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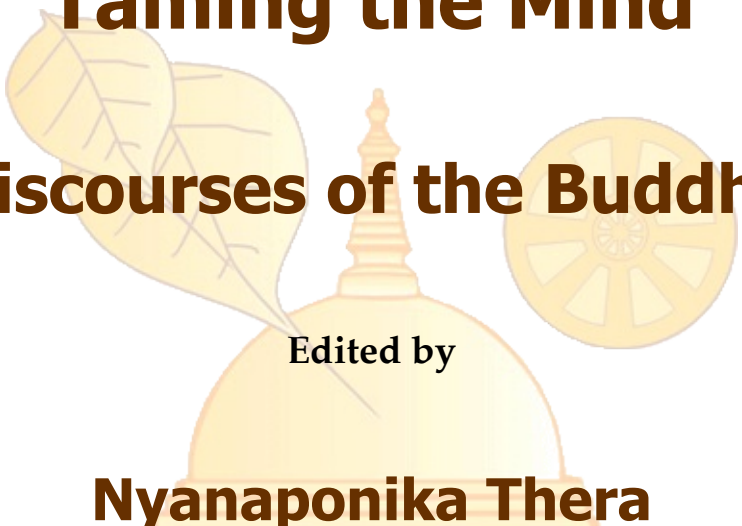
Taming the Mind
Discourses of the Buddha

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Taming the Mind

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1. No Other Single Thing

(Aṅguttara, Ones)

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing so intractable as the untamed mind. The untamed mind is indeed a thing untractable.

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing so tractable as the tamed mind. The tamed mind is indeed a thing tractable.

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing so conducive to great loss as the untamed mind. The untamed mind indeed conduces to great loss.

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing so conducive to great profit as the tamed mind. The tamed mind indeed conduces to great profit.

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing that brings such woe as the mind that is

untamed, uncontrolled, unguarded and unrestrained. Such a mind indeed brings great woe.

“Monks, I know not of any other single thing that brings such bliss as the mind that is tamed, controlled, guarded and restrained. Such a mind indeed brings great bliss.”

Gradual Sayings Aṅguttara Nikāya)

The Book of the Ones, Ch. IV

Translated by F. L. Woodward

2. Discourse to Gaṇaka-Moggallāna

(Majjhima Nikāya No. 107)

Thus I have heard: At one time the Lord was staying near Sāvattthī in the palace of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Monastery. Then the brahmin Gaṇaka-Moggallāna approached the Lord; having approached he exchanged greetings with the Lord; having conversed in a friendly and courteous way, he sat down at a respectful distance. As he was sitting down at a respectful distance, Gaṇaka-Moggallāna the brahmin spoke thus to the Lord: “Just as, good Gotama, in this palace of Migāra’s mother there can be seen a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual practice, that is to say as far as the last flight of stairs; [1] so, too, good Gotama, for these brahmins there can be seen a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual practice,

that is to say in the study [of the Vedas]; [2] so too, good Gotama, for these archers there can be seen a gradual ... practice, that is to say in archery; so too, good Gotama, for us whose livelihood is calculation [3] there can be seen a gradual training, a gradual practice, that is to say in accountancy. For when we get a pupil, good Gotama, we first of all make him calculate: 'One one, two twos, three threes, four fours, five fives, six sixes, seven sevens, eight eights, nine nines, ten tens,' and we, good Gotama, also make him calculate a hundred. Is it not possible, good Gotama, to lay down a similar gradual training, gradual doing, gradual practice in respect of this Dhamma and discipline?"

"It is possible, brahmin, to lay down a gradual training, a gradual doing, a gradual practice in respect of this Dhamma and discipline. Brahmin, even a skilled trainer of horses, having taken on a beautiful thoroughbred first of all gets it used to the training in respect of wearing the bit. Then he gets it used to further training — even so brahmin, the Tathāgata, having taken on a man to be tamed, first of all disciplines him thus:

Morality

“Come you, monk, be of moral habit, live controlled by the control of the Obligations, endowed with (right) behaviour and posture, seeing peril in the slightest fault and, undertaking them, train yourself in the rules of training.’ As soon, brahmin, as the monk is of moral habit, controlled by the control of the Obligations, endowed with (right) behaviour and posture; seeing peril in the slightest fault and, undertaking them, trains himself in the rules of training, the Tathāgata disciplines him further saying:

Sense-control

“Come you, monk, be guarded as to the doors of the sense-organs; having seen a material shape with the eye, do not be entranced with the general appearance, do not be entranced with the detail; for if one dwells with the organ of sight uncontrolled, covetousness and dejection, evil, unskilful states of mind, may flow in. So abide controlling it; guard the organ of sight, achieve control over the organ of sight. Having heard a sound with the ear... Having smelt a smell with the nose... Having savoured

a taste with the tongue... Having felt a touch with the body... Having cognised a mental state with the mind, do not be entranced with the general appearance, do not be entranced with the detail. For if one dwells with the organ of mind uncontrolled, covetousness and dejection, evil, unskilful states of mind, may flow in. So abide controlling it; guard the organ of mind, achieve control over the organ of mind.'

Moderation in eating

“As soon, brahmin, as a monk is guarded as to the doors of the sense-organs, the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, be moderate in eating; you should take food reflecting carefully, not for fun or indulgence or personal charm or beautification, but taking just enough for maintaining this body and keeping it going, for keeping it unharmed, for furthering the Holy Life, [4] with the thought: Thus will I crush out an old feeling, and I will not allow a new feeling to arise, and then there will be for me subsistence and blamelessness and abiding in comfort.’

Vigilance

“As soon, brahmin, as a monk is moderate in eating, the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, dwell intent on vigilance; during the day while pacing up and down, while sitting down, cleanse the mind of obstructive mental states; during the middle watch of the night, lie down on the right side in the lion posture, foot resting on foot, mindful, clearly conscious, reflecting on the thought of getting up again; during the last watch of the night, when you have risen, while pacing up and down, while sitting down, cleanse the mind of obstructive mental states.’

Mindfulness and clear consciousness

“As soon, brahmin, as a monk is intent on vigilance, the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, be possessed of mindfulness and clear consciousness, acting with clear consciousness whether you are approaching or departing, acting with clear consciousness whether you are looking ahead or looking round, acting with clear consciousness whether you are bending in or stretching out (the arms), acting with clear consciousness whether you are carrying the

outer cloak, the bowl or robe, acting with clear consciousness whether you are eating, drinking, munching, savouring, acting with clear consciousness whether you are obeying the calls of nature, acting with clear consciousness whether you are walking, standing, sitting, asleep, awake, talking or being silent.'

Overcoming of the five hindrances

“As soon, brahmin, as he is possessed of mindfulness and clear consciousness, the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, choose a remote lodging in a forest, at the root of a tree, on a mountain slope, in a glen, a hill cave, a cemetery, a woodland grove, in the open, or on a heap of straw.’ On returning from alms-gathering after the meal, the monk sits down cross-legged, holding the back erect, having made mindfulness rise up in front of him. He, getting rid of covetousness for the world, dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness, he cleanses the mind of covetousness. Getting rid of the taint of ill-will, he dwells benevolent in mind; compassionate and merciful towards all creatures and beings, he cleanses the mind of ill-will. Getting rid of

sloth and torpor, he dwells without sloth or torpor; perceiving the light, mindful and clearly conscious he cleanses the mind of sloth and torpor. Getting rid of restlessness and worry, he dwells calmly; the mind inward tranquil, he cleanses the mind of restlessness and worry. Getting rid of doubt, he abides free from doubt; unperplexed as to the states that are wholesome, [5] he cleanses his mind of doubt.

Jhāna

“He, by getting rid of these five hindrances [6] which are defilements of the mind and deleterious to intuitive wisdom, aloof from pleasures of the senses, aloof from unskilled states of mind, enters and abides in the first meditation which is accompanied by initial thought and discursive thought, is born of aloofness and is rapturous and joyful. By allaying initial thought and discursive thought, his mind subjectively tranquillised and fixed on one point, he enters and abides in the second meditation which is devoid of initial thought and discursive thought, is born of concentration and is rapturous and joyful. By the fading out of rapture, he dwells with equanimity, attentive and clearly conscious, and experiences in his

person that joy of which the ariyans [7] say: 'Joyful lives he who has equanimity and is mindful,' and he enters and abides in the third meditation. By getting rid of anguish, by the going down of his former pleasures and sorrows, he enters and abides in the fourth meditation which has neither anguish nor joy, and which is entirely purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

“Brahmin, such is my instruction for those monks who are learners who, perfection being not yet attained, dwell longing for the incomparable security from the bonds. But as for those monks who are perfected ones, the cankers destroyed, who have lived the life, done what was to be done, shed the burden, attained to their own goal, the fetters of becoming utterly destroyed, and who are freed by perfect profound knowledge — these things conduce both to their abiding in ease here and now as well to their mindfulness and clear consciousness.”

When this had been said, the brahmin Gaṇaka-Moggallāna spoke thus to the Lord:

“Now, on being exhorted thus and instructed thus by the good Gotama, do all the good

Gotama's disciples attain the ultimate goal [8]
— Nibbāna or do some not attain it?"

"Some of my disciples, brahmin, on being exhorted and instructed thus by me, attain the ultimate goal — Nibbāna; some do not attain it."

"What is the cause, good Gotama, what the reason that, since Nibbāna does exist, since the way leading to Nibbāna exists, since the good Gotama exists as adviser, some of the good Gotama's disciples on being exhorted thus and instructed thus by the good Gotama, attain the ultimate goal — Nibbāna, but some do not attain it?"

"Well then, brahmin, I will question you on this point in reply. As it is pleasing to you, so you may answer me. What do you think about this, brahmin? Are you skilled in the way leading to Rājagaha?"

"Yes, sir, skilled am I in the way leading to Rājagaha."

"What do you think about this? A man might come along here wanting to go to Rājagaha. Having approached you, he might speak thus: 'I want to go to Rājagaha, sir; show me the way to this Rājagaha.' You might speak thus to him:

“Yes, my good man, this road goes to Rājagaha; go along it for a while. When you have gone along it for a while you will see a village; go along for a while; when you have gone along for a while you will see a market town; go for a while. When you have gone along for a while you will see Rājagaha with its delightful parks, delightful forests, delightful fields, delightful ponds.’ But although he has been exhorted and instructed thus by you, he might take the wrong road and go westwards. Then a second man might come along wanting to go to Rājagaha... (*as above*) ‘... you will see Rājagaha with its delightful... ponds.’ Exhorted and instructed thus by you he might get to Rājagaha safely. What is the cause, brahmin, what the reason that, since Rājagaha does exist, since the way leading to Rājagaha exists, since you exist as adviser, the one man, although being exhorted and instructed thus by you, may take the wrong road and go westwards while the other may get to Rājagaha safely?”

“What can I, good Gotama, do in this matter? A shower of the way, good Gotama, am I.”

“Even so, brahmin, Nibbāna does exist, the way leading to Nibbāna exists and I exist as adviser. But some of my disciples, on being exhorted

and instructed thus by me attain the ultimate goal — Nibbāna, some do not attain it. What can I, brahmin, do in this matter? A shower of the way, brahmin, is a Tathāgata.”

When this had been said, the brahmin Gaṇaka-Moggallāna spoke thus to the Lord:

“Good Gotama, as for those persons who, in want of a way of living, having gone forth from home into homelessness without faith, who are crafty, fraudulent, deceitful, who are unbalanced and puffed up, who are shifty, scurrilous and of loose talk, the doors of whose sense-organs are not guarded, who do not know moderation in eating, who are not intent on vigilance, indifferent to recluseship, not of keen respect for the training, who are ones for abundance, lax, taking the lead in backsliding, shirking the burden of seclusion, who are indolent, of feeble energy, of confused mindfulness, not clearly conscious, not concentrated but of wandering minds, who are weak in wisdom, drivellers — the good Gotama is not in communion with *them*. But as for those young men of respectable families who have gone forth from home into homelessness from faith, who are not crafty, fraudulent or deceitful, who are not unbalanced or puffed up,

who are not shifty, scurrilous or of loose talk, the doors of whose sense-organs are guarded, who know moderation in eating, who are intent on vigilance, longing for recluseship, of keen respect for the training, who are not ones for abundance, not lax, shirking, backsliding, taking the lead in seclusion, who are of stirred up energy, self-resolute, with mindfulness aroused, clearly conscious, concentrated, their minds one-pointed, who have wisdom, are not drivellers — the good Gotama is in communion with *them*. As, good Gotama, black gum is pointed to as chief of root-scents, as red sandalwood is pointed to as chief of pith-scents, as jasmine is pointed to as chief of flower scents — even so is the exhortation of the good Gotama highest among the teachings of today. Excellent, good Gotama, excellent, good Gotama. As, good Gotama, one might set upright what had been upset, or disclose what had been covered, or show the way to one who had gone astray, or bring an oil-lamp into the darkness so that those with vision might see material shapes — even so in many a figure is Dhamma made clear by the good Gotama. I am going to the revered Gotama for refuge and to Dhamma and to the Order of monks May the

good Gotama accept me as a lay-follower going
for refuge from today forth for as long as life
lasts.”

From *Middle Length Sayings*
Translated by I. B. Horner
(Pali Text Society, London)

3. Vijitasena's Verses

(Theragāthā vv. 355-359)

I shall fasten you, mind, like an elephant at a small gate. I shall not incite you to evil, you net of sensual pleasure, body-born.

When fastened, you will not go, like an elephant not finding the gate open. Witch-mind, you will not wander again, and again, using force, delighting in evil.

As the strong hook-holder makes an untamed elephant, newly taken, turn against its will, so shall I make you turn.

As the excellent charioteer, skilled in the taming of excellent horses, tames a thoroughbred, so shall I, standing firm in the five powers, tame you.

I shall bind you with mindfulness; with purified self shall cleanse [you]. Restrained by

the yoke of energy you will not go far from
here, mind.

The Elders' Verses I, P.T.S. 1969

Translated by K.R. Norman

4. Discourse on the “Tamed Stage”

Dantabhūmi sutta (Majjhima Nikāya No. 125)

Thus have I heard: At one time the Lord was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove at the squirrels’ feeding place. Now at that time the novice Aciravata was staying in the Forest Hut. [9] Then prince Jayasena, [10] who was always pacing up and down, always roaming about on foot, approached the novice Aciravata; having approached he exchanged greetings with the novice Aciravata; having exchanged greetings of friendliness and courtesy, he sat down at a respectful distance. While he was sitting down at a respectful distance, Prince Jayasena spoke thus to the novice Aciravata: “I have heard, good Aggivessana, that if a

monk is abiding here diligent, ardent, self-resolute, he may attain one-pointedness of mind.”

“That is so, prince; that is so, prince. A monk abiding here diligent, ardent, self-resolute, may attain one-pointedness of mind.”

“It were good if the reverend Aggivessana were to teach me Dhamma as he has heard it, as he has mastered it.”

“I, prince, am not able to teach you Dhamma as I have heard it, as I have mastered it. Now, if I were to teach you Dhamma as I have heard it, as I have mastered it, and if you could not understand the meaning of what I said, that would be weariness to me, that would be a vexation to me.”

“Let the reverend Aggivessana teach me Dhamma as he has heard it, as he has mastered it. Perhaps I could understand the meaning of what the good Aggivessana says.”

“If I were to teach you Dhamma, prince, as I have heard it, as I have mastered it, and if you were to understand the meaning of what I say, that would be good; if you should not understand the meaning of what I say, you must remain as you are: you must not question

me further on the matter.”

“Let the reverend Aggivessana teach me Dhamma as he has heard it, as he has mastered it. If I understand the meaning of what the good Aggivessana says, that will be good; if I do not understand the meaning of what the good Aggivessana says, I will remain as I am; I will not question the reverend Aggivessana further on this matter.”

Then the novice Aciravata taught Dhamma to Prince Jayasena as he had heard it, as he had mastered it. When this had been said, Prince Jayasena spoke thus to the novice Aciravata:

“This is impossible, good Aggivessana, it cannot come to pass that a monk abiding diligent, ardent, self-resolute, should attain one-pointedness of mind.” Then Prince Jayasena, having declared to the novice Aciravata that this was impossible and could not come to pass, rising from his seat, departed.

And soon after Prince Jayasena had departed, the novice Aciravata approached the Lord; having approached and greeted the Lord, he sat down at a respectful distance. As he was sitting down at a respectful distance, the novice Aciravata told the Lord the whole of the

conversation he had with Prince Jayasena as far as it had gone. When this had been said, the Lord spoke thus to the novice Aciravata:

“What is the good of that, Aggivessana? That Prince Jayasena, living as he does in the midst of sense-pleasures, enjoying sense-pleasures, being consumed by thoughts of sense-pleasures, burning with the fever of sense-pleasures, eager in the search for sense-pleasures, should know or see or attain or realise that which can be known by renunciation, seen by renunciation, attained by renunciation, realised by renunciation — such a situation does not exist. It is as if, Aggivessana, among elephants or horses or oxen to be tamed, two elephants, two horses or two oxen are well tamed, well trained, and two are not tamed, not trained. What do you think about this, Aggivessana? Would these two elephants or horses or oxen that were to be tamed and that were well tamed, well trained — would those on being tamed reach tamed capacity, would they, being tamed, attain a tamed stage?”

“Yes, revered sir.”

“But those two elephants or horses or oxen that were to be tamed but that were neither tamed

nor trained — would these, not being tamed, attain a tamed stage as do the two elephants or horses or oxen to be tamed that were well tamed, well trained?”

“No, revered sir.”

“Even so, Aggivessana, that Prince Jayasena, living as he does in the midst of sense-pleasures... should know or see or attain or realise that which can be known and realised by renunciation — such a situation does not exist. It is as if, Aggivessana, there were a great mountain slope near a village or a market-town which two friends, coming hand in hand from that village or market-town might approach; having approached the mountain slope one friend might remain at the foot while the other might climb to the top. Then the friend standing at the foot of the mountain slope might speak thus to the one standing on the top: ‘My dear, what do you see as you stand on the top of the mountain slope?’ He might reply: ‘As I stand on the top of the mountain slope I, my dear, see delightful parks, delightful woods, delightful stretches of level ground, delightful ponds.’ But the other might speak thus: ‘This is impossible, it cannot come to pass, my dear, that, as you stand on the top of the mountain

slope, you should see... delightful ponds.’ Then the friend who had been standing on top of the mountain slope having come down to the foot and taken his friend by the arm, making him climb to the top of the mountain slope and giving him a moment in which to regain his breath, might speak to him thus: ‘Now, my dear, what is it that you see as you stand on the top of the mountain slope?’ He might speak thus: ‘I, my dear, as I stand on the top of the mountain slope, see delightful parks... delightful ponds.’ He might speak thus: ‘Just now, my dear, we understood you to say: This is impossible, it cannot come to pass that, as you stand on the top of the mountain slope, you should see delightful... ponds. But now we understand you to say: ‘I, my dear, as I stand on the top of the mountain slope, see delightful parks... delightful ponds.’ He might speak thus: ‘That was because I, my dear, hemmed in by this great mountain slope, could not see what was to be seen.’

“Even so but to a still greater degree, Aggivessana, is Prince Jayasena hemmed in, blocked, obstructed, enveloped by this mass of ignorance. Indeed, that Prince Jayasena, living as he does in the midst of sense-pleasures,

enjoying sense-pleasures, being consumed by the thoughts of sense-pleasures, burning with the fever of sense-pleasures, eager in the search for sense-pleasures, should know or see or attain or realise that which can be known... seen... attained... realised by renunciation — such a situation does not exist. Had these two similes occurred to you, Aggivessana, for Prince Jayasena, Prince Jayasena naturally would have trusted you and, having trust, would have acted in the manner of one having trust in you.”

“But how could these two similes for Prince Jayasena have occurred to me, revered sir, seeing that they are spontaneous, that is to say to the Lord, and have never been heard before?”

“As, Aggivessana, a noble anointed king addresses an elephant hunter saying; ‘You, good elephant hunter, mount the king’s elephant and go into an elephant forest. When you see a forest elephant, tie him to the neck of the king’s elephant.’ And, Aggivessana, the elephant hunter having answered: ‘Yes, sire,’ in assent to the noble anointed king, mounts the king’s elephant and goes into an elephant forest. Seeing a forest elephant, he ties him to

the neck of the king's elephant. So the king's elephant brings him out into the open. But, Aggivessana, the forest elephant has this longing, that is to say for the elephant forest. But in regard to him the elephant hunter tells the noble anointed king that the forest elephant has got out into the open. The noble anointed king then addresses an elephant tamer, saying: 'Come you, good elephant tamer, tame the forest elephant by subduing his forest ways, by subduing his forest memories and aspirations, and by subduing his distress, his fretting and fever for the forest, by making him pleased with the villages and by accustoming him to human ways.'

"And, Aggivessana, the elephant tamer, having answered 'Yes, sire,' in assent to the noble anointed king, driving a great post into the ground ties the forest elephant to it by his neck so as to subdue his forest ways... and accustom him to human ways. Then the elephant tamer addresses him with such words as are gentle, pleasing to the ear, affectionate, going to the heart, urbane, pleasant to the manyfolk, liked by the manyfolk. And, Aggivessana, the forest elephant, on being addressed with words that are gentle... liked by the manyfolk, listens, lends

ear and bends his mind to learning. Next the elephant tamer supplies him with grass-fodder and water. When, Aggivessana, the forest elephant has accepted the grass-fodder and water from the elephant tamer, it occurs to the elephant tamer: 'The king's elephant will now live.' Then the elephant tamer makes him do a further task, saying: 'Take up, put down.' When, Aggivessana the king's elephant is obedient to the elephant tamer and acts on his instructions to take up and put down, then the elephant tamer makes him do a further task, saying: 'Advance, retreat ... a further task, saying: 'Get up, sit down.' When, Aggivessana, the king's elephant is obedient to the elephant tamer and acts on his instructions to get up and sit down, then the elephant tamer makes him do a further task; known as 'standing your ground': he ties a shield to the great beast's trunk; a man holding a lance is sitting on his neck, and men holding lances are standing surrounding him on all sides; and the elephant tamer, holding a lance with a long shaft, is standing in front. While he is doing the task of 'standing your ground' he does not move a fore-leg nor does he move a hind-leg, nor does he move the forepart of his body, nor does he

move the hindpart of his body, nor does he move his head, nor does he move an ear, nor does he move a tusk, nor does he move his tail, nor does he move his trunk. A king's elephant is one who endures blows of sword, axe, arrow, hatchet, and the resounding din of drum and kettle-drum, conch and tam-tam, he is [like] purified gold purged of all its dross and impurities, fit for a king, a royal possession and reckoned as a kingly attribute.

Acquisition of faith

“Even so, Aggivessana, does a Tathāgata arise here in the world, a perfected one, fully Self-Awakened One, endowed with right knowledge and conduct, well-farer, knower of the worlds, the matchless charioteer of men to be tamed, the Awakened One, the Lord. He makes known this world with the *devas*, with Māra, with Brahma, the creation with its recluses and brahmins, its *devas* and men, having realised them by his own super-knowledge. He teaches Dhamma which is lovely at the beginning, lovely in the middle, lovely at the ending, with the spirit and the letters; he proclaims the Holy Life, [11] wholly fulfilled, quite purified. A householder or a

householder's son or one born in another family hears that Dhamma. Having heard that Dhamma he gains faith in the Tathāgata. Endowed with this faith that he has acquired, he reflects in this way: 'The household life is confined and dusty, going forth is in the open; it is not easy for one who lives in a house to practise the Holy Life wholly fulfilled, wholly pure, polished like a conch-shell. Suppose now that I, having cut off hair and beard, having put on saffron robes, should go forth from home into homelessness?' After a time, getting rid of his wealth, be it small or great, getting rid of his circle of relations, be it small or great, having cut off his hair and beard, having put on saffron robes, he goes forth from home into homelessness. To this extent, Aggivessana, the ariyan disciple gets out into the open.

Morality

"But, Aggivessana, *devas* and mankind have this longing, that is to say, for the five strands of sense-pleasures. The Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: 'Come you, monk, be moral, live controlled by the control of the Obligations, possessed of [right] behaviour and posture, seeing danger in the slightest faults;

undertaking them, train yourself in the rules of training.'

Sense-Control

“And when, Aggivessana, the ariyan disciple is moral, lives controlled by the control..., undertaking them, trains himself in the rules of training, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, be guarded as to the doors of the sense-organs. Having seen a material shape with the eye... (*as above*). Having cognised a mental state with the mind, be not entranced by the general appearance, be not entranced by the detail. For, if you were to dwell with the organ of mind uncontrolled, covetousness and dejection, evil unskilful states of mind, might flow in. So practise control, guard the organ of mind, achieve control over the organ of mind.’

Moderation in eating

“And when, Aggivessana, the ariyan disciple is guarded as to the doors of the sense-organs, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, be moderate in eating...(*as above*)... abiding in comfort.’

Vigilance

“When, Aggivessana, the ariyan disciple is moderate in eating, the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, abide intent on vigilance...*(as above)*... you should cleanse the mind of obstructive mental states.

Mindfulness and clear consciousness

“And when, Aggivessana, the ariyan disciple is intent on vigilance, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, be possessed of mindfulness and clear consciousness. Be one who acts with clear consciousness...*(as above)*... talking, silent.’

Overcoming of the five hindrances

“And when, Aggivessana, the ariyan disciple is possessed of mindfulness and clear consciousness, then the Tathāgata disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, choose a remote lodging in a forest, at the root of a tree, on a mountain slope, in a wilderness, a hill-cave, a cemetery, a forest haunt, in the open or on a heap of straw.’ He chooses a remote

lodging in the forest... or on a heap of straw. Returning from alms-gathering, after the meal, he sits down cross-legged, holding the back erect, having made mindfulness rise up in front of him, he, by getting rid of coveting for the world, dwells with a mind devoid of coveting, he purifies the mind of coveting. By getting rid of the taint of ill-will, he dwells benevolent in mind, compassionate for the welfare of all creatures and beings, he purifies the mind of the taint of ill-will. By getting rid of sloth and torpor, he dwells devoid of sloth and torpor; perceiving the light, mindful, clearly conscious, he purifies the mind of sloth and torpor. By getting rid of restlessness and worry, he dwells calmly the mind subjectively tranquillized, he purifies the mind of restlessness and worry. By getting rid of doubt, he dwells doubt-crossed, unperplexed as to the states that are skilful, he purifies the mind of doubt.

The four applications of mindfulness

“He, by getting rid of these five hindrances which are defilements of the mind and weakening to intuitive wisdom, dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent,

clearly conscious [of it], mindful [of it] so as to control the covetousness and dejection in the world. He dwells contemplating the feelings... the mind... the mental states in mental states, ardent, clearly conscious [of them], mindful [of them] so as to control the covetousness and dejection in the world.

“As, Aggivessana, an elephant tamer, driving a great post into the ground, ties a forest elephant to it by his neck so as to subdue his forest ways, so as to subdue his forest aspirations, and so as to subdue his distress, his fretting and fever for the forest, so as to make him pleased with villages and accustom him to human ways — even so, Aggivessana, these four applications of mindfulness are ties of the mind so as to subdue the ways of householders and to subdue the aspirations of householders and to subdue the distress, the fretting and fever of householders; they are for leading to the right path, for realising Nibbāna.

“The Tathāgata then disciplines him further, saying: ‘Come you, monk, abide contemplating the body in the body, but do not apply yourself to a train of thought connected with the body; abide contemplating the feelings in the feelings... the mind in the mind... mental states

in mental states, but do not apply yourself to a train of thought connected with mental states.'

Jhāna

“He by allaying initial thought and discursive thought, with the mind subjectively tranquillized and fixed on one point, enters on and abides in the second meditation [12] which is devoid of initial and discursive thought, is born of concentration and is rapturous and joyful. By the fading out of rapture, he dwells with equanimity, attentive and clearly conscious, and experiences in his person that joy of which the ariyans say: ‘Joyful lives he who has equanimity and is mindful,’ and he enters and abides in the third meditation. By getting rid of joy, by getting rid of anguish, by the going down of his former pleasures and sorrows, he enters and abides in the fourth meditation which has neither anguish nor joy, and which is entirely purified by equanimity and mindfulness.

The three knowledges (te-vijjā)

1. Recollection of former habitations

“Then with the mind composed thus, quite

purified, quite clarified, without blemish, without defilement, grown pliant and workable, fixed, immovable, he directs his mind to the knowledge and recollection of former habitation: he remembers a variety of former habitations, thus: one birth, two births, three... four... five... ten... twenty... thirty... forty... fifty... a hundred... a thousand... a hundred thousand births, and many an eon of integration and many an eon of disintegration and many an eon of integration-disintegration: 'Such a one was I by name, having such a clan, such and such a colour, so was I nourished, such and such pleasant and painful experiences were mine, so did the span of life end. Passing from this, I came to be in another state where such a one was I by name, having such and such a clan, such and such a colour, so was I nourished, such and such pleasant and painful experiences were mine, so did the span of life end. Passing from this, I arose here.' Thus he remembers divers former habitations in all their modes and details.

2. The Divine Eye

"Then with the mind composed, quite purified, quite clarified, without blemish, without defilement, grown pliant and workable, fixed,

immovable, he directs his mind to the knowledge of the passing hence and the arising of beings. With the purified *deva*-vision surpassing that of men, he sees beings as they pass hence or come to be; he comprehends that beings are mean, excellent, comely, ugly, well-going, ill-going, according to the consequence of their deeds, and he thinks: Indeed these worthy beings who were possessed of wrong conduct in body, who were possessed of wrong conduct of speech, who were possessed of wrong conduct of thought, scoffers at the ariyans, holding a wrong view, incurring deeds consequent on a wrong view — these, at the breaking up of the body after dying, have arisen in a sorrowful state, a bad bourn, the abyss, Niraya hell. But these worthy beings who were possessed of good conduct in body, who were possessed of good conduct in speech, who were possessed of good conduct in thought, who did not scoff at the ariyans, holding a right view, incurring deeds consequent on a right view — these, at the breaking up of the body, after dying, have arisen in a good bourn, a heaven world.

3. Destruction of Cankers: Sainthood

“Then with the mind composed... immovable,

he directs his mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the cankers. [13] He understands as it really is: This is anguish, [14] this is the arising of anguish, this is the stopping of anguish, this is the course leading to the stopping of anguish. He understands as it really is: These are the cankers; this is the arising of the cankers; this is the stopping of the cankers; this is the course leading to the stopping of the cankers. Knowing thus, seeing this, his mind is freed from the canker of sense pleasures, is freed from the canker of becoming, freed from the canker of ignorance. In freedom the knowledge came to be: I am freed; and he comprehends: Destroyed is birth, brought to a close is the Holy Life, done is what was to be done; there is no more of being such or such.

“That monk is able to endure, heat, cold, hunger, thirst, the touch of mosquitoes, gadflies, wind, sun and creeping things, abusive language and unwelcome modes of speech: he has grown to bear bodily feelings which as they arise are painful, acute, sharp, severe, wretched, miserable, deadly. Purged of all the dross and impurities of attachment, aversion and confusion, [15] he is worthy of oblations, offerings, respect and homage, an

unsurpassed field of merit in the world.

“If, Aggivessana, a king’s elephant dies in old age, untamed, untrained, the king’s old elephant that has died is reckoned as one that has died untamed. And so, Aggivessana, of a king’s elephant that is middle-aged. And too, Aggivessana, if a king’s elephant dies young, untamed, untrained, the king’s young elephant that has died is reckoned as one that has died untamed. Even so, Aggivessana, if a monk who is an elder dies with the cankers not destroyed, the monk who is an elder that has died is reckoned as one that has died untamed. And so of a monk of middle standing. And too, Aggivessana, if a newly ordained monk dies with the cankers not destroyed, the newly ordained monk that has died is reckoned as one that has died untamed. If, Aggivessana, a king’s elephant dies in old age, well tamed, well trained, the king’s old elephant that has died is reckoned as one that has died tamed. And so, Aggivessana of a king’s elephant that is middle-aged. And too, Aggivessana, if a king’s elephant dies young, well tamed, well trained, the king’s young elephant that has died is reckoned as one that has died tamed. Even so, Aggivessana, if a monk who is an elder dies

with the cankers destroyed, the monk who is an elder that has died is reckoned as one that has died tamed. And so, Aggivessana, of a monk of middle standing. And too, Aggivessana, if a newly ordained monk dies with cankers destroyed, the newly ordained monk that has died is reckoned as one that has died tamed.”

Thus spoke the Lord. Delighted, the novice Aciravata rejoiced in what the Lord had said.

5. Dantikā's Verses

(Therīgāthā vv. 48-50)

Coming from noonday-rest on Vulture's Peak
I saw an elephant, his bathing done,
Forth from the river issue. And a man,
Taking his goad, bade the great creature stretch
His foot: 'Give me your foot'. The elephant
Obeyed, and to his neck the driver sprang.
I saw the untamed tamed, I saw him bent
To master's will; and marking inwardly,
I passed into the forest depths and there
In faith I trained and ordered all my heart.

From *Psalms of the Sisters*

Translated by C.A.F. Rhys Davids

6. The Goad

Āṅguttara-Nikāya, Fours, No. 113

“Monks, these four goodly thoroughbred steeds are found existing in the world. What four?

“In this case, monks, we may have a certain goodly thoroughbred steed which at the very sight of the shadow of the goad-stick is stirred, feels agitation [thinking:] ‘What task, I wonder, will the trainer set me today? What return can I make him?’ [16] Here, monks, we may have such a steed, and this is the first sort of goodly thoroughbred steed found existing in the world.

“Then again, monks, we may have a certain goodly thoroughbred steed which is not stirred at the mere sight of the goad-stick’s shadow, feels no agitation, but when his coat is pricked

with the goad, he is stirred, feels agitation [thinking:] 'What task, I wonder...' This is the second sort...

“Then again, monks, we may have a certain goodly thoroughbred steed which is not stirred... at the sight of the goad-stick’s shade, nor yet when his coat is pricked with the goad, but when his flesh is pierced, he is stirred, he feels agitated [thinking:] 'What task, I wonder...' This is the third sort...

“Once more, monks, we may have a goodly thoroughbred steed which is stirred neither at the sight of the goad-stick’s shade nor when his coat is pricked, nor yet when his flesh is pierced by the goad-stick; but when he is pierced to the very bone, he is stirred, feels agitation [thinking:] 'What task, I wonder, will the trainer set me today? What return can I make him?' Here we have such a goodly thoroughbred steed... This is the fourth sort.

“Thus, monks, these four goodly thoroughbred steeds are found existing in the world.

“Just in the same way, monks, these four goodly thoroughbred men are found existing in the world. What four?

“In this case, monks, we may have a certain

goodly thoroughbred man who hears is said that in such and such a village or township is a woman or a man afflicted or dead. Thereat he is stirred, he feels agitation. Thus agitated he strictly applies himself. Thus applied he both realises in his own person the supreme truth, and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom. Just as, monks, that goodly thoroughbred steed on seeing the shadow of the goad-stick is stirred, feels agitation, even so using this figure do I speak of this goodly thoroughbred man. Such in this case is the goodly thoroughbred man. This is the first sort...

“Again, monks, here we may have a goodly thoroughbred man who does not hear it said that in such a village or township is a woman or a man afflicted or dead, but with his own eyes beholds such. Thereupon he is stirred, he feels agitation (*as above*)... Just as, monks, that goodly thoroughbred steed on having his coat pricked with the goad stirred... even so using this figure do I speak of this goodly thoroughbred man... Such in this case is... This is the second sort...

“Then again, monks, here we may have a goodly thoroughbred man who does not hear it said... nor yet with his own eyes beholds a woman or a man afflicted or dead, but his own

kinsman or blood-relation is afflicted or dead. Thereupon he is stirred... just as, monks, that goodly thoroughbred steed on having his flesh pierced is stirred... even so using this figure do I speak of this goodly thoroughbred man... Such in this case... This is the third sort.

“Once more, monks, here we may have a goodly thoroughbred man who neither hears it said... nor yet with his own eyes beholds... nor is his own kinsman or blood-relation afflicted or dead, but he himself is stricken with painful bodily feelings, grievous, sharp, racking, distracting, discomfoting, that drain the life away. Thereat he is stirred, he feels agitation. Being so stirred he strictly applies himself. Thus applied he both realises in his own person the supreme truth, and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom. Just as, monks, that goodly thoroughbred steed on being pierced to the very bone is stirred, feels agitation, even so using this figure do I speak of this goodly thoroughbred man. Of such a sort, monks, is the goodly thoroughbred man in this case. This is the fourth sort.

“These, monks, are the four sorts of thoroughbreds among men found existing in the world.”

From *Gradual Sayings*, The Book of the
Fours,
Translated by F.L. Woodward.
(Pali Text Society, London)

7. The Chapter on the Mind

(Dhammapada)

Just as a fletcher straightens an arrow, so does the wise man straighten his mind which is fickle and unsteady and difficult to guard and difficult to restrain. (33)

Just as a fish taken out of its watery abode and cast on land, quivers and throbs, so does the mind. (Hence) should the realm of Passions be shunned. (34)

It is good to restrain the mind which is difficult to subdue and is swift-moving and which seizes whatever it desires. A mind thus tamed brings happiness. (35)

Difficult to grasp and extremely subtle is this mind, seizing on whatever it desires; let the wise guard it. A guarded mind brings happiness. (36)

This mind wanders afar, is solitary, formless,
and rests in the cave (of the heart). Those who
subdue it are freed from the bonds of Māra. (37)

He whose mind is not steadfast and who knows
not the Good Teaching and whose faith wavers,
the wisdom of such a man never becomes
perfect. (38)

He whose mind remains untouched by lust,
and unaffected by hatred, and who has
discarded both good and evil, for such a
vigilant one there is no fear. (39)

Knowing this body to be as fragile as a clay pot
and fortifying this mind like a well-fortified
city, let a man fight Māra with the sword of
wisdom; and let him guard his conquest and
remain unattached (to it). (40)

Ere long alas! will this body lie upon the earth,
unheeded and lifeless, even as a useless log.
(41)

Whatever an enemy may do to an enemy or a
hater to a hater, an ill-directed mind would do
one a greater injury. (42)

Neither mother nor father nor any other
relative can do a person greater good than what
his well-directed mind can do. (43)

Dhammapada, Citta Vagga
Translated by Bhikkhu Buddarakkhita

Notes

Notes to the Discourse to Gaṇaka-Moggallāna

1. A seven-storied palace is not to be built in one day [Commentary]. [\[Back\]](#)
2. It is not possible to learn the three Vedas by heart in one day [Commentary]. [\[Back\]](#)
3. *Gaṇanā*—from this profession, the appellation Gaṇaka is added to the brahmin’s name. Moggallāna later became Mahāmoggallāna, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha and teacher of the Sangha [Ed., The Wheel]. [\[Back\]](#)
4. *Brahmacariya*—this refers to the pure life of a celibate recluse [Ed., The Wheel]. [\[Back\]](#)
5. *Kusala*—sometimes translated as “skilled, salutary, profitable, kammically wholesome.” [Ed., The Wheel]. [\[Back\]](#)
6. On these, see [The Wheel No. 26](#). [\[Back\]](#)
7. *Ariyā* refers here, according to the *Visuddhi Magga*, to the Enlightened Ones. [\[Back\]](#)

8. *Accantaniṭṭhā*—*accanta* means “utmost, culminating, supreme.” [\[Back\]](#)

Notes to the Discourse on the “Tamed Stage”

9. A hut in a secluded part of the Bamboo Grove for the use of monks who wanted to practice striving, *padhāna* — [Commentary]. [\[Back\]](#)
10. A son of King Bimbisāra. [\[Back\]](#)
11. *brahmacariya*: the pure life of a celibate recluse [Ed., The Wheel]. [\[Back\]](#)
12. It is noteworthy that the section on the Four Applications of Mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) is here followed by the *second* meditation (*jhāna*) without mention of the first. This may either refer to a meditator who, already previously, has attained to the first *jhāna*, or, which seems more probable, it is meant to indicate that the intensive practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* which, through emphasis on bare observation, tends to reduce discursive thought, and enables the meditator to enter directly into the second *jhāna*, which is free from initial and discursive thought (*vitakka-vicāra*). This latter explanation is favoured by the facts that (1) in our text, the practice of *Satipaṭṭhāna* is preceded by the temporary

abandonment of the five Hindrances, which indicates a high degree of concentration approaching that of the *jhāna*; (2) in our text, the meditator is advised not to engage in the *thought about* the body, feelings, etc. — that is, in discursive thinking, which is still present in the first *jhāna*. [Ed., The Wheel]. [\[Back\]](#)

13. *Āsava*. [\[Back\]](#)

14. *Dukkha*: usually rendered by “suffering” or “ill” [Ed., The Wheel]. [\[Back\]](#)

15. *Rāga, dosa, moha*. [\[Back\]](#)

Notes to The Goad

16. *Kim paṭikaromi* seems to mean that the horse intends to do his best in return for the training. (Translator) Alternative rendering: “Should I not respond (or: obey him)?” [\[Back\]](#)

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