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Nagara Sutta

The Discourse on the City | S 12.65/2:104-107

Theme: How the Buddha awakened: the parable of the city

Translated by Piya Tan, ©2005

1 Introduction

The Nagara Sūtra (in Sanskrit), the Nagara Sutta (S 12.65) and the Mahā Sakya,muni Gotama Sutta (S 12.10) recount the same key event in Buddhist spirituality: the nature of the Buddha's awakening. They recount how the Buddha, when he was still a Bodhisattva (a Buddha-to-be) noticed the sufferings of the world, and how he discovered the way out of this suffering. This discovery of awakening is related by way of the two modes of dependent arising (*paṭicca,samuppāda*), first in the forward mode (*anuloma*) showing how decay, death, birth and repeated suffering arise, and then in the reverse mode (*paṭiloma*) showing how they end.

All the three suttas here deal with the nature of the arising and the ending of suffering. They all begin by investigating the condition for the arising of decay-and-death: the Nagara Sūtra [§54a], the Nagara Sutta [§3] and the Mahā Sakya,muni Gotama Sutta [§3.1]. The Nagara Sūtra and the the Mahā Sakya,-muni Gotama Sutta, except for their language (the former is in Sanskrit, the latter Pali), both identically give the traditional 12-link dependent arising formula, beginning with ignorance (*āvijjā*) and ending with suffering (*soka,parideva,dukkha...*). The main difference here is that the Nagara Sūtra, like the Nagara Sutta has the city parable, while the Mahā Sakya,muni Gotama Sutta does not.

The Nagara Sutta is a classic statement on Buddhist spirituality being a path (*magga*) [§§19-22.1], that is, a way or method of personal development culminating in self-awakening. Towards the end of the Sutta, in the parable section, the Buddha declares that this path is none other than the noble eightfold path (*ariy'aṭṭhaṅgika magga*), a path traversed in a triple-gear vehicle, that is, one equipped with moral virtue (*sīla*), mental concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*).¹

The minding aspect of the path—mental concentration—is often called “the one-going way” (*ekāyana*), as in the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas (D 22; M 10).² The “one-going way” (or more simply “the one way”) refers to meditation, or more specifically to satipaṭṭhana practice, where one sits alone to meditate, using this method that has only one purpose (mental focus), keeping one's mindfulness on one object (eg the breath), working towards only one goal, overcoming the mental hindrances and building the awakening factors, for attaining nirvana. It should be made clear that neither satipaṭṭhana nor “vipassana” is the “only way” (which is not what *ekāyana* means anyway); the only way, as clear from the Nagara Sutta, is the noble eightfold path.³

2 The parable of the city

In the Nagara Sutta, the delightful ancient fortress city [§20.2] clearly refers to nirvana, and the city is populated by saints (called “seers,” *ṛṣī*, in the Sanskrit Nagara Sūtra, §5.28). Both the Pali and Sanskrit versions of the sutta speak of ancient people using the path. We find a more detailed parable of the city in the Kimsuka Sutta (S 35.204),⁴ where it is said to be a frontier city (*paccantima nagara*). The parable points to the importance of the guarding of the sense-doors for the purpose of mental cultivation.⁵

Suppose, monk, a king has a frontier city with strong ramparts, walls, arches, and with six gates. The gate-keeper posted there would be wise, competent, and intelligent; one who keeps

¹ A whole chapter in **Saṃyutta Nikāya**—the Magga Saṃyutta or connected discourses on the path—deals with this aspect.

² D 22/2:290-315; M 10/1:55-63 = SD 13.

³ See esp SD 13(3.2) for a discussion.

⁴ S:B ref is S 35.245. On the difference between the PTS ed (Feer) and Bodhi's numbering, see S:B 23-26.

⁵ For a discussion on this passage in connection with the “intermediate state” (*antarā,bhava*), see SD 2.17(8).

out strangers and admits acquaintances. A swift pair of messengers would come from the east ...the west...the north...the south and ask the gate-keeper, “Where, good man, is the lord of this city?” He would reply, “He is sitting in the central square [where the four roads meet]. Then the swift messenger would deliver their message of things as they are to the lord of the city and leave by the route by which they have come.

I have made up this simile, monk, to show you the meaning, that is to say: “**The city**” is a designation for this body consisting of the four elements, originating from mother and father, built up of rice and gruel, subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to breaking apart and dissolution. “**The six gates**” are a designation for the six internal sense-bases. “**The gate-keeper**” is a designation for mindfulness. “**The swift messengers**” are a designation for calmness and insight. “**The lord of the city**” is a designation for consciousness. “**The central square [where four roads meet]**” (*siṅghāṭaka*) is a designation for the four great elements—the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element.’ “**A message of things as they are**” is a designation for Nirvana. **The route by which they have come** is a designation for the Noble Eightfold Path.... (S 35.204/4:194 f)

3 The looped dependent arising formula

The Nagara Sutta (S 12.65) is unique here because, unlike the other two suttas, it gives the “looped” version of the dependent arising formula. After examining the dependent arising of suffering [§§3-7], the Sutta goes on to show how consciousness (*viññāṇa*) and name-and-form (*nāma, rūpa*) condition one another [§§5.14-8], and then declares:

9.1 *Tassa mayham, bhikkhave, etad ahoṣi—
'Paccudāvattati kho idaṃ viññāṇaṃ,
nāma, rūpamhā na paraṃ gacchati.'*

Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
'Now this consciousness turns back.
It goes no further than name-and-form.'

9.2 *Ettāvatā jāyetha vā jīyetha vā mīyetha vā cavetha vā upapajjetha vā, yad-idaṃ:*

It is thus far that one may be born, or may decay, or may die, or may fall from life, or may be reborn, namely:

9.3 <i>nāma, rūpa, paccayā</i>	<i>viññāṇaṃ;</i>
<i>viññāṇa, paccayā</i>	<i>nāma, rūpaṃ;</i>
<i>nāma, rūpa, paccayā</i>	<i>saḷ-āyatanaṃ;</i>
<i>saḷ-āyatana, paccayā</i>	<i>phasso;</i>
<i>phassa, paccayā</i>	<i>vedanā;</i>
<i>vedanā, paccayā</i>	<i>taṇhā;</i>
<i>taṇhā, paccayā</i>	<i>upādānaṃ;</i>
<i>upādāna, paccayā</i>	<i>bhavo;</i>
<i>bhava, paccayā</i>	<i>jāti;</i>
<i>jāti, paccayā</i>	<i>jarā, maraṇaṃ;</i>

*soka, parideva, dukkha, domanass' upāyāsā sambhavanti.
Evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-k, khandhassa samudayo hoti.*

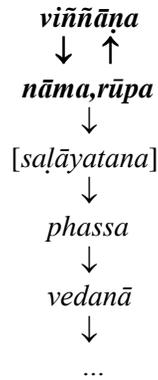
**With name-and-form as condition,
With consciousness as condition,
With name-and-form as condition,
With the six sense-bases as condition,**

**there is consciousness.
there is name-and-form.
there is the six sense-bases.
there is contact.**

With contact as condition,	there is feeling.
With feeling as condition,	there is craving.
With craving as condition,	there is clinging.
With clinging as condition,	there is existence.
With existence as condition,	there is birth.
With birth as condition,	there is decay-and-death.
Sorrow, lamentation mental pain, physical pain, and despair arise.	
Thus there is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.	

Conversely, the Sutta goes on to give the “looped” formula for the ending of suffering [§§12-18], which actually climaxes the Sutta, after which the parable of the ancient fortress city is given [§§19-21]. The looped dependent arising formula can be represented schematically thus:

Looped version



The looped version is so called because it represents consciousness and name-and-form as mutually (*añña-m-añña*) conditioning each other, and “this causal loop is confirmed when the series is reiterated in summary in the forward direction,”⁶ thus:

Conditioned by name-and-form is consciousness.
 Conditioned by consciousness is name-and-form.
 Conditioned by name-and-form is contact...

The most famous example of the looped version is **the Mahā Nidāna Sutta** (D 15); other examples are **the Nala,kalapiya Sutta** (S 12.26) and **the Mahāpadāna Sutta** (D 14). The Commentary on the Nagara Sutta explains the loop thus:

With name-and-form as condition, there is consciousness. Here it should be said, “When there is consciousness, there are volitional activities” (*saṅkhāresu sati viññāṇan ti*) and “when there are volitional activities, there is ignorance” (*avijjāya sati saṅkhārā ti*). But why is neither mentioned? Because ignorance and volitional activities belong to a third existence and this insight is not connected with them (*avijjā,saṅkhārā hi tatiyo bhavo, tehi saddhīm ayaṃ vipassanā na ghaṭiyati*). For the Great Man (the Bodhisattva) undertakes insight by way of the present five-

⁶ **Mahāpadāna S**, D 14.2.18/2:32 (same as in the Buddha Vipassi’s awakening account); **Mahā Nidāna S**, D 15.2/2:56 (= SD 5.17) = Dīrgh’āgama 61b20 = 243c2-3 = Madhyam’āgama 580a1-2 = 845b11-12; **Nala,kalapiya S**, S 12.26/2:114 = Saṃyukt’āgama 80c3-6. For other versions of dependent arising formulas, see SD 15.6(5). See also Bucknell 1999:315 n13.

constituent existence (*pañca, vokāra, bhava*, ie existence where all the five aggregates are present).

(Query:) Is it not true that one cannot awaken as long as ignorance and volitional activities are unseen?

(Reply:) True, one cannot. But these are seen by way of craving, clinging, and existence. If a man pursuing a lizard has seen it enter a pit, he would get down to digging up the place where it has entered, catch it, and leave. He would not dig up some other place where the lizard cannot be found.

Similarly, where the Great Man was sitting on the seat of awakening, he looked for the various conditions beginning with decay-and-death. Seeking the conditions for the phenomena up to name-and-form, he looked for its condition, too, and saw it to be consciousness. Then realizing, “Such is the range of exploration by way of five-constituent existence,” he reversed his insight (*vipassanaṃ paṭinivattesi*).

Beyond this, there is still the pair, ignorance and volitional activities, which are like the unbroken region of the empty pit. But because they have been included by insight earlier, they do not undergo exploration separately.⁷ Hence, he does not mention them. (SA 2:115)

4 The Mahā, nidāna Sutta (D 15)

The looped dependent arising embodies the two important conscious processes discovered by the Buddha, namely (using modern terminology), existential consciousness and cognitive consciousness. In simple terms, existential consciousness refers to rebirth consciousness, while cognitive consciousness is all our conscious processes that occur during our living moments.⁸ This passage from **the Mahā, nidāna Sutta** (D 15),⁹ explains the brief statement of the “looped” version of the dependent arising formula [9.1-3]:

Existential consciousness

21 It is said: **‘With consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form.’** [63]

Ānanda, how consciousness conditions name-and-form should be known in this manner:

If there were no consciousness to descend into a mother’s womb, would name-and-form take shape in the womb?”¹⁰

“Certainly not, bhante.”

If, after descending into the mother’s womb, the consciousness were to depart, would name-and-form be generated in this state of being here?”

“Certainly not, bhante.”

“If the consciousness of a young boy or a young girl were to be cut off, would name-and-form grow, develop and mature?”

“Certainly not, bhante.”

⁷ “Under craving, etc?” amplification by Bodhi (S:B 777 n176).

⁸ See *Viññāṇa* = SD 17.8a(6).

⁹ D 15.21-22/2:63 = SD 5.17. For a tr of detailed explanation at DA 2:501-503 with excerpts from Sub-comy, see Bodhi (tr), *The Great Discourse on Causation*, 2nd ed 1995:84-89.

¹⁰ Cf **Titth’āyatana S** (A 3.61) where the Buddha declares: “Based on the six elements, there is descent into the womb; | (On account of) such a descent, there is name-and-form; | With name-and-form as condition, there is contact; | With contact as condition, there is feeling. | Now, it is for one who feels that I make known [the 4 noble truths].” (A 3.61.9/1:176). This clearly shows that feeling arises with the descent of the gandharva (rebirth consciousness) into the womb. However, this is not a common interpretation of *viññāṇa-nāma, rūpa* dyad, where “*viññāṇa* in this context became the consciousness that descends into the mother’s womb at conception, while *nāma-rūpa* became the body complex that takes shape and, after developing sense-organs (*saḷāyatana*), experiences contact (*phassa*) and so on.” (Bucknell 1999:339). More commonly, *viññāṇa* is “the consummation of the six types of consciousness associated with the sense organs, which makes the version read like an account of the psychological process of sensory perception.” (Bucknell 1999: 327); see **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18.16-18/1:111-113). See discussion on **nāma, rūpa** in the essay “Dependent Arising” = SD 5.11 Introd.

“Therefore, Ānanda, this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition for name-and-form, that is to say, consciousness.

Cognitive consciousness

22a It is said: ‘**With name-and-form as condition, there is consciousness.**’

Ānanda, how name-and-form conditions consciousness should be known in this manner:

If there were no consciousness to find a footing in name-and-form, would there be further arising of birth, decay, death and suffering?”

“Certainly not, bhante.”

“Therefore, Ānanda, this is the cause, the source, the origin, the condition for consciousness, that is to say, name-and-form.

22b It is thus far, Ānanda, that one can be born, decay and die, pass away and re-arise; thus far that there is a pathway for designation; thus far there is a pathway for language; thus far there is a pathway for description; thus far there is a sphere for wisdom; thus far that the round [of cyclic lives] turns [64] for describing this [state of being], that is, when there is name-and-form together with consciousness.¹¹

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The Discourse on the City

S 12.65/2:104-107

[104]

1 [Thus have I heard. At one time, the Blessed One] was residing [in Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery in Jeta’s grove] near Sāvattihī.

Before the awakening

2.1 Bhikshus, before my self-awakening, when I was still a bodhisattva, it occurred to me:

2.2 ‘Alas! What difficulty this world has come to! One is born, and decays, and dies, and falls (from the heavens), and is reborn.’¹²

2.3 Furthermore, they know not the escape from this suffering, from decay-and-death.

2.4 Now when will an escape be known from this suffering of decay-and-death (and so on)?

Dependent arising of suffering

3 Bhikshus, then it occurred to me:

‘Now, when what is, does **decay-and-death** occur?’

What is the condition for decay-and-death?’

4 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is birth, decay-and-death occurs;

¹¹ The PTS ed is followed here. Be adds *añña-m-añña, paccayatā pavattati*, “(which) occur as conditions for one another.” “But this phrase seems to have been mistakenly read from the commentarial gloss into the text itself.” (Bodhi 1984:60 n1). On the interrelationship between name-and-form and consciousness [21, 22], see **Naḷa, kalapiya S** (S 12.67) which compares this intimate interconnection (*nāma, rūpa* and *viññāṇa*) to “two bundles of reeds that are standing and supporting each other...if one of the two were to fall, the other would fall, too.” (S 12.67/ 2:114).

¹² “Is reborn.” Be PTS Se *upapajjati*; Ce *uppajjati* always. While the former usu refers to rebirth, the latter has a general sense of birth: see CPD & DP.

with **birth** as condition, there is decay-and-death.’

5.1 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does birth occur?

What is the condition for birth?’

5.2 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is *existence*, birth occurs;

with **existence** as condition, there is birth.’

5.3 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does existence occur?

What is the condition for existence?’

5.4 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is *clinging*, existence occurs;

with **clinging** as condition, there is existence.’

5.5 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does clinging occur?

What is the condition for clinging?’

5.6 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is *craving*, clinging occurs;

with **craving** as condition, there is existence.’

5.7 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does craving occur?

What is the condition for craving?’

5.8 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is *feeling*, craving occurs;

with **feeling** as condition, there is craving.’

5.9 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does feeling occur?

What is the condition for feeling?’

5.10 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is *contact*, feeling occurs;

with **contact** as condition, there is feeling.’

5.11 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does contact occur?

What is the condition for contact?’

5.12 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is *the six sense-bases*, contact occurs;

with **the six sense-bases** as condition, there is contact.’

5.13 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does the six sense-bases occur?

What is the condition for the six sense-bases?’

5.14 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into reality thus:

‘When there is *name-and-form*, the six sense-bases occurs;

with **name-and-form** as condition, there is the six sense-bases.’

5.15 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does name-and-form occur?

What is the condition for name-and-form?’

6 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there is in me the penetration thus:

‘When there is *consciousness*, name-and-form occurs;

with **consciousness** as condition, there is name-and-form.’

7 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is, does consciousness occur?

What is the condition for consciousness?’

8 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there is in me the penetration thus:

‘When there is *name-and-form*, consciousness occurs;

with **name-and-form** as condition, there is consciousness.’¹³

9.1 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now this consciousness turns back.¹⁴ **It goes no further than name-and-form.**’

The “looped” arising of suffering

9.2 It is thus far that one may be born, or may decay, or may die, or may fall from life, or may be reborn, namely: [105]

9.3 With name-and-form as condition, there is consciousness.

With consciousness as condition, there is name-and-form.

With name-and-form as condition, there is the six sense-bases.

With the six sense-bases as condition, there is contact.

With contact as condition, there is feeling.

With feeling as condition, there is craving.

With craving as condition, there is clinging.

With clinging as condition, there is existence.

With existence as condition, there is birth.

With birth as condition, there is decay-and-death.

Sorrow, lamentation, mental pain, physical pain, and despair arise.

Thus there is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

10 ‘**The arising! The arising!**’ thus, bhikshus, it occurred to me. In things unheard before, the eye arose in me, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, true knowledge arose, light arose.

Dependent ending of suffering

11 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

Now when what is not, does **decay-and-death** not occur?

With the ending of what, is there the ending of decay-and-death?’

12 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is no birth, decay-and-death does not occur.

With the ending of **birth**, there is the ending of decay-and-death.’

13.1 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is not, does birth not occur?

With the ending of what, is there the ending of birth?’

¹³ This dependent arising link is stated in the same manner as that in the account of the Buddha Vipassī’s awakening in **Mahāpadāna S** (D 14.2.18/32,22-30). See above Intro (2).

¹⁴ See above Intro (2).

13.2 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no existence, birth does not occur.
 With the ending of **existence**, there is the ending of birth.’

13.3 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
 ‘Now, bhikshus, when what is not, does existence not occur?
 With the ending of what, is there the ending of existence?’

13.4 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no clinging, existence does not occur.
 With the ending of **clinging**, there is the ending of existence.’

13.5 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
 ‘Now when what is not, does clinging not occur?
 With the ending of what, is there the ending of clinging?’

13.6 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no craving, clinging does not occur.
 With the ending of **craving**, there is the ending of clinging.’

13.7 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
 ‘Now when what is not, does craving not occur?
 With the ending of what, is there the ending of craving?’

13.8 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no feeling, craving does not occur.
 With the ending of **feeling**, there is the ending of craving.’

13.9 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
 ‘Now when what is not, does feeling not occur?
 With the ending of what, is there the ending of feeling?’

13.10 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no contact, feeling does not occur.
 With the ending of **contact**, there is the ending of feeling.’

13.11 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
 ‘Now when what is not, does contact not occur?
 With the ending of what, is there the ending of contact?’

13.12 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no six sense-bases, contact does not occur.
 With the ending of **the six sense-bases**, there is the ending of contact.’

13.13 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
 ‘Now when what is not, does the six sense-bases not occur?
 With the ending of what, is there the ending of the six sense-bases?’

13.14 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no name-and-form, the six sense-bases does not occur.
 With the ending of **name-and-form**, there is the ending of the six sense-bases.’

13.15 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:
 ‘Now when what is not, does name-and-form not occur?
 With the ending of what, is there the ending of name-and-form?’

14 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:
‘When there is no consciousness, name-and-form does not occur.

With the ending of **consciousness**, there is the ending of name-and-form.⁷

15 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘Now when what is not, does consciousness not occur?

With the ending of what, is there the ending of consciousness?’

16 Then, bhikshus, through wise attention, there was in me penetration into wisdom thus:

‘When there is no name-and-form, consciousness does not occur.

With the ending of **name-and-form**, there is the ending of consciousness.⁷

The “looped” ending of suffering

17a Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘I have indeed found this path of awakening,¹⁵ namely:

<u>With the ending of name-and-form,</u>	<u>there is the ending of</u>	<u>consciousness.</u>
<u>With the ending of consciousness,</u>	<u>there is the ending of</u>	<u>name-and-form.</u>
With the ending of name-and-form ,	there is the ending of	the six sense-bases.
With the ending of the six sense-bases ,	there is the ending of	contact.
With the ending of contact ,	there is the ending of	feeling.
With the ending of feeling ,	there is the ending of	craving.
With the ending of craving ,	there is the ending of	clinging.
With the ending of clinging ,	there is the ending of	existence.
With the ending of existence ,	there is the ending of	birth.
With the ending of birth ,	there is the ending of	decay-and-death:

Sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and distress end.

Thus there is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.

17b Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

‘I have indeed found **this path of awakening**, namely:

<u>With the ending of name-and-form,</u>	<u>there is the ending of</u>	<u>consciousness.</u>
<u>With the ending of consciousness,</u>	<u>there is the ending of</u>	<u>name-and-form.</u> ¹⁶
With the ending of name-and-form,	there is the ending of	the six sense-bases.
With the ending of the six sense-bases,	there is the ending of	contact.
With the ending of contact,	there is the ending of	feeling.
With the ending of feeling,	there is the ending of	craving.
With the ending of craving,	there is the ending of	clinging.
With the ending of clinging,	there is the ending of	existence.
With the ending of existence,	there is the ending of	birth.
With the ending of birth,	there is the ending of	decay-and-death:

Sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and distress end.

¹⁵ *Adhigato kho myāyaṃ maggo bodhāya*. SA is silent here, but DA explains the corresponding passage in **Mahāpadāna S** (D 14.2.20/2:34) thus: “*The path* is the path of insight. *Of awakening* means of the awakening to the four noble truths, or of the realizing of nirvana. It is called awakening (*bodhi*) because it awakens (*bujjhati*); this is the name for the noble path.” (DA 2:461). “This explanation,” notes **Bodhi**, “hinges upon the distinction (only implicit in the Nikāyas) between the mundane preliminary portion of the path (*pubba, bhāga, paṭipadā*), which is the “path of insight,” and the noble supramundane path (*lokuttara, magga*), which directly realizes Nibbāna. Since the supramundane path is identical with enlightenment, the commentary holds that ‘the path to enlightenment’ [or better, *of awakening*], the Bodhisatta discovered must be the mundane path of insight. In the D version, having discovered the path to enlightenment, the Bodhisatta Vipassī continues to contemplate the rise and fall of the five aggregates, as a result of which ‘his mind was liberated from the taints [cankers, *āsava*] by not clinging.’” (S:B 778 n179)

¹⁶ This mutual ending of consciousness and name-and-form is also found in **Mahāpadāna S** (D 14) version (D 14.2.20/2:34).

Thus there is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.

18 ‘**The ending! The ending!**’ thus, bhikshus, it occurred to me. In things unheard before, the eye arose in me, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, true knowledge arose, light arose.

The parable of the ancient city

19.1 It is just as if, bhikshus, a man, while wandering in a forest on a mountain-side, arrives at an ancient road, an ancient highway [a straight, direct way], followed by people in the past.

19.2 He arrived there.

Having arrived there, he sees an ancient city, an ancient royal city, [106] inhabited by people, endowed with parks, endowed with forests, endowed with lotus ponds, and surrounded with ramparts—delightful.

20.1 Then, bhikshus, the man informs the rajah or a royal minister:

‘Please, sir, you should know this:

While I was wandering in a forest on a mountain-side, I saw an ancient road, an ancient highway [a straight, direct way], followed by people in the past.

20.2 I followed it, and following it, I saw an ancient city, an ancient royal city, inhabited by people, endowed with parks, endowed with forests, endowed with lotus ponds, and surrounded with ramparts¹⁷—delightful.

Your majesty, would you please renovate that city.’

21.1 Then, bhikshus, the rajah or a royal minister renovates the city. In due course, it becomes a city that is successful and prosperous, widely known, popular, endowed with prosperity and plenty.¹⁸

The noble eightfold path

21.2 Even so, bhikshus, I have seen an ancient road, an ancient way, followed by fully self-awakened ones in the past.

22.1 And what, bhikshus, is that ancient road, that ancient path, followed by the fully self-awakened ones in the past?

22.2 It is this **noble eightfold path** itself, namely:

right view,
right intention [thought],
right speech,
right action,
right livelihood,
right effort,
right mindfulness,
right concentration

22.3 This, bhikshus, is that ancient road, that ancient path, followed by the fully self-awakened ones in the past. I followed it.

23.1 Following it,

I directly knew ¹⁹	<u>decay-and-death</u> ,
I directly knew	the arising of decay-and-death,
I directly knew	the ending of decay-and-death,
I directly knew	the way to the ending of decay-and-death.

I followed it.

¹⁷ “Ramparts,” **Uddāpa~**, preferred vl for *uddhāpa~*.

¹⁸ SA explains this parable in great detail, such as showing the correspondences between the elements of the parable and aspects of the Dharma.

¹⁹ “I directly knew,” **abbhaññāsīm**, aor of *abhiñāmi*, “I know, understand,” or more technically, “I directly know.” The n is *abhiññā*, “direct knowledge.”

I directly knew	the ending of consciousness.
I directly knew	the way to the ending of consciousness.
I followed it.	
32 Following it,	
I directly knew	<u>volitional activities</u> , ²⁰
I directly knew	the arising of volitional activities,
I directly knew	the ending of volitional activities,
I directly knew	and the way leading to the end of volitional activities.

Liberation

[107] 33.1 Having directly known it, I explained²¹ it to the monks, to the nuns, to the laymen, and to the laywomen.

33.2 This holy life, bhikkhus, has become successful and prosperous, and widely known, widespread, and popular, well proclaimed by gods and men[, well proclaimed amongst gods and men].²²

— evaṃ —

051107; 061018; 120621; 120924

²⁰ Bodhi: “At this point *saṅkhāra*, omitted earlier, are finally introduced, and *avijjā*, their condition, is implied by the mention of ‘their origin’ [the arising, *saṅkhāra, samudaya*]” (S:B 778 n181)

²¹ “I explained,” **ācikkhīṃ**, aor of *ācikkhāmi*, “I describe, explain.”

²² *Tayidam bhikkhave brahmacariyaṃ iddhaṃ c’eva phūtaṃ ca vitthārikaṃ bahu, jaññaṃ puthu, bhūtaṃ yāva-d-eva manussehi suppakāsitaṃ ti*. This closing is also at **Cāpāla Cetiya S** (S 51.10/5:262,9-14) which = D 16.3.8e/-2:106,11-13 (SD 9), where SA parallels DA 2:554-558; = U 64,16-19, commented at UA 332-330. At D 16 and U 64, the phrase *tayidam bhikkhave* is replaced by *etarahi kho pana bhante bhagavato* (But now, venerable sir, the Blessed One’s...), and is spoken by Māra, using this as an excuse for inviting the Buddha to enter parinirvana. The underscored phrase reads thus at S 51.10, D 16.3, & U 64; but vl & Comy has *yāva deva, manussehi*, & Divy *deva, manuṣeybhyah*. **Bodhi**: “I follow SA in its explanation of *yāva deva, manussehi suppakāsitaṃ*. The point is that, despite the use of the instrumental form *-ehi*, the Dhamma is not proclaimed by devas and humans, but ‘throughout the region (inhabited) by devas and humans in the ten-thousandfold galaxy, within this extent it is well proclaimed, well taught, by the *Tathāgata*’ (*yāva dasa, sahassa, cakkavāle deva, manussehi pariccheda atthi, etasmim antare suppakāsitaṃ sudesitaṃ tathāgatena*). It is possible *-ehi* here is a vestigial Eastern locative plural: see Geiger, *Pāli Grammar*, §80.3.” (S:B 779 n182). Be that as it may, the Dharma is truly spread only when it is “well spread,” and as such this applies to “gods and men,” too. The life of the Dharma lies in its being well proclaimed and well realized, and well proclaimed by such beings. This is clear from this passage’s context in **Mahā, parinibbāna S** = SD 9.