

Selections from the Majjhima Nikāya on the Subject of the Doctrine

Selected by Bhikkhu Bodhi

(Based on private communication with Bhikkhu Bodhi, when asked what he recommends new monks to read)

[11. Cūlasīhanāda Sutta \(The Lesser Discourse on the Lion's Roar\).](#)

The Buddha declares that only in his Dispensation can the four grades of noble individuals be found, explaining how his teaching can be distinguished from other creeds through its unique rejection of all doctrines of self.

[12. Mahāsīhanāda Sutta \(The Greater Discourse on the Lion's Roar\).](#)

The Buddha expounds the ten powers of a Tathāgata, his four kinds of intrepidity, and other superior qualities, which entitle him to roar his lions roar in the assemblies.

[13. Mahādukkhakkhanda Sutta \(The Greater Discourse on the Mass of Suffering\).](#)

The Buddha explains the full understanding of sensual pleasures, material form, and feelings; there is a long section on the dangers in sensual pleasures.

[22. Alagaddupama Sutta \(The Simile of the Snake\).](#)

A bhikkhu named Ariṭṭha gives rise to a pernicious view that conduct prohibited by the Buddha is not really an obstruction. The Buddha reprimands him and, with a series of memorable similes, stresses the dangers in misapplying and misrepresenting the Dhamma. The sutta culminates in one of the most impressive disquisitions on non-self found in the Canon.

[26. Ariyapariyesanā Sutta \(The Noble Search\).](#)

The Buddha gives the bhikkhus a long account of his own quest for enlightenment from the time of his life in the palace up to his transmission of the Dhamma to his first five disciples.

[28. Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta \(The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint\).](#)

The venerable Sāriputta begins with a statement of the Four Noble Truths, which he then expounds by way of the contemplation of the four elements and the dependent origination of the five aggregates.

[38. Mahātanhāsankhaya Sutta \(The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving\).](#)

A bhikkhu named Sāti promulgates the pernicious view that the same consciousness transmigrates from life to life. The Buddha reprimands him with a lengthy discourse on dependent origination, showing how all phenomena of existence arise and cease through conditions.

[41. Sāleyyaka Sutta \(The Brahmins of Sālā\).](#)

In this and Sutta 42 the Buddha explains to groups of brahmin householders the courses of conduct leading to rebirth in lower realms and the courses leading to higher rebirth and deliverance.

[44. Cūlavedalla Sutta \(The Shorter Series of Questions and Answers\).](#)

This and Sutta 45 take the form of discussions on various subtle points of Dhamma. This sutta takes place between the venerable Mahā Koṇhita and the venerable Sāriputta, and the next between the bhikkhuni Dhammadinnā and the lay follower Visākha.

[63. Cūlamālunkya Sutta \(The Shorter Discourse to Mālunkya\).](#)

A Bhikkhu threatens to leave the Order unless the Buddha answers his metaphysical questions. With the simile of a man struck by a poisoned arrow, the Buddha makes plain exactly what he does and does not teach.

[72. Aggivacchagotta Sutta \(To Vacchagotta on Fire\).](#)

The Buddha explains to a wanderer why he does not hold any speculative views. With the simile of an extinguished fire he tries to indicate the destiny of the liberated being.

[75. Māgandiya Sutta \(To Māgandiya\).](#)

The Buddha meets the hedonist philosopher Māgandiya and points out to him the dangers in sensual pleasures, the benefits of renunciation, and the meaning of Nibbāna.

[77. Mahāsakuludāyi Sutta \(The Greater Discourse to Sakuludāyin\).](#)

The Buddha teaches a group of wanderers the reasons why his disciples venerate him and look to him for guidance.

[95. Cankī Sutta \(With Canki\).](#)

The Buddha instructs a young brahmin on the preservation of truth, the discovery of truth, and the final arrival at truth.

[109. Mahāpunnama Sutta \(The Greater Discourse on the Full-moon Night\).](#)

A bhikkhu questions the Buddha on the five aggregates, clinging, personality view, and the realization of non-self.

[115. Bahudhātuka Sutta \(The Many Kinds of Elements\).](#)

The Buddha expounds in detail the elements, the sense bases, dependent origination, and the kinds of situations that are possible and impossible in the world.

[117. Mahācattārīsaka Sutta \(The Great Forty\).](#)

The Buddha defines the factors of the Noble Eightfold Path and explains their inter-relationships.

[135. Cūlakammavibhanga Sutta \(The Shorter Exposition of Action\).](#)

The Buddha explains how kamma accounts for the fortune and misfortune of beings.

[137. Salāyatanaṅga Sutta \(The Exposition of the Sixfold Base\).](#)

The Buddha expounds the six internal and external sense bases and other related topics.

[140. Dhātuvibhanga Sutta \(The Exposition of Elements\).](#)

Stopping at a potter's workshop for a night, the Buddha meets a monk named Pukkusāti and gives him a profound discourse on the elements culminating in the four foundations of arahantship.

[141. Saccavibhanga Sutta \(The Exposition of the Truths\).](#)

The venerable Sariputta gives a detailed analysis of the Four Noble Truths.

[148. Chachakka Sutta \(The Six Sets of Six\).](#)

This is an especially profound and penetrating discourse which explains all the factors of sense experience as not-self.