

ANATTA

§ 1. “Both formerly & now, it is only stress that I describe, and the cessation of stress.” — *SN 22:86*

§ 2. “There are these four ways of answering questions. Which four? There are questions that should be answered categorically [straightforwardly yes, no, this, that]. There are questions that should be answered with an analytical (qualified) answer [defining or redefining the terms]. There are questions that should be answered with a counter-question. There are questions that should be put aside. These are the four ways of answering questions.” — *AN 4:42*

§ 3. Then the wanderer Vacchagotta went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with him. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat down to one side. As he was sitting there he asked the Blessed One: “Now then, Venerable Gotama, is there a self?”

When this was said, the Blessed One was silent.

“Then is there no self?”

A second time, the Blessed One was silent.

Then Vacchagotta the wanderer got up from his seat and left.

Then, not long after Vacchagotta the wanderer had left, Ven. Ananda said to the Blessed One, “Why, lord, did the Blessed One not answer when asked a question by Vacchagotta the wanderer?”

“Ananda, if I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is a self—were to answer that there is a self, that would be conforming with those brahmins & contemplatives who are exponents of eternalism [the view that there is an eternal, unchanging soul]. If I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is no self—were to answer that there is no self, that would be conforming with those brahmins & contemplatives who are exponents of annihilationism [the view that death is the annihilation of consciousness]. If I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is a self—were to answer that there is a self, would that be in keeping with the arising of knowledge that all phenomena are not-self?”

“No, lord.”

“And if I—being asked by Vacchagotta the wanderer if there is no self—were to answer that there is no self, the bewildered Vacchagotta would become even more bewildered: ‘Does the self I used to have now not exist?’” — *SN 44:10*

§ 4. “To what extent, Ananda, does one delineate when delineating a self? Either delineating a self possessed of form and finite, one delineates that ‘My self is possessed of form and finite.’ Or, delineating a self possessed of form and infinite, one delineates that ‘My self is possessed of form and infinite.’ Or, delineating a self formless and finite, one delineates that ‘My self is formless and finite.’ Or, delineating a self formless and infinite, one delineates that ‘My self is formless and infinite.’

“Now, the one who, when delineating a self, delineates it as possessed of form and finite, either delineates it as possessed of form and finite in the present, or of such a nature that it will [naturally] become possessed of form and finite [when asleep / after death], or he believes that ‘Although it is not yet that way, I

will convert it into being that way.’ This being the case, it is proper to say that a fixed view of a self possessed of form and finite obsesses him.

[Similarly with each of the other views.] —*DN 15*

§ 5. “Just as a dog, tied by a leash to a post or stake, keeps running around and circling around that very post or stake; in the same way, an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for people of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—assumes form to be the self, or the self as possessing form, or form as in the self, or the self as in form.

“He assumes feeling to be the self, or the self as possessing feeling, or feeling as in the self, or the self as in feeling.

“He assumes perception to be the self, or the self as possessing perception, or perception as in the self, or the self as in perception.

“He assumes (mental) fabrications to be the self, or the self as possessing fabrications, or fabrications as in the self, or the self as in fabrications.

“He assumes consciousness to be the self, or the self as possessing consciousness, or consciousness as in the self, or the self as in consciousness.

“He keeps running around and circling around that very form ... that very feeling... that very perception... those very fabrications... that very consciousness. He is not set loose from form, not set loose from feeling... from perception... from fabrications... not set loose from consciousness. He is not set loose from birth, aging, & death; from sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs. He is not set loose, I tell you, from suffering & stress.” — *SN 22:99*

§ 6. “Monks, where there is a self, would there be (the thought), ‘belonging to my self?’”

“Yes, lord.”

“Or, monks, where there is what belongs to self, would there be (the thought), ‘my self?’”

“Yes, lord.”

“Monks, where a self or what belongs to self are not pinned down as a truth or reality, then the view-position—‘This cosmos is the self. After death this I will be constant, permanent, eternal, not subject to change. I will stay just like that for an eternity’—Isn’t it utterly & completely a fool’s teaching?” — *MN 22*

§ 7. “There is the case where an uninstructed, run-of-the-mill person—who has no regard for noble ones, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma; who has no regard for men of integrity, is not well-versed or disciplined in their Dhamma—does not discern what ideas are fit for attention or what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas fit for attention and attends (instead) to ideas unfit for attention....

“This is how he attends inappropriately: ‘Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past? Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?’ Or else he is inwardly perplexed about the immediate present: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?’

“As he attends inappropriately in this way, one of six kinds of view arises in him: The view *I have a self* arises in him as true & established, or the view *I have no self*... or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive self*... or the view *It is precisely by means of self that I perceive not-self*... or the view *It is precisely by means of not-self that I perceive self* arises in him as true & established, or else he has a view like this: *This very self of mine—the knower that is sensitive here & there to the ripening of good & bad actions—is the self of mine that is constant, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change, and will endure as long as eternity.* This is called a thicket of views, a wilderness of views, a contortion of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views. Bound by a fetter of views, the uninstructed run-of-the-mill person is not freed from birth, aging, & death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair. He is not freed, I tell you, from suffering & stress.

“The well-instructed disciple of the noble ones—who has regard for noble ones, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma; who has regard for men of integrity, is well-versed & disciplined in their Dhamma—discerns what ideas are fit for attention and what ideas are unfit for attention. This being so, he does not attend to ideas unfit for attention and attends (instead) to ideas fit for attention....

“He attends appropriately, 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. As he attends appropriately in this way, three fetters are abandoned in him: identity-view, doubt, and grasping at habits & practices. These are called the fermentations to be abandoned by seeing.” — MN 2

§ 8. “If one stays obsessed with form, monk, that’s what one is measured by (*or*: limited to). Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified.

“If one stays obsessed with feeling.... perception.... fabrications....

“If one stays obsessed with consciousness, that’s what one is measured by. Whatever one is measured by, that’s how one is classified.

“But if one doesn’t stay obsessed with form, monk, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with feeling.... perception.... fabrications....

“If one doesn’t stay obsessed with consciousness, that’s not what one is measured by. Whatever one isn’t measured by, that’s not how one is classified.” — SN 22:36

§ 9. Now at that moment this line of thinking appeared in the awareness of a certain monk: “So—form is not-self, feeling is not-self, perception is not-self, fabrications are not-self, consciousness is not-self. Then what self will be touched by the actions done by what is not-self?”

Then the Blessed One, realizing with his awareness the line of thinking in that monk’s awareness, addressed the monks: “It’s possible that a senseless person—immersed in ignorance, overcome with craving—might think that he could outsmart the Teacher’s message in this way: ‘So—form is not-self, feeling is not-self, perception is not-self, fabrications are not-self, consciousness is not-self. Then what self will be touched by the actions done by what is not-self?’ Now, monks, haven’t I trained you in counter-questioning with regard to this & that topic here & there? What do you think—Is form constant or inconstant?” “Inconstant, lord.” “And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.” “And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am?’” “No, lord.”

“... Is feeling constant or inconstant?” “Inconstant, lord”

“... Is perception constant or inconstant?” “Inconstant, lord”

“... Are fabrications constant or inconstant?” “Inconstant, lord”

“What do you think, monks—Is consciousness constant or inconstant?”

“Inconstant, lord.” “And is that which is inconstant easeful or stressful?”

“Stressful, lord.” “And is it fitting to regard what is inconstant, stressful, subject to change as: ‘This is mine. This is my self. This is what I am?’” “No, lord.”

“Thus, monks, any form whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every form is to be seen with right discernment as it has come to be: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Any feeling whatsoever....

“Any perception whatsoever....

“Any fabrications whatsoever....

“Any consciousness whatsoever that is past, future, or present; internal or external; blatant or subtle; common or sublime; far or near: every consciousness is to be seen with right discernment as it has come to be: ‘This is not mine. This is not my self. This is not what I am.’

“Seeing thus, the instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with form, disenchanted with feeling, disenchanted with perception, disenchanted with fabrications, disenchanted with consciousness. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is released. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released.’ He discerns that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.’”

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One’s words. And while this explanation was being given, the minds of sixty monks, through lack of clinging, were fully released from fermentations. — MN 109

§ 10. “To what extent, Ananda, does one assume when assuming a self? Assuming feeling to be the self, one assumes that ‘Feeling is my self’ [or] ‘Feeling is not my self: My self is oblivious [to feeling]’ [or] ‘Neither is feeling my self, nor is my self oblivious to feeling, but rather my self feels, in that my self is subject to feeling.’

“Now, one who says, ‘Feeling is my self,’ should be addressed as follows: ‘There are these three feelings, my friend—feelings of pleasure, feelings of pain, and feelings of neither pleasure nor pain. Which of these three feelings do you assume to be the self? At a moment when a feeling of pleasure is sensed, no feeling of pain or of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed. Only a feeling of pleasure is sensed at that moment. At a moment when a feeling of pain is sensed, no feeling of pleasure or of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed. Only a feeling of pain is sensed at that moment. At a moment when a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed, no feeling of pleasure or of pain is sensed. Only a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain is sensed at that moment.’

“Now, a feeling of pleasure is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. A feeling of pain is inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. A feeling of neither pleasure nor pain is

inconstant, fabricated, dependent on conditions, subject to passing away, dissolution, fading, and cessation. Having sensed a feeling of pleasure as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own feeling of pleasure, 'my self' has perished. Having sensed a feeling of pain as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own feeling of pain, 'my self' has perished. Having sensed a feeling of neither pleasure nor pain as 'my self,' then with the cessation of one's very own feeling of neither pleasure nor pain, 'my self' has perished.

"Thus he assumes, assuming in the immediate present a self inconstant, entangled in pleasure and pain, subject to arising and passing away, he who says, 'Feeling is my self.' Thus in this manner, Ananda, one does not see fit to assume feeling to be the self.

"As for the person who says, 'Feeling is not the self: My self is oblivious [to feeling],' he should be addressed as follows: 'My friend, where nothing whatsoever is sensed (experienced) at all, would there be the thought, "I am"?"'

"No, lord."

"Thus in this manner, Ananda, one does not see fit to assume that 'Feeling is not my self: My self is oblivious [to feeling].'

"As for the person who says, 'Neither is feeling my self, nor is my self oblivious [to feeling], but rather my self feels, in that my self is subject to feeling,' he should be addressed as follows: 'My friend, should feelings altogether and every way stop without remainder, then with feeling completely not existing, owing to the cessation of feeling, would there be the thought, "I am"?"'

"No, lord."

"Thus in this manner, Ananda, one does not see fit to assume that 'Neither is feeling my self, nor is my self oblivious [to feeling], but rather my self feels, in that my self is subject to feeling.'

"Now, Ananda, in as far as a monk does not assume feeling to be the self, nor the self as oblivious, nor that 'My self feels, in that my self is subject to feeling,' then, not assuming in this way, he does not cling to anything in the world. Not clinging, he is not agitated. Unagitated, he is totally unbound right within. He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'

"If anyone were to say with regard to a monk whose mind is thus released that 'The Tathagata exists after death,' is his view, that would be mistaken; that 'The Tathagata does not exist after death' ... that 'The Tathagata both exists and does not exist after death' ... that 'The Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist after death' is his view, that would be mistaken. Why? Having directly known the extent of designation and the extent of the objects of designation, the extent of expression and the extent of the objects of expression, the extent of description and the extent of the objects of description, the extent of discernment and the extent of the objects of discernment, the extent to which the cycle revolves: Having directly known that, the monk is released. The view that, 'Having directly known that, the monk released does not see, does not know,' would be mistaken." — *DN 15*

§ 11. "Monks, do you see any clinging in the form of a doctrine of self which, in clinging to, there would not arise sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief & despair?"

"No, lord."

“...Neither do I... What do you think, monks: If a person were to gather or burn or do as he likes with the grass, twigs, branches & leaves here in Jeta’s Grove, would the thought occur to you, ‘It’s us that this person is gathering, burning or doing with as he likes’?”

“No, lord. Why is that? Because those things are not our self, nor do they pertain to our self.”

“Even so, monks, whatever is not yours: Let go of it. Your letting go of it will be for your long-term happiness & benefit. And what isn’t yours? Form isn’t yours... Feeling isn’t yours... Perception... Fabrications... Consciousness isn’t yours: Let go of it. Your letting go of it will be for your long-term happiness & benefit.” — *MN 22*

§ 12. Your own self is
your own mainstay,
for who else could your mainstay be?
With you yourself well-trained
you obtain the mainstay
hard to obtain. — *Dhp 160*

Evil is done by oneself,
by oneself is one defiled.
Evil is left undone by oneself,
by oneself is one cleansed.
Purity & impurity are one’s own doing.
No one purifies another.
No other purifies one. — *Dhp 165*

You yourself should reprove yourself,
should examine yourself.
As a self-guarded monk
with guarded self,
mindful, you dwell at ease. — *Dhp 379*

§ 13. “And what is the self as a governing principle? There is the case where a monk, having gone to a wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty dwelling, reflects on this: ‘It’s not for the sake of robes that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness; it’s not for the sake of almsfood, for the sake of lodgings, or for the sake of this or that state of [future] becoming that I have gone forth from the home life into homelessness. Simply that I am beset by birth, aging, & death; by sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs; beset by stress, overcome with stress, [and I hope,] “Perhaps the end of this entire mass of suffering & stress might be known!” Now, if I were to seek the same sort of sensual pleasures that I abandoned in going forth from home into homelessness—or a worse sort—that would not be fitting for me.’ So he reflects on this: ‘My persistence will be aroused & not lax; my mindfulness established & not confused; my body calm & not aroused; my mind centered & unified.’ Having made himself his governing principle, he abandons what is unskillful, develops what is skillful, abandons what is blameworthy, develops what is

unblameworthy, and looks after himself in a pure way. This is called the self as a governing principle.” — *AN 3:40*

§ 14. “‘This body comes into being through conceit. And yet it is by relying on conceit that conceit is to be abandoned.’ Thus it was said. And in reference to what was it said? There is the case, sister, where a monk hears, ‘The monk named such-and-such, they say, through the ending of the fermentations, has entered & remains in the fermentation-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for himself right in the here & now.’ The thought occurs to him, ‘The monk named such-&-such, they say, through the ending of the fermentations, has entered & remains in the fermentation-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for himself right in the here & now. Then why not me? Then, at a later time, he abandons conceit, having relied on conceit.’” — *AN 4:159*

§ 15. “Form, monks, is not self. If form were self, this form would not lend itself to dis-ease. It would be possible [to say] with regard to form, ‘Let my form be thus. Let my form not be thus.’ But precisely because form is not self, this form lends itself to dis-ease. And it is not possible [to say] with regard to form, ‘Let my form be thus. Let my form not be thus.’

“Feeling is not self....

“Perception is not self....

“Fabrications are not self....

“Consciousness is not self. If consciousness were the self, this consciousness would not lend itself to dis-ease. It would be possible [to say] with regard to consciousness, ‘Let my consciousness be thus. Let my consciousness not be thus.’ But precisely because consciousness is not self, consciousness lends itself to dis-ease. And it is not possible [to say] with regard to consciousness, ‘Let my consciousness be thus. Let my consciousness not be thus.’” — *SN 22:59*

§ 16. “This is the way leading to discernment: when visiting a brahman or contemplative, to ask: ‘What is skillful, venerable sir? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? What, when I do it, will be for my long-term harm & suffering? Or what, when I do it, will be for my long-term welfare & happiness?’” — *MN 135*

§ 17. “What do you think, Rahula: What is a mirror for?”

“For reflection, sir.”

“In the same way, Rahula, bodily acts, verbal acts, & mental acts are to be done with repeated reflection.

“Whenever you want to perform a bodily act, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily act I want to perform—would it lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily act, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it would lead to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it would be an unskillful bodily act with painful consequences, painful results, then any bodily act of that sort is absolutely unfit for you to do. But if on reflection you know that it would not

cause affliction ... it would be a skillful bodily act with happy consequences, happy results, then any bodily act of that sort is fit for you to do.

“While you are performing a bodily act, you should reflect on it: ‘This bodily act I am doing—is it leading to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both? Is it an unskillful bodily act, with painful consequences, painful results?’ If, on reflection, you know that it is leading to self-affliction, to affliction of others, or both... you should give it up. But if on reflection you know that it is not... you may continue with it.

“Having performed a bodily act, you should reflect on it.... If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful bodily act with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it, reveal it, lay it open to the Teacher or to a knowledgeable companion in the holy life. Having confessed it... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful bodily act with happy consequences, happy results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

[Similarly with verbal and mental acts, except for the last paragraph under mental acts:]

“Having performed a mental act, you should reflect on it.... If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful mental act with painful consequences, painful results, then you should feel distressed, ashamed, & disgusted with it. Feeling distressed... you should exercise restraint in the future. But if on reflection you know that it did not lead to affliction... it was a skillful mental act with happy consequences, happy results, then you should stay mentally refreshed & joyful, training day & night in skillful mental qualities.

“Rahula, all those brahmans & contemplatives in the course of the past who purified their bodily acts, verbal acts, & mental acts, did it through repeated reflection on their bodily acts, verbal acts, & mental acts in just this way.

“All those brahmans & contemplatives in the course of the future who will purify their bodily acts, verbal acts, & mental acts, will do it through repeated reflection on their bodily acts, verbal acts, & mental acts in just this way.

“All those brahmans & contemplatives at present who purify their bodily acts, verbal acts, & mental acts, do it through repeated reflection on their bodily acts, verbal acts, & mental acts in just this way.

“Thus, Rahula, you should train yourself: ‘I will purify my bodily acts through repeated reflection. I will purify my verbal acts through repeated reflection. I will purify my mental acts through repeated reflection.’ That’s how you should train yourself.” —*MN 61*

§ 18. If, by forsaking
a limited ease,
he would see
an abundance of ease,
the enlightened man
would forsake
the limited ease
for the sake
of the abundant. — *Dhp 290*

§ 19. I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Savatthi in Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery. Now at that time King Pasenadi Kosala was together with Queen Mallika in the upper palace. Then he said to her, "Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?"

"No, your majesty," she answered. "There is no one more dear to me than myself. And what about you, your majesty? Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?"

"No, Mallika. There is no one more dear to me than myself."

Then the king, descending from the palace, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One: "Just now I was together with Queen Mallika in the upper palace. I said to her, 'Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?'"

"'No, your majesty,'" she answered. "There is no one more dear to me than myself. And what about you, your majesty? Is there anyone more dear to you than yourself?"

"'No, Mallika. There is no one more dear to me than myself.'"

Then, on realizing the significance of that, the Blessed One on that occasion exclaimed:

Searching all directions
with your awareness,
you find no one dearer
than yourself.
In the same way, others
are fiercely dear to themselves.
So you shouldn't hurt others
if you love yourself. — *Ud 5:1*

§ 20. "Now where do skillful habits cease without trace? ... There is the case where a monk is virtuous but not fashioned of virtue (*na silamaya*). He discerns, as it has come to be, the awareness-release & discernment-release where his skillful habits cease without trace." — *MN 78*

§ 21. "A person of no integrity... enters & remains in the first jhana. He notices, 'I have gained the attainment of the first jhana, but these other monks have not gained the attainment of the first jhana.' He exalts himself for the attainment of the first jhana and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

"A person of integrity notices, 'The Blessed One has spoken of non-fashioning (*atammayata*) even with regard to the attainment of the first jhana, for by whatever means they construe it, it becomes otherwise from that.' So, making non-fashioning his focal point, he neither exalts himself for the attainment of the first jhana nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

[Similarly with the other levels of jhana up through the dimension of nothingness.]

"A person of no integrity... enters & remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. He notices, 'I have gained the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, but these other monks have not gained the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-

perception.’ He exalts himself for the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception and disparages others. This is the quality of a person of no integrity.

“A person of integrity notices, ‘The Blessed One has spoken of non-fashioning even with regard to the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, for by whatever means they construe it, it becomes otherwise from that.’ So, making non-fashioning his focal point, he neither exalts himself for the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception nor disparages others. This is the quality of a person of integrity.

“A person of integrity, completely transcending the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters & remains in the cessation of feeling & perception. When he sees with discernment, his fermentations are ended. This is a monk who does not construe anything, does not construe anywhere, does not construe in any way.” — *MN 113*

§ 22. Then Ven. Anuruddha went to Ven. Sariputta and, on arrival, greeted him courteously. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Sariputta: “By means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human, I see the thousand-fold cosmos. My persistence is aroused & unsluggish. My mindfulness is established & unshaken. My body is calm & unaroused. My mind is concentrated into singleness. And yet my mind is not released from the fermentations through lack of clinging.”

Sariputta: “My friend, when the thought occurs to you, ‘By means of the divine eye, purified & surpassing the human, I see the thousand-fold cosmos,’ that is related to your conceit. When the thought occurs to you, ‘My persistence is aroused & unsluggish. My mindfulness is established & unshaken. My body is calm & unperturbed. My mind is concentrated into singleness,’ that is related to your restlessness. When the thought occurs to you, ‘And yet my mind is not released from the fermentations through lack of clinging,’ that is related to your anxiety. It would be well if—abandoning these three qualities, not attending to these three qualities—you inclined your mind to the deathless property.”

So after that, Ven. Anuruddha—abandoning those three qualities, not attending to those three qualities—inclined his mind to the Deathless property. Dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute, he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew: “Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world.” And thus Ven. Anuruddha became another one of the arahants. — *AN 3:128*

§ 23. Then Ven. Khemaka (a non-returner), leaning on his staff, went to the elder monks and, on arrival, exchanged courteous greetings with them. After an exchange of friendly greetings & courtesies, he sat to one side. As he was sitting there, the elder monks said to him, “Friend Khemaka, this ‘I am’ of which you speak: what do you say ‘I am’? Do you say, ‘I am form,’ or do you say, ‘I am something other than form’? Do you say, ‘I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,’ or do you say, ‘I am something other than consciousness’? This ‘I am’ of which you speak: what do you say ‘I am’?”

“Friends, it’s not that I say ‘I am form,’ nor do I say ‘I am something other than form.’ It’s not that I say, ‘I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,’ nor do I say, ‘I am something other than consciousness.’ With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, ‘I am’ has not been overcome, although I don’t assume that ‘I am this.’

“It’s just like the scent of a blue, red, or white lotus: If someone were to call it the scent of a petal or the scent of the color or the scent of a filament, would he be speaking correctly?”

“No, friend.”

“Then how would he describe it if he were describing it correctly?”

“As the scent of the flower: That’s how he would describe it if he were describing it correctly.”

“In the same way, friends, it’s not that I say ‘I am form,’ nor do I say ‘I am other than form.’ It’s not that I say, ‘I am feeling... perception... fabrications... consciousness,’ nor do I say, ‘I am something other than consciousness.’ With regard to these five clinging-aggregates, ‘I am’ has not been overcome, although I don’t assume that ‘I am this.’

“Friends, even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters, he still has with regard to the five clinging-aggregates a lingering residual ‘I am’ conceit, an ‘I am’ desire, an ‘I am’ obsession. But at a later time he keeps focusing on the phenomena of arising & passing away with regard to the five clinging-aggregates: ‘Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance. Such is feeling.... Such is perception.... Such are fabrications.... Such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.’ As he keeps focusing on the arising & passing away of these five clinging-aggregates, the lingering residual ‘I am’ conceit, ‘I am’ desire, ‘I am’ obsession is fully obliterated.

“Just like a cloth, dirty & stained: Its owners give it over to a washerman, who scrubs it with salt earth or lye or cow-dung and then rinses it in clear water. Now even though the cloth is clean & spotless, it still has a lingering residual scent of salt earth or lye or cow-dung. The washerman gives it to the owners, the owners put it away in a scent-infused wicker hamper, and its lingering residual scent of salt earth, lye, or cow-dung is fully obliterated.

“In the same way, friends, even though a noble disciple has abandoned the five lower fetters, he still has with regard to the five clinging-aggregates a lingering residual ‘I am’ conceit, an ‘I am’ desire, an ‘I am’ obsession. But at a later time he keeps focusing on the phenomena of arising & passing away with regard to the five clinging-aggregates: ‘Such is form, such its origin, such its disappearance. Such is feeling.... Such is perception.... Such are fabrications.... Such is consciousness, such its origin, such its disappearance.’ As he keeps focusing on the arising & passing away of these five clinging-aggregates, the lingering residual ‘I am’ conceit, ‘I am’ desire, ‘I am’ obsession is fully obliterated.”

When this was said, the elder monks said to Ven. Khemaka, “We didn’t cross-examine Ven. Khemaka with the purpose of troubling him, just that (we thought) Ven. Khemaka is capable of declaring the Blessed One’s message, teaching it, describing it, setting it forth, revealing it, explaining it, making it plain—just as he has in fact declared it, taught it, described it, set it forth, revealed it, explained it, made it plain.”

That is what Ven. Khemaka said. Gratified, the elder monks delighted in his words. And while this explanation was being given, the minds of sixty-some monks, through no clinging, were fully released from fermentations—as was Ven. Khemaka’s. — *SN 22:89*

§ 24. When you see with discernment,
‘All fabrications are inconstant’....
‘All fabrications are stressful’....
‘All phenomena are not-self’—
 you grow disenchanted with stress.
 This is the path
 to purity. — *Dhp 277-279*

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

“Staying right there, he reaches the ending of the mental fermentations. Or, if not, then through this very Dhamma-passion, this Dhamma-delight, and through the total wasting away of the first five Fetters [self-identity views, grasping at precepts & practices, uncertainty, sensual passion, and irritation]—he is due to be reborn [in the Pure Abodes], there to be totally unbound, never again to return from that world.

“‘I tell you, the ending of the mental fermentations depends on the first jhana.’ Thus it was said, and in reference to this was it said.

[Similarly with the other levels of jhana up through the dimension of nothingness.] — *AN 9:36*

§ 26. As he was sitting to one side, Ven. Kaccayana Gotta said to the Blessed One: “Lord, ‘Right view, right view,’ it is said. To what extent is there right view?”

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

“By & large, Kaccayana, this world is in bondage to attachments, clingings (sustenances), & biases. But one such as this does not get involved with or cling to these attachments, clingings, fixations of awareness, biases, or obsessions; nor

is he resolved on 'my self.' He has no uncertainty or doubt that mere stress, when arising, is arising; stress, when passing away, is passing away. In this, his knowledge is independent of others. It's to this extent, Kaccayana, that there is right view.

"'Everything exists': That is one extreme. 'Everything doesn't exist': That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications...." — *SN 12:15*

§ 27. *Upasiva:*

He who has reached the end:
 Does he not exist,
 or is he for eternity
 free from dis-ease?
 Please, sage, declare this to me
 as this phenomenon has been known by you.

The Buddha:

One who has reached the end
 has no criterion / measure
 by which anyone would say that—
 for him it doesn't exist.
 When all phenomena are done away with,
 all means of speaking
 are done away with as well. — *Sn 5:6*

§ 28. "What do you think, Anuradha: Do you regard form as the Tathagata?"—"No, lord."

"Do you regard feeling as the Tathagata?"—"No, lord."

"Do you regard perception as the Tathagata?"—"No, lord."

"Do you regard fabrications as the Tathagata?"—"No, lord."

"Do you regard consciousness as the Tathagata?"—"No, lord."

"What do you think, Anuradha: Do you regard the Tathagata as being in form? Elsewhere than form? In feeling? Elsewhere than feeling? In perception? Elsewhere than perception? In fabrications? Elsewhere than fabrications? In consciousness? Elsewhere than consciousness?" — "No, lord."

"What do you think: Do you regard the Tathagata as form-feeling-perception-fabrications-consciousness?" — "No, lord."

"Do you regard the Tathagata as that which is without form, without feeling, without perception, without fabrications, without consciousness?" — "No, lord."

"And so, Anuradha—when you can't pin down the Tathagata as a truth or reality even in the present life—is it proper for you to declare, 'Friends, the Tathagata—the supreme man, the superlative man, attainer of the superlative attainment—being described, is described otherwise than with these four positions: The Tathagata exists after death, does not exist after death, both does & does not exist after death, neither exists nor does not exist after death?'"

"No, lord."

“Very good, Anuradha. Very good. Both formerly & now, it is only stress that I describe, and the cessation of stress.” — *SN 22:86*

§ 29. “In the same way, Vaccha, any form by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of form, Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the sea. ‘Reappears’ doesn’t apply. ‘Does not reappear’ doesn’t apply. ‘Both does & does not reappear’ doesn’t apply. ‘Neither reappears nor does not reappear’ doesn’t apply.

“Any feeling.... Any perception.... Any fabrication....

“Any consciousness by which one describing the Tathagata would describe him: That the Tathagata has abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of existence, not destined for future arising. Freed from the classification of consciousness, Vaccha, the Tathagata is deep, boundless, hard to fathom, like the sea.” — *MN 72*