

SUTTA STUDY GUIDES

Study Guide to the Digha Nikaya

This Sutta Study Guide is based on the Digha Nikaya, translated by Maurice Walshe, published by Wisdom Publications. All numerical references are to this edition. Some of the comments about the various Suttas are taken from the Access to Insight web site. The most important Suttas in the Digha Nikaya are #2, #22, #15, #16, #9 and #31.

Division One - The Moralities

This division gets its name because all 13 Suttas in it contain identical sections on sila - morality, virtue. There are many other sections that reappear in most of the Suttas. To get a good handle on The Moralities, first read and study DN#2 and DN# 9.

1. Read DN#2 - Samaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

This is, in the opinions of Matara Sri Nanarama Mahathera and his student Ven. Ayya Khema and her student Leigh Brasington, the most important Sutta in the whole Pali Cannon. It shows the entire path of training for the spiritual life from beginning to full Enlightenment. And its setting, with King Ajatasattu asking the Buddha to point out any "fruits of leading a spiritual life that are visible here and now", makes a wonderful story as well as showing the Buddha's marvelous powers of teaching.

2. Read Visible Here and Now by Ven. Ayya Khema

This is Ayya Khema's modern commentary on DN#2. It provides an enormous wealth of information that will serve you well as you read the other Suttas in the first division of the Digha Nikaya. This information will also serve to make clearer many points that occur throughout the Suttas. See also Bikkhu Bodhi's The Discourse on the Fruits of Reclusheship (Buddhist Publication Society) which includes the Sutta and it's ancient Commentaries.

3. Now reread DN#2 - Samaññaphala Sutta: The Fruits of the Spiritual Life

4. Read DN#9 - Potthapada Sutta: States of Consciousness

Notice the parts of DN#9 that are the same as DN#2. Notice that Jhanas 1 - 7 are discussed as well as Nirodha, rather than just Jhanas 1 - 4 as in DN#2. Notice the discussion on Not-Self that occurs in the last half of this Sutta.

5. Now read Who is My-Self by Ven. Ayya Khema

This is Ayya Khema's modern commentary on DN#9. It provides a great deal of clarification about the Jhanas and the Buddha's teaching on Not-Self.

6. Reread DN#9 - Potthapada Sutta: States of Consciousness

Having read these two Suttas and Ayya Khema's commentaries on them, you are now ready to dive into the other 11 Suttas that make up the first division of the Digha Nikaya.

7. Read DN#1 - Brahmajala Sutta: The Supreme Net of What the Teaching is Not

In this Sutta, the Buddha describes all 62 possible views of the Self - The Supreme Net of Views - and shows that they are all false. The 62 views are expansions of the various views of Self that Potthapada proposed in DN#9. See also Bikkhu Bodhi's The All Embracing Net of Views (Buddhist Publication Society) which includes the Sutta and its ancient Commentaries.

8. Now you can read DN#3 - DN#8. Your previous study in the Digha Nikaya will make these quite accessible since they cover much the same ground.

9. Read DN#10 - Subha Sutta: Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom

This Sutta is a summary of the three training of the Buddha's path: Virtue, Concentration and Wisdom. It was given by Ananda after the Buddha had died. Its importance is that the training is here distilled to its essence with very little extra story, and that it is given by someone other than the Buddha. This will be easy reading after all the previous Suttas.

10. Read DN#11 - Kevaddha Sutta: What the Brahma Didn't Know

This discourse explores the role of miracles and conversations with heavenly beings as a possible basis for faith and belief. The Buddha does not deny the reality of such experiences, but he points out that of all possible miracles - the only reliable one is the miracle of instruction in the proper training of the mind. As for heavenly beings, they are subject to greed, anger, and delusion, and so the information they give is not necessarily trustworthy. Thus the only valid basis for faith is the instruction that, when followed, brings about the end of one's own mental defilements. The tale that concludes the discourse is one of the finest examples of the early Buddhist sense of humor. It probably was a separate discourse at one time, perhaps also given to Kevaddha, that was later tacked onto the end of the "Miracle of Instruction" sutta. The verse at the end of this tale is an important early description of non-duality.

Note that the section on the iddhis - supernormal powers - found at DN#2:85 - 96 do not appear in this Sutta; this may not be clear because of the ellipsis in the Wisdom edition.

11. Read DN#12 - Lohicca Sutta: Good and Bad Teachers

A non-Buddhist poses some good questions: If Dhamma is something that one must realize for oneself, then what is the role of a teacher? Are there any teachers who don't deserve some sort of criticism? The Buddha's reply includes a sweeping summary of the entire path of practice.

12. Read DN#13 - Tevijja Sutta: The Threefold Knowledge

Notice that this Sutta only discusses the training up thru the 1st Jhana. And that here the 1st Jhana is used as a basis from which to generate the Four Supreme Emotions - The Brahma Viharas - The Divine Abodes. By dwelling with a mind full of these emotions, one can enter the Realm of Brahma. It's important to note that in this sutta, the Buddha is using "the Realm of Brahma" as a metaphor for Nibbana - a point missed by the mainstream Theravadan tradition as well as by early translators.

Division Two - The Great Division

This division gets its name because many of the Suttas in this division have Maha (Great) as part of their title. The "Great" refers to their length, but it also is fitting because many of these Suttas are of great importance and make great reading. DN#15, DN#16 and DN#22 are the most important ones in this division.

1. Read DN#14 - Mahapadana Sutta: The Great Discourse on the Lineage

This Sutta mentions the previous Buddhas of our aeon and tells the story of the previous Buddha Vipassi. It is interesting mythology, but also notice that sections 2.17 - 2.22 describe his enlightenment. His story very closely parallels our Buddha's story and Vipassi's enlightenment comes about because he is able to formulate and penetrate Dependent Origination. See also my essay on this Sutta.

2. Read The Translator's Introduction to the Mahanidana Sutta which can be found at the Access to Insight web site.

3. Read DN#15 - Mahanidana Sutta: The Great Discourse on Origination

Here we have Dependent Origination described in detail in the the Digha Nikaya. Notice that the description is first formulated "backwards" starting from Death and going to Birth, Becoming, etc. Notice that the Six

Sense-Bases are left out(!). Also this formulation only goes back to the mutual conditioning of Mind-and-Body and Consciousness. This formulation (but with the Six Sense-Bases included) is probably the oldest formulation; the usual twelve links starting with Ignorance and Karmic Formations preceding Consciousness and Mind-and-Body is probably a later teaching that the Buddha came up with after he had penetrated the 10 reverse-link formulation during his quest for Enlightenment.

The second half of this Sutta contains another teaching on Not-Self. This extremely important teaching shows that the Not-Self concept (called Emptiness in the Mahayana traditions of Tibetan and Zen Buddhism) rests upon seeing all phenomena as dependently originating - including "Me".

4. Read Sister Vajira's Introduction to the Mahaparinibbana Sutta which can be found near the beginning of the version of the Sutta at the Access to Insight web site.

5. Read DN#16 - Mahaparinibbana Sutta: The Great Passing of the Buddha

This is the longest Sutta of them all. It contains much historical information as well as teachings. Notice how as the Buddha and Ananda traveled westward on the Buddha's last journey, he frequently gave discourses on Morality, Concentration and Wisdom - the theme of DN#2 - #12. I also have written an essay on this Sutta.

6. DN#17 - Mahasudassana Sutta: The Great Splendor
tells the story in full detail that was briefly alluded to by the Buddha at DN#16:5.17-18.

7. DN#18, #19, #20 and #21 are all mythological in nature. Although they do not measure up to the quality of other Suttas in this division, they are nonetheless interesting for their cosmological disclosures. Be sure and read Walshe's introduction to Buddhist cosmology on pages 37 - 42 before reading these Suttas.

8. Read DN#22 - Mahasatipatthana Sutta: The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Many people consider this to be the most important Sutta in the entire Pali Cannon. You should read it in Walshe's translation, then read the translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu at the Access to Insight web site.

9. Read Satipatthana by Analayo

A thorough and insightful guide to this deceptively simple yet profound teaching.

10. Read The Heart of Buddhist Meditation by Nyanaponika, Nyanaponika Thera

This wonderful book is another modern commentary on the Mahasatipatthana Sutta. In addition to the commentary, there is another translation plus a nice selection of other Suttas. You might also read Four Foundations of Mindfulness by U Silananda.

11. There are three more translations of most of the Mahasatipatthana Sutta at MN#10 of Selected Suttas from the Majjhima Nikaya including the translation at The Foundations of Mindfulness by Nyanasatta Thera. You can never study this Sutta too much.

12. Read DN#23 - The Payasi Sutta

This Sutta, spoken by Ven. Kumara-Kassapa, is noteworthy for all the little parables Kassapa uses to convince Prince Payasi to give up his wrong view.

Division Three - The Patika Division

This division gets its name from the first Sutta in the division. The Suttas here are by and large not as fine as found earlier in the Digha Nikaya. DN#28, DN#29 and DN#31 are the best of the bunch.

1. DN#24 and DN#25 are both about other teachers who think they can best the Buddha; of course they fail.

The first 6 sections of DN#24 appear to be a coherent sutta on its own. After that, DN#24 goes downhill with tacked on bits contradicting earlier bits. Not unamusing, as Maurice Walshe says.

2. First read my essay on DN#26 and #27, then read these two Suttas - Cakkavatti-Sihanada Sutta and Aggañña Sutta - if you wish.

3. Read DN#28 - Sampasadaniya Sutta: Serene Faith

Ven. Sariputta proclaims his faith in the teaching of the Buddha and backs up his claim with well explained understanding.

4. Read DN#29 - Pasadika Sutta: The Delightful Discourse
is about good and bad teachers and also more on Not-Self. Notice that the Buddha did not use "No Self", he just pointed out that whatever anyone was claiming to be the self, was in fact dependently originated, and hence Not-Self.

5. DN#30 - Lakkhana Sutta: The Marks of a Great Man

The Brahmins at the time of the Buddha had a teaching that a "Great Man" had 32 special physical features. This Sutta indicates that the Buddha possessed all 32 of them. Note: long earlobes is NOT one of the 32 marks - they are due to wearing heavy earrings since birth - something royalty did in the time of the Buddha.

6. Read DN#31 - Sigalaka Sutta: Advice to Lay People

This is the famous Sutta giving the Buddha's advice to lay people - definitely one of the stronger Suttas of this division.

7. DN#32 - Atanatiya Sutta: The Atanata Protective Verses

is not particular interesting; but see footnote 986 for the introduction to this Sutta in Walshe's translation.

8. DN#33 and DN#34 are Suttas full of lists-by-the-numbers. If you are looking for a particular list, you might find it here - otherwise, these are not so interesting.

Study Guide to the Majjhima Nikaya

The Majjhima Nikaya is a collection of 152 suttas of a "middle length" covering a wide range of topics. It has been suggested that the suttas in this collection were intended as a set of study texts for newly ordained monks as they pursued spiritual development.

* MN 9 - Right View

Sariputta teaches the wholesome and the unwholesome, nutriment, 4 Noble Truths, 12 factors of Dependent Origination, and the taints.

* MN 10 - The 4 Foundations of Mindfulness

This is one of the most important suttas; it outlines the path of practice in wonderful detail. See also DN 22.

* MN 22 - The Simile of the Snake

Contains not only the simile of the snake, but the simile of the raft, a deep teaching on non-self, a description of the arahant, the teaching of only "dukkha and its ending", abandoning the aggregates, stages of enlightenment. See also MN 109.

* MN 24 - The Relay Chariots

This sutta lays out the path of Insight. It forms the outline of the Visuddhimagga.

* MN 38 - The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving
Dependent Origination in detail, the Training in brief.

* MN 39 - The Greater Discourse at Assapura

The Training (the development of the spiritual path) in detail; attitude towards eating. See also MN 27 & 53.

* MN 63 - The Shorter Discourse to Malunkyaputta

What the teaching is and is not; the simile of the poisoned arrow.

* MN 86 - On Angulimala

A mass murderer becomes enlightened

* MN 109 - The Greater Discourse on the Full Moon Night

Aggregates, clinging, personality view, realization of non-self; see also MN 22.

* MN 118 - Mindfulness of Breathing

The 16 parts of meditation on the breath, the 7 factors of enlightenment.

[Bilingual excerpt here.]

- * MN 141 - The Exposition of the Truths
Sariputta explains the 4 Noble Truths in detail.

- * MN 26 - The Noble Search
The story of the Buddha's quest for Enlightenment.
- * MN 36 - The Greater Discourse to Saccaka
Another telling of the story of the Buddha's quest for Enlightenment.

- * MN 2 - All the Taints
7 methods for restraining and abandoning the fundamental defilements.
- * MN 7 - The Simile of the Cloth
The Buddha illustrates the difference between a deluded mind and a pure mind.
- * MN 18 - The Honeyball
Contact => Feeling => Perceptions => Thoughts => Mental Proliferations (papañca)
- * MN 20 - Removal of Distracting Thoughts
5 methods for dealing with distracting thoughts that may arise during meditation.
- * MN 27 - The Shorter Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint
The Training in detail.
- * MN 53 - The Disciple in Higher Training
Ananda teaches the Training in detail.
- * MN 60 - The Incontrovertible Teaching
The original formulation of what became known in the West as "Pascal's Wager".
- * MN 61 - Advice to Rahula at Ambalatthika
The Buddha admonishes his son Rahula on the dangers of lying; the importance of motives.
- * MN 62 - The Greater Discourse of Advice to Rahula
The Buddha teaches Rahula the 4 elements, mindfulness of breathing, and other topics.
- * MN 71,72,73 - Discourses to Vacchagotta
The 3 fold knowledges; the simile of the fire gone out; Vacchagotta's

conversion, training, and full enlightenment.

* MN 121 - The Shorter Discourse on Voidness,
An early teaching on how a deep perception of emptiness leads to enlightenment.

* MN 143 - Advice to Anathapindika
On his deathbed, Anathapindika hears a deep sermon on non-attachment from Sariputta.

* MN 146 - Advice from Nandaka
Nandaka teaches the nuns about the 6 senses, dependent arising, 7 factors of enlightenment.

* MN 148 & 149 - 6 Sets of 6 and The Great 6-fold Base
2 suttas on the 6 sense bases and how fully understanding what is happening with them leads to liberation.

* MN 8 - Effacement
The Jhanas are no big deal; moral behavior.

* MN 13 - Mass of Suffering
Sensual Pleasures and the Danger therein.

* MN 19 - Two Kinds of Thought
Unwholesome thoughts should be replaced with wholesome thoughts.

* MN 28 - The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Elephant's Footprint
Sariputta explains the 4 Noble Truths, the 4 Elements, 5 Aggregates which are dependently arisen.

* MN 29 - The Greater Discourse on the Simile of the Heartwood
The goal - the heartwood - of the practice is the unshakeable deliverance of mind.

* MN 33 - The Greater Discourse on the Cowherd
11 factors of spiritual growth.

* MN 35 - The Shorter Discourse to Saccaka
A Debate; the 5 aggregates.

* MN 37 - The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving
Craving

* MN 43 & 44 - Questions and Answers
Q & A

- * MN 48 - At Kosambi
6 qualities that create love and respect, 7 knowledges from the fruit of stream entry.
- * MN 52 - The man from Atthakanagara
Any Jhana can lead to enlightenment; the Jhanas 1-4, the 4 highest emotions, the Jhanas 5-7.
- * MN 58 - To Prince Abhaya
Right Speech.
- * MN 64 - The Greater Discourse to Malunkyaputta
Abandoning the 5 lower fetters; using the factors of the 1st 7 Jhanas for insight work.
- * MN 87 - Born from those Who are Dear
How those who are dear to us bring us pain.
- * MN 95 - With Canki
How to seek the Truth.
- * MN 107 - To Ganaka Moggallana
The Training taught by "The Shower of the Way".
- * MN 112 - The Sixfold Purity
Description of the mind of an enlightened one. This sutta uses "consciousness" (viññana) in 4 different ways: as one of the 5 aggregates, as one of the 6 elements, as sense consciousness, and as mind (as the counterpart to body). [It is probably a late, composite sutta.]
- * MN 114 - To Be and To Not Be Cultivated
How to behave.
- * MN 117 - The great Forty
Right View explained in detail via its relationship to the other factors of the 8-fold Path.
- * MN 119 - Mindfulness of the Body
Mindfulness of the Body and its relationship to the Jhanas.
- * MN 125 - The Grade of the Tamed
The training of a disciple is like the training of an elephant.
- * MN 138 - The Exposition of a Summary
Don't get stuck on the senses; Jhanas; non-self leads to non-agitation -
cf. MN 22.
- * MN 145 - Advice to Punna
Guarding the senses; "What if someone abuses you?"

- * MN 147 - Advice to Rahula
The Buddha's discourse on non-self that leads to his son's enlightenment.
- * MN 152 - The Development of the Faculties
Guarding the senses.
- * MN 108 - With Gopaka Moggallana
After the Buddha's passing, Ananda teaches 10 qualities that inspire confidence in one who has them; right meditation.

**

- * MN 15 - Check up on yourself
- * MN 31 - Congenial communal living
- * MN 40 - Morality
- * MN 47 - Qualities of a true teacher
- * MN 51 - Training path
- * MN 79 - "Let be the past, let be the future; I shall teach you Dhamma..."
- * MN 85 - Biographical information; 5 factors of striving
- * MN 106 - Jhanas 7 & 8 lead to Nibbana
- * MN 123 - The Buddha's birth myth
- * MN 131-134 - One fortunate attachment
- * MN 139 - The Middle Way, Right Speech, pleasures of the senses vs pleasure of the Jhanas
- * MN 142 - Giving, including the 4 kinds of giving

*

- * MN 21 - The Simile of the Saw - Patience
- * MN 30 - Another heartwood sutta; contradicts MN 27, MN 29, DN 2, etc.
- * MN 55 - Eating meat
- * MN 56 - Debate with a Jain
- * MN 74 - How Sariputta became enlightened - version #1, Biographical information
- * MN 75 - Biographical information, Sense Pleasures
- * MN 77 - 37 Factors of Enlightenment; Jhanas plus Insight
- * MN 111 - One by One as They Occurred - How Sariputta became

enlightened - version #2.

* MN 113 - Thinking that the Jhanas are a big deal is "untrue"

* MN 115 - The elements, sense bases, dependent origination, possible and impossible situations

* MN 127 - Instruction for the 5th Jhana

* MN 128 - Living together, Biographical information; hindering mind states. A source (along with Dhp 1.5) of

"In this world hatred is never appeased by hatred; hatred is only appeased by love. This is an eternal law."

* MN 140 - (Late sutta) 6 elements, 6 sense bases, 18 kinds of mental exploration, 4 foundations of enlightenment

* MN 144 - A monk commits suicide and becomes enlightened as he dies.

* MN 151 - Various aspects of the path.

Other Noteworthy

* MN 1 - The Root of All Things - A very difficult to understand non-dual teaching.

* MN 4 - Dealing with fear, Biographical information

* MN 12 - Biographical information

* MN 68 - The Buddha says that he doesn't declare the destination of one who has died to deceive or flatter people, but because it gladdens and inspires the faithful

* MN 97 - Sariputta guides the brahmin Dhananjani to rebirth in the Bhrama-world via brahma vihara practice, but is reprimanded by the Buddha for not having taught him teachings that would lead to stream entry

* MN 102 - Like DN 1, corrupted(?)

* MN 129-130 - Heaven and Hell; 129 includes the simile of the blind sea turtle

* MN 135 - How Karma fruits

* MN 136 - Karma is complex

* MN 84-101 - Various teaching about other religious beliefs.

Suttas that mention the Jhanas in a significant way

* MN 4, 6, 8, 13, 19, 35, 30, 31, 36, 38, 43, 45, 53, 53, 59, 64, 65, 66, 76, 77, 78, 79, 85, 106, 107, 108, 111, 112, 113, 119, 121, 128, 137, 138, 139, 141

Suttas with biographical information

* MN 26, 36; 4, 12, 74, 75, 85, 87, 100, 123, 128

Study Guide to the Samyutta Nikaya

With 2889 suttas, the Samyutta Nikaya is a bit daunting, not only to read, but to try to come up with a way to study this wonderful mass of material. The suttas are divided into 56 books, with all the suttas in a book covering the same topic. Some of the topics are much more interesting than others, many contain much repetition. My personal favorite books are 12, 22, 35; reading these in their entirety would certainly make a good starting point.

What follows is a list, with perhaps a single line of notes, for the suttas I found the most interesting and helpful.

* The first 11 books are not all that interesting, but here are a few interesting suttas.

1.1 "When I struggled, I was whirled about. When I stopped, I sank. And so I crossed over the flood without struggling, without stopping."

1.23&27 Both describe Nibbana. Where name-and-form cease without remainder (cf DN 11, MN 49 & SN 7.6)

2.17 Release from fear

2.26 You cannot travel to the end of the world; this fathom long carcass, endowed with perception and mind, is the world

3.4 All you own is your karmic resultants. "the merits and evil done, this is what is truly one's own."

3.8 "Each person holds oneself most dear."

3.17 The importance of diligence

3.25 4 mountains come from the 4 directions crusing all in their paths - i.e. aging and death are coming

5.1-10 All the nuns' verses are interesting; includes Kisagotami, Sariputta's 3 sisters, and Vajira's not-self simile of the chariot

6.1 Brahma Sahampati requests that the Buddha teach the Dhamma

7.2 The Buddha cleverly deals with another's anger

7.6 Again describing Nibbana as where name-and-form cease without remainder (cf SN 1.23 & 27 above)

8.4 Verses on extinguishing lust

8.5 Altho the prose is uninteresting, Ven. Vangisa's 4 verses on Right Speech are quite good

10.8 How Anathapindika first met the Buddha

* Book 12 is about Dependent Origination and contains much valuable information on this most important topic.

12.2 Details of Dependent Origination

12.10 Dependent Origination and Enlightenment (12 links)

12.15 Dependent Origination is Right View; also this is a very important teaching by the Buddha on Emptiness and the Middle Way. See 12.46, 47 & 48 for 3 more suttas on Dependent Origination as the middle way between extremes

12.17 Kassapa learns that dukkha arises via Dependent Origination

12.23 Transcendental Dependent Origination

12.38-40 Volition and Dependent Origination

12.43 Dukkha and Dependent Origination

12.46 Kharma and Dependent Origination

12.51 Thorough Investigation

12.61 Body as self is easier to overcome than Mind as self; monkey mind simile

12.64 At the end is the important simile (the house with no western wall) for consciousness not becoming established when there is no lust for nutriment

12.65 The Ancient City - very important (10 links)

12.66 Inward Exploration - Contains a simple (early?) formulation of Dependent Origination which is clearer & easier to understand than the 10 or 12 element formulations

12.67 The simile of the 2 sheaves leaning against each other as an explanation of how consciousness & mind-and-body are mutually dependent

12.70 Dependent Origination and the irrelevance of the magical powers

* Books 13 - 21 contain only a few interesting suttas, but these are quite important.

15.5,6 The length of an Eon

15.7,8 The number of Eons that have passed

- 15.10 The Heap of Bones
- 15.14-19 All beings have been your mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter
- 16.1-13 The 13 suttas of the Maha Kassapa samyutta paints a vivid picture of this great disciple of the Buddha
- 16.3 The attitude to have when teaching the Dhamma
- 16.11 Mahakassapa's Enlightenment (and the incident after the Buddha's death of Mahakassapa referring to Ananda as a "youngster" and Ananda pointing out the grey hairs on his head)
- 16.13 Factors that bring about the Decline of the True Damma
- 20.2 Precious Human Birth. "Few are beings reborn among humans. Far more are those reborn elsewhere."
- 20.7 When the True Dhamma is replaced by mere poetry
- 21.1 The 2nd Jhana is Noble Silence since it is without thinking and examining. Makes the commentarial definition of vitakka and vicara as initial and sustained attention rather suspect

* Book 22 is about the Aggregates, another very important topic

- 22.1
- 22.2
- 22.5 Aggregates and Dependent Origination
- 22.7-8 Aggregates and Dependent Origination
- 22.26 Enlightenment and the Aggregates
- 22.27-29 more on gratification
- 22.37-38 Aggregates and Arising & Ceasing
- 22.43 How to be an Island
- 22.53
- 22.55 "It might not be"
- 22.56
- 22.57 Definition of Aggregates
- 22.59 The 2nd Discourse. Not Self
- 22.60
- 22.79 Definitions plus Examples
- 22.80
- 22.81 37 Factors of Enlightenment plus View of Self
- 22.82 Same as MN 109 - excellent discussion of the aggerates,

clinging, personality view, realization of non-self

22.85 Yamaka holds the view that an arahant is "annihilated, perishes, & does not exist after death." Sariputta sets him straight. See especially Bhikkhu Bodhi's footnote #151 - Yamaka believes "unenlightened beings have a lasting self which transmigrates; an arahant utterly perishes" - a common view among Buddhist today.

22.86 The Buddha. "I make known dukkha and the cessation of dukkha."

22.88 Insight, rather than Concentration, is what matters

22.89 The conceit "I am" lingers for the non-returner like the scent of a flower lingers

22.90 About Channa (Prince Siddhartha's charioteer)

22.94 See 12.15

22.95 Emptiness - Form is like a glob of foam; feeling, a water bubble; perception, a mirage; mental formations, a banana tree; consciousness, a magic trick

22.99 The impermanence of the world; the dog tied to the post, running around and around (the 5 aggregates). See also 22.100

22.101 Practice! 37 Factors of Enlightenment; similes of The Hen, The Adze Handle, The Ship's Rigging

22.102 Arising & Ceasing and How it Works

* I found only one sutta interesting in books 23 - 34.

23.2 Sandcastles

* Book 35 contains 248 suttas on the 6 Sense Bases

It is quite instructive to read all 248 in a single sitting (and not that hard to do either due to the many repetitions).

35.28 The 3rd Discourse. The Fire Sermon

35.63-64 Instructions to Ven. Migajala. Sense objects should be experienced without seeking delight, welcoming or holding them

35.93 "The Dyad" 6+5

35.95 Guarding the Senses Explained

35.96 Decline

35.97 Guarding the Senses [35.98 = 35.96+35.07]

35.103 The Buddha quotes a verse from his teacher Uddaka

Ramaoutta and interprets it in his own way

- 35.127 The Morality Aspects of Training
- 35.134 Guarding the Senses and its Effects
- 35.160 Concentration
- 35.229 The Ocean
- 35.230 Mara's Bait (Fisherman)
- 35.231 Milktree Sap
- 35.232 The Eye is not a Fetter; A Form is not a Fetter
- 35.234 Consciousness is Not Self
- 35.238 Similie of 4 vipers, 5 enemies, murderous companion,
empty village, bandits, great expanse of water, near shore, far shore, raft,
making effort, crossed over
- 35.241 The Simile of the Great Log - attributes needed to reach
Nibbana (also at SN 35.242)
- 35.243 Moggallana teaches the corrupted and the uncorrupted
- 35.244 (The challenging first sentence is well worth studying.)
- 35.245 Different Ways of Practice; also the simile of the swift pair of
messengers
- 35.247 The Simile of the 6 Animals

* Book 36 teaches us what is really meant by Vedana (and it's not Emotions!).

- 36.3 Definition of Vedana
- 36.4 An instructed noble disciple does not sorrow, grieve or
lament when experiencing a painful bodily Vedana
- 36.6 The 2 Arrows
- 36.14 The Guest House
- 36.15 Vedana Details
- 36.16-18 About Vedana
- 36.19 Jhanas and more sublime feelings
- 36.21 Kharma and present circumstances cause current Vedana -
i.e. not all one experiences is caused by kharma
- 36.23-26 About Vedana
- 36.31 Worldly & Unworldly Vedana

* Book 37 discusses powers possessed by women

It appears the Buddha had great respect for women, unlike the picture sometimes painted by the patriarchy.

* Various terms are explained in book 38 (book 39 is identical)

38.14 The 3 Kinds of Suffering (dukkha)

* Book 40 contains discourses with Moggallana

40.1 This sutta uses the word ekaggata in reference to the first jhana (one of only 3 - the other 2 being MN 43 & MN 111); it also makes it clear that vitakka & vicara do not mean "initial and sustained attention" in the context of the jhanas as found in the suttas.

40.9 "by nonattention to all signs, one enters and dwells in the signless concentration of mind."

* Book 41 is discourses with the householder Citta

41.3 How Wrong Views Arise (compare with DN #1)

41.6 About Nirodha (the cessation of feeling and perception)

41.7 Measureless, Nothingness & Emptiness explained

* Book 42 contains various discourses given to Headmen

42.2 Acting is not Right Livelihood

42.3-5 Being a Soldier is not Right Livelihood

42.13 A valuable and broad ranging discussion with the headman Pataliya

* Book 43 on the Unconditioned had no suttas that caught my attention; However, it does give 32 names for Nibbana.

the unconditioned, the uninclined, the truth, the far shore, the subtle, the very difficult to see, the unaging, the stable, the unintegrating, the unmanifest, the unproliferated (nippapanca), the peaceful, the deathless, the sublime, the auspicious, the secure, the destruction of craving, the wonderful, the amazing, the unailing, the unailing state, Nibbana, the unafflicted, dispassion, purity, freedom, the unadhesive, the island, the shelter, the asylum, the refuge.

* Book 44 is about Undeclared Points

44.7,8,9,10,11 Vacchagotta's Questions - very interesting; in 44.10, the Buddha is silent both when asked "is there a self?" and "is there no self?"

* The Path is discussed in book 45

- 45.2 Ananda and Half the Holy Life
- 45.8 The 8-Fold Path Defined - very important
- 45.149 Virtue is the foundation for all progress along the Noble 8-fold Path
- 45.159 The Guest House
- 45.165 The 3 Types of Suffering (dukkha) [also at 38.14]

* Book 46 discussed the Factor of Enlightenment

- 46.2 Nutriment for the 5 Hindrances and the 7 Factors of Enlightenment
- 46.3 The 7 Factors of Enlightenment linked together plus the 5 Types of Non-returner
- 46.4 The 7 Factors of Enlightenment are measureless, perfected, persist and abate for reasons
- 46.5 The 7 Factors of Enlightenment called that because they lead to Enlightenment
- 46.6 How to practice Sense Restraint and how this leads to The 7 Factors of Enlightenment
- 46.11 Moral Conduct (Virtue) is the Foundation
- 46.14-16 Chanting The 7 Factors of Enlightenment as a cure for illness
- 46.31-32 Diligence as the Root and also Careful Attention
- 46.39 Hindrances strangle life like a parasitic tree
- 46.51 Like 46.2, but much deeper
- 46.53 The 7 Factors of Enlightenment versus a sluggish or excited mind
- 46.54 The 7 Factors of Enlightenment and the 4 Brahma Viharas
- 46.55 The 5 Hindrances and the Pools of Water
- 46.56 Causes and conditions for having or not having Knowledge and Vision

- * The Establishment of Mindfulness is discussed in Book 47
 - 47.6 A Jataka Tale. The Hawk and the Quail
 - 47.7 Catching Monkeys (source of the Uncle Remus "Tar Baby" tale)
 - 47.9 Be an Island (also in DN #16)
 - 47.12 Sariputta's "Lion's Roar" (also in DN #16 and DN #28)
 - 47.13 Sariputta's Death
 - 47.14 After hearing of the deaths of Sariputta and Moggallana, The Buddha says one should "Be an Island"
 - 47.19 The Acrobats. Protecting oneself and others via the 4 Foundations of Mindfulness
 - 47.20 A brilliant simile on the meaning of Mindfulness. Beautiful girl, jug of oil & a sharp sword
 - 47.35 Clear Comprehension and Feelings, Thoughts & Perceptions

- * Book 48 discusses the Faculties
 - 48.1 The 5 Faculties
 - 48.9 The 5 Faculties explained in a different way
 - 48.10 48.9 plus the standard definition of the 5 Faculties
 - 48.15 5 Types of Non-returner (see also 48.66, 51.26, 54.5 & 55.25)
 - 48.24 5 Types of Non-returner + 3 Types of Stream Enterer
 - 48.36 5 Other Faculties with definitions
 - 48.40 5 Other Faculties and the Jhanas [questionable logic(!)]
 - 48.41 The Buddha is subject to aging
 - 48.43 The 5 Faculties are the same as The 5 Powers
 - 48.50 How The 5 Faculties work to bring Liberation
 - 48.51 Wisdom is the Chief (most important) [also 48.52, 54, 55, 67-70]

* Books 49 & 50 Right Striving and The Powers - but not much of interest

- * The Bases for Spiritual Power are the subject of Book 51
 - 51.10 The strange story of Ananda not asking the Buddha to live 100 years [also in DN #16]

51.11-12 The 4 Bases of Power lead to development of the magical powers

51.15 Wise Wishes

51.20 Details of the 4 Bases of Power

* Book 52 contains Discourses with Anurudda

52.1 Mindfulness, arising & ceasing, internal & external

* Book 53 has some information about The Jhanas

53.1 The 4 Jhanas defined and that they lead one towards Nibbana

* Book 54 has discourses on Mindfulness of Breathing

54.1 One thing when developed is of great benefit. Mindfulness of Breathing [also in MN #118]

54.8 Mindfulness of Breathing leads to Jhanas and to Insights

54.9 Monks hear discourse on foulness of the body; many commit suicide; Ananda requests discourses on Mindfulness of Breathing instead of foulness

54.10 Mindfulness of Breathing fulfills the Four Foundations of Mindfulness [also in MN #118]

54.13 Contains much of the material from MN #118

* Book 55 talks about Stream Entry

55.1 Better to be a Stream Enterer than a World ruling Monarch

55.3 Dighavu Sutta: 6 things that partake of true knowledge: contemplating impermanence in all formations, perceiving dukkha in all that is impermanent, perceiving non-self in all that is dukkha, perceiving abandonment, perceiving fading away, perceiving cessation

55.6 4 factors of Stream Entry

55.7 Do unto others as you would have them do unto you

55.8&10 Also in DN #16

55.37 How a lay follower is accomplished in various ways

55.39 Stream Entry factors for a lay woman (cf. 55.6 - same factors as for a lay man)

55.50 4 factors for Stream Entry: association with superior persons, hearing the true Dhamma, careful attention, practice in

accordance with the Dhamma (see also 55.55-74)

* Book 56 discusses The 4 Noble Truths

56.1-2 What to do

56.7-10 What not to do

56.11 The 1st Sermon. Setting in Motion the Wheel of Dhamma

56.21 Also in DN #16

56.31 A Handful of Leaves

56.34 Practice like your hair is on fire

56.42,43&46 A short version of Dependent Origination

56.47-48 Precious Human Birth. The simile of the turtle and the yoke

56.49-60 A Stream Enterer has much less Dukkha than a non-stream enterer

Study Guide to the Anguttra Nikaya

An on-line version of the complete Anguttra Nikaya, translated by Sister Upalavanna, is available from the metta.lk/tipitaka website.

The Anguttara Nikaya, the fourth division of the Sutta Pitaka, consists of several thousand suttas arranged in eleven books (nipatas) according to numerical content. At first glance this may seem a rather pedantic classification scheme, but in fact it often proves quite useful. For example, if you dimly recall having heard something about the five subjects worthy of daily contemplation and you'd like to track down the original passage in the Canon, a good place to begin your search is the Book of the Fives in the Anguttara.

What follows is a list, with a single line of notes, of the suttas I found the most interesting and helpful while reading the Anguttra Nikaya:

I v 9.10;

I vi 1,2 the Luminous Mind - see especially this note

I vi 6,7 Mind is the forerunner of both the wholesome & the unwholesome

I vi 9 importance of diligence

I xv 1-3 right view and the 3 characteristics

II i 5 (bio) don't be content with good mindstates, have unremitting diligence

II i 9 the 2 Guardians of the world

II iii 1 the fools and the wise - seeing transgressions and forgiving transgressions

II iii 10 how tranquility (samatha) and insight (vipassana) function together to uproot passion and ignorance

II iv 1-2 Gratitude; Repaying one's parents

III 25 3 types of persons

III 32 No I-making, mine-making or conceit; references Sn 1106-7

III 33 Karmma: Bad actions ripen, Good actions don't ripen; rebirth

- (ripening) can take place in this life, the next life or a future life
- III 35 The 3 messengers: old age, sickness and death
 - III 38 (bio) 3 palaces plus old age, sickness and death
 - III 47 Conditioned and Unconditioned
 - III 57 Vacchagotta - giving
 - III 60 Miracle of Instruction; Benefiting others via the holy life; Also on miracles: "miracle of psychic power (the miracle of telepathy) ... is a miracle experienced only by him who does it; it belongs only to him who does it. It seems to me to be of the nature of an illusion."
 - III 61 The 4 Noble Truths are equivalent to Dependent Origination; dukkha is caused by ignorance
 - III 65 The Kalama Sutta
 - III 68 Greed, Hatred and Delusion
 - III 70 the Roots of the Uposatha - 8 precepts, etc.
 - III 71 the drawbacks of greed, hatred and delusion
 - III 76 Kamma leads to becoming
 - III 83 If 250 precepts are too many for you, train in heightened virtue, heightened mind (concentration) & heightened wisdom
 - III 93 you can't force results
 - III 99 The Salt Crystal; "Why do bad things happen to good people?"
 - III 100: 9-15 the need to balance concentration, energy and equanimity
 - III 101: 1 & 2 Gratification, Danger, Escape
 - III 129 No Secrets
 - III 130 & 131 2 suttas about Anuruddha, including instructions from Sariputta that helped him to become Enlightened

 - IV 21 (bio) Reverence for the Dhamma
 - IV 24 non-dual: there is no seen, there is no seer
 - IV 36 (bio) Dana - will you be a deva?
 - IV 41 4 Developments of Concentration; references Sn 1048
 - IV.42 4 ways of answering a question
 - IV 45 "...within this fathom-long body, with its perception & intellect, ... there is the cosmos..."
 - IV 77 the 4 imponderables: range of a Buddha, range of a person in jhana, threads of kamma, origin of the world
 - IV 96, 99 Living for one's own good and for anothers - early

Bodhisattva idea

IV 113 The horse whip

IV 192 knowing a person's traits

IV 198 short version of the Graduated training

IV 232 4 kinds of Kamma

IV 246 The Growth of Wisdom

V 14-15 The 5 Powers

V 25 5 Helpers of Right View

V 49 on Grief - see especially the verses at the end of this sutta

V 51 the 5 hindrances - with river simile

V 53 5 factors for exertion

V 57 The 5 Daily Reflections

V 73-74 Practice! Don't just learn and teach

V 75-76 the battle to guard celibacy; short version of graduated training

V 77-80 77: dangers of living in the wilderness; 78: dangers of society and sangha;

79: more dangers (including flowery poems [Rumi poems in Dharma talks?])

V 121 advice to a sick monk; sickness and spiritual practice

V 129 5 deeds leading directly to hell

V 159 How to teach the Dhamma

V 161 Removing Grudges

V 177 5 wrong livelihoods: Business in weapons, in living beings, in meat, in intoxicants, and in poison

V 193 5 Hindrances and the 5 similes of water

V 198 Right Speech has 5 Qualities: spoken at the right time, in truth, affectionately, beneficially, with a mind of loving-kindness

V 202 5 rewards of listening to dhamma. (Teachers: do your dhamma talks generate these?)

VI 19 & 20 2 suttas on mindfulness of death

VI 50 Sense control, virtue, concentration, wisdom, disenchantment, dispassion

VI 53 diligence is the one thing, developed and made much that reaches

- up to the good, both here & now and here after
- VI 55 The Similes of the Lute
- VI 63 Penetrative Exposition: Sensuality, vedana, perception, asava, karma ("It is volition that I declare to be kamma"), dukkha all should be known
- VI 65,66,
76,77 Qualities needed for the supermundane
- VI 88 6 obstructions to practice due to not listening well
- VI 96 6 Rarities: appearance of a Tathagata, appearance of a Dhamma teacher, born where the Dhamma is available, unimpaired physical & mental faculties, absence of stupidity & dullness
- VII 6 & 7 7 Treasures
- VII 11 & 12 7 obsessions (or latent tendencies)
- VII 46 7 Perceptions - cf. Progress of Insight
- VII 49 7 reasons for giving
- VII 56 7 reasons why the Dhamma declines
- VII 58 Dealing with Drowsiness
- VII 60 7 disadvantages to being angry
- VII 64 seven qualities that make one a respectable and honorable individual - and able to approach the dhamma
- VII 67 Necessity of Mental Cultivation
- VII 70 Teaching of ancient teacher Araka: "Life is short; do good, live a pure life." The Buddha adds "Practice!"
- VII 80 The Buddha explains how to recognize authentic teachings of Dhamma
- VIII 1 The 8 Benefits of Metta (see also AN XI 16)
- VIII 2 Supporting conditions for wisdom
- VIII 5 The 8 Worldly Conditions in brief: loss & gain, fame & ill fame, praise & blame, pleasure & pain
- VIII 6 The 8 Worldly Conditions & how to work with them
- VIII 7 & 8 Devadatta & The 8 Worldly Conditions
- VIII 19 Dhamma is like the Ocean
- VIII 26 To Jivaka: how a lay follower can best work for the welfare of others

- VIII 30 Anaruddha and 8 Great Thoughts
- VIII 31,33,35 Giving
- VIII 51 The traditional story of the founding of the nuns' order
- VIII 53 Instructions to Mahapajapati Gotami (the Buddha's foster mother)
- VIII 54 Advice to a layman
- VIII 63 metta, karuna, mudita, and upekkha and the four foundations of mindfulness as a basis for concentration practice
- VIII 73,74 Mindfulness of Death; simile of "hair on fire" in #74
-
- IX 3 9 things to do to bring the mind towards liberation
- IX 5 4 Powers; Freed from 5 Fears; includes "Dhamma is the best gift"
- IX 29 9 factors that arouse anger
- IX 36 Using the aggregates of the Jhanas as a basis of insight (cf. MN 111 & 121)
- IX 41 the long road of meditation practice that culminates in Awakening begins with appreciating the value of renunciation; perfecting the jhanas leads to Awakening
-
- X 6 & 7 Meditative Experience of Nibbana
- X 11 one should have 5 factors & live in a dwellings endowed with 5 factors
- X 13 the 10 fetters that bind us
- X 15 Heedfulness/Diligence is foremost of skillful qualities
- X 60 the 10 Perceptions - an interesting list which include the 16 steps of Mindfulness of Breathing
- X 61,62 Associating with good people is the basis of hearing the true Dhamma
- X 69 10 suitable topics of conversation
- X 70 10 recommended topics of conversation
- X 72 the 10 thorns, including: To one in 1st jhana, sounds are a thorn
- X 76 The Prerequisites for Stream Entry and Enlightenment
- X 93 Anathapindika instructs a group of non-Buddhist wanderers on the nature of Right View: Dependent Origination
- X 95 Will all beings attain liberation?
- X 96 The 10 undeclared points are simply speculations
- X 176 To Cunda the silversmith: 10 right actions

- X 206 The 1st 4 Precepts in detail
- X 208 The 4 Sublime Emotions can lead to 3rd stage of enlightenment

- XI 1 cf SN 12:23 and the Progress of Insight
- XI 2 cf SN 12:23 and the Progress of Insight; "there is no need for an act of will"
- XI 10 Meditate without "perception" of the meditation object - just experience it
- XI 12 & 13 the 6 Recollections - see the Vissudhimagga for later details
- XI 16 The 11 Benefits of Metta (see also AN VIII 1)

This section contains lists of suttas on various topics. Please note that the lists are not exhaustive, but simply represent some suttas I have found helpful when studying a topic.

* Dependent Origination

- o DN 15
- o MN 9, MN 28, MN 38, MN 115, MN 146
- o SN Book 12 - particularly 12:15 12:23 12:65
- o AN III 61

* Right View - Wrong View

- o DN 1 (see summary chart in Insight Journal, Fall 2003), DN 2 (section on the 6 teachers), DN 9
- o MN 9, MN 22, MN 38, MN 72, MN 74, MN 117, MN 141 (short definition of Right View near the end)
- o SN 12:15, 22:85, 44:7, 44:8, 44:9, 44:10, 44:11 (especially 44:10)
- o AN I xv 1-3, V 25, X 93

* Discourses to Vacchagotta

- o SN 33:1-55, 44:7, 44:8, 44:9, 44:10, 44:11
- o AN III.57
- o MN 71,72,73

* And finally, someone asked me to list my Top 10 Suttas

- o DN 2 - The Fruits of the Spiritual Life
- o DN 22 - The Four Foundations of Mindfulness
- o MN 22 - The Simile of the Snake
- o MN 38 - The Greater Discourse on the Destruction of Craving
- o MN 118 - Mindfulness of Breathing
- o SN 12:15 - To Kaccayana Gotta (on Right View)
- o SN 12:23 - Transcendental Dependent Origination
- o SN 12:65 - The Ancient City
- o Udana I.10 - The Bahiya Sutta
- o Sutta Nipata I.8 - Metta Sutta