

# 2e

## Kati Chinda Sutta

The Discourse on Cutting What? | S 1.5 of the Naḷa Vagga,<sup>1</sup> The Reed Group  
Theme: Overcoming hindrances to spiritual development  
Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2018

### 1 Sutta significance

#### 1.1 PARAPHRASE

**1.1.1 The Kati Chinda Sutta** (S 1.5) has only 2 verses: the first is the young deva’s riddle [S 7\*], followed by the Buddha’s answer to it [S 8\*]. The riddle seems to play on the word “bonds” or “ties” (*saṅga*), a relatively rare term in the suttas [2.4]. In fact, nowhere in the Nikāyas are we told of what the components of these “bonds” are: we only know this from the Commentaries. [2.4]

**1.1.2** We have no way of knowing whether this was a riddle drawn from a common pool of gnomic sayings,<sup>2</sup> or whether the Buddha himself had composed this riddle as a mnemonic for remembering a set of teachings related to meditation.<sup>3</sup> Anyway, the purpose of this Sutta is clear: to remind us of the key teachings regarding the basics of meditation, the Buddha’s training and its goal. What must we give up before we can start walking the path of awakening?

#### 1.2 KATI CHINDA

**1.2.1 Etymology.** In the phrase *kati chinde* [S 7a\*], *kati* (nominative plural of the stem <sup>5</sup>ka, see CPD) is an interrogative pronominal derivative with a numerical sense, meaning “how many.” *Chinde* is the potential<sup>4</sup> verb from *chindati* or *chijjati*, “to cut down, destroy; cut out, remove” (from √CHID, to cut off). Hence, *kati chinde* means “what should be cut off?”

**1.2.2 Occurrences.** The form *chinde* is not so common, occurring only about 6 times in the Nikāyas;<sup>5</sup> more common would be *chindeyya* (plural *chindeyyum*).

The deity’s question or riddle [S 7\*] seems to occur only in the **Kati Chinda Sutta** (S 1.5). The Buddha’s answer [S 8\*] is better known. It is found in the **Thera,gāthā** (Tha 15 = 633)—in the Kuṇḍadhāna Thera,gāthā and the Soṇa Koḷivisa Thera,gāthā—and in the **Dhammapada** (Dh 370), which is said to form part of the Buddha’s teaching to 900 meditating monks who were erstwhile robbers who had converted.<sup>6</sup>

**1.2.3 Commentary.** The **Commentary** explains that we “**should cut off**” (*chinde*) the 5 lower fetters; we “**should abandon**” (*jahe*) the 5 higher fetters. In order to cut off and abandon these fetters we “**should cultivate a further 5**” (*pañca c’uttari bhavaye*), that is, the 5 faculties (that is, the spiritual faculties). A

<sup>1</sup> *Naḷa*: A 4:169; J 1:392; VvA 43. Cf (1) *naḷī*, a hollow stalk, tube, pipe; a measure of capacity; (2) *nāḷikā*, a stalk, shaft; a tube, pipe or cylinder for holding anything; a small measure of capacity. On **Naḷa Vagga**, see SD 54.2a (1).

<sup>2</sup> See SD 54.2 (3.2.2.5). On *gnomes*, see **Sādhū S** (S 1.33), SD 22.10c (1.1).

<sup>3</sup> See esp **Sambahula Bhikkhu Vatthu** (the story of some monks), DhA 25.7/4:101-112 (Dh 368-376).

<sup>4</sup> In Pali, the “potential” or “optative” (*sattamī*) tense is used for any hypothetical action, and may be tr by “should,” “would,” “may,” etc; hence, “should be done.” See Warder, *Introduction to Pali*, 1963, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1974:86.

<sup>5</sup> In the Nikāyas, only at S 7\*, 8\* (S 1.5/1:3); Dh 370a; Pv 4.3.28 (Se Be:Ka); Tha 15a = 633a. Also J 465\*×2 (Be v20); Nett 170 (qu S 8\* = Dh 370a).

<sup>6</sup> DhA 25.7/4:101-112 (Dh 368-376). Also at Mv 5.12.1-10 (V 1:194-197); U 5.6/57-59; ThaA 208; qu at J 6.15.

monk who has broken the 5 bonds is called a “**flood-crosser**” (*ogha,tiṇṇa*), that is, one who has overcome the 4 floods, that is, an arhat. (SA 1:24,13-30).

Here are the explanations for **the riddle** [S 8\*], and for details on these teachings, see the following sections:

“ <b>One must cut the 5</b> ”	refers to	the 5 lower fetters;	<i>oram,bhāgiya saṃyojana</i>
“ <b>abandon the 5</b> ”	refers to	the 5 higher fetters;	<i>uddham,bhāgiya saṃyojana</i>
“ <b>cultivate a further 5</b> ”	refers to	the 5 faculties;	<i>pañc’indriya</i>
“ <b>gone beyond 5 bonds</b> ”	refers to	the 5 bonds.	<i>pañca saṅga</i>

<u>the 5 lower fetters:</u>	identity view, doubt, attachment to rituals and vows, sensual desire, ill will	[2.1]
<u>the 5 higher fetters:</u>	lust for form, lust for the formless, conceit, restlessness, ignorance	[2.2]
<u>the 5 faculties:</u>	faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom	[2.3]
<u>the 5 bonds:</u>	lust, hatred, delusion, conceit, views (the 5 latent tendencies)	[2.4]
<u>the 4 floods:</u>	sensual desire, existence, views, ignorance	[2.5]

## 2 Sutta teachings

### 2.0 THE 10 FETTERS

**The 10 fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*) have been discussed in some details elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> We shall here only briefly mention how they are overcome at each stage of the 4 supermundane paths, that is, those of streamwinning, once-returning, non-returning and arhatood. **Table 2.0** summarizes which of the fetters are to be overcome for the attaining of the respective stages of sainthood.<sup>8</sup>

(1) <u>self-identity view</u>	<i>sakkāya,ditthi</i>	} The 3 fetters
(2) <u>spiritual doubt</u>	<i>vicikicchā</i>	
(3) <u>attachment to rituals and vows</u>	<i>sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa</i>	
(4) sensual lust	<i>kāma,rāga</i>	} The 5 lower fetters <i>oram,bhāgiya saṃyojana</i>
(5) aversion (or repulsion)	<i>paṭigha</i> <sup>9</sup>	
(6) lust for form existence	<i>rūpa,rāga</i>	} The 5 higher fetters <i>uddham,bhāgiya saṃyojana</i>
(7) lust for formless existence	<i>arūpa,rāga</i>	
(8) conceit	<i>māna</i>	
(9) restlessness	<i>uddhacca</i>	
(10) ignorance	<i>avijjā</i>	

**Table 2.0** The 10 fetters<sup>10</sup>

The Commentaries on the verses at **S 1.5, Tha 15 and Dh 370**, wherein S 8\* recurs, all give practically the same explanations on the fetters, faculties and bonds listed below.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> SD 10.16 (1.6.6-1.6.8); **Kīṭa,giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1.4); (**Sekha**) **Uddesa S** (A 4.85), SD 3.3 (2).

<sup>8</sup> See (**Catukka**) **Samāṇa S** (A 4.239), SD 49.14. for detailed defs, see SD 10.16 (11-14).

<sup>9</sup> In some places, *paṭigha* is replaced by ill will (*vyāpāda*).

<sup>10</sup> For details, see SD 10.16 (1.2). For a Table on the 10 fetters and the 4 influxes, see SD 50.12 (2.5).

## 2.1 THE 5 LOWER FETTERS

### 2.1.1 Prison of the senses

**2.1.1.1 The Dhammapada Commentary** explains: “**One must cut 5** (*pañca chinde*) [S 8a\*]: On account of the 5 lower fetters (*pañca oram, bhāgiya saṃyojana*), a person would, as it were, be bound by a rope around his feet and dragged down below to the Avīci hell. When a person cuts it, as if with a sword, he gains access to the 3 lower paths.”<sup>12</sup> The commentator’s grim language highlights the fate of unawakened worldling overwhelmed by *self-identity view, spiritual doubt, attachment to rituals and vows, sensual lust and aversion* [2.0]. The physical senses are our prison, and the 5 fetters their *walls, bars, fences, chains and guards*.

**2.1.1.2** The 5 lower fetters bind us to **the sense-world**, the lowest plane of which is Avīci hell.<sup>13</sup> The most insidious of these 5 fetters are sensual lust and its opposite, aversion. They work together by inducing us to glorify our pleasure and beauty of the physical body and to reject whatever that suggests otherwise. Sensual lust and aversion relegate us to total dependence on our senses, so that we are caught up in our own projected reality like an IMAX movie.

### 2.1.2 The 3 lower fetters

**2.1.2.1** Ironically, the easiest fetters to break are the very first 3: *self-identity view, spiritual doubt, and attachment to rituals and vows*. They are also the most common defilements of worldlings who fail to see the world for what it really is and not understanding how our senses imprison us to the sense-world. Essentially, the 3 fetters are our proclivity for trying to “own” the senses, to **identify** with our bodies, which is rooted in wrong view.

**2.1.2.2** Wrong view leads to wrong thought, that is, to doubt that we are capable of ever being free of our body or senses. Hence, we are caught with the extreme views that either our body is all there is (materialism) or that it is merely a shell we vacate at death for some kind of eternal existence (eternalism) such as a heaven or a paradise. Either way, we **doubt** that we, as such body-based beings are capable of self-effort or self-salvation.

**2.1.2.3** The wrong view in which **self-identity view** is rooted fools us with the idea that we are our body or a part thereof. The wrong thought behind our **spiritual doubt** propels us to frantically seek succour and salvation outside of ourself, to seek refuge in some kind of agency (like God or divine being).

To bridge the gap between self and other in such a scenario—to gain that eternal after-life state or grace of the universal Other—we have to continuously **perform religious rituals and make vows**, or, at least **believe** (hold a view), supplicating the supreme and eternal Other, whether it is God, Godhead or some kind of eternal Buddha, Bodhisattva or Dharmakāya. Or, we should at least appease through prayers or offerings some eternal beings or supreme powers that seem to hold our fate in their hands.<sup>14</sup> This includes the worship of gods, demons, spirits and the supernatural.

<sup>11</sup> SA 1:24,13-30; ThaA 1:70,14-29; DhA 4:108,20-109,1-12. The last (DhA) give the most detailed explanations.

<sup>12</sup> *Pañca chinde*’ti heṭṭhā apāya, sampāpakāni pañc’oram bhāgiya, saṃyojanāni pāde baddha, rajjuṃ puriso satthena viya heṭṭhā, magga-t, tayena chindeyya. (DhA 1:109,1-3)

<sup>13</sup> Avīci hell is so called because the suffering there is “without a break” (*avīci*); see **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136,20) n, SD 4.16.

<sup>14</sup> On the 3 fetters, see SD 3.3 (5).

**2.1.2.4** When spiritual doubt spurs us to identify with external loci of power, an outside agency of succour or salvation, we effectively surrender our remote to someone else—hence, we disempower ourself of any chance of self-awakening. We have become a mere sinning creature whose purpose in existence is to worship that external agency, attributing it majesty and reminding ourself of our misery or misguided euphoria at best. We have been enslaved by faith and religion.

To free ourself from such mental and spiritual slavery, we must no more identify with anything in the world: “This world is not-I, not-me, not-mine.” This means that we do not see any separation, as it were between “I” and the world—we *are* the world; it is created of our own senses. Hence, the most powerful mantra, the most efficacious prayer for this is: “There is no-I, no-Thou.” In early Buddhism, this is called the truth of *atammayatā*, the non-identifying with any thing and anything.<sup>15</sup>

### **2.1.3 The way out.**

**2.1.3.1** Since the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 fetters are the weakest section of the 10 fetters, it makes good sense to break the fetters here. We have noted [2.1.2] how the 3 fetters hold us to the wrong view that there is some kind of permanence of our body that we should identify with [2.1.1]; or, how we can seek an after-life refuge in an eternal heaven or paradise [2.1.2]; or, we can somehow purchase the services or favour of the powerful, whether in religion or superstition [2.1.3].

**2.1.3.2** Since the 3 fetters bind us with the false notion of permanence in self, other or in between, we can and must seek to break these weakest fetters by regularly reflecting on **impermanence**. Indeed, this is exactly what the Buddha exhorts us to do to gain certain access to the path of awakening in this life itself. Our diligence in reflecting on impermanence, through faith or by wisdom—declares the Buddha in **the (Anicca) Cakhu Sutta** (S 25.1)—will certainly bring us to the path of awakening as streamwinners in this life itself, if not, certainly with our last breath.<sup>16</sup>

**2.1.3.3** When the 3 lower fetters—*self-identity view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows* [2.0]—have been overcome, we become **streamwinners** (*sotāpanna*). With some further effort, when we are able to weaken the 3 unwholesome roots of greed, hate and delusion, we go on to become **once-returners** (*sakad-āgāmī*). This is basically the same as saying that the once-returner weakens the last two of the 5 lower fetters, that is, *sensual lust and aversion* [2.0].

**2.1.3.4** When we have broken all the 5 lower fetters [2.0], we become **non-returners** (*anāgāmī*). We are the saints who have uprooted our latent tendencies of sensual lust and aversion, that is, of liking and disliking, by fully mastering their minds through dhyana (*jhāna*). We are able to habitually enjoy such a level of mental joy and peace that we have no need whatsoever of physical joy, the pleasures of the senses since we are able to transcend them.<sup>17</sup>

## **2.2 THE 5 HIGHER FETTERS**

**2.2.1 The Dhammapada Commentary** explains: “**(One must) abandon 5** (*pañca jahe*) [S 8a\*]: On account of the 5 higher fetters (*pañca uddham, bhāgiya saṃyojana*), a person would, as it were, be bound by a rope around his neck and brought up to the heavenly worlds; when a person cuts them, he would give

<sup>15</sup> See *Atammayatā*, SD 19.13.

<sup>16</sup> S 25.1 (SD 16.7); or any of the 10 suttas of *Okkanta Saṃyutta* (S 25).

<sup>17</sup> On the fetters broken by a non-returner, see SD 23.16 (1.1) n. Types of non-returners, see *Niṭṭha S* (A 10.63,3) SD 3.3(1.2); SD 2.17 (4-5).

them up, abandon them, cut them off, as if with a sword by way of the arhat-path.”<sup>18</sup> The strange rope imagery highlights the fact that these higher fetters—the *lust for form existence, the lust for formless existence, conceit, restlessness and ignorance*—still bind them, even if on a “higher” level, to the form and the formless worlds. They are still bound to the ceaseless cycle of rebirths and redeaths.

The point is that, even those who have overcome the 5 lower fetters—the streamwinner, the once-returned and the non-returned—are still bound to ceaseless cycles of samsara. They will be reborn and will redie, over and over, until they have broken the higher fetters.

**2.2.2** What is rarely, if ever, mentioned by sutta teachers is that these 10 fetters are not out there, not even something imposed on us by samsara. All these fetters are the mental aspects of our own ignorance and craving. We see neither reason nor motivation, neither the willingness nor ability, to get out of samsara. We actually feel that samsara is “all right,” as long as we live “making merits that bring happiness” (*puññāni kayirātha sukhāvahāni*) (S 3d\* = 310d\*), as stated by a deva in **the Upanīya Sutta** (S 1.3). The Buddha responds by reminding us to free ourselves from the world itself: “A peace-seeker should forsake the world’s lure” (*lok’āmisam pajahe santi,pekkho*) (S 4d\* = 311 d).<sup>19</sup>

**The “world’s lure”** (*lok’āmisā*) is embodied as the 10 fetters, a teaching model used by the Buddha so that we see them for what they really are. The “lure” (*āmisā*) is a fishing bait—the lure of Māra—to catch us and then throw us back into the floods (*ogha*) of samsara for Māra’s sport. Like the gods, we, too, do not really die: we leave this world when our present karma is exhausted, but since our past karmic store is immeasurable, we keep coming back: moreover, we do it more quickly than the gods do.

**2.2.3** We are like Titan **Prometheus** of Greek mythology, chained by Zeus, the king of the Olympian gods, to the rocks by the ocean of suffering, to be torn open at dawn by an eagle who feeds on his liver. He suffers the agonies of the body but does not die; he heals through the day and night, only to be torn apart again the next dawn. Eternal life means eternal suffering—whether we know it or not.

Prometheus’s agonies end only when **Heracles** (Latin, Hercules)—the son of Zeus by the mortal Alcmena—hence, a demigod, breaks his divine chains and frees him. Prometheus (“forethought”) represents our own mind that works to do good, but it still imprisons us in this world. Heracles represents both our human and divine potential for moral strength and effort, by which we break the chains that hold us to this world.

## 2.3 THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

### 2.3.1 Definition

**2.3.1.1 The Dhammapada Commentary** explains: “(One) must cultivate a further 5 (*pañca c’uttare bhavaye*) [S 8b\*]: For the sake of abandoning the higher fetters, we should further cultivate the 5 faculties (*pañc’indriya*), beginning with faith and so on.”<sup>20</sup> The 5 faculties, or more fully, **the 5 spiritual faculties**, are as follows, defined in terms of the teachings they each entail, according to **the (Indriya) Daṭṭhabba Sutta** (S 48.8), thus:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> *Pañca jahe’ti upari,deva,loka,sampāpakāni pañc’uddhambhāgiya,samyojanāni puriso gīvāya baddha,rajjukam viya arahatta,maggena jaheyya pajaheyya, chindeyyāti attho.* (DhA 4:109,3-6)

<sup>19</sup> S 1.3/1:2 (SD 54.2d).

<sup>20</sup> *Pañca c’uttari\* bhāvaye’ti uddhambhāgiya,samyojanānam pahān’atthāya saddh’ādāni pañc’indriyāni uttari bhāvayya.* (DhA 4:109,6-8). \*Ee: v’uttare (va uttare).

<sup>21</sup> On the 5 faculties, see **Pañc’indriya**, SD 10.4; SD 3.6 (3). On the balance of the 5 faculties (*indriya,samatta*), see SD 10.4 (2).

<u>The faculty of:</u>		<u>the teachings to be cultivated</u>	
(1) faith	<i>saddh'indriya</i>	the 4 limbs of streamwinning	<i>catu sotāpatti-y-aṅga</i>
(2) energy or effort	<i>viriy'indriya</i>	the 4 right strivings	<i>catu samma-p, padhāna</i>
(3) mindfulness	<i>sat'indriya</i>	mindfulness	<i>sati</i>
(4) concentration	<i>samādh'indriya</i>	the 4 dhyanas	<i>catu jhāna</i>
(5) wisdom	<i>paññ'indriya</i>	the 4 noble truths	<i>catu ariya, sacca</i>

**2.3.1.2** Note that **mindfulness** is at the centre of the set, since it acts as the moderator, keeping the other 2 pairs of faculties—those of faith and wisdom, and effort and concentration—balanced so that our meditation is effective in “leading” us to spiritual progress. Hence, it is called *indriya*, literally, “that which leads; leader” in the cultivation of the “spiritual faculties” that bring spiritual development.

Now, we will examine how each of these 5 faculties works to help us strengthen itself as part of a collective base for attaining the path of awakening in this life itself.

### **2.3.2 The 4 limbs of streamwinning**

**2.3.2.0** In the set of 5 spiritual faculties, the 1<sup>st</sup>, that of **faith** (*saddhā*), is defined as “the 4 factors of streamwinning” (*sotāpatti-y-aṅga*), those qualities that conduce to the arising of streamwinning, listed in **the (Sotāpatti) Phala Sutta** (S 55.55) as follows:

(1) association with true individuals, <sup>22</sup>	<i>sappurisa, samseva</i>
(2) hearing the true teaching,	<i>saddhamma, savana</i>
(3) wise attention, and	<i>yoniso, manasikāra</i>
(4) practice of the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.	<i>dhammānudhamma, paṭipatti</i>

(S 55.55/5:410 f), SD 3.3(4.1); (A 5.246)

These are the 4 factors that bring about the fruition of streamwinning. Hence, in **the (Mahānāma) Gilāna Sutta** (S 55.54,5), they are called the 4 assurances (*assāsanīyā dhamma*), SD 4.10. Since they bring about progress on the path of awakening, they are also called “the conditions for noble growth” (*ariya, vuḍḍhi* or *vuḍḍhi, dhamma*).<sup>23</sup>

**2.3.2.1** <sup>24</sup>**Associating with true individuals** (*sappurisa, samseva*), that is, those who have already attained streamwinning or higher. Generally, “true individuals” can refer to anyone who properly practises the Dharma, but here it specifically refers to other saints from whom we can learn and whom we can emulate. In the absence of such saintly teachers or examples, we must turn to the suttas to examine and emulate their lives and follow the teachings in their connection.<sup>25</sup>

**2.3.2.2 Hearing the true teaching** (*saddhamma, savana*), that is, the Buddha’s teaching, especially as recorded in the early Buddhist texts, in all their simplicity and clarity. To truly “hear” the Buddha Dhamma, we must empty ourself of all views and biases, and simply read, listen to or reflect on the Dhamma in

<sup>22</sup> “True individuals,” *sappurisa*, also “virtuous persons” or “ideal persons,” ie, true spiritual practitioners. On the true individual’s qualities, see **Sappurisa S** (M 113/3:37-45), SD 29.6. They are also given at **D 33, 2.2(6)/3:252, 34, 1.8(7)/3:283; M 110, 14-24/3:23 f; A 7.64/4:113, 8.38/4:144.**

<sup>23</sup> (**Tadah’**) **Uposatha S** (A 3.70.8b), SD 4.18; **Sambadh’okāsa S** (A 6.26,8), SD 15.7a; **Pañca Vaḍḍhi S 1** (A 5.63); **Pañca Vaḍḍhi S 2** (A 5.64). See also SD 3.3 (4.1.2-4.1.3).

<sup>24</sup> For further details on these 4 factors, see SD 3.3 (4.1.1).

<sup>25</sup> On the Buddha’s virtues, see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7; on the virtues of the Dharma, see **Dhammānussati**, SD 15.9; on the virtue of the Sangha, see **Aṭṭha, puggala S 1** (A 8.59), SD 15.10a(1).

the suttas or from a wise Dharma-inspired teacher, *as if for the first time*. As we constantly reflect on these teachings, we will see how they connect together and clarify one another. This is like looking at a beautiful scenery or painting, and in time, we become fully familiar with it, and it makes clear good sense to us with its truth and beauty.<sup>26</sup>

**2.3.2.3 Wise attention** (*yoniso,manasikāra*) means that we constantly direct our mind to habitually observe the most common feature of the true nature of things, that they are all impermanent (*anicca*).<sup>27</sup> When we see and accept the impermanence of all things, we notice that we are less disappointed with failure; less euphoric with success. We more easily see gain and loss, fame and obscurity, blame and praise, joy and pain, with the same calm eyes and peaceful heart.<sup>28</sup> We begin to understand how such a heart prepares us to take the first real step on the path of awakening as a streamwinner.

**2.3.2.4 Practice of the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma** (*dhammānudhamma,paṭipatti*) refers to our living a wholesome life, inspired by the Buddha, the early saints and their examples and experiences. In keeping with **the Gāraḥa Sutta** (S 6.2), just as the Buddha himself “dwells in dependence” on the Dharma,<sup>29</sup> we, too, see no other refuge other than the Buddha Dharma itself.<sup>30</sup>

On a practical level, the Buddha’s teaching entails our following what the Buddha has done that makes him buddha—he renounced the world: he freed himself from the world’s lure [2.2.2]. We must live our life in imitation of the Buddha: a life of **renunciation** (*nekkhamma*) in the true sense of the word. We should cultivate renunciation of the levels of the body, speech and the mind [2.3.2.5].

**2.3.2.5** Our true spiritual practice comprises renunciation at the 3 karmic doors of the body, speech and mind.<sup>31</sup> **Bodily renunciation** refers to the habit of letting go of whatever that is unwholesome and unhelpful to our physical health and well-being. Ethically, this means respecting life (ours and that of others), respecting the happiness of others, and respecting their personal space and freedom. This last respect is that for our body and those of others. All this is, in fact, embodied in the first 3 of the 5 precepts.<sup>32</sup>

**Verbal renunciation** is the habit of refraining from wrong speech, that is, false, divisive, harsh and unbeneficial speech, and the practice of right speech, that is, speech that is true, unifying, pleasant and beneficial in a timely way. In short, this is helpful and healing *communication* and what may be said to be *the ideals of human communication*. Avoiding false speech, as a shorthand for “wrong speech,” is, in fact, the 4<sup>th</sup> of 5 precepts.<sup>33</sup>

**Mental renunciation** is training oneself to let go of negative ideas and views, and cultivating wholesome ones. This is best done through mindfulness and meditation.<sup>34</sup> Mindfulness is basically the habitual reflection on impermanence, appreciating the “rise-and-fall” of people, thoughts and things, how everything changes and becomes other, every time, sooner than we think—and how, we too (our body and mind) change. But when we understand and accept change, and see it as “**natural renunciation**,” then, we grow with change, we evolve towards the path of awakening, even attain it.

<sup>26</sup> On beauty and truth in Buddha,dhamma, see SD 40a.1 (8.1.2).

<sup>27</sup> These are the 3 characteristics (*ti,lakkhaṇa*): see **Atam,mayatā**, SD 19.13 (1); **Anatta Lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59,12-16), SD 1.2.

<sup>28</sup> On these **8 worldly conditions**, see **Loka,dhamma S 1+2** (A 8.5+6), SD 42.2+3.

<sup>29</sup> **Gāraḥa S** (S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3.

<sup>30</sup> D 16,6.1/2:154 (SD 9).

<sup>31</sup> These are the 3 doors of karma: see SD 5.7 (2.2.2).

<sup>32</sup> On the 5 precepts, see **Veḷu,dvāreyya S**, SD 1.5 (2); **Sīlānussati**, SD 15.11 (2.2); SD 21.6 (1.2); SD 37.8 (2.2).

<sup>33</sup> On the 5 precepts, see **Veḷu,dvāreyya S**, SD 1.5 (2); **Sīlānussati**, SD 15.11 (2.2); SD 21.6 (1.2); SD 37.8 (2.2).

<sup>34</sup> See **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1.

Meditation refers to the letting go of all thoughts so that our mind is calm and clear, healing and helping us to see ourself and others in a positive way. Thus, we see and feel the true nature of life and the world so that we live truly joyfully and beneficially, evolving on the path of personal growth, wholesome creativity and spiritual liberation.<sup>35</sup>

One of the major hindrances to wholesome meditation is a clouded mind, especially due to drunkenness and addiction to drinks and indulgence in drugs. Hence, keeping the mind unclouded by drinks and drugs is vital for ensuring that our mind is healthy and ready for attaining the path of awakening. Hence, the 5<sup>th</sup> and last of the 5 precepts is the avoidance of drinking and addictive conduct.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.3.3 The 4 right strivings

**2.3.3.1** In the set of the 5 spiritual faculties [2.3.1.1], the 2<sup>nd</sup>, that of effort (*virīya*), is defined as **the 4 right strivings** (*samma-p, padhāna*). They are an elaboration of the 2 kinds of quests: the ignoble quest (*anariya pariyesanā*) and the noble quest (*ariya pariyesanā*).

**The ignoble quest** is the striving for what is *subject to birth, decay, disease, death, sorrow and defilement*. Such a quest should be avoided if we are thinking of it but have not done it. When we are caught in such a quest, we should cease and desist from it. These are respectively, the effort to avoid, and the effort to abandon what is *unwholesome*.

**The noble quest** is the striving for what is not subject to birth, *not* subject to decay, *not* subject to disease, *not* subject to death, *not* subject to sorrow, *not* subject to defilement. This, in short, is the quest for nirvana, the unconditioned. If we have never thought of making such a quest (that is, to attain the path to nirvana), we should aspire to do so. When we have thought of such a striving, we should diligently take up such a quest—that is, work to attain nirvana.<sup>37</sup>

**2.3.3.2** On their own, the set of 4 is known as “**the 4 right strivings**” (*samma-p, padhāna*). As a limb (*aṅga*) of **the noble eightfold path** (*ariya’atth’aṅgika magga*), they are called the “4 right efforts” (*sammā, vāyāma*), that is:

(1) the effort to	avoid	(unwholesome states)’	<i>sarivara, padhāna</i>
(2) the effort to	abandon	(unwholesome states);	<i>pahāna, padhāna</i>
(3) the effort to	cultivate	(wholesome states); and	<i>bhavanā, padhāna</i>
(4) the effort to	maintain	(wholesome states).	<i>anurakkhaṇa, padhāna</i>

**(Catu) Padhāna Sutta** (A 4.14), SD 10.2<sup>38</sup>

**2.3.3.3** How do we apply right striving *here and now* in practical terms? If we do *not* hold any view about making merits for material and worldly benefits in this life and for good rebirth to come, we should keep it that way. Or, when we have (at least in recent memory) never consciously broken any of the precepts, we should consistently keep it that way. This is our **1<sup>st</sup> right striving**: the striving to avoid the unwholesome, the action of non-action, as it were.

If we have *views* that we should simply make merit for material or worldly happiness here and now, and to attain good rebirths, or are doing so, we should at once abandon such views and stop performing

<sup>35</sup> On renunciation (*nekkhamma*) as spiritual practice (esp meditation), see **Hālidakāni S 1** (S 22.3/3:9-12), SD 10.12; **Sexuality**, SD 31.7 (1.6.2); **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (14.7). On the 3 trainings, see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

<sup>36</sup> On the 5 precepts, see **Veḷu, dvāreyya S**, SD 1.5 (2); **Sīlānussati**, SD 15.11 (2.2); SD 21.6 (1.2); SD 37.8 (2.2).

<sup>37</sup> See SD 54.2c (2.2.1.5).

<sup>38</sup> See also SD 10.16 (6.2); for the pericope: SD 51.21 (1.2).



such rituals. Or, when we have been habitually breaking any of the precepts,<sup>39</sup> we should at once stop doing so. This is our **2<sup>nd</sup> right striving**: the striving to abandon the unwholesome.<sup>40</sup>

It is vital that we understand what wholesome karma (*kusala kamma*) means: it brings us closer to the path of awakening. Even before we actually reach the path as streamwinners, our wholesome karma expedites our approach to the path by cultivating moral virtue (wholesome cultivation of body and speech), a wholesome mind (calm and insight), and wisdom (insight into the impermanence or the rise and fall of all things). The practice of reflecting on impermanence is the most significant aspect of our **3<sup>rd</sup> right effort**: the striving to cultivate the wholesome.

When we understand and accept, whether by faith or through wisdom, the universal truth of impermanence, we should constantly practise the reflection on impermanence. Then, we should **aspire for streamwinning in this life itself**. We should regularly renew our aspiration for streamwinning in this life, and keep up the practice of reflecting on impermanence. This is our **3<sup>rd</sup> right striving**: the striving to main-  
tain the wholesome.

### **2.3.4 Mindfulness**

**2.3.4.1** In the set of the 5 spiritual faculties [2.3.1.1], the 3<sup>rd</sup> is the faculty of **mindfulness** (*sati*), which we have noted to be the moderator of the other 4 faculties so that they are cultivated harmoniously and bring about mental calm and clarity.<sup>41</sup> Even in daily life, mindfulness keeps us mentally on the right course. Here, **mindfulness** has 2 intimately related aspects: memory and attention.

**Memory** is called *sati* in Pali: we see this term in “mindfulness of the breath” (*ānāpāna,sati*).<sup>42</sup> A practice that strengthens and empowers our memory in wholesome practice is called a recollection (*anusati*), as in the “recollection of the Buddha” (*buddhānussati*).<sup>43</sup> When we are already familiar with the teaching and apply it to true reality, it is called “perception” (*saññā*), as in the “perception of impermanence” (*anicca,sañña*), where we “recognize” impermanence in all our experiences.<sup>44</sup>

*Sati*, then, refers to remembering what we have learned that is wholesomely relevant to our practice and progress, which includes learning from our mistakes and not repeating them. A vital function of our memory is to recall truths we have learned or identify them in our daily experiences that is right before us. Hence, it is a kind of “synthesizing” (putting together) faculty that connects theory with experience—this is basically constitutes *wisdom*.

**2.3.4.2 Attention** (*manasikāra*) is how and where we direct our conscious mind, that is, keeping a “mindful mind.” Often, in popular Buddhism, we are told to direct our mind to the “here and now” (*diṭṭha,dhamma*), a phrase that usually refers to “this life.”<sup>45</sup> The idea of “seeing the here and now” should not be narrowly understood to mean whether “only the present” exists or not exist—it is something mentally projected or mind-made.

Technically, there is *no* “present” since all moments are passing! The idea is to direct our mind to “where the action is,” which is really the “present” or, better, **the “event” moment**. It helps that we

<sup>39</sup> On the 5 precepts, see **Veḷu,dvāreyya S**, SD 1.5 (2); **Sīlānussati**, SD 15.11 (2.2); SD 21.6 (1.2); SD 37.8 (2.2).

<sup>40</sup> As our right striving, we should convert the merit-making into generation of *wholesome* benefits: see SD 54.2c (2.2.3.2).

<sup>41</sup> On calm and clarity, see **Samatha and vipassana**, SD 41.1 and DEB: samatha,vipassanā.

<sup>42</sup> On the breath meditation, see **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118,5-7+15-22), SD 7.13.

<sup>43</sup> On the recollection of the Buddha, see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7 (3).

<sup>44</sup> On perception of impermanence, see **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

<sup>45</sup> Such as in the phrase, **diṭṭha.dhamma,sukha.vihara**, “dwelling happy here and now”: see **Samādhī Bhāvanā S** (A 4.41,2), SD 24.1.

examine this vital definition of the “**present**” in a key teaching given in these famous verse-lines from the **Bhadd’eka,ratta Sutta** (M 131):<sup>46</sup>

(1) *Atītaṃ nānvāgameyya  
n’appaṭikaṅkhe anāgataṃ  
yad atītaṃ pahīnaṃ taṃ  
appaṭaṇṇa ca anāgataṃ.*

**Let one not pursue<sup>47</sup> [not dwell on] the past,<sup>48</sup>  
nor hold fond hope for the future.**

For, the past is gone,<sup>49</sup>  
and the future has not yet come.<sup>50</sup>

(2) *paccuppannaṃ ca yo dhammaṃ  
tattha tattha vipassati*

**Only this present state<sup>51</sup>**

(as it arises) one sees that with insight<sup>52</sup> ...

(M 131,3\*/3:187), SD 8.9

Verse (1) advises us to follow neither thoughts of the past nor those of the future: “**the past is gone, | the future has not yet come**”—they are merely virtual realities, not true reality: the true reality is that this is all change and impermanence. This reality is explained in (2): we should see “**the present state, as it arises**” *with insight*. The emphasis here is not in “the here and now”—which may be dominated by thoughts of the past or of the future—but “as it arises.” It means we are to observe *the change*—this is what “**with insight**” means: to see change and impermanence, rise and fall.

**2.3.4.3** Clearly, we are not to think that the “present” is really there. In fact, we have to let go of even *the present*. This is clear from the **Atta,daṇḍa Sutta** (Sn 4.15), where the Buddha declares:

Let the past wither away.  
Let not what comes later be anything—  
If you grasp not at what’s in between,  
You will wander about (mentally) stilled.

*yaṃ pubbe taṃ visosehi  
pacchā te māhu kiñcanaṃ  
majjhe ce no gahessasi  
upasanto carissasi*

(Sn 949; cf Dh 348)<sup>53</sup>

In the verse, *pubbe*, *pacchā* and *majjhe* are used figuratively to refer respectively to the past, the future and the present. This hints at the “timelessness” of the awakened mind of the arhat. The awakened mind is liberated, as it were, from time itself. We seem to have touched the limits of language and knowledge. We are not talking about epistemology here: we are simply dealing with what is real before us, which seems to come and go while we exist in this space-time continuum. That much we can say.

**2.3.4.4** When *sati* is taken to mean only memory, then, **sampajañña**, “full awareness,” is used to refer to the application of that memory *to examine or scrutinize the event before us*. Then, we have the

<sup>46</sup> Further see SD 54.2i (1.1.2).

<sup>47</sup> “Let one ... not pursue [not dwell on]” (*anvāgameyya*), pot 3 sg of *anvāgameti* (caus of *anvāgacchati* = *anu* + *ā-gacchati*), lit, “to let come back,” ie to wish something back (CPD), to run after, dwell on. [This tr was suggested by Kumara Bhikkhu of Malaysia, email 17 Aug 2013.]

<sup>48</sup> Cf *patisarati* at SD 41.6 (2.3.6.1).

<sup>49</sup> Alt tr: “For the past has passed away.”

<sup>50</sup> Alt tr: “And the future is yet unreached”; poetically, “the future never comes.”

<sup>51</sup> Comy: One should contemplate each state as it arises by way of the 7 contemplations of insight (ie by way of insight into impermanence, suffering, not-self, revulsion, dispassion, cessation, relinquishment) (MA 5:1 f).

<sup>52</sup> The Sutta here teaches seeing *only* the arising of the 5 aggregates (or any of them) in the present moment. More simply, this means to see each moment of “rising and falling,” as being impermanent: this is a perception of impermanence (*anicca,saññā*): see (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 36.1), SD 16.7.

<sup>53</sup> Further see SD 8.9 (5.1).

dvandva (twin compound) *sati,sampajañña*, “mindfulness and full awareness [clear comprehension].”<sup>54</sup> *Sampajañña*—derived from *sam-* (com- meaning “converging”) + *pa-* (suggesting “up, about”) + √JÑĀ, to know—is sometimes rendered as “clear comprehension.”

Hence, we see this as a synonym for *manasikāra*—which comes from *manasi*, “the mind” + √KR, “to make” → *kār*, “to do, work”—literally, “to work the mind,” that is, to pay attention to, to observe, scrutinize. *Sampajañña* has the sense of “seeing the whole picture and knowing what to do about it”—for example, when we notice anger arising, we know it to be so, and at once cultivate lovingkindness to remove it.

*Manasikāra* means “paying attention (to)” in a general sense. However, when this refers to attending to the true nature of reality, such as seeing impermanence, then, the phrase, *yoniso manasikāra*,<sup>55</sup> literally, “paying attention to the root of things”; hence, meaning “attending wisely.” Specifically, this expression is used to refer to observing the universal characteristics of existence, that is, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. [2.3.2.3]

When we aspire for streamwinning, we should “wisely attend” to the nature of impermanence in whatever happens to us and all around us. This habitual practice keeps us in tune with the true reality before us, and lays the foundation for attaining streamwinning in this life itself.

### 2.3.5 The 4 dhyanas

**2.3.5.1** In the set of the 5 spiritual faculties [2.3.1.1], the 4<sup>th</sup>, that of concentration (*samādhi*), refers to **the 4 dhyanas**. A **dhyana** (*jhāna*) is basically a transsomatic state where the mind becomes so calm and clear in a spiritual sense that it seems to fully and joyfully exist in itself. “**Transsomatic**”<sup>56</sup> means that in the dhyanic state all workings of the physical senses—the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, and the sense-based functions of the mind—have ceased, leaving only the “pure bright mind” (*pabhassara,-citta*).<sup>57</sup> Such a mind, however, still has a subtle, thought-free, spiritually hedonic, ecstatic and enstatic [2.3.5.3] perceptions of itself.<sup>58</sup>

**2.3.5.2** The Buddhist practice of dhyana meditation is the ultimate exercise in spiritual **renunciation** [2.3.2.4]. First, the body is seated (rarely in other postures, that is, standing or reclining, much less reclining)<sup>59</sup> in a comfortable and balanced manner, free from all physical discomfort and distraction, in peaceful solitude—this is **the renunciation of the world** (in a physical sense).

A suitable method of meditation, usually the breath meditation or lovingkindness cultivation, gently and naturally primes the mind to overcome the 5 hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*): those of sensual desire, ill will, restlessness and worry, sloth and torpor, and doubt. Free from all sense-experiences, the mind calms and clears itself of all thoughts. This is **the renunciation of the body**. [2.3.2.5]

**2.3.5.3** When we have rid the mind of all the 5 hindrances [2.3.5.2], dhyana is attained. It is characterized by **the 5 dhyana-factors**, as follows:

<sup>54</sup> *Satipaṭṭhāna Ss* (D 22; M 10), SD 13.1 (3.6); *Sāmañña,phala* (D 2,65), SD 8.10 = *Kevaḍḍha S* (D 11,33), SD 1.7.

<sup>55</sup> *Yoniso* is the adv from *yonī*, lit “womb,” meaning “the origin, way or place of birth; nature”; hence, *yoniso* means “down to the root of things; really, truly, wisely, naturally.”

<sup>56</sup> “Transsomatic” (from *trans-* meaning “beyond” + *somatic*, means “of the body,” meaning “transcending the body.”

<sup>57</sup> See *Cūḷ’accharā S* (A 2.6,3-5), SD 2.13.

<sup>58</sup> On *jhāna*, see *Dhyana*, SD 8.4; *The layman & dhyana*, SD 8.5; *Nimitta*, SD 19.7; *Samādhi*, SD 33.1a. See also *The Buddha discovered dhyana*, SD 33.1a.

<sup>59</sup> But see account of Ānanda’s attaining of arhathood (Cv 11.1.6 @ V 2:286): see SD 52.4 (1.2.3.2).

- |                           |                      |  |
|---------------------------|----------------------|--|
| (1) initial application   | ( <i>vitakka</i> )   | the mind is naturally <u>directed</u> to the meditation object;                    |
| (2) sustained application | ( <i>vicāra</i> )    | the mind naturally <u>stays</u> with the meditation object;                        |
| (3) zest or rapturous joy | ( <i>pīti</i> )      | the mind <u>ecstatically</u> feels free from all other sensations;                 |
| (4) joy or total comfort  | ( <i>sukha</i> )     | the mind <u>enstatically</u> <sup>60</sup> enjoys itself in a most settled manner; |
| (5) one-pointedness       | ( <i>ek'aggatā</i> ) | the mind feels <u>totally</u> within itself and yet is everything.                 |

Early Buddhism speaks of **4 dhyanas**, the 1<sup>st</sup> of which has the first 4 dhyana-factors. Then, we go through a progressive renunciation of the mind. When even the subtlest “mental activities”—initial application and sustained application—cease, the mind attains the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana. With the ceasing of zest, it attains the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana; and with the ceasing of joy, attains the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, which only feels the total oneness of mind. We can tabulate the respective **dhyana-factors** (*jhān'āṅga*) of the 4 dhyanas and dhyanic progress as follows:

	<u>initial</u> <u>application</u> <i>vitakka</i>	<u>sustained</u> <u>application</u> <i>vicāra</i>	<u>zest</u> <i>pīti</i>	<u>joy</u> <i>sukha</i>	<u>one-pointedness</u> <u>of mind</u> <i>ek'aggatā</i>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> dhyana</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓	(✓) <sup>61</sup>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana</b>	...	...	✓	✓	✓
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana</b>	...	...	...	✓	✓
<b>4<sup>th</sup> dhyana</b>	...	...	... ..		✓

**Fig 2.3.5.** The dhyana-factors

**2.3.5.2 Streamwinning**, the start of the path of awakening, is gained through the perception of impermanence. According to **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1), the perception of impermanence may be done as an act of faith or through wisdom. When this perception is diligently done, the Buddha guarantees that we will attain streamwinning in this life itself; if not, certainly at the moment of dying.<sup>62</sup>

The Sutta makes no mention of the necessity of dhyana for attaining streamwinning; only wise faith and focused mindfulness are needed. The reason for this is clear. The 3 fetters, which must be broken for the attaining of streamwinning, do *not* mention lust—the desire for sensual pleasures—which can only be overcome by dhyana. Dhyana is only needed for the breaking of the higher fetters [2.3.1.1].

Dhyanic bliss is much more refined and efficacious than body-based sensual pleasures. Hence, someone who has mastered dhyanic attainment will have neither lust nor taste for sensual pleasures. These are the non-returners and arhats, the states that need dhyana to be attained.

## 2.3.6 The 4 noble truths

### THE MEANING OF LIFE

**2.3.6.1** In the set of the 5 spiritual faculties, the 5<sup>th</sup> and last, is that of wisdom (*paññā*), which is defined as **the 4 noble truths** [2.3.1.1]. The Buddha’s wisdom and teachings are summarized in the 4 noble truths, sometimes called the 4 *ennobling* truths, since understanding and accepting them turn us into

<sup>60</sup> “Enstasy” (lit “in place”; cf “ecstasy,” “out of place”) is a term for the kind of joy experienced in meditation, esp dhyana.

<sup>61</sup> On “one-pointedness” (*ek'aggatā*) in the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, see SD 8.4 (5.1.2).

<sup>62</sup> S 25.1/3:225 (SD 16.7).

spiritually noble individuals. To understand these truths is to see true reality that is the basis for self-awakening.

The 4 truths ennoble us by awakening us to the true meaning and purpose of life. **The meaning of life** is embodied in the first 2 truths: that (1) life is unsatisfactory, and (2) this unsatisfactoriness arises from craving. *Life is unsatisfactory* in that we are somehow caught up in a sense of lack and loss. Whether we know it or not, we are *lacking* something, we are never satisfied with what we have [2.3.6.3] or what we are. [2.3.6.4]

**2.3.6.2** Worldliness is a lure, **the world's lure** (*lok'āmisā*)—says **the Upanīya Sutta** (S 1.3).<sup>63</sup> **“Worldliness”** means desiring more than what is necessary, wanting more than we need, unless that “more” benefits others in uplifting them from suffering and bringing wisdom and awakening to them.

Basically, worldliness is whatever that keeps us in this world, our self-created *virtual* reality, which keeps us so rooted to our body that we are unable to grow in mind and heart to be able to joyfully see *true* reality. Worldliness enslaves us to our senses so that we only sense what we *have* [2.3.6.3] and what we *are* or seem *to be* [2.3.6.4] in measurable terms by unjustly profiting from others and abusing the environment, by exploiting them.<sup>64</sup>

**2.3.6.3** We are never satisfied with what we **have** or **want** simply because we fail to understand and accept that nothing in this world is really ours. Everything is *impermanent*;<sup>65</sup> hence, nothing is worth clinging to (*sabbe dhammā nālaṃ abhinivesāyā*).<sup>66</sup> We can only suitably use what we *need* and properly enjoy what we *want* with the understanding that we are all an integral and interdependent part of a vast network of *being*, the living and living space.

**2.3.6.4** Like the worldly delusion of “having,” we tend to view our **“being”** (the abstract noun of “be”) in measurable terms of what we **are**, of what *others* are, of what we *and* others are. Worldliness deludes us into conceiving, vacillating, agitating and proliferating what we **were**, what we **will** be, what we **will not** be, and so on.<sup>67</sup>

We are dictated by the **conceit** that we are better than others, or inferior to others, or equal with others. Then, we are spurred to act and react according to this self-other delusion, this virtual reality of conceit, the complexes of superiority, of inferiority, of equality.<sup>68</sup> This proclivity floods us with a proliferation (*papañca*)<sup>69</sup> of thoughts, very much more than we can ever manage. We are unable to manage them because they are often insidious and useless self-created delusions.

We are trapped in a rut and wondering which side of the pit to climb up and out of. We are trapped in a world of choices: “To be or not to be?” But all we can do is run in the rut that is a circular pit, the belly of a uroboros. **“To be or not to be?”** is *not* the question, ‘tis neither nobler in the mind to suffer

<sup>63</sup> This is from **Upanīya S** (S 4d\* @ S 1.3) and elsewhere (SD 54.2c (2.2.3)) where it lit means “the carnal” (related to the physical sense), and fig, our 4 material supports of life (food, clothing, shelter, health supplies). The term is applied more broadly here.

<sup>64</sup> This suggests the mentality of an “asura,” an embodiment of a violently exploitative narcissistic demon: SD 39.2 (1.3); SD 40a.1 (11.2.2).

<sup>65</sup> Impermanence (*anicca*) is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 3 universal characteristics: see SD 26.9 (2.2). See DEB: *anicca*.

<sup>66</sup> **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 37,3/1:251), SD 54.8; **Pacalā S** (A 7.58,11.2) + SD 4.11 (5).

<sup>67</sup> For a list of such conceiving, vacillating, agitation and proliferating that may arise, see SD 6.14 (2.3).

<sup>68</sup> On conceit (*māna*): as a fetter (*saṃyojana*), see SD 50.12 (2.4.4); as a latent tendency (*anusaya*), see SD 53.14 (2.2.2).

<sup>69</sup> On *papañca*, see SD 6.14 (2); SD 17.3 (1.4).

the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, nor is it worthwhile to take arms against a sea of troubles.<sup>70</sup> It's just a mote "in the mind's eye,"<sup>71</sup> a troubling speculation that is unnecessary and unhelpful. We must work to let the walls of the ratty pit crumble until the ground is high enough for us to emerge free: this is the "**middle way**."<sup>72</sup>

#### THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

**2.3.6.5 The purpose of life** is embodied in the last 2 truths: that (3) there is unconditional happiness (nirvana), and (4) there is the way to this unconditional happiness. Once we understand, even in a limited way, the meaning of life, we are naturally driven to know of its **purpose**, that is, how do we end suffering, and how we attain a suffering-free state?

The purpose of life is embodied in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> noble truths. The well-known teaching model of the 4 truths gives the 3<sup>rd</sup> noble truth as stating the possibility of the *ending* of suffering, that is, the reality that is **nirvana**. Hence, this is the natural goal that we must work for if we are to be truly free from the world and suffering.<sup>73</sup>

The 4<sup>th</sup> noble truth states *the way* to attaining nirvana, that is, **the noble eightfold path**. The way or path (*magga*) entails a journey which means self-effort and personal progress. Interestingly, although we speak of a "path," it is not something out there, but it is an inner journey. Our practice *is* the way: we are the path. This is an affirmation of the possibility and efficacy of **self-effort**, without which we fall into the helplessness of dependence on some imagined "other-power" or external agency.

<i>Attā hi attano nātho</i>	The self is the master of the self;
<i>ko hi nātho paro siyā</i>	for, who else can the master be?
<i>attanā'va sudantena</i>	With a self that is well-tamed, indeed,
<i>nāthaṃ labhati dullabhaṃ</i>	one gains a master that is hard to find.
	(Dh 160; cf 380) <sup>74</sup>

**2.3.6.6** Philosophically, the purpose of life, according to early Buddhism, is to grow and progress. We are born with only a human body, but our mind is still unformed. It is like **a mirror** that simply reflects what is before it. If our parents or other compassionately wise humans do not humanize us, we are likely to devolve into an animal state, especially when we are raised by some intelligent animals, as in the case of feral children.<sup>75</sup>

Hence, we are born with only a human body, but not a human mind or heart. We are grateful to our parents and carers who have raised us in humanity, who *humanize* us—in this sense, they are our "first teachers" (*pubb'ācariya*). The better parents are those who early ground us in *godliness*, the qualities of divinity—love, ruth, joy and peace—the "divine abodes" (*brahma, vihāra*):<sup>76</sup> such parents are the true "God" (*brahma*) to us.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>70</sup> A Buddhist response to Shakespeare's famous quote (*Hamlet* 3.1.56-83), 1602. Hamlet is basically wondering whether it is better to live or to die: he is deeply troubled by his life's issues, but his fear of death is even greater.

<sup>71</sup> Cf *Hamlet* 1.1.112 (Horatio to Barnardo), 1.2.185 (Hamlet to Horatio).

<sup>72</sup> Cf SD 40a.1 (4.4.3).

<sup>73</sup> In the earlier "practice model" of the 4 truths, their sequence is 1-2-4-3, ie, the 3<sup>rd</sup> truth is the path we work on which brings us to the 4<sup>th</sup> truth, nirvana: see **Mahā Saḷ-āyatanika S** (M 149,11 etc) + SD 41.9 (2.4); SD 53.26 (2).

<sup>74</sup> See SD 27.3 (3.1) & SD 34.1(5.2).

<sup>75</sup> On feral children, see SD 38.4 (4.4.2).

<sup>76</sup> See **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5.

<sup>77</sup> The well known passage states: "Parents are God [Brahma], the first teachers they say; | they are worthy of oblations from children, people should be compassionate to them" (*brahmā ti mātā, pitaro, pubb'ācariyā ti vuccare | āhuneyyā ca puttānaṃ, pajāya anukampakā*) (A 1:132 = 2:70 = It 110 = J 5:331 = Vism 523 = VbhA 130).

Ideally, then, we are born with a human body; we are humanized (mature with a mind of wisdom); and we nurture divinity within (cultivate the divine virtues). These are the ideal bases for the next stage in our personal growth, that is, to evolve further in our **spiritual evolution**. This is another word for walking the path of awakening: we begin this journey with *the aspiration to become streamwinners*. This is the highest purpose we can have in this life, short of attaining awakening itself.

## 2.4 THE BONDS: 5 OR 7?

### 2.4.1 Definition and evolution

**2.4.1.1 The Dhammapada Commentary** gives this explanation: “(Who) has gone beyond 5 bonds (*pañca saṅgātigo*) [S 8c\*] means: “There are these 5 bonds (*pañca saṅga*)—lust, hate, delusion, conceit and view—overcoming which, a monk (that is, a meditator) is called ‘a flood-crosser’ (*ogha,tiṇṇa*), one who has crossed the 4 floods [2.5].”<sup>78</sup>

The word *saṅga*, “cleaving, clinging, attachment, bond,” is the noun of *sajjati* (from √SAṆJ or √SAJ, to hang) “to cling, be attached.”<sup>79</sup> The term *saṅga* is very common in the suttas, occurring in various grammatical forms, mostly in verses and only as a list-name.<sup>80</sup> The list of 5 bonds is, however, rare, mentioned only by list-name and only in the verses,<sup>81</sup> but it does occur as the compound, *saṅgātiga*, “one who has overcome the bonds”<sup>82</sup> [S 7c\* = 8c\*]. What exactly does the term *saṅga* refer to?

**2.4.1.2 The 5 bonds** (*pañca,saṅgā*), as already noted [2.4.1.1], are: lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dosa*), delusion (*moha*), conceit (*māna*) and views (*diṭṭhi*). Although the list is mentioned by name in several places in the suttas,<sup>83</sup> they are never actually listed, except in the Abhidhamma and the Commentaries.<sup>84</sup> In the **Vibhaṅga**, the 5 are also called “darts” (*salla*).<sup>85</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> 3 bonds—lust, hatred and delusion—are, of course, the well-known 3 unwholesome roots—greed, hate and delusion, functioning at the preconscious level,<sup>86</sup> colouring the intentions behind our actions of body, speech and mind. On a deeper level, in the unconscious, the 3 unwholesome roots take a subtler, yet more pervasive, form as **the latent tendencies** (*anusaya*) of *lust, aversion* and *ignorance*, the accumulation of conditionings since time immemorial.

We repeatedly see these 3 latent tendencies appearing as a triad; as the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 of the 5 bonds (see above); and heading the 7 bonds [2.4.1.3]. We can safely conclude, then, that the 3 unwholesome roots are a grosser everyday manifestation of the 3 latent tendencies, which are, in turn, ramified into the 5 latent tendencies (also called the 5 bonds), and finally, they evolved into the set of **7 latent tendencies** that we are familiar with today. We will examine a little closer into how this may have occurred.

<sup>78</sup> *Pañca,saṅgātigo*’ti evaṃ sante pañcannaṃ raga,dosa,moha,māna,diṭṭhi,saṅgānaṃ atikkamanena pañca,saṅgātigo bhikkhu *ogha,tiṇṇo*’ti vuccati, cattāro oghe tiṇṇo yevāti vuccatīti attho. (DhA 4:109,9-11; VbhA §2480/504 *rāg’ādayo pañca lagganaṭṭhena saṅgā*, “the 5 comprising greed and so on”)

<sup>79</sup> S 1:25, 117 f; A 3:311, 4:289; Dh 170, 342; Sn 61, 212, 386, 390, 475; Dhs 1059; DhsA 363; J 3:201. See PED: *sajjati* (1).

<sup>80</sup> This is based on a “wildcard” search—saṅg\*—in the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā (VRI) Tipiṭaka CD (CSCD).

<sup>81</sup> Tha 15 = 633 = Dh 370.

<sup>82</sup> *Saṅgātiga* occurs in verses at S 1.3 (S 7\*-8\*) = Dh 370, 4:158\*; It 3.2.10/58; Sn 250c.

<sup>83</sup> Tha 15 = 633 = Dh 370; cf Tha 14.

<sup>84</sup> Vbh 377,16-18, §940/377; DhA 4:187; cf VbhA 503,26.

<sup>85</sup> Vbh 377,19-21 (VbhA 503,27).

<sup>86</sup> On the preconscious, see SD 17.8b esp (1.1.2; 2.2); SD 7.10 (3.3).

**2.4.1.3** A set of “7 bonds” (*satta,saṅga*) is mentioned only by list-name in the **Upaparikkha Sutta** (It 3.5.5).<sup>87</sup> The Sutta’s commentary lists these 7 bonds, and adds: “Some say that they are simply the 7 latent tendencies” (*Keci pana sattānusayā eva satta,saṅgāti vadanti*)<sup>88</sup> [2.4.1.3]. This is probably an early set which evolved during the 1<sup>st</sup> period of the Buddha’s ministry (the 1<sup>st</sup> 20-25 years),<sup>89</sup> well before the set of 7 latent tendencies was introduced.

The term *saṅga* is also mentioned in the Sutta Nipāta in the **Suddh’atṭhaka Sutta** (Sn 791b), the **Atta,-daṇḍa Sutta** (Sn 948b) and the **Mettaḡū Māṇava Pucchā** (Sn 1060b), all of which are patently ancient texts. Their respective commentaries all explain *saṅga* as referring to “the 7 bonds” (*satta,saṅgā*): those of lust (*raga,saṅga*), of hate (*dosa,saṅga*), of delusion (*moha,saṅga*), of conceit (*māna,saṅga*), of view (*diṭṭhi,saṅga*), of defilement (*kilesa,saṅga*) and of misconduct (*duccarita,saṅga*).<sup>90</sup>

**2.4.1.4** Here is a comparative table of the 7 bonds and the 7 latencies showing their parallelism:<sup>91</sup>

<u>The 7 bonds (<i>saṅga</i>)</u>			<u>The 7 latent tendencies (<i>anusaya</i>)<sup>92</sup></u>	
(1) craving	( <i>taṇhā</i> )	=	(1) sensual lust	( <i>kāma,rāga</i> )
(2) views	( <i>diṭṭhi</i> )		(2) aversion	( <i>paṭigha</i> )
(3) conceit	( <i>māna</i> )	=	(3) conceit	( <i>māna</i> )
(4) anger	( <i>kodha</i> )		(4) views	( <i>diṭṭhi</i> )
(5) ignorance	( <i>avijjā</i> )		(5) doubt	( <i>vicikicchā</i> )
(6) defilements	( <i>kilesa</i> )		(6) lust for existence	( <i>bhava,rāga</i> )
(7) moral misconduct	( <i>duccarita</i> )		(7) ignorance	( <i>avijjā</i> )

**Table 2.4.1.** A comparative table of the 7 bonds and the 7 latent tendencies

We can see, at a glance, from this comparative table of the 2 sets that their respective components significantly differ in name and in arrangement. On closer scrutiny, however, we will notice that the 1<sup>st</sup> items in the 2 sets: craving as a bond and sensual lust as a latent tendency are actually the same thing. Furthermore, the 3<sup>rd</sup> items of the two sets, conceit, are identical. The 2<sup>nd</sup> bond, views, is identical with the 4<sup>th</sup> latent tendency.

The 4<sup>th</sup> bond, anger, although somewhat narrower, overlaps in meaning with the 2<sup>nd</sup> latent tendency of aversion. Then, there is ignorance, the 5<sup>th</sup> bond, which is identical with the 7<sup>th</sup> and last latent tendency.

This leaves us with the last 2 bonds—those of defilements and moral misconduct—which do not seem to relate to the 5<sup>th</sup> latent tendency, doubt, and the 6<sup>th</sup>, lust for existence. Clearly, the last 2 bonds are broad terms, while the 2 latent tendencies are more specific [2.4.1.4]. This suggests that the list of 7 bonds is a very ancient one.

Anyway, this list of 7 bonds is found only a about half a dozen suttas only by list-name (which means that they were assumed to be widely known) at least during the Buddha’s time. But, in due course, they

<sup>87</sup> It 3.5.5/94,5, SD 33.14(2).

<sup>88</sup> ItA 2:121,11-13.

<sup>89</sup> On the 2 periods of the Buddha’s ministry, see SD 1.1 (2.2); SD 40a.1 (1.3).

<sup>90</sup> Nm 91,26-28 (Sn 791), 432,27-29 (Sn 948); Nc:Be 88,10-11 (Sn 1060b).

<sup>91</sup> See SD 33.14 (2.2).

<sup>92</sup> The 7 latent tendencies: D 33,2.3(12)/3:254, 34,1.8(4)/282; A 4:9; Pm 123; Vbh §949/383; Yam 268; also *Anusaya*, SD 31.3 (1).



seem to be forgotten so that the Commentaries had to list them, to remind us that they refer to the 7 latent tendencies [2.4.1.3].

We will now try to learn how this set of 7 latent tendencies rose to prominence.

**2.4.1.5** Pali terms with broad or general senses are common in the suttas, especially in **the Aṭṭhaka Vagga** (Sn ch 4) and **the Pārāyana Vagga** (Sn ch 5), clearly the earliest works in the Nikāyas, indeed, of Buddhism as a whole.<sup>93</sup> Let us assume the rule that the earlier Dharma-lists tend to be shorter and simpler, often without any technicality (that is, they tend to be contextual).<sup>94</sup>

One of the oldest Dharma-lists is that of **the 3 unwholesome roots** (*akusala, mūla*): greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*)<sup>95</sup> [2.4.1.5]. This triad is embedded in both lists [2.4.1.3] as craving/sensual lust, anger/aversion and delusion/ignorance. The last, ignorance (a bond), is only a near-synonym of delusion (a root), but is identical to the 7<sup>th</sup> latent tendency. It is likely that both lists—the 7 bonds and the 7 latent tendencies—evolved from this triad. [2.4.1.4]

As the set of latent tendencies proves itself more useful, the set of bonds was set aside. We may even surmise that the “bonds” (*saṅga*) are only mentioned by list-name but not their components because they functionally refer just as well to the 7 latent tendencies.

## 2.4.2 The roots, the bonds and the latent tendencies

**2.4.2.1** We will now try to trace how the set of 3 unwholesome roots evolved into the set of 7 latent tendencies in the suttas. The 3 unwholesome roots are actually mentioned as “latent tendencies” in **the Cha Chakka Sutta** (M 148) in a long and instructive passage describing how our reactions to sense-experiences and thoughts bring about the latent tendencies, thus:

(1) When one is touched by *a pleasant feeling*,  
one delights in it, welcomes it, remains attached to it.  
Thus one’s **latent tendency of lust** (*rāgānusaya*)<sup>96</sup> lies latent.

(2) When one is touched by *a painful feeling*,  
one sorrows, grieves, laments, beats one’s breast and falls into confusion.  
Thus one’s **latent tendency of aversion** (*paṭighānusaya*) lies latent.

(3) When one is touched by *a feeling that is neither pleasant nor painful*,  
one does not understand it as it really is,  
the arising, the passing away, the gratification, the danger, and the escape with regards  
to that *feeling*.<sup>97</sup>  
Thus one’s **latent tendency of ignorance** (*avijjā’nusaya*)<sup>98</sup> lies latent. (M 148,28/3:285), SD 26.6

<sup>93</sup> See A K Warder, *Pali Metre*, 1967:§303; K R Norman, *Pali Literature*, 1983:63 f, 69, 84-86; Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pali Literature*, 1996:§§94, 98, 116.

<sup>94</sup> On the rule of context, see SD 53.5 (4.2.3).

<sup>95</sup> On the 3 unwholesome roots, see **Mūla S** (A 3.69), SD 18.2; SD 4.14 (1.5); SD 50.20 (3.1.3).

<sup>96</sup> On these 3 latent tendencies (*anusaya*)—lust, aversion and ignorance—see **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44,25-28/1:303 f), SD 40a.9.

<sup>97</sup> *Adukkham-asukhāya vedanāya phuṭṭho samāno tassā vedanāya samudayañ ca atthaṅgamañ ca assādañ ca ādīnavañ ca nissaranañ ca yathā, bhūtañ na-p, pajānāti*. On the underscored terms (ie, “the arising, the passing away, the gratification, the danger, and the escape”), see eg **Satta-ṭ, ṭhāna S** (S 22.57/3:62-65), SD 29.2.

The above descriptions can be graphically represented thus:

unwholesome					latent
root	reaction	to	feeling	tendency	
greed	→ “delights”	→	the pleasant	→ lust	
hate	→ “sorrows”	→	the unpleasant	→ aversion	
delusion	→ “does not understand”	→	the neutral	→ ignorance	

**Table 2.4.2.1.** How the roots become latent tendencies

**2.4.2.2** The above passage [2.4.2.1] can be paraphrased in terms of the 3 unwholesome roots and the 3 latent tendencies as follows:

- When we *act* with greed (preconscious unwholesome intention) toward a **pleasant** feeling arising from any of the 6 senses, we then *react* (unconsciously) by feeding the latent tendency of lust.
- When we *act* with hate toward an **unpleasant** feeling arising from any of the 6 senses, we then *react* by feeding the latent tendency of aversion.
- When we *act* with delusion toward a **neutral** feeling arising from any of the 6 senses, we then *react* by feeding the latent tendency of ignorance.<sup>99</sup>

**2.4.2.3** What occurs here is that our actions rooted in any of the unwholesome roots (intention) feed the respective latent tendencies: our unwholesome intention, to so speak, converts the *root* into a *latent tendency*: greed into lust; hate into aversion; delusion into ignorance.

We can now see how the Buddha uses a particular teaching to clarify a certain situation. To explain how the unawakened “normally” acts when confronted with the 3 kinds of feelings, the Buddha uses the teaching model of the **3 unwholesome roots** to show how they each feed the 3 latent tendencies. But, as we shall see, the process also works in reverse [2.4.2.7(1)].

In **S 8\*** [§3], the Buddha teaches on overcoming **the 10 fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*) for the attaining of the path, that is, attaining streamwinning or even up to attaining arhathood. There is also a wordplay on the number “5”. The 5 bonds, then, apparently refers to the 5 latent tendencies. It seems that the term “bond” (*saṅga*) sometimes works as an old name for “latent tendency” (*anusaya*) [1.2.3].

**2.4.2.4** There is a helpful passage in **the Paṭisambhidā, magga** that explains how “the fetters are abandoned” (*saññojanāni pahīyanti*) and how “the latent tendencies are eradicated” (*anusayā byanti-honti*) give here, followed by a comparative table, thus:

With **the streamwinner path** (*sotāpatti, magga*):

these 3 fetters—self-identity view, doubt, attachment to rituals and vows—are abandoned; and these 2 latent tendencies—those of view and of doubt are eradicated.

With **the once-returner path** (*sakadāgāmi, magga*):

these 2 fetters—the gross (*olārika*) fetters of sensual lust and of aversion—are abandoned, and these 2 latent tendencies—the gross latent tendencies of sensual lust and of aversion are eradicated.

<sup>98</sup> Note “ignorance” is mentioned twice here: this is the first one, which refers only to the lack of understanding of the arising, etc, of neutral feeling (which can be called “cognitive ignorance”). The second mention [§28b] is the ignorance that is at the root of samsara (cyclic existence) (which can be called “existential ignorance”). (MA 5:101)

<sup>99</sup> This last reaction occurs *without* our knowing it, arising from lack of wisdom by not reflecting on the impermanence of the neutral state.

With **the non-returner path** (*anāgāmi,magga*): these 2 fetters—the secondary (*anusahagata*) fetters of sensual lust and of aversion—are abandoned; and these 2 latent tendencies—the secondary latent tendencies of sensual desire and of aversion—are eradicated.

With **the arhat path** (*arahatta,magga*): these 5 fetters—lust for form existence, lust for formless existence, conceit, restlessness and ignorance—are abandoned; and these 3 latent tendencies—conceit, lust for existence and ignorance—are eradicated.

(Pm 11.2/2:94 f)

**2.4.2.5** The technical details of **the Paṭisambhidā,magga passage** (Pm 11.2) [2.4.2.4] can be graphically represented thus:

	the lower fetters					the higher fetters					the 7 latent tendencies						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii
streamwinner	√	√	√											√	√		
once-returner	x	x	x								o	o		x	x		
non-returner	x	x	x	x	x						a	a		x	x		
arhat	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	√	√

**Key:** √ eradicated; x eradicated earlier; o gross (*oḷārika*) latent tendency eradicated; a secondary (*anusahagata*) latent tendency eradicated. [Table 2.4.2.7]

**Table 2.4.2.5.** The progress of the 4 saints in terms of the fetters and the latent tendencies

Here is a paraphrase of **Table 2.4.2.5**:

**The streamwinner** (*sotāpanna*) has cut the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 lower fetters: self-identity view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows. By the same process, he has eradicated the latent tendencies that are views and doubts.

**The once-returner** (*sakad-āgāmī*), like the streamwinner, has already cut the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 fetters and eradicated latent tendencies that are views and doubts. He goes on to eradicate the gross latent tendencies that are sensual lust and aversion.

**The non-returner** (*anāgāmi*) has cut all the 5 lower fetters and, like the streamwinner and once-returner, eradicated latent tendencies that are views and doubts, too. He goes on to eradicate the secondary latent tendencies (the residues) of sensual lust and aversion.

**The arhat** (*arahata*) has cut all the 10 fetters and previously eradicated the latent tendencies of sensual lust, aversion, views and doubt, too. He goes on to eradicate the latent tendencies that are conceit, lust for existence, and ignorance.

**2.4.2.6** We will now explore **why there are 2 sets of criteria for the progress of sainthood** in early Buddhism. Isn't just one of the 2 sets sufficient to describe the stages of sainthood progress? After all, from **Table 2.4.2.7**, we can see that the 10 fetters appear to be an expansion of the 7 latent tendencies. At least 6 of the components of the 2 sets are identical; only 4 of the 10 fetters—*sīla-b,bata parāmāsa*, *rūpa,raga*, *arūpa,raga* and *uddhacca*—seem to be absent from the list of latent tendencies. (Those unique fetters given in English are printed in *italics*.)

Even then, we equate the latent tendency *bhava,rāga* as a common term for the fetters *rūpa,raga* and *arūpa,raga*. This leaves us with only 2 fetters--*sīla-b,bata parāmāsa* and *uddhacca*—as unique, not listed among the latent tendencies.

***Sīla-b,bata parāmāsa***, “attachment to rituals and vows,” is an externalization of the spiritual locus of self-control, that is, a reliance on a repetitive external action for succour and salvation. This is clearly against the early Buddhist spirit of self-reliance and taking the Dharma as our only refuge.<sup>100</sup> *Sīla-b,bata parāmāsa* is thus a major hindrance to practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, and need to be overcome at the start of our practice to reach the path of awakening.

***Uddhacca*** seems to be a subtle defilement arising from compassion. Again here, we see an act of externalizing our attention—this time, showing a concern for others even before we are awakened. Since we are unawakened, it would be almost impossible to effectively teach, much less convert, others, especially those with defilements that are thicker than ours. As a subtle defilement, this is known as *dhamm’-uddhacca*, “Dharma-based restlessness.” Since it is a subtle form of desire, it is only eradicated when *kāma,rāga* and *paṭigha* are overcome. Hence, it is regarded as a higher fetter.<sup>101</sup>

**2.4.2.7 The Paṭisambhidā,magga passage** and its summary [2.4.2.4] give us vital clues regarding how the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion) and the 3 latent tendencies (lust, aversion and ignorance) are related to **the 7 bonds** [2.4.1.4], **the 7 latent tendencies** and **the 10 fetters**. Before we examine this interesting situation, let us look at how the 10 fetters and the 7 latent tendencies are related.

**Table 2.4.2.7** summarizes the teachings on **the Paṭisambhidā,magga** on the parallel workings of the 10 fetters and the 7 latent tendencies in the development of the path of awakening.

<b>The 10 fetters</b> (the higher fetters are in <b>bold</b> )			<b>The 7 latent tendencies</b>
(1) <u>self-identity view</u>	<i>sakkāya,ditṭhi</i>		
(2) <u>spiritual doubt</u>	<i>vicikicchā</i>		
(3) <u>attachment to rituals and vows</u>	<i>sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa</i>		
(4) sensual lust	<i>kāma,rāga</i>	=	(i) sensual lust <i>kāma,rāga</i>
(5) aversion (or repulsion)	<i>paṭigha</i> <sup>102</sup>	=	(ii) aversion <i>paṭigha</i>
<b>(6) lust for form existence</b>	<i>rūpa,rāga</i>	}	(iii) conceit <i>māna</i>
<b>(7) lust for formless existence</b>	<i>arūpa,rāga</i>		(iv) views <i>ditṭhi</i>
<b>(8) conceit</b>	<i>māna</i>		(v) doubt <i>vicikicchā</i>
<b>(9) restlessness</b>	<i>uddhacca</i>		(vi) lust for existence <i>bhava,rāga</i>
<b>(10) ignorance</b>	<i>avijjā</i>	=	(vii) ignorance <i>avijjā</i>

**Table 2.4.2.7** The 10 fetters and 7 latent tendencies [Table 2.0]

We will now basically examine how the 3 unwholesome roots evolved into the 10 fetters and what arose in between in terms of teachings used by the Buddha.

(1) Following the guideline that “few and simpler is older,” we may conclude that **the 3 unwholesome roots** (*akusala,mūla*) is probably the earliest set in consideration. We have noted how these 3 roots (as unwholesome intention) (*lobha, dosa, moha*) feed **the 3 latent tendencies** (*ragānusaya, paṭighānusaya, avijjā’nusaya*) [2.4.2.3]. The process also works the other way around: the latent tendencies feed and condition the 3 wholesome roots. We are unconscious of the latent tendencies (we can say they work in

<sup>100</sup> See **The one true refuge**, SD 3.1.

<sup>101</sup> SD 41.5 (5); SD 32.7 (2.1.4, 2.2.3); SD 41.4 (2.2.1).

<sup>102</sup> In some places, *paṭigha* is replaced by ill will (*vyāpāda*).

our “unconscious” = they work unconsciously).<sup>103</sup> This model is used to explain how we are caught up in bad karma.<sup>104</sup>

(2) From the 3 unwholesome roots evolved **the 5 bonds** (*pañca saṅga*) (*raga, dosa, moha, māna* and *diṭṭhi*) [2.4.1.2]. Notice that the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 bonds are actually the 3 unwholesome roots, to which are added *māna* and *diṭṭhi*.

**Māna**, “conceit,” is a mental measuring of self and others in terms of inferiority, superiority and equality as psychological complexes.<sup>105</sup> **Conceit** is like a mental strategy we habitually have on how to act, react or not with others, and what we materially or emotionally profit from it. Basically, it is driven by the desire for pleasure (self-satisfaction, etc) and power (approval of others, etc).

Conceit is rooted in and spurred by **diṭṭhi**, “views.” These are delusions that what we profit from *māna* are lasting, pleasurable and self-promoting. In other words, we have no understanding of the 3 universal characteristics of impermanence, suffering and non-self, or simply reject them. Both *māna* and *diṭṭhi* work through *lobha, dosa* and *moha* (the 3 roots) in **the preconscious** [2.4.1.2], motivating and guiding how we act, speak and think.

(3) The 5 bonds work very much like the 3 unwholesome roots; the former seems to duplicate the latter’s functions. Moreover, the *unconscious* latent tendencies are more complicated than the *preconscious* qualities of the 5 bonds. In time, the 5 bonds evolved into **the 7 bonds** (*satta saṅga*) which appears to be popular for a while<sup>106</sup> [2.4.1.3]. The Commentaries explain “the 7 bonds” as those of lust (*raga, saṅga*), of hate (*dosa, saṅga*), of delusion (*moha, saṅga*), of conceit (*māna, saṅga*), of view (*diṭṭhi, saṅga*), of defilement (*kilesa, saṅga*) and of misconduct (*duccarita, saṅga*).<sup>107</sup>

Here again, we see the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 of the 7 bonds to be the familiar triad of the unwholesome roots (*lobha, dosa* and *moha*). *Diṭṭhi*, the last of the 5 bonds [see (2) above] is also present; but *māna* is replaced by *kilesa* and *duccarita*, referring respectively to psychological impurities and ethical misconduct. The present of the last two is probably an attempt to include teachings that explain *the unwholesome states of mind* and their manifestations through body, speech and mind. But this seems too broad to be really helpful but, in time, grew into the 7 latent tendencies.

(4) It must have taken a relatively short time for the 7 bonds to evolve into the more useful **7 latent tendencies** (*satta anusaya*): *kāma, raga, paṭigha, māna, diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, bhava, raga* and *avijjā* [Table 2.4.1]. This set of 7 latent tendencies is very helpful in explaining the **psychological** process—what happens to our mind—when we attain the path, that is, become the 4 kinds of saints: the streamwinner, the once-returned, the non-returned and the arhat.<sup>108</sup> This soteriological process is elaborated in **the Paṭisambhidā, magga** [2.4.2.4].

The 7 latent tendencies as a teaching set neatly summarizes the psychological dynamics of the awakening process. It effectively presents an early Buddhist theory of **the psychodynamics of human mental evolution**, or simply, the awakening process. Even on a mundane level, the set can be used as a teaching and practice guide for anyone aspiring to attain the path.

<sup>103</sup> In the spirit of early Buddhism, it is best not to think of “the unconscious” as any kind of fixed state or “store-consciousness.” These are fluid, dynamic process of the mind described in fluid, dynamic language.

<sup>104</sup> This model is elaborated into, eg, the 10 unwholesome karmic courses (*akusala kamma, patha*): **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,7-10), SD 5.7; **Sañcetanika S** (A 10.206,1-7), SD 3.9.

<sup>105</sup> “Complex” is used here simply as convenient term without any technicality, except to highlight the fact that they work in a complicated network of conditionings (causes-effects, action-reactions), rooted in views (*diṭṭhi*).

<sup>106</sup> The set was known to the Iti, vuttaka compiler, the laywoman Khujj’uttarā: SD 8.6 (8.2); SD 15.11 (1.3.3.1).

<sup>107</sup> Nm 91,26-28 (Sn 791), 432,27-29 (Sn 948); Nc:BE 88,10-11 (Sn 1060b).

<sup>108</sup> On these 4 kinds of saints (*ariya*), see SD 10,16 (11-14).

(5) What is needed now is a teaching model that will help the practitioner or neophyte to appreciate, in practical or better **ethical** terms, what to avoid in the world in the first place. How do we fully prepare ourself—in mind, body and speech—to expedite the attaining of the path? What sort of spiritual skillful means can help us avoid and rise beyond wrong conduct and wrong views, so that we can focus all our energies into working towards the path?

The answer to all these questions is found in the one most successful teaching model for awakening: that of **the 10 fetters** (*dasa samyojana*), comprising *sakkāya, diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sila-b, bata, paramāsa, kāma, raga, paṭigha, rūpa, raga, arūpa, raga, māna, uddhacca* and *avijjā* [Table 2.0]. This set neatly shows which of the fetters need to be broken as the true disciple progresses on the path of awakening.

While the set of the 10 fetters effectively explains the full **ethical** bases in the process of awakening, the set of the 7 latent tendencies clarifies which tendency the saint uproots so that he is fully free from it [Table 2.4.2]. While the 10 fetters serve as a “social teaching” that helps us understand why other religious and ethical systems do not succeed or have serious flaws, the 7 latent tendencies are a set of personal or **psychological** guidelines for the practitioner to use to gauge his own progress on the path.

## 2.5 THE 4 FLOODS

### 2.5.1 The Sutta’s climax

**2.5.1.1** The climax of **the Kati Chinda Sutta** (S 1.5) is the Buddha’s declaration at the very end of the Sutta that one who has “cut” the 5 lower fetters, “abandoned” the 5 higher fetters, “further cultivated” the 5 faculties, and “gone beyond” the 5 bonds is called a **flood-crosser** (*ogha, tiṇṇa*) [S 8\*]. The “flood-crosser” is, of course, the arhat, that is, one who has overcome the 4 “floods” (*ogha*)<sup>109</sup> that are sense-desire, existence, views and ignorance.<sup>110</sup>

**2.5.1.2 The 4 floods** (*catu ogha*) are a well-known set [2.5.1.1]. They are so called because they overwhelm our lives, drowning us in worldliness. Since they yoke us to worldliness, they are also called the “4 yokes” (*catu yoga*).<sup>111</sup>

Technically, they are known as the “**influxes**” (*āsava*),<sup>112</sup> so called because they “flow” (*āsavati*) into our minds through the 6 sense-bases (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind). We mentally “process” these experiences of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and minding, thinking them over (perceiving and conceiving),<sup>113</sup> measuring them (liking, disliking and being bored),<sup>114</sup> and attracting more thoughts (mental proliferation).<sup>115</sup> Such activities are rooted in the latent tendencies,<sup>116</sup> which are fed by the influxes and so perpetually self-generate.<sup>117</sup>

These 4 influxes, floods or yokes are as follows:

<sup>109</sup> For details on the 4 floods (*ogha*), see **Ogha Pañha S** (S 38.11), SD 30.3(1.4) + (1.4.2). The 4 influxes are also known as “yokes” (*yoga*): SD 30.3 (1.4.2 n).

<sup>110</sup> M 1:386; S 1:3, 23, 4:158 = It 58; Sn 250, 473, 621; DhA 4:159.

<sup>111</sup> D 16,10.4 n (SD 9).

<sup>112</sup> See SD 30.3 (1.4).

<sup>113</sup> On perception (*saññā*), see **Saññā**, SD 17.4. On conception (*maññanā*), see **Mūla,pariyāya S** (M 1,3) n, SD 11.9; **Ejā S 1** (S 35.90), SD 29.10 (3). See also SD 31.10 (2.6); SD 43.3 (4.2.3.5).

<sup>114</sup> On feeling, see **Vedanā**, SD 17.3.

<sup>115</sup> On thought proliferation (*papañca*), see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18), SD 6.14 (2).

<sup>116</sup> On the latent tendencies, see **Anusaya**, SD 31.3.

<sup>117</sup> See SD 4.25 (5); SD 50.12 (2.5.2).

	<u>the influxes</u>	<u>the floods</u>	<u>the yokes</u>
(1) sensual desire	<i>kām'āsava</i>	<i>kām'ogha</i>	<i>kāma,yoga</i>
(2) existence	<i>bhav'āsava</i>	<i>bhav'ogha</i>	<i>bhava,yoga</i>
(3) views	<i>diṭṭh'āsava</i>	<i>diṭṭh'ogha</i>	<i>diṭṭhi,yoga</i>
(4) ignorance	<i>avijjāsava</i>	<i>avijj'ogha</i>	<i>avijjā,yoga</i> .

### 2.5.2 The fetters and the influxes

**2.5.2.1** The Sutta's closing verse [S 8\*], which records the Buddha's answer to the young deva, mentions 4 sets of teachings: the 5 lower fetters (to be "cut"), the 5 higher fetters (to be "abandoned"), the 5 faculties (to be "further cultivated"), and the arhat or one who "has gone beyond 5 bonds." Why does the Buddha still mention yet another set of teachings: the 4 influxes (*āsava*)?

The answer is that the Buddha uses these teaching sets to highlight the different dimensions of our being and existence as we work to overcome our defilements and as we progress on the path of awakening. **The latent tendencies** (*anusaya*) describe what needs to be overcome in the psychological dimension [2.4.2.7(5)]. **The 10 fetters** (*saṃyojana*) (the 5 lower fetters + the 5 higher fetters) describe what needs to be overcome in the ethical dimension [2.4.2.7(5)].

**The bonds** (a set of 5, and then 7) hover between both these dimensions, the psychological and the ethical. These sets were used in the suttas for a while but fell out of use. A remnant of them can be found in the rare description of an arhat as "one who has overcome the bonds" (*saṅgâtiga*) [S 8d\*].

The same verse mentioning *saṅgâtiga* alongside *ogha,tinṇa* seems to hint that the former is not so well known so that the latter needs to be mentioned, too, as a synonym for an arhat. The "floods" (*ogha*) are a metaphorical name for the "influxes" (*āsava*) [2.5.1.2]. The Buddha uses **āsava** as a convenient **philosophical summary** of the various teachings he has mentioned. This is a kind of shorthand for the public, that is, the non-Buddhists, so that we have an easier word to remember for the spiritual training that the Buddha has to offer.<sup>118</sup>

<u>The 10 fetters (<i>saṃyojana</i>)</u>		<u>The 3 influxes (<i>āsava</i>)</u> <sup>119</sup>
(1) personality view	<i>sakkāya,diṭṭhi</i>	} (1) the influx of sense-desire
(2) spiritual doubt	<i>vicikicchā</i>	
(3) attachment to rituals and vows	<i>sīla-b,bata parāmāsa</i>	
(4) sensual lust	<i>kāma,rāga</i>	
(5) repulsion	<i>paṭigha</i>	
(6) greed for form existence	<i>rūpa,rāga</i>	} (2) the influx of existence
(7) greed for formless existence	<i>arūpa,rāga</i>	
(8) conceit	<i>māna</i>	} (3) the influx of ignorance
(9) restlessness	<i>uddhacca</i>	
(10) ignorance	<i>avijjā</i>	

(S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377)<sup>120</sup>

**Table 2.5.2:** The fetters and the influxes

<sup>118</sup> On 3 or 4 influxes? see SD 30.3 (1.3.2).

<sup>119</sup> For a Table on the 10 fetters and the 4 influxes, see SD 50.12 (2.5).

<sup>120</sup> On how the 4 influxes fit into the 10 fetters, see SD 50.12 (2.5.2.2) + Table.

**2.5.2.2** The older set of **the influxes** (*āsava*) is a triad: the influxes of sense-desire, of existence and of ignorance. From its brevity, it is possible that the set of the 3 influxes is probably an ancient set, as old as the set of 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala,mūla*) [2.4.2.7(1)].

The set of 4 influxes was introduced later, clearly when there were more new members of the order and the Buddha’s teaching was becoming more well known and popular, so that the Buddha and the early Buddhists had to contend with a wide range of views [2.5.2.2].

The 3 influxes are, in fact, a summary of **the 10 fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*), which can be subsumed under **the 3 influxes** (*āsava*). That is to say, the 3 influxes, an ancient listing of the basic defilements that keep us suffering in the world, is, in due course, expanded into the 10 fetters, to show how they should be overcome to attain the various stages of the path, thus:

**2.5.2.3** The 4<sup>th</sup> influx, found in the later model of 4 influxes [2.5.2.2], is the influx of view, would cover conceit and restlessness, as both of them arise on account of not fully understanding the true nature of the mind and reality, even at this level of the learner who, although being saints, are still not arhats yet. The influx of view, in other words, is subsumed under the influx of existence.<sup>121</sup>

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## Kati Chinda Sutta

### The Discourse on Cutting What?

S 1.5

**1** Originating in Sāvattḥī.

Standing at one side, the young deva uttered this verse in the Blessed One’s presence:

- |          |  |       |   |
|----------|--|-------|---|
| <b>2</b> | <i>Kati chinde kati jahe<br/>kati c’uttari bhāvaye<br/>kati saṅgâtigo bhikkhu<br/>ogha,tiṇṇo’ti vuccatîti.</i>     | (S 7) | How many are to be cut, how many abandoned,<br>and how to be further cultivated?<br>When a monk has gone beyond how many bonds<br>is he called a “flood-crosser?”               |
| <b>3</b> | <i>Pañca chinde pañca jahe<br/>pañca c’uttari bhāvaye<br/>pañca saṅgâtigo bhikkhu<br/>ogha,tiṇṇo’ti vuccatîti.</i> | (S 8) | One must cut 5, abandon 5,<br>and must cultivate a further 5.<br>When a monk <sup>122</sup> has gone beyond 5 bonds,<br>he is called a “flood-crosser.” (Tha 15 = 633 = Dh 370) |

— evaṃ —

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<sup>121</sup> On the fetters and the influxes, further see SD 30.3 (1.3.3). Further on the fetters and the influxes, see SD 50.12 (2.5.2.2) + Table.

<sup>122</sup> “A “monk” (*bhikkhu*) refers to anyone who is meditating Dharmawise: see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) + n, SD 13.3; SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5); SD 16.7 (1.1.1.2).