

COMMENTS on: Topic 3: Kamma and Merit:

I have heard one ask how to make sure of a fortunate rebirth by Brad

I have heard one ask how to make sure of a fortunate rebirth. Based on statements made by the Buddha (put together), I believe he would say:

Do not think about past, future, or present existence. To be fortunate upon death: You have, in life, through intentional actions earned merit (& generated & changed/created kamma). And, thus to be so fortunate, in life: you have engaged in what you have to do & gotten it DONE (even if it may not be finished).

Some relevant quotes re: the topic of the Comment above by Brad

Some relevant quotes re: the topic of the Comment above:

The Buddha said: "When, bhikkhus, a noble disciple has clearly seen with correct wisdom as it really is this dependent origination and these dependently arisen phenomenon, it is impossible that he will run back to the past thinking: 'Did I exist in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past?' OR that he will run forward into the future, thinking: 'Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future? Having been what, what will I become in the future?' OR that he will now be inwardly confused about the present thus: 'Do I exist? Do I not exist? What am I? How am I? This being -- where has it come from, and where will it go?' ..."

"... When, bhikkhus, the Dhamma has thus been well-expounded by me, elucidated, disclosed, revealed, stripped of patchwork, this is enough for a clansman who has gone forth out of faith to arouse his energy thus: 'Willingly, let only my skin, sinews, and bones remain, and let the flesh and blood dry up in my body, but I will not relax my energy so long as I have not attained what can be attained by manly strength, by manly energy, by manly exertion'..."

"... Considering your own good, bhikkhus, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence; considering the good of others, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence; considering the good of both, it is enough to strive for the goal with diligence."

(quoted from the Nidanasamyutta, Book II, Connected Discourses)

Examples: Buddha refers to one's purpose by Brad

Related to the Comment above: The Buddha clearly and repeatedly seems to refer to one's purpose fulfilled (OR achieving major goals) as: "life has been lived, what had to be done has been done". Here is a typical context:

"Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: 'It's liberated.' He understands: 'Destroying birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.'"

**Buddhist
Cosmology
is largely
extraneous**
by Brad

Belief in the Buddhist cosmology is at least largely extraneous:

**Though this is my opinion, it would be very hard or impossible to refute:
I believe it is incumbent on me to point out that there is no need to believe the
Buddha's cosmology (i.e. believe in any after-life, happenings after death, _or_ reincarnation)
to fully obtain all the benefits of behaving and thinking as prescribed by the Buddha.
Furthermore, not only all the benefits will accrue if you know nothing about this
cosmology but it seems all the natural intrinsic motivations to progress down the path are
still there. [I lived for quite a long while as a thorough-going practicing
Buddhist, knowing nothing about this cosmology (NOTHING) and after learning
about this teaching, I noted no further benefits.]**

A way I can view the Buddha's talks about gods and heavens and hells (and some other matters) is: for some of his audiences, this might have been the only way to connect with them (and then, after connecting, he could teach his wonderful system of living). The pervasive concepts of Hinduism in the India where he taught may have not infrequently required this approach to attract sufficient initial interest, even from certain very good people. He perhaps knowingly sacrificed the consistency of his belief system for the good of people -- this seems an interesting idea, and we cannot rule it out: He was, perhaps, in a big sense "Bodhicitta" and sacrificing for others. To the extent we cannot verify parts of his system for ourselves, **as the Buddha said we should ALWAYS do**, perhaps he would expect us to be able to have this understanding, that I just expressed. Thus, he does not corrupt us as he did what he had to do to be of benefit to other groups. (It is also helpful to keep in mind that the Buddha taught in India for 45 years.)

COMMENTS ON: Topic 5: MEDITATION

**To Learn
about
Meditation**
by Brad

To learn more about meditation, I recommend Chapter 9 (IX) of the Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma , the Abhidhammattha Sangaha, which may be downloaded as a pdf via the link below:

http://store.pariyatti.org/Comprehensive-Manual-of-Abhidhamma-A--PDF-eBook_p_4362.html

**How to
meditate** by
Brad

For a basic perspective on how to meditate, see:
"The Basic Method of Meditation" by Ajahn Brahmavamso -- free at:

<http://www.holybooks.com/method-meditation>

(It is essential that you read my quotes of the Venerable Walpola Rahula, below, to put this into perspective.)

Direct link to "The Basic Method of Meditation" by Ajahn Brahmavamso:

<http://holybooks.lichtenbergpress.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/The-Basic-Method-of-Meditation.pdf?a20918>

(It is essential that you read my quotes of the Venerable Walpola Rahula, below, to put this into perspective.)

BUT, my favorite book on meditation so far is Life is Mediation - Meditation is Life ... Get to it via [THIS LINK](#) . (A shorter address to that site is: <http://tiny.cc/sbmed> (easy to remember and share))

It is a meditation procedure based in the suttas. From the book: it seems to me that the key way to not do much but 'noticing' NOR spending much time on intrusions (and yet perhaps eliminating them appropriately), is to realize that all these phenomenon have (in essence) nothing to do with you (are non-self); this seems (in my interpretation of this book's procedures) to be key to good attention, careful attention, and quickly returning to the object of concentration (perhaps providing for lightening-fast, appropriate processing so intrusions are put in place as things as they really are -- perhaps [also] clearly seen as an instance of dependent origination -- and will much likely no longer intrude, given they are not the object of concentration).

The author seems to couple this sort of notion of recognizing (or 'noting') (my interpretation, directly above) with then relaxing mind and body and then smiling, then returning to the object of concentration. He asserts these step puts the mind in a wholesome state as it returns to the object of concentration. Link to Paper on : [Science of Meditation \(and 'intrusions'\)](#) (<https://mynichecomp.com/sciMed.pdf>)

Half of the book is on breathing meditation, the other half on loving-kindness (metta) meditation.

Instead of just depending on "blessed intrusions" during meditation, it seems likely that, for at least some, another technique would help -- and this would help generalize using techniques out in the world. (This could be particularly good for some, though, perhaps, unnecessary for others.)

Here is the technique described by Gilbert and Choden: (quoting):

Breathing Rhythm

"Sit comfortably with both feet flat on the floor about a shoulder width apart and with your back straight. Your posture is comfortable but upright because the idea is to be both relaxed and alert rather than becoming sleepy, which can happen if your head drops forward. Gently, close your eyes or allow your gaze to fall unfocused on the floor. Create a gentle facial expression, an expression of friendliness, as if you are with somebody you like. Try relaxing your facial muscles by letting your jaw drop slightly, and then let your mouth turn up into a slight smile.

Now focus on your breathing, on the air coming in through your nose and down into your diaphragm, staying a short while, and then moving back out through your nose. Notice how your diaphragm

moves gently as you breathe in and out. For the development of a soothing breathing rhythm, you will breathe slightly more slowly and slightly more deeply than you would normally. The in-breath is about three to five seconds, and then you pause momentarily and take three to five seconds for the out-breath. You might try to breathe a little faster and then a little slower until you find a breathing pattern that is comfortable for you and has a gentle rhythm to it, giving you the feeling of slowing down. The slow comfortable rhythm of the breath is key. Five to six breaths per minute is ideal but only if comfortable.

Also focus on the out-breath and the air leaving your nose with a steady rhythm. Try to ensure that the in-breath and the out-breath are even, and don't rush them. As you develop your breathing rhythm, notice the feeling of inner slowing with each out-breath. Notice how your body responds to your breathing, as if you are linking up with a rhythm within your body that is soothing and calming for you. Notice how this links to your friendly facial expression. Notice how you might feel heavier as you sit, more solid, and still in your body."

Gilbert, Paul; Choden. *Mindful Compassion: How the Science of Compassion Can Help You Understand Your Emotions, Live in the Present, and Connect Deeply with Others* (p. 194). New Harbinger Publications. Kindle Edition.
(end quote)

Such a technique may well take care of my concerns about linking meditation to the outside world (or using 'meditation' more generally).

My view:

If you do not bring wholesome techniques of your traditional meditation out into a cultivation in-life also, your practice of Buddhism is not complete.

<-Bringing your Buddhism "out" will more likely reciprocally bring into your quiet contemplative states things worth attending to/being mindful of.

[(Wouldn't you like to find yourself "falling" into worthy contemplation -- where else could wisdom appear?) (Eventually one will realize: To know that you know things is simply part of knowing things; to control what you do is simply part of doing.)]

**More notes
on
Meditation**
by *Brad*

The following material is quoted from:

Rahula, Walpola (2007-12-01). *What the Buddha Taught: Revised and Expanded Edition with Texts from Suttas and Dhammapada* (Kindle Location 1655). Grove/Atlantic, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

The Buddha's teaching, particularly his way of 'meditation', aims at producing a state of perfect mental health, equilibrium and tranquility. It is unfortunate that hardly any other section of the Buddha's teaching is so much misunderstood as 'meditation', both by Buddhists and non-Buddhists. ...

... The word meditation is a very poor substitute for the original term bhavana, which means 'culture'

or ‘development’, i.e., mental culture or mental development. The Buddhist bhavana, properly speaking, is mental culture in the full sense of the term. It aims at cleansing the mind of impurities and disturbances, such as lustful desires, ...

... There are two forms of meditation.

One is the development of mental concentration (samatha or samadhi), of one-pointedness of mind, by various methods prescribed in the texts, leading up to the highest mystic states such as ‘the Sphere of Nothingness’ or ‘the Sphere of Neither-Perception-nor-Non-Perception’. All these mystic states, according to the Buddha, are mind-created, mind-produced, conditioned (samkhata). They have nothing to do with Reality, Truth, Nirvana. This form of meditation existed before the Buddha. Hence it is not purely Buddhist, but it is not excluded from the field of Buddhist meditation. However it is not essential for the realization of Nirvana. ...

... [The Buddha] therefore discovered the other form of ‘meditation’ known as vipassana (Skt. vipasyana or vidarsana), ‘Insight’ into the nature of things, leading to the complete liberation of mind, to the realization of the Ultimate Truth, Nirvana. This is essentially Buddhist ‘meditation’, Buddhist mental culture. It is an analytical method based on mindfulness, awareness, vigilance, observation. ...

... The most important discourse ever given by the Buddha on mental development (‘meditation’) is called the Satipatthana-sutta, ‘The Setting-up of Mindfulness’. The discourse is divided into four main sections: the first section deals with our body (kaya), the second with our feelings and sensations (vedana), the third with the mind (citta), and the fourth with various moral and intellectual subjects (dhamma). It should be clearly borne in mind that whatever the form of ‘meditation’ may be, the essential thing is mindfulness or awareness (sati), attention or observation (anupassana). ...

... [One form (or way) of meditation has to do with the breathing-in and breathing-out (as described by the Buddha, in the main Topic-section, above).]

Another very important, practical, and useful form of ‘meditation’ (mental development) is to be aware and mindful of whatever you do, physically or verbally, during the daily routine of work in your life, private, public or professional. ...

... This mindfulness or awareness with regard to our activities, taught by the Buddha, is to live in the present moment, to live in the present action. [This does not mean that you should not think of the past or the future at all. On the contrary, you think of them in relation to the present moment, the present action, when and where it is relevant.] (This is also the Zen way which is based primarily on this teaching.)

Here in this form of meditation, you haven’t got to perform any particular action in order to develop mindfulness, but you have only to be mindful and aware of whatever you may do....

... now let us discuss the form of ‘meditation’ with regard to our minds. You should be fully aware of the fact whenever your mind is passionate or detached, whenever it is overpowered by hatred, ill-will, jealousy, or is full of love, compassion, whenever it is deluded or has a clear and right understanding, and so on and so forth. ...

Here is no attitude of criticizing or judging, or discriminating between right and wrong, or good and bad. It is simply observing, watching, examining. You are not a judge, but a scientist. When you observe your mind, and see its true nature clearly, you become dispassionate with regard to its

emotions, sentiments and states. Thus you become detached and free, so that you may see things as they are. ...

... there is a form of 'meditation' on ethical, spiritual and intellectual subjects. All our studies, reading, discussions, conversation and deliberations on such subjects are included in this 'meditation'. To read this book, and to think deeply about the subjects discussed in it, is a form of meditation.

... the conversation between Khemaka and the group of monks was a form of meditation which led to the realization of Nirvana. ...

One may also 'meditate' on such subjects as the Five Aggregates investigating the question 'What is a being?' or 'What is it that is called I?', or on the Four Noble Truths, as we discussed above. Study and investigation of those subjects constitute this fourth form of meditation, which leads to the realization of Ultimate Truth. ...

Apart from those we have discussed here, there are many other subjects of meditation, traditionally forty in number, among which mention should be made particularly of the four Sublime States: (Brahma-vihara): (1) extending unlimited, universal love and good-will (metta) to all living beings without any kind of discrimination, 'just as a mother loves her only child'; (2) compassion (karuna) for all living beings who are suffering, in trouble and affliction; (3) sympathetic joy (mudita) in others' success, welfare and happiness; and (4) equanimity (upekkha) in all vicissitudes of life.

(end quotes)

[**My own summaries on/about meditation and on some other matters and on some more general matters can be viewed by reading my twitter tweets: <http://twitter.com/lorlarz2> .]**

Comments on : Topic 6: More perspective and perspectives

Some NON-invariant aspects of Dependent Origination by Brad

The order of phenomenon in dependent origination is NOT invariant!!
In the usual statement of 12 "steps" in Dependent Origination:

- With ignorance as the condition, volitional formations come to be.
- With volitional formations as condition, comes consciousness.
- With consciousness as condition, comes name-and-form.
- With name-and-form as condition, come the 6 sense bases
- With sense bases comes contact.
- With contact comes feelings.
- With feelings comes craving.
- With craving comes clinging.
- With clinging comes existence.

With existence as condition comes birth ...
With birth ... aging and suffering

Now, quoting the Buddha (Book Two of the Samyutta Nikaya):

"Then, bhikkhsu, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does consciousness come to be? By what is consciousness conditioned?' Then, bhikkhsu, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is name-and-form, consciousness comes to be; consciousness has name-and-form as its condition. '
[Note, above, name-and-form has consciousness as its condition.]

"Then, bhikkhsu, it occurred to me: consciousness turns back; it does not go further than name-and-form. It is to this extent that one may be born and age and die, pass away and be reborn, that is, when there is consciousness with name-and-form as its condition, and name-and-form with consciousness as its condition. With name-and-form as condition ... [regular order of dependent origination, at the top of this Comment] ... "

" ... a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is no consciousness, name-and-form does not come to be; with the cessation of consciousness comes cessation of name-and form' ... 'When there is no name-and-form, consciousness does not come to be; with the cessation of name-and-form comes the cessation of consciousness' ..."

P.S. Several "steps" are NOT bi-directional: I should note that several of the 12 "steps" of Dependent Origination are expressly NOT bi-directional. In these cases, causation (that is: what "is the condition for" what) is only ONE WAY. I think it is fair to say (to put it in modern terms) that this is "by definition". (All this is based on statements expressly made by the Buddha himself.)
Consciousness --> name-and-form AND Name-and-form --> consciousness seem to be the unique bi-directional conditions.

Moreover: terms like 'perception', 'attention', and 'intention', also used by the Buddha (at least as translated), must be understood to be somewhere(s) **amidst** the RANGE from initial volitional formations _to_ (and perhaps including) craving in dependent origination.

Speaking using the words (terms), 'perception' and 'intention', the Buddha said:
"What are unwholesome intentions? They are the intention of sensual desire, the intention of ill will, and the intention of cruelty ... they should be said to originate from perception. What perception? Though perception is multiple, and varied, and of different aspects, there is perception of sensual desire, perception of ill will, and perception of cruelty. Unwholesome intentions originate from this. [Similarly, wholesome intentions originate from perception of renunciation, perception of non-ill will, and perception of non-cruelty.]"

Interestingly: Unwholesome intentions do not cease without remainder until the first

jhana (jhanas are progressive states of 'deep' concentration shown by arahants -- see Topic 7). Wholesome intentions are fully 'dealt with' only by the second jhana (where THEY can be said to have 'ceased without remainder') (Source for last 2 paragraphs: Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, Samanamandikaputta Sutta).

Also, regarding feeling, perception, volition, contact, and attention: Quoting the Buddha: "... Feeling, perception, volition, contact, and attention -- these are called name [(in name-and-form)]. The four great elements and the form derived from the four great elements -- these are called form. So this name and this form are what is called name-and-form. ..." (end quote)
Given the statements from the Buddha, quoted in this top Comment, it seems likely that the junction of consciousness and name-and-form is especially important for changes in feeling, perception, volition, contact, and attention

**Adding
Perspective
to the top
Comment**
by *Brad*

Important things related to conditions:

While 3 of THE 5 aggregates subject to clinging (ETC.!) have CONTACT as their condition, form and consciousness do not.

Form simply has nutriment as its condition. But consciousness has a non-aggregate as its condition : name-and-form.

[The 5 aggregates subject to clinging are: form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness.]

AND HERE'S ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE:

Since understanding things in terms of the sense bases is an important understanding, according to the Buddha:

In terms of sense bases: Form is related to the 6 organ bases (eye base, [the 4 other physical sense bases] _and_ mind base) AND the form base. Feeling, perception, and volitional formations are related to the sense base called "mental phenomenon base"

(these are the same three with Contact as their condition).

Consciousness has the sense base called "mind base" (as is one of the 6 initial bases of [sensing] form).

[Some schemes in the teaching have SOME volitional formations occur directly after consciousness (in particular, the consciousness, at least some of which, occurs right after sensing form). This does seem to help make things make sense, so to speak. The sense base of this round of volitional formations, as is true of later volitional formations and 2 other aggregate things, is the 'mental phenomenon base'.

ACTUALLY: This is indicated in the words of the Buddha, himself -- the quote below on contact, feeling, AND intention.

Also: Sariputta, a main disciple of the Buddha, says something that supports this fore-mentioned point of view on volitional formations. He states that feeling, perception, and consciousness are conjoined and impossible to separate from each other. In particular he says, "what one feels, that one perceives; and what one perceives, one cognizes" (Middle Length Discourses, Mahavedalla Sutta).] Another fact that is noteworthy is that when describing the origination of suffering the Buddha and his disciples often describe it, not in terms of 12 steps of dependent origination, but basically beginning with the way one 'handles' feeling, and whether he delights in things (or finds aversion) and how that leads to clinging, ETC. (Example: Middle Length Discourses, Shorter Discourse on the Destruction of Craving).

Nothing I have seen in the words of the Buddha indicate consciousness, feeling, perception, or volitional formations occur successively or in any particular order (as indicated here and there). I have seen it claimed that some Buddhist traditions say such things, but again, I have not seen it myself in the many, many tens of thousands of words of the Buddha I have read yet.

There is this sequence of causal ("dependent") relationships:

IN DEPENDENCE ON form and sense organ(s) comes consciousness* of one or more types (including mind-consciousness). Buddha: "The meeting, the encounter, the concurrence of these three things is called ['sense-organ'-] contact. ...

Contacted, bhikkhus, one feels, contacted one intends, contacted one perceives.

Thus, these things too are moving and tottering, impermanent, changing, becoming otherwise."

[* Obviously consciousness appears also in another order -- other than where it is said to emerge in dependent origination. Later analyses describe states of consciousness succeeding one another in quick succession. See the Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma, the Abhidhammattha Sangaha. Consciousness can come after any of the other 4 aggregates, according to the venerable Walpola Rahula.]

To talk in terms of 'internal' and 'external' sense bases:

The six sense organs or bases of contact are named internal sense bases (these are: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body [(touch)] and mind); the six corresponding sense objects, are known as external sense bases (visible form, sound, odor, taste, tangible things and mind-objects); consciousness arises in relation to each pair of these internal and external sense bases.

TO ABANDON ALL ("the all"), there is the Dhamma for abandoning all through direct knowledge and full understanding: forms** or mental phenomenon (as the case may be) related to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, are to be so abandoned; 'sense organ'-related consciousness is (are) to be so abandoned; 'sense organ' contacts are to be so abandoned; and feelings that arise with contact ('sense organ' contacts) as their condition are to be so abandoned.

The Buddha said: "without directly knowing and fully understanding the all, without developing dispassion towards it and abandoning it, one is incapable of destroying suffering. ..." [AND, vice versa:] " ... By directly knowing and fully understanding the eye [similarly for each of the other 'physical' organs] and ... the mind ... and whatever feeling arises with mind-contact [(or other 'sense organ' contacts)] as condition ... by developing dispassion towards it and abandoning it, one is capable of destroying suffering."

On another occasion: In a statement similar to that above, after form (or mental phenomenon) and 'sense organ'-consciousness [(in both cases, each type mentioned individually)], and before 'sense organ' contacts, he inserts: "things to be cognized by" the 'sense organ'- consciousness.

Footnote and other notes:

[** "Forms" and "form", as used in this Comment, refer to: visible form, sound, odor, taste, tangible things (touch).]

Obviously, in several statements in this comment and the one above, feelings are a very important nexus for making things change. That is even more clear when the Buddha says: "It is in dependence on the diversity of elements that there arises the diversity of contacts; in dependence on the diversity of contacts that there arises the diversity of feelings." The Buddha also said:

" ... in this very body here
Various kinds of feelings arise.

Pleasant ones and painful ones,
And those that are neither painful nor pleasant.

"But when a bhikkhu who is ardent
Does not neglect clear comprehension,
Then the wise man fully understands
Feelings in their entirety.

"Having fully understood feelings,
He is taintless in this very life.
Standing in Dhamma, with the body's breakup,
The knowledge-master cannot be reckoned. "

Regarding the internal and external sense bases, the Great Disciple, Sariputta, said (in Book IV of the Samyutta Nikaya):

and, in the same source, on another occasion the Great Disciple, Ananda, made the exact same statements: "... the eye is not the fetter of forms ([visual forms]) nor are forms the fetter of the eye, but rather the desire and lust that arise there dependent on both: that is the fetter there. [Similarly for the ear and sounds (and with the other 3 'physical' senses, internal and external) AND with the mind and mental phenomenon -- it is the desire and lust that arises dependent on both that is the fetter.]"

The Buddha:

"Whatever, bhikkhus, is the extent of the aggregates, the elements, and the sense bases, he does not conceive that, does not conceive in that, does not conceive from that, does not conceive, 'That is mine'.
Since he does not conceive anything thus, he does not cling to anything in this world."

A bit more perspective on Buddhist Concepts

One must be fully with/on the 'object' one is contemplating or attending to wisely (closely) or concentrating on -- THAT is the **NOW (the present)** of Buddhism.

For unenlightened persons: a bit of the **'emptiness'** Buddhism speaks of is found when you transcend the unnecessary or incorrect parts of a view(s) (insight); experiencing a bit of 'emptiness' of an old incorrect view, one also gets a sense of the **conditionality** and **impermanence**, and of **non-self**.

(based on Excursions in the Thought World of the Pali Discourses, by Analayo, 2012 and based on his finding that, except at Enlightenment, emptiness is used as an adjective, qualifying 'objects' of concentration and contemplation.)

AND: "... even the peak of emptiness, the realization of full awakening and unsurpassable mental freedom, is "empty of." Empty of what? Empty of lust, anger, and delusion (MN I 298)." (Analayo)

COMMENTS ON: Topic 7: Stages on the Path to Enlightenment

More of the Buddha's words on the PATH
by Brad

What more did the Buddha say that brings further understanding of the Path?

My major summary of Book V. (The Great Book) of the Samyutta Nikaya, as translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi :

(All quotes of the Buddha, himself, except when [very rarely] indicated otherwise):

From a collection of suttas , roughly about the PATH in general :

“Ignorance is the forerunner in the entry upon unwholesome states, with shamelessness and fearlessness of wrongdoing following along.”

“For an unwise person immersed in ignorance, wrong view springs up. For one of wrong view, wrong intention springs up. For one of wrong intention, wrong speech springs up.”

“... wrong speech, wrong action ... wrong action, wrong livelihood ... wrong livelihood, wrong effort ,... wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, ... wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration.”

“... true knowledge is the forerunner in the entry upon wholesome states, with a sense of shame and fear of wrongdoing following along ... true knowledge, right view; right view, right intention; ..., right speech; ..., right action; ..., right livelihood; ... , right effort; ..., right mindfulness; ..., right concentration.”

“When a bhikkhu has a good friend, good companion, a good comrade, it is to be expected that he will develop and cultivate the Noble 8-fold Path. [Doing so] a bhikkhu develops right view based upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release [(← a very often restated phrase, including: used with each aspect of the 8-fold Noble Path)].”

“This is a designation for this Noble 8-fold Path: 'the divine vehicle' and 'the vehicle of the Dhamma' ... the path, when developed and cultivated has as its final goad the removal of lust, the removal of hatred, the removal of delusion. ... this is the Path, this is the way for the full understanding of suffering.”

The 8-fold Noble Path includes right view, etc. ...leading to the knowledge of the 4 Noble Truths and with right effort: “a bhikkhu [(one in training on the Path)] generates desire for the non-arising of unarisen evil, unwholesome states; he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, and strives. He generates desire for the abandoning of evil, arisen unwholesome states. ... He generates desire for the arising of wholesome states. He generates desire for the maintenance of arisen wholesome states, for their non-decay, increase,

expansion, and fulfillment by development; he makes an effort, aroused energy, applies his mind and strives.”

“... There is feeling with wrong view as a condition, also feeling with right view as condition ... [6 other Noble Path factors similarly dealt with here] ... feeling with wrong concentration as condition and feeling with right concentration as condition. There is feeling with desire as condition, also feeling with thought as condition, also feeling with perception as condition. ... when desire has subsided, and perception has subsided, there is also feeling with that as condition. There is effort for the as-yet-unattained; when that stage has been reached, there is also feeling with that as condition.”

“Whether it is a layman or one gone forth who is practicing rightly, because of undertaking the right way of practice [(the 8-fold Noble Path)] he attains the method, the Dhamma ...”

“Worse than an inferior person ... someone of wrong view, wrong [6 others] , wrong concentration, wrong knowledge, wrong liberation. ... Better than a superior person ... is someone of right view, right [6 others] , right concentration, right knowledge, right liberation.”

Purpose of the holy life:

“for the abandoning of the fetters ... for the uprooting of the underlying tendencies ... for the full understanding of the course ... for the destruction of the taints ... for the realization of the fruit of true knowledge and liberation ... for the sake of knowledge and vision ... for the sake of final Nibbana without clinging [and the end of suffering] .”

“The forerunner and precursor for the arising of the 8-fold Noble Path, that is accomplishment in virtue ... accomplishment in desire ... accomplishment in self ... accomplishment in view ... accomplishment in diligence ... accomplishment in careful attention.” “And how does a bhikkhu who is accomplished in careful attention develop and cultivate the 8-fold Noble Path? Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu develops right view which is based on seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release [same for the other 7 aspects of the 8-fold Noble Path]. [The Path] has right view, which has as its final goal the removal of lust, the removal of hatred, the removal of delusion [same for the other 7 aspects of the 8-fold Noble Path].”

“ ... whatever wholesome states there are, they are rooted in diligence, converge upon diligence, and diligence is declared to be chief among them..”

“Whatever strenuous deeds are done, [they] are all done base upon the earth, established upon the earth, so too, based upon virtue, established upon virtue.”

“When a bhikkhu develops and cultivates the 8-fold Noble Path, whenever evil, unwholesome states have arisen, he intercedes to dispense and quell them ... When a bhikkhu develops and cultivates the 8-fold Noble Path, then for him the 4 establishments of mindfulness go to fulfillment by development; the 4 right strivings ... , the 4 bases of spiritual power ... , the 5 spiritual faculties ... , the 5 powers ... , and the 7 factors of enlightenment [all] go to fulfillment by development.”

When one “develops and cultivates the 8-fold Noble Path, he understands by direct knowledge

those things that are to be fully understood by direct knowledge; he abandons by direct knowledge those things that are to be abandoned by direct knowledge; he realizes by direct knowledge those things that are to be realized by direct knowledge; he develops by direct knowledge those things that are to be developed by direct knowledge.”

Question: What are the things to be fully understood by direct knowledge? Answer: “... the 5 aggregates subject to clinging ... What are things to be abandoned by direct knowledge? Answer: “Ignorance and craving for existence ... [and what is] to be realized by direct knowledge?: true knowledge and liberation ... [and what is] to be developed by direct knowledge: serenity and insight.”

For one who is “developing and cultivating the 8-fold Noble Path, it is impossible that he will give up training and return to lower life ... because for a long time his mind has been slanted, and inclined toward seclusion ... and inclines toward Nibbana.”

“... there are 3 searches ... the search for sensual pleasure, the search for existence, the search for a holy life ... the 8-fold Noble Path is to be developed for direct knowledge of these three searches ... full understanding of the 3 searches ... for the utter destruction of the 3 searches ... for the abandoning of the 3 searches.” ... Likewise for 3 discriminations: 'I am superior', 'I am equal', 'I am inferior' (full understanding “ ... for their utter destruction, for their abandonment”)

More suttas on sets of 3 things, to be fully understood, utterly destroyed, and abandoned:

- three taints: sensuality, the taint of existence, the taint of ignorance
- The 3 kinds of existence: sense-sphere, form sphere, formless sphere
- The 3 kinds of suffering: due to pain, due to formations, due to change
- The 3 kinds of barrenness: barrenness of lust, barrenness of hatred, barrenness of delusion (these 3 also known as the 3 stains, the 3 kinds of trouble)
- the 3 feelings: pleasure, painful, neither pleasant or painful
- the 3 cravings: for sensual pleasure, for existence, for extermination (also know as the three thirsts)

Now, sets of 4 things to be fully understood, utterly destroyed, and abandoned:

- 4 floods: of sensuality, the flood of existence, the flood of views, the flood of ignorance
- similarly: the bonds of: sensuality ..., of existence ..., of views ..., of ignorance
- the 4 kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, clinging to rules and vows, clinging to a doctrine of 'self'
- the 4 knots: of covetousness, of ill will, distorted grasp of rules and vows, adherence to dogmatic assertions off truth

Sets of 5, to be fully understood, utterly destroyed, and abandoned:

- 5 cords of sensual pleasure (based on 5 of the 6 senses -- the physical ones)
- the 5 hindrances
- the 5 aggregates

Also the 8-fold Noble Path is to be developed for direct knowledge (etc.) of the 5 lower

fetters and 5 higher fetters.

Then there are also the 7 underlying tendencies to be fully understood, utterly destroyed, and abandoned:

- tendency to sensual lust
- tendency to aversion
- tendency to views
- tendency to doubt
- tendency to conceit
- tendency to lust for existence
- tendency to ignorance

B. Bodhi tells us that out of the 29 OTHER aspects of the OVERALL path to enlightenment, the 8-fold Noble Path can be seen to have counterparts in 24 of these others (or, 32 out of the grand total of 37). Thus, among ALL the factors needed for enlightenment, the 8-fold Noble Path is very important.

NOW:

Suttas generally on the 7 factors of Enlightenment:

More bases of problems: CARELESS ATTENTION to:

- nutriment of the hindrances
- unarisen sensual desire
- unarisen ill will
- unarisen sloth and torpor
- unarisen restlessness and remorse
- unarisen doubt

Frequently giving careless attention to any of these is the nutriment for their arising, increase, and expansion,

In contrast: frequently giving CAREFUL ATTENTION to each of the 7 factors of enlightenment is nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factors and for the development of them.

When one dwells “thus withdrawn [one] recollects the Dhamma and thinks it over, on that occasion the enlightenment factor of mindfulness is aroused” and [that factor] “comes to fulfillment by development”. Similarly for each of the other 6 factors of enlightenment -- arising in sequence, each having the one before it as its base. “... developing mindfully, he discriminates that Dhamma with wisdom and makes an investigation of it” “... while he discriminates, energy is aroused ... when energy is aroused, there aroused, there arises in him spiritual rapture ...

uplifted by rapture, the body becomes tranquil ... one who is tranquil and happy becomes concentrated ... one [thereby] closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated.” [Each factor just mentioned above, “coming to fulfillment by development” -- development, again, “based on seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release”.]

With the 7 factors (of enlightenment) developed and cultivated, one obtains “final knowledge”.

Three kinds of misconduct (bodily, verbal, and mental) : when seen via the proper kind of restraint of the sense faculties (all 6), not greatly excited or dejected, but seen with a steady, composed mind: this leads to the abandonment of the 3 kinds of misconduct.

And, when good conduct is developed and cultivated, this leads to the 4 establishments of mindfulness: “... ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world, he dwells contemplating body-in-body, feeling-in-feeling, mind-in-mind, and phenomenon-in-phenomenon “. The 4 factors of mindfulness, when developed and cultivated, lead to the 7 factors of enlightenment, Once they (the 7) are developed and cultivated, they fulfill true knowledge and liberation.

“A bhikkhu can know (by careful attention) for himself ... when arousing the enlightenment factor of mindfulness [and all the other 6 factors, similarly]”.

Another precursor of the 7 factors of enlightenment is good friendship (it promotes seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, maturing in release -- each E.F. based on this sort of process).

“It is in this way ... based on virtue, [one] develops and cultivates the 7 factors of enlightenment.” Also: “these 7 factors, when developed and cultivated, lead to utter revulsion, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana”.

By giving frequent attention to things that are the bases of sensual lust, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and remorse, doubt -- this leads to each arising and then increasing and expanding.

And yet, also: when one attends carelessly to sensual desire ETC, those unarisen will arise and increase and expand. And the enlightenment factor of mindfulness and all subsequent factors do not arise and those arisen cease.

Development and cultivation of the 7 factors of enlightenment lead to the destruction of craving (and end of suffering). Each, when developed and cultivated (based on seclusion, dispassion, cessation, maturing in release) become “vast, exalted,

measureless, without ill will”. Thus, craving is abandoned. And, with each factor, one “penetrates and sunders the mass of greed that he has never penetrated before [and similarly for hatred and delusion] .”

A venerable follower of the Blessed One, said (and it was approved of):

“When I consider my devotion and reverence for the Blessed One and my sense of shame and fear of wrongdoing, I went forth from the household into homelessness. The Blessed One taught me the Dhamma, thus: such is form, its origin, such is its passing away; such is feeling ...; ... perception ...; ... volitional formations ...; ... consciousness, such is its origin, such is its passing away. I directly knew, as it really is, 'this is suffering'; I directly knew, as it really is, 'This is the origin of suffering'; ... 'this is the cessation of suffering'; ... 'this is the way to the cessation of suffering'. I have made a breakthrough to the Dhamma ... obtained the Path ... developed and cultivated it, and I have obtained the seven Factors of Enlightenment ... and developed and cultivated [each]. ... Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this state of being.”

“Bhikkhuss, as to internal factors, I do not see any other factor that is so helpful for the arising of the 7 factors of enlightenment as this: careful attention.” With regard to external factors: “I do not see any other factor that is so helpful for the arising of the 7 factors of enlightenment as: this: good friendship.”

The liberation of the mind through loving-kindness: “frequently giving careful attention to it is the denourishment that prevents unarisen ill will from arising and arisen ill will from increasing and expanding.”

“Arousal, the element of endeavor, the element of exertion: frequently giving careful attention to them ... [that] is the denourishment that prevents sloth and torpor”. Similarly: peacefulness of mind vs. restlessness and remorse.

“There are wholesome and unwholesome states, blameable and blameless states, inferior and superior states with their counterparts: frequently giving careful attention to them is the denourishment of doubt”

Opposite of the above good results occur when not frequently giving careful attention to the 7 factors of enlightenment.

pp. 1605 - 1608 (of the B. Bodhi translation of the Samyutta Nikaya): “timely” and “untimely” times to try to develop the various 7 factors of enlightenment.

“... abandon the 5 hindrances; fill the mind rather with loving-kindness, compassion, altruistic joy, and equanimity” ... develop the 7 F.E. by accompanying each of the 7 F.E. with the four great things just mentioned. In such states (the 4, just mentioned) “one can, if one wishes”:

- “perceive the repulsive in the unrepulsive”
- “perceive the unrepulsive in the repulsive”

- perceive both in the repulsive
- perceive both in the unrepulsive

“OR he may perceive neither and may dwell equanimously mindful and clearly comprehending.”

The Buddha at least at one occasion said:

“one who possesses even a single factor of enlightenment would know and see things as they really are.”

The Development of Mindfulness

While there are “timely” times for the development of 6 of the factors of enlightenment (and “untimely times”), according to the Buddha: “mindfulness, bhikkhus, I say is always useful.”

Thus, not only is mindfulness the first-occurring in the sequence of F.E., but it seems to be the most pervasive and abiding.

Thus, a collection of suttas on the 4 factors of mindfulness seems very appropriate and a summary of these suttas is coming now:

“How are the 3 kinds of good conduct developed and cultivated so they fulfill the 4 establishments of mindfulness? ... abandoning bodily misconduct, a bhikkhu develops good conduct [likewise for verbal misconduct, etc. and mental misconduct, etc.]”

“How are the 4 establishments of mindfulness developed and cultivated so that they fulfill the 7 factors of enlightenment? ... [dwell] contemplating body-in-body, ardent clearly comprehending, and mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world [and same for feeling-in-feeling, mind-in-mind and phenomenon-in-phenomenon].”

“... this is the one-way path for the purification of beings, for overcoming sorrow and lamentations, for passing away of pain and displeasure, for the achievement of the method for the realization of Nibbana.”

Clear comprehension is exercised “when going forward and returning, when looking ahead and looking aside ... etc [(i.e. basically: at all times)]”

“... bhikkhus, how do you purify the very starting point of wholesome states? ... [by] virtues that is well-purified and view that is straight ...” contemplate internally, externally, and internally and externally: body-in-body, feeling ... , mind ..., and phenomenon-in-phenomenon.

“[Those] not long gone forth, recently come to this Dhamma and Discipline, should be exhorted, settled, and established by you in the development of the 4 establishments.”

“[Those] liberated through final knowledge: they too dwell contemplating body-in-body, ardent, clearly comprehending, unified, with limpid mind, concentrated, with one-pointed mind, detached from the body [similarly for: feeling-in-feeling, mind-in-mind and phenomenon-in-phenomenon].”

“What is NOT, bhikkhus, our resort, but the domain of others? It is the 5 cords of sensual pleasure [(5 of the 6 sense bases -- the physical ones)].”

“ ... a bhikkhu's resort, his own ancestral domain, is the 4 establishments of mindfulness.”

“[if] while he dwells contemplating and his mind does not become concentrated, his corruptions are not abandoned he does not pick up on the signs [of body-in-body, ETC.] If he does become concentrated he does pick up the sign for each.” Yet: “by non-attention to all signs and by the cessation of certain feelings, the Tathagata (the Buddha) dwells in the signless concentration of the mind, on that occasion.”

“[One] should direct his mind towards some inspiring sign; when he directs his mind towards some inspiring sign, gladness is born; when gladdened, rapture is born; when the mind is uplifted by rapture, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body experiences happiness. The mind of one who is happy becomes concentrated. He reflects thus: 'The purpose for which I directed my mind has been achieved. Let me now withdraw it; so he withdraws and does not think or examine. He understands: 'Without thought and examination, internally I am happy'.”

“I have taught by direction. I have taught without direction. Whatever should be done, a compassionate teacher, out of compassion for his disciples [does] ...”

“[As one] dwells contemplating body-in-body , ETC, the mind becomes dispassionate and by non-clinging it is liberated from the taints.”

Sariputta: “I have understood by inference the Dhamma; whatever arahants ... arose in the past, all those Blessed Ones had first abandoned the 5 hindrances, corruptions of the mind and weakness of wisdom, and then with their minds well-established in the 4 establishments of mindfulness, they developed correctly the 7 factors of enlightenment.” This statement was directly approved of by the Buddha.

Having accomplished the goal of mindfulness: “[one] dwells with yourself as your own island.”

When you correctly develop the 4 establishments of mindfulness: “you may expect only growth in wholesome states, not decline... the 4 establishments of mindfulness, when developed and cultivated are noble and emancipating; they lead one who acts upon them out to the complete destruction of suffering.”

“... by protecting oneself, one protects others ... by protecting others, one protects oneself. By patience, harmlessness, loving-kindness, and sympathy ... thus should the establishments of mindfulness be practiced.”

“It is because the 4 establishments of mindfulness are not developed and cultivated that the true Dhamma does not endure long ... [it is] because the 4 establishments of mindfulness are developed and cultivated that the true Dhamma endures long after the Tathagata has attained final Nibbana.” AND: “It is because one has completely developed the 4 establishments of mindfulness that one is beyond training.”

When the contemplation of the body-in-body, [ETC.] has been developed “thus bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.”

“The 4 establishments of mindfulness: when developed and cultivated, lead to utter revulsion, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.”

Exercising clear comprehension: “feelings are understood as they arise, understood as they remain present, understood as they pass away [similarly for thoughts and perceptions].”

“What bhikkhus, is the development of mindfulness? ... a bhikkhu dwells contemplating the nature of the origination of the body; he dwells contemplating the nature of the vanishing of the body; he dwells contemplating the nature of the origination and vanishing of the body -- ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful ... [similarly for feelings, mind, and for phenomenon]”

“With the origination of contact, there is origination of feeling. With the cessation of contact there is the passing away of feeling. With the origination of name-and-form there is the origination of mind. With cessation of name-and-form there is passing away of mind. With the origination of attention, there is the origination of phenomenon. With the cessation of attention, there is cessation of phenomenon.”

“What is the way leading to the establishment of mindfulness? It is the 8-fold Noble path.”

“Dwell restrained ... in good conduct ... seeing danger in the slightest faults ... based upon virtue, you should develop the 4 establishments of mindfulness.”

Collection of suttas on the “5 faculties”: “... of faith, ... of energy, ... of mindfulness ... , of concentration , ... of wisdom.”

“A noble disciple understands as they really are the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of these 5 faculties, then he is called a stream-enterer, no longer bound to the nether world.”

He is “liberated by non-clinging”, “one whose taints are destroyed”, “one who has done what had to be done ... reached his goal.” “... utterly destroyed the fetters of existence, one completely liberated by final knowledge.”

“[one must] understand the faculty of faith, its origin, its cessation, the way leading to

cessation [similarly for: energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom].”

“ Faith is seen in the 4 factors of stream-entry [(coming up)]”

“Energy is seen in the 4 right strivings [(coming up)]”

“Mindfulness in the establishments of mindfulness”

“Concentration in the 4 jhanas”

“Wisdom in the 4 Noble Truths”

The noble disciple has wisdom “directed to the arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrating, leading to the complete destruction of suffering.”

The “noble disciple ... dwells with energy aroused for the abandoning of unwholesome states, firm in exertion, not shirking the responsibility of cultivating wholesome states ... [he] generates desire for non-arising of evil, unwholesome states, he makes an effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, strives ... [likewise] he generates desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome states and for the maintenance of arisen wholesome states ... [and their] increase, expansion, and fulfillment.”

Noble, wise disciple: completely understands the 4 Noble Truths.

There is another set of 6 faculties : the 6 sense bases. [one] must understand gratification, danger, and escape with regard to each and the origin and passing away, then one is a stream-enterer.

YET other “faculties”, 5 of them:

-- pleasure (born of body contact) (ceases in the third jhana)

-- pain (born of body contact) (ceases in the first jhana)

-- joy (born of mind contact)(ceases in the fourth jhana)

-- displeasure (born of mind contact) (ceases in the second jhana)

-- equanimity (body or mental)(ceases when one dwells with the cessation of perception and feeling, after the fourth jhana)

One wants to fully understand each and have them “cease and subside”.

“5 faculties become the 5 powers [(coming up)] and the 5 powers become the 5 faculties.”

“because he has developed one faculty a bhikkhu who has destroyed the taints, declares final knowledge ... that one faculty: wisdom: faith that follows from it becomes stabilized [likewise for energy, mindfulness, and concentration]. ... For the the noble disciple with wisdom: his noble liberation is his faculty of concentration.”

“The remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance, the mass of darkness: this is the peaceful state, this is the sublime state that is the stilling of all formations, the relinquishment of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbana ... that is his capacity of wisdom.”

“... established in one thing, all 5 faculties are developed, well-developed; that one thing: diligence: guards the mind against the taints and tainted states; thus faith goes to fulfillment by development [and same for the other 4 faculties].”

“5 faculties, when developed and cultivated, lead to the uprooting of the underlying tendencies.”

One develops the 5 faculties [again, as with other things] based upon seclusion, dispassion, cessation, maturing in release.”

Interesting statements (distinctions):

The Buddha at least once said: “... because he has developed *4* faculties he has destroyed the taints.” These four are: energy, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom [(faith is not listed here)]; of course on many other occasions, all 5 were said to be required; yet on another occasion only 3 needed faculties were cited as necessary for 'final knowledge', [(these being mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom.)]

RIGHT STRIVINGS:

4 right strivings:

- generate desire for unarising of unarisen evil unwholesome states
- generate desire for abandoning of arisen evil, unwholesome states
- generate desire for the arising of unarisen wholesome states
- generate desire for the maintenance ... expansion ... of wholesome states ...

“... One makes and effort, arouses energy, applies his mind, strives”

“... based upon virtue, established upon virtue, ... one develops and cultivates the 4 right strivings.”

Summary of suttas on the 5 powers

[in a way, the same as the 5 faculties]

5 powers: power of faith, power of energy, power of mindfulness, power of concentration, power of wisdom.

“a bhikkhu who develops these powers slants, slopes, and inclines toward Nibbana.”

[As with other things,] they develop “based on seclusion, dispassion, cessation, maturing in release.”

The powers have as their final goal: the removal of lust, the removal of hatred, the removal of delusion.

Summary of suttas on the bases of spiritual power

Bases and development of spiritual powers : THESE HAVE TO DO WITH CONCENTRATION (based on various (4) things) AND STRIVING.

4 bases:

“basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional formations of striving”

“basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to energy and volitional formations of striving”

“basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to mind and volitional formations of striving”

“basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional formations of striving”

When these bases are developed and cultivated, “[they] lead to utter revulsion, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.”

“... by the destruction of taints, in this very life, [those who] entered and dwell in the taintless liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, realizing it for themselves, with direct knowledge, all did so because they had developed and cultivated these 4 bases for spiritual power.”

Also, in the case of each power: “in regard to things unheard before, there arose ... vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light ...”

One develops each spiritual power that possesses concentration by [some factor] and “volitional formations of striving AND THOUGHT”

“... desire [etc.] will neither be too slack nor too tense and it will be neither constricted internally nor distracted externally ... [(5 cords of sensual pleasure, major distractions)].”

“... such a person “dwells perceiving after and before: 'as before, so after', 'as after, so before; 'as below, so above', 'as above, so below' ...”

“ ... with a mind that is open and unenveloped, he develops the mind imbued with luminosity ...” “... having been one, he becomes many, having been many, he becomes one ... he understands the minds of other human beings and persons, having encompassed them with his own mind. He understands a mind with lust, as a mind with lust, [ETC.]” He generates desires for wholesome states and desires to rid unwholesome states (as noted before) <-- with regard to each of the powers.

“[This] is the path, the way for abandoning desire ... [yet] it is impossible that one can abandon desire by means of desire ... Thus, after accomplishments, the desire associated with each power, subsides [(just naturally subsides in one on the path to enlightenment)].”

Because one “has developed and cultivated the 4 bases of spiritual power that ... by the destruction of taints, in this very life dwells in the taintless liberation of mind ... wisdom ... realizing ... with direct knowledge.”

“path and practice that leads to gaining spiritual power, to obtaining spiritual power, ... and what is the way leading to the development of the bases? ... It is the 8-fold Noble Path.”

“4 bases of spiritual power are to be developed for the direct knowledge of the 5 higher fetters ... for the full understanding of them, for their utter destruction and for their abandoning.”

Summary of suttas (discourses) on Breathing and Meditation:

Meditative Mindfulness of Breathing

What the meditator thinks: breathing in ... breathing out ...

“having folded his legs crosswise, straightened his body, and set up mindfulness in front of him, just mindful he breathes in and breathes out --” noting one important experience or another on each occasion (cycle) of breathing in and breathing out.

Such meditation promotes the development of the 7 factors of enlightenment.

Arittha: “abandoned sensual desire for past sensual pleasures ... I have gotten rid of sensual desire for future sensual desires and I have thoroughly dispelled perceptions of aversion towards things internally and externally. Just mindful, I breath in; mindful, I breathe out.”

The Buddha responded:

“... That is mindfulness of breathing ... But as to how mindfulness of breathing is fulfilled in detail, Arittha, listen and attend closely and I will speak”

“... if a bhikkhu wishes: 'may I, secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, enter and dwell in the first jhana, which is accompanied by thought and examination, with rapture and happiness born of seclusion,' this same concentration by mindfulness of breathing should be closely attended to ...” [Similarly when one attains each of the 3 subsequent jhanas and beyond.]

“... when ... the concentration of breathing has been developed and cultivated, in this way, if he feels a pleasant feeling he understands: 'It is not to be held to'; he understands: 'It is not to be delighted in' [similarly for a painful feeling and when he feels a neither painful-nor-pleasant feeling].”

The mindfulness of breathing meditation is also excellent for contemplation of body-in-body, feeling-in-feeling, phenomenon-in-phenomenon.

“The concentration by mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, leads to the destruction of taints.”

“Concentration by mindfulness of breathing, Ananda, is the one thing, which when developed and cultivated, fulfills the 4 establishments of mindfulness ...” “... [when these are] developed and cultivated: [that] fulfills true knowledge and liberation.”

“It is in this way ... that concentration by mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated so it leads to the abandoning of fetters, the uprooting of the underlying tendencies, to fulfill the understanding of the course, to the destruction of the taints”

Summary of suttas on Stream-Entry:

Stream-entry is when one “taps” into the Dhamma and one is irrevocably on the path toward liberation and enlightenment.

4 things the stream-enterer has:

-- confirmed confidence in the Buddha, that “he is an arahant, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, fortunate, knower of the world, unsurpassed leader of persons to be tamed ...”

-- confidence in the Dhamma thus: “The Dhamma is well-expounded by the Blessed One, directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.”

-- confirmed confidence in the Sangha (his path companions; peers) thus: “the Sangha of Blessed One's disciples is practicing in a good way, practicing in the straight way, practicing in the true way, practicing the proper way ...”

-- He “possesses virtues dear to noble ones -- unbroken, unblemished, unmottled, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration.”

“... established upon these four factors of stream-entry, you should develop 6 further things that partake of true knowledge: ... contemplating impermanence in all formations, perceiving suffering in what is impermanent, perceiving non-self in what is suffering, perceiving abandonment, perceiving fading away, perceiving cessation.

It is in such a way that you should train yourself.”

The stream-enterer has:

“association with superior persons ... Hearing the true Dhamma ... careful attention ... practice in accordance with the Dhamma”, so said Saripatta (a venerable disciple) , and his statement was approved of by the Buddha.

The “stream” the stream-enterer enters (truly) is the 8-fold Noble Path.

A noble disciple is diligent. “A noble disciple ... dwells at home with a mind devoid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighted in giving and sharing.”

A noble disciple abstains from: taking of life, taking what is not given, abstains from sexual misconduct, abstains from false speech, divisive speech, harsh speech, frivolous speech, and idle chatter. With regard to each, the noble disciple reflects: “How can I inflict upon another what is displeasing and disagreeable to me?” With regard to each of these good practices, he exhorts others to do likewise.

Next on the path past stream-entry:

“with the utter destruction of the 5 lower fetters and with the diminishment of greed, hatred, and delusion”

[The stream-enterer has eliminated the 3 fetters: identity view, doubt, and wrong grasp of rules and observances. To eliminate all 5 lower fetters, sensual lust and ill will must be eliminated.]

“A foolish course does not lead to revulsion, dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge ... the way going upward for the Noble Disciple [is] that way that leads to utter revulsion, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.”

“... for those for whom you have compassion and who think you should be heeded ... these you should exhort, settle, and establish in the 4 factors of stream-entry”

Regarding faltering:

“when a person's mind has been fortified over a long time by faith, virtues, learning, generosity, and wisdom ... that goes upward, goes to distinction ... when a lay follower has gone for refuge over a long time to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, how could he go to the nether world?”

And this is interesting:

“... [About] some person who does not possess confirmed confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha ; he is not one of joyous wisdom, not one swift of wisdom, and has not obtained liberation ... yet if he has the 5 faculties ... and the teaching proclaimed by the Tathagata [(the Buddha)] are accepted by him after being pondered to a sufficient degree with wisdom. This person too is one that does not go to hell ...”

The 4 Streams of Merit:

“... confirmed confidence in the Buddha ... This is the first stream of merit, stream of the wholesome, nutriment of happiness ...

The Dhamma, well-expounded by the Blessed One ... to be personally experience by the wise. This is the second stream of merit. ...

The Sangha of the Blessed One's disciples is practicing the good way, ... the unsurpassed field of merit for the world. This is the third stream of merit ...

possessing virtues dear to the Noble Ones [(the 8-fold Noble Path)] unbroken, leading to concentration. This is the fourth stream of merit ...

These are the 4 streams of merit, streams of the wholesome, nutriments of happiness.”

[Note: At least once, the Buddha cites another fourth stream of merit:

“ the disciple [that] is wise, he possesses wisdom directed to arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering”]

How is the lay follower accomplished :

-- in virtue: he has the 5 abstinences

-- in faith: he places faith in the enlightenment of the Buddha

-- in generosity: “devoid of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing”

-- in wisdom: “[he] possesses wisdom directed to arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering”

A noble disciple, who dwells diligently:

“has confirmed confidence in the Buddha ... he makes further effort for solitude, night and day ... when he dwells diligently gladness is born. When he is glad, rapture is born. When the mind is uplifted by rapture, the body becomes tranquil. One tranquil in body experiences happiness. The mind that is happy becomes concentrated ... phenomenon become manifest ...”

“[Also:] ... there is no difference between a lay follower who is thus liberated in mind and a bhikkhu who has been liberated in mind for 100 years.”

FINALLY, Summary of the suttas on the Truths:

“A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands things as they really are” (big example: the 4 Noble Truths.)

“An exertion should be made to understand ... make an exertion in seclusion.”

In brief the 5 aggregated subject to clinging are suffering.

Origin of suffering: “it is this craving that leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination ... the origin of suffering is to be abandoned [and when it has been, that is the cessation of suffering]”

Cessation of suffering: “it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.”

Way leading to the cessation of suffering: “it is the 8-fold Noble Path ... [there are no alternative ways to the cessation of suffering]”

A venerable disciple, Kondanna, said:

“Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.” The Blessed One declared: “Kondanna has indeed understood.”

“ ... This noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned ...

“ ... This noble truth of the cessation of suffering is to be realized ...

“ ... This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is to be developed .”

With regard to each of these things: “ ... in regard to things unheard before, there arose in the Tathagata : vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.”

“... One who sees the origin of suffering also sees the way leading to the cessation of suffering, also sees the cessation of suffering, [And also: “seeing” any of the last 3 Noble Truths, leads to seeing them all.]”

“... without having made a breakthrough in the noble truth of suffering as it really is ... completely making an end to suffering is impossible ...”

“in order to make a breakthrough to the 4 Noble Truths ... one should arouse extraordinary desire, make an extraordinary effort, stir up zeal and enthusiasm, be unremitting, and exercise mindfulness and comprehension. ... the breakthrough to the 4 Noble Truths is accompanied by happiness and joy. ... a forerunner and precursor to the breakthrough to the 4 Noble Truths as they really are is right view .”

“Those who do not understand as it really is [suffering, the origin, the cessation, and the way to cessation] -- they delight in volitional formations ... Delighting in such volitional formations, they generate volitional formations that lead to birth ... aging ... sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair, not freed from suffering ... [those] having not generated such volitional formations, they do not tumble down the precipice.”

With regard to the 6 senses, one sees, one hears, ... , each should be seen as “undesirable, never desirable; unlovely, never lovely; disagreeable, never agreeable”

Yet more “terrible and frightening is not seeing suffering ... way to the cessation of suffering -- delighting in volitional formations [etc.]”

“For a person accomplished in view who has made a breakthrough, the suffering that has been utterly destroyed and eliminated is more, while that which remains is trifling.”
