



THE WISDOM OF THE BUDDHA

Heart Teachings in His Own Words

EDITED BY ANNE BANCROFT



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COMPILED AND EDITED BY

Anne Bancroft



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EDITOR'S PREFACE

This book presents the words of the Buddha as recorded by his followers. During the course of a long life spent traveling on foot between the villages and towns of north India, the Buddha (563–483 BCE) gave many discourses and much advice not only to his order of monks and nuns but also to kings and villagers, outcastes and thieves, for he did not recognize any caste boundaries.

The style of these discourses, when they came to be written down some three centuries later, was repetitive and often divided into numbered categories, for that was how the teachings had been memorized at a time when writing was rare and materials expensive. His followers would want to remember a sermon word for word, and a large body of material was preserved in this way. After the Buddha's death, the movement divided into two main schools, the Theravada and the Mahayana. The Theravada took Pali, an ancient Indian language, for its accounts of the Buddha's teachings, while the Mahayana expressed itself in the equally ancient and classical Sanskrit. As

Buddhism spread to other countries, such as Korea, China, and Tibet, the original Pali or Sanskrit texts were translated into the native languages. This proved to be very fortunate, particularly with regard to the Sanskrit texts, for this preserved them from destruction by later invaders. The Pali texts survived more easily because King Ashoka (third century BCE) of India, a keen Buddhist, had them written in document form as well as inscribing them on stones throughout the country.

In the late nineteenth century, translations were made of the Pali texts into European languages, and the translators—notably the Pali Text Society—followed the original words very closely. A little later the Sanskrit texts, too, began to be translated, and the chief English translator was Professor Edward Conze.

The Pali texts in particular have remained rather impenetrable because their late-Victorian translators not only kept to the original repetitive style but also used phrases and words of their own time that today have become obscure. Nevertheless, the essential Buddha, the brilliant teacher and philosopher who never claimed to be anything more than a human being, shines through, and there are constant intimations of a wonderful mind—wise and serene, yet full of energy and humor; strongly compassionate, yet practical and penetratingly sane.

The central message of the Buddha was that every single one of us can find freedom from the deluded servitude that binds us to desires and cravings. By contemplation we can observe how life is. With awareness we can understand correctly the way to live and find clarity within confusion or despair. When we see the interconnectedness of all existence, we can free ourselves from self-love and the narrow confines of the self. Once the self has lost its power, a new consciousness is experienced that is timeless and unconditioned. This is nirvana never apart from the world but only to be apprehended when the world is no longer clutched at. The Buddha's own account of his awakening to these truths forms the first passage in the book.

The extracts in this book have been carefully edited to keep to the original text as closely as possible while at the same time using appropriate modern words and phrases instead of outdated ones. In this way the Buddha can speak to us as he spoke to the inhabitants of north India two and a half millennia ago. The reader will discover that the situations the Buddha came across in his many encounters with the people he met are intrinsically the same as the situations we find ourselves in today. His advice to his followers is as clear and necessary for our world as it was to theirs.

AWAKENING

When I was a young man, at the beginning of my life, I looked at nature and saw that all things are subject to decay and death and thus to sorrow. The thought came to me that I myself was of such a nature. I was the same as all created things. I too would be subject to disease, decay, death, and sorrow. But what if I were to search for that which underlies all becoming, for the unsurpassed perfect security which is nirvana, the perfect freedom of the unconditioned state?

So, in the first flush of my independence, I went against my father's wishes, shaved off my thick black hair, put on a saffron robe, and left my father's house for a homeless life. I wandered a long time, searching for what is good, searching after an unsurpassed state of peace.

At last I came to a pleasant forest grove next to a river of pure water and sat down beneath a big tree, sure that this was the right place for realization.

All the conditions of the world came into my mind, one after another, and as they came they were penetrated and put down. In this way, finally, a knowledge and insight arose, and I knew that this was the

changeless, the unconditioned. This was freedom.

The reality that came to me is profound and hard to see or understand because it is beyond the sphere of thinking. It is sublime and unequaled but subtle and only to be found by the dedicated.

Most people fail to see this reality, for they are attached to what they cling to, to pleasures and delights. Since all the world is so attached to material things, it's very difficult for people to grasp how everything originates in conditions and causes. It's a hard job for them to see the meaning of the fact that everything, including ourselves, depends on everything else and has no permanent self-existence.

If I were to try to teach this truth, this reality, nobody would understand me, I thought. My labor and my trouble would be for nothing.

But then it came to me as an insight that I should teach this truth, for it is also happiness. There are people whose sight is only a little clouded, and they are suffering through not hearing the reality. They would become knowers of the truth.

It was in this way I went forth to teach:

For those who are ready, the door
To the deathless state is open.
You that have ears, give up
The conditions that bind you, and enter in.

Majjhima Nikaya

In all its parts, both small and infinite,
This one transcended his own life's history.
Composed and calm, he broke apart,
Like a shell of armor, all that makes the self.

Digha Nikaya

The mighty ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt.
Even so, the true way has but one savor, the savor of
freedom.

Majjhima Nikaya

Subhuti, does it occur to you that I believe that
through me living beings are led to liberation? Never
think that way, Subhuti. Why? Because there is no
separate being to lead to liberation. If I were to think
there was, I would be caught in the notion of a self or
a person or a life span.

Subhuti, what I call a self is essentially not a self in
the way that an ordinary person thinks of it. But nei-
ther do I think of anyone as an ordinary person. How-
ever, knowing the essence, I can use the name—
ordinary person.

Diamond Sutra

Overcome your uncertainties and free yourself from
dwelling on sorrow. If you delight in existence, you
will become a guide to those who need you, reveal-
ing the path to many.

Sutta Nipata

The Buddha was meditating on the bank of a river. A brahman performing his worship rituals nearby had some unused cake and wanted to give it away. He went over to the Buddha but was put off when he saw the Buddha's shaven head—a sign of a nobody.

“What caste are you?” he asked.

“I am not a brahman, a prince, a farmer, or any other caste. I am one who understands how existence comes into being. Your question about caste is irrelevant.”

“You seem a wise man and so I want to give you this offering of cake. I like to make offerings, for I feel they will bring me merit. Can you tell me what makes an offering effective for merit?”

The Buddha replied: “Since you are searching for an understanding, listen carefully. Don't ask about caste or riches but instead ask about conduct. Look at the flames of a fire. Where do they come from? From a piece of wood—and it doesn't matter what wood. In the same way, a wise person can come from wood of any sort. It is through firmness and restraint and a sense of truth that one becomes noble, not through caste.

“I will tell you who is worth offerings. It is the one who doesn't cling to life and who has seen where birth and death end. In the fullness of that state he has realized the way things are. His mind no longer seeks resting places. He sees the end of habit-chains. No more does he think of himself in terms of a self, and

so there is nothing in him that can lead to bewilderment. He perceives all phenomena with clarity. That is the one who is worthy of offerings. That is where offerings are due.”

Overwhelmed, the brahman held out his cake. “I have now met a being who understands everything completely, therefore my offering will be true. I ask you to accept my cake.”

But the Buddha replied: “Now, brahman, I do not accept gifts for telling the truth. This is not the way with people of clear knowledge. Go and find a great saint who is perfect and is able to calm all anxieties. That will be the right place for a man like yourself who is looking for merit. That is how a gift will be effective.”

The brahman put away his cake. “You are worthy of a gift, for you have given one to me. It is unsurpassable and of immense fruitfulness.”

He then went on his way to find a perfect saint.

Sutta Nipata

Like entrusting yourself to a brave man when
greatly afraid,
By entrusting yourself to the awakening mind,
You will be swiftly liberated,
Even if you have made appalling errors.

Majjhima Nikaya

Just as space reaches everywhere, without discrimination, just so the immaculate element, which in its essential nature is mind, is present in all.

Visuddhi Magga

If you really want freedom, happiness will arise
From happiness will come rapture
When your mind is enraptured, your body is
 tranquil
When your body is tranquil, you will know bliss
Because you are blissful, your mind will concentrate easily
Being concentrated, you will see things as they
 really are
In so seeing, you will become aware that life is a
 miracle
Being so aware, you will lose all your attachments
As you cease grasping, so you will be freed.

Digha Nikaya

The Buddha was instructing his monks: “Suppose there is a king who has never heard the sound of a lute. He hears it for the first time and exclaims, ‘What is that beautiful sound?’

“His courtiers tell him it is the sound of a lute.

“‘Bring me that lute,’ he orders.

“But when he is given the lute he does not know what to do with it.

“Take away the lute and just bring me that perfect sound.’

“But we can’t do that, Sire. There are many causes for that sound. There are all the parts of the lute, for one thing. The sound is made by the body and the sounding board, the arm, the head and strings, and the movement of the musician’s fingers—’

“But the king could not understand that an entire system must be in place, and he broke the lute into pieces, saying: ‘This lute has been deluding and deceiving people for too long.’

“Monks, we who look at the whole and not just the part, know that we too are systems of interdependence, of feelings, perceptions, thoughts, and consciousness all interconnected. Investigating in this way, we come to realize that there is no me or mine in any one part, just as a sound does not belong to any one part of the lute.”

Samyutta Nikaya

The brahman Dona saw the Buddha sitting under a tree and was impressed by his peaceful air of alertness and his good looks. He asked the Buddha:

“Are you a god?”

“No, brahman, I am not a god.”

“Then an angel?”

“No, indeed, brahman.”

“A spirit, then?”

“No, I am not a spirit.”

“Then what are you?”

“I am awake.”

Anguttara Nikaya

“How can I tell that you are an enlightened person?” asked Sela the brahman of the Buddha.

“I know what should be known,” answered the Buddha, “and what should be cultivated, I have cultivated. What should be abandoned, I have let go. In this way, O brahman, I am awake.”

Sutta Nipata

You should do the work yourself, for buddhas only teach the way.

Dhammapada

Awake and rejoice in watchfulness. Understand the wisdom of the enlightened.

By watching keenly and working hard, the wise one may build himself an island which no flood can sweep away.

The thoughtless man does not care, but the attentive man looks on wakefulness as his greatest treasure.

Meditate, and in your wisdom realize nirvana, the highest happiness.

Dhammapada

There is freedom from desire and sorrow at the end of the way. The awakened one is free from all fetters and goes beyond life and death.

Like a swan that rises from the lake, with his thoughts at peace he moves onward, never looking back.

The one who understands the unreality of all things, and who has laid up no store—that one's track is unseen, as of birds in the air.

Like a bird in the air, he takes an invisible course, wanting nothing, storing nothing, knowing the emptiness of all things.

Dhammapada

At the moment of awakening, the Buddha exclaimed: “Wonder of wonders! All living beings are truly enlightened and shine with wisdom and virtue. But because their minds have become deluded and turned inward to the self, they fail to understand this.”

Kegon Sutra

Subhuti, do not think that when one gives rise to the highest, most fulfilled, awakened mind one needs to see all objects of mind as nonexistent, cut off from life. Please do not think in that way. One who gives rise to the awakened mind does not deny objects or say that they are nonexistent.

One who gives rise to the awakened mind should know that what is called a self or a person, a living being or a life span, is not so in essence but only in concept. The names self, person, living being, or life span are names only. Subhuti, you should know that all the things of the world are like this, and you should have confidence in their essence without names.

As stars, a lamp, a fault of vision,
As dewdrops or a bubble,
A dream, a lightning flash, a cloud,
So one should see conditioned things.

Diamond Sutra

Subhuti asked: “Is perfect wisdom beyond thinking? Is it unimaginable and totally unique but nevertheless reaching the unreachable and attaining the unattainable?”

The Buddha replied: “Yes, Subhuti, it is exactly so. And why is perfect wisdom beyond thinking? It is because all its points of reference cannot be thought about but can be apprehended. One is the disappearance of the self-conscious person into pure presence. Another is the simple awakening to reality. Another is the knowing of the essenceless essence of all things in the world. And another is luminous knowledge that knows without a knower. None of these points can sustain ordinary thought because they are not

objects or subjects. They can't be imagined or touched or approached in any way by any ordinary mode of consciousness, therefore they are beyond thinking.”

Prajnaparamita

I declare that the overcoming of clinging to the impurities of the world is possible for a person who knows and sees but not for a person who does not know or see. In the person who knows and sees, the dustless and stainless Eye of Truth arises. Seeing the truth, he sees things as they are. Seeing the truth, the eye is born, knowledge is born, wisdom is born, science is born, and light is born.

Samyutta Nikaya

Ananda, the nature of the Absolute is that it is total enlightenment. It is beyond name and form and beyond the world and all its living beings. Ignorance creates an illusion of birth and death, but when ignorance is dispelled, the supreme and shining Absolute is there. Then, suffering is changed into insight, and death is transmuted into nirvana.

Surangama Sutra

LOVE

Putting down all barriers, let your mind be full of love. Let it pervade all the quarters of the world so that the whole wide world, above, below, and around, is pervaded with love. Let it be sublime and beyond measure so that it abounds everywhere.

Digha Nikaya

Of all the ways you can think of, none has a sixteenth part of the value of loving-kindness. Loving-kindness is a freedom of the heart which takes in all the ways. It is luminous, shining, blazing forth.

Just as the stars have not a sixteenth part of the moon's brilliance, which absorbs them all in its shining light, so loving-kindness absorbs all the other ways with its lustrous splendor.

Just as when the rainy season ends and the sun rises up into the clear and cloudless sky, banishing all the dark in its radiant light, and just as at the end of a black night the morning star shines out in glory, so none of the ways you can use to further your spiritual progress has a sixteenth part of the value of

loving-kindness. For it absorbs them all, its luminosity shining forth.

Itivuttaka Sutta

This itself is the whole of the journey, opening your heart to that which is lovely. Because of their feeling for the lovely, beings who are afraid of birth and death, aging and decaying, are freed from their fear. This is the way you must train yourself: I will become a friend and an intimate of the lovely. To do this I must closely observe and embrace all states of mind that are good.

Samyutta Nikaya

The Buddha was told that his father, King Suddhodana, was getting old and anxious to see him. Consequently he traveled a long distance to his father's palace in Kapilavastu, taking two months for the journey and teaching on the way. His disciples went with him, and arrangements were made for the party to stay in the royal park when they arrived. But the court attendants looked down on the Buddha for giving up his princehood and becoming a homeless wanderer and they saw to it that no food was provided for his noonday meal, his only one of the day.

Untroubled, the Buddha took his begging bowl and went from house to house in Kapilavastu, his disciples with him. The king was told of this and hurried out to

the Buddha, demanding to know why he was disgracing the family in this way. “To beg is the custom of our order,” the Buddha told him.

The king was astonished. “But ours is a warrior lineage, and not a single warrior has ever gone out begging.”

“The warrior lineage is yours, O King,” answered the Buddha, “mine is the buddha lineage.”

Standing in the street, he advised the king: “Be alert, be attentive. Lead a good life. The good live happily in this world and the next.”

The king saw the truth of this. He took the bowl from the Buddha and led him and all the disciples to the palace, where he served them with food. From then on he lived a thoughtful and unpretentious life.

Digha Nikaya

When people speak badly of you, you should respond in this way: Keep a steady heart and don't reply with harsh words. Practice letting go of resentment and accepting that the other's hostility is the spur to your understanding. Be kind, adopt a generous standpoint, treat your enemy as a friend, and suffuse all your world with affectionate thoughts, far-reaching and widespread, limitless and free from hate. In this state you should try to remain.

Dhammapada

The Buddha was joined by his own son, Rahula, a young boy. He advised him: “Cultivate, Rahula, a meditation on loving-kindness, for by cultivating loving-kindness, ill will is banished forever. Cultivate, too, a meditation on compassion, for by cultivating compassion, you will find harm and cruelty disappear.”

Majjhima Nikaya

A person who gives freely is loved by all. It’s hard to understand, but it is by giving that we gain strength. But there is a proper time and proper way to give, and the person who understands this is strong and wise. By giving with a feeling of reverence for life, envy and anger are banished. A path to happiness is found. Like one who plants a sapling and in due course receives shade, flowers, and fruit, so the results of giving bring joy. The way there is through continuous acts of kindness so that the heart is strengthened by compassion and giving.

Majjhima Nikaya

A rich man said to the Buddha, “I see you are the Awakened One and I would like to open my mind to you and ask your advice. My life is full of work, and having made a great deal of money, I am surrounded by cares. I employ many people who depend on me to be successful. However, I enjoy my work and like working hard. But having heard your followers talk of

the bliss of a hermit's life and seeing you as one who gave up a kingdom in order to become a homeless wanderer and find the truth, I wonder if I should do the same. I long to do what is right and to be a blessing to my people. Should I give up everything to find the truth?"

The Buddha replied: "The bliss of a truth-seeking life is attainable for anyone who follows the path of unselfishness. If you cling to your wealth, it is better to throw it away than let it poison your heart. But if you don't cling to it but use it wisely, then you will be a blessing to people. It's not wealth and power that enslave men but the clinging to wealth and power.

"My teaching does not require anyone to become homeless or resign the world unless he wants to, but it does require everyone to free himself from the illusion that he is a permanent self and to act with integrity while giving up his craving for pleasure.

"And whatever people do, whether in the world or as a recluse, let them put their whole heart into it. Let them be committed and energetic, and if they have to struggle, let them do it without envy or hatred. Let them live not a life of self but a life of truth, and in that way bliss will enter their hearts."

Majjhima Nikaya

In reply to the question, What is the best that people can possess, what brings them truest happiness, what

is the sweetest of the sweet, and what is the pleasantest life to live? The Buddha answered:

“Trust is the best that people can possess; following the way brings truest happiness; truth is the sweetest of the sweet; and the practice of insight is the pleasantest way to live.”

Sutta Nipata

Whatever living beings there may be—feeble or strong, small or large, seen or unseen, those who live far or those near, those who are born and those who are yet to be born—may all beings, without exception, experience a happy mind.

Let one not deceive another nor despise any person whatever in any place. In anger or ill will let one not wish any harm to another.

Let one’s thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world without any obstruction, without any hatred, without any enmity.

Samyutta Nikaya

A mother, even at the risk of her own life, protects her child, her only child. In the same way should you cultivate love without measure toward all beings. You should cultivate toward the whole world—above, below, around—a heart of love unstinted, unmixed with any sense of differing or opposing interests. You

should maintain this mindfulness all the time you are awake. Such a state of heart is the best in the world.

Majjhima Nikaya

It is in this way that we must train ourselves: by liberation of the self through love. We will develop love, we will practice it, we will make it both a way and a basis, take our stand upon it, store it up, and thoroughly set it going.

Samyutta Nikaya

The Buddha had heard that his monks were quarreling among themselves. He told them a story:

“In Benares there was a powerful king, Brahmadata, who went to war against Dirgheti, the king of Koshala, for he thought the kingdom of Koshala was small and an easy conquest. Dirgheti saw that resistance was useless and so he fled his kingdom and after much wandering reached Benares and lived there with his wife in a potter’s dwelling. There they had a son and called him Dirghayu.

“When Dirghayu had grown up, Dirgheti thought to himself, Brahmadata has done us great harm and will be fearing our revenge. If ever he finds us, he will kill us. So he sent Dirghayu, his son, away. Dirghayu finished his education and became skillful and wise.

“But Dirgheti’s former barber, who lived in Benares,

saw him one day and betrayed him to Brahmadata for a reward. Brahmadata had Dirgheti and his queen paraded through the streets, and there, to his horror, Dirgheti saw his son. Afraid he would draw attention to himself, he called out, 'Do not look at us. Turn away. Hatred is not appeased by hatred, only by forgiveness.' Then he and his wife were executed. But when night arrived, Dirghayu took their bodies and burned them on a funeral pyre with honors.

"Hearing of this, Brahmadata was sure that Dirghayu would assassinate him if he could. But Dirghayu had gone to the forest, where he could be alone in his sorrow. After some time he returned to Benares, and hearing there was a job in the royal elephant stable, he took it. The king overheard him singing a sad but beautiful song to the accompaniment of his lute and was so touched by Dirghayu's sweet voice that he asked the young man to join his retinue. He soon saw how wise, good-tempered, and reliable Dirghayu was and gave him a position of trust.

"The king went hunting and took Dirghayu as his only companion. He became tired and lay down with his head in Dirghayu's lap. At last, here was Dirghayu's opportunity to avenge himself for the robbery of his kingdom and his parents' deaths. He unsheathed his sword. But then he remembered his father's last words to him, that hatred can never be appeased by hatred, and he put his sword back. The king woke and

said, 'I dreamed that young Dirghayu was about to kill me with his sword.'

"Dirghayu laid one hand on the king's head and with the other took out his sword again. 'I am Dirghayu. The time of revenge has come.'

"The king saw that he was at his mercy, and said, 'Grant me my life, dear Dirghayu. Please grant me my life.'

"How can I grant you your life when my life is in danger from you? It is you who must grant me my life.'

"And the king said, 'I will grant you your life if you will grant me mine.'

"They took each other's hands and swore never to harm each other. Out of remorse, the king gave Dirghayu back his kingdom."

The Buddha ended his story with the comment: "Now, monks, if such can be the forbearance of kings who are used to ruling with the sword, so much more must you let your light shine before the world. You, having embraced the life of a seeker, must show yourselves to be forbearing and generous. No more altercations, no arguments, no disunion, no quarrels."

Udana Sutta

The one who practices loving-kindness sleeps and wakes in comfort and has no bad dreams; he is dear to both humans and creatures; no danger harms him. His mind can be quickly concentrated, his expression

is happy and serene. He dies without any confusion of mind. Loving-kindness protects him.

Anguttara Nikaya

Be loving, be kind
And follow the ways of goodness.
Committed, and longing for the goal,
Always keep going with courage.
To dally and delay will not help you.
But to be ardent is sure and safe.
When you see it, cultivate the path,
So you will touch and make your own
The Deathless Way.

Psalms of the Early Buddhists

The one who gives himself entirely to sense pleasures and does not contemplate gives up the real for the pleasant. He comes to envy the one who pursues wisdom.

Do not cling to the pleasant, much less to the unpleasant. Losing that which you love brings suffering; harboring the pain of your loss brings more pain.

Dhammapada

Ananda, an attendant of the Buddha, passed by a well near a village. A young low-caste woman, Pakati, was fetching water. He asked her for a drink.

Pakati said: "I am low caste and therefore may not give you water. Please ask nothing from me in case

I contaminate your holy state with my low-caste status.”

Ananda said: “I am not interested in caste. It is water I am after.”

Pakati’s heart leaped joyfully. She gave him water to drink, and when he left she followed him at a discreet distance. Finding out that he was a disciple of the Buddha, she went to the Buddha and said, “Please accept me and let me live in this place where your disciple Ananda dwells, so that I may see him and supply him with what he needs. For I find that I love Ananda.”

The Buddha understood what was going on in her feelings and he said gently, “Pakati, your heart is full of love but you don’t understand your own emotions. It is not Ananda that you love, but his kindness. Accept the kindness that he has shown to you and in your turn practice it toward others. You have been born low caste, but in this way you will be a model for highborn nobles. Keep to this path and in time you will outshine the glory of kings and queens.”

Agamas

Arouse your will, supreme and great,
Practice love, give joy and protection;
Let your giving be like space,
Without discrimination or limitation.
Do good things, not for your own sake

But for all the beings in the universe;
Save and make free everyone you encounter,
Help them attain the wisdom of the way.

Prajnaparamita

Ananda said to the Buddha: “I think there has never been a teacher as great as you, nor will there ever be one as great in the future.”

The Buddha asked: “Have you known all the awakened ones, the buddhas of the past?”

“No, Honored One.”

“And are you able to know all the buddhas of the future?”

“No, Honored One.”

“Then I suppose you do know this awakened one’s mind completely?”

“No, Honored One, I do not even know your mind completely.”

“Then how can you make such a bold statement? It is better to talk of what you know than to speculate foolishly.”

Majjhima Nikaya

All those who clearly understand the fact that enlightenment is everywhere come to the perfect wisdom with a marvelous insight that all objects and structures, just as they are in the present moment, are themselves enlightenment, both the way and the goal,

being perfectly transparent to the ineffable. Those who experience the ineffable, known as Suchness, recognize that all structures are radiantly empty of self-existence.

Those who attain perfect wisdom are forever inspired by the conviction that the infinitely varied forms of this world, in all their relativity, far from being a hindrance and a dangerous distraction to the spiritual path, are really a healing medicine. Why? Because by the very fact that they are interdependent on each other and therefore have no separate self, they express the mystery and the energy of all-embracing love. Not just the illumined wise ones but every single being in the interconnected world is a dweller in the boundless infinity of love.

Prajnaparamita

CLARITY

Subhuti asked the Buddha: “The highest, most awakened mind that you have attained—is that mind the unattainable?”

“Yes, Subhuti. With regard to that highest and most awakened mind, I have not attained anything. That mind is everywhere equally. It cannot be attained or grasped, but it can be realized. It is realized through the practice of all good actions when they are done in the spirit of no self and no object of self.”

Prajnaparamita

A name is imposed on what is thought to be a thing or a state and this divides it from other things and other states. But when you pursue what lies behind the name, you find a greater and greater subtlety that has no divisions. Atoms of dust are not really atoms of dust but are merely called that. In the same way, a world is not a world but is merely called that.

Visuddhi Magga

Subhuti asked: “What does *buddha* mean?”

The Buddha answered: “Buddha is reality. One who thoroughly comprehends all the factors of existence is a buddha.”

Then Subhuti asked: “What does *enlightenment* mean?”

The Buddha replied: “Enlightenment is a way of saying that all things are seen in their intrinsic empty nature, their Suchness, their ungraspable wonder. Names or words are merely incidental, but that state which sees no division, no duality, is enlightenment.”

Subhuti asked: “If one wants to know emptiness, how should one do it?”

“The one who wants to realize emptiness should adore reality, develop a skill in living in the world, and cultivate friends of the same mind. Skill can only be developed in the presence of reality, not otherwise. Endowed with skill, the person gives without the idea of a giver and lives in the realization that all the factors of existence have no ultimate substance.”

Prajnaparamita

The eye of clarity is so called because it brings sight to everyone. It enables every single one to enter the uncreated and unconditioned reality, each in his own way.

Prajnaparamita

What is not yours, put away; putting it away will be for your good and welfare. What are the things that are not yours? Your body is not yours—put it away. Your feelings come and go, don't own them, put them away. Perception and the things you perceive are not yours, put them down. The way your brain works and forms ideas is not yours, let it go. Consciousness is a condition that is general, it is not yours, do not own it. Letting go and putting away and not owning will be for your good and welfare.

Samyutta Nikaya

Just as the footprint of any creature that walks the earth can be placed in the elephant's footprint, which is the largest of all—even so mindful attention is the one quality that ensures ease of mind at all times.

Mindful attention causes beneficial thoughts that have not yet arisen to arise. It also causes harmful thoughts that have already arisen to vanish. In the one who is mindful, the good that is to be will be realized.

Anguttara Nikaya

The Buddha noticed Sigala, a householder, clasping his hands and then turning in the four directions as well as to the sky above and the earth beneath. The Buddha knew this was a ritual to avert evil and he asked Sigala:

“Why do you perform this strange ceremony?”

“Do you think it strange that I should protect my home against the influence of demons? I know that you, O Buddha, believe that incantations are no use, but I know that in performing this rite I am honoring my father and keeping his instructions sacred.”

“You do well, Sigala, to honor your father and keep his instructions. And it’s your duty to protect your home and your family. I don’t find anything wrong in your performing your father’s ritual, but I don’t think you understand the ceremony. Let me, as your spiritual father, explain:

“To guard your home by mysterious ceremonies is not enough, you must guard it by good deeds. With good deeds you should turn to your parents in the east, your teachers in the south, your wife and children in the west, and your friends in the north. Above you, worship the spirit, and below you, honor all that serve you. That is the real protection your father wants you to have, and when you perform this ritual you will be reminded of it.”

Then Sigala looked to the Buddha as his own father and said, “I never knew what I was doing but now I know.”

Majjhima Nikaya

The brightly shining mind is never absent but is colored by the thoughts and emotions that people put

upon it. If you were to see the luminous freedom of this mind, you would cultivate it before any other, keeping it free from all attachments.

Anguttara Nikaya

A soldier came to the Buddha and asked: “It is said that you deny the existence of the soul. Do those who say this speak the truth or are they bearing false witness against you?”

The Buddha replied: “There is a way in which they are speaking the truth; on the other hand, there is a way in which they are not. I teach that there is no separate reality that is the self. On the other hand, I do teach that there is perception. The one who understands soul as perceptive mind and says that perception exists teaches the truth that leads to clarity and enlightenment.”

The soldier asked: “Do you then believe that two things exist? The world that we perceive with our senses, and the mind?”

The Buddha answered: “This is what I say: Your mind is spiritual and so too is the sense-perceived world. The spirit is timeless and it dominates all existence as the great law guiding all beings in their search for truth. It changes crude nature into mind, and there is no being that can’t be transformed into a vessel of truth.”

Brahmajala Sutra

To reflect on the beginning and end of things is to feel happiness as you see the boundless joy of worlds beyond worlds.

Look to your own perceptive mind, which is intrinsically pure, and rouse yourself. Look to the purity on which the world is founded and correct yourself. Look within and find happiness. Feel no more doubt.

When you are no longer dependent on name and form, you will indeed become a seeker.

You are the master and you are also the way. Where else can you look? As a merchant breaks in a noble horse, so you should master yourself.

The seeker who has confidence in the way will go beyond the way and find the end of suffering.

The seeker who goes beyond the way enlightens the world, just as the moon shines as it passes from behind the clouds.

Dhammapada

Different winds come from all directions. Some are clear, some carry dust, some are cold or hot, fierce gales or gentle breezes. In the same way sensations arise in the body—pleasant or unpleasant or neutral. When a meditator sees sensations as he does the winds, coming and going, clear or dust laden, fierce or gentle, he will fully understand them and be free

from dependence on them. When he understands sensations perfectly, he will see beyond this conditioned world.

Samyutta Nikaya

Empty and calm and devoid of self
Is the nature of all things.
No individual being
In reality exists.

There is no end or beginning,
Nor any middle course.
All is illusion,
As in a vision or a dream.

All beings in the world
Are beyond the realm of words.
Their ultimate nature, pure and true,
Is like the infinity of space.

Prajnaparamita

The one whose mind knows the clarity of perfect wisdom is never afraid or even anxious. Why? Because when being at one with the living power of wisdom, the mother of all the buddhas, that person has the strength to remain in a state of undivided contemplation even while ceaselessly and skillfully engaging in