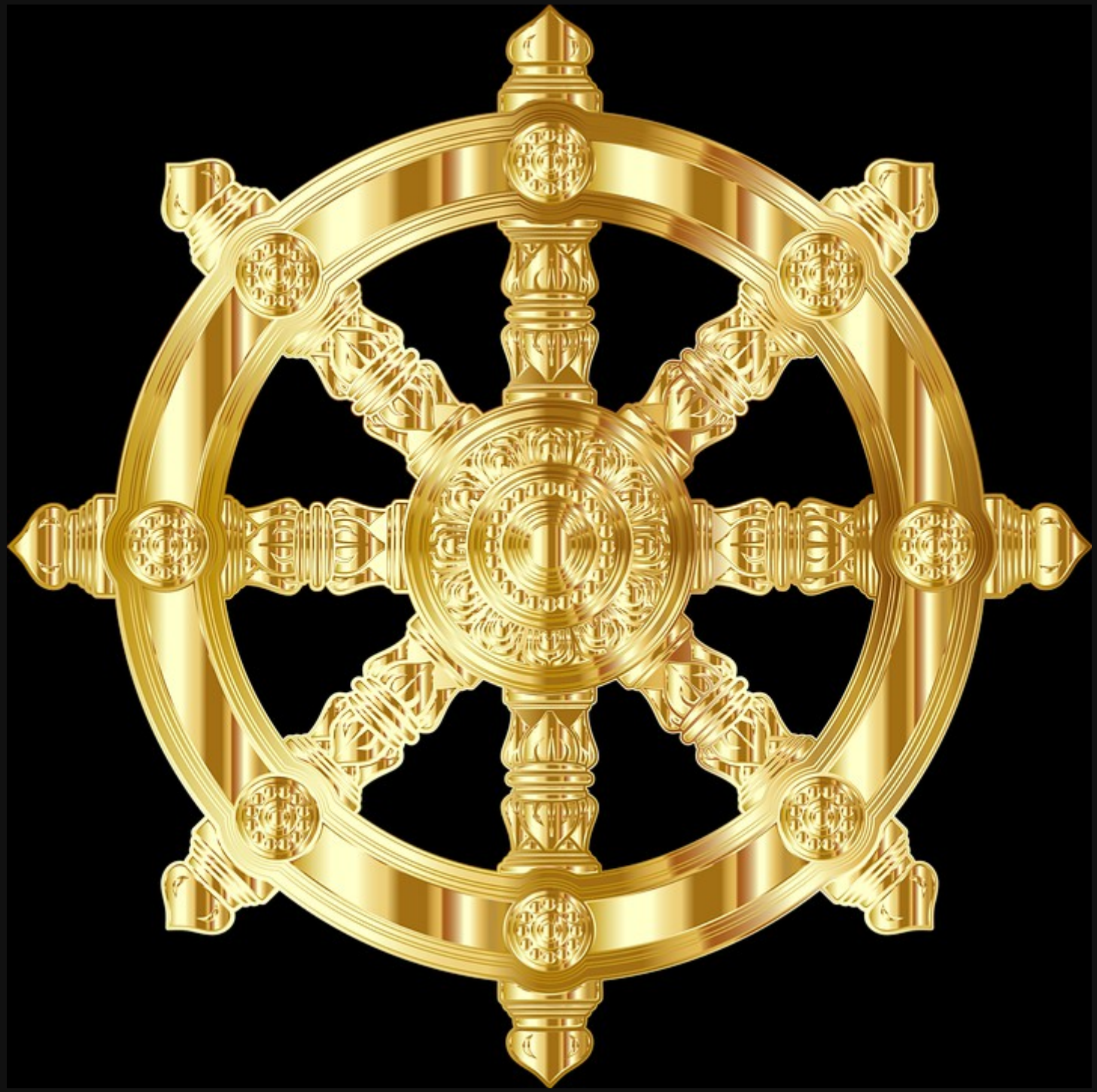
Noble Eightfold Path

In

Early Buddhism

Factors of N8P

- Right View, *sammādiṭṭhi*
- Right Intention, *sammāsaṅkappo*
- Right Speech, *sammāvācā*
- Right Action, *sammākammanto*
- Right Livelihood, *sammāājīvo*
- Right Effort, *sammāvāyāmo*
- Right Mindfulness, *sammāsati*
- Right Stillness, *sammāsamādhi*



Dhp 273 – 276: The Noble Eightfold Path is the best of all practises...

This is the only path for purifying insight; there is no other.

Follow this path and you will discombobulate Māra.

3 Requirements for the path

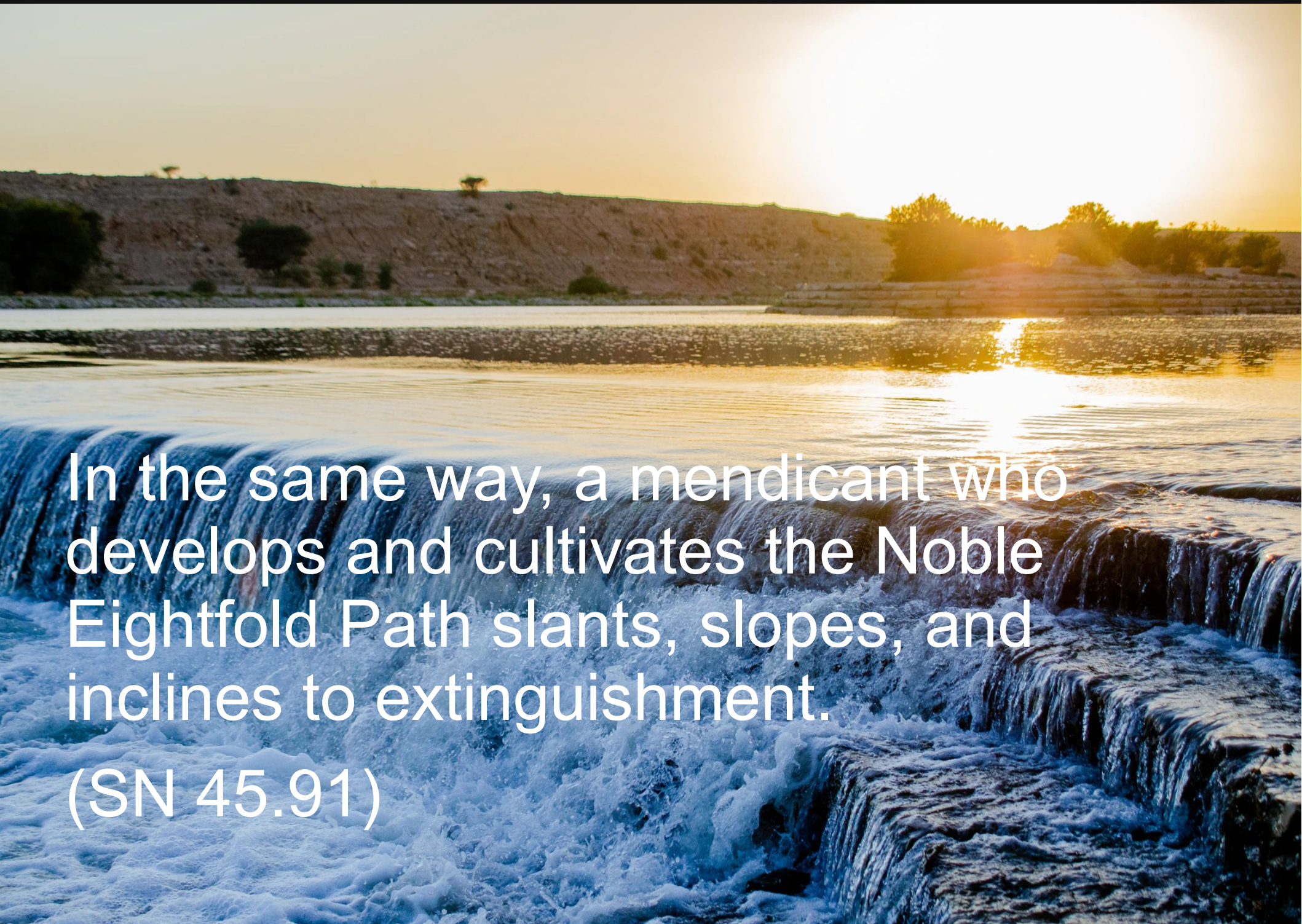
1. Full and accurate picture of suffering
2. Correct analysis of the causes
3. Must give means to eradicate causes i.e. remedy
   - Has to be verifiable by our own experience

The closer you are to the end of the path ...

the more “you” disappear.

Slanting East

"Mendicants, the Ganges river slants, slopes, and inclines to the east.


In the same way, a mendicant who develops and cultivates the Noble Eightfold Path slants, slopes, and inclines to extinguishment.
(SN 45.91)

Sammā vs. *micchā*
Right vs. wrong

- Not a command
- According to reality
- Leading to Awakening

Conditioned sequence (SN 45.1)

Right view >
Right intention >
Right speech >
Right action >
Right livelihood >
Right effort >
Right mindfulness >
Right stillness

Conditioned sequence (SN 45.1)

Right view >

Right intention

Conditioned sequence (SN 45.1)

Right intention >

Right speech +
right action +
right livelihood

Conditioned sequence (SN 45.1)

Right speech +
right action +
right livelihood >

Right effort

Conditioned sequence (SN 45.1)

Right effort >

Right mindfulness

Conditioned sequence (SN 45.1)

Right mindfulness >

Right stillness

Conditioned feedback (MN 117)

Right view comes first. How? When you understand wrong speech as wrong speech and right speech as right speech, that's your right view. ...

You make an effort to give up wrong speech and embrace right speech: that's your right effort.

Mindfully you give up wrong speech and take up right speech: that's your right mindfulness.

So these three things keep running and circling around right speech, namely: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

Root causes of the path

“Sir, good friends, companions, and associates are half the spiritual life.”

“Not so, Ānanda! Not so, Ānanda!

Good friends, companions, and associates are the whole of the spiritual life.

Root causes of the path

A mendicant with good friends, companions, and associates can expect to develop and cultivate the N8P.

(SN 45.2)

Root causes of the path

...And here’s another way to understand how good friends are the whole of the spiritual life.

Root causes of the path

For, by relying on me (the Buddha) as a good friend, sentient beings who are liable to rebirth, old age, and death, to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are freed from all these things.

(SN3.18)

Good friend, kalyāṇamitta

Root causes of the path

"Mendicants, the dawn is the forerunner and precursor of the sunrise.

In the same way accomplishment in proper attention is the forerunner and precursor of the Noble Eightfold Path for a mendicant. (SN45.55)

Root causes of the path

Proper attention is the mental factor responsible for the turning the mind to the object.

How you attend to anything.

Attention is like the rudder of a ship, which directs it to its destination, or like a charioteer who sends the well-trained horses (i.e. the associated states) towards their destination (the object). (Bhikkhu Bodhi)

Quality of the attention here and now so that causes good qualities to increase and bad ones to decline. (MN2)

Root causes of the path

And how does a mendicant with good friends develop and cultivate the noble eightfold path?

It's when a mendicant develops right view (etc.), which relies on seclusion (*viveka*), fading away (*virāga*), and cessation (*nirodha*), and ripens as letting go (*paṭinissagga*). (SN 45.2)

Results of the Path (MN 117)

Right view >

...

Right stillness >

Right knowledge >

Right liberation

The Buddha's Awakening

‘I recall sitting in the cool shade of the rose-apple tree while my father the Sakyan was off working.

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.

Could that be the path to awakening?’

Stemming from that memory came the realization:
‘*That* is the path to awakening!’
‘eseva maggo bodhāyā’ti.

How do you know you are practising the N8P?

Noble Eightfold Path

In

Early Buddhism

N8P and DO

Ignorance >
Willed actions >
…
Birth >
Old age, death, suffering

N8P and DO

Right view … right stillness >
Right understanding >
Ignorance >
…
Birth >
Old age, death, and suffering

N8P and DO

Ignorance >
Willed actions
= N8P >
Right knowledge

BOOM

N8P and DO

Right knowledge

= Ignorance ends >

Willed activities end >

... >

Suffering ends

N8P and DO

Feeling >
Craving >
Grasping
= N8P >
Right knowledge
= Craving ends >
Grasping ends >
... >
Suffering ends

N8P and 3 trainings (*sikkhā,* MN 44)

Morality (*sīla*)

Stillness (*samādhi*)

Wisdom (*paññā*)

N8P and 3 trainings (*sikkhā,* MN 44)

Right speech, right action, and right livelihood	= Morality (*sīla*)
Right effort, right mindfulness, and right stillness	= Stillness (*samādhi*)
Right view and right intention	= Wisdom (*paññā*)