

Translations for *The Spiral Path*

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The Discourse on Preconditions
Upanisā Sutta SN 12.23, PTS ii.29

Staying at Sāvathī... etc .. Monks, the destruction of the taints (*āsavānaṃ khayam*) is for one who knows and sees, not for one who doesn't know and doesn't see. What is it that the know or see? Thus is form; thus is the origin of form; this is the disappearance of form, as for sensations, perceptions, volitions, and consciousness. This is what they know and see.

That knowledge of destruction due to destruction, has a precondition, and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for knowledge of destruction? The answer is liberation. I say that liberation has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for liberation? The answer is dispassion (*virāga*). I say that dispassion has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for dispassion? The answer is being fed up. I say that being fed up has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for being fed up? The answer is knowledge & vision of things as they are.

I say that knowledge & vision of things as they are has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for knowledge & vision of things as they are? The answer is concentration. I say that concentration has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for concentration? The answer is bliss. I say that bliss has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for bliss? The answer is serenity. I say that serenity has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for serenity? The answer is rapture. I say that rapture has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for rapture? The answer is joy. I say that joy has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for joy? The answer is faith.

I say that faith has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for faith? The answer is misery. I say that misery has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for misery? The answer is becoming.

I say that becoming has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for becoming? The answer is clinging. I say that clinging has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for clinging? The answer is craving. I say that craving has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for craving? The answer is sensations. I say that sensation have a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for sensations? The answer is contact. I say that contact has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for contact? The answer is the six senses. I say that the six senses have a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for the six senses? The answer is name & form. I say that name & form has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for name & form? The answer is consciousness. I say that consciousness has a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for consciousness? The answer is volitions. I say that volitions have a precondition and isn't without a precondition. And what is the precondition for volitions? The answer is ignorance.

So monks with ignorance as a precondition there are volitions; with volitions as a precondition there is consciousness; with consciousness as a precondition there are name &

form; with name & form as a precondition there are six senses; with the six senses as a precondition there is contact; with contact as a precondition there are sensations; with sensations as a precondition there is craving; with craving as a precondition there is clinging; with clinging as a precondition there is becoming; with becoming as a precondition there is birth; with birth as a precondition there is misery; with misery as a precondition there is faith; with faith as a precondition there is joy; with joy as a precondition there is rapture; with rapture as a precondition there is serenity; with serenity as a precondition there is bliss; with bliss as a precondition there is absorption; with absorption as a precondition there is knowledge & vision of experience as it is; with knowledge & vision of experience as it is as a precondition there is being fed up; with being fed up as a precondition there is dispassion; with dispassion as a precondition there is knowledge of destruction

Just as monks, when the gods pour down rain over the mountains and water flows down the mountainside filling up the branches of the crevices and gullies. Having filled the crevices and gullies small lakes are filled, and the great lakes. The great lakes being filled the small rivers fill up. The small rivers fill up the large rivers, and the large rivers fill up the great ocean.

In that way with ignorance as a precondition there are volitions; with volitions as a precondition there is consciousness; with consciousness as a precondition there are name & form; with name & form as a precondition there are six senses; with the six senses as a precondition there is contact; with contact as a precondition there are sensations; with sensations as a precondition there is craving; with craving as a precondition there is clinging; with clinging as a precondition there is becoming; with becoming as a precondition there is birth; with birth as a precondition there is misery; with misery as a precondition there is faith; with faith as a precondition there is joy; with joy as a precondition there is rapture; with rapture as a precondition there is serenity; with serenity as a precondition there is bliss; with bliss as a precondition there is absorption; with absorption as a precondition there is knowledge & vision of experience as it is; with knowledge & vision of experience as it is as a precondition there is being fed up; with being fed up as a precondition there is dispassion; with dispassion as a precondition there is knowledge of destruction

What is the Point?

Kimatthiya Sutta (AN 10.1, PTS v.1)¹

Thus have I heard. One time when the Bhagavan was in Sāvattḥī dwelling at the Jeta Grove in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park the elder Ānanda approached him, greeted him, sat to one side, and asked:

“What are the benefits of moral competence (*kusalāni sīlāni*), Sir, what are the rewards?”

“A clear conscience is the benefit and reward of moral competence.

“What are the benefits and rewards of a clear conscience?”

“Joy is the benefit and reward of a clear conscience.”

“What are the benefits and rewards of joy?”

“Rapture is the benefit and reward of joy.”

“What are the benefits and rewards of rapture?”

¹ Also AN 11.1 – where where nibbidā and virāga are two steps.

“Serenity is the benefit and reward of rapture.”

“What are the benefits and rewards of serenity?”

“Bliss is the benefit and reward of serenity.”

“What are the benefits and rewards of bliss?”

“Absorption is the benefit and reward of bliss.”

“What are the benefits and rewards of absorption?”

“Knowledge & visions of things as they are is the benefit and reward of absorption.”

“What are the benefits and rewards of knowledge & visions of things as they are?”

“Being fed up and turned off is the benefit and reward of knowledge & visions of things as they are.”

“What are the benefits and rewards of being fed up and turned off?”

“Knowledge & vision of liberation is the benefit and reward of being fed up and turned off.”

“Thus, Ānanda: a clear conscience is the benefit and reward of moral competence; joy is the benefit and reward of a clear conscience; rapture is the benefit and reward of joy; serenity is the benefit and reward of rapture; bliss is the benefit and reward of serenity; absorption is the benefit and reward of bliss; knowledge & visions of things as they are is the benefit and reward of absorption; being fed up and turned off is the benefit and reward of knowledge & visions of things as they are; knowledge & vision of liberation is the benefit and reward of being fed up and turned off. Thus, Ānanda moral competence goes up to the highest [benefit and reward].

The Discourse on Forming an intention

Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta (AN 10.2, PTS v.2)

The virtuous one, monks, endowed with virtue² need not form an intention 'may my conscience be clear'. It is natural for the virtuous one endowed with virtue to have a clear conscience. Having a clear conscience there is no need to will 'may I feel joy'. Joy naturally arises in those who have a clear conscience. The joyful need not decide 'may I be filled with rapture'. Joyfulness naturally produces rapture. There is no need for the enraptured to resolve 'may my body calm down'. It is natural in the enraptured for the body to calm down. With a body at rest there is no need to form the intention 'may I experience bliss'. With the body at rest they naturally experience bliss. The blissful don't need to will 'may my mind become composed'. The mind of the blissful is naturally absorbed. When the mind is absorbed there is no need to think 'may I have knowledge and vision of experience as it is'. With the mind absorbed one naturally sees and knows experience as it is. Knowing and seeing experience as it is there is no need to form an intention 'May I become weary [of experience], may I become dispassionate [towards it]. It is natural when seeing experience as it is that one becomes fed up and turns away from experience. Weary of experience and disinterested in it there is no need to wish 'may I experience for myself the knowledge and vision of liberation'. For, weary of experience and disinterested in it one naturally experiences knowledge and vision of liberation.

Thus knowledge & vision of liberation is the benefit and blessing of being fed up and turning away. Being fed up and turning away is the benefit and blessing of knowledge & vision of experience as it is. Knowledge & vision of experience as it is, is the benefit and

² sīlavant sīlasampanna

blessing of absorption. Absorption is the benefit and blessing of bliss. Bliss is the benefit and blessing of serenity. Serenity is the benefit and blessing of rapture. Rapture is the benefit and blessing of joy. Joy is the benefit and blessing of a clear conscience. A clear conscience is the benefit and blessing of moral competence..

Thus each one fills up the next, each one is fulfilled by the next, and goes from the near bank to the far bank.

The First Discourse on Preconditions

Paṭhamaupanisa Sutta (AN 10.3; PTS A v.3)

³...The virtuous one, monks, endowed with virtue possesses the precondition for a clear conscience. When there is a clear conscience, having a clear conscience, there is the precondition for joy. When there is joy, being joyful, there is the precondition for rapture. When there is rapture, being rapturous, there is the precondition for serenity. When there serenity, being serene, there is the precondition for bliss. When there is bliss, being blissful, there is the precondition for absorption. When there is absorption, being absorbed, there is the precondition for knowledge & vision of things as they are. When there is knowledge & vision of things as they are, possessed of knowledge & vision, there is the precondition for being fed up & turned off. Being fed up & turned off, there is the precondition for knowledge & vision of liberation.

Just as if there were a tree endowed with branches and leaves. The shoots of that tree mature, as does the bark, inferior wood, heartwood etc. So the virtuous one, endowed with virtue possesses the precondition for a clear conscience ... Being fed up & turned off, there is the precondition for knowledge & vision of liberation.

The Second Discourse on Preconditions is different from the first only in being spoken by Sāriputta, and the Third is identical but spoken by Ānanda. Each of these suttas is repeated in the chapter of 11s with *nibbidā* and *virāga* made two nodes instead of one.

³ I have skipped part one which states each stage in terms of the lack of the quality destroying the precondition.

The discourse on Mindfulness and Attention

Satisampajañña Sutta (extract⁴)

AN 8.81

When there is mindfulness & attention, for one endowed with mindfulness & attention, the condition for shame & scruple is present. When there is shame & scruple, for one endowed with shame & scruple, then the condition for restraint of the senses is present. When there is restraint of the senses, for one endowed with restraint of the senses, then the condition for good conduct is present. When there is good conduct, for one endowed with good conduct, then the condition for perfect absorption is present. When there is perfect absorption, for one endowed with perfect absorption, then the conditions for knowledge & vision of experience-as-it-is exist. When there is knowledge & vision of experience-as-it-is, for one endowed with knowledge & vision of experience-as-it-is, then the condition for disenchantment & dispassion are present. When there is disenchantment & dispassion, for one endowed with disenchantment & dispassion, then the condition for knowledge & vision of liberation is present.

Just as if, monks, for a tree endowed with branches and foliage, the shoots mature (*pāripūri gacchati*), the bark matures, the wood and the heartwood mature. So, when there is mindfulness & attention, endowed with the basis of mindfulness & attention, then there is shame & scruple... etc.

Nandiya Sutta

SN 55.40 PTS S v.397ff.

(extract S v.398-399)

And how, Nandiya, is the ideal Buddhist one who dwells vigilantly (*appamādavihārī*)? Here, Nandiya, the ideal disciple is possessed by certain confidence in the *Buddha*... [and in the *dhamma*, and in the *saṅgha*] but not content with that confidence in [the three jewels], they keep striving for detachment (*paviveka*), night and day in solitary retreat. Thus they dwell vigilantly and joy is born (*jāyati*). From joy rapture is born. The body of one enraptured calms down. One whose body is serene experiences (*vediyati*) bliss. Bliss integrates (*samādhiyati*) the mind. With the mind integrated phenomena become manifest (*dhammā pātubhavanti*). Just this visibility of phenomena is called dwelling vigilantly.

Vatthūpama Sutta

MN 7, PTS i.36f.

Thus have I heard. One time when the Bhagavan was staying in Sāvattihī at the Jeta Grove Anāthapiṇḍika's park he addressed the monks:

“Monks: just as a dyer might bring together a cloth which is stained and dirty with some dye of whatever colour – blue, yellow, red, crimson – it would be badly and imperfectly

⁴ The text first presents the list in negative terms, i.e. without *satisampajañña* there is no basis for *hittoppa*. My thanks to Dhīvan for help unravelling the syntax of this passage.

dyed. And why is that? Because of the imperfection of the cloth. Even so monks in a stained mind a miserable existence is expected.

Suppose monks the dyer was to use clean and spotless cloth. It would be well perfectly dyed. And why? Because of the purity of the cloth. So, monks, in a mind without stains a happy existence is expected.

And what, monks, are the impurities of the mind? Covetousness & unlawful acquisition (*abhikkhāvisamalobha*); illwill (*byāpāda*), anger (*kodha*), begrudging (*upanāha*), rage (*makkha*), malice (*palāsa*), jealousy (*issā*), selfishness (*macchariya*), deception (*māyā*), treachery (*sātheyya*), hardness (*thambho*), quarrelling (*sārambho*), conceit (*māna*), arrogance (*atimāna*), intoxication (*mado*), and negligence (*pamāda*).⁵

A monk having known these things as impurities of the mind abandons them, and they are abandoned. He gains certain confidence in the Buddha, in the Dhamma, and in the Saṅgha [which is expressed in terms of the *itipi so* verses].

When they have given up, ceased, vomited out, been freed from, abandoned and forsaken [these pernicious qualities], they know they have certain confidence, and they gain knowledge of the letter, and knowledge of the spirit [of the *dhamma*]⁶; and gain joy accompanied by dhamma⁷. Rapture is born from joy. From rapture comes pacification of the body. With the body pacified they experience (*vedeti*) bliss. For the blissful the mind becomes concentrated^{8,9}.

That monk, thus virtuous, thus supported¹⁰, thus wise, even enjoying fine white rice¹¹ from his alms bowl, is not an obstacle. Just as a stained and dirty cloth can be washed clean and purified by clear water, or ore can be refined in the furnace, so for that monk there is no obstacle.

They dwell pervading each direction with loving kindness, and compassion, and sympathetic joy, and equanimity: they dwell with extensive, encompassing, boundless thoughts of goodwill and love¹² above and below, and across, in every direction, everywhere, for the whole world.

They know: there is this, there is the unworthy, there is the excellent. There is knowledge of escape beyond this perceptual situation. The one who knows and sees like this frees their

⁵ For alternate translation of this series of terms see Nyanatiloka Buddhist Dictionary p.219.

⁶ *labhati atthaveda, labhati dhammavedaṃ*. When *attha* and *dhamma* are contrasted like this they suggest the primary/natural meaning, and the interpretation, or the theoretical and practical. See PED s.v. *attha*¹ (defn. – 4), p.23b. MA 1.173 interprets *veda* as *ganthopi ñāṇampi somanassampi* or ‘the books [of the Brahmanical *vedas*], knowledge, and happiness’. MA suggests that *atthaveda* arises from considering certain confidence itself, while *dhammaveda* arises from considering its cause.

⁷ *labhati dhammūpasam pāmojjaṃ*. MA understands *dhammena upasañhitam* ‘accompanied by dhamma’, and *pāmojja* arises from considering the merits (*ānisaṃsa*) of the letter and the spirit. It’s not entirely clear what *dhamma* means here. Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi, and Thanissaro translate ‘connected with the Dhamma’ – i.e. the teaching. But perhaps the *dhamma* here is the same as in *dhammaveda* in the previous sentence – that is it connotes the understanding gained from contemplating one’s own moral purity.

⁸ alternatively ‘integrated’.

⁹ The sequence of verbs is *labhati, jāyati, passambhati, vedeti, samādhīyati*, so: joy is obtained, rapture is born, the body is pacified, bliss is experienced, and the mind is integrated.

¹⁰ *evaṃdhammaṃ*. Again *dhamma* here is a bit of a puzzle. I think the context allows for my translation. Other translators disagree Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi ‘such a state [of concentration]’.

¹¹ *sālīnaṃ... vicitakāḷakaṃ* ‘fine rice... with the black grains removed’. Not sure where Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi get “choice hill rice”

¹² more literally *averena* ‘with non-illwill’ and *abhyāpajjena* ‘with non-hatred’

mind from the taint of desire, from the taint of becoming, from the taint of ignorance. In that freedom comes the knowledge ‘I am liberated’. “They know ‘birth is ended, the holy life is lived, what should be done is done, there is no further existence. This is called ‘a monk, bathed with the inner bathing’”.¹³

Pamādvihārī Suttaṃ
(SN 35.97 PTS S iv.77)

I will teach you about the inebriate and abstainer. Listen up.

How is someone an inebriate? Living with the sense faculties unguarded corrupts (*vyāsiñcati*) the mind. With the mind corrupted by the senses and their objects there is no joy. Where there is no joy, there is no meditative rapture. Without meditative rapture there is no serenity. In the absence of serenity there is disappointment (*dukkha*). The disappointed mind cannot become integrated (*samādhīyati*). In the unintegrated mind phenomena (*dhammā*) do not become clear (*pātubhavanti*). Because phenomena are obscured one dwells intoxicated – this is the definition of an inebriate.

How is someone abstemious? Living with the sense faculties guarded the mind is not corrupted. In a mind uncorrupted by the sense faculties and their objects there is joy. From joy is born meditative rapture. The body of the enraptured meditator is calms down. With a serene body they dwell in bliss. The blissful mind becomes integrated, and in the integrated mind phenomena become clear. Because phenomena are clear one is not intoxicated by them – one is sober. This is an abstainer.

Mahānāma Sutta
AN 6.10; A iii.284.

One time the Bhagavan was amongst the Sakkas in the Banyan Park near Kapilavatthu. At that time Mahānāma the Sakka approached him, greeted him, and sat to one side. From his seat he addressed the Bhagavan: Sir, the ideal Buddhist¹⁴ to whom the fruit [of awakening] has come, who understands the message [of the Buddha] in which mode does he often dwell?¹⁵

Mahānāma the ideal Buddhist, to whom the fruit has come, who has understood the message usually dwells recollecting [the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha in terms of the *itipi so* verses].¹⁶ When the ideal Buddhist reflects on the three jewels, then their mind is never possessed by passion, aversion or confusion; then the mind is directed towards the three

¹³ A reference to the brahmanical habit of washing away sins in holy rivers, which the Buddha criticises. The text continues with the Buddha converting Sundarika Bhāradvāja – who is also converted in other stories.

¹⁴ *ariyasāvaka* literally ‘one who has heard the noble ones’. Often translated as noble disciple, as a *sāvaka* is one who has paid heed to the Buddha. The idea is that this is what the ideal disciple is like, and ‘ideal Buddhist’ seems to capture the spirit of what is intended.

¹⁵ *katamena vihārena bahulaṃ viharati*.

¹⁶ In the text the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha are treated separately alongside their section of the *itipi so* but in identical terms, so I have condensed them.

jewels¹⁷. The ideal Buddhist whose mind is directed gains knowledge of the letter and the meaning [of the dhamma], and the joy associated with knowledge of the meaning.¹⁸ Rapture is born of joyfulness. With rapture in the mind, the body is calmed. The body calmed experiences bliss. The blissful mind is integrated (*samādhīyati*¹⁹). They are called an ideal Buddhist: living equanimously in a world of disharmony (*visamagata*); living peacefully in a world of aggression; endowed with the Dhamma ear (*dhammasota*²⁰), who cultivates the recollections of the three jewels.

In the same way they dwell reflecting on their own virtuous conduct unbroken, continuous, unspotted, unblemished, liberating, undisturbed, untarnished, conducive to meditative integration. When they reflect this was their mind is never possessed by passion etc.

And they dwell reflecting on their own generosity (*cāga*) [thinking] “it is indeed a gain for me; a welcome gain. I dwell in a world stained by selfishness, with selfishness banished from my mind; settled in a house freely giving, open handed, delighting in charity, open to beggars, enjoying giving gifts.²¹ When they reflect this was their mind is never possessed by passion etc.

And also the ideal Buddhist cultivates the recollection of the divinities – there are the four Great Kings, the thirty-three gods, the gods of death, The happy gods, The humble gods, the other-power gods²², Brahma’s retinue, and other gods beyond. The kind of faith that allowed them to be born in heaven after they died is the kind of faith that I have. The kind of virtue that allowed them to be born in heaven after they died is the kind of virtue that I have. The kind of religious knowledge (*suta*) that allowed them to be born in heaven after they died

¹⁷ *uju* – literally “straight, upright, direct”. *Uju* is often a moral quality i.e. honesty. With *ujugata* is literally ‘gone straight’ but I think here it means ‘gone directly’ AA glosses *ujugata* with *buddhānussatikammaṭṭhāne ujukameva gataṃ* ‘goes directly to the state of doing the buddha recollection’ (?)

¹⁸ *Ujugatacitto kho pana, mahānāma, ariyasāvako labhati atthavedaṃ, labhati dhammavedaṃ, labhati dhammūpasamhitam pāmojjaṃ*. The commentarial tradition allows several meanings for *veda* its natural meaning of knowledge, perhaps because it evokes the Brahmanical Vedas. MA 1.173 interprets *veda* as *ganthopi nānampi somanassampi* or ‘the books [of the Brahmanical vedas], knowledge, and happiness’. MA suggests that *atthaveda* arises from considering certain confidence itself, while *dhammaveda* arises from considering its cause. Nyanaponik & Bodhi here opt for ‘inspiration’ in their translation, following one of Buddhaghosa’s suggestions.

¹⁹ *samādhīyati* is a passive formation of *samādahati* ‘put together, composed’

²⁰ *sota* here could mean ‘stream’ < Sanskrit *srotas*; or ‘ear’ < Sanskrit *śrotas*. Either way as SN 2.58 shows the phrase belongs amongst descriptions of someone with *vipassanā*: “He is called a noble disciple, perfected in view and vision; one who has arrived at the truth, who sees the truth; one who possesses a practitioner’s knowledge and understanding; endowed with the Dhamma ear (or stream); a noble with insightful knowledge, who stands at the doors to the deathless”. (*Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako diṭṭhisampanno itipi, dassanasampanno itipi, āgato imaṃ saddhammaṃ itipi, passati imaṃ saddhammaṃ itipi, sekkhena nāṇena samannāgato itipi, sekkhāya vijjāya samannāgato itipi, dhammasotaṃ samāpanno itipi, ariyo nibbedhikapañño itipi, amatadvāraṃ āhacca tiṭṭhati itipīti*). SA 2.59 glosses *dhammasotaṃ samāpanno* as *maggasaṅkhātameva dhammasotaṃ samāpano* while AA 3.357 (the commentary on this text) glosses it as *vipassanāsaṅkhātameva dhammasotaṃ samāpanno*.

²¹ This paragraph is identical to another *Mahānāma Sutta* at SN 55.37. However there the Buddha is responding to the question ‘what is a lay follower?’ (*Kittāvatā nu kho, bhante, upāsako hotīti*. S v.395). This text is followed (SN 55.38) by the rain simile which here has a coda saying that for a *ariyasāvaka* the four factors of stream entry (confidence in the three jewels, and virtue) flow on, having gone over [to the other shore], and lead to the destruction of the āsavas. (*evameva kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvakassa yo ca buddhe aveccappasādo, yo ca dhamme aveccappasādo, yo ca saṅghe aveccappasādo, yāni ca ariyakantāni sīlāni – ime dhammā sandamānā pāraṃ gantvā āsavānaṃ khayāya saṃvattantīti* S v.396)

²² *para-nimmita-vasa-vattin* other-created-power-maker – PED *paranimmita* ‘created by another’; *vasavattin* ‘having power over’ (Bodhi ‘devas Who Control What is Created by Others’ [the capitals are strange].

is the kind of religious knowledge that I have. The kind of generosity that allowed them to be born in heaven after they died is the kind of generosity that I have. The kind of wisdom that allowed them to be born in heaven after they died is the kind of wisdom that I have. When they reflect this was their mind is never possessed by passion etc.

Mahānāma the ideal Buddhist, to whom the fruit has come, who has understood the message usually dwells like this.