SD 65.16

N'atthi,dinna Sutta

The Discourse on "There is Nothing Given" | **S 24.5**
or, **N'atthi Sutta** The Discourse on Nothing
Theme: Views arise on account of the aggregates
Translated and annotated by Piya Tan 2012, ©2026

Key & References (listed according to textual hierarchy)**:**

D	Dighā Nikāya, *Sīla-k,khandha,vagga Pāli*. Rangoon: Burmese Buddha Sāsana Council, 1954.
Comy	Commentary = DA.
DA	Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā, *Sumaṅgala,vilāsinī*. *Sīla-k,khandha,vagga Aṭṭhakathā*. Rangoon: Burmese Buddha Sāsana Council, 1956.
Subcomy	Subcommentary (DAṬ:Be and DAṬ:Ee).
DAṬ:Be	[also DAṬ] Burmese Subcommentary. Dīgha Nikāya Ṭīkā, *Sīla-k,khandha,vagga Ṭīkā.* Rangoon: Burmese Buddha Sāsana Council, 1961. (DAṬ 225-228)
DAṬ:Ee	PTS Subcommentary. (DAṬ:Ee) Dīghānikāyaṭṭhakathā-Ṭīkā. Ed Lily de Silva, vol 1, London: Luzac, for the Pali Text Society (PTS), 1970. (DAṬ 1:292-296)
NSubcomy	New Subcommentary (DANṬ).
DANṬ	Burmese New Subcommentary. Sīlakkhandhavagga Abhinavaṭīkā, *Sādhu,vilāsinī*, by (Ācariya) Ñāṇābhivaṁsa Mahāthera, Rangoon: Burmese Buddha Sāsana Council, 1961.

References are according to "volume:page" or "volume:page,line(s)." [Additional comments are given within square brackets.]

1 Sutta summary and significance

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

Various forms of wrong view—philosophical, religious and speculative—arise on account of the 5 aggregates and how they are perceived. When this is clearly understood, one gains streamwinning, that is, the first stage of the path of awakening.

1.2 SUTTA SIGNIFICANCE

The N'atthi,dinna Sutta (S 24.5), laid out in full (abbreviating only the wrong-view pericope), is a spiritual delight to experience. Indeed, it is nearly impossible to understand much of a Sutta translation that has been painfully lopped in a Procrustean manner for commercial convenience and profit. A scholar may perhaps be able to skim through the abbreviated expressions and passages, get a glimpse of the gist of the text, and then move on to other things.

An insightful scholar or Dharma-spirited student would surely benefit from and enjoy a sutta passage that is translated in full, perhaps with helpful annotations. We should be reminded that suttas—both the text and translation—are not meant to be read for entertainment, not even for information, but for inspiring and inducing spiritual change in us.

Hence, they should not be treated like a jigsaw puzzle with missing pieces for the viewer to complete by using their imagination. Rather, suttas are meant to be windows into the Dharma garden. Even a small open window without any obstruction will give us a helpful view of the beautiful garden and let in some cool breeze and fresh air.

2 Ajita Kesambalī and his views

2.1 AJITA KESAMBALĪ THE SECTARIAN GURU

2.1.1 Ajita the materialist annihilationist

In Sanskrit, his name is Ajita Keśa,kambala. The nick-name *kesa,kambalī* means "of the hair-blanket," since he wore a cloak of human hair. His views of materialism and nihilism—or materialist annihilationism—are refuted in **the Apaṇṇaka Sutta** (M 60).[1] He is listed amongst the 6 sectarian teachers in **the Sāmañ-ñaphala Sutta** (D 2).[2]

2.1.2 The 6 sectarian teachers

The 6 sectarian or heterodox teachers, often called "the 6 teachers" (*satthā*) are as follows (along with mention of their views):[3]

(1) Pūraṇa Kassapa	antinomian ethics, amoralism, non-action,
(2) Makkhali Gosāla	fatalism, determinism, denial of causality,
(3) Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta	fourfold restraint, liberation through self-mortification,
(4) Sañjaya Belaṭṭhi,putta	agnosticism, skepticism, evasion,
(5) Pakudha Kaccāyana	atomism (forerunner of Vaiśeṣika philosophy),
(6) Ajita Kesa,kambalī	materialism, annihilationism.

For further details on their views, see **Kutūhala,sālā Sutta** (S 44.9), SD 23.15 (2).

2.1.3 The *nâstika* movement

2.1.3.1 Medhātithi,[4] defining *haitukāḥ* at Manu 4.30 (*The Principal Upaniṣads,* ed S Radhakrishnan, 1:243) asserts that the *nâstikas* (who reject the established brahminical system) upheld the doctrines of *nâsti para,loko nâsti dattaṁ nâsti hutam iti* ("there is no hereafter [next world], no value in giving, no value in sacrifice"), while the Buddhist phrase has *n'atthi ayaṁ loko,* etc.[5]

2.1.3.2 However, in academic usage, **the term** *nâstika* simply refers to those who reject the texts (especially the Vedas) and the authority of the brahmins. Technically, the Buddhists and other "recluses" (*samaṇa*; Skt *śramaṇa*) are thus ***nâstika,*** "the heterodox" in the brahmin terminology, or simply, "non-brahmin."

Other than the early Buddhists, most of the other recluses of the *samaṇa* movement were said to be "wanderers" (*paribbājaka*). Many, if not most, of these wanderers, though said to be "homeless," lived settled lives in their own communities (each with a leader), and were often patronized by the rich, like the community outside Rājagaha numbering some 3,000 led by the wanderer Nigrodha, as related in **the**

[1] **M 60**,5-12/1:401-404 (SD 35.5).

[2] **D 2**,21/1:55), SD 8.10.

[3] They are mentioned in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,16-39), SD 8.10; see also **Silence and the Buddha**, SD 44.1 (1.2.1).

[4] **Medhātithi** was one of the oldest and most famous commentators on **the *Manusmṛti*** or the Laws of Manu, a code of traditional laws (*dharma*), belonging to the Hindu **Dharmaśāstra**, which incl the caste system. His dates and location are not certain. For refs, see [Wiki]. 4 Aug 2026.

[5] For a discussion, see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.1(VII) n on "no next world" in qu on Ajita Kesa,kambala (from Sāmañña,phala S). See Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:94, 98 f; Bh Bodhi, *The Discourse on The Fruits of Recluseship,* 1989:9-83; P S Jaini, "Sramaṇas, Their Conflict with Brahmanical Society" (1970), 2001:57-61.

Udumbarikā Siha,nāda Sutta (D 25).[6] They led easy and loose lives, "all talking loudly, shouting, making great noise, a din, and indulging in various kinds of **animal [low] talk**."[7]

2.2 AJITA KESAMBALĪ'S MATERIALIST ANNIHILATIONISM

2.2.0 A commentary on Ajita's materialist annihilationist views

The following study is based on the related Dīgha Nikāya Commentary and Subcommentaries, which are paraphrased in parts for smoother reading.[8]

Ajita's wrong views are listed at §2 in the Sutta

2.2.1 Ajita's rejection of karma and rebirth

2.2.1.1 "There is nothing given" (*n'atthi dinnaṁ*) [§2]. **Comy**: He says this in connection with (his view) that there is no karmic fruit of giving (DA 1:165,11 f); that there is no fruit of offerings (*n'atthi yiṭ-ṭhaṁ*); that there is no fruit of sacrifices (*n'atthi hutaṁ*). (DA 1:165,13-15)

2.2.1.2 "**There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions**" (*n'atthi sukata,dukkaṭānaṁ*[9] *kammānaṁ phalaṁ vipāko*). **Comy**: Actions are neither wholesome nor unwholesome. Actions have no consequences. (DA 1:165,16-18)

[The implication here is that our actions have no moral significance, that we are not responsible for anything done whether good or evil.]

2.2.1.3 "There is no this world, no next world" (*n'atthi ayaṁ loko, n'atthi paro loko*). **Comy:** There is neither the present world, nor the world beyond. For one living in the world *beyond* (in time or in space) this world does not exist, and for one living in *this* world the world *beyond* does not exist. He shows that all are annihilated just where they are. (DA 1:165,19-21)

[This last statement seems contradictory. It means that the world in which one lives does exist after all—which is tautological!]

2.2.1.4 Subcomy: For one existing in the world beyond, there is no present world to be gained through karma, and for one existing in the present world, there is no world beyond to be gained through karma. (DAṬ 225,25-28)

"**All are annihilated right where they are**" (*sabbe tattha tatth'eva ucchijjanti*) means that whatever state of existence or type of birth they are in, they are right there annihilated; they perish without re-arising. (DAṬ 226,1 f, DAṬ:Ee 1:292,20-24)

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[6] **D 25**/3:36-57, SD 1.4.

[7] **D 25**,2/3:36 f (SD 1.4). *Tiracchāna,kathā*, lit "animal talk." As animals mostly walk parallel to the earth, so this kind of talk does not lead on upwards. This section is *mutatis mutandis* as at **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,3/1:178 f). Cf **Lohicca S** (D 1:228). For a fuller list, called "the moralities" (*sīla*), see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,43-62/1:4-12), SD 25.2 & Intro (3), & **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,43-63/ 1:63-70), **Tiracchāna Kathā S** (S 56.10), SD 65.13; SD 8.10 & Intro (3). For details on tiracchāna,kathā, see SD 10.16 (3.4.2). See DEB: tiracchāna,kathā.

[8] For tr excerpts from the Comy on **the Sāmañña phala S** (D 2) related to Ajita Kesambala, see Bh Bodhi, *The Discourse on the Fruits of Recluseship,* Kandy, 1989:83-77. For an academic study, see G Macqueen, *A Study of the Śrāmaṇyaphala-Sūtra,* Wiesbaden, 1988:269 f, 272 f.

[9] Ce Ee *sukkaṭadukkaṭānaṁ*.

2.2.2 Ajita's rejection of parenthood

2.2.2.1 "There is no mother, no father" (*n'atthi mātā, n'atthi pitā*) [§2]. **Comy:** He says that this is due to the absence of karmic fruit in regard to right and wrong practice. (DA 1:165,22 f)

[Technically, such a view rejects the notion of "family." The concept of "**family**" serves as the fundamental building block of society. It provides the primary environment for emotional security, the transmission of core values and cultural norms, and the physical and social development of individuals from birth through adulthood. The social economic structure is also family-based, which allows the proper and stable distribution of wealth. How far the definition of family extends to how wealth should be distributed often depends on the dominant political and religious systems. The family however remains the root and primary structure of human civilization.]

2.2.2.2 Subcomy explains "**due to the absence of karmic fruit**" (*phalâbhava.vasena*) thus**:** Because of the absence of karmic fruit, he [Ajita] claims that there is thus the absence of right or wrong practice towards parents. Because of the absence of karmic fruit there is no act honouring or dishonouring parents that is evident in the world. (Thus Ajita's view that) "**There is no mother, no father**." (DAṬ:Be 226,4-6; DAṬ:Ee 1:292,24-28)

2.2.3 Rebirth and the elements

2.2.3.1 "There are no beings that are reborn spontaneously" (*n'atthi sattā opāpatikā*) [§2]. **Comy:** He [Ajita] says that there are no beings who, having passed away, are reborn (*cavitvā upapajjanaka,sattā nāma n'atthī ti vadati*). (DA 1:165,23-25)

Subcomy explains this as follows: He claims: "The arising of these beings is just like that of a bubble.[10] They do not come here after previously passing away." The earth element (in his body) returns to and merges with the (external) earth-mass. (DAṬ:Be 226,6-8; DAṬ:Ee 1:292,28-33)

2.2.3.2 "Composed of the 4 primary elements" (*cātum,mahā,bhūtiko*) [§2]. **Comy:** The internal earth element (returns to and merges with) the external earth element. It dissolves (***anupetī*** *ti anuyāti*), meaning it follows suit (***anupagacchatī*** *ti tass'eva vevacanaṁ, anugacchatī ti pi attho*). The same applies to the rest (of the elements). (DA 1:165,27-30)

"**The same applies to the rest (of the elements)**" (*āp'ādisu pi es'eva nayo*), that is, just as the water evaporates from the great ocean as rain clouds, becomes rain water and returns to and merge with the ocean; as a bolt of lightning, the splendor of which comes from sunlight, returns to and merges with the sunlight; and as a gust of wind separated from the air-mass, returns to and merges with the air-mass (so too with the elements comprising the body). That is the opinion of the view-holder. (DAṬ:Be 226,20-24; DAṬ:Ee 1:293,17-23)

2.2.3.3 Subcomy: One portion of the external earth-mass has come together and taken shape as a sentient being by becoming part of him internally. Now that earth element, like the earth that makes up a pot, returns to and merges with the external earth-mass; it becomes one with it completely and indistinguishably. (DAṬ:Be 226,25-28; DAṬ 1:293,23-28)

[10] Be *pubbuḷakassa vuya;* Ee *bubbulakassa viya.*

2.2.4 The inefficacy of giving (Ajita's wrong view)

2.2.4.1 "**The sense-faculties scatter into space**" (*ākāsaṁ indriyāni saṅkamanti*). **Comy:** The 6 sense-faculties with the mind leap into space. (DA 1:166,1 f)

[Ajita's view seems to be that both the physical being and its consciousness come from the universe itself, or that they are made of the same elements. The physical aspect of this view agrees with the Buddhist view; but the mental aspect is somewhat simplistic when we consider that according to the Buddhist view the mind comprises not only consciousness (*viññāṇa*) but also feelings (*vedanā*), perception/-memory (*saññā*), and formations/karma (*saṅkhārā*).]

2.2.4.2 Comy: Offerings (*āhutiyo*), that is, gifts given in honour, and so on, all end up in ashes (***āhutiyo** ti yaṁ paheṇaka,sakkār'ādi,bhedaṁ dinna,dānaṁ sabbaṁ taṁ charikâvasānam eva hoti*). They do not go beyond, yielding fruit." (DA 1:166,11-13)

The notion, "Give!" (*dattu paññattaṁ*) [§2.2]. **Comy:** This notion is that of foolish humans; invented and spoken by the foolish and unwise, not by the wise. It can be seen thus: Fools give, the wise take! He (Ajita) shows that the practice of giving is a doctrine of fools (*bālā denti paṇḍitā gaṇhantī ti dasseti*). (DA 1:166,14-16)

2.3 THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF WRONG VIEW

2.3.1 Views on karma and rebirth

2.3.1.1 Comy: Among these (sectarian teachers), **Pūraṇa** [§2.1.2], with his statement "In doing there is no evil," denies karma [because of his doctrine of the inefficacy of action].

Ajita, with his statement "With the break-up of the body one is annihilated," denies karmic fruit [because he completely rejects a new life].

Makkhali, with his statement "There is no cause," denies both. (DA 1:166,17-20)

Subcomy: (He denies both) because by completely denying the cause, the fruit also is rejected. When he asserts "**Beings are defiled without cause, without condition; (they are) purified without cause, without condition**" (*ahetū apaccayā sattā saṅkilissanti, … visujjhanti cā ti*)[11] his assertion of the conditionless nature of defilement and purification rejects the result as much as it rejects karma; thus he denies both karma and its result. (DAṬ:Be 227,2-6; DAṬ:Ee 1:294,6-11)

2.3.1.2 Comy: By denying karma one denies its result [because there is no fruit when there is no karma]. By denying the fruit one denies karma [because when there is no fruit, karma is inefficacious]. Thus all these (teachers), by denying both (karma and its fruit), in effect embrace the non-causality view (*ahetuka,vāda*), the view of inefficacy of action (*akiriya,vāda*), and the view of moral nihilism (*n'atthika,-vāda*). (DA 1:166,20-24)

Subcomy: Although these 3 view-holders have come down separately in the texts by way of the explanation of their individual views, they all deny both (karma and its result); and by denying both, they all teach non-causality, and so on. For the moral nihilist, holding the view of annihilationism by his denial of the fruit, in effect holds the inefficacy of action by his denial of karma and by his denial of both. The same method works with the other two. (DAṬ:Be 227,8-14; DAṬ:Ee 1:294,14-21)

2.3.1.3 Comy: When people accept these views and then recite and investigate them while sitting in their day-quarters or night-quarters, wrong mindfulness becomes established, taking it as object (one of

[11] **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,19/1:53), SD 8.10.

these views): "One does no evil" (*karoto na kariyati pāpaṁ*) or "There is no cause, no condition" (*n'atthi hetu n'atthi paccayo*) or "The dead are annihilated" (*mato ucchijjatī ti*).

When the mind takes this wrong mindfulness as object, the mind becomes one-pointed. The impulsions run their course.[12] At the 1st impulsion these people are curable; and so too at the 2nd, and so on. But at the 7th one, they cannot be cured even by the Buddhas; they cannot be turned back (in this life). Someone might hold *one* of these three views, another *two*, another all *three*.

But whether one holds one, two, or three views, one adopts *a wrong view with fixed consequences*. One has created an obstruction on the path to heaven and an obstruction to the path to liberation. It is impossible for him to reach heaven immediately following this present existence, much less to reach liberation. This being has become a stump in the rounds [2.3.2.4], a herdsman on earth.[13] In most cases, one such as this does not free himself from cyclic existence. [2.3.2.5]

tasmā akalyāṇa,janaṁ[14]	Therefore one with discernment	*c*
āsīvisaṁ iv'orāgaṁ	desirous of well-being	*d*
ārakā parivajjeyya	should stay far away from bad people[15]	*a*
bhūti,kāma vicakkhaṇo ti	as one would avoid a venomous serpent.	*b*
		(DA 1:166,24-167,7)

2.3.2 The mind of wrong view

2.3.2.1 Subcomy: "**Wrong mindfulness becomes established**" (*micchā,sati santiṭṭhati*): wrong mindfulness is the craving associated with the wrong view, and it is this which becomes established. For through oral tradition one first apprehends the general meaning of the view "one does no evil," and so on. One then ponders that meaning with various reasons until it appears as clear to the mind as if it has concrete form.

By becoming accustomed to such a view over a long time, one arrives at a reflective acceptance of it, thinking "It is true." When, again and again, one habitually indulges in and cultivates the view that has been accepted as true through reflective acceptance, wrong thought directs craving to that view, with wrong effort reinforcing the craving. Thus one apprehends things as having a nature which they do not really have. Thus it is the craving associated with the theory that is called wrong mindfulness. (DAṬ 227,18-25; DAṬ 1:294,27-295,5)

2.3.2.2 The mind becomes one-pointed" (*cittaṁ eka'aggaṁ hoti*): by gaining such special conditions as initial application and so on, the mind becomes steadied on its object; it abandons diffuseness and becomes one-pointed, as if fully concentrated.

"**Wrong concentration**" (*micchā,samādhi*) is spoken of under the heading of "mind." For that concentration, gaining the power of cultivation through special conditions, performs the function of perversely concentrating the mind on its object, as in the case of sharpshooting archers, and so on.

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[12] In Abhidhamma, the impulsion phase (*javana*) of the mental process is the moment when the mind karmically determines an action (thought, speech or deed). This phase has 7 *javana*-moments.

[13] The well known phrases "a stump in the rounds" (*vaṭṭa,khāṇu*) and "a herdsman on earth" (*paṭhavi,gopaka*) seem to suggest that such a person remains stuck in samsara on account of his wrong view, not finding any liberation. These 2 expressions and the foll verse recur in similar contexts in MA 3:122 (**Apaṇṇaka S**, M 60/1:407) and MA 4:136 (**Mahā,cattārīsaka S**, M 117/4:136).

[14] This verse recurs in Comy to **Apaṇṇaka S** (M 60), SD 35.5, with regards to the non-causality view: MA 3:122; qu at MAṬ:Be 2:136.

[15] In **(Chakka) Mitta S** (A 6.67), the Buddha states that when one associates with an evil friend, it is impossible to fulfill even the dharma of proper common conduct (*ābhisamācārika dhamma*), the very basis of spiritual training.

"**The impulsions run their course**" (*javanāni javanti*): after the preliminary series of impulsions have occurred in that mode a number of times, in the last series of impulsions [which forms the conviction in the truth of the view] 7 impulsions run their course. "At the first impulsion they are curable," and so on: this simply shows the intrinsic nature of things. For when 7 impulsions are reached, no one is capable of curing them. (DAṬ:Be 227,25-228,3; DAṬ 1:295,5-16)

2.3.2.3 NSubcomy: (They cannot be cured) because, while they are standing in those states of impulsion, it is impossible to prevent the arising of the 7th impulsion. Thus the process of consciousness occurs so quickly that it is impossible to cure them (at that moment) by means of exhortation and instruction. Thus the commentator says: "**They cannot be cured or reversed even by the Buddhas**."[16] (*buddhānam pi atekicchā anivattino ti*). (DANṬ 2:48,26-49,1)

2.3.2.4 Subcomy: "**Someone falls into one view**" (*koci ekaṁ dassanaṁ okkamati*): someone who holds on to and habitually indulges in *only one view* has only one view. Those who habitually indulge in *2 or 3 views* hold on to 2 or 3 views. By this statement the Commentator shows that the entire preceding discussion of these views, which defined and explained them in terms of their common denial of both (karma and result), was only a preliminary.

But when (one takes up a particular view) it leads one into *a fixed course of wrongness*,[17] that view is not combined with other views; since it is established through its own linking up of conditions, it does not arise together with (other views) just as the distinctive achievements (the dhyanas, etc) do not arise simultaneously with different objects.

"**But one falls into one (view)**" (*ekasmiṁ okkante pi*): by this the commentator shows that the three views have the same strength and yield the same fruit [that is, they obstruct the attainment of heaven (and the noble path)]. Therefore, though the 3 views arise in a single person uncombined, when one yields its results the other 2 lend their strength to it. (DAṬ 228,4-14; DAṬ 1:295,16-296,1)

2.3.2.5 "**A stump in the rounds**" (*vaṭṭa,khāṇu*): this statement is one whose meaning requires explication (*neyy'attha*), not one whose meaning is explicit (*nīt'attha*). Thus in **the Papañca,súdanì** (Majjhima Comy) it is asked:

"Is his future (as a result of his wrong view) fixed only with regard to a single existence (the next one) or also with regard to subsequent existences? It is fixed only with regard to a single existence (the next one). But because he repeatedly indulges in that view, he will approve of the same view in subsequent existences too."[18] (MA 3:122,15-17)

Since the unwholesome is feeble and powerless, not strong and powerful like the wholesome, the wrong view is said to be fixed only with regard to a single existence (the next one). Otherwise, the fixed

[16] The remarks in this passage refer to the fixity in the sequence of impulsion (*javana*) within their cognitive series and do not mean that the person cannot be led away from his wrong views at a proper time.

[17] The "fixed course of wrongness" (*micchatta,niyāma*) is a course of unwholesome karma strong enough to determine an unfortunate rebirth in the immediately following existence. The point of this discussion is that although a theorist may at different times adopt all 3 of the wrong views being expounded, when he adopts any view firmly enough to constitute a descent into the course of wrongness, the object of his adherence can only be a single one among the 3 views and not 2 or 3 together.

[18] *Kiṁ pan'esa ekasmiṁ yeva attabhāve niyato hoti, udāhu aññasmim pī ti. Ekasmiṁ yeva niyato, āsevana,vasena pana bhav'antare'pi taṁ taṁ diṭṭhiṁ roceti yevā ti.*

course of wrongness would be absolutely final like the fixed course of rightness,[19] but it is not absolutely final. (DAṬ 228,14-21; DAṬ 1:296,2-12)

2.3.2.6 Query: If so, then how does the expression "a stump in the rounds" apply (to the one who takes up such views)?

Reply: Because he habitually indulges (in that view). As in the Aṅguttara Nikāya it is said: "The fool who has sunk down even once is sunken indeed" (A 7.15/4:11), so here the expression "a stump in the rounds" is used in the same way. For he holds such a view because of certain conditions; hence it cannot be denied that sometimes, because of the opposite conditions, he may manage to emerge from that view. Therefore, in the Commentary it is said: "***In most cases,* one such as this does not free himself from cyclic existence**." [2.3.1.3] (DAṬ 228,22-26; DAṬ 1:296,13-19)

2.3.2.7 NSubcomy: The statement ("This being has become a stump in the rounds") is one whose meaning requires interpretation, and not one whose meaning is explicit, because the meaning has to be shown by explaining: "He becomes 'a stump in the rounds' because in most cases one such as this does not free himself from cyclic existence, since by habitually indulging in this or that view he approves of the same view in a subsequent existence too." But it must be added that he does not become "a stump in the rounds" in the sense that the fixed course of wrongness is absolutely final.

The fixed course of rightness (*sammatta,niyāma*) is the noble eightfold path. The firm adoption of any of the 3 wrong views has fixed consequences only for the next existence, but cannot cause permanent bondage to samsara; in this it contrasts with the path, which can bring complete and irreversible liberation from samsara. (DANṬ 2:49,22-30)

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[19] "The fixed course of rightness," *sammatta,niyāma,* the certainty of attaining the path. See **Sammatta Niyāma Ss 1-3** (A 5.151-153), SD 4.2-4; **Sussūsā S** (A 6.88), SD 4.5. As taught in **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1/3:225), the constant proper reflection on impermanence, as taught by the Buddha, will bring one certainty of attaining streamwinning in this very life itself (SD 16.7 (1.6)).

N'atthi,dinna Sutta

The Discourse on "There is Nothing Given"

S 24.5

1 Originating in Sāvatthī.

2 Bhikshus, when what exists, in clinging to what, in adhering to what, does **such a view** as this arise:[20]

"There is nothing given,[21] nothing offered, nothing sacrificed.
There is no fruit or result of good or bad actions.
There is no this world, no next world.[22]
There is no mother, no father.
There are no beings that are reborn spontaneously.[23]
There are neither recluses nor brahmins who, living rightly and practising rightly, having directly known and realized for themselves this world and the hereafter, proclaim them.[24]

2.2 This person (that we are) is composed of the 4 primary elements. **[207]**
At death, the earth (in the body) returns to and merges with the (external) earth-body.
The fire returns to and merges with the external fire-body.
The water [liquid] returns to and merges with the external water-body.
The wind returns to and merges with the external wind-body.

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[20] This is the nihilist doctrine (*natthika,vāda*) stated in full. In **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), it is called annihilationism (*uccheda,vāda*) and ascribed to Ajita Kesa,kambali (D 2,22 f/1:55,15-31), SD 8.1.

[21] "There is nothing given" (*n'atthi dinnaṁ*). MA 2:332 = DA 165 says that this means there is no fruit of (or no value in) giving. Cf D 1:55; M 1:401, 515; S 3:206.

[22] "There is no this world, no next world," *n'atthi ayaṁ loko, n'atthi para,loko,* lit, "this world does not exist, the next world does not exist" (D 3:265, 287; M 1:286, 401, 515 (bis), 3:22, 52, 71; S 3:204, 348, 355, 351 (bis); A 1:269, 4:226, 5:265, 284; Nc:Be 276). While the Lokāyata materialists may be known to deny the next world, it is difficult to understand why they should deny the existence of this world as well. However, the problem is solved when one examines the only extant authentic Lokāyata text, Tattvopaplava-Siṁha (ed Saṅghavi & Parekh, Gaekwad Oriental Series 87, Baroda, 1940), by Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa, a devoted Bṛhaspati adherent of the 8th century CE. According to this work, there was a Lokāyata materialist school that denied the existence of this world as well. While the pluralistic school of metaphysical materialists believed in the reality of the primary elements and denied only the next world, the nihilist school of pragmatic materialists denied the reality of both this world and the next. Basically, the latter asserted that our perception is always false. "Was Ajita also a pragmatist Materialist like Jayarāśi? The more probable explanation seems to be that the Buddhists identified all the known materialist views with Ajita, who symbolizes the philosophy of Materialism, inconsistently putting together the tenets of mutually opposed schools since they both (or all) happened to be in some sense (metaphysical or pragmatic) materialists" (Jayatilleke 1963:91; also 79 f, 92).

[23] ***Opapātika***, often said of a non-returner's rebirth, and also that of all divine and hell beings. Refs in pericope on wrong view: **D 1**,2.27/1:27, **2**,23/1:55, **6**,13/1:156, **23**,2-11/2:317-329, 14-20/2:332-339, 21/2:342, 33/2:356 f, **33**,3.-2(4)/3:265, **34**,2.1(7)/287; **M 41**,10**/**1:287**, 60,**5-6**/**1:401 f, **76**,7/1:515, **110,**11/3:22, 22/3:24, **114**,10/3:52, **117**,5/3:-72; **S 24.5**/3:206, **42.13(III)**/4:348 f, **(IV)**/4:352, **(V)**/355 f; **A 3.115**.6**/**1:269, **8.29**.3/4:226, **10.176**.5/5:265, **10.200**.2/-5:284 f; **Nm** 1:188. Here, foll Comy, I take it in a general sense of "rebirth." Comy: "There are no beings that are reborn means that beings, after dying, are not reborn" (***n'atthi sattā opapātikā*** *ti cavitvā upapajjanakā sattā nāma n'atthî ti vadati,* DA 1:165). Cf A 4.191/2:186 f.

[24] This section up to here is stock: **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,10/1:287), SD 5.7 & **Sandaka S** (M 76,7/1:515), SD 35.7. See **Apaṇṇaka S** (M 60,5-12/1:401-404), SD 35.5 where this wrong view is refuted.

The sense-faculties scatter into space.

Four men walk bearing a bier with a corpse as the fifth.[25] The words (prayers and eulogies) only go as far as the cremation ground.[26] The bones turn pigeon-colored. The offerings end in ashes.

Generosity is taught by fools. Those who say that there is the notion of offerings, that they should give them, make empty, false prattle.[27]

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.'

3 "Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, have the Blessed One as refuge.[28] It would be good indeed, bhante, if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the bhikshus would remember it."[29]

[3.2 "Then listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak."

"Yes, bhante!" the bhikshus replied in assent to the Blessed One.][30]

WRONG VIEWS ARISE WITH THE 5 AGGREGATES

4 (1) **"**When there is **form**, bhikshus, in clinging to form, in adhering to form, such a view as this arises:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements … .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.'[31]

5 (2) When there is **feeling**, in clinging to feeling, in adhering to feeling, such a view as this arises:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements … .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.'

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[25] *Asandi,pañcamā.* Four men, each holding a leg of the bier, and the bier itself is the fifth object. D 1:55,25 = M 1:515,13 (MA) = S 3:207,4 = J 5:239,29'.

[26] *Yāv'āḷāhanā padāni paññāyanti,* Comy: By "**words**" is meant, eg, "Words regarding virtues and vices that go thus, "Being morally virtuous is like this; being immoral is like this, and so on." The words here are in reference to the body. (***Padānī*** *ti ayam evaṁ sīlavā ahosi, evaṁ dussīlo ti ādinā nayena pavattāni guṇâguṇa,padāni, sarīram eva vā ettha padānī ti adhippetaṁ,* DA 1:166,6-8).

[27] *Āhutiyo dattu,paññattam idaṁ dānaṁ tesaṁ tucchā musā vilāpo ye keci atthika,vādaṁ vadanti.* Comy says that this refers to the fruits of giving (MA 3:227).

[28] "Have the Blessed One as refuge," *bhagavaṁ … dhammā paṭisaraṇā.* This means that 2 things: (1) that the Buddha discovers, proclaims and protects the Dharma, and (2) that the Buddha himself takes the Dharma as his refuge. Hence, even with the Buddha's passing, the Dharma still exists (as it always does) and available to us when we follow the Buddha's teaching as preserved in the suttas.

[29] *Bhagavaṁ mūlakā no bhante dhammā bhagavaṁ nettikā bhagavaṁ paṭisaraṇā. Sādhu vata bhante Bhagavantaṁ yeva paṭibhātu etassa bhāsitassa attho. Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressanṭî ti,* which is stock: see **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58,9), SD 49.10; also **Mahā Dhamma,samādāna S** (M 46,2/1:309 f), **Vīmaṁsaka S** (M 47,3/1:317), **Naḷakapāna S** (M 68,8/1:465), **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,19/3:115), SD 11.4; **S** 8.5-11/1:188-196, **Bālena Paṇḍita S** (S 12.19-/2:24), SD 21.1, **Parivīmaṁsanā S** (S 12.51/2:81), SD 11.5, **Candûpama S** (S 16.3/2:199), **Sammāsambuddha S** (S 22.58/3:66), **Sall'atthena S** (S 36.6/4:208), SD 5.5, **Ānanda S 2** (S 36.16/4:221); **A 3.68**/1:199, A 8.6/4:158, **A 8.83**/-4:338, **A 9.1**/4:351, **A 10.58**/5:106, **A 11.20**/5:355. See also S:B 404 n227.

[30] As in the other passages qu in prec n.

[31] Since this is a passage of wrong views, it is reprised only as *peyyāla.*

6 (3) When there is **perception**, in clinging to perception, in adhering to perception, such a view as this arises:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements … .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.'

7 (4) When there are **(volitional) formations**, in clinging to formations, in adhering to formations, such a view as this arises:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements … .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.'

8 (5) When there is **consciousness**, in clinging to consciousness, in adhering to consciousness, such a view as this arises:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements … .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death.'

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE 6 GROUNDS

9 What do you think, bhikshus,

(1) is **form** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, is it unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?"[32]

"Unsatisfactory, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, *unsatisfactory* and subject to change, indeed, without relying on it, **would such a view arise**:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements … .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death'?"

"No, bhante."

10 (2) Is **feeling** permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, is it unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?"

"Unsatisfactory, bhante."

[32] *Dukkhaṁ vā sukhaṁ vā.* Here, the alternative tr, "painful," reminds us that whatever brings us pain or discomfort (bodily or mentally) is not liked by us. When the pain is gone, we feel some pleasure. However, even the pleasurable is impermanent, and when it is gone, we feel pain. Hence, both the painful and the pleasant are "suffering" (*dukkha*). It is useful to understand this difference between pain and suffering. Simply put, pain is natural (we have a physical but conscious body, so we feel pain, whether tolerable or intolerable, which is a sign of irritability or sensitivity of our experiences); suffering is optional (we can train our minds not to be attached to what is pleasant or to reject what is unpleasant, and to regard even the neutral as being impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise.)

"Whatever is *impermanent*, *unsatisfactory* and subject to change, indeed, without relying on it, **would such a view arise**:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements … .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. <u>They do not exist after death</u>'?"

"No, bhante."

11 (3) Is **perception** permanent or impermanent?"

"<u>Impermanent</u>, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, is it unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?"

"<u>Unsatisfactory</u>, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, *unsatisfactory* and subject to change, indeed, without relying on it, **would such a view arise**:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements… .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. <u>They do not exist after death</u>'?"

"No, bhante."

12 (4) Are **formations** permanent or impermanent?"

"<u>Impermanent</u>, bhante."

"Whatever are *impermanent*, are they unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?"

"<u>Unsatisfactory</u>, bhante."

"Whatever are *impermanent*, *unsatisfactory* and subject to change, indeed, without relying on them, **would such a view arise**:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements… .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. <u>They do not exist after death</u>'?"

"No, bhante."

13 (5) Is **consciousness** permanent or impermanent?"

"<u>Impermanent</u>, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, is it unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?"

"<u>Unsatisfactory</u>, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, *unsatisfactory* and subject to change, indeed, without relying on it, **would such a view arise**:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements… .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. <u>They do not exist after death</u>'?"

"No, bhante."

14 (6) That which is **seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, sought after, mentally pursued**[33]— is it permanent or impermanent?

"Impermanent, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, is it unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory [pleasurable]?"

"Unsatisfactory, bhante."

"Whatever is *impermanent*, *unsatisfactory* and subject to change, indeed, without relying on it, **would such a view arise**:

[*2*] '*There is nothing given, …*

This person (that we are) is a composite of the 4 primary elements… .

With the break-up of the body, the wise and the foolish alike are annihilated, destroyed. They do not exist after death'?"

"No, bhante."

15 When, bhikshus, a noble disciple has abandoned perplexity (*kaṅkhā*) regarding these 6 grounds;[34]

when he has abandoned perplexity regarding suffering;

when he has abandoned perplexity regarding the arising of suffering;

when he has abandoned perplexity regarding the ending of suffering;

when he has abandoned perplexity regarding the path leading to the ending of suffering;

16 then, this noble disciple is called **a streamwinner**, not bound for the lower world, sure of going over to self-awakening."[35]

— evaṁ —

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[33] This is the full cognitive series, all of which are objects of consciousness. Comy: **The seen** (*diṭṭha*) is the visible form base; **the heard** (*suta*), the sound-base; **the sensed** (*muta*), the objects of smell, taste, and touch; and **the cognized** (*viññāta*), the other 7 bases (the 6 internal sense-bases and the mind object base; the last is *dhamm'āyatana*) [DEB]; see SD 7.1 (4.4).

[34] Ce Ee Se *imesu chasu ṭhānesu*; only Be *imesu ca ṭhānesu.* Comy is silent. From the preceding §§9-14, it's clear that the 6 cases are the 5 aggregates and the cognitive series *diṭṭhaṁ mutaṁ sutaṁ viññātaṁ pattaṁ pariyesitaṁ anuvicaritaṁ* taken together. Cf **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22,15), where the "seen, heard, sensed, cognized … " (sense-objects) actually replace *viññāṇa* as a basis for wrong views (*diṭṭhi-ṭ,ṭhāna*) (M 1:135,34-36), SD 3.13. The words "attained, sought after, mentally pursued" (*pattaṁ pariyesitaṁ anuvicaritaṁ*) elaborate the ways in which the objects are cognized.

[35] *Ayaṁ vuccati bhikkhave ariya,sāvako ssotāpanno avinipāta,dhammo niyato sambodhi,parāyaṇo ti.* This def of a streamwinner, beginning from "Having fully destroyed...," is stock: **V** 3:10,24 (VA 1:196,13-18 ≠ DA (2:)544,7-9); **D** 1:156, 3:107, 108, 132; **M** 1:34, 466, 467, 5:377, 379; **A** 1:232, 2:89, 238, 4:12; **U** 50; **Pug** 16×3, 63, 72. See CPD: a-vinipāta-dhamma.