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MAHĀSATIPAṬṬHĀNA SUTTA

The Great Discourse on Foundation of Mindfulness

Ekāyano ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo sattānam visuddhiyā,
sokaparidevanam samatikkamāya dukkhadomanassānam
atthaṅgamāya nāyassa adhiḅgamāya nibbānassa
sacchikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhāna.

"This is the only path, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the disappearance of dukkha and discontent, for the acquisition of the Noble Path (nāya), and for the realization of Nibbāna; namely, the four satipaṭṭhānas.

"This is the only Path"

The Pāli word *ekāyana* is composed of two words *eka* (one) and *āyana* (way or path). Here, "one" (*eka*) can mean "only one or only." According to the commentary, therefore, *ekayana* is often translated as "only way."

According Pāli grammar, "one" (*eka*) has many meanings, such as, the first digital number (*sankhyā*), no two or unparalleled (*atulya*), alone or oneself (*asahāya*), unmixed or direct (*amissana*), number one, the best or superior (*seṭṭha*), only one or only (*anaññā*), absolute or unique (*sacca*), certain (*mukhya*), complete (*kevala*), and so on.

The commentary defines the word *ekāyana* according to five meanings of *eka* (one) among others as follows:

- This (great observing power) is the *direct path*, as it has no junction.
- This is the way one must walk *alone* or *oneself*. No one can do this on our behalf.
- This is the way of the *Superior One*, the Buddha who discovered it.
- This is the *certain* way, as it certainly leads to the goal, nibbāna.
- This is the *only* way, as there is no other way that can promise the destination.