Bhante, obtain the going forth in the presence of the Blessed One, obtain the full ordination?”

“Come bhikkhus,” said the Blessed One, ... Just that, was the venerables’ full ordination.

Then the Blessed One, subsisting on delivered food, exhorted and instructed the remaining bhikkhus with a Dhamma talk. On what the three bhikkhus brought back after wandering for alms, the group of six subsisted. And then while the venerable Mahānāma and the venerable Assaji were being exhorted and instructed by the Blessed One with the Dhamma talk, there arose [in them] the dust-free, stainless Dhamma-eye

[that saw]: “Whatever has the nature of origination, all that has the nature of cessation.”

They who had seen, attained, understood, and penetrated the dhamma, ... said to the Blessed One: “May we, Bhante, obtain the going forth in the presence of the Blessed One, obtain the full ordination.”

“Come bhikkhus,” said the Blessed One, ... Just that, was the venerables’ full ordination.

After all the five had entered the stream and become the first members of the bhikkhusaṅgha, the Buddha spoke to them about anatta, as a result of which all of them attained arahantship. While the first five people to enter the stream were renunciants, the next few were lay people. The account of how they did so follows after that of the first five bhikkhus’ attainment of arahantship and is shown below, abridged and adapted from Āyasmā Ānandajoti’s translation at <https://bit.ly/2vRvMX0>.

YASA’S GOING FORTH

Then at that time at Bārāṇasī there was a delicate young man of good family, Yasa by name, a merchant’s son. There were three palaces for him: one for the winter time, one for the summer time, and one for the rainy season. During the four months in the rainy season palace, while a female musical ensemble was entertaining him, he did not descend to the bottom of the palace.

Then while the young man Yasa, possessed of and endowed with the five strands of sensual pleasure, was being entertained he fell asleep first, and his retinue fell asleep afterwards, and all night an oil-lamp burned.

Then the young man Yasa, after waking first, saw his retinue sleeping, one with a lute in her armpit, another with a small drum on her neck, another with a drum on her chest, another with hair dishevelled, another dribbling, another muttering, [so that] it seemed as if there was a charnel ground close at hand.

Having seen [this] the danger (*ādīnava*) became clear to him, and his mind was established in world-weariness (*nibbidā*). Then the young man Yasa uttered this exalted utterance: “Tribulation (*upadduta*) indeed, ruination (*upassatṭha*) indeed!”

Then the young man Yasa, after donning his golden slippers, went to the door of his dwelling. Divine beings opened the door [thinking]: “Let there be no obstacle to the going forth of the young man Yasa from the home to the homeless life.”

Then the young man Yasa went to the city gate. Divine beings opened the gate [thinking]: “Let there be no obstacle to the going-forth of the young man Yasa from the home to the homeless life.”

Then the young man Yasa approached the Deer Park at Isipatana.

Then at that time, towards the time of dawn, after rising, the Fortunate One was walking in the open air. The Fortunate One saw the young man Yasa coming while still far away, and descending from the walkway, sat down on the prepared seat.

Then the young man Yasa, not far from the Fortunate One uttered this exalted utterance: “Tribulation indeed, ruination indeed!”

Then the Fortunate One said this to the young man Yasa: “This, Yasa, is not tribulation, this is not ruination. Come, Yasa, sit down and I will teach Dhamma to you.”

Then the young man Yasa (thinking): ‘It seems this is not tribulation, this is not ruination’, joyful (*hatṭha*), uplifted (*udagga*), after taking off his golden slippers, approached the Fortunate One, worshipped him and sat down on one side.

To the young man Yasa, sitting at one side, the Fortunate One spoke about the gradual teaching, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation; (these) he explained.

When the Fortunate One knew that the young man Yasa had a ready mind (*kallacitta*), a pliable mind (*mu-ducitta*), **a mind without the hindrances** (*vinīvaraṇa-citta*), an uplifted mind (*udaggacitta*), **a clear mind** (*pasannacitta*), he explained to him the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to the young man Yasa on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

Vinīvaraṇacitta was originally rendered as “an open mind”, but I prefer a more literal one:

without (*vi*) hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) mind (*citta*). This makes it obvious that it refers to the abandoning of the 5 Hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*) that meditators are so familiar with.

For *pasannacitta*, I prefer a more literal translation: a clear mind, instead of the original “a confident mind”.

YASA’S FATHER

Then the young man Yasa’s mother, having ascended the palace, and not finding the young man Yasa, approached the merchant householder and said this: “Your son Yasa, householder, cannot be found.” Then the merchant householder, after sending scouts on horses to the four directions, himself approached the Deer Park at Isipatana. The merchant householder saw the [place where the] golden sandals were cast-off, and went after it.

The Fortunate One saw the merchant householder, coming while still far away, and this occurred to the Fortunate One: “Now what if I were to so arrange it with my psychic powers that while the merchant householder is sitting here he could not see the young man Yasa sitting here?” Then the Fortunate One so arranged it with his psychic powers.

Then the merchant householder approached the Fortunate One, and after approaching he said this to the Fortunate One: “Has the Fortunate One, venerable Sir, seen the young man Yasa?”

“Sit, householder, and it may be that while you are sitting here you will see the young man Yasa sitting here.”

Then the merchant householder [thought]: “It seems that while sitting here I will see the young man Yasa sitting here,” and joyful, uplifted, after worshipping the Fortunate One, he sat down on one side.

To the merchant householder, sitting at one side the Fortunate One spoke about the gradual teaching, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation; (these) he explained.

When the Fortunate One knew that the merchant householder had a ready mind (*kallacitta*), a pliable mind (*muducitta*), a mind without the hindrances (*vinīvaraṇacitta*), an uplifted mind (*udaggacitta*), a clear mind (*pasannacitta*), he explained to him the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to the merchant householder on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

Then the merchant householder, having seen the Dhamma, attained the Dhamma, understood the Dhamma, penetrated the Dhamma, crossed over uncertainty, being without doubts, having attained full

confidence, having become independent of others in the Teacher’s teaching, said this to the Fortunate One:

“Excellent, venerable Sir! Excellent, venerable Sir! Just as, venerable Sir, one might set upright what has been overturned, or open up what has been closed, or show a path to one who is lost, or carry an oil lamp into the darkness, [thinking]: ‘those with vision will see forms’, just so has the Dhamma been explained by the Fortunate One in countless ways.

“I go, venerable Sir, to the Fortunate One for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks (*Esāhaṃ, bhante, bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, dhammañca, bhikkhusaṅghañca*). Please bear it in mind, Fortunate One, that I am a lay follower who has gone for refuge from today forward for as long as I have the breath of life (*Upāsakaṃ maṃ bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gatanti*),” and he became the first lay disciple in the world with the three [refuge] formula (*tevāciko*).

Read the complete account of Yasa’s liberation and his mother’s attainment of the Dhamma-eye here: <https://bit.ly/2vRvMX0>.

The following story about King Bimbisāra is excerpted and adapted from Āyasmā Ānandajoti’s translation at <https://bit.ly/2A66Y0C>.

THE MEETING WITH KING BIMBISĀRA

Then the venerable Uruvelakassapa, after rising from his seat, arranging his outer robe on one shoulder, and falling with his head at the feet of the Fortunate One, said to the Fortunate One: “The Fortunate One is my Teacher, venerable Sir, I am his disciple, the Fortunate One is my Teacher, venerable Sir, I am his disciple.”

Then this occurred to those twelve myriads of brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha: “Uruvelakassapa lives the spiritual life under the Great Ascetic.”

Then the Fortunate One, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the minds of the Magadhan brāhmaṇas and householders, spoke about the gradual teaching to them, that is to say: talk about giving, talk about virtue, talk about heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages of renunciation; (these) he explained.

When the Fortunate One knew that they had ready minds (*kallacitta*), pliable minds (*muducitta*), minds without the hindrances (*vinīvaraṇacitta*) uplifted minds (*udaggacitta*), clear minds (*pasannacitta*), he explained to them the Dhamma teaching the Awakened Ones

have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path.

Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain will take the dye well, just so to eleven myriads of the Magadhan brāhmaṇas and householders, with Bimbisāra at their head on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.” And one myriad (of them) made known their state as lay-followers.

Here is an extraordinary account of stream-entry, abridged and adapted from Āyasmā Ānandajoti’s translation at <https://bit.ly/2i24LeC>.

Suppabuddhakuṭṭhi Sutta (KN 3.43)

3: THE DISCOURSE ABOUT THE LEPER SUPPABUDDHA

Thus I heard:

At one time the Fortunate One was dwelling near Rājagaha, in Bamboo Wood, at the Squirrels’ Feeding Place. Then at that time the leper known as Suppabuddha [Wide Awake] was in Rājagaha, a poor man, a wretched man, a miserable man.

Then at that time the Fortunate One was sitting teaching Dhamma surrounded by a great assembly. The leper Suppabuddha saw while still far away that great crowd of people assembled together and this occurred to him: “Un-

doubtedly in this place some comestibles (*khādanīya*) and edibles (*bhojanīya*) will be distributed. Well now, I could go to that great crowd of people. Perhaps I will get some comestibles or edibles in this place.”

Then the leper Suppabuddha went to that great crowd of people, saw the Fortunate One sitting teaching Dhamma surrounded by a great assembly and this occurred to him: “Here there are no comestibles or edibles being distributed. This ascetic Gotama is teaching Dhamma to the assembly. Perhaps I also could hear the Dhamma”, and he sat down right there [and then, thinking]: “I will also listen to the Dhamma.”

Then the Fortunate One applied his mind and fully encompassed the whole of that assembly with his mind, [thinking]: “Who here is able to understand the Dhamma?” The Fortunate One saw the leper Suppabuddha sitting in that assembly, and this occurred to him: “This one here is able to understand the Dhamma”, and having regard to the leper Suppabuddha he related a gradual talk, that is to say: talk on giving, talk on virtue, talk on heaven, the danger, degradation, and defilement of sensual desires, and the advantages in renunciation; [these] he explained.

When the Fortunate One knew that the leper Suppabuddha was of ready mind, malleable mind, un hindered mind (*vinīvaraṇacitta*), uplifted mind, trusting mind (*pasannacitta*), then he explained the Dhamma teaching the

Awakened Ones have discovered themselves: Suffering, Origination, Cessation, Path. Just as it is known that a clean cloth without a stain would take the dye well, so to the leper Suppabuddha on that very seat, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

Then the leper Suppabuddha having seen the Dhamma, ... rose from his seat, went to the Fortunate One, worshipped him, and sat down at one side.

While he was sitting on one side the leper Suppabuddha said this to the Fortunate One: “Excellent, venerable Sir! Excellent, venerable Sir! ... I go, venerable Sir, to the Fortunate One for refuge, and to the Dhamma, and to the Community of monks. Please bear it in mind, venerable Gotama, that I am a lay follower who has gone for refuge from today forward for as long as I am furnished with life.”

Then the Fortunate One instructed, roused, enthused, and cheered the leper Suppabuddha with a Dhamma talk, and after greatly rejoicing and gladly receiving this word of the Fortunate One, he rose from his seat, worshipped and circumambulated the Fortunate One, and went away. Then not long after he had gone, a cow with a young calf attacked him and deprived him of life.

Then many monks went to the Fortunate One, worshipped him, sat down on one side and said this to him:

“That leper called Suppabuddha, venerable Sir, who was instructed, roused, enthused, and cheered by the Fortunate One with a Dhamma talk has died. What is his destination? What is his future state?”

“A wise man, monks, was Suppabuddha, who practised Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, and did not trouble me on account of the Dhamma. The leper Suppabuddha, monks, through the destruction of three fetters, is a stream-enterer,⁵ not subject to the fall, and is assured of arriving at Full Awakening.”

When that was said, a certain monk said this to the Fortunate One: “What was the reason, venerable Sir, what was the cause, through which the leper Suppabuddha became a poor man, a wretched man, a miserable man?”

“Formerly, monks, the leper Suppabuddha was a son of a wealthy merchant in this very Rājagaha. While going to his pleasure park he saw the Pacceka Buddha Tagarasikkhī entering the city for alms, and this occurred to him: ‘Who is this leper roaming around with his leper’s robe?’ And having spat, and circumambulated him disrespectfully [on the left side], he went away.

“As a result of that deed of his for many years, for many hundreds of years, for many thousands of years, for many hundreds of thousands of years, he boiled in the nether

regions. And as a result of the remaining part of that deed of his he became a leper in this very Rājagaha, a poor man, a wretched man, a miserable man.

“[But] he came to the Dhamma and Discipline taught by the Realised One, and obtained faith, obtained virtue, obtained learning, obtained liberality, obtained wisdom. After coming to the Dhamma and Discipline taught by the Realised One, and obtaining faith, obtaining virtue, obtaining learning, obtaining liberality, obtaining wisdom, at the break up of the body, after death, he arose in a happy destiny, in the world of Heaven, in the companionship of the Tāvātimsa devas. And there he surely outshines the other devas with his beauty and repute.”

Then the Fortunate One, having understood the significance of it, on that occasion uttered this exalted utterance:

“As a man with vision,
while he is endeavouring,
(would avoid) dangerous paths,
(So) a wise man in the world of the living,
should avoid bad deeds.”

5. The arising of the Dhamma-eye is here explicitly stated by the Buddha as referring to stream-entry.

The many other accounts in the Great Division (Mahāvagga) of the Vinaya Piṭaka and elsewhere⁶ of how lay people entered the stream show a common pattern: they listened to the Buddha's gradual teaching and when their minds were ready, the Buddha taught them the Four Noble Truths; then they entered the stream. The accounts of how renunciants entered the stream however can be quite varied, as we saw in the case of the first five stream-enterers above. Other cases are shown below.

The account of the going-forth of Sāriputta and Moggallāna is abridged and adapted from Āyasmā Ānandajoti's translation at <https://bit.ly/2vFsOF1>.

THE STORY OF THE GOING-FORTH OF SĀRIPUTTA AND MOGGALLĀNA

Then at that time the wanderer Sañjaya was living near Rājagaha together with a great assembly of wanderers, with two hundred and fifty wanderers....

Then the wanderer Sāriputta approached the venerable Assaji, exchanged greetings with him and while standing on one side, said this to him: "Your faculties, friend, are very clear, purified is your skin and bright. On

account of whom, friend, did you go forth? Who is your teacher? What Dhamma do you prefer?"

"There is, friend, a Great Ascetic, a Sakyan Son, who has gone forth from the Sakya family. On account of that Fortunate One I went forth; that Fortunate One is my Teacher; that Fortunate One's Dhamma I prefer."

"But what is the doctrine of the venerable's Teacher? What does he say?"

"I am new, friend, one not long gone forth. I recently came to this Dhamma and Discipline. I am not able to teach the Dhamma at length, but I can explain the meaning to you in brief."

Then the wanderer Sāriputta said this to the venerable Assaji:

"Friend, speak little or much,
but tell the meaning to me,
The meaning is useful to me,
what to do with many words?"

Then the venerable Assaji recited this Dhamma instruction to the wanderer Sāriputta:

"Whatever things have a cause and source,
their cause the Realised One has told,
And also that which is their cessation—
such is the Great Ascetic's doctrine."

6. E.g. Ambaṭṭha Sutta (DN 3), Kūṭadanta Sutta (DN 5), Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14), Upāli Sutta (MN 56), Dīghanakha Sutta (MN 74), Brahmāyu Sutta (MN 91), Sīha Sutta (AN 8.12), Paṭhamaugga Sutta (AN 8.21), Dutiyaugga Sutta (AN 8.22).

Then to the wanderer Sāriputta, after hearing this Dhamma instruction, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing...”

Then the wanderer Sāriputta approached the wanderer Moggallāna. The wanderer Moggallāna saw the wanderer Sāriputta coming while still far away, and said this to him: “Your faculties, friend, are very clear, purified is your skin and bright. Have you, friend, attained the Deathless (*amata*)?”

“Yes, friend, I have attained the Deathless.”

“But how did you, friend, attain the Deathless?...”

Then to the wanderer Moggallāna, after hearing this Dhamma instruction [from Sāriputta’s recounting of his meeting with Venerable Assaji], the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

The following account of how some errant bhikkhus entered the stream is excerpted from Bhikkhu Brahmāli’s translation at Sutta Central: <https://tinyurl.com/2gm3u27u>.

THE ACCOUNT OF SCHISM IN THE SAṄGHA

Soon afterwards Sāriputta and Moggallāna went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down, and said, “Venerable Sir, Devadatta has split the Sangha and left for Gayāsīsa together with five hundred monks.”

“You have compassion for those five hundred newly ordained monks, don’t you? Go then, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, before they are affected by misfortune and disaster.”

Saying, “Yes,” Sāriputta and Moggallāna got up from their seats, bowed down, circumambulated the Buddha with their right side toward him, and went to Gayāsīsa.

Just then a certain monk who was standing near the Buddha was crying. The Buddha asked him why. He replied, “Even Sāriputta and Moggallāna, the Buddha’s chief disciples, are going to Devadatta because they approve of his teaching.”

“It’s impossible for Sāriputta and Moggallāna to approve of Devadatta’s teaching. Instead, they’ve gone to win those monks over.”

On that occasion Devadatta was seated giving a teaching surrounded by a great gathering. When Devadatta saw Sāriputta and Moggallāna coming, he said to the monks, “See how well-taught my teaching is, in that even Sāriputta and Moggallāna, the ascetic Gotama’s chief disciples, are coming here because they approve of my teaching.”

But Kokālika said, “Don’t trust Sāriputta and Moggallāna. They have bad desires. They are in the grip of bad desires.”

“Don’t worry. Anyone who comes to approve of my teaching is welcome.”

Devadatta invited Venerable Sāriputta to sit on a seat half the height of his own. Saying, “There’s no need,” Sāriputta took another seat and sat down to one side, as did Mahāmoggallāna. After spending most of the night instructing, inspiring, and gladdening the monks with a teaching, Devadatta invited Sāriputta, saying “The Saṅgha of monks is without dullness and drowsiness. Give a teaching, Sāriputta. My back is aching and I’ll stretch it.”

“Yes.”

Devadatta then folded his upper robe in four and lay down on his right side. Because he was tired, absent-minded, and heedless, he fell asleep in an instant.

Venerable Sāriputta then used the wonder of mind reading to instruct them, and Venerable Mahāmoggallāna used the wonder of supernormal powers to the same effect. While those monks were being instructed like this, they experienced the stainless vision of the Truth (*dharmacakkhu*): “Anything that has a beginning has an end (*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ*).”

In the following excerpt, the Buddha discoursed on the three characteristics of the six senses to a sick newly ordained bhikkhu who consequently entered the stream.

Paṭhamagilāna Sutta (SN 35:74)

74. SICK (1) (Abridged from CDB pp 1157-1158)

At Sāvattihī. Then a certain bhikkhu approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Venerable sir, in such and such a dwelling there is a certain newly ordained bhikkhu, not well known, who is sick, afflicted, gravely ill. It would be good, venerable sir, if the Blessed One would approach that bhikkhu out of compassion.”

Then, when the Blessed One heard the words “newly ordained” and “sick,” and understood that he was not a well-known bhikkhu, he went to him....

“What do you think, bhikkhu, is the eye permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, venerable sir.”... “Is the ear ... the mind permanent or impermanent?” — “Impermanent, venerable sir.” — “Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?” — “Suffering, venerable sir.” — “Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?’” — “No, venerable sir.”

“Seeing thus, bhikkhu, the instructed noble disciple experiences revulsion towards the eye, revulsion towards the ear, revulsion towards the nose, revulsion towards the tongue, revulsion towards the body, revulsion towards the mind. Experiencing revulsion, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It’s liberated.’ He understands: ‘Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.’”

This is what the Blessed One said. Elated, that bhikkhu delighted in the Blessed One’s statement. And while this discourse was being spoken, there arose in that bhikkhu the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma: “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.”

What

THE above passages show the circumstances leading to the event of stream-entry, but what actually is the experience of stream-entry? The Dhamma-eye (*dhammacakkhu*) sees “*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhammaṃ*”, variously translated as

“Whatever has the nature of origination, all that has the nature of cessation” (Aggacitta).

“Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.” (Ānandajoti).

“Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation” (Bodhi).

“Anything that has a beginning has an end” (Brahmāli).

But what does such a vision really entail? Is it merely seeing the arising and passing away of constructions (*saṅkhārā*) which many Buddhist meditators are able to do? Or is there something more to it than just this?

What follows is a possible explanation from the perspective of experientially understanding conditionality.

Ariyasāvaka Sutta (SN 12.49)

49. THE NOBLE DISCIPLE (1) (Abridged from CDB pp 585-586)

“Rather, bhikkhus, the instructed noble disciple has knowledge about this that is independent of others:

‘When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases. When there is no consciousness, name-and-form does not come to be.... When there is no birth, aging-and-death does not come to be.’ He understands thus: ‘In such a way the world ceases.’

“Bhikkhus, when a noble disciple thus understands as they really are the origin and the passing away of the world, he is then called a noble disciple who is accomplished in view (*ditṭhisampanno*), accomplished in vision (*dassanasampanno*), who has arrived at this true Dhamma, who sees this true Dhamma (*passati imaṃ saddhammaṃ*), who possesses a trainee’s knowledge, a trainee’s true knowledge, who has entered the stream of the Dhamma (*dhammasotaṃ samāpanno*), a noble one with penetrative wisdom, one who stands squarely before the door to the Deathless.”

More explicitly, we read earlier about Sāriputta’s stream-entry and his acknowledgement that he had attained the Deathless when asked by Moggallāna later:

Then to the wanderer Sāriputta, after hearing this Dhamma instruction, the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.” ...

Then the wanderer Sāriputta approached the wanderer Moggallāna. The wanderer Moggallāna saw the

wanderer Sāriputta coming while still far away, and said this to him: “Your faculties, friend, are very clear, purified is your skin and bright. Have you, friend, attained the Deathless (*amata*)?”

“Yes, friend, I have attained the Deathless.”

“But how did you, friend, attain the Deathless?”...

Then to the wanderer Moggallāna, after hearing this Dhamma instruction [from Sāriputta’s recounting of his meeting with Venerable Assaji], the dust-free, stainless Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose: “Whatever has the nature of arising, all that has the nature of ceasing.”

Perhaps the following dialogue between two bhikkhus can shed more light on this.

Kosambi Sutta (SN 12.68)

68. KOSAMBI (Abridged from CDB pp 610-611)

“Friend Nārada, apart from faith, apart from personal preference, apart from oral tradition, apart from reasoned reflection, apart from acceptance of a view after pondering it, does the Venerable Nārada have personal knowledge thus: ‘Nibbāna is the cessation of existence (*bhavanirodho nibbānaṃ*)?’”

“Friend Saviṭṭha, apart from faith, apart from personal preference, apart from oral tradition, apart from reasoned reflection, apart from acceptance of a view after pondering it, I know this, I see this: ‘Nibbāna is the cessation of existence.’”

“Then the Venerable Nārada is an arahant, one whose taints are destroyed.”

“Friend, though I have clearly seen as it really is with correct wisdom, ‘Nibbāna is the cessation of existence,’ I am not an arahant, one whose taints are destroyed. Suppose, friend, there was a well along a desert road, but it had neither a rope nor a bucket. Then a man would come along, oppressed and afflicted by the heat, tired, parched, and thirsty. He would look down into the well and the knowledge would occur to him, ‘There is water,’ but he would not be able to make bodily contact (*kāyena phusitvā*) with it. So too, friend, though I have clearly seen as it really is with correct wisdom, ‘Nibbāna is the cessation of existence,’ I am not an arahant, one whose taints are destroyed.”

Even more enlightening is the description given by Venerable Sāriputta in answer to Venerable Ānanda’s query in the following excerpt.

Sāriputta Sutta (AN 10.7)

7 (7) SĀRIPUTTA (NDB pp 1344-1345)

“On one occasion, friend Ānanda, I was dwelling right here in Sāvathī in the Blind Men’s Grove. There I attained such a state of concentration that I was not percipient of earth in relation to earth; of water in re-

lation to water; of fire in relation to fire; of air in relation to air; of the base of the infinity of space in relation to the base of the infinity of space; of the base of the infinity of consciousness in relation to the base of the infinity of consciousness; of the base of nothingness in relation to the base of nothingness; of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception in relation to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; of this world in relation to this world; of the other world in relation to the other world, but I was still percipient.”

“But of what was the Venerable Sāriputta percipient on that occasion?”

“One perception arose and another perception ceased in me: ‘The cessation of existence is nibbāna (*bhavanirodho nibbānaṃ*); the cessation of existence is nibbāna.’ Just as, when a fire of twigs is burning, one flame arises and another flame ceases, so one perception arose and another perception ceased in me: ‘The cessation of existence is nibbāna; the cessation of existence is nibbāna.’ On that occasion, friend, I was percipient: ‘The cessation of existence is nibbāna.’ ”

Further clarification of the experience of nibbāna can be found in the following excerpt.

Samādhi Sutta (AN 10.6)

6 (6) CONCENTRATION (NDB pp 1343-1344)

“Here, Ānanda, a bhikkhu is percipient thus: ‘This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all activities, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna.’ It is in this way, Ānanda, that a bhikkhu could obtain such a state of concentration that he would not be percipient of earth in relation to earth; of water in relation to water; of fire in relation to fire; of air in relation to air; of the base of the infinity of space in relation to the base of the infinity of space; of the base of the infinity of consciousness in relation to the base of the infinity of consciousness; of the base of nothingness in relation to the base of nothingness; of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception in relation to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; of this world in relation to this world; of the other world in relation to the other world, but he would still be percipient.”⁷

Discussion D1a

Construct a flowchart to map out the process of entering the stream for the lay people mentioned by the excerpts in this section.

7. This stock passage describing the experience of nibbāna is found elsewhere too, e.g. Saññā Sutta (AN 11.7) and the Samādhi Suttas (AN 11.18-21), but with an additional phrase appended to it: *of anything seen, heard, sensed, cognized, reached, sought after, and examined by the mind, but he would still be percipient.*

Discussion D1b

Is this process applicable to renunciants? Give reasons for your answer.

Discussion D1c

Is there any one element in this process that you consider to be more important than the others? Give reasons for your answer.

Discussion D2a

What does the Dhamma-eye see? How did you arrive at this conclusion?

Discussion D2b

What do you understand by the simile of the well water in Kosambi Sutta (SN 12.68) and the contents of the subsequent two sutta excerpts from AN 10.7 and AN 10.6?

2

HOW?

Conditions for
Entering the Stream

THE selected passages from the Vinaya and suttas in Section 1 show the context and process of entering the stream as well as the actual experience of stream-entry. While some of the proximate conditions for stream-entry can already be identified there, in this section we explore passages from other suttas to find out additional conditions which may not be so proximate.

Sotāpattiphala Sutta (AN 5.260)

260 FRUIT OF STREAM-ENTRY (NDB p 840)

“Bhikkhus, without having abandoned these five things one is incapable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry. What five? Miserliness with regard to dwellings, miserliness with regard to families, miserliness with regard to gains, miserliness with regard to praise, and miserliness with regard to the Dhamma.⁸ Without having abandoned these five things, one is incapable of realizing the fruit of stream-entry.

Cankī Sutta (MN 95)

WITH CANKĪ (Abridged from MLDB p 782)

“When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on greed ... hate ... delusion, then he places faith in him; filled with faith he visits

8. Aparasotapattiphala Sutta (AN 5.268) replaces *miserliness with regard to the Dhamma* with *ingratitude or unthankfulness*.

him and pays respect to him; having paid respect to him, he gives ear; when he gives ear, he hears the Dhamma; having heard the Dhamma, he memorises it and examines the meaning of the teachings he has memorised; when he examines their meaning, he gains a reflective acceptance of those teachings; when he has gained a reflective acceptance of those teachings, zeal springs up; when zeal has sprung up, he applies his will; having applied his will, he scrutinises; having scrutinised, he strives; resolutely striving, he realises **with the body** the supreme truth (*kāyena ceva paramasaccaṃ sacchikaroti*) and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom. In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the discovery of truth; in this way one discovers truth; in this way we describe the discovery of truth.

Āyasmā Bodhi consistently translates *kāyena* as “with the body” in practically all contexts. In my previous workshops I showed, with substantive sutta references, that although literally accurate, it is misleading in the context of meditation. Instead, I concluded that a clearer translation, without compromising literal accuracy, is “personally” or “experientially”. See also my note on p 97.

Dutiyasāriputta Sutta (SN 55.5)

5 (5) SĀRIPUTTA (2) (CDB p 1792)

Then the Venerable Sāriputta approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, and sat down to one side. The Blessed One then said to him:

“Sāriputta, this is said: ‘A factor for stream-entry (*sotāpattiyaṅgaṃ*), a factor for stream-entry.’ What now, Sāriputta, is a factor for stream-entry?”

“Association with superior persons (*sappurisasam-sevo*), venerable sir, is a factor for stream-entry. Hearing the true Dhamma (*saddhammassavanaṃ*) is a factor for stream-entry. Careful attention (*yonisomanasikāro*) is a factor for stream-entry. Practice in accordance with the Dhamma (*dhammānudhammapaṭipatti*) is a factor for stream-entry.”⁹

“Good, good, Sāriputta! Association with superior persons, Sāriputta, is a factor for stream-entry. Hearing the true Dhamma is a factor for stream-entry. Careful attention is a factor for stream-entry. Practice in accordance with the Dhamma is a factor for stream-entry.

“Sāriputta, this is said: ‘The stream, the stream.’ What now, Sāriputta, is the stream?”

9. These four factors are also listed in Aṅga Sutta (SN 55.50) and Sotāpattiphala Sutta (SN 55.55).

“This Noble Eightfold Path, venerable sir, is the stream; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.”

“Good, good, Sāriputta! This Noble Eightfold Path is the stream; that is, right view ... right concentration.

“Sāriputta, this is said: ‘A stream-enterer, a stream-enterer.’ What now, Sāriputta, is a stream-enterer?”

“One who possesses this Noble Eightfold Path, venerable sir, is called a stream-enterer: this venerable one of such a name and clan.”

“Good, good, Sāriputta! One who possesses this Noble Eightfold Path is a stream-enterer: this venerable one of such a name and clan.”

Mahāvedalla Sutta (MN 43)

THE GREATER SERIES OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (MLDB p 390)

“Friend, how many conditions are there for the arising of right view?”

“Friend, there are two conditions for the arising of right view: the voice of another (*parato ghoso*) and wise attention (*yoniso manasikāro*). These are the two conditions for the arising of right view.”¹⁰

10. Also in AN 2.127.

“Friend, by how many factors is right view assisted when it has deliverance of mind for its fruit, deliverance of mind for its fruit and benefit, when it has deliverance by wisdom for its fruit, deliverance by wisdom for its fruit and benefit?”

“Friend, right view is assisted by five factors when it has deliverance of mind for its fruit, deliverance of mind for its fruit and benefit, when it has deliverance by wisdom for its fruit, deliverance by wisdom for its fruit and benefit. Here, friend, right view is assisted by virtue, learning, discussion, serenity, and insight. Right view assisted by these five factors has deliverance of mind for its fruit, deliverance of mind for its fruit and benefit; it has deliverance by wisdom for its fruit, deliverance by wisdom for its fruit and benefit.”

Bodhirājakumāra Sutta (MN 85)

TO PRINCE BODHI (MLDB pp 707-708)

“So too, prince, there are these five factors of striving. What five? (1) Here a bhikkhu has faith, he places his faith in the Tathāgata’s enlightenment thus: ‘That Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed.’ (2) Then he is free from illness and affliction,

possessing a good digestion that is neither too cool nor too warm but medium and able to bear the strain of striving. (3) Then he is honest and sincere, and shows himself as he actually is to the Teacher and his companions in the holy life. (4) Then he is energetic in abandoning unwholesome states and in undertaking wholesome states, steadfast, launching his effort with firmness and persevering in cultivating wholesome states. (5) Then he is wise; he possesses wisdom regarding rise and disappearance that is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete destruction of suffering. These are the five factors of striving.

“Prince, when a bhikkhu who possesses these five factors of striving finds a Tathāgata to discipline him, he might dwell seven years until by realising for himself with direct knowledge, he here and now enters upon and abides in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life into homelessness.

“Let alone seven years, prince. When a bhikkhu who possesses these five factors of striving finds a Tathāgata to discipline him, he might dwell six years ... five years ... four years ... three years ... two years ... one year ... Let alone one year, prince, ... he might dwell seven months ... six months ... five months ... four months ... three months ... two months ... one

month ... half a month ... Let alone half a month, prince, ... he might dwell seven days and nights ... six days and nights ... five days and nights ... four days and nights ... three days and nights ... two days and nights ... one day and night.

“Let alone one day and night, prince. When a bhikkhu who possesses these five factors of striving finds a Tathāgata to discipline him, then being instructed in the evening, he might arrive at distinction in the morning; being instructed in the morning, he might arrive at distinction in the evening.”

Āvaraṇanīvaraṇa Sutta (SN 46.38)

38 (8) WITHOUT HINDRANCES (CDB p 1592)

“When, bhikkhus, a noble disciple listens to the Dhamma with eager ears, attending to it as a matter of vital concern, directing his whole mind to it, on that occasion the five hindrances are not present in him; on that occasion the seven factors of enlightenment go to fulfilment by development.”

Paṭhama-sammattaniyāma Sutta (AN 5.151)

151 (1) THE FIXED COURSE OF RIGHTNESS (1) (NDB pp 764-765)

“Bhikkhus, possessing five qualities, even while listening to the good Dhamma one is incapable of entering upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness

in wholesome qualities (*niyāmaṃ okkamituṃ kusalesu dhammesu sammattaṃ*). What five? (1) One disparages the talk; (2) one disparages the speaker; (3) one disparages oneself; (4) one listens to the Dhamma with a distracted and scattered mind (*vikkhittacitto, anekaggacitto*); (5) one attends to it carelessly (*ayoniso manasi karoti*). Possessing these five qualities, even while listening to the good Dhamma one is incapable of entering upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness in wholesome qualities.

The commentary says *niyāmaṃ okkamituṃ kusalesu dhammesu sammattaṃ* refers to the fixed course of the Path, i.e. the moment of awakening.

“Bhikkhus, possessing five qualities, while listening to the good Dhamma one is capable of entering upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness in wholesome qualities. What five? (1) One does not disparage the talk; (2) one does not disparage the speaker; (3) one does not disparage oneself; (4) one listens to the Dhamma with an undistracted and one-pointed mind (*avikkhittacitto, ekaggacitto*); (5) one attends to it carefully (*yoniso manasi karoti*). Possessing these five

qualities, while listening to the good Dhamma one is capable of entering upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness in wholesome qualities.”¹¹

Tatiya-sammattaniyāma Sutta (AN 5.153)

153 (3) THE FIXED COURSE OF RIGHTNESS (3)
(NDB pp 765-766)

“Bhikkhus, possessing five qualities, even while listening to the good Dhamma one is incapable of entering upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness in wholesome qualities. What five? (1) One listens to the Dhamma as a denigrator obsessed with denigration; (2) one listens to the Dhamma with the intention of criticizing it, seeking faults; (3) one is ill disposed toward the teacher, intent on attacking him; (4) one is unwise, stupid, obtuse; (5) one imagines that one has understood what one has not understood. Possessing these five qualities, even while listening to the good Dhamma one is incapable of entering upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness in wholesome qualities.

“Bhikkhus, possessing five qualities, while listening to the good Dhamma one is capable of entering

11. In the next sutta (AN 5.152), the fourth and fifth qualities are replaced by: (4) *one is unwise, stupid, obtuse*; (5) *one imagines that one has understood what one has not understood*; and (4) *one is wise, intelligent, astute*; (5) *one does not imagine that one has understood what one has not understood*.

upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness in wholesome qualities. What five? (1) One does not listen to the Dhamma as a denigrator obsessed with denigration; (2) one listens to the Dhamma without any intention of criticizing it, not as one who seeks faults; (3) one is not ill disposed toward the teacher and intent on attacking him; (4) one is wise, intelligent, astute; (5) one does not imagine that one has understood what one has not understood. Possessing these five qualities, while listening to the good Dhamma one is capable of entering upon the fixed course [consisting in] rightness in wholesome qualities.”

Okkantisaṃyutta (SN 25)

25-30. CONNECTED DISCOURSES ON ENTERING
(Abridged from CDB pp 1004-1007)

“Monks, the six senses ... their objects ... their consciousnesses ... sense experiences (*-samphassa*) ... feelings arising from sense experiences ... perceptions of sense objects ... volitions regarding sense objects ... craving for sense objects ... the six elements ... the five aggregates are impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise.

“One who places faith in these teachings and resolves on them thus is called a faith-follower (*saddhānusāri*) ... One for whom these teachings are ac-

cepted thus after being pondered to a sufficient degree with wisdom is called a Dhamma-follower (*dhammānusāri*), one who has entered the fixed course of rightness (*okkanto sammattaniyāmaṃ*), entered the plane of superior persons, transcended the plane of the worldlings (*vītivatto puthujjanabhūmiṃ*). He is incapable of doing any deed by reason of which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal realm, or in the domain of ghosts (*pettivisayaṃ*); he is incapable of passing away without having realized the fruit of stream-entry.

“One who knows and sees these teachings thus is called a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny (*niyato*), with enlightenment as his destination.”

Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2)

ALL THE TAINTS (MLDB p 93)

“He attends wisely: ‘This is suffering’; he attends wisely: ‘This is the origin of suffering’; he attends wisely: ‘This is the cessation of suffering’; he attends wisely: ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’ When he attends wisely in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: personality view, doubt, and adherence to rules and observances. These are called the taints that should be abandoned by seeing.”

Discussion D3a

List out the contributing factors for the attainment of stream-entry, preferably grouped in a temporal sequence, e.g. preliminaries, attitude, mental readiness, etc. Explain the rationale behind your sequential arrangement.

Discussion D3b

In your opinion, which factors are particularly applicable to most lay Buddhists nowadays? Give reasons for your answer.

Discussion D3c

When does one become a faith-follower (*saddhānusārī*) or a Dhamma-follower (*dhammānusārī*)? Give reasons for your answer.

3

THEN WHAT?

The Qualities of a
Stream-enterer

WHAT does it entail to become a stream-enterer? Anyone can easily claim to be one based on the general criteria in the Mirror of the Dhamma (see below) that the Buddha gave to Venerable Ānanda. Here we explore, in other suttas, other qualities of the stream-enterer.

Paṭhama-giñjakāvasatha Sutta (SN 55.8)

8. THE BRICK HALL (1) (CDB pp 1799-1800)¹²

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Ñātika in the Brick Hall. Then the Venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him:

“Venerable sir, the bhikkhu named Sālha has died. What is his destination (*gati*), what is his future bourn (*abhisamparāyo*)? The bhikkhunī named Nandā has died. What is her destination, what is her future bourn? The male lay follower named Sudatta has died. What is his destination, what is his future bourn? The female lay follower named Sujātā has died. What is her destination, what is her future bourn?”

“Ānanda, the bhikkhu Sālha who has died, by the destruction of the taints (*āsavānaṃ khayā*), in this very life had entered and dwelt in the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, realizing it for himself

with direct knowledge. The bhikkhunī Nandā who has died had, with the utter destruction of the five lower fetters (*orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ*), become one of spontaneous birth, due to attain nibbāna there without returning from that world. The male lay follower Sudatta who has died had, with the utter destruction of three fetters and with the diminishing of greed, hatred, and delusion, become a once-returner who, after coming back to this world only one more time, will make an end to suffering. The female lay follower Sujātā who has died had, with the utter destruction of three fetters, become a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as her destination.

“It is not surprising, Ānanda, that a human being should die. But if each time someone has died you approach and question me about this matter, that would be troublesome for the Tathāgata. Therefore, Ānanda, I will teach you a Dhamma exposition called the mirror of the Dhamma, equipped with which a noble disciple, if he wishes, could by himself declare of himself: ‘I am one finished with hell, finished with the animal realm, finished with the domain of ghosts (*pettivisaya*), finished with the plane of misery, the bad destinations, the nether world. I am a stream-enterer, no

12. Also in Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (DN 16).

longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as my destination.’

“And what, Ānanda, is that Dhamma exposition, the mirror of the Dhamma, equipped with which a noble disciple, if he wishes, could by himself declare thus of himself? Here, Ānanda, a noble disciple possesses **confirmed confidence** (*aveccap(p)asāda*) in the Buddha thus: ‘The Blessed One is ... teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.’ He possesses confirmed confidence in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha.... He possesses the virtues dear to the noble ones—unbroken, untorn, unblemished, unmottled, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration.

“This, Ānanda, is that Dhamma exposition, the mirror of the Dhamma, equipped with which a noble disciple, if he wishes, could by himself declare of himself. ‘I am one finished with hell.... I am a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as my destination.’ ”

Ānanda Sutta (SN 55.13)

(3) ĀNANDA (CDB pp 1803-1805)

“Friend Ānanda, by the abandoning of how many things and because of possessing how many things are people declared by the Blessed One thus: ‘This one is a

The translation of *avejjap(p)asāda* as “confirmed confidence”, can be rather vague and ambiguous. I think “experientially verified / experiential / verified faith” would do more justice to its etymological meaning:

avecca = having known, having penetrated with wisdom +
pasāda = clarity, joy, satisfaction, happy or good mind, virtue, faith.

stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as his destination?’” [asked the Venerable Sāriputta.]

“It is, friend, by the abandoning of four things and because of possessing four things that people are declared thus by the Blessed One. What four?

“One does not have, friend, that distrust regarding the Buddha which the uninstructed worldling possesses, because of which the latter, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the nether world, in hell. And one has that confirmed confidence in the

Buddha which the instructed noble disciple possesses, because of which the latter, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world: ‘The Blessed One is ... teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One ...

[*This passage is repeated for the Dhamma and Saṅgha with their respective qualities.*]

“One does not have, friend, that immorality which the uninstructed worldling possesses, because of which the latter, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in the plane of misery, in a bad destination, in the nether world, in hell. And one has those virtues dear to the noble ones which the instructed noble disciple possesses, because of which the latter, with the breakup of the body, after death, is reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world: virtues dear to the noble ones ... leading to concentration.”

Veḷudvāreyya Sutta (SN 55.7)

7. THE PEOPLE OF BAMBOO GATE (Abridged from CDB pp 1797-1799)

“Master Gotama, we have such wishes, desires, and hopes as these: ‘May we dwell in a home crowded with children! May we enjoy Kāsian sandalwood! May we wear garlands, scents, and unguents! May we receive gold and silver! With the breakup of the body, after death, may we be reborn in a good destination, in a

heavenly world!’ As we have such wishes, desires, and hopes, let Master Gotama teach us the Dhamma in such a way that we might dwell in a home crowded with children ... and with the breakup of the body, after death, we might be reborn in a good destination, in a heavenly world....”

(1) “Here, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘I am one who wishes to live, who does not wish to die; I desire happiness and am averse to suffering. Since I am one who wishes to live ... and am averse to suffering, if someone were to take my life, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to take the life of another—of one who wishes to live, who does not wish to die, who desires happiness and is averse to suffering—that would not be pleasing and agreeable to the other either. What is displeasing and disagreeable to me is displeasing and disagreeable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is displeasing and disagreeable to me?’ Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from the destruction of life, exhorts others to abstain from the destruction of life, and speaks in praise of abstinence from the destruction of life. Thus this bodily conduct of his is purified in three respects.

(2) “Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If someone were to take from me what I have

not given, that is, to commit theft, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me....' Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from taking what is not given, exhorts others to abstain from taking what is not given, and speaks in praise of abstinence from taking what is not given. Thus this bodily conduct of his is purified in three respects.

(3) "Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: 'If someone were to commit adultery with my wives, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me....' Thus this bodily conduct of his is purified in three respects.

(4) "Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: 'If someone were to damage my welfare with false speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me....' Thus this verbal conduct of his is purified in three respects.

(5) "Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: 'If someone were to divide me from my friends by divisive speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me....' Thus this verbal conduct of his is purified in three respects.

(6) "Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: 'If someone were to address me with harsh speech, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me....' Thus this verbal conduct of his is purified in three respects.

(7) “Again, householders, a noble disciple reflects thus: ‘If someone were to address me with frivolous speech and idle chatter, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to me. Now if I were to address another with frivolous speech and idle chatter, that would not be pleasing and agreeable to the other either. What is displeasing and disagreeable to me is displeasing and disagreeable to the other too. How can I inflict upon another what is displeasing and disagreeable to me?’ Having reflected thus, he himself abstains from idle chatter, exhorts others to abstain from idle chatter, and speaks in praise of abstinence from idle chatter. Thus this verbal conduct of his is purified in three respects.

“He possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha thus: ‘The Blessed One is ... teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.’ He possesses confirmed confidence in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha.... He possesses the virtues dear to the noble ones, unbroken ... leading to concentration.

“When, householders, the noble disciple possesses these seven good qualities and these four desirable states, if he wishes he could by himself declare of himself: ‘I am one finished with hell, finished with the animal realm, finished with the domain of ghosts, finished with the plane of misery, the bad destinations, the nether world. I am a stream-enterer, no longer

bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as my destination.’ ”

Kāḷigodha Sutta (SN 55.39)

(9) KĀḶIGODHĀ (Abridged from CDB p 1826)

“Godhā, a noble woman disciple who possesses four things is a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as her destination. What four?

“Here, Godhā, a noble woman disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha ... in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha.... She dwells at home with a mind devoid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing.

“A noble woman disciple, Godhā, who possesses these four things is a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world, fixed in destiny, with enlightenment as her destination.”

Nandiya Sutta (SN 55.40)

(10) NANDIYA (Abridged from CDB pp 1827-1828)

“And how, Nandiya, is a noble disciple one who dwells negligently? Here, Nandiya, a noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha ... in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha.... He possesses the virtues dear to the

noble ones, unbroken ... leading to concentration. Content with those virtues dear to the noble ones, he does not make further effort for solitude by day nor for seclusion at night. When he thus dwells negligently, there is no gladness. When there is no gladness, there is no rapture. When there is no rapture, there is no tranquillity. When there is no tranquillity, he dwells in suffering. The mind of one who suffers does not become concentrated. When the mind is not concentrated, phenomena do not become manifest. Because phenomena do not become manifest, he is reckoned as 'one who dwells negligently.'

"Not content with that confirmed confidence in the Buddha ... in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha ... with those virtues dear to the noble ones, he makes further effort for solitude by day and for seclusion at night. When he thus dwells diligently, gladness is born.... Because phenomena become manifest, he is reckoned as 'one who dwells diligently.' "

Kosambiya Sutta (MN 48)

THE KOSAMBIANS (Abridged from MLDB pp 421-423)

"And how does this view that is noble and emancipating lead the one who practises in accordance with it to the complete destruction of suffering?"

"Here a bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, considers thus: 'Is there any

obsession unabandoned in myself that might so obsess my mind that I cannot know or see things as they actually are?' If a bhikkhu is obsessed by sensual lust, then his mind is obsessed. If he is obsessed by ill will, then his mind is obsessed. If he is obsessed by sloth and torpor, then his mind is obsessed. If he is obsessed by restlessness and remorse, then his mind is obsessed. If he is obsessed by doubt, then his mind is obsessed. If a bhikkhu is absorbed in speculation about this world, then his mind is obsessed. If a bhikkhu is absorbed in speculation about the other world, then his mind is obsessed. If a bhikkhu takes to quarrelling and brawling and is deep in disputes, stabbing others with verbal daggers, then his mind is obsessed.

(1) "He understands thus: 'There is no obsession unabandoned in myself that might so obsess my mind that I cannot know and see things as they actually are. My mind is well disposed for awakening to the truths.' This is the first knowledge attained by him that is noble, supramundane, not shared by ordinary people.

(2) "Again, a noble disciple considers thus: 'When I pursue, develop, and cultivate this view, do I personally obtain serenity, do I personally obtain quenching?'

"He understands thus: 'When I pursue, develop, and cultivate this view, I personally obtain serenity, I personally obtain quenching.' This is the second

knowledge attained by him that is noble, supra-mundane, not shared by ordinary people.

(3) “Again, a noble disciple considers thus: ‘Is there any other recluse or brahmin outside [the Buddha’s Dispensation] possessed of a view such as I possess?’

“He understands thus: ‘There is no other recluse or brahmin outside [the Buddha’s Dispensation] possessed of a view such as I possess.’ This is the third knowledge attained by him that is noble, supra-mundane, not shared by ordinary people.

(4) “Again, a noble disciple considers thus: ‘Do I possess the character of a person who possesses right view?’ What is the character of a person who possesses right view? This is the character of a person who possesses right view: although he may commit some kind of offence for which a means of rehabilitation has been laid down, still he at once confesses, reveals, and discloses it to the Teacher or to wise companions in the holy life, and having done that, he enters upon restraint for the future. Just as a young, tender infant lying prone at once draws back when he puts his hand or his foot on a live coal, so too, that is the character of a person who possesses right view.

“He understands thus: ‘I possess the character of a person who possesses right view.’ This is the fourth

knowledge attained by him that is noble, supra-mundane, not shared by ordinary people.

(5) “Again, a noble disciple considers thus: ‘Do I possess the character of a person who possesses right view?’ What is the character of a person who possesses right view? This is the character of a person who possesses right view: although he may be active in various matters for his companions in the holy life, yet he has a keen regard for training in the higher virtue, training in the higher mind, and training in the higher wisdom. Just as a cow with a new calf, while she grazes watches her calf, so too, that is the character of a person who possesses right view.

“He understands thus: ‘I possess the character of a person who possesses right view.’ This is the fifth knowledge attained by him that is noble, supra-mundane, not shared by ordinary people.

(6) “Again, a noble disciple considers thus: ‘Do I possess the strength of a person who possesses right view?’ What is the strength of a person who possesses right view? This is the strength of a person who possesses right view: when the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata is being taught, he heeds it, gives it attention, engages it with all his mind, hears the Dhamma as with eager ears.

“He understands thus: ‘I possess the strength of a person who possesses right view.’ This is the sixth knowledge attained by him that is noble, supra-mundane, not shared by ordinary people.

(7) “Again, a noble disciple considers thus: ‘Do I possess the strength of a person who possesses right view?’ What is the strength of a person who possesses right view? This is the strength of a person who possesses right view: when the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata is being taught, he gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma.

“He understands thus: ‘I possess the strength of a person who possesses right view.’ This is the seventh knowledge attained by him that is noble, supra-mundane, not shared by ordinary people.

“When a noble disciple is thus possessed of seven factors, he has well sought the character for realisation of the fruit of stream-entry. When a noble disciple is thus possessed of seven factors, he possesses the fruit of stream-entry.”

Below, Venerable Ānanda counsels the householder Anāthapiṇḍika who was then sick and in great pain.

Dutiyaṅāthapiṇḍika Sutta (SN 55.27)

27. ANĀTHAPIṆḌIKA (2) (Abridged from CDB pp 1819-1820)

“Householder, for the instructed noble disciple who possesses four things there is no fright, no trepidation, no fear of imminent death. What four?”

“Here, householder, the instructed noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha thus: ‘The Blessed One is ... teacher of devas and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One.’ When he considers within himself that confirmed confidence in the Buddha, there is no fright, trepidation, or fear of imminent death.

“Again, householder, the instructed noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha ... When he considers within himself that confirmed confidence in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha, there is no fright, trepidation, or fear of imminent death.

“Again, householder, the instructed noble disciple possesses the virtues dear to the noble ones, unbroken ... leading to concentration. When he considers within himself those virtues dear to the noble

ones, there is no fright, trepidation, or fear of imminent death.

“For the instructed noble disciple who possesses these four things there is no fright, trepidation, or fear of imminent death.”

“I am not afraid, Venerable Ānanda. Why should I be afraid? For, venerable sir, I possess confirmed confidence in the Buddha ... in the Dhamma ... in the Saṅgha. And as to these training rules for the laity taught by the Blessed One, I do not see within myself any that has been broken.”

“It is a gain for you, householder! It is well gained by you, householder! You have declared, householder, the fruit of stream-entry.”

Sarada Sutta (AN 3.95)

94 (3) AUTUMN (Abridged from NDB p 327)

“Bhikkhus, just as, in the autumn, when the sky is clear and cloudless, the sun, ascending in the sky, dispels all darkness from space as it shines and beams and radiates, so too, when the dust-free, stainless Dhamma-eye arises in the noble disciple, then, together with the arising of vision (*dassanuppāda*), the noble disciple abandons three fetters: personal-existence view (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*), doubt (*vicikicchā*), and wrong grasp of behavior and observances (*silabbataparāmāsa*).

Pahīna Sutta (AN 6.90)

90 (6) ABANDONED (NDB pp 979-980)

“Bhikkhus, one accomplished in view (*ditṭhisampanna*) has abandoned these six things. What six? Personal-existence view, doubt, wrong grasp of behavior and observances, lust leading to the plane of misery, hatred leading to the plane of misery, and delusion leading to the plane of misery. One accomplished in view has abandoned these six things.”

Sāleyyaka Sutta (MN 41)

THE BRAHMIN OF SĀLĀ (Abridged from MLDB pp 380-381)

“Householders, there are three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct (*adhammacariyāvisamacariyā*). There are four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct. There are three kinds of mental conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

“And how, householders, are there three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct? Here someone kills living beings; he is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. He takes what is not given; he takes by way of theft the wealth and property of others in the village or forest. He miscon-

ducts himself in sensual pleasures; he has intercourse with women who are protected by their mother, father, mother and father, brother, sister, or relatives, who have a husband, who are protected by law, and even with those who are garlanded in token of betrothal. That is how there are three kinds of bodily conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

“And how, householders, are there four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct? Here someone speaks falsehood; when summoned to a court, or to a meeting, or to his relatives’ presence, or to his guild, or to the royal family’s presence, and questioned as a witness thus: ‘So, good man, tell what you know,’ not knowing, he says, ‘I know,’ or knowing, he says, ‘I do not know’; not seeing, he says, ‘I see,’ or seeing, he says, ‘I do not see’; in full awareness he speaks falsehood for his own ends, or for another’s ends, or for some trifling worldly end. He speaks maliciously; he repeats elsewhere what he has heard here in order to divide [those people] from these, or he repeats to these people what he has heard elsewhere in order to divide [these people] from those; thus he is one who divides those who are united, a creator of divisions, who enjoys discord, rejoices in discord, delights in discord, a

speaker of words that create discord. He speaks harshly; he utters such words as are rough, hard, hurtful to others, offensive to others, bordering on anger, uncondusive to concentration. He is a gossip; he speaks at the wrong time, speaks what is not fact, speaks what is useless, speaks contrary to the Dhamma and the Discipline; at the wrong time he speaks such words as are worthless, unreasonable, immoderate, and unbeneficial. That is how there are four kinds of verbal conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct.

“And how, householders, are there three kinds of mental conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct? Here someone is covetous; he covets the wealth and property of others thus: ‘Oh, may what belongs to another be mine!’ Or he has a mind of ill will and intentions of hate thus: ‘May these beings be slain and slaughtered, may they be cut off, perish, or be annihilated!’ Or he has wrong view, distorted vision, thus: ‘There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed; no fruit or result of good and bad actions; no this world, no other world; no mother, no father; no beings who are reborn spontaneously; no good and virtuous recluses and brahmins in the world who have themselves realised by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other

world.’ That is how there are three kinds of mental conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, unrighteous conduct. So, householders, it is by reason of such conduct not in accordance with the Dhamma, by reason of such unrighteous conduct that some beings here on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in states of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell.”

Mahākammavibhaṅga Sutta (MN 136)

THE GREATER EXPOSITION OF ACTION (Abridged from MLDB p 1064)

“Therein, Ananda, as to the person here who kills living beings, takes what is not given, misconducts himself in sensual pleasures, speaks falsehood, speaks maliciously, speaks harshly, gossips; he is covetous, has a mind of ill will, and holds wrong view, and on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in an unhappy destination, in perdition, even in hell: either earlier he did an evil action to be felt as painful, or later he did an evil action to be felt as painful, or at the time of death he acquired and undertook wrong view. Because of that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a state of deprivation ... even in hell. And since he has here killed living beings ... and held wrong view, he will experience the result of that

either here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence.

“Therein, Ananda, as to the person here who kills living beings ... and holds wrong view, and on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappears in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world: either earlier he did a good action to be felt as pleasant, or later he did a good action to be felt as pleasant, or at the time of death he acquired and undertook right view. Because of that, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he has reappeared in a happy destination, even in the heavenly world. But since he has here killed living beings ... and held wrong view, he will experience the result of that either here and now, or in his next rebirth, or in some subsequent existence....”

Saupādisesa Sutta (AN 9.12)

12 (2) WITH RESIDUE REMAINING (Abridged from NDB pp 1265-1267)

“These nine persons, Sāriputta, passing away with a residue remaining, are freed from hell, the animal realm, and the sphere of afflicted spirits; freed from the plane of misery, the bad destination, the lower world. What nine?

(1) “Here, Sāriputta, some person fulfills virtuous behavior and concentration but cultivates wisdom only to a moderate extent. With the utter destruction

of the five lower fetters, this person is an attainer of nibbāna in the interval (*antarāparinibbāyī*). This is the first person, passing away with a residue remaining, who is freed from hell, the animal realm, and the sphere of afflicted spirits; freed from the plane of misery, the bad destination, the lower world.

(2)–(5) “Again, some person fulfills virtuous behavior and concentration but cultivates wisdom only to a moderate extent. With the utter destruction of the five lower fetters, this person is an attainer of nibbāna upon landing ... an attainer of nibbāna without exertion ... an attainer of nibbāna through exertion ... one bound upstream, heading toward the Akaniṭṭha realm. This is the fifth person, passing away with a residue remaining, who is freed from hell ... the lower world.

(6) “Again, some person fulfills virtuous behavior but cultivates concentration and wisdom only to a moderate extent. With the utter destruction of three fetters and with the diminishing of greed, hatred, and delusion, this person is a once-returner who, after coming back to this world only one more time, makes an end of suffering. This is the sixth person, passing away with a residue remaining, who is freed from hell ... the lower world.

(7) “Again, some person fulfills virtuous behavior but cultivates concentration and wisdom only to a moderate extent. With the utter destruction of three fetters, this person is a one-seed attainer (*ekabījī*) who, after being reborn once more as a human being, makes an end of suffering. This is the seventh person, passing away with a residue remaining, who is freed from hell ... the lower world.

(8) “Again, some person fulfills virtuous behavior but cultivates concentration and wisdom only to a moderate extent. With the utter destruction of three fetters, this person is a family-to-family (*kolaṅkola*) attainer who, after roaming and wandering on among good families two or three times, makes an end of suffering. This is the eighth person, passing away with a residue remaining, who is freed from hell ... the lower world.

(9) “Again, some person fulfills virtuous behavior but cultivates concentration and wisdom only to a moderate extent. With the utter destruction of three fetters, this person is a seven-times-at-most attainer (*sattakkhattuparama*) who, after roaming and wandering on among devas and humans seven times at most, makes an end of suffering. This is the ninth person, passing away with a residue remaining, who is freed from hell, the animal realm, and the sphere of afflic-

ted spirits; freed from the plane of misery, the bad destination, the lower world....

“These nine persons, passing away with a residue remaining, are freed from hell, the animal realm, and the sphere of afflicted spirits; freed from the plane of misery, the bad destination, the lower world. Sāriputta, I had not been disposed to give this Dhamma exposition to the bhikkhus, bhikkhunīs, male lay followers, and female lay followers. For what reason? I was concerned that on hearing this Dhamma exposition, they might take to the ways of heedlessness. However, I have spoken this Dhamma exposition for the purpose of answering your question.”

Tatīyasikkhā Sutta (AN 3.89)

88 (8) THE PROCESS OF TRAINING (3) (NDB pp 320-321)

“Bhikkhus, every half-month more than a hundred and fifty training rules come up for recitation; clansmen who desire their own good train in these. These are all comprised within these three trainings. What three? The training in the higher virtuous behavior, the training in the higher mind, and the training in the higher wisdom. These are the three trainings in which all this is comprised.

“Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu fulfills virtuous behavior, concentration, and wisdom. He falls into offenses in regard to the lesser and minor training rules and

rehabilitates himself. For what reason? Because I have not said that he is incapable of this. But in regard to those training rules that are fundamental to the spiritual life, in conformity with the spiritual life, his behavior is constant and steadfast. Having undertaken the training rules, he trains in them. With the destruction of the taints, he realizes for himself with direct knowledge, in this very life, the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, and having entered upon it, he dwells in it.

“If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of the five lower fetters, he is an attainer of nibbāna in the interval (*antarāparinibbāyī*). If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of the five lower fetters, he is an attainer of nibbāna upon landing ... an attainer of nibbāna without exertion ... an attainer of nibbāna through exertion ... one bound upstream, heading toward the Akanitṭha realm.

“If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of three fetters and with the diminishing of greed, hatred, and delusion, he is a once-returner who, after coming back to this world only one more time, makes an end of suffering. If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of three fetters, he is a one-seed attainer who, after

being reborn once more in human existence, makes an end of suffering. If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of three fetters, he is a family-to-family attainer who, after roaming and wandering on among good families two or three times, makes an end of suffering. If he does not attain and penetrate this, with the utter destruction of three fetters, he is a seven-times-at-most attainer who, after roaming and wandering on among devas and humans seven times at most, makes an end of suffering.

“Thus, bhikkhus, one who cultivates fully reaches fulfillment; one who cultivates in part succeeds in part. These training rules, I say, are not barren.”

Tapussa Sutta (AN 6.119)

119 (3) TAPUSSA (NDB p 989)

“Bhikkhus, possessing six qualities, the householder Tapussa has reached certainty about the Tathāgata and become a seer of the deathless (*amataddaso*), one who lives having realized the deathless (*amataṃ sacchikatvā iriyati*). What six? Unwavering confidence (*aveccap(p)asādo*) in the Buddha, unwavering confidence in the Dhamma, unwavering confidence in the Saṅgha, noble virtuous behavior, noble knowledge, and noble liberation. Possessing these six qualities, the householder Tapussa has reached certainty about

the Tathāgata and become a seer of the deathless, one who lives having realized the deathless.”¹³

Upādiyamāna Sutta (SN 22.63)

63. IN CLINGING (Abridged from CDB pp 906-907)

Then that bhikkhu, having delighted and rejoiced in the Blessed One’s words, rose from his seat, and, after paying homage to the Blessed One, keeping him on his right, he departed.

Then, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and resolute, that bhikkhu, by realizing it for himself with direct knowledge (*sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā*), in this very life (*diṭṭheva dhamme*) entered and dwelt (*upasampajja viharati*) in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness. He directly knew: “Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.” And that bhikkhu became one of the arahants.¹⁴

13. This whole passage is repeated for 19 other householders: Bhallika, Anāthapiṇḍika, Citta of Macchikāsaṇḍa, Hatthaka from Aḷavaka, Mahānāma the Sakyan, Ugga from Vesālī, Uggata, Sūrambaṭṭha, Jīvaka Komārabhacca, Nakulapitā, Tavakaṇṇika, Pūraṇa, Isidatta, Sandhāna, Vicaya, Vijayamāhika, Meṇḍaka, Vāseṭṭha, Ariṭṭha, and Sāragga.

14. This stock passage is repeated again and again in the four Nikāyas.

Discussion D4a

Make a composite list of all the qualities of a stream-enterer. Try to group them according to type, e.g. morality, faith, generosity, meditative experience, etc.

Discussion D4b

Based on the given sutta excerpts, what evidence is there for the most irrefutable qualities of a stream-enterer in terms of

- i. meditative experience
- ii. moral standards
- iii. world view and attitude towards life situations?

Discussion D4c

What is the significance of the last two excerpts: Tapussa Sutta (AN 6.119) and Upādiyamāna Sutta (SN 22.63)?

4

BUT WHY?

The Difficulty of
Authenticating a
Stream-enterer

IN some meditation traditions, the process of entering the stream is described in detail and even a “standard operating procedure” for confirming the attainment is used. One of the major criteria for the latter is the skill in entering, staying in and emerging from the so-called “fruition attainment” (*phalasangāpatti*). Fruition attainment is supposed to be the ability of the stream-enterer to experience nibbāna, or the Deathless (*amata*), and be totally absorbed in it at will. However, it is well known among meditation teachers that even if a meditator can reportedly fulfil this criterion, he or she may not exhibit the qualities of a stream-enterer as stated in the suttas, particularly those pertaining to moral conduct. This begs the question of how applicable this phenomenon of fruition attainment is to practice informed by the early suttas, as it is a commentarial term not found in the four Nikāyas nor in the early texts of the fifth Nikāya. In this section, we explore relevant passages from the suttas that may shed some light on the nature of such a phenomenon even though the actual term *phalasangāpatti* is never used.

Kosambi Sutta (SN 12.68)

68. KOSAMBĪ (CDB p 611)

“Friend, though I have clearly seen as it really is with correct wisdom, ‘Nibbāna is the cessation of existence,’ I am not an arahant, one whose taints are des-

troyed. Suppose, friend, there was a well along a desert road, but it had neither a rope nor a bucket. Then a man would come along, oppressed and afflicted by the heat, tired, parched, and thirsty. He would look down into the well and the knowledge would occur to him, ‘There is water,’ but he would not be able to make bodily contact (*kāyena phusitvā*) with it. So too, friend, though I have **clearly seen as it really is with correct wisdom**, ‘Nibbāna is the cessation of existence,’ I am not an arahant, one whose taints are destroyed.”

“Clearly seeing nibbāna as it really is with correct wisdom” can be paraphrased as “Having a glimpse of nibbāna”. Compare this with “the seer of the deathless, one who lives having realized the deathless” in Tapussa Sutta (AN 6.119) at the end of Section 3. This should also be compared with the experience of nibbāna as described in the sutta excerpts at the end of Section 1.

Does this imply that trainees (*sekhas*) who have attained any of the three lower stages of awakening prior to arahantship

can only get a glimpse of nibbāna but not personally experience it (*kāyena phusitvā*) as in attaining the jhānas and the formless bases (*āyatanas*)? Let us examine the usage of the phrase “*kāyena phusitvā*” in the following excerpts for more clues.

Kāyasakkhī Sutta (AN 9.43)

43 (2) BODY WITNESS (NDB pp 1320-1321)

“It is said, friend, ‘a body witness (*kāyasakkhī*), a body witness.’ In what way has the Blessed One spoken of a body witness?”

(1) “Here, friend, secluded from sensual pleasures ... a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the first jhāna He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*tadāyatanaṃ ... naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained]. To this extent the Blessed One has spoken of a body witness in a provisional sense (*pariyāyena*).

(2)–(4) “Again, friend, with the subsiding of thought and examination, a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the second jhāna ... the third jhāna ... the fourth jhāna.... He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained]. To this extent, too, the Blessed One has spoken of a body witness in a provisional sense (*pariyāyena*).

Āyasmā Bodhi consistently translates *kāyena phusitvā* on the lines of “having made bodily contact with”. In my previous workshops I showed, with substantive sutta references, that although literally accurate, it is misleading in the context of meditation. Instead, I concluded that a clearer translation, without compromising literal accuracy, is “having personally experienced”.

(5)–(8) “Again, friend, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of forms, with the passing away of perceptions of sensory impingement, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite,’ a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the base of the infinity of space ... the base of the infinity of consciousness ... the base of nothingness ... the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained]. To this extent, too, the Blessed One has spoken of a body witness in a provisional sense (*pariyāyena*).

(9) “Again, friend, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he

enters and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling, and having seen with wisdom, his taints are utterly destroyed. He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained]. To this extent, friend, the Blessed One has spoken of a body witness in a non-provisional sense (*nippiyāyena*).”

The terms *pariyāyena* and its opposite *nippiyāyena*, when contextually placed in apposition, are easier understood as “in a figurative sense” and “in a non-figurative or ultimate sense” respectively.

Ubbatobhāgavimutta Sutta (AN 9.45)

45 (4) BOTH RESPECTS (NDB pp 1322-1323)

“It is said, friend, ‘liberated in both respects, liberated in both respects.’ In what way has the Blessed One spoken of one liberated in both respects?”

(1) “Here, friend, secluded from sensual pleasures ... a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the first jhāna.... He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained], and he understands it with wisdom. To this

extent the Blessed One has spoken of one liberated in both respects in a provisional sense (*pariyāyena*).

(2)–(4) “Again, friend, with the subsiding of thought and examination, a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the second jhāna ... the third jhāna ... the fourth jhāna.... He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained], and he understands it with wisdom. To this extent, too, the Blessed One has spoken of one liberated in both respects in a provisional sense (*pariyāyena*).

(5)–(8) “Again, friend, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of forms, with the passing away of perceptions of sensory impingement, with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, [perceiving] ‘space is infinite,’ a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the base of the infinity of space ... the base of the infinity of consciousness ... the base of nothingness ... the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained], and he understands it with wisdom. To this extent, too, the Blessed One has spoken of one liberated in both respects in a provisional sense (*pariyāyena*).

(9) “Again, friend, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, a bhikkhu enters and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling, and having seen with wisdom, his taints are utterly destroyed. He dwells having contacted that base with the body (*naṃ kāyena phusitvā viharati*) in whatever way [it is attained], and he understands it with wisdom. To this extent, friend, the Blessed One has spoken of one liberated in both respects in a non-provisional sense (*nippariyāyena*).”

Another important clue can be found in the popular Ratana Sutta¹⁵ where the verses show what constitute the gems in the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha:

Verse	Gem in
1-2	NA
3	Buddha
4-5	Dhamma
6-11	Saṅgha
12-13	Buddha
14	Saṅgha
15-17	Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha respectively

15. The Ratana Sutta can be considered a late addition to the Minor Collections (Khuddaka Nikāya) because a parallel cannot be found in the Sanskrit/Chinese Āgamas.

A Sanskrit version of the same text is found in the Mahāvastu (the Great Story), a large collection of material of the Lokottaravādin Mahāsāṅghika sect. In the Sanskrit version the sutta is embedded in the narrative which gives the background to how the verses came to be recited. In the Pāli texts the narrative (nidāna) is given in the commentary to Khuddakapāṭha, Paramathajotikā (Pt 1). The stories in both versions agree in outline, but differ somewhat in the details. (For a continuation of this excerpt, see Āyasmā Ānandajoti’s excellent comparative study at <https://bit.ly/1PACNPE>.)

Of the seven verses devoted to the Saṅgha, verse 6 refers to all the four pairs of awakened ones, verses 8-11 refer to the stream-enterer whereas verses 7 and 14 to the arahant. Verse 7 explicitly states that those who are “void of cravings (*nikkāmino*)¹⁶ have reached the goal and plunged into the Deathless, freely enjoying the peace they have attained.” Among all the four pairs of awakened ones, who else is void of cravings other than the arahant? Scrutinise the verses below to know more about the gems in the Saṅgha.

Ratana Sutta (KN 1.6, 5.13)

GEM DISCOURSE

6. The eight individuals praised by good people—
There are altogether four pairs of them all.
These disciples of the Well-Gone are worthy of gifts.
[Offerings] given to them are of great fruits.
This, too, is an exquisite gem in the Saṅgha.
By this speech of truth may there be well-being.

7. They who’re well engaged mentally (and) firmly
In Gotama’s Sāsana void of cravings (*nikkāmino*)
Have reached the goal, and plunged into the Deathless,
Freely enjoying the peace they have attained.

This, too, is an exquisite gem in the Saṅgha.
By this speech of truth may there be well-being.

8. Just as a pillar embedded into the earth
Would be firmly unshakeable by the four winds;
So do I say of a superior person
Who, having comprehended, sees the Noble Truths.
This, too, is an exquisite gem in the Saṅgha.
By this speech of truth may there be well-being.

9. They who clearly understand the Noble Truths—
Well proclaimed by the One with Profound Wisdom—
Although they [may] become very negligent,
They can never take up an eighth existence.
This, too, is an exquisite gem in the Saṅgha.
By this speech of truth may there be well-being.

10. With just the accomplishment of his vision (*dassanena*)
Indeed three mental states become abandoned:
Body-is-self-view and doubt [in the three gems],
Habits and duties, and some extant ones too.
From the four woeful states he is well released.
Incapable of doing the six gross deeds.
This, too, is an exquisite gem in the Saṅgha.
By this speech of truth may there be well-being.

16. However, the commentary to the Ratana Sutta explains *nikkāmino* as those who have escaped from all defilements with effortful wisdom.

11. Even though he may commit an evil action—
 By the body, or by speech, or by the mind—
 Incapable is he of concealing it.
 Incapable is the Path-seer, it's said.
 This, too, is an exquisite gem in the Saṅgha.
 By this speech of truth may there be well-being.

14. Extinct is the old; there is no new becoming.
 With minds disinterested in future birth,
 With extinct seeds and no desire for more growth,
 The wise become extinguished just like this lamp.
 This, too, is an exquisite gem in the Saṅgha.
 By this speech of truth may there be well-being.

Discussion D5a

Based on the selected excerpts, do you think that fruition attainment (*phalasangāpatti*), which is a supramundane (*lokuttara*) jhāna according to the commentaries, is possible for sekhas too, and not only for arahants who are non-trainees (*asekhas*)? Give reasons for your answer.

Discussion D5b

If it is only the domain of arahants, what then is the so-called "fruition attainment" (*phalasangamāpatti*) that meditators are said to experience?

The answer is crucial because some meditation traditions believe that the skill in entering, staying in and emerging from it is a major criterion, if not the gold standard, of authenticating a meditator's attainment of stream-entry.

Discussion D5c

Do you think there can be a more reliable set of criteria based on all the excerpts in this workbook for confirming the attainment of stream-entry? If yes, what is your proposal?

5

AND SO?
Feedback from
Participants

Discussion D6a

Rate your individual degree of comprehension and retention with respect to each element of each section in terms of a percentage, then average each of them for your group.

Sec	Element	Comp (%)	Retain (%)
1	Content		
	Discussion		
	Presentation		
	Conclusion		
2	Content		
	Discussion		
	Presentation		
	Conclusion		
3	Content		
	Discussion		
	Presentation		
	Conclusion		
4	Content		
	Discussion		
	Presentation		
	Conclusion		

Discussion D6b

List the benefits obtained by your interactive participation in this workshop and tell us how it will influence your practice along the Noble Eightfold Path and your attitude towards those who claim to be stream-enterers. Make a composite list for your group.

APPENDIX: GLOSSARY OF PĀLI TERMS

āsava: (lit: influxes), ‘cankers’, taints, corruptions, intoxicant biases. There is a list of four (DN 16): the canker of sense-desire (*kāmāsava*), of (desiring eternal) existence (*bhavāsava*), of (wrong) views (*ditthāsava*), and of ignorance (*avijjāsava*). A list of three, omitting the canker of views, is possibly older and is more frequent in the Suttas, e.g. in MN 2, MN 9, DN 33; AN 3.59, 67; AN 4.63 ...

Through the path of Stream-Entry, the canker of views is destroyed; through the path of Non-Returning, the canker of sense-desire; through the path of Arahatsip, the cankers of existence and ignorance....

nīvaraṇa: ‘hindrances’, are 5 qualities which are obstacles to the mind and blind our mental vision ... They are: 1. sensuous desire (*kāmacchanda*), 2. ill-will (*byāpāda*), 3. sloth and torpor (*thīna-middha*), 4. restlessness and scruples (*uddhacca-kukkucca*), and 5. skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*).

(sam)bojjhaṅga: ‘the Factors of Enlightenment’, are 7: Mindfulness (*sati-sambojjhaṅga*), investigation of the law (*dhammavicaya-*), energy (*viriya-*), rapture (*pīti-*) tranquillity (*passaddhi-*), concentration (*samādhi-*), equanimity (*upekkhā-sambojjhaṅga*).

Abridged from Nyanatiloka’s *Buddhist Dictionary*
https://www.budsas.org/ebud/bud-dict/dic_idx.htm

saṃyojana: ‘fetters’. There are 10 fetters tying beings to the wheel of existence, namely: (1) personality-belief (*sakkāya-ditthi*), (2) sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) clinging to mere rules and ritual (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*), (4) sensuous craving (*kāma-rāga*), (5) ill-will (*byāpāda*), (6) craving for fine-material existence (*rūpa-rāga*), (7) craving for immaterial existence (*arūpa-rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*). The first five of these are called ‘lower fetters’ (*orambhāgiya-saṃyojana*), as they tie to the sensuous world. The latter 5 are called ‘higher fetters’ (*uddhambhāgiya-saṃyojana*), as they tie to the higher worlds, i.e. the fine-material and immaterial world.

He who is free from 1-3 is a Sotāpanna, or Stream-winner, i.e. one who has entered the stream to Nibbāna, as it were. He who, besides these 3 fetters, has overcome 4 and 5 in their grosser form, is called a Sakadāgāmi, a ‘Once-returner’ (to this sensuous world). He who is fully freed from 1-5 is an Anāgāmi, or ‘Non-returner’ (to the sensuous world). He who is freed from all the 10 fetters is called an Arahata....

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbr	Pāḷi Text	Reference according to
AN	Aṅguttara Nikāya	Book number : Sutta number
KN	Khuddaka Nikāya	Book number : Sutta number
MN	Majjhima Nikāya	Sutta number
SN	Saṃyutta Nikāya	Saṃyutta number : Sutta number
CDB	The Connected Discourses of the Buddha	
MLDB	The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha	
NDB	The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha	



**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE
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DHAMMAPADA VERSE 354

A GIFT OF DHAMMA CONQUERS ALL GIFTS;

THE TASTE OF DHAMMA CONQUERS ALL TASTES;

A DELIGHT IN DHAMMA CONQUERS ALL DELIGHTS;

THE ENDING OF CRAVING CONQUERS ALL SUFFERING & STRESS.

CREATING A BRIGHTER LIFE