

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

“These two are extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure in connection with sensuality: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathāgata—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.

“And which is the middle way realized by the Tathāgata that—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding? Precisely this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the middle way realized by the Tathāgata that—producing vision, producing knowledge—leads to stilling, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to unbinding.” — *Mv.I.6*

Path & Goal

“And what is the holy life? Just this noble eightfold path... And what are the fruits of the holy life? The fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-returning, the fruit of non-returning, & the fruit of arahantship... And what is the goal of the holy life? Whatever is the ending of passion, the ending of aversion, the ending of delusion: That is called the goal of the holy life.” — *SN 45:39–40*

“Among whatever dhammas there may be, fabricated or unfabricated, the dhamma of dispassion—the subduing of intoxication, the elimination of thirst, the uprooting of attachment, the breaking of the round, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, the realization of unbinding—is considered supreme. Those who have confidence in the dhamma of dispassion have confidence in what is supreme; and for those with confidence in the supreme, supreme is the result.

“Among whatever fabricated dhammas there may be, the noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration—is considered supreme. Those who have confidence in the dhamma of the noble path have confidence in what is supreme; and for those with confidence in the supreme, supreme is the result.” — *Iti 90*

“The great expanse of water stands for the fourfold flood: the flood of sensuality, the flood of becoming, the flood of views, & the flood of ignorance. The near shore, dubious & risky, stands for self-identity. The far shore, safe and free from risk, stands for unbinding. The raft stands for just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. Making an effort with hands & feet stands for the arousing of persistence.” — *SN 35:197*

Noble

“Monks, there are these two searches: ignoble search & noble search. And which is ignoble search? There is the case where a person, being subject himself to birth, seeks [happiness in] what is likewise subject to birth. Being subject himself to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement, he seeks [happiness in] what is likewise subject to illness... death... sorrow... defilement.

“And what may be said to be subject to birth? Spouses & children are subject to birth. Men & women slaves... goats & sheep... fowl & pigs... elephants, cattle, horses, & mares... gold & silver are subject to birth. Subject to birth are these acquisitions, and one who is tied to them, infatuated with them, who has totally fallen for them, being subject to birth, seeks what is likewise subject to birth.

“And what may be said to be subject to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement? Spouses & children... men & women slaves... goats & sheep... fowl & pigs... elephants, cattle, horses, & mares... gold & silver are subject to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement. Subject to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement are these acquisitions, and one who is tied to them, infatuated with them, who has totally fallen for them, being subject to birth, seeks what is likewise subject to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement. This is ignoble search.

“And which is the noble search? There is the case where a person, himself being subject to birth, seeing the drawbacks of birth, seeks the unborn, unexcelled rest from the yoke: unbinding. Himself being subject to aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement, seeing the drawbacks of aging... illness... death... sorrow... defilement, seeks the aging-less, illness-less, deathless, sorrow-less, undefiled, unexcelled rest from the yoke: unbinding. This is the noble search.” — MN 26

Right

“Suppose a man in need of milk, looking for milk, wandering in search of milk, would twist the horn of a newly-calved cow. If he were to twist the horn of a newly-calved cow even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, he would be incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results.

“In the same way, any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with wrong view, wrong resolve, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, & wrong concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish [for results]... having made no wish... both having made a wish and having made no wish... neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are incapable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an inappropriate way of obtaining results....

“But as for any contemplatives or brahmans endowed with right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right

mindfulness, & right concentration: If they follow the holy life even when having made a wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when both having made a wish and having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. If they follow the holy life even when neither having made a wish nor having made no wish, they are capable of obtaining results. Why is that? Because it is an appropriate way of obtaining results.” — MN 126

Two analyses of the path

The Blessed One said, “Now what, monks, is the noble eightfold path? Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“And what, monks, is right view? Knowledge with regard to [or: in terms of] stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard to the stopping of stress, knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the stopping of stress: This, monks, is called right view.

“And what, monks, is right resolve? Resolve for renunciation, resolve for non-ill will, resolve for harmlessness: This, monks, is called right resolve.

“And what, monks, is right speech? Abstaining from lying, abstaining from divisive speech, abstaining from harsh speech, abstaining from idle chatter: This, monks, is called right speech.

“And what, monks, is right action? Abstaining from taking life, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from sexual intercourse: This, monks, is called right action. [DN 22 & MN 141 define this factor in this way: “And what is right action? Abstaining from taking life, from stealing, & from sexual misconduct: This is called right action.”]

“And what, monks, is right livelihood? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with right livelihood: This, monks, is called right livelihood.

“And what, monks, is right effort? (i) There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen. (ii) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the abandoning of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen. (iii) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen. (iv) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen: This, monks, is called right effort.

“And what, monks, is right mindfulness? (i) There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, aware, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. (ii) He remains focused on feelings

in & of themselves—ardent, aware, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. (iii) He remains focused on the mind in & of itself—ardent, aware, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. (iv) He remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, aware, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. This, monks, is called right mindfulness.

“And what, monks, is right concentration? (i) There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful (mental) qualities—enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. (ii) With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation—internal assurance. (iii) With the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhāna, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ (iv) With the abandoning of pleasure & pain—as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress—he enters & remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This, monks, is called right concentration.” — *SN 45:8*

The Blessed One said: “Now what, monks, is noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions? Any singleness of mind equipped with these seven factors—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, & right mindfulness—is called noble right concentration with its supports & requisite conditions.

[1] “Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong view as wrong view, and right view as right view. This is one’s right view. And what is wrong view? ‘There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed. There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions. There is no this world, no next world, no mother, no father, no spontaneously reborn beings; no brahmans or contemplatives who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is wrong view.

“And what is right view? Right view, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right view with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; there is right view that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And what is the right view with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions? ‘There is what is given, what is offered, what is sacrificed. There are fruits & results of good & bad actions. There is this world & the next world. There is mother & father. There are spontaneously reborn beings; there are contemplatives & brahmans who, faring rightly & practicing rightly, proclaim this world & the next after having directly known & realized it for themselves.’ This is the right view with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions.

“And what is the right view that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a

factor of the path? The discernment, the faculty of discernment, the strength of discernment, analysis of qualities as a factor for awakening, the path factor of right view of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right view that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong view & to enter into right view: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong view & to enter & remain in right view: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right view.

[2] “Of those, right view is the forerunner. And how is right view the forerunner? One discerns wrong resolve as wrong resolve, and right resolve as right resolve. And what is wrong resolve? Being resolved on sensuality, on ill will, on violence. This is wrong resolve.

“And what is right resolve? Right resolve, I tell you, is of two sorts: There is right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions; there is right resolve that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“And what is the right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on non-violence. This is the right resolve with effluents, siding with merit, resulting in acquisitions.

“And what is the right resolve that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path? The thinking, directed thinking, resolve, (mental) fixity, transfixion, focused awareness, & verbal fabrications of one developing the noble path whose mind is noble, whose mind is without effluents, who is fully possessed of the noble path. This is the right resolve that is noble, without effluents, transcendent, a factor of the path.

“One tries to abandon wrong resolve & to enter into right resolve: This is one’s right effort. One is mindful to abandon wrong resolve & to enter & remain in right resolve: This is one’s right mindfulness. Thus these three qualities—right view, right effort, & right mindfulness—run & circle around right resolve.” ...
MN 117

The Four Noble Truths

“Now this, monks, is the noble truth of stress: Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved is stressful, separation from the loved is stressful, not getting what is wanted is stressful. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful.

“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the origination of stress: the craving that makes for further becoming—accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there—i.e., craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming.

“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of stress: the remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving.

“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this noble eightfold path—right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before ... ‘This noble truth of stress is to be comprehended’ ... ‘This noble truth of the origination of stress is to be abandoned’ ... ‘This noble truth of the cessation of stress is to be directly experienced’ ... ‘This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress is to be developed.’” — SN 56:11

Right View beyond the Four Noble Truths

Then Anāthapiṇḍika the householder went to where the wanderers of other sects were staying. On arrival he greeted them courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the wanderers said to him, “Tell us, householder, what views Gotama the contemplative has.”

“Venerable sirs, I don’t know entirely what views the Blessed One has.”

“Well, well. So you don’t know entirely what views Gotama the contemplative has. Then tell us what views the monks have.”

“I don’t even know entirely what views the monks have.”

“So you don’t know entirely what views Gotama the contemplative has or even that the monks have. Then tell us what views you have.”

“It wouldn’t be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have. But please let the venerable ones expound each in line with his view-standpoint, and then it won’t be difficult for me to expound to you what views I have.”

When this had been said, one of the wanderers said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, “*The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have.”

Another wanderer said to Anāthapiṇḍika, “*The cosmos is not eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have.”

Another wanderer said, “*The cosmos is finite...*...” “*The cosmos is infinite...*...” “*The soul is the same thing as the body...*...” “*The soul is one thing and the body another...*...” “*After death a Tathāgata exists...*...” “*After death a Tathāgata does not exist...*...” “*After death a Tathāgata both does & does not exist...*...” “*After death a Tathāgata neither does nor does not exist. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have.”

When this had been said, Anāthapiṇḍika the householder said to the wanderers, “As for the venerable one who says, ‘*The cosmos is eternal. Only this is true; anything otherwise is worthless.* This is the sort of view I have,’ his view arises from his own inappropriate attention or in dependence on the words of another.

Now this view has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen. Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. This venerable one thus adheres to that very stress, submits himself to that very stress.”
[Similarly for the other view-standpoints.]

When this had been said, the wanderers said to Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, “We have each & every one expounded to you in line with our own view-standpoints. Now tell us what views you have.”

“Whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. Whatever is stressful is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. This is the sort of view I have.”

“So, householder, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. You thus adhere to that very stress, submit yourself to that very stress.”

“Venerable sirs, whatever has been brought into being, is fabricated, willed, dependently co-arisen: That is inconstant. Whatever is inconstant is stressful. Whatever is stressful is not me, is not what I am, is not my self. Having seen this well with right discernment as it has come to be, I also discern the higher escape from it as it has come to be.”

When this was said, the wanderers fell silent, abashed, sitting with their shoulders drooping, their heads down, brooding, at a loss for words. Anāthapiṇḍika the householder, sensing that the wanderers were silent, abashed... at a loss for words, got up & went to the Blessed One. On arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there he told the Blessed One the entirety of his discussion with the wanderers.

[The Blessed One said,] “Well done, householder. Well done. That is how you should periodically & righteously refute those foolish men.” Then he instructed, urged, roused, and encouraged Anāthapiṇḍika the householder with a talk on Dhamma. When Anāthapiṇḍika the householder had been instructed, urged, roused, and encouraged by the Blessed One with a talk on Dhamma, he got up from his seat and, having bowed down to the Blessed One, left, keeping the Blessed One on his right side. Not long afterward, the Blessed One addressed the monks: “Monks, even a monk who has long penetrated the Dhamma in this Dhamma & Vinaya would do well, periodically & righteously, to refute the wanderers of other sects in just the way Anāthapiṇḍika the householder has done.” — *AN 10:93*

“By & large, Kaccāyana, this world is supported by/takes as its object a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination of the world with right discernment as it has come to be, ‘non-existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world with right discernment as it has come to be, ‘existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one.

“By & large, Kaccāyana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings, & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor is he resolved on ‘my self.’ He has no uncertainty or doubt that mere stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, his knowledge is independent of others. It’s to this extent, Kaccāyana, that there is right view.” — *SN 12:15*

Right Resolve

“There are these five strings of sensuality. Which five? Forms cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing; sounds cognizable via the ear... aromas cognizable via the nose... flavors cognizable via the tongue... tactile sensations cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, fostering desire, enticing. But these are not sensuality. They are called strings of sensuality in the discipline of the noble ones.

“The passion for his resolves is a man’s sensuality,
not the beautiful sensual pleasures
found in the world.

The passion for his resolves is a man’s sensuality.

The beauties remain as they are in the world,
while the wise, in this regard,
subdue their desire.” — *AN 6:63*

Right Speech

“And how is one made pure in four ways by verbal action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning false speech, abstains from false speech. When he has been called to a town meeting, a group meeting, a gathering of his relatives, his guild, or of the royalty, if he is asked as a witness, ‘Come & tell, good man, what you know’: If he doesn’t know, he says, ‘I don’t know.’ If he does know, he says, ‘I know.’ If he hasn’t seen, he says, ‘I haven’t seen.’ If he has seen, he says, ‘I have seen.’ Thus he doesn’t consciously tell a lie for his own sake, for the sake of another, or for the sake of any reward. Abandoning false speech, he abstains from false speech. He speaks the truth, holds to the truth, is firm, reliable, no deceiver of the world. Abandoning divisive speech he abstains from divisive speech. What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there. Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or cementing those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord. Abandoning abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech. He speaks words that are soothing to the ear, that are affectionate, that go to the heart, that are polite, appealing & pleasing to people at large. Abandoning idle chatter, he

abstains from idle chatter. He speaks in season, speaks what is factual, what is in accordance with the goal, the Dhamma, & the Vinaya. He speaks words worth treasuring, seasonable, reasonable, circumscribed, connected with the goal. This is how one is made pure in four ways by verbal action.” — *AN 10:176*

Right Action

“And how is one made pure in three ways by bodily action? There is the case where a certain person, abandoning the taking of life, abstains from the taking of life. He dwells with his rod laid down, his knife laid down, scrupulous, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings. Abandoning the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He does not take, in the manner of a thief, things in a village or a wilderness that belong to others and have not been given by them. Abandoning sexual misconduct, he abstains from sexual misconduct. He does not get sexually involved with those who are protected by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers, their sisters, their relatives, or their Dhamma; those with husbands, those who entail punishments, or even those crowned with flowers by another man. This is how one is made pure in three ways by bodily action.” — *AN 10:176*

Right Livelihood

“Monks, a lay follower should not engage in five types of business. Which five? Business in weapons, business in living beings, business in meat, business in intoxicants, and business in poison.” — *AN 5:177*

Right Mindfulness

“And which is the faculty of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk, a disciple of the noble ones, is mindful, endowed with excellent proficiency in mindfulness, remembering & recollecting what was done and said a long time ago. He remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... the mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. This is called the faculty of mindfulness.” — *SN 48:10*

“This holy life is lived... with mindfulness as its governing principle.... And how is mindfulness the governing principle? The mindfulness that ‘I will make complete any training with regard to good conduct that is not yet complete, or I will protect with discernment any training with regard to good conduct that is complete’ is well-established right within. The mindfulness that ‘I will make complete any training with regard to the basics of the holy life that is not yet complete, or I will protect with discernment any training with regard to the basics of the holy life that is complete’ is well-established right within. The mindfulness that ‘I will scrutinize with discernment any Dhamma that is not yet scrutinized, or

I will protect with discernment any Dhamma that has been scrutinized' is well-established right within. The mindfulness that 'I will touch through release any Dhamma that is not yet touched, or I will protect with discernment any Dhamma that has been touched' is well-established right within.

"This is how mindfulness is the governing principle." — *AN 4:245*

[Ven. MahāKassapa:] "And how is one ardent? There is the case where a monk, (thinking,) 'Unarisen evil, unskillful qualities arising in me would lead to what is unbeneficial,' arouses ardency. (Thinking,) 'Arisen evil, unskillful qualities not being abandoned in me...' ... 'Unarisen skillful qualities not arising in me ...' ... 'Arisen skillful qualities ceasing in me would lead to what is unbeneficial,' he arouses ardency. This is how one is ardent." — *SN 16:2*

"And how is a monk alert? When going forward & returning, he makes himself alert; when looking toward & looking away... when bending & extending his limbs... when carrying his outer cloak, his upper robe & his bowl... when eating, drinking, chewing, & savoring... when urinating & defecating... when walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, & remaining silent, he makes himself alert. This is how a monk is alert." — *SN 36:7*

"I will teach you the establishing of mindfulness, the development of the establishing of mindfulness, and the path of practice leading to the development of the establishing of mindfulness. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak.

"Now, what is the establishing of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world. He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves... mind in & of itself... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"This is called the establishing of mindfulness.

"And what is the development of the establishing of mindfulness? There is the case where a monk remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the body, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to the body—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"He remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to feelings, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to feelings, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to feelings—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

"He remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to the mind, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to the mind, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with

regard to the mind—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

“He remains focused on the phenomenon of origination with regard to mental qualities, remains focused on the phenomenon of passing away with regard to mental qualities, remains focused on the phenomenon of origination & passing away with regard to mental qualities—ardent, alert, & mindful—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world.

“This is called the development of the establishing of mindfulness.

“And what is the path of practice to the development of the establishing of mindfulness? Just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is called the path of practice to the development of the establishing of mindfulness.” — *SN 47:40*

“And further, the monk remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the **seven factors for awakening**. And how does he remain focused on mental qualities in & of themselves with reference to the seven factors for awakening? There is the case where, there being mindfulness as a factor for awakening present within, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor for awakening is present within me.’ Or, there being no mindfulness as a factor for awakening present within, he discerns that ‘Mindfulness as a factor for awakening is not present within me.’ He discerns how there is the arising of unarisen mindfulness as a factor for awakening. And he discerns how there is the culmination of the development of mindfulness as a factor for awakening once it has arisen. [The same formula is repeated for the remaining factors for awakening: analysis of qualities, persistence, rapture, calm, concentration, & equanimity.]” — *MN 10*

Right Concentration

[Visākha:] “Now what is concentration, what qualities are its themes, what qualities are its requisites, and what is its development?”

[Sister Dhammadinnā:] “Singleness [*ek’aggatā*] of mind is concentration; the four establishings of mindfulness are its themes; the four right exertions are its requisites; and any cultivation, development, & pursuit of these qualities is its development.” — *MN 44*

Singleness

“Endowed with five qualities when listening to the True Dhamma, one is capable of alighting on the orderliness, on the rightness of skillful qualities. Which five?

“One doesn’t hold the talk in contempt.

“One doesn’t hold the speaker in contempt.

“One doesn’t hold oneself in contempt.

“One listens to the Dhamma with an unscattered mind, a mind gathered into

one [*ek'agga-citto*].

“One attends appropriately.”

“Endowed with these five qualities when listening to the True Dhamma, one is capable of alighting on the orderliness, on the rightness of skillful qualities.” — *AN 5:151*

“Now what, monks, is five-factored noble right concentration? There is the case where a monk—quite secluded from sensuality, secluded from unskillful qualities—enters and remains in the first *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion.

“Just as if a dexterous bathman or bathman’s apprentice would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water, so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and without—would nevertheless not drip; in the same way, the monk permeates, suffuses and fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of seclusion. This is the first development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

“Then, with the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters and remains in the second *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought and evaluation—internal assurance. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of concentration.

“Just like a lake with spring-water welling up from within, having no inflow from east, west, north, or south, and with the skies periodically supplying abundant showers, so that the cool fount of water welling up from within the lake would permeate and pervade, suffuse and fill it with cool waters, there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; in the same way, the monk permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the rapture & pleasure born of concentration. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by rapture & pleasure born of concentration. This is the second development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

“Then, with the fading of rapture, he remains equanimous, mindful, & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters and remains in the third *jhāna*, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasant abiding.’ He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture, so that there is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture.

“Just as in a blue-, white-, or red-lotus pond, there may be some of the blue, white, or red lotuses which, born and growing in the water, stay immersed in the

water and flourish without standing up out of the water, so that they are permeated and pervaded, suffused and filled with cool water from their roots to their tips, and nothing of those blue, white, or red lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water; in the same way, the monk permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the pleasure divested of rapture. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded with pleasure divested of rapture. This is the third development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

“Then, with the abandoning of pleasure and stress—as with the earlier disappearance of joy & distress—he enters and remains in the fourth jhāna: purity of equanimity and mindfulness, neither-pleasure-nor-pain. He sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright awareness, so that there is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness.

“Just as if a man were sitting wrapped from head to foot with a white cloth so that there would be no part of his body to which the white cloth did not extend; in the same way, the monk sits, permeating his body with a pure, bright awareness. There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by pure, bright awareness. This is the fourth development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

“And further, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well-pondered, well-tuned [well-penetrated] by means of discernment.

“Just as if one person were to reflect on another, or a standing person were to reflect on a sitting person, or a sitting person were to reflect on a person lying down; in the same way, monks, the monk has his theme of reflection well in hand, well attended to, well-pondered, well-tuned [well-penetrated] by means of discernment. This is the fifth development of the five-factored noble right concentration.

“When a monk has developed and pursued the five-factored noble right concentration in this way, then whichever of the six higher knowledges he turns his mind to know and realize, he can witness them for himself whenever there is an opening.” — *AN 5:28*

“Suppose that an archer or archer’s apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, so that after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses. In the same way, there is the case where a monk... enters & remains in the first jhāna: rapture & pleasure born of seclusion, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He regards whatever phenomena there that are connected with form, feeling, perception, fabrications, & consciousness, as inconstant, stressful, a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction, alien, a disintegration, an emptiness, not-self. He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to the property of deathlessness: ‘This is peace, this is exquisite—the resolution of all fabrications; the relinquishment of all acquisitions; the ending of craving; dispassion; cessation; unbinding.’

“Staying right there, he reaches the ending of effluents. Or, if not, then—through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and from the total ending of the five lower fetters [self-identity views, uncertainty, grasping at habits & practices, sensual passion, and irritation]—he is due to arise spontaneously [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world....

“[Similarly with the second, third, and fourth jhāna.]” — *AN 9:36*

“And I have also taught the step-by-step cessation of fabrications. When one has attained the first jhāna, speech has ceased. When one has attained the second jhāna, directed thoughts & evaluations [verbal fabrications] have ceased. When one has attained the third jhāna, rapture has ceased. When one has attained the fourth jhāna, in-and-out breathing [bodily fabrication] has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of space, the perception of forms has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of space has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of nothingness, the perception of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness has ceased. When one has attained the dimension of neither-perception nor non-perception, the perception of the dimension of nothingness has ceased. When one has attained the cessation of perception & feeling, perception & feeling [mental fabrications] have ceased. When a monk’s effluents have ended, passion has ceased, aversion has ceased, delusion has ceased.” — *SN 36:11*

“Having directly known the All as the All, and having directly known the extent of what has not been experienced through the Allness of the All, I wasn’t the All, I wasn’t in the All, I wasn’t coming forth from the All, I wasn’t “The All is mine.” I didn’t affirm the All.

“Consciousness without surface,
endless, radiant all around,

has not been experienced through the earthness of earth... the liquidity of liquid... the fieriness of fire... the windiness of wind... the Allness of the All.”
— *MN 49*

“And what is the path going to the unfabricated... the ultimate? The noble eightfold path.

“Thus, monks, I have taught you the unfabricated and the path going to the unfabricated.... I have taught you the ultimate and the path going to the ultimate. Whatever a sympathetic teacher should do—seeking the welfare of his disciples, out of sympathy for them—that have I done for you. Over there are the roots of trees; over there, empty dwellings. Practice jhāna, monks. Don’t be heedless. Don’t later fall into regret. This is our message to you all.” — *SN 43*