MN 9 — Sammaditthi Sutta: Right View

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Translator's Introduction

Right view is normally explained in terms of the four noble truths. In this discourse, Ven. Sariputta expands the discussion in several directions.

He begins by focusing on two concepts that underlie the structure of the four noble truths: the dichotomy of skillful and unskillful action, and the concept of nutriment.

Focusing on the dichotomy of skillful and unskillful action draws attention to a general principle of cause and effect — the fact that actions give results — and to the particular role of action in determining one's experience of pleasure and pain: Unskillful actions lead to pain, skillful actions to pleasure. The search for the root of skillful and unskillful actions leads ultimately to the mind, because the presence or lack of skill in any action is determined by the mental state motivating it. Thus the issue of skillful and unskillful action provides in a nutshell some of the basic principles of the four noble truths in terms of causality, wise and unwise uses of causality, and the dominant role of the mind in the causal chain leading to happiness or pain.

The image of "root" carries further implications. Because the function of roots is to draw nourishment from the soil, the natural question is: Where do the roots of skillful and unskillful behavior draw their nourishment? This is why the next topic in the sutta is nutriment, which is of two sorts, physical and mental. And implicit in the idea of nutriment is the possibility for a strategy to use nutriment skillfully: If the mental state being nourished is unskillful, it can be overcome by depriving it of nutriment; if it's skillful, it can be fostered by feeding it more (see, for example, SN 46.51). This points to the possibility of training the mind through a strategy of selective feeding and starving, while the analysis of mental nutriment shows precisely which events are most basic in the mental food chain: contact, intellectual intention, and consciousness.

Ven. Sariputta combines the issues of skillfulness and nutriment by approaching the topic of nutriment with a fourfold framework: nutriment, its origination (nutriment, in turn, has its own food), its cessation (the possibility of starving it of that food), and the path of practice leading to its cessation (the way to starve it). This line of thinking leads naturally to the next topic, in which this same framework is applied to the focal issue of the Buddha's teaching — suffering and stress — yielding the four noble truths. In this way, Ven. Sariputta shows how the four noble truths derive from the two topics of skillful/unskillful and nutriment.

It's interesting to note that both these topics figure prominently in discourses directed at young people. The Buddha's instruction to Rahula in MN 61 focuses on skillful and unskillful behavior; the first of the Novice's Questions (Khp 4), on nutriment. Seeing how basic these concepts are to understanding the role of causality in putting an end to suffering, the Buddha taught them to young people as an entry into the Dhamma. In this sutta, Ven. Sariputta shows how these topics can perform the same function for adults. And perhaps he is also showing us the line of reasoning through which his own first glimpse of the deathless followed upon a simple statement of a causal principle:

Whatever phenomena arise from cause: their cause and their cessation. Such is the teaching of the Tathagata, the Great Contemplative.

— Mv 1.23.5

The remainder of this sutta expands on the four noble truths with a reverse-order analysis of dependent co-arising. Two features of this section stand out. To begin with, Ven. Sariputta points out that understanding the relationship between any two adjacent factors in the pattern of dependent co-arising provides enough discernment to abandon unskillful obsessions and put an end to suffering. There is no need to comprehend the entire pattern, for the whole is implicit in each paired relationship. This is a point with important practical implications. Sn 3.12 makes the same point, but pairs the objects for contemplation in a different way: Every factor in dependent co-arising is paired directly with stress. A comparison between these two suttas provides much practical food for thought, showing how the ability to see and comprehend dualities is essential to the Buddha's strategy for discernment and release.

Second, Ven. Sariputta here continues the pattern of dependent co-arising past ignorance — the usual endpoint — to look for its origination, which is mental fermentation. Because these fermentations in turn depend on ignorance, the discussion shows how ignorance tends to prompt more ignorance. But, as Ven. Sariputta has demonstrated throughout his discussion, ignorance needn't keep propagating forever. Because it is simply a lack of knowledge in terms of the four noble truths, it can be replaced by knowledge that does look at things in terms of the four noble truths — the framework derived from the topics of skillful/unskillful and nutriment. When knowledge in terms of this framework is applied at any point in the causal framework, the entire framework dependent on ignorance can be brought to an end.

In this way Ven. Sariputta fills in a blank contained in the stock Canonical description of Awakening. The central part of that description states, "He discerns, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the way leading to the cessation of stress... These are mental fermentations... This is the origination of fermentations... This is the cessation of fermentations... This is the way leading to the cessation of fermentations." This description, however, does not explain these last four insights into mental fermentation, nor does it explain how they relate to the four insights into stress. In the last section of this discourse, Ven. Sariputta explains the first of these issues, while in the overall structure of the discourse he explains the second.

Ven. Sariputta offers further explanations of right view in two other suttas in the Majjhima Nikaya. In MN 141 he offers a word-by-word analysis of the four noble truths. In MN 28 he analyzes the first noble truth — in particular, the form clinging-aggregate — showing how the comprehension of that one aggregate encompasses the comprehension of all five aggregates, all four noble truths, and the principle of dependent co-arising.

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. Then Ven. Sariputta addressed the monks, "Friends!"

"Yes, friend," the monks responded.

Ven. Sariputta said, "'Right view, right view' it is said.[1] To what extent is a disciple of the noble ones a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"We would come from a long distance, friend, to learn the meaning of these words in Ven. Sariputta's presence. It would be good if Ven. Sariputta himself would enlighten us as to their meaning. Having listened to him, the monks will bear it in mind."

"Then in that case, friends, listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, friend," the monks responded.

Skillful & unskillful

Ven. Sariputta said, "When a disciple of the noble ones discerns what is unskillful, discerns the root of what is unskillful, discerns what is skillful, and discerns the root of what is skillful, it is to that extent that he is a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

Now what is unskillful? Taking life is unskillful, taking what is not given... sexual misconduct... lying... abusive speech... divisive tale-bearing... idle chatter is unskillful. Covetousness... ill will... wrong views are unskillful. These things are termed unskillful.

And what are the roots of what is unskillful? Greed is a root of what is unskillful, aversion is a root of what is unskillful, delusion is a root of what is unskillful. These are termed the roots of what is unskillful.

And what is skillful? Abstaining from taking life is skillful, abstaining from taking what is not given... from sexual misconduct... from lying... from abusive speech... from divisive tale-bearing... abstaining from idle chatter is skillful. Lack of covetousness... lack of ill will... right views are skillful. These things are termed skillful.

And what are the roots of what is skillful? Lack of greed is a root of what is skillful, lack of aversion is a root of what is skillful, lack of delusion is a root of what is skillful. These are termed the roots of what is skillful.

"When a disciple of the noble ones discerns what is unskillful in this way, discerns the root of what is unskillful in this way, discerns what is skillful in this way, and discerns the root of what is skillful in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Nutriment

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns nutriment, the origination of nutriment, the cessation of nutriment, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of nutriment, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is nutriment? What is the origination of nutriment? What is the cessation of nutriment? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of nutriment?

"There are these four nutriments for the maintenance of beings who have come into being or for the support of those in search of a place to be born. Which four? Physical food, gross or refined; contact as the second, intellectual intention the third, and consciousness the fourth. From the origination of craving comes the origination of nutriment. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of nutriment. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of nutriment is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns nutriment, the origination of nutriment, the cessation of nutriment, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of nutriment in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Stress

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns stress, the origination of stress, the cessation of stress, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is stress? Birth is stressful, aging is stressful, death is stressful; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are stressful; not getting what one wants is stressful.[2] In short, the five clinging-aggregates are stressful. This is called stress.

"What is the origination of stress? The craving that makes for further becoming — accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there — i.e., craving for sensuality, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming. This is called the origination of stress.

"And what is the cessation of stress? The remainderless fading & cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving. This is called the cessation of stress.

"And what is the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress? Just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is called the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns stress, the origination of stress, the cessation of stress, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Aging & death

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns aging & death, the origination of aging & death, the cessation of aging & death, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of aging & death, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is aging & death? What is the origination of aging & death? What is the cessation of aging & death? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of aging & death?

"Whatever aging, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called aging. Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called death. This aging & this death are called aging & death.

From the origination of birth comes the origination of aging & death. From the cessation of birth comes the cessation of aging & death. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of aging & death is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns aging & death, the origination of aging & death, the cessation of aging & death, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of aging & death in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Birth

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns birth, the origination of birth, the cessation of birth, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of birth, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is birth? What is the origination of birth? What is the cessation of birth? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of birth?

"Whatever birth, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, & acquisition of [sense] spheres of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth.

"From the origination of becoming comes the origination of birth. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of birth is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns birth, the origination of birth, the cessation of birth, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of birth in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Becoming

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns becoming, the origination of becoming, the cessation of becoming, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of becoming, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is becoming? What is the origination of becoming? What is the cessation of becoming? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of becoming?

"There are these three becomings: sensual becoming, form becoming, & formless becoming. This is called becoming.

"From the origination of clinging comes the origination of becoming. From the cessation of clinging comes the cessation of becoming. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of becoming is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns becoming, the origination of becoming, the cessation of becoming, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of becoming in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Clinging

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns clinging, the origination of clinging, the cessation of clinging, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of clinging, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is clinging? What is the origination of clinging? What is the cessation of clinging? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of clinging?

"There are these four clingings: sensuality clinging, view clinging, precept & practice clinging, and doctrine of self clinging. This is called clinging.

"From the origination of craving comes the origination of clinging. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of clinging is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns clinging, the origination of clinging, the cessation of clinging, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of clinging in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Craving

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns craving, the origination of craving, the cessation of craving, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of craving, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is craving? What is the origination of craving? What is the cessation of craving? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of craving?

"There are these six cravings: craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for tastes, craving for tactile sensations, craving for ideas. This is called craving.

"From the origination of feeling comes the origination of craving. From the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of craving is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns craving, the origination of craving, the cessation of craving, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of craving in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Feeling

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns feeling, the origination of feeling, the cessation of feeling, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of feeling, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is feeling? What is the origination of feeling? What is the cessation of feeling? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of feeling?

"There are these six feelings: feeling born from eye-contact, feeling born from ear-contact, feeling born from nose-contact, feeling born from tongue-contact, feeling born from body-contact, feeling born from intellect-contact. This is called feeling.

"From the origination of contact comes the origination of feeling. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of feeling is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns feeling, the origination of feeling, the cessation of feeling, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of feeling in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Contact

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns contact, the origination of contact, the cessation of contact, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of contact, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is contact? What is the origination of contact? What is the cessation of contact? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of contact?

"There are these six classes of contact: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, intellect-contact: This is called contact.

"From the origination of the six sense media comes the origination of contact. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of contact is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns contact, the origination of contact, the cessation of contact, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of contact in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Six sense media

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns the six sense media, the origination of the six sense media, the cessation of the six sense media, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of the six sense media, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what are the six sense media? What is the origination of the six sense media? What is the cessation of the six sense media? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of the six sense media?

"There are these six sense media: the eye-medium, the ear-medium, the nose-medium, the tongue-medium, the body-medium, the intellect-medium: These are called the six sense media.

"From the origination of name-&-form comes the origination of the six sense media. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of the six sense media is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns the six sense media, the origination of the six sense media, the cessation of the six sense media, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of the six sense media in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Name-&-form

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns name-&-form, the origination of name-&-form, the cessation of name-&-form, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of name-&-form, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is name-&-form? What is the origination of name-&-form? What is the cessation of name-&-form? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of name-&-form?

"Feeling, perception, intention, contact, & attention: This is called name. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements: This is called form. This name & this form are called name-&-form.

"From the origination of consciousness comes the origination of name-&-form. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of name-&-form is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns name-&-form, the origination of name-&-form, the cessation of name-&-form, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of name-&-form in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Consciousness

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns consciousness, the origination of consciousness, the cessation of consciousness, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is consciousness? What is the origination of consciousness? What is the cessation of consciousness? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness?

"There are these six classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, intellect-consciousness. This is called consciousness.

"From the origination of fabrication comes the origination of consciousness. From the cessation of fabrication comes the cessation of consciousness. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness,

right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns consciousness, the origination of consciousness, the cessation of consciousness, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of consciousness in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Fabrication

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns fabrication, the origination of fabrication, the cessation of fabrication, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of fabrication, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is fabrication? What is the origination of fabrication? What is the cessation of fabrication? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of fabrication?

"There are these three fabrications: bodily fabrication, verbal fabrication, mental fabrication. These are called fabrication.

"From the origination of ignorance comes the origination of fabrication. From the cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of fabrication. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of fabrication is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns fabrication, the origination of fabrication, the cessation of fabrication, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of fabrication in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Ignorance

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which

a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns ignorance, the origination of ignorance, the cessation of ignorance, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is ignorance? What is the origination of ignorance? What is the cessation of ignorance? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance?

"Any lack of knowledge with reference to stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the origination of stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the cessation of stress, any lack of knowledge with reference to the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress. This is called ignorance.

"From the origination of fermentation comes the origination of ignorance. From the cessation of fermentation comes the cessation of ignorance. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns ignorance, the origination of ignorance, the cessation of ignorance, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of ignorance in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

Fermentation

Saying "Good, friend," having delighted in and approved of Ven. Sariputta's words, the monks asked him a further question: "Would there be another line of reasoning by which a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma?"

"There would. When a disciple of the noble ones discerns (mental) fermentation, the origination of fermentation, the cessation of fermentation, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of fermentation, then he is a person of right view... who has arrived at this true Dhamma.

"And what is fermentation? What is the origination of fermentation? What is the cessation of fermentation? What is the way of practice leading to the cessation of fermentation?

"There are these three fermentations: the fermentation of sensuality, the fermentation of becoming, the fermentation of ignorance. This is called fermentation.

"From the origination of ignorance comes the origination of fermentation. From the cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of fermentation. And the way of practice leading to the cessation of fermentation is just this very noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"Now, when a disciple of the noble ones discerns fermentation, the origination of fermentation, the cessation of fermentation, and the way of practice leading to the cessation of fermentation in this way, when — having entirely abandoned passion-obsession, having abolished aversion-obsession, having uprooted the view-&-conceit obsession 'I am'; having abandoned ignorance & given rise to clear knowing — he has put an end to suffering & stress right in the here-&-now, it is to this extent, too, that a disciple of the noble ones is a person of right view, one whose view is made straight, who is endowed with verified confidence in the Dhamma, and who has arrived at this true Dhamma."

That is what Ven. Sariputta said. Gratified, the monks delighted in Ven. Sariputta's words.

Notes

1.

This reading follows the Thai edition. The Burmese and PTS editions say, "'A person of right view, a person of right view' it is said."

2.

In passages where the Buddha defines stress, (e.g., SN 56.11, DN 22), he includes the statements, "association with the unbeloved is stressful; separation from the loved is stressful," prior to "not getting what one wants is stressful." For some reason, in passages where Ven. Sariputta defines stress (here and at MN 28 and MN 141), he drops these statements from the definition.

See also: MN 61; MN 117; MN 141; SN 12.11; SN 12.12; SN 12.15; SN 12.63; SN 12.64; AN 10.94; Sn 3.12