

The Eightfold Path
Tipiṭaka. Suttapiṭaka. Saṃyuttanikāya. Magga-vibhanga Sutta
SN45.8

Magga-vibhanga Sutta
An Analysis of the Path
Translated from the Pali by
Thanissaro Bhikkhu

I have heard that at one time the Blessed One was staying in Savatthi at Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's monastery.

There he addressed the monks, saying, "Monks."

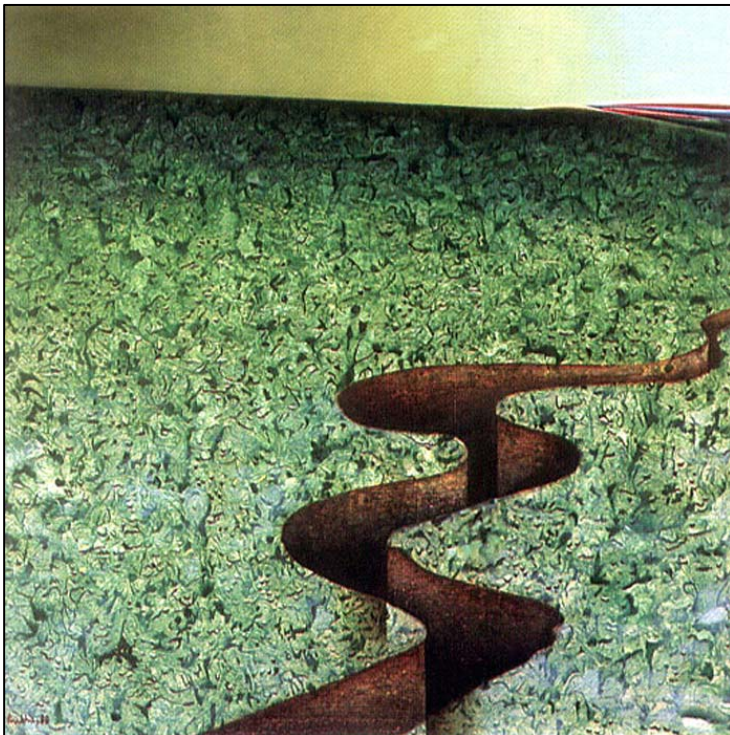
"Yes, lord," the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said, "I will teach & analyze for you the Noble Eightfold Path. Listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said, "Now what, monks, is the Noble Eightfold Path? Right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"And what, monks, is right view? Knowledge with regard



to stress, knowledge with regard to the origination of stress, knowledge with regard to the stopping of stress, knowledge with regard to the way of practice leading to the stopping of stress: This, monks, is called right view.

"And what is right resolve? Being resolved on renunciation, on freedom from ill will, on harmlessness: This is called right resolve.

"And what is right speech? Abstaining from lying, abstaining from divisive speech, abstaining from abusive speech, abstaining from idle chatter: This, monks, is called right speech.

"And what, monks, is right action? Abstaining from taking life, abstaining from stealing, abstaining from unchastity: This, monks, is called right action.

"And what, monks, is right livelihood? There is the case where a disciple of the noble ones, having abandoned dishonest livelihood, keeps his life going with right livelihood: This, monks, is called right livelihood.

"And what, monks, is right effort? (i) There is the case where a monk generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the non-arising of evil, unskillful qualities that have not yet arisen. (ii) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the abandonment of evil, unskillful qualities that have arisen. (iii) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the sake of the arising of skillful qualities that have not yet arisen. (iv) He generates desire, endeavors, activates persistence, upholds & exerts his intent for the maintenance, non-confusion, increase, plenitude, development, & culmination of skillful qualities that have arisen: This, monks, is called right effort.

"And what, monks, is right mindfulness? (i) There is the case where a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself — ardent, aware, & mindful — putting away greed & distress with reference to the world. (ii) He remains focused on feelings in & of themselves — ardent, aware, & mindful — putting away greed & distress with reference to the world. (iii) He remains focused on the mind in & of itself — ardent, aware, & mindful — putting away greed & distress with reference to the world. (iv) He remains focused on mental qualities in & of themselves — ardent, aware, & mindful — putting away greed & distress with reference to the world. This, monks, is called right mindfulness.



"And what, monks, is right concentration?"

(i) There is the case where a monk — quite withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from unskillful (mental) qualities — enters & remains in the first jhana: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. (ii) With the stilling of directed thoughts & evaluations, he enters & remains in the second jhana: rapture & pleasure born of concentration, unification of awareness free from directed thought & evaluation — internal assurance. (iii) With the fading of rapture, he remains in equanimity, is mindful & alert, and senses pleasure with the body. He enters & remains in the third jhana, of which the Noble Ones declare, 'Equanimous & mindful, he has a pleasurable abiding.' (iv) With the abandoning of pleasure & pain — as with the earlier disappearance of elation & distress — he enters & remains in the fourth jhana: purity of equanimity & mindfulness, neither pleasure nor pain. This, monks, is called right concentration."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted at his words.

For free distribution. This work may be republished, reformatted, reprinted, and redistributed in any medium. It is the author's wish, however, that any such republication and redistribution be made available to the public on a free and unrestricted basis and that translations and other derivative works be clearly marked as such.