

THE DHAMMA CENTER UK : BUDDHISM AND SUSTAINABILITY SERIES

Countering Fake Speech

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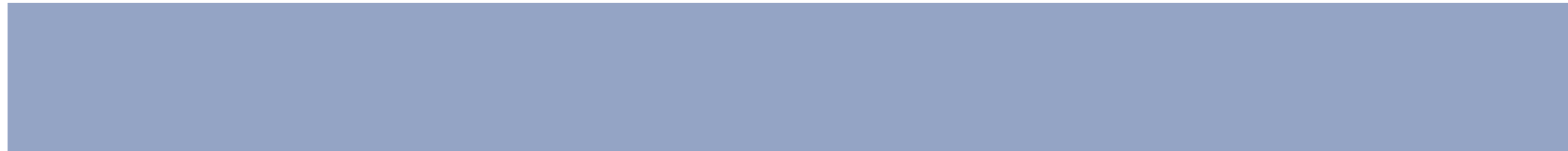
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Background



FROM MY EXPERIENCE



**World Headquarters of the United Nations
Environment Programme (UNEP) Nairobi, Kenya
(photo: courtesy UNEP)**

UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL, GENEVA



Photo: courtesy UN Multimedia

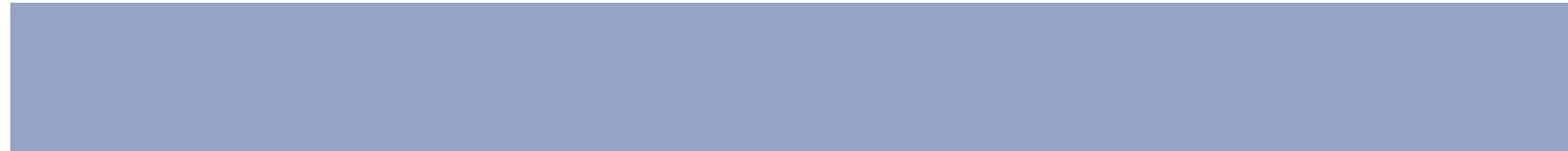
ENVIRONMENTAL DIPLOMACY



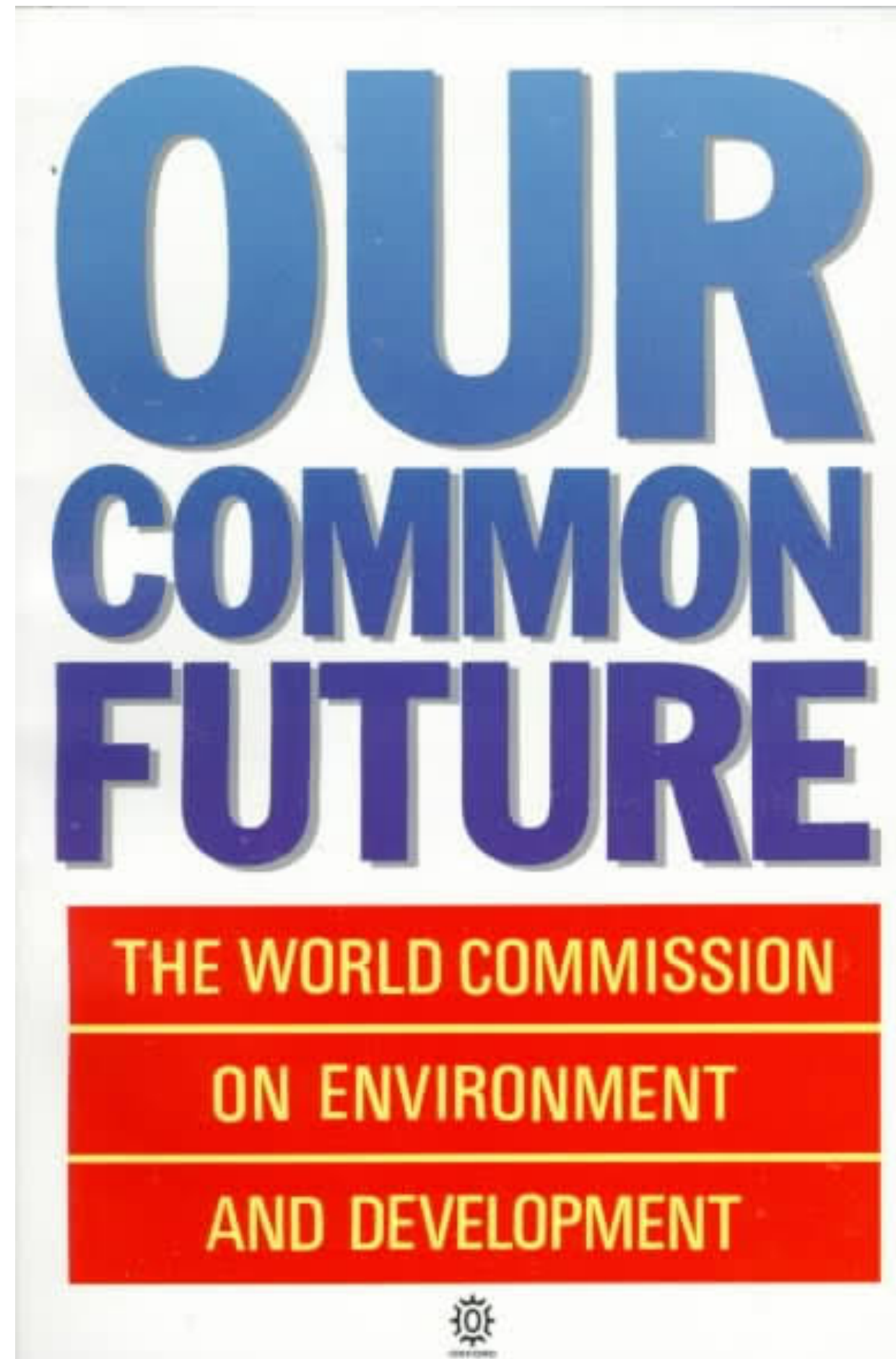
2012 Earth Summit With Maurice Strong, who globalised the environment movement, first Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN Under-Secretary General

courtesy UN Multimedia

What is Sustainability?



**Chair: Gro Harlem
Brundtland,
former Prime Minister of
Norway**



“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” -- World Commission on Environment and Development.

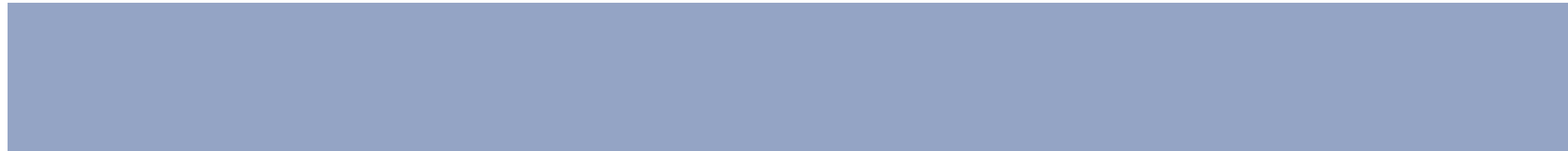
“Sustainable development concerns the wise use of our natural resources — this includes, issues, such as, food and consumption, poverty, the gap between the rich and poor, homelessness, racism, education, the use of utilities like gas, water and electricity, flooding and health and wellbeing.” We are dealing with two inter-related challenges: COVID-19 and Climate Change.

Buddhism & Environment

Two sides of the same coin



Fake Buddha Quotes



Fake Buddha Quotes

The Tweet

“RT @Sharon_Phoenix “When words are both true and kind, they can change our world.” ~Buddha”

Led to:



inspirational quotes ...
pinterest.ch



Both Destroy And Heal. When Words ...
123rf.com



world. #buddha #inspiration ...
ar.pinterest.com

The real quote:

**“The friend who is all take,
The friend of empty words,
The friend full of flattery,
And the reckless friend;**

**These four are not friends, but
enemies;
The wise understand this
And keep them at a distance
As they would a dangerous
path.”**

The impact of Fake Speech



Fake News: Ancient Times

Fake News is nothing new. It was utilised at length by rulers and spiritual leaders. During the first century BC, Octavian ran a campaign of misinformation against his rival, Marc Antony portraying him as a drunkard, a womanizer, and a puppet of the Egyptian queen, Cleopatra VII.

During the second and third centuries AD, false rumours were spread about Christians claiming that they engaged in ritual incest and cannibalism. In the 3rd century AD, the Christian writer, Lactantius, invented stories about pagans engaging in acts of immorality and cruelty.



Social Media

Social media has had a dramatic impact on the ways we interact with one another. Stories and opinions can gain exposure with unprecedented speed, giving us immediate information about both important and mundane issues.

Fake news is false or misleading information presented as news. It often has the aim of damaging the reputation of a person or entity, or making money through advertising revenue. Recent examples: Early 2020, the coronavirus pandemic is a cover for a plan to implant trackable microchips within vaccines. Just recently, magnets can stick to your arm in the place, where you had the COVID-19 jab.

Fake News and Climate Change

Fake news about climate change and biodiversity loss is having a worrying impact in the battle to halt the growing environmental threats to the planet, a group of scientists and analysts have warned in the March 2021 issue of *Ambio*.

“Social media reports have created a toxic environment where it’s now very difficult to distinguish facts from fiction,” said one author, Owen Gaffney, of the Stockholm Resilience Centre. “One of the biggest challenges now facing humanity is our inability to tell fact from fiction. This is undermining democracies, which in turn is limiting our ability to make long-term decisions needed to save the planet.”

AMBIO Journal of the (Norwegian) Royal Academy of Sciences, 14 March 2021:
Our future in the Anthropocene biosphere

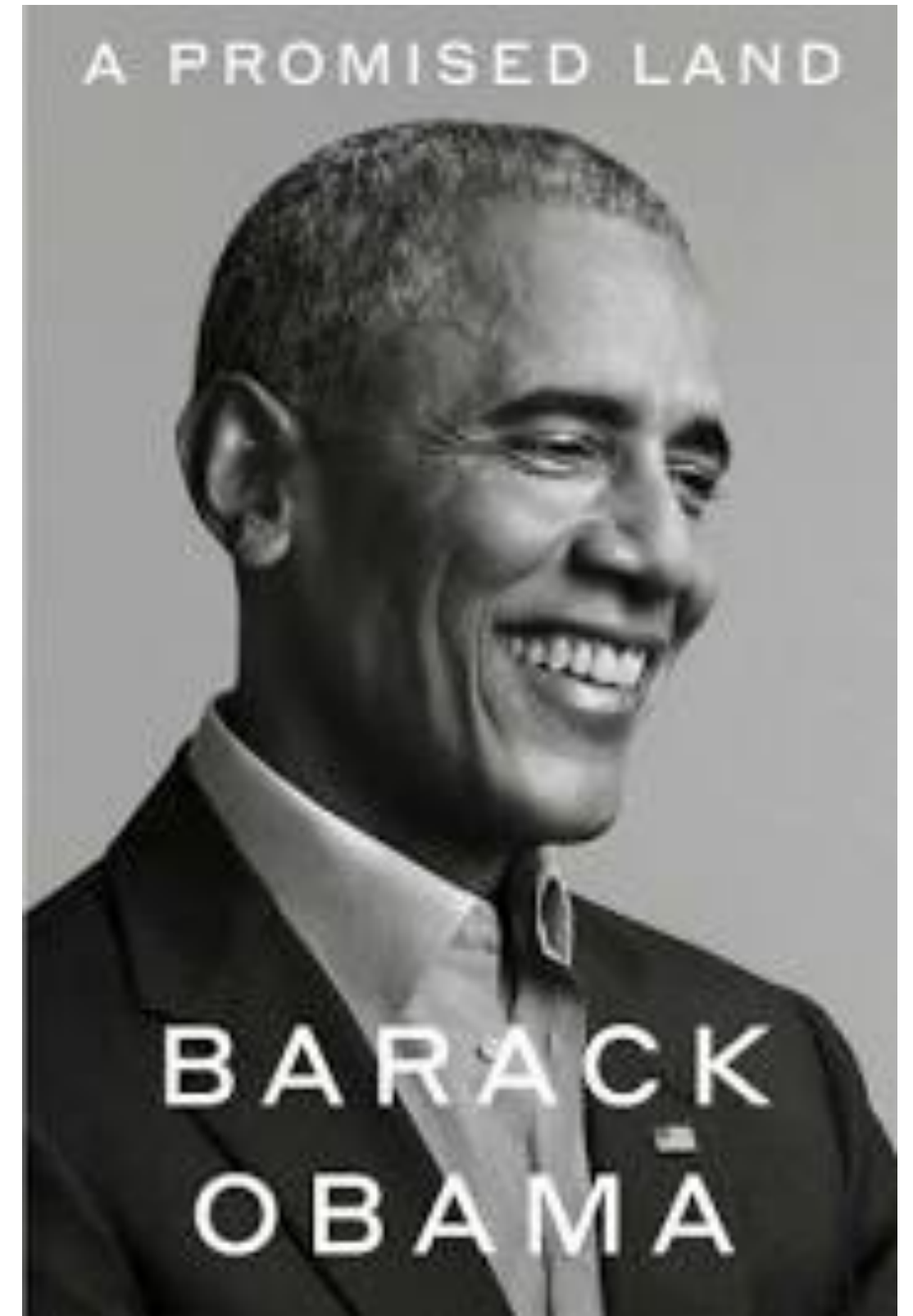


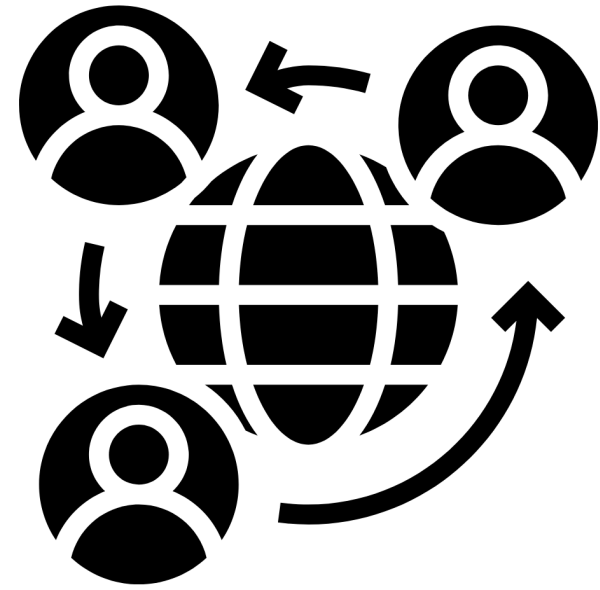
President Barack Obama has spoken out about fake news, suggesting that it helps to undermine democracy.

“If we are not serious about facts and what’s true and what’s not, if we can’t discriminate between serious arguments and propaganda, then we have problems,” he said during a press conference in Germany, sometime ago.

Obama said that we live in an age with “so much active misinformation” that is “packaged very well” and looks the same whether it’s on.

In an interview with The Atlantic about his book The Promised Land, President Obama was asked if the social media age is now impeding justice and progress. “I think it is the single biggest threat to our democracy,” the former president said.

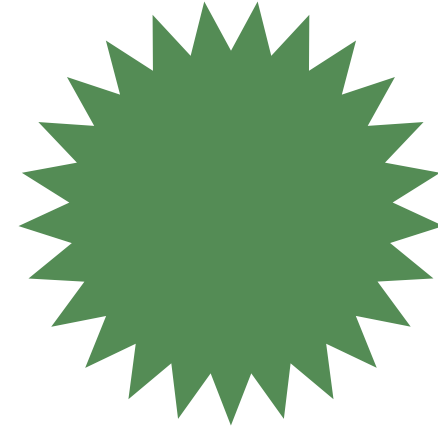




Authenticity of Early Buddhist Texts

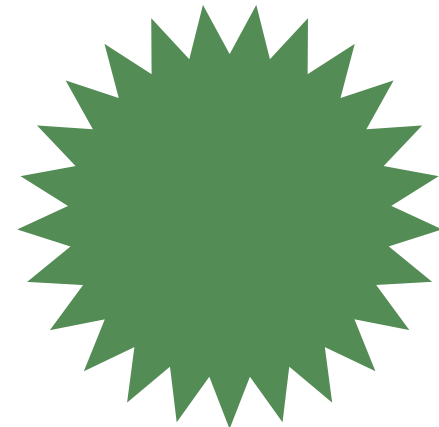


The Early Buddhist Texts (Tipitaka - Three Baskets)



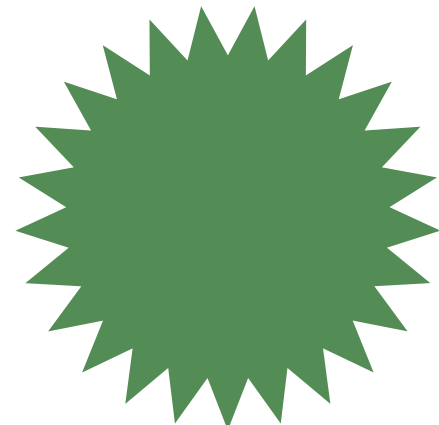
Basket of Discourses

The Buddha's teachings, mainly Long, Middle, Linked, Numbered, and Minor. These scriptures are our primary sources for the historical Buddha's life and practice. They depict the Buddha and his students in lively conversation with a diverse range of people on topical issues.



Basket of Monastic Law

The texts on Monastic Law (vinaya) detail the lifestyle, rules, and procedures for Buddhist monks and nuns. They provide the guidelines for Buddhist monastics to this day, and in addition, paint a detailed and vivid picture of everyday life in ancient India.



Basket of Systematic Treatises

Abhidhamma texts are systematic summaries and analyses of the teachings drawn from the earlier discourses.

The Pali Cannon

The Early Buddhist Texts refer to the authentic and verified records of what the Buddha said and did. They can be traced to the historical Buddha.

Research shows that there are parallel texts shared by the Early Buddhist schools. The most widely studied EBTs material are the first four Pali Nikayas (Collections), as well as the corresponding Chinese Āgamas (Discourses).



THE AUTHENTICITY OF
EARLY BUDDHIST TEXT
(EBTs): BHIKKHU SUJATO
AND BHIKKHU BRAHMALI,
published by
THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR
BUDDHIST STUDIES
EBTs Source:

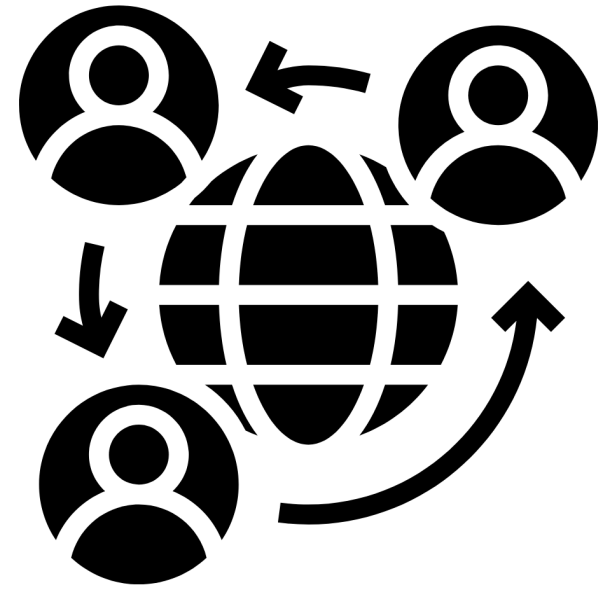
suttacentral.net

The Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies

<https://ocbs.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/authenticity.pdf>

The EBTS has a down-to-earth portrayal of the Buddha. For example:

- **The Buddha lays down rules and then modifies or even rescinds them (Code of Conduct 72–74 and Code of Conduct 79/83)**
- **In mid winter, the Buddha, sleeps on a pile of leaves on a cattle track (Numbered Discourses 3:35)**
- **The Buddha is called various names, such as, shaveling, recluse-like, menial, dark (Long Discourses 3.1.10) and outcast (Grouped Discourses 7:9)**
- **A brahman verbally abuses the Buddha (Grouped Discourses 7.2)**
- **The monk Bhaddāli refuses to the Buddha's face to keep the Code of Conduct rule about not eating after midday (Middle Discourses 65.2).**
- **The Buddha complains of having a bad back, and then lies down in the middle of a Dhamma talk (Middle Discourses 53.5).**



Early Buddhism within a toxic environment



Conflicts, Politics and Opportunism

During the time of the Buddha, the political landscape was under rapid change, as monarchies led by ambitious kings rose to embark on ferocious, military campaigns with the purpose of expanding their domains. Within the courts of royalty, personal rivalries among those hungry for power were bitter. Spiritual communities of the time were not immune to conflict.

Religious leaders proud of their traditions sparred with each other in passionate debates, each seeking to defeat their rivals and swell the ranks of their followers.



“Fear has arisen from one who has taken up violence: behold the people engaged in strife.

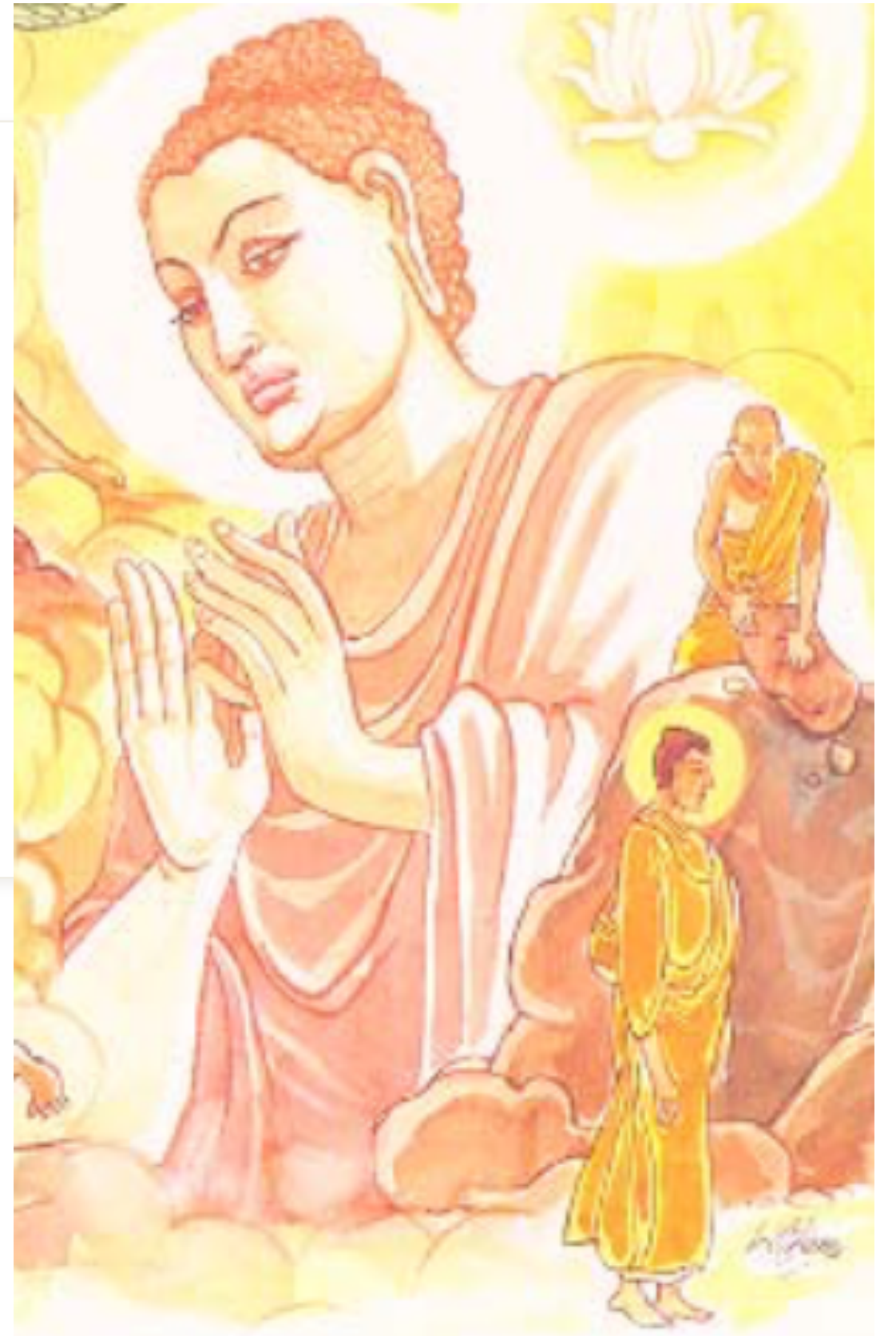
I will tell you of my sense of urgency, how I was stirred by a sense of urgency.

Having seen people trembling like fish in a brook with little water, when I saw them hostile to one another, fear came upon me.

The world was insubstantial all around; all the directions were in turmoil. Desiring an abode for myself, I did not see any place unoccupied.”



The Buddhist Framework for “Right Speech”



Connected Discourses 45.8

“And what, mendicants, is right speech?
Abstinence from false speech, abstinence
from divisive speech, abstinence from
harsh speech, abstinence from idle chatter:
this is called right speech.”

The Buddha

Connected Discourses 9.23

“With safeguarding as the foundation originate the taking up of rods and weapons, quarrels, contentions, and disputes, accusations, **divisive speech**, and **false speech**, and many other bad unwholesome things. These are the nine things **rooted in craving.**”

The Buddha



The Buddha repeatedly highlighted the importance of how we employ our human capacity for speech and verbal interaction. Right Speech is one of the Five Precepts:

I undertake to observe the rule:

- 1. to abstain from taking life**
- 2. to abstain from taking what is not given**
- 3. to abstain from sensuous misconduct**
- 4. to abstain from false speech**
- 5. to abstain from intoxicants as tending to cloud the mind**

**Pancha Sila:
Five Precepts**

The Noble Eightfold Noble Path

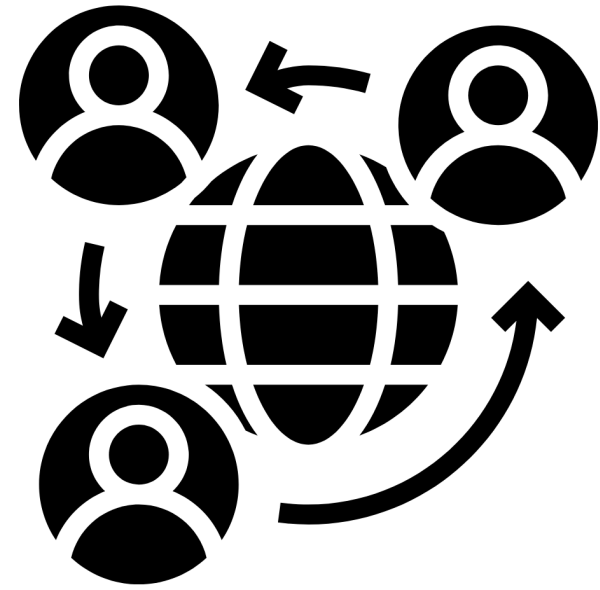
Within the fourth noble truth — as a way out of suffering, the Buddha offered: the noble eightfold path. Right Speech is one of the eight parts of the path to liberation are grouped into three essential elements of Buddhist practice—moral conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom.

- **Right understanding (Samma ditthi)**
- **Right thought (Samma sankappa)**
- **Right speech (Samma vaca)**
- **Right action (Samma kammanta)**
- **Right livelihood (Samma ajiva)**
- **Right effort (Samma vayama)**
- **Right mindfulness (Samma sati)**
- **Right concentration (Samma samadhi)**

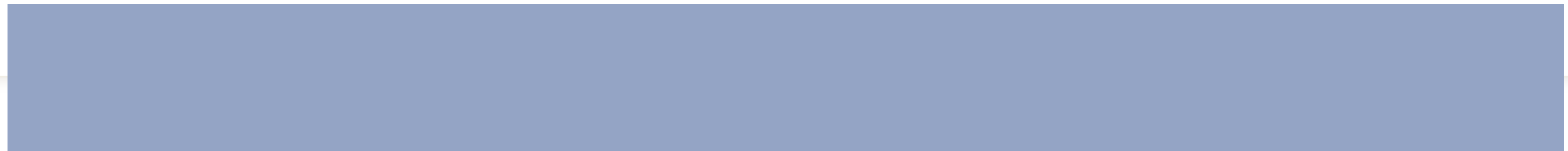


“Monks, **IGNORANCE is the forerunner in the entry upon unwholesome states**, with shamelessness and fearlessness of wrongdoing following along. For an unwise person immersed in ignorance, wrong view springs up. For one of wrong view, wrong intention springs up. For one of wrong intention, wrong speech springs up. **For one of wrong speech, wrong action springs up.** For one of wrong action, wrong livelihood springs up. For one of wrong livelihood, wrong effort springs up. For one of wrong effort, wrong mindfulness springs up. For one of wrong mindfulness, wrong concentration springs up.”

“Monks, TRUE KNOWLEDGE is the forerunner in the entry upon wholesome states, with a sense of shame and fear of wrongdoing following along. For a wise person who has arrived at true knowledge, right view springs up. For one of right view, right intention springs up. For one of right intention, right speech springs up. For one of right speech, right action springs up. For one of right action, right livelihood springs up. For one of right livelihood, right effort springs up. For one of right effort, right mindfulness springs up. For one of right mindfulness, right concentration springs up.”



Killer Words



- **"There is no other way."**
- **"You will never change."**
- **"There is nothing we can do."**
- **"Why can't you see it?"**
- **"Everybody knows."**
- **"I don't have the time."**
- **"You don't have a choice."**
- **"They made me."**
- **"Don't re-invent the wheel".**



Courtesy: www.behance.net

Middle Discourses 61

The Buddha's advice to his son, Rahula:
“Whenever you want to perform a verbal act.. — would it lead to self-affliction, the affliction of others, or to both?....

Whilst you are performing this... would it lead to self-affliction, the affliction of others, or to both?....

Having performed a verbal act, you should reflect on it... If, on reflection, you know that it led to self-affliction, to the affliction of others, or to both; it was an unskillful verbal act with painful consequences, painful results, then you should confess it.....



**Reflect on your
speech, before,
during, and after
speaking**

Rulers and Aristocracy



General Siha was a follower and a major funder of spiritual groups. The general expressed a wish to see the Buddha. Before doing so, the general went to see a spiritual leader, Nigantha Nathaputta, who raised many concerns about the Buddha, particularly that he advocated “non-doing” (akiriyavado).

The General to the Buddha: “I have heard this, Bhante: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a proponent of non-doing who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of non-doing and thereby guides his disciples.’ Do those who speak thus state what has been said by the Blessed One and not misrepresent him with what is contrary to fact? Do they explain in accord with the Dhamma so that they would not incur any reasonable criticism or ground for censure? For we do not want to misrepresent the Blessed One.”

The Buddha took the opportunity to go through key fake allegations, one by one, he was falsely accused of:

A NON-DOER: “ is a proponent of non-doing who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of non-doing and thereby guides his disciples’? For I assert the non-doing of bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct; **I assert the non-doing of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome deeds.** It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a proponent of non-doing who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of non-doing and thereby guides his disciples.’

A PROPONENT OF DEEDS: who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of deeds and thereby guides his disciples’? **For I assert good bodily, verbal, and mental conduct; I assert the doing of the numerous kinds of wholesome deeds.** It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a proponent of deeds who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of deeds and thereby guides his disciples.’

“is an **ANNIHILATIONIST**, who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of annihilation and thereby guides his disciples’? For I assert the annihilation of lust, hatred, and delusion; **I assert the annihilation of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome qualities.** It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is an annihilationist who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of annihilation and thereby guides his disciples.’”

“is a **REPELLER**, who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of repulsion and thereby guides his disciples’? **For I am repelled by bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct; I am repelled by the acquisition of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome qualities.** It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a repeller who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of repulsion and thereby guides his disciples.’”

“is an **ABOLITIONIST**, who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of abolition and thereby guides his disciples’? For I teach the Dhamma for the abolition of desire, hatred, and delusion; **I teach the Dhamma for the abolition of the numerous kinds of bad unwholesome qualities.** It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is an abolitionist who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of abolition and thereby guides his disciples.’”

“is a **TORMENTOR**, who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of tormenting and thereby guides his disciples’? For I assert that bad unwholesome qualities—bodily, verbal, and mental misconduct—are to be burned up. **I say that someone is a tormentor when he has abandoned the bad unwholesome qualities that are to be burned up; when he has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them so that they are no more subject to future arising.** It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: ‘The ascetic Gotama is a tormentor who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of tormenting and thereby guides his disciples.’”

is a **CONSOLER**, one who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of consolation and thereby guides his disciples'? **For I am a consoler with the supreme consolation**; I teach the Dhamma for the sake of consolation and thereby guide my disciples. It is in this way that one could rightly say of me: 'The ascetic Gotama is a consoler, one who teaches his Dhamma for the sake of consolation and thereby guides his disciples.'

Comment: On refuting fake news about him: the response to General Siha (Lion), a powerful figure at the time. The general was checking a statement directly from the spiritual leader. The Buddha's response was a masterclass in how to diffuse a volatile situation, with directly responding and making matters worse. He chose a tactful and diplomatic approach.

(Continuing with the Discourse) Investigate, before you accept:

When this was said, Sīha the general said to the Buddha:

“Excellent, Bhante! Excellent, Bhante! ... Let the Blessed One accept me as a lay follower who from today has gone for refuge for life.

But the Buddha, responded: **“Make an investigation, Sīha! It is good for such well-known people like yourself to make an investigation.”**

“Bhante, I am even more satisfied and pleased with the Blessed One for telling me: ‘Make an investigation, Sīha! It is good for such well-known people like yourself to make an investigation.’ **For if the members of other sects were to gain me as their disciple, they would carry a banner all over Vesālī announcing: “Sīha the general has become our disciple.’**

The spirit of Interfaith

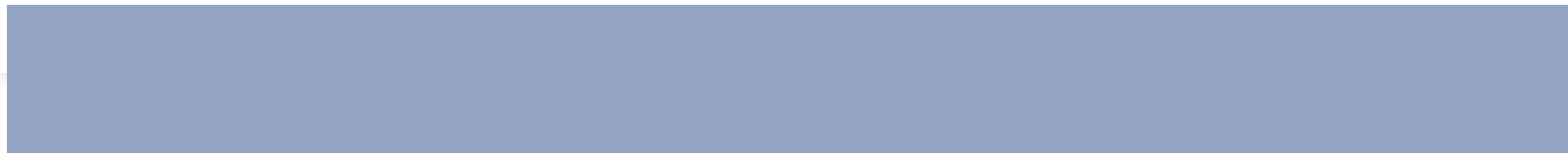
Continue to support the Jains: **“Sīha, your family has long been a fountain of support for the Nigaṇṭhas; hence you should consider continuing to give alms to them when they approach you.”**

“Following this encounter, the general invited Buddha and his followers for a meal, the following day. When departing for home, the general then asked his assistant to find some meat and other food for the meal.”

The rumours: “Then, in the morning, the Blessed One dressed, took his bowl and robe, went to Sīha’s residence along with the Saṅgha of bhikkhus, and sat down on the seat prepared for him. Now on that occasion a number of Nigaṇṭhas went from street to street and from square to square in Vesālī, thrashing their arms about and crying out: **“Today Sīha the general has slain a plump animal to prepare a meal for the ascetic Gotama! The ascetic Gotama knowingly uses meat obtained from an animal killed especially for his sake, the act being done on his account.”**”

Then a man approached Sīha the general and whispered into his ear about the rumour. The General responded: “Enough, good man. **For a long time those venerable ones have wanted to discredit the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. They will never stop misrepresenting the Blessed One with what is untrue, baseless, false, and contrary to fact, and we would never intentionally deprive a living being of life, even for the sake of our life.**”

ROYAL INTRIGUES



The Buddha was living at Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary. Prince Abhaya met Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta.

Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, said to him: “Come, prince, **refute the recluse Gotama's doctrine, and a good report of you will be spread to this effect:** ‘Prince Abhaya has refuted the doctrine of the recluse Gotama, who is so powerful and mighty.’”

“Come, prince, go to the recluse Gotama and say: **‘Venerable sir, would the Tathāgata utter speech that would be unwelcome and disagreeable to others?’**”

Prince Abhaya met the Buddha and asked the question: “Venerable sir, would a Tathāgata utter such speech as would be unwelcome and disagreeable to others?” **“There is no one-sided answer to that, prince.”** “Then, venerable sir, the Nigaṇṭhas have lost in this.” “Why do you say this, prince: ‘Then, venerable sir, the Nigaṇṭhas have lost in this’?”

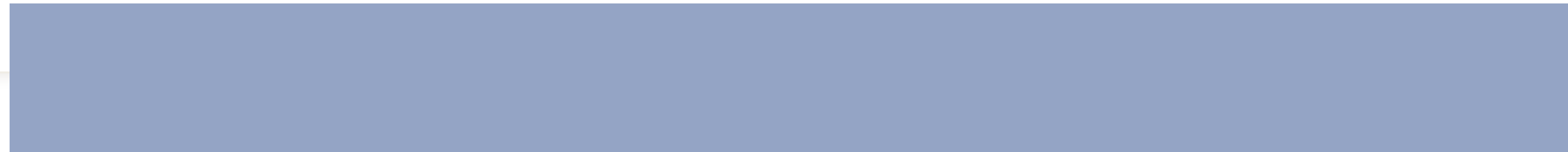
Prince Abhaya then reported to the Blessed One his entire conversation with the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta. The Buddha responded: such speech as the Tathāgata knows to be **untrue, incorrect, and unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others:** such speech the Tathāgata does not utter.

Such speech as the Tathāgata knows to **be true and correct but unbeneficial, and which is also unwelcome and disagreeable to others**: such speech the Tathāgata does not utter.”

Such speech as the Tathāgata **knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is unwelcome and disagreeable to others**: the Tathāgata knows the **TIME to use such speech**.

.....Such speech as the Tathāgata knows to **be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is welcome and agreeable to others**: the Tathāgata knows the **TIME to use such speech**. Why is that? Because the Tathāgata has compassion for beings.”

WELL-SPOKEN



The Blessed One said this: “Monks, when speech possesses four factors, it is **well spoken**, not badly spoken, and it is blameless and irreproachable among the wise. What four? Here, a monk speaks only what is well spoken, not what is badly spoken. **He speaks only Dhamma, not non-Dhamma. He speaks only what is pleasant, not what is unpleasant. He speaks only what is true, not lies. When speech possesses these four factors, it is well spoken, not badly spoken, and it is blameless and irreproachable among the wise.**”

**HOLDING DEBATES: NOT
“CRUSHING YOUR
OPPONENT” AND “TIMING”
YOUR RESPONSE**





Meeting Hall, Ancient India



**Deer Park at Saranath
The place of many discourses**



Debates and discussions is very much part of the South Asian spiritual culture. Rulers set aside parks and open spaces for wandering ascetics to dwell and discuss their views. A big town had a debating hall where ascetics would gather for debates, which were commonplace among the contemporary ascetic and contemplative communities that flourished in northern India. These usually centered around a charismatic teacher. Adherents of rival sects would often meet to discuss and debate their respective tenets.

While the Buddha tried very hard to avoid fruitless debates, which were conducted for the purpose of humiliating others and promoting one's own fame. So it was inevitable that as the monks wandered among the towns of northern India, they would invariably be drawn into debates and discussions with brahmins, philosophers, and ascetics of opposing views. So he took a lot of time to provide advice for those intent on holding discussions and participating in debates.

“Those who speak with quarrelsome intent, Settled in their opinions, swollen with pride, ignoble, having assailed virtues, look for openings [to attack] one another.

They mutually delight when their opponent speaks badly and makes a mistake, in his bewilderment and defeat; but noble Ones don't engage in such talk.

If a wise person wants to talk, **having known the time is right**, without quarrelsomeness or pride, the sagely person should utter the speech that the noble ones practice, which is connected with the Dhamma and meaning.”



**Connected Discourses
Book of Threes 67**

“**Not being insolent or aggressive, with a mind not elated**, he speaks free from envy on the basis of right knowledge.

He should approve of what is well expressed but **should not attack what is badly stated**. He should **not train in faultfinding** nor seize on the other's mistakes; he should **not overwhelm and crush his opponent**, nor speak mendacious words.

Truly a discussion among the good is for the sake of knowledge and confidence. Such is the way the noble discuss things; this is the discussion of the noble ones. Having understood this, the wise person should not swell up but should discuss things.”

**Senior Nuns: Dhammadinnā, foremost
in speaking about the Dhamma:**



Foremost female disciples: in the Pañcama Vagga and Chaṭṭha Vagga of the Numerical Discourses, (235-247) the Buddha lists names of women, both mendicant and lay, who were exemplars of attainment and character:
“The foremost among MY nun disciples” ...

Foremost in seniority: Mahāpajāpatī
Gotamī

Foremost in great wisdom: Khemā

Foremost in psychic
power: Uppalavannā

Foremost in memorizing the
Vinaya: Paṭācārā

**Foremost in speaking the
Dhamma: Dhammadinnā**

Foremost in absorption: Nandā

Foremost in energy: Soṇā

Foremost in clairvoyance: Sakulā

Foremost in swift insight: Bhaddā
Kundalakesā

Foremost in recollecting past
lives: Bhaddā Kāpilānī

Foremost in great
insight: Bhaddakaccānā

Foremost in wearing coarse
robes: Kisāgotamī

Foremost in faith: Siṅgālakamātā

A discourse by Dhammadinna: Middle Discourses 44: Culavedalla Sutta: The Shorter Set of Questions-and-Answers

The Buddha, together with monks and nuns, were staying near Rajagaha, in the Squirrel's Sanctuary. **“Then Visakha the lay follower went to Dhammadinna the nun and, on arrival, having bowed down to her, sat to one side.”** In the commentary, Visakha is described as her former husband. Visakha raised a series of questions about the Dhamma (Teaching) to Dhammadina. After a long discussion, Dhammadinna urged Visakha to see the Buddha and “ask him about the meaning of these things”. “Then Visakha the lay follower, delighting & rejoicing in what Dhammadinna the nun had said, **bowed down to her and, keeping her to his right, went to the Blessed One.**”

He told the Blessed One the full extent of the conversation he had had with Dhammadinna.

“The nun Dhammadinnā is astute (a scholar), Visākha, she has great wisdom.

**“paṇḍitā, visākha, dhammadinnā bhikkhunī, mahāpaññā,
visākha, dhammadinnā bhikkhunī.**

If you came to me and asked this question, I would answer it in exactly the same way as the nun Dhammadinnā.

**Mañcepi tvam, visākha, etamattham puccheyyāsi, ahampi
tam evamevam byākareyyam, yathā tam dhammadinnāya
bhikkhuniyā byākatam.**

That is what it means, and that’s how you should remember it.”

Eso cevetassa attho. Evañca nam dhārehīti.
That is what the Buddha said.
Idamavoca bhagavā.

Targeting your speech



“Monks, a talk is wrongly addressed when, having weighed one type of person against another, it is addressed to these five [inappropriate] types of persons.

“What five? A talk on faith is wrongly addressed to one devoid of faith; a talk on virtuous behavior is wrongly addressed to an immoral person; a talk on learning is wrongly addressed to one of little learning; a talk on generosity is wrongly addressed to a miser; a talk on wisdom is wrongly addressed to an unwise person.”

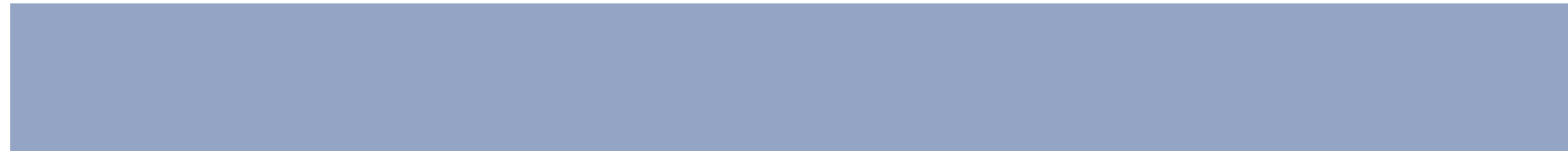
**Human Resources: Staff
Assessments:
Reproving Others**



The Venerable Sariputta addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Friends, a bhikkhu who wishes to reprove another should first establish five things in him self. What five? (1) [He should consider:] **I will speak at a proper time, not at an improper time;** (2) **I will speak truthfully, not falsely;** (3) **I will speak gently, not harshly;** (4) **I will speak in a beneficial way, not in a harmful way;** (5) **I will speak with a mind of loving-kindness, not while harbouring hatred.**

A bhikkhu who wishes to reprove another should first establish these five things in himself."

A Decisive Encounter



Responding with purpose

When faced with rumour, innuendo and abuse, the Buddha did not shy away from addressing issues head on. He dealt directly with fake speech about him and the Sangha, immediately, point by point. Act did so with tact and diplomacy. The debates that the Buddha were involved in were open meetings, in front of both rulers and people. The Buddha was also challenged by Nigantha Nataputta's son, Saccaka, who vowed to his followers that he would defeat the Buddha in a debate: **“So in debate I will shake the recluse Gotama down and shake him up and thump him about.”**

The Middle Length Discourses 35: The Shorter Discourse to Saccaka

Saccaka: “I assert thus, Master Gotama: ‘Material form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, formations are my self, consciousness is my self.’ And so does this great multitude.”

The Buddha: **“What has this great multitude to do with you, Aggivessana? Please confine yourself to your own assertion alone.”**

The Buddha: Would a head-anointed noble king for example..., exercise the power in his own realm to execute those who should be executed...?” Saccaka answered in the affirmative.

The Buddha asked: “What do you think, Aggivessana (Saccaka)? When you say thus: ‘Material form is my self,’ do you exercise any such power over that material form as to say: ‘Let my form be thus; let my form not be thus’?” When this was said, Saccaka the Nigaṇṭha’s son was silent.

Towards the end of his final encounter with the Buddha, Saccaka said: **“It is wonderful, Master Gotama, it is marvellous how when Master Gotama is spoken to offensively again and again, assailed by discourteous courses of speech, the colour of his skin brightens and the colour of his face clears, as is to be expected of one who is accomplished and fully enlightened.”**



- **Social media carries advantages and disadvantages.**
- **The impact of fake speech has imploded with the development of social media.**
- **Fake information moves from one smartphone to the next with lightening speeds.**
- **It is a threat to daily living, well-being, governance and democracy.**
- **Spiritual communities need to pay urgent attention to these problems.**

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Thank You