Middle Discourses

Bhikkhu Sujato

MIDDLE DISCOURSES

A lucid translation of the Majjhima Nikāya



translated and introduced by

Bhikkhu Sujato

VOLUME 1

MN 1–50

The First Fifty

MŪLAPAṆṆĀSA

SuttaCentral

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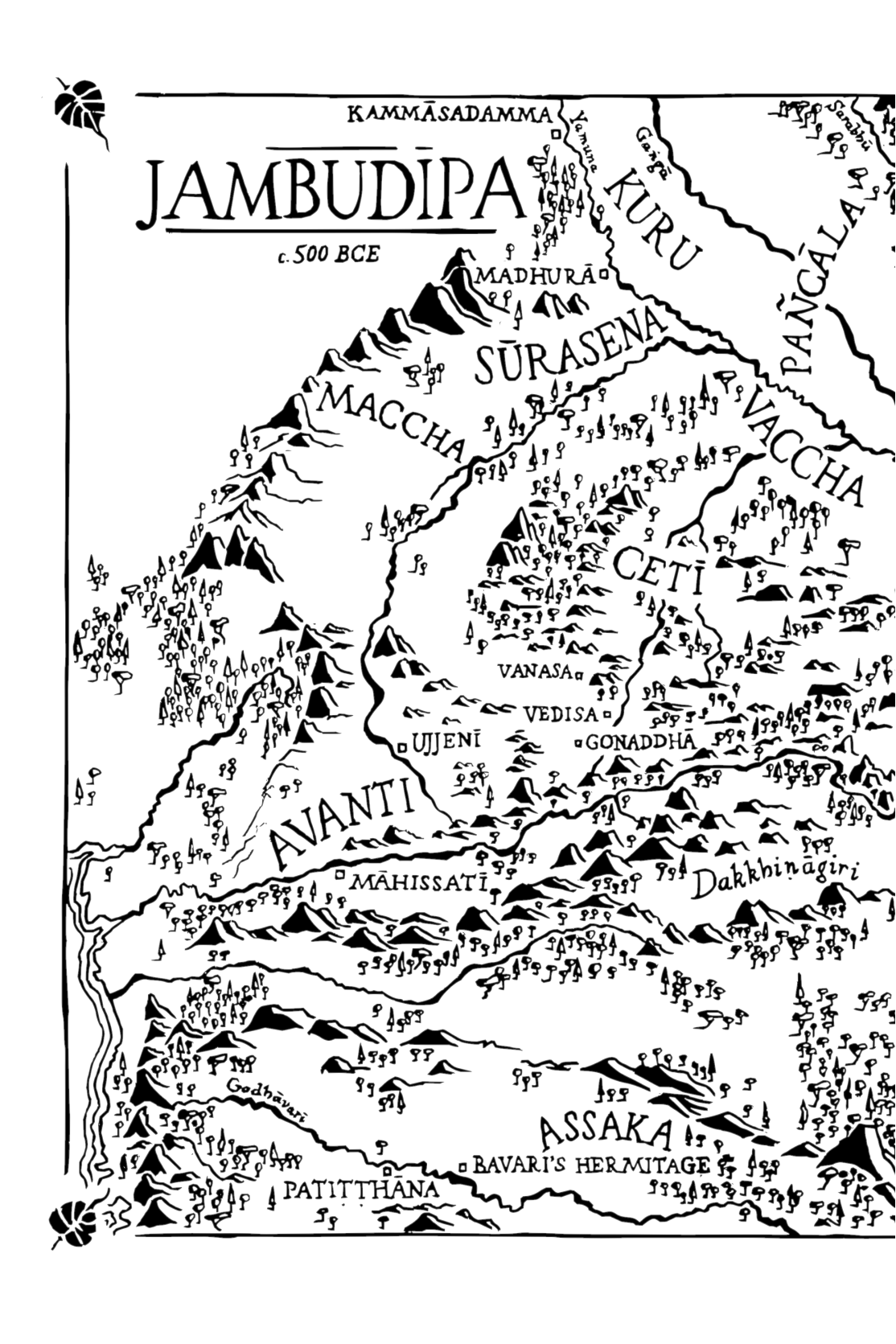
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The sage at peace is not reborn, does not grow old, and does not die. They are not shaken, and do not yearn. For they have nothing which would cause them to be reborn. Not being reborn, how could they grow old? Not growing old, how could they die? Not dying, how could they be shaken? Not shaking, for what could they yearn?

"The Analysis of the Elements"
Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta
Majjhima Nikāya 140


JAMBUDĪPA
c. 500 BCE
KAMMĀSADAMMA
Yamunā
Gaṅgā
KURU
Sarabhū
PAÑCĀLA
MADHURĀ
SŪRASENA
MACCHA
VACCHA
CETĪ
VANASA
VEDISA
UJJENĪ
GONADDHĀ
AVANTI
MĀHISSATĪ
Dakkhiṇāgiri
Godhāvarī
ASSAKA
BAVARI'S HERMITAGE
PATITTHĀNA


Aciravatī
SĀKYA
SETAVYĀ
KAPILAVATTHU
LUMBINĪ
SĀVATTHĪ
VAJJI
VIDEHA
SĀKETA
KUSINĀRĀ
MITHILĀ
Mahī
KOSALA
PĀVĀ
MALLĀ
KESAPUTTA
VESĀLĪ
AYOJJHĀ
BĀRĀṆASĪ
ĀPANA
KOSAMBĪ
KĀSI
GAYĀ
RĀJAGAHA
CAMPĀ
URUVELĀ
Nerañjara
AṄGA
MAGADHA
UKKALĀ
KALIṄGA
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Preface to the Majjhimanikāya

It was in 1992 that I first encountered the Buddha's words. I was in Chieng Mai, having just completed my very first meditation retreat, a month-long *vipassanā* intensive in the Mahasi style. During the retreat, the guides at Wat Ram Poeng told us not to read any books, but to learn only from our own experience. This was an entirely novel concept for me at the time. The retreat, quite frankly, blew my mind.

When the retreat was over reading was allowed, and as a confirmed bookworm from childhood, I couldn't wait to start making sense of all that had happened on my retreat. They gave me some of the then-available books, collections of Dhamma talks and the like. They were fine, but nothing that really sparked my enthusiasm.

I went back and said, "They talk about these things called 'the Suttas'. What are they?"

This was the days before the internet and before the excellent editions by Bhikkhu Bodhi. What they had was the selected discourses from the Majjhima Nikāya translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoḷi, edited and compiled by Bhikkhu Khantipalo as *A Treasury of the Buddha's Words*. Very excited, I took the first volume back to my room and began to read.

Right away I knew. There was something about it. It was not at all what I was expecting. I don't know what I was expecting, but this wasn't it. It was so different than my usual reading. At once transpar-

ent and obscure; forbidding and intimate. The Buddha's voice was refreshingly free of the apologetics and mysticism I associated with "spiritual" literature. He was direct, blunt even. He spoke with the quiet authority of someone who knew what he was talking about.

I took it slow, reading a Sutta per day. There was much that I didn't understand, even with the notes and introductions. But I knew that there were great depths there. This was the Buddha! This would be just the start of a long journey. So I read, slowly, going back over it again and again, digesting as much as I could. When I had the time, I'd read for an hour a day and meditate for a few hours. The teachers at Wat Ram Poeng told us to sit mindfully when learning Dhamma, so I did. I brought as much care and mindful attention to reading as I did to meditation.

Gradually I made my way through the Majjhima Nikāya, learning volumes along the way. I remember some months after that retreat I was staying in Mae Hong Son, at a farm for orphaned children called Buddhakaset. I was there as a volunteer for a while. When the kids had gone to bed, I'd sit in the evening under the shelter of a simple wooden verandah. I'd carefully open my book of Suttas and read the next one, never quite knowing what was to come. There are many things that most Buddhists will encounter and know through Buddhist culture, then rediscover when reading the Suttas. "Ahh, that's where that came from!" For me it was the opposite: I discovered things in the Suttas, then noticed them in Buddhist culture.

I continued these practices through my early years as a monk. Gradually, I read my way through the Suttas, often in the archaic translations that were then available. But I kept the simple approach I had from the start. Read a bit, meditate a lot. Things that I read then have stayed with me until the present.

I reread the Majjhima Nikāya in other translations. First that by I.B. Horner for the Pali Text Society, which was roughly contemporary to that of Ñāṇamoḷi, but which in publication and language seemed of an earlier generation. Then Bhikkhu Bodhi's edition came out, a completely revised and seemingly perfected translation based

on that of Ñāṇamoḷi. Exciting times! I was beginning my Pali studies, but I never expected to one day be making my own translation.

I hope that you might experience something of the joy and inspiration that I found in my discovery of the Suttas. At this point, having been a monk for twenty-five years, it is redundant to say that these teachings changed my life. They might change yours, too, if you let them.

The Middle Discourses: conversations on matters of deep truth

Bhikkhu Sujato, 2019

The Majjhima Nikāya is the second of the four main divisions in the Sutta Piṭaka of the Pali Canon (*tipiṭaka*). It is translated here as *Middle Discourses*, and is sometimes known as the *Middle-Length Discourses*. As the title suggests, its discourses are somewhat shorter than those of the Dīgha Nikāya (*Long Discourses*), but longer than the many short discourses collected in the Saṁyutta Nikāya (*Linked Discourses*) and Aṅguttara Nikāya (*Numbered Discourses*).

In the classic introduction to his translation of the Majjhima Nikāya, Bhikkhu Bodhi described the Majjhima as "the collection that combines the richest variety of contextual settings with the deepest and most comprehensive assortment of teachings". He went on to situate it among the other *nikāyas*:

> Like the Dīgha Nikāya, the Majjhima is replete with drama and narrative, while lacking much of its predecessor's tendency towards imaginative embellishment and profusion of legend. Like the Saṁyutta, it contains some of the profoundest discourses in the Canon, disclosing the Buddha's radical insights into the nature of existence; and like the Aṅguttara, it covers a wide range of topics of practical

applicability. In contrast to those two Nikāyas, however, the Majjhima sets forth this material not in the form of short, self-contained utterances, but in the context of a fascinating procession of scenarios that exhibit the Buddha's resplendence of wisdom, his skill in adapting his teachings to the needs and proclivities of his interlocutors, his wit and gentle humour, his majestic sublimity, and his compassionate humanity.

In this guide, I describe some of the special features of the Majjhima. After noting some formal and doctrinal features, I focus this essay on the Buddha and the people he encountered, whether his monastic Sangha, his lay followers, or the many non-Buddhists he spoke with. The Majjhima includes many of the most important autobiographical discourses, so it is a natural place to discuss the Buddha's life and person. And the dialogue format makes the Majjhima a specially rich context to see how the Dhamma emerged through interaction and conversation with people of all kinds.

How the Majjhima is Organized

There are 152 discourses in the Majjhima. These are collected into groups of 50 discourses (*paṇṇāsa*), although the final *paṇṇāsa* contains 52.

Within each *paṇṇāsa* is a set of five *vaggas*. As usual, most of the *vaggas* are simply named after their first sutta, but a few exhibit some thematic unity:

Opamma Vagga (Chapter With Similes) All these discourses prominently feature similes.

Mahāyamaka Vagga (Large Chapter With Pairs) Paired "long" and "short" discourses. (The following Short Chapter With Pairs only has two sets of pairs.)

Vaggas 6–10 These collect discourses featuring certain kinds of people: householders, mendicants, wanderers, kings, and brahmins.

Vibhaṅga Vagga (Chapter on Analysis) These discourses consist of a lengthy "analysis" of a short saying.

Saḷāyatana Vagga (Chapter on the Six Senses) These focus on the six senses.

Imagery and Narrative

The Majjhima includes an astonishing range of imagery, with similes found in almost all discourses. Sometimes these are extended to short parables. MN 21 *The Simile of the Saw* (*Kakacūpamasutta*) tells the memorable story of the bold maid Kāḷī who tested her mistress. In MN 56:27 *With Upāli* we meet the brahmin lady who wanted to not only dye her pet monkey, but press him and wring him out.

While the Buddha himself speaks only short tales, in the background narratives we find more developed narratives, including famous stories such as the taming of the vicious serial-killer Aṅgulimāla (MN 86) or the uncompromising commitment of the wealthy youth Raṭṭhapāla (MN 82), who defied his parents' will to take ordination, and whose discourse finishes with an extraordinary set of teachings for his king.

Some stories are less earthbound. MN 37 *The Shorter Discourse on the Ending of Craving* (*Cūḷataṇhāsaṅkhayasutta*) depicts Moggallāna ascending to the heaven of Sakka, the lord of gods, to check his indulgence. MN 50 *The Rebuke of Māra* (*Māratajjanīyasutta*) also features Moggallāna, this time in a dialogue with Māra, the lord of deceit and death; and it contains the startling revelation that Moggallāna himself was a Māra in a past life. Such cosmic drama reaches its apex in MN 49 *On the Invitation of Brahmā* (*Brahmanimantanikasutta*), where the Buddha takes on no less than Brahmā himself in a high-level philosophical debate, forcing Māra to reveal himself on the side of Brahmā. From the perspective of early Buddhism, God and the Devil are not so very different.

Theory & Practice

The Majjhima is perhaps the richest of the early Buddhist collections in matters of doctrine. It contains an extraordinary series of discourses that delve into profound topics with detail and complexity not found elsewhere. It's worth bearing in mind, though, that such discourses are for advanced students, and fascinating as they are, it is important to get a solid grounding on the fundamental doctrines collected in the Saṁyutta. For this reason, I reserve most doctrinal explanations for my guide to the Linked Discourses and make only a few brief remarks here.

The teachings familiar from the Saṁyutta are all found in the Majjhima, and in several cases, the Majjhima offers more detailed explanations. These discourses are important and deserve close study, but beware of equating length with importance. In Buddhist texts it's just as likely that length implies, not that it is something the Buddha regarded as important, but that it is a late compilation.

Such is the case with MN 10 *Mindfulness Meditation* (*Satipaṭṭhānasutta*), which, together with its expanded version at DN 22, is the most detailed explanation of mindfulness meditation in the canon. Yet critical and comparative analysis reveals that the discourse as found in the Pali has been subject to considerable late development. MN 141 *The Analysis of the Truths* (*Saccavibhaṅgasutta*), the most detailed discourse of the four noble truths, is closely related to MN 10—in fact DN 22 is virtually a combination of this and MN 10—and it too might be suspected to have late features. No such doubt attends to MN 111 *One by One* (*Anupadasutta*), which is clearly a late sutta. This is not the place for a complex discussion of text-critical method, but it is common and natural to assume that length implies importance, and it is worth bearing in mind that the situation is more complicated than that.

Majjhima suttas that deal with key doctrinal teachings can be understood as offering in-depth analyses of particular factors of the four noble truths. The first truth of suffering is explored in detail in

MN 13 and MN 14 on the "Mass of Suffering". Various topics under this heading are also treated in detail; the six sense fields are taught in several suttas (MN 18, MN 137, MN 138) and even an entire *vagga* (MN 143–152), while several suttas investigate the teaching on the elements in great detail, exposing depths that one might not suspect for what appears to be such a simple teaching (MN 28, MN 115, MN 140). The aggregates appear, but are treated in less detail.

The second and third noble truths are featured in MN 38, a complex and rewarding discourse on dependent origination, as well as MN 135 and MN 136, two of the most detailed and influential discourses on the topic of *kamma*; see too MN 120.

But it is the fourth noble truth, the path, that dominates the Majjhima. The vast majority of discourses deal with the path as a central topic. The noble eightfold path is treated in complex detail at MN 117 *The Great Forty* (*Mahācattārīsakasutta*), and several discourses deal with specific path factors. In MN 9, Venerable Sāriputta presents the topic of right view from a diverse range of perspectives. The second path factor, right thought or right intention, is the special subject of MN 19 and MN 20, which give advice from the Buddha's own experience on how to first purify thought and then let it go entirely. The path factors on ethics are treated in too many suttas to be summarized here; some of these are covered in the sections on the Saṅgha and the lay communities. Right effort is featured in many suttas but is especially emphasized in texts such as MN 29, MN 30, and MN 32. MN 10, as noted, deals with right mindfulness, and the topic is treated from more specialized angles in MN 118 on mindfulness of breathing, and MN 119 on mindfulness of the body. In MN 77 we find a long list of different presentations of the path, including the topics found as heads in the Saṁyutta, and quite a few more.

Right immersion or *jhāna*, the final factor of the path, is prominent throughout the Majjhima. It is difficult to overstate how central the *jhānas* are to Buddhist meditation. The formula for the four absorptions appears around 50 times in the Majjhima, which is probably more than the formulas for all the other path factors *combined*.

Moreover, right immersion appears also in other guises, such as the four "divine meditations" (*brahmavihāra*), where the pure emotions of love, compassion, rejoicing, and equanimity serve as a basis for immersion. These appear around 13 times in the Majjhima. The even more subtle "formless" meditations are also a frequent topic, also appearing no less than 13 times. Unlike the absorptions, these are not an absolute requirement for the path to awakening, but clearly they were part of the practice for many talented meditators. Discourses such as MN 52 *The Man From the City of Aṭṭhaka* (*Aṭṭhakanāgarasutta*) combine these three sets of meditations, while advanced texts such as MN 43 *The Great Classification* (*Mahāvedallasutta*), MN 44 *The Shorter Classification* (*Cūḷavedallasutta*), MN 106 *Āneñjasappāyasutta*, MN 121 *The Shorter Discourse on Emptiness* (*Cūḷasuññatasutta*), and MN 122 *The Longer Discourse on Emptiness* (*Mahāsuññatasutta*) deal with rarely-discussed subtleties and refinements pertaining to the most advanced forms of meditation.

The Buddha

The story of the Buddha's life has become a primary vehicle for sharing and passing down Buddhist teachings and values in the Buddhist traditions. Yet there is no coherent biography of the Buddha in the early texts. Such information as we do have is scattered and piecemeal, found in the occasional details shared by the Buddha himself or inferred from the various situations in which we find him.

But perhaps this shouldn't come as such a surprise. There's no particular reason for the Buddha to be interested in telling his life story—he had lived it. And his disciples knew him personally. Only after he had passed away did the community feel the need to keep their teacher's memory alive through vivid and detailed stories, growing more elaborate with every telling.

The broad outlines of the later Buddha legends grew out of the kernels in the early texts, many of which are found in the Majjhima. There we find the Buddha's birth, his early upbringing, renunciation,

practice and awakening, challenges involved in setting up a community, and various encounters while teaching. In the Dīgha we find the longest narrative of early Buddhism, an extensive record of the Buddha's last days found in DN 16 *Mahāparinibbāna*. And scattered throughout the texts we find isolated events and encounters. In one sense, most of the discourses can be considered as episodes of the Buddha's life, vignettes in a magnificent myth, each one contributing a little to understanding the man and his message. These texts form our primary source of knowledge for the Buddha's early life and teaching career. While the tendency towards legend-building is apparent in some places, most of these episodes are simple and realistic.

An exception is MN 123 *Incredible and Amazing* (*Acchariyaabbhutasutta*), where we find Ānanda, the founder of Buddhist biography, recounting an extended series of apparently miraculous events that accompanied the birth of the Buddha-to-be. This is evidently derived from DN 14 *Mahāpadāna* with some expansions. With its devotional tone and emphasis on the extraordinary, this text shows a shift in emphasis towards honoring the person of the Buddha rather than practicing his teachings; a shift that the Buddha resists by pointing out that the truly extraordinary thing is to be aware of one's own mind.

The Buddha's immediate family is mentioned only rarely in the *nikāyas*. The Buddha's wife appears only in the Vinaya and Therīgāthā, where she has some verses. His son Rāhula is prominently featured in several discourses (MN 61, MN 62, MN 147), showing the Buddha's patient teaching and Rāhula's eventual awakening. The Buddha's father is briefly mentioned in the passage below on meditation as a child. Both his parents are mentioned in several Majjhima discourses (MN 26, MN 36, MN 85, MN 100), but they are only named elsewhere: Suddhodana his father in Snp 3.11 and Kd 1:54; Māyā his mother in Thig 6.6; and both in DN 14 and Thag 10.1. His stepmother Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, however, appears in a few discourses, notably MN 142 *The Analysis of Religious Donations*

(*Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta*), and AN 8.51. More distant relatives include several well-known monastic and lay figures such as Ānanda, Anuruddha, and Mahānāma.

In MN 75:10 *With Māgaṇḍiya* the Buddha recounts the luxuries he enjoyed as a young man (cp. AN 3.39), and in MN 26:13 he tells of the painful moment when he left home, though his parents wept in distress. An alternate account of the going forth is found in the distinctive and early Attadaṇḍa Sutta, where going forth is prompted not by the sight of old age, sickness, and death, but by seeing the unceasing conflict and distress of the world (Snp 4.15).

There follows the story of the six years of striving, divided into three periods. It seems that he first practiced under a Brahmanical tradition, probably following the Upaniṣadic philosophy. MN 26 *The Noble Search* (*Ariyapariyesanasutta*, also known as the *Pāsarāsisutta*) tells of his experience under the famed spiritual guides Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. Under their tutelage, he realized deep immersion (*samādhi*) and formless attainments, but he was still unsatisfied, so he left to embark on a more severe ascetic path.

According to the traditions, the bulk of this period was spent enduring harsh austerities, practices that are similar or identical to those observed by the Jains. These are described in detail in MN 12 *The Longer Discourse on the Lion's Roar* (*Mahāsīhanādasutta*) and MN 36 *The Longer Discourse With Saccaka*. But after many years of such self-mortification, he was getting nowhere. So he took some solid food and, recalling his childhood experience of absorption, began the third and final phase of his practice, which led to his awakening.

While it might seem as if the night of awakening followed directly from his rejection of austerities, several discourses indicate that this period involved a rather extensive development of meditation. MN 19 *Two Kinds of Thought* (*Dvedhāvitakkasutta*), for example, tells of his analysis and training in wholesome thought; MN 4 *Fear and Terror* (*Bhayabheravasutta*) depicts his struggles to overcome fear; and MN 128 *Corruptions* (*Upakkilesasutta*) speaks of a series of specific meditative hindrances he encountered (see too AN 8.64 and

AN 9.40). While his reflections on pursuing a path of practice are always logical, in AN 5.196 we read about an extraordinary series of dreams that foretold his awakening; the symbolism of the dream imagery repays careful attention.

It is in the Majjhima (MN 36, MN 85, MN 100) that the Buddha speaks of that crucial moment in his childhood where he spontaneously entered the first absorption, a state of profound peace and stillness in meditation. Much later, when he arrived at a crisis in his spiritual progress, he was to recall this event and realize that meditative absorption was the only true path to awakening (*eso'va maggo bodhāya*).

The Buddha's awakening is told from several different perspectives. In MN 4 *Bhayabherava*, after describing how he overcame his fears, the Buddha tells how he developed the absorptions and gained the three higher knowledges. In MN 14 *The Shorter Discourse on the Mass of Suffering* (*Cūḷadukkhakkhandha*) he speaks of the escape from suffering by letting go of sensual pleasures; see too SN 35.117. Several discourses employ the stock framework of understanding the three aspects of gratification, drawback, and escape, applying this to the five aggregates (SN 22.26), the elements (SN 14.31), feelings (SN 36.24), or the world (AN 3.101). Elsewhere awakening is seen as a result of understanding dependent origination (SN 12.10, DN 14). Other contexts depict awakening as emerging from different practices, such as the four kinds of mindfulness meditation (SN 47.31), the four bases of psychic powers (SN 51.9), or the abandoning of thoughts (MN 19). This is far from an exhaustive list, as all of the Buddha's teachings depict different aspects of the wisdom that stems from awakening.

The period after the awakening is told in some detail, recounting the Buddha's journeys, various encounters along the way, his first conversions, and setting up the Sangha. However the detailed account of this is in the Vinaya (Kd 1), and only portions of these events are found in the *nikāyas*, such as the first three sermons (SN 56.11, SN 22.59, SN 35.28).

The Buddha followed the same simple lifestyle as his monastic disciples. His possessions consisted of a single set of three robes, a bowl, and a few other sundry items. He stayed for the most part in Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery near Sāvatthī, although he spent time also in other monasteries. While in a monastery he lived in a simple hut. The year was divided into three seasons—hot, rainy, and cold. During the rainy season he always stayed in a monastery, while for the other seasons he might also wander the countryside.

A typical day would begin with early rising for meditation. The approaching dawn signaled the start of the day's activities, particularly the daily alms round. Now, while in the monastery, monastics would typically wear only a lower sarong-like robe (and an upper cloth for the nuns). So, some time after dawn, they would dress in the full set of three robes before proceeding to a nearby village or town for alms round. During the alms round, as may be seen in Buddhist lands today, lay folk would put some food in the bowl to be eaten that day. Buddhist monastics are not allowed to receive money. The monastics would eat once or twice a day, but always between dawn and noon.

Normally the mendicants would retire after the morning meal to solitude for the day's meditation, either in their huts or perhaps in a nearby forest or some other quiet spot. In the hot season the Buddha would sometimes have a short siesta in the afternoon (MN 36:46). Towards evening the Buddha would emerge and would often give teachings or answer questions. But this was spontaneous, and not a fixed routine. Then he would meditate until late at night, needing only a few hours sleep in the middle of the night.

MN 91 *With Brahmāyu* describes his behavior in minute detail, recording the tiny nuances of mindfulness and care that he brought to every activity. His followers saw him as the embodiment of the highest truth. Discerning his realization in every detail of his words and acts, they could be moved to exalted praise in passages of joy and high beauty (MN 92 *With Sela*, AN 6.43, AN 10.30, SN 8.7). However, far from encouraging mindless devotion, the Buddha en-

couraged his students to investigate him, prescribing a rigorous and detailed set of tests that a good spiritual teacher should pass (MN 47 *The Inquirer*).

This brief description does not do justice to the impact that the Buddha had on those who encountered him. He is constantly praised as the one who arises in the world out of compassion for sentient beings (MN 4), who is perfected in good qualities (MN 38), whose arising is the manifestation of a great light (AN 1.175–AN 1.177), who fully understands whatever is knowable (MN 1; AN 4.23), and possesses complete confidence and courage no matter what the context (MN 12). He possessed overwhelming physical beauty and charisma, making an unforgettable impression on many of the people he encountered (MN 26, AN 4.36), but he told overzealous devotees to forget about his "putrid body" (SN 22.87).

While as a person he was unique and unequaled in his time (MN 56; AN 1.174), as the "Realized One" (*tathāgatha*) the Buddha was one of a series of awakened masters of truly cosmic significance. His understanding did not just pertain to the narrow locale of his own time and place, but was equally relevant to all sentient beings in all realms at all times.

Other Buddhas have arisen in the past and will arise again in the future, with the same realization and teachings. A detailed list of past Buddhas is found at DN 14 *Mahāpadāna*. Mentions elsewhere, such as the Buddhas Kakusandha in MN 50 and Kassapa in MN 81, show that the underlying idea was current throughout the *nikāyas* (See too SN 12.4–10, AN 3.80, and AN 5.180).

MN 116 *At Isigili* also refers to the so-called "Buddhas awakened for themselves" (*paccekabuddha*), a mysterious kind of sage who has realized the same truths as the "fully awakened Buddha" (*sammāsambuddha*) but does not establish a religious movement.

Despite his exalted and revered status, the Buddha in the *nikāyas* had not yet been elevated to the cosmic divinity who appears in later Buddhism. For all his extraordinary qualities, he remains a very human figure. Nowhere does he say that his practice in past lives

led to his awakening in this life; there is no mention of the *pāramīs*. Indeed, in one of the rare occasions when he refers to a past life (MN 81 *With Ghaṭikāra*), he appears decidedly un-enlightened.

In the early texts, the term *bodhisatta* means "one intent on awakening". It primarily refers to the period after leaving home and before awakening. The Buddha-to-be is not described as following a path that he had started long ago, but as exploring the different options available to him, uncertain as to how awakening may be gained. His crucial insight came, not through vows made in past lives, but when he remembered the time he fell into absorption (*jhāna*) as a child.

The Buddha goes to great lengths to detail the many trials and experiments he undertook before his path was mature. His truly special quality was that he discovered the path through his own efforts, and later taught that same path to his disciples. Even disciples who had realized the same liberation and understanding revered the Buddha as the one of unsurpassed wisdom and compassion who illuminated the path for others.

The Stages of Awakening

Spiritual enlightenment or awakening in Buddhism is not seen as a vague or unknown quantity. On the contrary, it is specific, precise, and repeatable. The texts develop a detailed typology of enlightened beings. There are four main stages, subdivided into eight. These are called the "noble disciples" (*ariyasāvaka*) or "good people" (*sappurisa*). These are presented from different perspectives throughout the texts; here is an overview.

The factors of the path are developed until they are all present to a sufficient degree of maturity. At this point one is said to be a "follower of the teachings" (*dhammānusāri*) or "follower by faith" (*saddhānusāri*), depending on whether wisdom or faith is predominant (MN 70:20). Such a person is also called "one who is on the path to stream-entry" (MN 142:5, MN 48:15). They will realize the Dhamma in this life, yet they have still not seen a vision of the

Dhamma and their understanding is still to a degree conceptual (SN 25.1). How far and fast they proceed depends on the strength of their faculties and their effort.

The texts are unclear as to whether such a person definitively knows that they have reached this point. No such ambiguity attaches to the moment of actually realizing stream-entry, however. It hits like a flash of lightning in the dead of night (AN 3.25), and you will remember precisely when and where it happened (Pj 4). You have a vision of the four noble truths, at which point the conceptual understanding of the path becomes fully experiential (SN 25.1). Letting go of three fetters (*saṁyojana*)—doubt, misapprehension of precepts and vows, and any views that identify a self with the aggregates—one reaches the first stage of awakening, known as "stream entry".

A stream-enterer is bound for awakening, free from any rebirth in lower realms (MN 6; SN 55.1), and is reborn a maximum of seven times (AN 3.88). They have eliminated a huge mass of suffering; what's left is like seven small pebbles compared to the Himalayas (SN 56.59). They are generous, devoted, and naturally keep the five precepts at a minimum (MN 53; SN 12.41; AN 7.6). They understand the four noble truths and dependent origination and have no doubts as to the Buddha, his teaching, or his Saṅgha (MN 7; SN 12.41). Yet there are still attachments; one may still sorrow when relatives pass away (Ud 8.8), or suffer moments of grief or despair (DN 16:5.13).

When a stream-enterer further develops the path, they are said to be on the path to once-return; with the lessening of greed and hate they reach the state of a once-returner. At this point one will be reborn in this world once only. Again developing the path one completely eliminates greed and hate, at which point one is considered a non-returner. Such a person is reborn usually in one of the special realms of high divinity known as the Pure Abodes, and from there attains full extinguishment. However, in certain cases a non-returner may become fully extinguished before being reborn (AN 3.88).

Yet even the exalted state of the non-returner is not entirely free from attachments. They have perfected ethics and immersion, yet their wisdom is still not complete. They still have the five higher fetters: attachment to rebirth in the realms of luminous form and the formless; a restless urgency to reach full awakening; a residual sense of self, or conceit; and ignorance.

Once again they further develop the path until they attain full perfection. A perfected one, or arahant, has fully eliminated all defilements, has made an end of rebirth, and when this life is over will suffer no more. Their liberation is identical to that of the Buddha. Since they have no hindrances or defilements of mind, they can attain deep meditation whenever they want, and their lives are full of joy and peace. They feel no grief, no anxiety, no confusion or doubt. A perfected one lives only in accordance with the Dhamma, and is incapable of reverting to worldly ways, or of indulging in material desires. They live a life of serenity and virtue, preferring seclusion and meditation, but are selfless in service, helping others whenever they can, especially through teaching. They are devoid of fear and have complete equanimity when faced with death (MN 140:24). They still experience the pain of the body, but have no mental suffering at all (SN 36.6).

The Monastic Disciples

Although we think of the suttas as "teachings of the Buddha", in fact only about a quarter of the discourses in the Majjhima feature the Buddha simply delivering a discourse to the assembly. Over half the discourses consist of dialogues (*vyākaraṇa*). Sometimes the Buddha asks a question and leads the assembly through a process of Socratic inquiry. Sometimes a seeker asks a question or a series of questions. The Buddha may answer in various ways—sometimes directly, sometimes with a counter-question, sometimes with a lengthy analysis—depending on the nature of the question and the questioner. And intriguingly, he sometimes doesn't answer at all.

And as well as featuring in one way or another in most of the discourses, various disciples serve as primary teachers in about a fifth of the discourses of the Majjhima, continuing the Buddha's work of exploring and explaining the teachings. In the Majjhima Nikāya we meet a range of skilled and accomplished teachers, many of whom became widely famed in the Buddhist traditions. From the beginning of his dispensation, the Buddha was eager to empower his followers, encouraging them to share the teaching to the best of their ability.

Nine discourses are spoken by the Buddha's chief disciple and renowned General of the Dhamma, Sāriputta. These include MN 9, a wide-ranging exploration of the many facets of right view; MN 28, which shows how all the teachings can be included in the four noble truths; and MN 141, giving a fully detailed explanation of the four noble truths based on the Buddha's first sermon. In these discourses Sāriputta shows his interest in developing a systematic overview of the Dhamma. Such analyses are one of the primary inspirations behind the later development of the Abhidhamma texts, and Sāriputta is rightly regarded as one of the fathers of the Abhidhamma.

Mahākaccāna is another monk of renowned wisdom, whose incisive analytic style, with a special focus on the process of sense experience, also influenced the Abhidhamma. He spoke four discourses in the Majjhima. MN 18, the "Honey Cake" demonstrates his unmatched skill in drawing out subtle implications of brief teachings by the Buddha. This discourse received a detailed treatment in Katukurunde Nyanananda's *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought,* one of the most influential monographs in modern Buddhist studies.

MN 24, a dialogue between Sāriputta and Puṇṇa Mantāṇiputta, speaks of a relay of chariots, introducing the idea of the seven stages of purification that was to greatly influence the concept of stages of insight in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* and, from there, contemporary Theravada meditation.

The nun Dhammadinnā presents the only discourse by a *bhikkhunī* in the Majjhima. It seems that the teachings by women in the suttas, while rare, were included because of their unique and striking wisdom. In MN 44 she responds to a series of questions by her former husband, revealing her depth of meditative accomplishment and wisdom.

Further discourses by disciples include several by Moggallāna, Anuruddha, and others. And we cannot pass a discussion on disciples without mentioning Ānanda, who lived closest to the Buddha, and through whom, according to tradition, all the texts passed. Ānanda is the main teacher in seven discourses, and features in many more. Ānanda has a specially close interest in the personal life of the Buddha, and it is with him that the Buddha's life story began to take on its familiar form.

The Saṅgha

Mighty in wisdom though they were, the enlightened disciples of the Buddha did not exist in isolation. They were part of an organized spiritual community called the Saṅgha, or "Monastic Order". *Saṅgha* as a religious term is used in two specific senses: the "monastic order" (*bhikkhusaṅgha*) and the "community of noble disciples" (*sāvakasaṅgha*; the expected term *ariyasaṅgha* only appears in one verse at AN 6.54). The former term refers to those who have taken ordination and practice as a Buddhist mendicant, while the latter refers to someone who has reached one of the stages of awakening, which may, of course, include lay followers.

The distinction between these two is not as clear-cut as one might imagine. The standard formula describing the Saṅgha in the recollection of the Triple Gem mentions the eight kinds of noble disciple on the path. But it also describes them in terms typical of the monastic order, for example as a "field of merit". It is difficult to draw a decisive conclusion from this, however, as this formula appears to be a composite one. As a general rule, it is safe to assume that, unless the

context specifies the Saṅgha of noble disciples, it is referring to the monastic order.

The monastic community was established shortly after the Buddha's awakening, as told in the first chapter of the Vinaya Khandhakas, known as the Mahākkhandhaka or the Pabbajjakkhandhaka (Kd 1). Portions of that narrative appear in the suttas, but the entire story should really be read.

The early Saṅgha consisted of a small community of advanced spiritual practitioners; according to the texts, they were all perfected ones. Famously, the Buddha urged his followers to wander the countryside, teaching the Dhamma for the benefit of all people (SN 4.5). This sets the example for how the Buddha was to relate to his community. He did not operate as a guru figure who insisted on obedience and treated his followers as dependents. On the contrary, he treated his community as adults who could make their own choices, and he trusted them to make their own contributions. To be sure, at this early stage they were all awakened; but this policy continued throughout his life, even up to his deathbed when this had long ceased to be the case.

Kd 1 tells the story of how the ordination procedure evolved. Originally the Buddha himself simply invited his followers with the words "Come, mendicant!" Later, as the number of candidates grew, the Buddha allowed the mendicants to perform ordination themselves using a simple ceremony of going to the three refuges; this is still used for novice ordinations. Eventually, the procedure was formalized in the mature form as a "motion and three announcements". The mature form of ordination ceremony had various formal and legalistic elements: a set of questions was given to vet the candidates; the questioners were formally appointed by the Saṅgha; the candidates, having been questioned, were assigned a mentor; and the entire Saṅgha gave their assent to the ordination. The entire procedure is straightforward and legalistic, devoid of ritual or embellishment. The core of the procedure is still followed today, although

the traditions have adorned the bare bones of the procedure with a colorful range of rituals and celebrations.

This procedure set the template for the proceedings of the Sangha. It is by consensus: the Saṅgha as a whole gives the ordination (*saṁgho itthannāmaṁ upasampādeti*). If even a single mendicant dissents the ordination does not proceed. Contrary to a misunderstanding that is unfortunately common even within the Saṅgha, the mentor—called *upajjhāya* for the monks or *pavattinī* for the nuns—does not perform the ordination; they are appointed by the Saṅgha to support the new monastics.

For legal purposes the Saṅgha is the community within the "boundary" (*sīmā*), which is an arbitrary area formally designated by the local community; typically it would have been the grounds of a monastery, but it could have been much bigger or smaller (see Kd 2). This is an important pragmatic point: the Saṅgha is decentralized. It is impractical to expect all mendicants from all over the world to come together to agree, so all procedures are based on the local community.

There is no hierarchy in the Saṅgha: all members have the same say. Respect is owed to seniors on account of their experience and wisdom, but this does not translate to a power of command. No Saṅgha member has the right to force anyone to do anything, and if a senior Saṅgha member, even one's mentor or teacher, tells one to do something that is against the Dhamma or Vinaya, one is obligated to disobey. As an example of how the mendicants were to make decisions, MN 17 *Jungle Thickets* (*Vanapatthasutta*) gives some guidelines for whether a mendicant should stay in a monastery or leave; there is no question of being ordered to go to one place or the other.

The Saṅgha soon set up monasteries, with relatively settled communities. Typically mendicants would stay in monasteries for part of the year, especially in the three months of the rainy season retreat, while much of the rest of the year may have been spent wandering. They would meet together each fortnight for the "sabbath"

(*uposatha*), during which time there would be teachings (MN 109 *The Longer Discourse on the Full-Moon Night, Mahāpuṇṇamasutta*), and later, the recitation of the monastic rules (*pātimokkha*).

At some point a community of nuns (*bhikkhunīs*) was set up along the lines of the monks' order. The traditional account says that this was on the instigation of the Buddha's stepmother, Mahapajāpatī Gotamī. However, the account as preserved today is deeply problematic both textually and ethically, and cannot be accepted without reservation. In any case, we know that a nuns' community was established and that it ran on mostly independent grounds. The nuns built their own monasteries (Bi Pj 5), took their own students (Thig 5.11), studied the texts (Bi Pc 33), developed meditation (SN 47.10), wandered the countryside (Bi Pc 50), and achieved the wisdom of awakening (MN 44 *The Shorter Classification, Cūḷavedallasutta*). While it is true that certain of the rules as they exist today discriminate against the nuns, other rules protect them; for example, the monks are forbidden from having a nun wash their robes, thus preventing the monks from treating the nuns like domestic servants. When monks taught the nuns, they did so respectfully, engaging with them as equals (MN 146 *Advice from Nandaka*). The order of nuns gave women of the time a rare opportunity to pursue their own spiritual path, supported by the community. It survived through the years in the East Asian traditions, and in recent years has been revived within the Tibetan and Theravādin schools.

Note that in the suttas, the term *bhikkhu* (masculine gender) is used as a generic term to include both monks and nuns. That nuns were included in the generic masculine is clear from such contexts as AN 4.170, where Ānanda begins by referring to "monks and nuns" and continues with just "monks", or DN 16, which speaks of "monks and nuns" but uses a masculine pronoun to refer to them both. That the default masculine may refer to women is further confirmed by passages such as Thig 16.1, where the lady Sumedhā is called *putta* by her father. *Putta* as "son" contrasts with *dhītā* as "daughter", but this passage shows it can be used in the generic sense of "child" as

well. In general teaching, it is likely that monks and nuns, as well as lay people, would have been present, yet the texts by convention are addressed to "monks" (*bhikkhave*). Hence I have rendered *bhikkhu* throughout with the gender-neutral "mendicant", except where it is necessary to distinguish the genders, in which case I use "monk". In the Vinaya Piṭaka, however, the texts are by default separated by gender, so it is best to use "monk" there. Note too that "mendicant" is what *bhikkhu* actually means: it refers to someone who makes a living by walking for alms.

Originally the Saṅgha followed an informal set of principles considered appropriate for ascetics, which was similar to those followed by other ascetic groups. These are retained in detail in the ethics portion of the Gradual Training (MN 51; DN 1, etc.). The Buddha initially refused to set up a formal system of monastic law, but eventually the Saṅgha grew so large that such a system became necessary (Bu Pj 1). This is detailed in the extensive texts of the Vinaya Piṭaka. Note that when the word *vinaya* is used in the four *nikāyas*, it rarely refers to the Vinaya Piṭaka. Normally it is a general term for the practical application of the teaching: *dhammavinaya* means something like "theory and practice".

Scattered throughout the four *nikāyas* we find a fair number of teachings intended for the monastic community. Sometimes these refer to technical procedures of the Vinaya Piṭaka, probably to make sure that students of the suttas would be familiar with them (MN 104 *At Sāmagāma*). More commonly, however, they were general principles of ethics, laying down guidelines for a harmonious and flourishing spiritual community.

In MN 3 *Dhammadāyāda* the Buddha teaches his mendicants to be his "heirs in the teaching", inheriting spiritual, not material things from their Teacher. In MN 5 *Unblemished* (*Anaṅgaṇasutta*), Venerables Sāriputta and Moggallāna speak of the those who have "blemishes" that spoil their spiritual integrity. When guilty of an offense, rather than clearing it by confession, they hide it. Or they hope the Buddha asks them a question about the teaching, or that they get

the best food at mealtime. Such things appear small, but over time they corrupt, so they must be polished off diligently, for scrupulous attention to ethics is the foundation for all higher achievements in the spiritual path (MN 6 *One Might Wish, Ākaṅkheyyasutta*). It is essential for community members to be open to admonition, for otherwise they cannot identify their flaws and heal them (MN 15 *Measuring Up, Anumānasutta*). But a community cannot be based on sniping and criticism, but on love, generosity, and respect (MN 16 *Emotional Barrenness, Cetokhilasutta*).

Not all were satisfied with the Buddha's path. A certain Sunakkhatta—familiar from DN 24—disrobed, for he wanted to see more miracles, and thought the mere ending of suffering was a poor goal (MN 12; see too MN 63). The monk Ariṭṭha went even further, directly contradicting the fundamental principles of the Dhamma by declaring that the things the Buddha said were harmful were not, in fact, harmful (MN 22 *The Simile of the Snake, Alagaddūpamasutta*). This event prompted the establishment of several Vinaya rules, showing the interdependence of these bodies of literature (Bu Pc 68, Bu Pc 69; Kd 11).

Sometimes problems went beyond just an individual, and a whole community could split apart. MN 48 *The Mendicants of Kosambi*, which also has parallels in the Vinaya, tells of how a community can be split because of an apparently trivial difference. They became so consumed by anger and conceit that they even ignored the Buddha's attempts at reconciliation. Eventually, though, they came to their senses. Likewise, the monks at Cātuma (MN 67) were so unruly the Buddha dismissed them, but was persuaded to relent.

Reconciliation and growth is also the message of MN 65 *With Bhaddāli*, where the Buddha requests that the mendicants eat before noon. Bhaddāli refuses, out of greed and stubbornness, but later accepts the Buddha's ruling and is forgiven. This rule was a big deal, for it is also discussed in MN 66 and MN 70.

But in general the suttas paint a glowingly positive view of the renunciate life, leaving the Vinaya Piṭaka to deal with the nitty-gritty

of human failings. MN 31 *The Shorter Discourse at Gosiṅga* (*Cūḷa-gosiṅgasutta* depicts an idyllic fellowship of three monks living in gracious and fulfilling harmony, where the simplicity and purity of their lifestyle form the basis for advanced meditation (see MN 128 *Corruptions, Upakkilesasutta*, which shares the same setting). The Saṅgha lives honoring the Buddha not out of fear but from genuine love and respect (MN 77 *The Longer Discourse with Sakuludāyī*). By practicing in line with the Dhamma, they honor their Teacher and become worthy of their alms-food (MN 151 *The Purification of Alms, Piṇḍapātapārisuddhisutta*).

The Wider Community

The monastics are far from the only people we meet. In his wide wanderings across the Ganges plain, the Buddha interacted with a wide cross-section of the local peoples: learned brahmins and simple villagers; kings and slaves; priests and prostitutes; women and men; children and the elderly; the devout and the skeptical; the sick and the disabled; those seeking to disparage and those sincerely seeking the truth.

It should not be thought that teachings for monastics and lay were completely separated. For example, MN 7 *The Simile of the Cloth* (*Vatthasutta* or *Vatthūpamasutta*) begins with a standard teaching to the mendicants about purifying the mind, leading up to the divine meditations and full awakening. The Buddha calls such a person "bathed with the inner bathing". At this, the brahmin Sundarika—who happened to be sitting nearby—protested, saying that the brahmins attested to the purifying properties of bathing in the river Bāhuka. This casual example shows that, even when a discourse is addressed to the mendicants, a wide range of people, including non-Buddhists, might be present.

The brahmin from MN 7 ended up taking ordination. However, there are also many cases of long-term practitioners who remained in the lay life. In MN 14 *Cūḷadukkhakkhandha*, the Buddha's relative

Mahānāma laments that despite his long years of practice, he still has greed, hate, and delusion. Lay meditators struggled to find deep peace of mind in those days, just like today.

Such cases show how the Buddha spoke to individuals, addressing their specific needs and concerns. Elsewhere he gave more general discourses on ethical principles. In MN 41 *The People of Sālā* (*Sāleyyakasutta*), he teaches a group of non-Buddhist lay people what are commonly called the "ten ways of doing skillful deeds" (*dasakusalakammapathā*; see AN 10.176):

1. No killing
2. No stealing
3. No sexual misconduct
4. True speech
5. Harmonious speech
6. Gentle speech
7. Meaningful speech
8. No covetousness
9. No ill will
10. Right view

The first three pertain to the body; the second four to speech, and the final three to the mind. These extend the well-known five precepts, offering a complete guide to ethical living. They are taught in many places in the suttas, and here they are defined in detail.

While in the Majjhima, and everywhere in the canon, formalistic and artificial settings dominate, several discourses have somewhat messy narrative structures, which seem to preserve the memory of real-life incidents. In MN 51 *With Kandaraka* the Buddha is approached by an elephant driver named Pessa and a wandering ascetic named Kandaraka. Kandaraka is impressed by the silence of the Saṅgha, prompting the Buddha to attribute this to their practice of mindfulness meditation. Pessa intervenes, saying that lay folk also sometimes practice mindfulness, and the Buddha engages him on the topic of people who act for their own harm or benefit, or

that of others; a topic familiar from the Aṅguttara (AN 4.198). But Pessa has to leave, at which the Buddha says he would have benefited by staying. The mendicants ask the Buddha to finish what he was about to say, at which he gives a lengthy version of the Gradual Training. We don't hear about what happened to either Pessa or Kandaraka. We do, however, find the Gradual Training taught to lay folk elsewhere, for example by Ānanda on the occasion of opening a new community hall belonging to his clan, the Sakyans (MN 53 *A Trainee*, *Sekhasutta*). Indeed, the gradual progress of a mendicant is compared with a graduated professional education of an accountant (MN 107 *With Moggallāna the Accountant*, *Gaṇakamoggallānasutta*).

In addition to personal problems and general ethical teachings, the Buddha responded to criticisms of his community, not with defensiveness, but by a clear explanation. In MN 55 *With Jīvaka*, the Buddha's physician reports that people are saying that the Buddha eats meat that has been slaughtered on purpose for him. The Buddha denies this, saying that he and his mendicants only accept food that has been freely offered, and will refuse any meat they suspect has been killed for them.

While the critics are not identified in MN 55, MN 56 *With Upāli* and MN 58 *With Prince Abhaya* (*Abhayarājakumārasutta*) depicts the Jains as deliberately trying to take down the Buddha in debate, and—since these are Buddhist texts—failing. Brahmins attempt the same trick, sending their most precocious scholars against the Buddha with no more success (MN 93, MN 95).

A few discourses focus not on the Buddha's message as such, but on the impact it had on family life. When the wealthy young man Raṭṭhapāla ordains, his parents are highly distressed and try to entice him to disrobe (MN 82). MN 87 *Born From the Beloved* (*Piyajātikasutta*) gives us a glimpse into the family life of King Pasenadi and Queen Mallikā. They hear of the Buddha's teaching that our loved ones bring us suffering, and when Mallikā agrees with this, her husband is not pleased at all. Mallikā is careful to first confirm that the teaching was what the Buddha said, then she gently and

kindly explains the teaching to the King, leading him to announce his faith in the Buddha. He became a devoted follower featured in many discourses. MN 100 *With Saṅgārava* is another case where a wife leads her husband to the Dhamma.

It is not only the great and the good who need teachings. The suttas depict Venerable Sāriputta helping his old friend Dhanañjāni, who was redeemed near the end of his life, despite his long career of corruption (MN 97). Even the serial killer Aṅgulimāla found redemption and forgiveness (MN 86; cf. Thag 16.8).

A Brief Textual History

The Majjhima Nikāya was edited by V. Trenckner (vol. 1) and Robert Chalmers (vols. 2 and 3) based on manuscripts in Sinhalese, Burmese, and Thai scripts, and published in Latin script by the Pali Text Society from 1888 to 1899. The first translation into English followed in 1926–7 by Robert Chalmers under the title *Further Dialogues of the Buddha*.

Rapid improvements in understanding of Pali and Buddhism during the early 20th century soon made it clear that an improved translation was needed. This was undertaken in the 1950s by I.B. Horner and was published by the PTS as *The Book of Middle Length Sayings* in 1954–9.

Her translation, while a significant improvement on Chalmers', was soon eclipsed by that of Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoḷi. Ñāṇamoḷi's extraordinary career as a Pali scholar and translator was tragically cut short by his early death, and his Majjhima Nikāya translation remained as an unfinished hand-written manuscript. Nevertheless, its value was so clear that it was published, first as a selection of 90 discourses edited by Bhikkhu Khantipalo and published in Bangkok in 1976 as *A Treasury of the Buddha's Words*, then as a fully edited and updated version by Bhikkhu Bodhi in 1995 under the title *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya*. The latter version reached a peak of accuracy, consistency, and readability

that has become the standard to which all later translations of the *nikāyas* have aspired.

When the Pali was unclear I frequently referred to the earlier work of Ñāṇamoḷi & Bodhi (both the published work and Ñāṇamoḷi's hand-written original), and less often to Horner and various translations of specific texts. I also had access to notes by Bhikkhus Ñāṇadīpa and Ñāṇatusita on Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation. In addition, I consulted the Chinese and other parallel texts, and the detailed studies on these by Bhikkhu Anālayo. However, I found these to be useful for translation in only a few instances, as I believe it is important to preserve the integrity of the different textual lineages. Comparative studies lose value when the underlying texts have already been reconciled.

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Summary of Contents

The Chapter on the Root of All Things (*Mūlapariyāyavagga*) This chapter, though beginning with the abstruse Mūlapariyāya Sutta, mostly contains foundational teachings and can, as a whole, serve as an introduction to the discourses.

MN 1: The Root of All Things (*Mūlapariyāyasutta*) The Buddha examines how the notion of a permanent self emerges from the process of perception. A wide range of phenomena are considered, embracing both naturalistic and cosmological dimensions. An unawakened person interprets experience in terms of a self, while those more advanced have the same experiences without attachment.

MN 2: All the Defilements (*Sabbāsavasutta*) The diverse problems of the spiritual journey demand a diverse range of responses. Rather than applying the same solution to every problem, the Buddha outlines seven methods of dealing with defilements, each of which works in certain cases.

MN 3: Heirs in the Teaching (*Dhammadāyādasutta*) Some of the Buddha's students inherit from him only material profits and fame. But his true inheritance is the spiritual path, the way of contentment. Venerable Sāriputta explains how by following the Buddha's example we can experience the fruits of the path.

MN 4: Fear and Dread (*Bhayabheravasutta*) The Buddha explains the difficulties of living in the wilderness, and how they are overcome by purity of conduct and meditation. He recounts some of the fears and obstacles he faced during his own practice.

MN 5: Unblemished (*Anaṅgaṇasutta*) The Buddha's chief disciples, Sāriputta and Moggallāna, use a simile of a tarnished bowl to illustrate the blemishes of the mind and conduct. They emphasize how the crucial thing is not so much whether there are blemishes, but whether we are aware of them.

MN 6: One Might Wish (*Ākaṅkheyyasutta*) According to the Buddha, careful observance of ethical precepts is the foundation of all higher achievements in the spiritual life.

MN 7: The Simile of the Cloth (*Vatthasutta*) The many different kinds of impurities that defile the mind are compared to a dirty cloth. When the mind is clean we find joy, which leads to states of higher consciousness. Finally, the Buddha rejects the Brahmanical notion that purity comes from bathing in sacred rivers.

MN 8: Self-Effacement (*Sallekhasutta*) The Buddha differentiates between peaceful meditation and spiritual practices that encompass the whole of life. He lists forty-four aspects, which he explains as "effacement", the wearing away of conceit.

MN 9: Right View (*Sammādiṭṭhisutta*) Venerable Sāriputta gives a detailed explanation of right view, the first factor of the noble eightfold path. At the prompting of the other mendicants, he approaches the topic from a wide range of perspectives.

MN 10: The Discourse on Mindfulness Meditation (*Satipaṭṭhānasutta*) Here the Buddha details the seventh factor of the noble eightfold path, mindfulness meditation. This collects many of the meditation teachings found throughout the canon, especially the foundational practices focusing on the body, and is regarded as one of the most important meditation discourses.

The Chapter on the Lion's Roar (*Sīhanādavagga*) Beginning with two discourses containing a "lion's roar", this chapter deals with suffering, community life, and practical meditation advice.

MN 11: The Shorter Discourse on the Lion's Roar (*Cūḷasīhanādasutta*) The Buddha declares that only those following his path can genuinely experience the four stages of awakening. This is

because, while much is shared with other systems, none of them go so far as to fully reject all attachment to the idea of a self.

MN 12: The Longer Discourse on the Lion's Roar (*Mahāsīhanādasutta*) A disrobed monk, Sunakkhatta, attacks the Buddha's teaching because it merely leads to the end of suffering. The Buddha counters that this is, in fact, praise, and goes on to enumerate his many profound and powerful achievements.

MN 13: The Longer Discourse on the Mass of Suffering (*Mahādukkhakkhandhasutta*) Challenged to show the difference between his teaching and that of other ascetics, the Buddha points out that they speak of letting go, but do not really understand why. He then explains in great detail the suffering that arises from attachment to sensual stimulation.

MN 14: The Shorter Discourse on the Mass of Suffering (*Cūḷadukkhakkhandhasutta*) A lay person is puzzled at how, despite their long practice, they still have greedy or hateful thoughts. The Buddha explains the importance of absorption meditation for letting go such attachments. But he also criticizes self-mortification, and recounts a previous dialog with Jain ascetics.

MN 15: Measuring Up (*Anumānasutta*) Venerable Moggallāna raises the topic of admonishment, without which healthy community is not possible. He lists a number of qualities that will encourage others to think it worthwhile to admonish you in a constructive way.

MN 16: Emotional Barrenness (*Cetokhilasutta*) The Buddha explains various ways one can become emotionally cut off from one's spiritual community.

MN 17: Jungle Thickets (*Vanapatthasutta*) While living in the wilderness is great, not everyone is ready for it. The Buddha encourages meditators to reflect on whether one's environment is genuinely supporting their meditation practice, and if not, to leave.

MN 18: The Honey-Cake (*Madhupiṇḍikasutta*) Challenged by a brahmin, the Buddha gives an enigmatic response on how con-

flict arises due to proliferation based on perceptions. Venerable Kaccāna draws out the detailed implications of this in one of the most insightful passages in the entire canon.

MN 19: Two Kinds of Thought (*Dvedhāvitakkasutta*) Recounting his own experiences in developing meditation, the Buddha explains how to understand harmful and harmless thoughts, and how to go beyond thought altogether.

MN 20: How to Stop Thinking (*Vitakkasaṇṭhānasutta*) In a practical meditation teaching, the Buddha describes five different approaches to stopping thoughts.

The Chapter of Similes (*Opammavagga*) A diverse chapter including biography, non-violence, not-self, and an influential teaching on the progress of meditation.

MN 21: The Simile of the Saw (*Kakacūpamasutta*) A discourse full of vibrant and memorable similes, on the importance of patience and love even when faced with abuse and criticism. The Buddha finishes with the simile of the saw, one of the most memorable similes found in the discourses.

MN 22: The Simile of the Snake (*Alagaddūpamasutta*) One of the monks denies that prohibited conduct is really a problem. The monks and then the Buddha subject him to an impressive dressing down. The Buddha compares someone who understands only the letter of the teachings to someone who grabs a snake by the tail, and also invokes the famous simile of the raft.

MN 23: The Ant-Hill (*Vammikasutta*) In a curious discourse laden with evocative imagery, a deity presents a riddle to a mendicant, who seeks an answer from the Buddha.

MN 24: Prepared Chariots (*Rathavinītasutta*) Venerable Sāriputta seeks a dialog with an esteemed monk, Venerable Puṇṇa Mantāniputta, and they discuss the stages of purification.

MN 25: Fodder (*Nivāpasutta*) The Buddha compares getting trapped by Māra with a deer getting caught in a snare, illustrating the ever more complex strategies employed by hunter and hunted.

MN 26: The Noble Search (*Pāsarāsisutta*) This is one of the most important biographical discourses, telling the Buddha's experiences from leaving home to realizing awakening. Throughout, he was driven by the imperative to fully escape from rebirth and suffering.

MN 27: The Shorter Elephant's Footprint Simile (*Cūḷahatthipadopamasutta*) The Buddha cautions against swift conclusions about a teacher's spiritual accomplishments, comparing it to the care a tracker would use when tracking elephants. He presents the full training of a monastic.

MN 28: The Longer Simile of the Elephant's Footprint (*Mahāhatthipadopamasutta*) Sāriputta gives an elaborate demonstration of how, just as any footprint can fit inside an elephant's, all the Buddha's teaching can fit inside the four noble truths. This offers an overall template for organizing the Buddha's teachings.

MN 29: The Longer Simile of the Heartwood (*Mahāsāropamasutta*) Following the incident with Devadatta, the Buddha cautions the mendicants against becoming complacent with superficial benefits of spiritual life and points to liberation as the true heart of the teaching.

MN 30: The Shorter Simile of the Heartwood (*Cūḷasāropamasutta*) Similar to the previous. After the incident with Devadatta, the Buddha cautions the mendicants against becoming complacent and points to liberation as the true heart of the teaching.

The Greater Chapter on Pairs (*Mahāyamakavagga*) Discourses arranged as pairs of longer and shorter texts.

MN 31: The Shorter Discourse at Gosiṅga (*Cūḷagosiṅgasutta*) The Buddha comes across three mendicants practicing diligently and harmoniously, and asks them how they do it. Reluctant to disclose their higher attainments, they explain how they deal with the practical affairs of living together. But when pressed by the Buddha, they reveal their meditation attainments.

MN 32: The Longer Discourse at Gosiṅga (*Mahāgosiṅgasutta*) Several senior mendicants, reveling in the beauty of the night,

discuss what kind of practitioner would adorn the park. They take their answers to the Buddha, who praises their answers, but gives his own twist.

MN 33: The Longer Discourse on the Cowherd (*Mahāgopālakasutta*) For eleven reasons a cowherd is not able to properly look after a herd. The Buddha compares this to the spiritual growth of a mendicant.

MN 34: The Shorter Discourse on the Cowherd (*Cūḷagopālakasutta*) Drawing parallels with a cowherd guiding his herd across a dangerous river, the Buddha presents the various kinds of enlightened disciples who cross the stream of transmigration.

MN 35: The Shorter Discourse With Saccaka (*Cūḷasaccakasutta*) Saccaka was a debater, who challenged the Buddha to a contest. Despite his bragging, the Buddha is not at all perturbed at his attacks.

MN 36: The Longer Discourse With Saccaka (*Mahāsaccakasutta*) In a less confrontational meeting, the Buddha and Saccaka discuss the difference between physical and mental development. The Buddha gives a long account of the various practices he did before awakening, detailing the astonishing lengths he took to mortify the body.

MN 37: The Shorter Discourse on the Ending of Craving (*Cūḷataṇhāsaṅkhayasutta*) Moggallāna visits the heaven of Sakka, the lord of gods, to see whether he really understands what the Buddha is teaching.

MN 38: The Longer Discourse on the Ending of Craving (*Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhayasutta*) To counter the wrong view that a self-identical consciousness transmigrates from one life to the next, the Buddha teaches dependent origination, showing that consciousness invariably arises dependent on conditions.

MN 39: The Longer Discourse at Assapura (*Mahāassapurasutta*) The Buddha encourages the mendicants to live up to their name, by actually practicing in a way that meets or exceeds the expectations people have for renunciants.

MN 40: The Shorter Discourse at Assapura (*Cūḷaassapurasutta*) The labels of being a spiritual practitioner don't just come from external trappings, but from sincere inner change.

The Lesser Chapter on Pairs (*Cūḷayamakavagga*) A similar arrangement to the previous.

MN 41: The People of Sālā (*Sāleyyakasutta*) The Buddha explains to a group of brahmins the conduct leading to rebirth in higher or lower states, including detailed explanations of the ten core practices which lay people should undertake, and which also form the basis for liberation.

MN 42: The People of Verañja (*Verañjakasutta*) Similar to the previous. The Buddha explains the conduct leading to rebirth in higher or lower states, including detailed explanations of the ten core practices.

MN 43: The Great Classification (*Mahāvedallasutta*) A series of questions and answers between Sāriputta and Mahākoṭṭhita, examining various subtle and abstruse aspects of the teachings.

MN 44: The Shorter Classification (*Cūḷavedallasutta*) The layman Visākha asks the nun Dhammadinnā about various difficult matters, including some of the highest meditation attainments. The Buddha fully endorses her answers.

MN 45: The Shorter Discourse on Taking Up Practices (*Cūḷadhammasamādānasutta*) The Buddha explains how taking up different practices may have harmful or beneficial results. The memorable simile of the creeper shows how insidious temptations can be.

MN 46: The Great Discourse on Taking Up Practices (*Mahādhammasamādānasutta*) While we all want to be happy, we often find the opposite happens. The Buddha explains why.

MN 47: The Inquirer (*Vīmaṁsakasutta*) While some spiritual teachers prefer to remain in obscurity, the Buddha not only encouraged his followers to closely investigate him, but gave them a detailed and demanding method to do so.

MN 48: The Mendicants of Kosambī (*Kosambiyasutta*) Despite the Buddha's presence, the monks of Kosambī fell into a deep and bitter dispute. The Buddha taught the reluctant monks to develop love and harmony, reminding them of the state of peace that they sought.

MN 49: On the Invitation of Divinity (*Brahmanimantanika-sutta*) The Buddha ascends to a high heavenly realm where he engages in a cosmic contest with a powerful divinity, who had fallen into the delusion that he was eternal and all-powerful.

MN 50: The Rebuke of Māra (*Māratajjanīyasutta*) Māra, the trickster and god of death, tried to annoy Moggallāna. He not only failed but was subject to a stern sermon warning of the dangers of attacking the Buddha's disciples.

The First Fifty

THE CHAPTER ON THE ROOT OF ALL THINGS

MN 1

The Root of All Things

Mūlapariyāyasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[1] At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Ukkaṭṭhā in the Subhaga Forest at the root of a magnificent sal tree.[2]
There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"[3]

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I will teach you the explanation of the root of all 2.1
things.[4] Listen and apply your minds well, I will speak."

1. Just as the Dīghanikāya begins with the complex and demanding Brahmajālasutta, the Majjhima opens with one of the most abstruse discourses in the entire canon. It examines the ways that the process of perception and identification evolves with progress on the path. It was translated, together with its commentary and extensive analysis, by Bhikkhu Bodhi as *The Discourse on the Root of Existence*. The commentarial background is also found in the Mūlapariyāya Jātaka (Ja 245). The commentary connects this sutta with the Gotamakacetiyasutta (AN 3.125), but there is no internal evidence to support this.

2. Ukkaṭṭhā, near Sāvatthī, is mentioned only rarely, and always in the context of extraordinary teachings and events that emphasize the cosmic grandeur of the Buddha against the brahmins, likely because it was the home of the prominent Kosalan brahmin Pokkharasāti (DN 3:1.2.1, DN 14:3.29.1, MN 49:2.1).

3. The pattern of this discourse answers to such passages as Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7, where Yājñavalkya expounds a series of principles in relation to which the "immortal self" is conceived. The commentary says that this discourse was delivered to a group of former brahmins who had become conceited when they learned the Buddha's teaching. While the text certainly responds to ideas and methods of Brahmanical texts, that interpretation is not supported by the text.

4. In his third discourse, speaking to Brahmanical ascetics, the Buddha reframed the "all" as the experience of the six senses (SN 35.28). The distinctive "conceiving" pattern of this sutta is therefore also applied to the "all" of the six senses (SN 35.30:1.19, SN 35.90:3.7). More broadly, the same pattern is also applied to the "aggregates, elements, and sense fields" (SN 35.31:1.21, SN 35.91:4.1). |

2.3 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "Take an unlearned ordinary person who has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons.[5] They perceive earth as earth.[6] Having perceived earth as earth, they conceive it to be earth, they conceive it in earth, they conceive it as earth, they conceive that 'earth is mine', they approve earth.[7] Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.[8]

The meaning of "root" is clarified later (MN 1:171.4) as "taking pleasure", i.e. craving, which is the "root" of suffering.

5. An "unlearned ordinary person", who has not realized any of the stages of the noble path, is contrasted with one who has entered the path. | "Noble one" (*ariya*) loosely conveys the sense "cultured" or "civilized"; it is a term for the inheritors of the Aryan culture that originated among the proto-Indo-European peoples of the Pontic–Caspian steppe. | "True person" (*sappurisa*) indicates one who is authentic and genuine in their realization of the truth, and hence is virtuous and good. Both "noble one" and "true person" are technical terms referring to any person who has at least entered the path to stream-entry.

6. Although their perception (*saññā*) is accurate, to perceive something "as" something is to recognize it filtered through memory and concepts learned in the past, a subtle pre-processing that interprets present experience in light of expectations and desires. | The ending *-to* here and throughout is the "ablative of perspective", which is used with verbs of cognition to express the idea of seeing something in a certain light; for example, one contemplates the body "as impermanent" (MN 74:9.1).

7. To "conceive" or "imagine" (*maññati*) is, according to the commentary, to think in terms of a "self", proliferating experience through craving, conceit, or views until it is constructed *for me*. This usage draws upon such passages as Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.20, where due to ignorance, a person "imagines" in a dream the fearful things they saw when awake, or at the highest level, "imagines I am this all" (*ahamevedaṁ sarvo'smīti manyate*). | Each of the five phrases takes the "perception of earth as earth" and conceives, imagines, or construes that perception in progressively more differentiated and objectified ways, until it becomes something that is owned and enjoyed.

8. "Complete understanding" (*pariññā*) is the understanding of the arahant that permanently cuts through all delusions and conceits.

They perceive water as water.[9] Having perceived water as water, they conceive it to be water … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 4.1

They perceive fire as fire. Having perceived fire as fire, they conceive it to be fire … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 5.1

They perceive air as air. Having perceived air as air, they conceive it to be air … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 6.1

They perceive creatures as creatures.[10] Having perceived creatures as creatures, they conceive them to be creatures … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 7.1

They perceive gods as gods.[11] Having perceived gods as gods, they conceive them to be gods … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 8.1

They perceive the Progenitor as the Progenitor.[12] Having perceived the Progenitor as the Progenitor, they conceive him to be the Progenitor … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 9.1

9. The sutta proceeds through the four main physical elements or properties before proceeding to beings and then various deities. The difference between these things is not as clear-cut as one might think. The elements were worshiped as gods, while the gods were often anthropomorphized natural phenomena such as the sky (*deva*) or the sun ("streaming radiance"). To identify with a material element is to share the essence of a powerful force of nature. | A similar list, but with fewer items, is found starting at MN 49:11.1.

10. "Creatures" (*bhūta*) can refer to any living being, including humans and animals, as well as invisible entities such as ghosts.

11. "Gods" (*deva*) or "deities" (*devatā*) are terms for the many divine entities of ancient Indian belief. Some were inherited from the old Vedic theology, while others reflect local customs and beliefs. All are impermanent and subject to suffering.

12. Pajāpati ("progenitor") was the lonely god of creation ("Let Prajāpati generate progeny for us", Rig Veda 10.85.3). The heat of his fervent exertions (*tapas*) created the world and all things in it (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 6).

10.1 They perceive the Divinity as the Divinity.[13] Having perceived the Divinity as the Divinity, they conceive him to be the Divinity … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

11.1 They perceive those of streaming radiance as those of streaming radiance.[14] Having perceived those of streaming radiance as those of streaming radiance, they conceive them to be those of streaming radiance … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

12.1 They perceive those of universal beauty as those of universal beauty.[15] But then they conceive them to be those of universal beauty … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

13.1 They perceive those of abundant fruit as those of abundant fruit.[16] Having perceived those of abundant fruit as those of abundant fruit, they conceive them to be those of abundant fruit … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

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13. Brahmā is also regarded as a creator, but in the sense of the underlying divine force that sustains the life of the cosmos. In Buddhism, several individual Brahmās appear, depicted as high deities who achieved their status due to the practice of first *jhāna* in a past life.

14. This and the next two are higher Brahmā realms. Beings in this realm are sometimes called "gods" (*devā*). They achieved their status through the second, third, and fourth *jhānas* respectively. Later Brahmanical texts mention a class of Ābhāsvara deities, but it does not appear to be a Vedic concept.

15. "Universal beauty" is *subhakiṇha*. *Subha* is "beauty, radiance". *Kiṇha* is "universal, entire, total" (= Sanskrit *kṛtsna*); the same word is the basis for the meditation on "universals" (*kasiṇa*). The concept appears to be Buddhist, but we find a precedent when Yājñavalkya says that, just as salt is "entirely" salty, the Self is an "entire mass of consciousness" (*kṛtsnaḥ prajñānaghana eva*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.13).

16. The gods of "abundant fruit" (*vehapphala*; Sanskrit *bṛhatphala*) do not appear in Brahmanical literature, but *bṛhat* is a common descriptor of divinity. See eg. the Vedic god Bṛhaspati, identified with the planet Jupiter, or Rig Veda 9.107.15, which describes Soma as *ṛtam bṛhat*, "vast and true".

They perceive the Vanquisher as the Vanquisher.[17] Having per- 14.1
ceived the Vanquisher as the Vanquisher, they conceive him to be the Vanquisher … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

They perceive the dimension of infinite space as the dimension of 15.1
infinite space.[18] Having perceived the dimension of infinite space as the dimension of infinite space, they conceive it to be the dimension of infinite space …[19] Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

They perceive the dimension of infinite consciousness as the di- 16.1
mension of infinite consciousness.[20] Having perceived the dimension of infinite consciousness as the dimension of infinite consciousness, they conceive it to be the dimension of infinite consciousness … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

They perceive the dimension of nothingness as the dimension of 17.1
nothingness.[21] Having perceived the dimension of nothingness as the dimension of nothingness, they conceive it to be the dimension of nothingness … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

17. "Vanquisher" (*abhibhū*) is an epithet of Brahmā (MN 49:5.2) that was appropriated for the Buddha (AN 4.23:5.1). In Rig Veda 8.97.10 it is an epithet of Indra, but it is not a regular name for a deity in either Buddhism or Brahmanism. Here it appears to be the name of the highest of the Brahmā gods.
18. Here begins the series of realms associated with the practice of formless meditations. These were practiced by the most advanced non-dualist Brahmanical teachers before the Buddha, who identified such experiences with the highest Self that is the cosmic divinity. The Buddha adopted the practices as part of the development of meditation, divesting them of metaphysical significance.
19. "Space" (*ākāsa*) is a principle of deep significance in the Upaniṣads, yet it is ultimately a lesser manifestation of the Absolute (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.8.7; Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.1.1; Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.12).
20. "Infinite consciousness" is identified with the highest Self by Yājñavalkya at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12.
21. Taught by the Brahmanical sage Āḷāra Kālāma at MN 26:15.13.

18.1 They perceive the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception as the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.[22] Having perceived the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception as the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they conceive it to be the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

19.1 They perceive the seen as the seen.[23] Having perceived the seen as the seen, they conceive it to be the seen …[24] Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

20.1 They perceive the heard as the heard.[25] Having perceived the heard as the heard, they conceive it to be the heard … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

22. Taught by the Brahmanical sage Uddaka Rāmaputta at MN 26:16.13.

23. Now the discourse introduces the "epistemic tetrad"—the seen, heard, thought, and known—which describe the means of knowing spiritual truths (see also note on SN 24.1:4.11). This framework was adopted from Yājñavalkya, for whom it is the Self that must be seen, heard, thought, and known (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.7, 2.4.5, 4.5.6; cf. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.13.7). Yet the Absolute Self is "the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unknown knower" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.4.2, 3.7.23, 3.8.11, 4.3.31), the divinity that is ancient and primordial (4.4.18). It is through inference or understanding that one can learn to see, hear, think, and know that which is unknown (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.1.3), and which comprises one's spiritual understanding (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.4.5).

24. While the "sight of ascetics" is regarded as a blessing (Snp 2.4:10.2), taking the "seeing" of a holy person as a standard of truth is a mistake (Snp 4.4). For Vedists, seeing can also refer to the Self which is beheld in a dream (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.9), where things are revealed in a person's own light (4.3.14).

25. This refers to teachings that are "heard" or learned by being passed down in oral tradition through a lineage of teachers. Knowledge heard from a teacher is said to lead to the goal (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.9.3). These are the Vedic scriptures (*śruti*) that were believed to have been "heard" or transmitted by divine inspiration. Buddhist suttas are marked with the phrase, "So I have heard". No scripture, however, is infallible (MN 76:25.2).

They perceive the thought as the thought.[26] Having perceived the thought as the thought, they conceive it to be the thought … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 21.1

They perceive the known as the known.[27] Having perceived the known as the known, they conceive it to be the known … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 22.1

They perceive oneness as oneness.[28] Having perceived oneness as oneness, they conceive it to be oneness … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 23.1

They perceive diversity as diversity.[29] Having perceived diversity as diversity, they conceive it to be diversity … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say. 24.1

26. *Muta* means "(what is) thought", but is often mistranslated as "sensed", a meaning that does not occur in the early texts. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.5.1 explains that "thought" (there, *citta*) is the basis of the Vedic mantras. Philosophical thought, like scripture, is fallible (MN 76:27.3), but people get attached to their theories (Snp 4.5).

27. The "known" (*viññāta*) is that which is cognized with consciousness (*viññāṇa*). For the Vedists this has the sense of "understanding" of the various branches of learning (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.7.1). It can also mean the states of expanded consciousness in deep meditation as indicated in the expanded "epistemic heptad" (SN 24.1:4.11). Even such states are not immune to misinterpretation (eg. MN 136:9.1, DN 1:1.31.1).

28. Perception of "oneness" (*ekatta*) sees the world as manifold reflections of an underlying unity. Arising from meditative experience or philosophical reflection, it is associated with the non-dual schools of Brahmanism. Īśa Upaniṣad 7, for example, speaks of "contemplating the oneness" (*ekatvam anupaśyataḥ*) of all creatures with the supreme soul. Yājñavalkya said in the state of non-differentiation the Self "becomes clear as water, one, the seer without a second; this is the Brahmā realm" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.32: *salila eko draṣṭādvaito bhavati, eṣa brahmalokaḥ*).

29. "Diversity" (*nānatta*) is the opposite fallacy to "oneness"; based on the diversity of sense experience, it interprets the world as irreducibly manifold. An example would be the Jains, who believed the world was made up of countless separate entities, a view criticized in Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 3.13 (*nānātvaṁ nindyate*). Both these fallacies take a particular mode of perception which is true in certain respects and make it into a metaphysical absolute.

25.1 They perceive all as all.[30] Having perceived all as all, they conceive it to be all … Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

26.1 They perceive extinguishment as extinguishment.[31] Having perceived extinguishment as extinguishment, they conceive it to be extinguishment, they conceive it in extinguishment, they conceive it as extinguishment, they conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', they approve extinguishment. Why is that? Because they haven't completely understood it, I say.

27.1 A mendicant who is a trainee, who hasn't achieved their heart's desire, but lives aspiring to the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, directly knows earth as earth.[32] Having directly known earth as

30. The "all" is another critical term in the Upaniṣads, representing the totality of creation as an expression of divinity. See eg. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.25.2, "the self is all this" (*ātmaivedaṁ sarvamiti*), or Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.5.19, "this self that experiences all is divinity" (*ayam ātmā brahma sarvānubhūḥ*).

31. It is puzzling to see "extinguishment" (*nibbāna*; Sanskrit *nirvāṇa*) here, as it is the end of conceiving. The similar sequence at MN 49:23.1 culminates with "all". Three interpretations: (1) *Simple textual error*. Of the three Chinese parallels, EA 44.6 mentions *nibbāna* here, while MA 106 and T 56 do not. If two separate texts have the same error, it predates the separation between the schools, or arose later through contamination. (2) *The five kinds of "extinguishment in the present life"*. These are false liberations believed by sectarians (DN 1:3.19.1). The commentary says they are meant here, but it seems unlikely, given that below the stream-enterer is enjoined to not identify with *nibbāna*, whereas they have already dispelled such misconceptions of the path. (3) *An unenlightened person's misconception of the Buddhist goal*. At least some ancient Buddhists read it this way, as this passage is quoted in an Abhidhamma discussion as to whether the deathless as an object of thought can be a fetter (Kathāvatthu 9.2). The Theravāda commentary, rejecting this, says it was the view of the Pubbaseliyas, a branch of the Mahāsaṅghikas.

32. A "trainee" (*sekha*), who has realized stream-entry, once-return, or non-return, has had a vision of the path and Nibbāna. Yet since they have not fully relinquished the fetters that bind them to transmigration, they continue to deepen their practice of the noble eightfold path. Their "direct knowing" (*abhiññā*) is purified by the twin powers of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation, rather than "perception" (*saññā*), which is filtered through the five hindrances and other cognitive distortions. This distinction between perception and higher

earth, let them not conceive it to be earth, let them not conceive it in earth, let them not conceive it as earth, let them not conceive that 'earth is mine', let them not approve earth.[33] Why is that? So that they may completely understand it, I say.

They directly know water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the 28.1
Progenitor … the Divinity … those of streaming radiance … those replete with glory … those of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher … the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception …[34] the seen … the heard … the thought … the known … oneness … diversity … all … They directly know extinguishment as extinguishment. Having directly known extinguishment as extinguishment, let them not conceive it to be extinguishment, let them not conceive it in extinguishment, let them not conceive it as extinguishment, let them not conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', let them not approve extinguishment. Why is that? So that they may completely understand it, I say.

A mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who 51.1
has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—directly knows earth as earth.[35] Having directly known earth as earth,

awareness (*vijñāna* or *prajñāna*) was first made by Yājñavalkya (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12 and 4.5.13).

33. The sutta depicts progress through the path in three grammatical modes. The ordinary person conceives; the trainee ought not conceive; the perfected one does not conceive. This echoes the "three rounds" of the first sermon (Dhammacakkappavattanasutta, SN 56.11): "there is" suffering; suffering "should be understood"; suffering "has been understood".

34. The stream-enterer has not necessarily had personal experience of all these meditation states and realms of existence. Yet they "directly know" dependent origination, and hence understand that all such states are conditioned, impermanent, and included within the round of transmigration.

35. The "perfected one" is the *arahant*, literally "worthy one", who is the Buddhist spiritual ideal. Their direct knowing is so powerful that it has cut through all fetters binding them to transmigration.

they do not conceive it to be earth, they do not conceive it in earth, they do not conceive it as earth, they do not conceive that 'earth is mine', they do not approve earth. Why is that? Because they have completely understood it, I say.

52.1 They directly know water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the Progenitor … the Divinity … those of streaming radiance … those replete with glory … those of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher … the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception … the seen … the heard … the thought … the known … oneness … diversity … all … They directly know extinguishment as extinguishment. Having directly known extinguishment as extinguishment, they do not conceive it to be extinguishment, they do not conceive it in extinguishment, they do not conceive it as extinguishment, they do not conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', they do not approve extinguishment. Why is that? Because they have completely understood it, I say.

75.1 A mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, they do not conceive it to be earth, they do not conceive it in earth, they do not conceive it as earth, they do not conceive that 'earth is mine', they do not approve earth. Why is that? Because they're free of greed due to the ending of greed.[36]

76.1 They directly know water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the Progenitor … the Divinity … those of streaming radiance … those replete with glory … those of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher … the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of

36. The text repeats the passage on the perfected one three times, emphasizing the ending of greed, hate, and delusion respectively.

neither perception nor non-perception … the seen … the heard … the thought … the known … oneness … diversity … all … They directly know extinguishment as extinguishment. Having directly known extinguishment as extinguishment, they do not conceive it to be extinguishment, they do not conceive it in extinguishment, they do not conceive it as extinguishment, they do not conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', they do not approve extinguishment. Why is that? Because they're free of greed due to the ending of greed.

A mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who 99.1
has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, they do not conceive it to be earth, they do not conceive it in earth, they do not conceive it as earth, they do not conceive that 'earth is mine', they do not approve earth. Why is that? Because they're free of hate due to the ending of hate.

They directly know water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the 100.1
Progenitor … the Divinity … those of streaming radiance … those replete with glory … those of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher … the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception … the seen … the heard … the thought … the known … oneness … diversity … all … They directly know extinguishment as extinguishment. Having directly known extinguishment as extinguishment, they do not conceive it to be extinguishment, they do not conceive it in extinguishment, they do not conceive it as extinguishment, they do not conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', they do not approve extinguishment. Why is that? Because they're free of hate due to the ending of hate.

A mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who 123.1
has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—

directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, they do not conceive it to be earth, they do not conceive it in earth, they do not conceive it as earth, they do not conceive that 'earth is mine', they do not approve earth. Why is that? Because they're free of delusion due to the ending of delusion.

124.1 They directly know water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the Progenitor … the Divinity … those of streaming radiance … those replete with glory … those of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher … the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception … the seen … the heard … the thought … the known … oneness … diversity … all … They directly know extinguishment as extinguishment. Having directly known extinguishment as extinguishment, they do not conceive it to be extinguishment, they do not conceive it in extinguishment, they do not conceive it as extinguishment, they do not conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', they do not approve extinguishment. Why is that? Because they're free of delusion due to the ending of delusion.

147.1 The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha directly knows earth as earth.[37] Having directly known earth as earth, he does not conceive it to be earth, he does not conceive it in earth, he does not conceive it as earth, he does not conceive that 'earth is mine', he does not approve earth. Why is that? Because the Realized One has completely understood it to the end, I say.[38]

148.1 He directly knows water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the Progenitor … the Divinity … those of streaming radiance … those replete with glory … those of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher …

37. The Buddha is an *arahant*, and he shares his fundamental understanding with other arahants. Yet the suttas elevate his understanding as the one who discovered the path.

38. To "completely understood to the end" is a phrase unique to this sutta. It implies that, while other arahants understand phenomena to the extent necessary for release, the Buddha understands all phenomena without exception.

the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception … the seen … the heard … the thought … the known … oneness … diversity … all … He directly knows extinguishment as extinguishment. Having directly known extinguishment as extinguishment, he does not conceive it to be extinguishment, he does not conceive it in extinguishment, he does not conceive it as extinguishment, he does not conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', he does not approve extinguishment. Why is that? Because the Realized One has completely understood it to the end, I say.

171.1 The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha directly knows earth as earth. Having directly known earth as earth, he does not conceive it to be earth, he does not conceive it in earth, he does not conceive it as earth, he does not conceive that 'earth is mine', he does not approve earth. Why is that? Because he has understood that approval is the root of suffering,[39] and that rebirth comes from continued existence; whoever has come to be gets old and dies.[40] That's why the Realized One—with the ending, fading away, cessation, giving up, and letting go of all cravings—has awakened to the supreme perfect awakening, I say.

172.1 He directly knows water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the Progenitor … the Divinity … those of streaming radiance … those replete with glory … those of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher … the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception … the seen … the heard

39. This clarifies an ambiguity in the phrase "approve" (or "delights", "relishes", *(abhi)-nandati*). This can have a positive sense, as the audience normally "approves" the Buddha's teachings (but see the end of this sutta). Here, however, the Buddha clarifies that he is using "approve" in the sense of craving, as it is found in the standard definition of the second noble truth (SN 56.11:4.4).

40. With these lines the Buddha connects the teachings of this sutta with dependent origination. He employs a similar strategy at the end of the Brahmajālasutta.

… the thought … the known … oneness … diversity … all … He directly knows extinguishment as extinguishment. Having directly known extinguishment as extinguishment, he does not conceive it to be extinguishment, he does not conceive it in extinguishment, he does not conceive it as extinguishment, he does not conceive that 'extinguishment is mine', he does not approve extinguishment. Why is that? Because he has understood that approval is the root of suffering, and that rebirth comes from continued existence; whoever has come to be gets old and dies. That's why the Realized One—with the ending, fading away, cessation, giving up, and letting go of all cravings—has awakened to the supreme perfect Awakening, I say."

194.8 That is what the Buddha said. But the mendicants did not approve what the Buddha said.[41]

41. That they "did not approve" (*na abhinandun̊*) is confirmed in the commentary and in the parallel at EA 44.6, which explains that the mendicants did not understand the discourse. Alternatively, some modern interpreters (Bodhi, Ñāṇananda), relying on the commentarial background explanation, suggest that the problem was that they understood it all too well and were not happy that their beliefs were challenged. These explanations, however, do not take into account the centrality of "approval" (*nanda*)—it is literally the "root" that lends the discourse its title. Given that an arahant does not "approve" even Nibbāna, and that "approval" is the root of suffering, is it any wonder that the audience did not "approve" the teaching? It is not that they did not understand, nor that their understanding threatened their egos, but that they understood so well that they received the teaching with perfect equanimity. Elsewhere the Buddha urged that one should "neither approve (*abhinandati*) nor dismiss" a teaching (AN 4.180:2.5 = DN 16:4.8.4, DN 29:18.4, MN 112:3.1). The normal response, where the audience approves a teaching with pleasure, is meant in a conventional sense, whereas this sutta shows how for an arahant all such responses are transcended.

MN 2

All the Defilements

Sabbāsavasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[42] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I will teach you the explanation of the restraint of all defilements.[43] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."[44] 2.1

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.3

"Mendicants, I say that the ending of defilements is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know or see.[45] For one who knows and sees what? Rational application of mind and irrational application of mind.[46] When you apply the mind irrationally, 3.1

42. Patterned after the Dīghanikāya, the Majjhimanikāya opens with a difficult philosophical text (Brahmajālasutta, Mūlapariyāyasutta) and follows it with a more practical teaching (Sāmaññaphalasutta, Sabbāsavasutta).

43. "Defilements" (*āsava*) are the fundamental "pollutions" or "corruptions" that darken awareness, trapping people in transmigration. In practical application, *āsava* can mean the "discharge" from a sore (AN 3.27:2.4). The Jain Tattvārthasūtra 6.1–2 defines *āsrava* as the influx of deeds; these pollute the pure soul. | Note that the Pali *āsava* represents two distinct words, which are homonyms in Pali but differentiated in Sanskrit. The word here is Sanskrit *āsrava* (or *āśrava*), whereas Sanskrit *āsava* means "intoxicant", a sense found elsewhere in Pali (Bu Pc 51:2.1.4).

44. This opening follows the pattern of MN 1.

45. The "ending of defilements" (*āsavānaṁ khayaṁ*) is a common sutta term for arahantship. | "Knowing and seeing" refers to the penetrating insight that arises from meditative immersion (*samādhi*, eg. AN 5.168:2.2, AN 10.2:2.3, SN 12.23:6.18, DN 2:83.1).

46. "Rational application of mind" (*yoniso manasikāra*) is a distinctively Buddhist term. It draws on the frequent Vedic image of the "womb of truth" (*yonāv*

defilements arise, and once arisen they grow.[47] When you apply the mind rationally, defilements don't arise, and those that have already arisen are given up.

4.1 Some defilements should be given up by seeing, some by restraint, some by using, some by enduring, some by avoiding, some by dispelling, and some by developing.[48]

1. Defilements Given Up by Seeing

5.1 And what are the defilements that should be given up by seeing?[49] Take an unlearned ordinary person who has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons.[50] They don't understand to which things they should apply the mind and to which things they should not apply the mind. So they apply the mind to things they shouldn't and don't apply the mind to things they should.

6.1 And what are the things to which they apply the mind but should not? They are the things that, when the mind is applied to them, give rise to unarisen defilements and make arisen defilements grow: the

ṛtasya, Rig Veda 9.13.9), the source of the laws and patterns that govern the natural order. The idea is that by applying the mind by way of cause or reason the hidden truth can be uncovered. Here the meditator's insight is framed not as uncovering the objective truth about the world, but as reflexively understanding the means of insight itself.

47. This passage and the next are comparable to the contemplation of the principles of the five hindrances and the seven awakening factors respectively in the fourth section of mindfulness meditation (*dhammānupassanā*; see MN 10:36.4).

48. Here the Buddha gives the scheme of the sutta: seven methods for getting rid of defilements. Omitting the defilements given up by seeing, the remainder are found at AN 6.58.

49. "Seeing" (*dassana*) the four noble truths with the wisdom of insight.

50. "Noble Ones" (*ariyā*) and "true persons" (*sappurisā*) both refer to the eight kinds of individual who have entered the eightfold path to awakening.

defilements of sensual desire,[51] desire to be reborn, and ignorance. These are the things to which they apply the mind but should not.

6.6 And what are the things to which they do not apply the mind but should? They are the things that, when the mind is applied to them, do not give rise to unarisen defilements and give up arisen defilements: the defilements of sensual desire, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. These are the things to which they do not apply the mind but should.

7.1 Because of applying the mind to what they should not and not applying the mind to what they should, unarisen defilements arise and arisen defilements grow.

7.2 This is how they apply the mind irrationally: 'Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? After being what, what did I become in the past?[52] Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future? After being what, what will I become in the future?' Or they are undecided about the present thus: 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? This sentient being—where did it come from? And where will it go?'[53]

8.1 When they apply the mind irrationally in this way, one of the following six views arises in them and is taken as a genuine fact.[54] The view: 'My self survives.'[55] The view: 'My self does not survive.'

51. This indicates one sense of what "irrational" means: it creates the very things that one is trying to escape.

52. These are existential questions framed from a metaphysical perspective, i.e. they are based on the underlying assumption of a self. They are "irrational" because they avoid the question of cause: they only ask *what* happens, not *why* it happens.

53. Compare Rig Veda 10.129.6: "From where was it born, from where this creation"; and the Jain Ācāraṅgasūtra 1.1.1.2, "What was I, what shall I become after departing from here".

54. To wonder is natural, but when we take speculations seriously they become dogmas, insisted on as the truth, though in reality we have no way of knowing.

55. See also the discussions on the "self" at SN 44.10 and "gods" at MN 100:42.4. All three passages are phrased similarly. In each case the question,

The view: 'I perceive the self with the self.'[56] The view: 'I perceive what is not-self with the self.'[57] The view: 'I perceive the self with what is not-self.'[58] Or they have such a view: 'This self of mine is he, the one who speaks, the one who knows, who experiences the results of good and bad deeds in all the different realms. This self is permanent, everlasting, eternal, and imperishable, and will last forever and ever.'[59] This is called a misconception, the thicket of views, the desert of views, the twist of views, the dodge of views,

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drawing on the doubts about the past and future as depicted above, is whether the self continues to exist (*atthi*) or not (*natthi*) after death.

56. Compare Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.23, which, in a discussion of the hereafter, says that a sage who is tamed and stilled (*samāhito*) "sees the self in the self" (*ātmanyevātmānaṁ paśyati*). Note the different verb here; unlike the Upaniṣad, the sutta is not speaking of a sage who "sees" but of a theorist who "perceives".

57. The method of negation was employed by Yājñavalkya to discard false, shallow views of the Self: "This Self is that which is not that, not that" (*sa eṣa neti netyātmā*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.15, etc.).

58. The theorist still relies on perception (*saññā*) and hence does not see the Self, which is pure *viññāṇa* cognized by *viññāṇa*: "Through what should one know the Knower?" (*vijñātāramare kena vijānīyāt*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.14).

59. This view, attributed to the mendicant Sāti at MN 36:5.11, is reminiscent of Yājñavalkya's discussion of the Self as a person's "light" in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. He illustrates the departure of the Self from the body at death by analogy with dreams, where a person sets aside the physical body and takes up a body of light (4.3.9). There (*tatra*) he is the "agent" (*kartā*, 4.3.10) who "moves between the worlds contemplating and playing, as it were" (4.3.7). He creates his own experiences, seeing good and bad (*dṛṣṭvaiva puṇyaṁ ca pāpaṁ ca*, 4.3.15). Being "immortal" (*amṛto*, 4.3.12), he wanders where he likes and returns unaffected (4.3.16). In 4.4.5, he additionally says that "as one acts, so one becomes", doing good becoming good, and doing bad becoming bad. See too Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.1, which says the Self is that by which one sees, hears, smells, tastes, speaks and knows. | For the phrase *sassatisamaṁ* ("lasting forever and ever"), compare Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.10.1: "He reaches that world free of sorrow and snow, where he lives forever and ever" (*sa lokam āgacchaty aśokam ahimam. tasmin vasati śāśvatīḥ samāḥ*).

the fetter of views.[60] An unlearned ordinary person who is fettered by views is not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're not freed from suffering, I say.

But take a learned noble disciple who has seen the noble ones, 9.1
and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They understand to which things they should apply the mind and to which things they should not apply the mind. So they apply the mind to things they should and don't apply the mind to things they shouldn't.

And what are the things to which they don't apply the mind and 10.1
should not? They are the things that, when the mind is applied to them, give rise to unarisen defilements and make arisen defilements grow: the defilements of sensual desire, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. These are the things to which they don't apply the mind and should not.

And what are the things to which they do apply the mind and 10.6
should? They are the things that, when the mind is applied to them, do not give rise to unarisen defilements and give up arisen defilements: the defilements of sensual desire, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. These are the things to which they do apply the mind and should.

Because of not applying the mind to what they should not and 10.11
applying the mind to what they should, unarisen defilements don't arise and arisen defilements are given up.

They rationally apply the mind: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the 11.1
origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is

60. "Twist" (*visūka*) is used with "dodge" (*vipphandita*) and sometimes "duck" (*visevita*) for a horse fighting the bit (MN 65:33.2) or a crab escaping the torment of children (MN 35:23.9). *Visūka* is also used for a "show" of dance, etc., where the commentarial gloss *paṭāṇi* ("screw") reinforces the sense "twist, gyrate". As descriptions of views, they suggest the active process of denial and distortion through which views shape how we see the world.

the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'.[61] And as they do so, they give up three fetters: substantialist view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances.[62] These are called the defilements that should be given up by seeing.

2. Defilements Given Up by Restraint

12.1 And what are the defilements that should be given up by restraint?[63] Take a mendicant who, reflecting rationally, lives restraining the eye faculty. For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without restraint of the eye faculty do not arise when there is such restraint.[64] Reflecting rationally, they live restraining the ear faculty … the nose faculty … the tongue faculty … the body faculty … the mind faculty. For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without restraint of the mind faculty do not arise when there is such restraint.[65]

12.10 For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without restraint do not arise when there is such

61. This is the realization of the four noble truths. The suttas distinguish between someone who accepts the truth of the Dhamma either by faith or by logic, and someone who truly sees with direct experience (SN 25.1). This direct vision, here called "rational application of mind", may be expressed any number of different ways.

62. They are a stream-enterer who has entered the first of the four stages of awakening. "Seeing" the four noble truths permanently severs these three fetters. This is the decisive difference between "seeing" and knowing by faith or logic (SN 25.1).

63. In the Gradual Training (eg. MN 38:35.1), sense restraint (*saṁvarā*) comes before seeing the four noble truths. The sequence in this sutta does not follow the order of practice; rather, it starts and ends with the most important items.

64. Sense restraint is not about denial, but about freeing the mind from addiction.

65. In the first and last items in this sutta, "giving up" defilements means their permanent eradication by means of the noble path. For the interim items, however, "giving up" refers to the more modest goal of practicing so that they do not arise in the mind. This creates the supportive conditions for deeper realizations, while giving the mind time for understanding to mature.

restraint. These are called the defilements that should be given up by restraint.

3. Defilements Given Up by Using

And what are the defilements that should be given up by using?[66] 13.1
Take a mendicant who, reflecting rationally, makes use of robes: 'Only for the sake of warding off cold and heat; for warding off the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles; and for covering up the private parts.'

Reflecting rationally, they make use of almsfood: 'Not for fun, 14.1
indulgence, adornment, or decoration, but only to sustain this body, to avoid harm, and to support spiritual practice. In this way, I shall put an end to old discomfort and not give rise to new discomfort, and I will have the means to keep going, blamelessness, and a comfortable abiding.'[67]

Reflecting rationally, they make use of lodgings: 'Only for the 15.1
sake of warding off cold and heat; for warding off the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles; to shelter from harsh weather and to enjoy retreat.'

Reflecting rationally, they make use of medicines and supplies for 16.1
the sick: 'Only for the sake of warding off the pains of illness and to promote good health.'[68]

66. These are the four requisites used (*paṭisevana*) by a mendicant. They are provided to a mendicant at their ordination. Other possessions of a minor nature are also allowed, such as a razor, waistband, sandals, and so on. These passages are used as mindfulness reminders when making use of possessions.
67. The next sutta (MN 3) gives an example of this. | In several Chinese translations, "adornment" is applied to robes rather than almsfood, where it seems more fitting. | Compare the phrase *yātrāmātraprasiddhyarthaṁ* ("for accomplishing mere maintenance") at Manusmṛti 4.3.
68. While it may seem odd to use medicines for purposes other than treating illness, this is a broad category. It includes anything used as a tonic, pick-me-up, or refreshment so long as it is not solid food, such as fruit juice, honey, ghee, ginger, etc.

17.1 For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without using these things do not arise when they are used. These are called the defilements that should be given up by using.

4. Defilements Given Up by Enduring

18.1 And what are the defilements that should be given up by enduring?[69] Take a mendicant who, reflecting rationally, endures cold, heat, hunger, and thirst. They endure the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles. They endure rude and unwelcome criticism. And they put up with physical pain—sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, disagreeable, and life-threatening.

18.3 For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without enduring these things do not arise when they are endured. These are called the defilements that should be given up by enduring.

5. Defilements Given Up by Avoiding

19.1 And what are the defilements that should be given up by avoiding?[70] Take a mendicant who, reflecting rationally, avoids a wild elephant, a wild horse, a wild ox, a wild dog, a snake, a stump, thorny ground, a pit, a cliff, a swamp, and a sewer. Reflecting rationally, they avoid sitting on inappropriate seats, walking in inappropriate neighborhoods, and mixing with bad friends—whatever sensible spiritual companions would believe to be a bad setting.[71]

69. The Buddha depicted the spiritual path as one of freedom and happiness. Nonetheless, practitioners will invariably encounter adversities along the way. Such things should be endured (*adhivāsana*) with patience and strength, without giving up.

70. This item shows that endurance is not always the right response to adversity. Some things are best avoided (*parivajjana*) where possible. This is different, of course, from a strategy or compulsion of avoiding things that are uncomfortable.

71. This introduces the hard-to-translate idea of *gocara*, literally "cowpasture". It refers to the places or people to whom a mendicant "resorts", especially when

For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without avoiding these things do not arise when they are avoided. These are called the defilements that should be given up by avoiding. 19.4

6. Defilements Given Up by Dispelling

And what are the defilements that should be given up by dispelling?[72] Take a mendicant who, reflecting rationally, doesn't tolerate a sensual, malicious, or cruel thought that has arisen, but gives it up, dispels it, eliminates it, and obliterates it. They don't tolerate any bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen, but give them up, dispel them, eliminate them, and obliterate them. 20.1

For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without dispelling these things do not arise when they are dispelled. These are called the defilements that should be given up by dispelling. 20.3

7. Defilements Given Up by Developing

And what are the defilements that should be given up by developing?[73] Take a mendicant who, reflecting rationally, develops the 21.1

on alms. What is appropriate depends on context. For example, whereas there is no issue with accepting a meal from a sex worker (DN 16:2.14.7), it would provoke suspicion if a monk entered a brothel for the meal. | *Okappeti* means "believe, trust" rather than "suspect".

72. This section shows that, rather than being "non-judgmental" about one's thoughts, a meditator should recognize and "dispel" (*vinodana*) those that are harmful. The first step, however, in dispelling harmful thoughts is to recognize that they are harmful, which requires a degree of mindfulness and equanimity. Often that is sufficient: once one is mindful of the bad thought, it undercuts the greed, hate, and delusion that fuels it and it fades away. In cases where the mind is too caught up in the harmful thinking, a more deliberate practice can be required (MN 20).

73. To develop (*bhāvanā*) is literally to "make be more", to "grow" or "amplify". The good factors that are already present, especially in the stream-enterer, are cultivated to support the realization of full awakening.

awakening factors of mindfulness,[74] investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go.[75]

21.9 For the distressing and feverish defilements that might arise in someone who lives without developing these things do not arise when they are developed. These are called the defilements that should be given up by developing.

22.1 Now, take a mendicant who, by seeing, has given up the defilements that should be given up by seeing. By restraint, they've given up the defilements that should be given up by restraint. By using, they've given up the defilements that should be given up by using. By enduring, they've given up the defilements that should be given up by enduring. By avoiding, they've given up the defilements that should be given up by avoiding. By dispelling, they've given up the defilements that should be given up by dispelling. By developing, they've given up the defilements that should be given up by developing.[76] They're called a mendicant who lives having restrained all defilements, who has cut off craving, cast off the fetters, and by rightly comprehending conceit has made an end of suffering."[77]

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74. The seven awakening factors especially emphasize the emotional and holistic dimension of meditative growth.

75. This formula is highly characteristic of the Mahāvagga of the Saṁyutta Nikāya. In cases such as this where it appears elsewhere it is in passages identical to there. | The four terms here—seclusion, fading away, cessation, ripening as letting go—are commonly applied to the different formulations of the path, but especially the seven awakening factors. Each expresses a fundamental quality of the path. They can be understood as a process of deepening that moves toward Nibbāna, the ultimate letting go, while each of the four is also a term for Nibbāna itself. See note on SN 45.2 for more details.

76. Spiritual teachings sometimes emphasize the critical role of a single practice to overcome different defilements, for example through chanting a mantra or by mindful awareness: many problems, one tool. This sutta, in line with the early texts generally, takes the opposing line, that the diversity of defilements requires a diversity of practices in response: many problems, many tools.

77. This is the arahant. | The "fetters" are enumerated as ten at eg. AN 10.13. | "Conceit", which is one of the fetters, is the tendency of the mind to judge and assess in terms of oneself through the process of "conceiving" discussed in

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 22.3

MN 1. | They have "made an end of suffering" in the sense that they have cut off the root of transmigration. Nonetheless while an arahant is living they still experience suffering such as physical sickness.

MN 3

Heirs in the Teaching

Dhammadāyādasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, be my heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh.[78] Out of sympathy for you, I think, 'How can my disciples become heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh?'

2.4 If you become heirs in things of the flesh, not in the teaching, that will make you liable to the accusation:[79] 'The Teacher's disciples live as heirs in things of the flesh, not in the teaching.' And it will make me liable to the accusation: 'The Teacher's disciples live as heirs in things of the flesh, not in the teaching.'

2.8 If you become heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh, that will make you not liable to the accusation: 'The Teacher's disciples live as heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh.' And it will make me not liable to the accusation: 'The Teacher's disciples live as heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh.'

78. "Things of the flesh" renders *āmisa*, literally "meat". In Vedic sacrifice the flesh of the slaughtered beast was made holy and fit for the gods (Rig Veda 1.162.10). In this way the guilt of killing was assuaged and the flesh became allowable for the brahmin priests. Here the "flesh" is extended by implication to the material pleasures of the world.

79. Text's *ādiya* (and variant *ādissā*) are future passive participles from √*dis* ("point") having the sense "liable to be pointed out or accused".

So, mendicants, be my heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh. Out of sympathy for you, I think, 'How can my disciples become heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh?' 2.12

Suppose that I had eaten and refused more food, being replete, and having had as much as I needed.[80] And there was some extra almsfood that was going to be thrown away. Then two mendicants were to come who were weak with hunger. I'd say to them, 'Mendicants, I have eaten and refused more food, being replete, and having had as much as I need. And there is this extra almsfood that's going to be thrown away. Eat it if you like. Otherwise I'll throw it out where there is little that grows, or drop it into water that has no living creatures.' 3.1

Then one of those mendicants thought, 'The Buddha has eaten and refused more food. And he has some extra almsfood that's going to be thrown away. If we don't eat it he'll throw it away. But the Buddha has also said: "Be my heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh." And almsfood is one of the things of the flesh. Instead of eating this almsfood, why don't I spend this day and night weak with hunger?' And that's what they did. 3.8

Then the second of those mendicants thought, 'The Buddha has eaten and refused more food. And he has some extra almsfood that's going to be thrown away. If we don't eat it he'll throw it away. Why don't I eat this almsfood, then spend the day and night having dispelled my hunger and weakness?' And that's what they did. 3.17

Even though that mendicant, after eating the almsfood, spent the day and night having dispelled hunger and weakness, it is the former mendicant who is more worthy of respect and praise. Why is that? 3.23

80. A mendicant tries to eat just what they need. In some circumstances, especially when eating on invitation in a house, the donors will first place a modest amount of food in the bowl, then offer more during the meal if it is needed. This passage concerns such extra food that has been refused.

Because for a long time that will conduce to that mendicant being of few wishes, content, self-effacing, unburdensome, and energetic.[81]

3.26 So, mendicants, be my heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh. Out of sympathy for you, I think, 'How can my disciples become heirs in the teaching, not in things of the flesh?'"

4.1 That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling.

4.3 Then, not long after the Buddha left, Venerable Sāriputta said to the mendicants,[82] "Reverends, mendicants!"

4.5 "Reverend," they replied. Sāriputta said this:

5.1 "Reverends, how do the disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion not train in seclusion? And how do they train in seclusion?"[83]

5.2 "Reverend, we would travel a long way to learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of Venerable Sāriputta. May Venerable Sāriputta himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

5.5 "Well then, reverends, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

5.6 "Yes, reverend," they replied. Sāriputta said this:

6.1 "Reverends, how do the disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion not train in seclusion? The disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion do not train in seclusion. They don't give up what the Teacher tells them to give up. They're indulgent and slack, leaders

81. This is an example of the "defilements given up by using" (MN 2:14.2). It makes a point: short term discomfort is outweighed by the benefits of overcoming greed. Note that the Buddha encouraged mendicants to eat regularly, and did not support fasting or other extreme diets.

82. This marks the first time in the Majjhimanikāya that we hear a teaching from a disciple. Sāriputta was the Buddha's leading disciple, famed for his wisdom. He gave many teachings in the suttas, typically, as here, preferring systematic expositions.

83. Sāriputta continues on a similar theme, phrased in terms of "seclusion" (*viveka*) rather than "things of the flesh" (*āmisa*). Seclusion is explained in the commentaries as threefold: physical seclusion achieved by living a virtuous life in a quiet place; mental seclusion from the hindrances achieved through the *jhānas*; and seclusion from attachments, namely Nibbāna.

in backsliding, neglecting seclusion. In this case, the senior mendicants should be criticized on three grounds.[84] 'The disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion do not train in seclusion.' This is the first ground. 'They don't give up what the Teacher tells them to give up.' This is the second ground. 'They're indulgent and slack, leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion.' This is the third ground. The senior mendicants should be criticized on these three grounds. In this case, the middle mendicants[85] and the junior mendicants should be criticized on the same three grounds.[86] This is how the disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion do not train in seclusion.

7.1 And how do the disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion train in seclusion? The disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion train in seclusion. They give up what the Teacher tells them to give up. They're not indulgent and slack, leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion. In this case, the senior mendicants should be praised on three grounds. 'The disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion train in seclusion.' This is the first ground. 'They give up what the Teacher tells them to give up.' This is the second ground. 'They're not indulgent and slack, leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion.' This is the third ground. The senior mendicants should be praised on these three grounds. In this case, the middle mendicants and the junior mendicants should be praised on the same three grounds. This is how the disciples of a Teacher who lives in seclusion train in seclusion.

8.1 The bad thing here is greed and hate. There is a middle way of practice for giving up greed and hate. It gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment.[87] And what is that middle way of practice? It is simply this noble

84. "Senior mendicants" (*therā bhikkhū*) have been ordained for more than ten rains retreats, i.e. ten years.
85. "Middle mendicants" (*majjhimā bhikkhū*) have between five and ten rains.
86. "Junior mendicants" (*navā bhikkhū*) have less than five rains.
87. Sāriputta is adapting a passage from the Buddha's first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta (SN 56.11:2.4).

eightfold path, that is:[88] right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is that middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment.

9-15.1 The bad thing here is anger and acrimony. … disdain and contempt … jealousy and stinginess … deceit and deviousness … obstinacy and aggression … conceit and arrogance … vanity and negligence. There is a middle way of practice for giving up vanity and negligence. It gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment. And what is that middle way of practice? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is that middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment."

9-15.13 That is what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what Sāriputta said.

88. The noble eightfold path is the fourth of the four noble truths. It is defined in detail at MN 141:23.2.

MN 4

Fear and Dread

Bhayabheravasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then the brahmin Jānussoṇi went up to the Buddha, and ex- 2.1
changed greetings with him.[89] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

"Worthy Gotama, those gentlemen who, out of faith in you, have 2.3
gone forth from the lay life to homelessness have you to lead the way, help them out, and give them encouragement.[90] And those people follow the worthy Gotama's example."[91]

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89. We meet Jānussoṇi many times in the suttas, where he converses with the Buddha on a number of topics, with a special interest in the afterlife. His name appears in Sanskrit as Jānaśruti or Jānaśruteya, which are patronymics of Janaśruti, "famed among the people", with the element *soṇi* coming from the Vedic *śvaṇi* ("sound"). The Chinese rendering 生聞 ("Born Famous", T 125.2.665b18) evidently assumes the same derivation (*jana* "people" is from √*jan* "born"). The Pali commentary says it is a title awarded the family priest (*purohita*) of Kosala, which would make him one of the most powerful brahmins alive. However, I can find no confirmation of such a title, whereas the use of Jānaśruti as a patronymic by the descendants of Janaśruti is well attested. One such, perhaps the same individual we meet in the Suttas, features in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.1–3 as a generous seeker of the truth.

90. This statement is sometimes translated as a question, but it lacks the usual question markers. The parallel at EA 31.1 reverses the sequence: Jānussoṇi first says that living in the forest is hard, then introduces the idea that the Buddha is their guide, following which the Buddha tells his life story. This makes for a better flow of ideas.

91. Picking up from the previous sutta the themes of following the Buddha's example and of seclusion. | In *diṭṭhānugatiṁ*, read *diṭṭha* ("what has been seen", i.e. "example"), rather than *diṭṭhi* ("view") per commentary.

2.5 "That's so true, brahmin! Everything you say is true, brahmin!"

2.8 "But worthy Gotama, remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest are challenging. It's hard to maintain seclusion and hard to find joy in solitude. The forests seem to rob the mind of a mendicant who isn't immersed in samādhi."

2.10 "That's so true, brahmin! Everything you say is true, brahmin!

3.1 Before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I too thought,[92] 'Remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest are challenging. It's hard to maintain seclusion and hard to find joy in solitude. The forests seem to rob the mind of a mendicant who isn't immersed in samādhi.'

4.1 Then I thought, 'There are ascetics and brahmins with unpurified conduct of body, speech, and mind who frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest. Those ascetics and brahmins summon unskillful fear and dread because of these defects in their conduct.[93] But I don't frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest with unpurified conduct of body, speech, and mind. My conduct is purified. I am one of those noble ones who frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest with purified conduct of body, speech, and mind.' Seeing this purity of conduct in myself I felt even more unruffled about staying in the forest.[94]

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92. This is the first of several times in the Majjhimanikāya that the Buddha spoke of his meditation before enlightenment (see eg. MN 19, MN 128). In these texts the Buddha takes pains to depict himself as an ordinary person who struggled with the same issues in meditation as anyone else. | "Intent on awakening" is *bodhisatta* (Sanskrit *bodhisattva*). Such passages as this are apparently the original context for this term. The Pali *satta* represents a number of different words in Sanskrit, including *sajjita* ("intent on, devoted to, fixed upon"), which makes better sense here than *sattva* ("being").

93. That is, their guilt will manifest as fear. Throughout this sutta, the Buddha emphasizes that fear is overcome by the proper development of the path, which leads to confidence and strength of mind. This is in implicit contrast to the notion that one overcomes fear by either brute endurance and force of will or by magical spells and charms.

94. "Unruffled" is *pallomamāpādiṁ*.

Then I thought, 'There are ascetics and brahmins with unpurified livelihood who frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest. Those ascetics and brahmins summon unskillful fear and dread because of these defects in their livelihood. But I don't frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest with unpurified livelihood. My livelihood is purified. I am one of those noble ones who frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest with purified livelihood.'[95] Seeing this purity of livelihood in myself I felt even more unruffled about staying in the forest. 5.1

Then I thought, 'There are ascetics and brahmins full of desire for sensual pleasures, with acute lust … I am not full of desire …' 8.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins full of ill will, with malicious intentions … I have a heart full of love …' 9.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins overcome with dullness and drowsiness … I am rid of dullness and drowsiness …' 10.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins who are restless, with no peace of mind … My mind is peaceful …' 11.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins who are doubting and uncertain … I've gone beyond doubt …' 12.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins who glorify themselves and put others down … I don't glorify myself and put others down …' 13.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins who are cowardly and craven … I don't get startled …' 14.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins who enjoy possessions, honor, and popularity … I have few wishes …' 15.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins who are lazy and lack energy … I am energetic …' 16.1

'There are ascetics and brahmins who are unmindful and lack situational awareness … I am mindful …' 17.1

95. The purification of livelihood for an ascetic is spelled out in detail in DN 2:56.1 as part of the Gradual Training of a Buddhist mendicant. The current sutta can, in fact, be read as a variant presentation of the Gradual Training.

18.1 'There are ascetics and brahmins who lack immersion, with straying minds …[96] I am accomplished in immersion …'

19.1 'There are ascetics and brahmins who are witless and idiotic who frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest. Those ascetics and brahmins summon unskillful fear and dread because of the defects of witlessness and stupidity. But I don't frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest witless and idiotic. I am accomplished in wisdom. I am one of those noble ones who frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest accomplished in wisdom.' Seeing this accomplishment of wisdom in myself I felt even more unruffled about staying in the forest.

20.1 Then I thought, 'There are certain nights that are recognized as specially portentous: the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight.[97] On such nights, why don't I stay in awe-inspiring and hair-raising shrines in parks, forests, and trees? In such lodgings, hopefully I might see that fear and dread.' Some time later, that's what I did. As I was staying there a deer came by, or a peacock snapped a twig, or the wind rustled the leaves. Then I thought, 'Is this that fear and dread coming?'[98] Then I thought, 'Why do I always meditate expecting that fear to come? Why don't I get rid of that fear and dread just as it comes, while remaining just as I am?' Then that fear and dread came upon me as I was walking. I didn't stand still or sit down or lie down until I had got rid of that fear and dread while walking. Then that fear and dread came upon me as I was standing. I didn't walk or sit down or lie down until I had got rid of that fear and dread while standing. Then that fear and dread came upon me as I was sitting. I didn't lie down or stand still or walk until I had got rid of that fear and dread while sitting. Then that fear and dread came

96. "Straying minds" is *vibbhantacittā*. The verbal form *vibhamati* is used of a monastic who disrobes.

97. These are the days of *uposatha* ("sabbath") marking the lunar cycle.

98. The dual feelings of love for wilderness and fear of her (possibly imagined) dangers echo the hymn to Araṇyānī, the wilderness as goddess, at Rig Veda 10.146.

upon me as I was lying down. I didn't sit up or stand still or walk until I had got rid of that fear and dread while lying down.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who perceive that it's day 21.1
when in fact it's night, or perceive that it's night when in fact it's day.[99] This meditation of theirs is delusional, I say. I perceive that it's night when in fact it is night, and perceive that it's day when in fact it is day.[100] And if there's anyone of whom it may be rightly said that a being not liable to delusion has arisen in the world for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of sympathy for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans, it's of me that this should be said.

My energy was roused up and unflagging, my mindfulness was es- 22-26.1
tablished and lucid, my body was tranquil and undisturbed, and my mind was immersed and unified in samādhi.[101] Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born

99. The Buddha illustrates his claim that the forests can rob the mind of a meditator without *samādhi*. During the development of meditation, perception can change in strange and unsettling ways, making the meditator question the nature of reality. In some cases, over-exertion in meditation can indeed lead to mental breakdown.

100. This alludes to the oft-repeated phrase "as by day, so by night; as by night, so by day", which is associated with the meditative perception of light (AN 4.41:3.3), the development of the bases of psychic power (SN 51.11:1.10), and the dispelling of drowsiness (AN 7.61:7.2). The point of that phrase is that the mind has been developed until it is full of light regardless of whether it is light or dark outside. Here, the Buddha forestalls the accusation that this is deluded: he knows perfectly well what is day and what is night.

101. To this point, the sutta has been focusing on the foundations of meditation from the special perspective of overcoming fear. Now that this has been achieved, it returns to the standard presentation of immersion and then wisdom. Taken together, then, it is the first presentation of the Gradual Training in the Majjhima Nikāya. | "Unified" (*ekagga*) is explained in the Pali commentaries as "rightly positioned, well placed", suggesting *agga* here is contracted *agāra* ("place"). This is supported by the Chinese 境 here, which means "place". However, the Sanskrit form *ekāgra* suggests, rather, the sense *agra* ("peak"). See note on MN 44:12.2.

of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[102] As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I entered and remained in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.[103] And with the fading away of rapture, I entered and remained in the third absorption, where I meditated with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.'[104] With the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, I entered and remained in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.[105]

27.1 When my mind had become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected many kinds of past lives.[106] That is: one, two, three, four,

102. *Jhāna* is a state of "elevated consciousness" (*adhicitta*), so all the terms have an elevated sense. The plural form indicates that "sensual pleasures" includes sense experience, which the meditator can turn away from since they no longer have any desire for it. The "unskillful qualities" are the five hindrances. The "rapture and bliss born of seclusion" is the happiness of abandoning the hindrances and freedom from sense impingement. "Placing the mind and keeping it connected" (*vitakka, vicāra*) uses terms that mean "thought" in coarse consciousness, but which in "elevated consciousness" refer to the subtle function of applying the mind to the meditation.

103. Each *jhāna* begins as the least refined aspect of the previous *jhāna* ends. This is not consciously directed, but describes the natural process of settling. The meditator is now fully confident and no longer needs to apply their mind: it is simply still and fully unified.

104. The emotional response to bliss matures from the subtle thrill of rapture to the poise of equanimity. Mindfulness is present in all states of deep meditation, but with equanimity it becomes prominent.

105. The emotional poise of equanimity leads to the feeling of pleasure settling into the more subtle neutral feeling. Pain and sadness have been abandoned long before, but are emphasized here as they are subtle counterpart of pleasure.

106. The equanimity of the fourth *jhāna* is not dullness and indifference, but a brilliant and radiant awareness. The fourth *jhāna* is the ideal basis for developing higher knowledges, although elsewhere the canon shows that even the first *jhāna*

five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. I remembered: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so I recollected my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.[107]

This was the first knowledge, which I achieved in the first watch of 28.1
the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

When my mind had become immersed in samādhi like this— 29.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke

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can be a basis for liberating insight. Without *jhāna*, however, the eightfold path is incomplete and liberating insight is impossible. | The verb *abhininnāmeti* ("extend") indicates that the meditator comes out of full immersion like a tortoise sticking out its limbs (SN 35.240:1.7).

107. Empowered by the fourth *jhāna*, memory breaks through the veil of birth and death, revealing the vast expanse of time and dispelling the illusion that there is any place of eternal rest or sanctuary in the cycle of transmigration. The knowledge of these events is not hazy or murky, but clear and precise, illuminated by the brilliance of purified consciousness.

up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.[108]

30.1 This was the second knowledge, which I achieved in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

31.1 When my mind had become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements.[109] I truly understood: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'.[110] I truly understood:

108. Here knowledge extends to the rebirths of others as well as oneself. Even more significant, it brings in the understanding of cause and effect; *why* rebirth happens the way it does. Such knowledge, however, is not infallible, as the Buddha warns in DN 1:2.5.3 and MN 136. The experience is one thing; the inferences drawn from it are another. One should draw conclusions only tentatively, after long experience. | "Clairvoyance" renders *dibbacakkhu* ("celestial eye"), for which see Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.12.5, which says of the self that "the mind is its celestial eye" (*mano'sya daivaṁ cakṣuḥ*).

109. This is the experience of awakening that is the true goal of the Buddhist path. The defilements—properties of the mind that create suffering—have been curbed by the practice of ethics and suppressed by the power of *jhāna*. Here they are eliminated forever.

110. These are the four noble truths, which form the main content of the Buddha's first sermon. They are the overarching principle into which all other teachings fall. As established in MN 2, seeing the four noble truths indicates stream-entry, while the ending of all defilements indicates arahantship.

'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'.[111]

Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the defile- 32.1
ments of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.[112] When it was freed, I knew it was freed.[113]

I understood: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been 32.3
completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'[114]

This was the third knowledge, which I achieved in the final watch 33.1
of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

Brahmin, you might think: 'Perhaps the ascetic Gotama is not 34.1
free of greed, hate, and delusion even today, and that is why he still frequents remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest.' But you should not see it like this. I see two reasons to frequent remote

111. The application of the four noble truths to defilements indicates that this is the final stage of awakening, perfection (or "arahantship", *arahatta*). | Many translators use "defilement" to render *kilesa*, but since *kilesa* appears only rarely in the early texts, I use "defilement" for *āsava*. Both terms refer to a stain, corruption, or pollution in the mind.

112. *Bhavāsava* is the defilement that craves to continue life in a new birth.

113. This is a reflective awareness of the fact of awakening. The meditator reviews their mind and sees that it is free from all forces that lead to suffering.

114. This is a standard declaration of full awakening in the suttas, said both of the Buddha and of any arahant ("perfected one"). Each of the four phrases illustrates a cardinal principle of awakening. (1) Further transmigration through rebirths has come to an end due to the exhaustion (*khīṇa*) of that which propels rebirth, namely deeds motivated by craving. (2) The eightfold path has been developed fully in all respects. (3) All functions relating to the four noble truths have been completed, namely: understanding suffering, letting go craving, witnessing extinguishment, and developing the path. (4) Extinguishment is final, with no falling back to this or any other state of existence.

lodgings in the wilderness and the forest. I see happiness for myself in this life, and I have sympathy for future generations."[115]

35.1 "Indeed, worthy Gotama has sympathy for future generations, since he is a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent, worthy Gotama! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha.[116] From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

115. Also at AN 2.30:1.1. The Buddha confirms Jānussoṇi's belief that he acts to set a good example for others.

116. Jānussoṇi goes for refuge so often in the suttas that it is almost a genre unto itself (MN 27, SN 12.47, AN 2.17:3.1, AN 3.55, AN 3.59, AN 4.184, AN 6.52, AN 7.47, AN 10.119, AN 10.167, AN 10.177). Such narrative accounts of conversion or enlightenment at the end of discourses are not very reliable, as they are not the Buddha's words but were added by editors at some point.

MN 5

Unblemished

Anaṅgaṇasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.[117] There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants: "Reverends, mendicants!" 1.1

"Reverend," they replied. Sāriputta said this: 1.5

"Reverends, these four individuals are found in the world.[118] 2.1 What four? One individual with a blemish doesn't truly understand: 'There is a blemish in me.'[119] But another individual with a blemish does truly understand: 'There is a blemish in me.' One individual without a blemish doesn't truly understand: 'There is no blemish in me.' But another individual without a blemish does truly understand: 'There is no blemish in me.' In this case, of the two individuals with a blemish, the one who doesn't understand is said to be worse, while the one who does understand is better. And of the two individuals without a blemish, the one who doesn't understand is said to be worse, while the one who does understand is better."

When he said this, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said to him: 3.1

"What is the cause, Reverend Sāriputta, what is the reason why, 3.2 of the two individuals with a blemish, one is said to be worse and

117. The Buddha does not appear in this sutta, yet he is mentioned by way of respect, indicating that these events took place while he was alive.

118. This discourse emphasizes how even small, apparently trivial defects betray a deeper corruption. Rather than hiding them away in shame, they will only be healed when brought to light.

119. "Blemish" (*aṅgaṇa*) is used literally as a mark or discoloration on the face (MN 15:8.3), and metaphorically in the sense of a psychological defect. It stems from the root √*añj* in the sense of something smeared on the skin such as ointment (MN 75:23.13) or eyeshadow (MN 82:25.14).

one better? And what is the cause, what is the reason why, of the two individuals without a blemish, one is said to be worse and one better?"

4.1 "Reverends, take the case of the individual who has a blemish and does not understand it. You can expect that they won't generate enthusiasm, make an effort, or rouse up energy to give up that blemish.[120] And they will die with greed, hate, and delusion, blemished, with a corrupted mind. Suppose a bronze cup was brought from a shop or smithy enveloped with dirt or stains. And the owners neither used it or had it cleaned, but kept it in a dirty place. Over time, wouldn't that bronze cup get even dirtier and more stained?"

4.6 "Yes, reverend."

4.7 "In the same way, take the case of the individual who has a blemish and does not understand it. You can expect that … they will die with a corrupted mind.

5.1 Take the case of the individual who has a blemish and does understand it. You can expect that they will generate enthusiasm, make an effort, and rouse up energy to give up that blemish. And they will die without greed, hate, and delusion, unblemished, with an uncorrupted mind. Suppose a bronze cup was brought from a shop or smithy enveloped with dirt or stains. But the owners used it and had it cleaned, and didn't keep it in a dirty place. Over time, wouldn't that bronze cup get cleaner and brighter?"

5.6 "Yes, reverend."

5.7 "In the same way, take the case of the individual who has a blemish and does understand it. You can expect that … they will die with an uncorrupted mind.

6.1 Take the case of the individual who doesn't have a blemish but does not understand it. You can expect that they will focus on the

120. When Sāriputta and Moggallāna address each other, they use their name together with "reverend" (*āvuso*). Here we just have *āvuso*. I take it that Moggallāna is asking questions on behalf of the group, and Sāriputta addresses the group.

feature of beauty, and because of that, lust will infect their mind.[121] And they will die with greed, hate, and delusion, blemished, with a corrupted mind. Suppose a bronze cup was brought from a shop or smithy clean and bright. And the owners neither used it or had it cleaned, but kept it in a dirty place. Over time, wouldn't that bronze cup get dirtier and more stained?"

"Yes, reverend." 6.6

"In the same way, take the case of the individual who has no blem- 6.7
ish and does not understand it. You can expect that … they will die with a corrupted mind.

Take the case of the individual who doesn't have a blemish and 7.1
does understand it. You can expect that they won't focus on the feature of beauty, and because of that, lust won't infect their mind. And they will die without greed, hate, and delusion, unblemished, with an uncorrupted mind. Suppose a bronze cup was brought from a shop or smithy clean and bright. And the owners used it and had it cleaned, and didn't keep it in a dirty place. Over time, wouldn't that bronze cup get cleaner and brighter?"

"Yes, reverend." 7.6

"In the same way, take the case of the individual who doesn't have 7.7
a blemish and does understand it. You can expect that … they will die with an uncorrupted mind.

This is the cause, this is the reason why, of the two individuals 8.1
with a blemish, one is said to be worse and one better. And this is the cause, this is the reason why, of the two individuals without a blemish, one is said to be worse and one better."

"Reverend, the word 'blemish' is spoken of.[122] But what is 'blem- 9.1
ish' a term for?"

121. "Feature of beauty" is *subhanimitta*. In early Pali, *nimitta* is used for a feature or quality of the mind that, when focused on, promotes the growth of similar or related qualities. Thus focusing on beauty fosters the desire for that beauty.
122. Following the commentary, I take this question as an interjection by Moggallāna, even though the expected personal name is lacking.

9.3 "Reverend, 'blemish' is a term for the spheres of bad, unskillful wishes.

10.1 It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'If I commit an offense, I hope the mendicants don't find out!'[123] But it's possible that the mendicants do find out that that mendicant has committed an offense. Thinking, 'The mendicants have found out about my offense,' they get angry and bitter. And that anger and that bitterness are both blemishes.

11.1 It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'If I commit an offense, I hope the mendicants accuse me in private, not in the middle of the Saṅgha.'[124] But it's possible that the mendicants do accuse that mendicant in the middle of the Saṅgha …

12.1 It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'If I commit an offense, I hope I'm accused by a peer, not by someone who is not a peer.'[125] But it's possible that someone who is not a peer accuses that mendicant …

13.1 It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'Oh, I hope the Teacher will teach the mendicants by repeatedly questioning me alone, not some other mendicant.' But it's possible that the Teacher will teach the mendicants by repeatedly questioning some other mendicant …

14.1 It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'Oh, I hope the mendicants will enter the village for the meal putting me at the

123. The Vinaya depends on mutual acknowledgement of offenses and mutual rehabilitation. It is a system of social morality, not just of individual responsibility.

124. Many Vinaya offenses can be cleared by a simple confession to a single fellow monastic. In more serious cases, however, the entire resident Saṅgha must be involved in the rehabilitation process. In such cases, a sense of collective shame is essential to motivate the offender to change their ways.

125. "Counterpart" (*paṭipuggala*) is elsewhere used of the Buddha, where it is paired with *sama* in a negative sense, "without equal or rival" (eg. MN 56:29.54). Here, the commentary explains it as someone who is a counterpart in that they too have committed an offense (*sāpattiko*, cp. Kd 2:27.3.1), or because they are similar in caste, learning, etc.

very front, not some other mendicant.'[126] But it's possible that the mendicants will enter the village for the meal putting some other mendicant at the very front …

It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'Oh, I hope that I alone get the best seat, the best drink, and the best almsfood in the refectory, not some other mendicant.' But it's possible that some other mendicant gets the best seat, the best drink, and the best almsfood in the refectory … 15.1

It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'I hope that I alone give the verses of appreciation after eating in the refectory, not some other mendicant.'[127] But it's possible that some other mendicant gives the verses of appreciation after eating in the refectory … 16.1

It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'Oh, I hope that I might teach the Dhamma to the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen in the monastery, not some other mendicant.'[128] 17.1

But it's possible that some other mendicant teaches the Dhamma … 18-20.1

It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'Oh, I hope that the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen will honor, respect, revere, and venerate me alone, not some other mendicant.' 21.1

But it's possible that some other mendicant is honored, respected, revered, and venerated … 22-24.1

It's possible that some mendicant might wish: 'I hope I get the nicest robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, not some other mendicant.' But it's possible that some other 25.1

126. Normally, mendicants would wander for alms, which was usually done alone or with an attendant. In some places today, such as north-east Thailand, mendicant go for alms in a line. The phrasing "for the meal", however, seems to refer to an occasion when a group of mendicants have been invited to take the meal in someone's house.

127. This is the *anumodana*, which is still recited in Pali today. It was a short teaching on the benefits of giving, emphasizing the positive effects of the donor's actions. See examples at DN 16:1.31.2 = Ud 8.6:22.1, MN 92:26.1 = Snp 3.7:35.1, SN 55.26:20.1, AN 5.44:8.1, AN 54:8.1, Kd 1:15.14.4, and Kd 1:1.5.1.

128. It is an offense for a monk to teach nuns with a worldly motive (Bu Pc 24).

mendicant gets the nicest robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick …

26-27.1 Thinking, 'Some other mendicant has got the nicest robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick', they get angry and bitter. And that anger and that bitterness are both blemishes.

28.1 'Blemish' is a term for these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes.

29.1 Suppose these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes are seen and heard to be not given up by a mendicant. Even though they dwell in the wilderness, in remote lodgings, eat only almsfood, wander indiscriminately for almsfood, wear rag robes, and wear shabby robes, their spiritual companions don't honor, respect, revere, and venerate them.[129] Why is that? It's because these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes are seen and heard to be not given up by that venerable. Suppose a bronze cup was brought from a shop or smithy clean and bright. The owners were to prepare it with the carcass of a snake, a dog, or a human, cover it with a bronze lid, and parade it through the market-place. When people saw it they'd say: 'Oh my, what is it that you're carrying like a precious treasure?' So they'd open up the lid for people to look inside. But as soon as they saw it they were filled with loathing, revulsion, and disgust. Not even those who were hungry wanted to eat it, let alone those who were replete.

29.11 In the same way, when these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes are seen and heard to be not given up by a mendicant … their spiritual companions don't honor, respect, revere, and venerate them. Why is that? It's because these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes are seen and heard to be not given up by that venerable.

30.1 Suppose these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes are seen and heard to be given up by a mendicant. Even though they dwell within a village, accept invitations to a meal, and wear robes offered by house-

129. These are the outward signs of someone living a dedicated ascetic life. These and other practices are called *dhutaṅga* ("shaking off") and may be voluntarily undertaken in order to live more freely without attachments.

holders, their spiritual companions honor, respect, revere, and venerate them. Why is that? It's because these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes are seen and heard to be given up by that venerable. Suppose a bronze cup was brought from a shop or smithy clean and bright. The owners were to prepare it with boiled fine rice with the dark grains picked out and served with many soups and sauces, cover it with a bronze lid, and parade it through the market-place. When people saw it they'd say: 'Oh my, what is it that you're carrying like a precious treasure?' So they'd open up the lid for people to look inside. And as soon as they saw it they were filled with liking, attraction, and relish. Even those who were replete wanted to eat it, let alone those who were hungry.

In the same way, when these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes 30.11
are seen and heard to be given up by a mendicant … their spiritual companions honor, respect, revere, and venerate them. Why is that? It's because these spheres of bad, unskillful wishes are seen and heard to be given up by that venerable."

When he said this, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said to him, "Rev- 31.1
erend Sāriputta, a simile strikes me."

"Then speak as you feel inspired," said Sāriputta. 31.3

"Reverend, this one time I was staying right here in Rājagaha, the 31.4
Mountainfold.[130] Then I robed up in the morning and, taking my bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. Now at that time Samīti of the wainwrights was planing the rim of a chariot wheel.[131] The Ājīvaka ascetic Paṇḍuputta, who was formerly of the wainwrights, was standing by,[132] and this thought came to his mind: 'Oh, I hope Samīti the wainwright planes out the crooks, bends, and flaws in

130. The "Mountainfold" (*giribbaja*) is an old name for Rājagaha and its surrounds, famously wrapped in a range of mountains.

131. Samīti is mentioned only here. | The rare *yānakāra* ("wainwright") is used here instead of the normal *rathakāra* (also at Tha-ap 150:1.1 and Varāhamihira's Bṛhatsaṁhitā 10.17).

132. The primary Pali account of Ājīvaka beliefs is at DN 2:20.2. | Paṇḍuputta is mentioned only here, although he shares a name with the five "sons of Paṇḍu", better known as Pāṇḍava, who fought the Kurukṣetra war in the Mahābhārata.

this rim. Then the rim will be rid of crooks, bends, and flaws, pure, and consolidated in the core.'[133] And Samīti planed out the flaws in the rim just as Paṇḍuputta thought. Then Paṇḍuputta expressed his gladness: 'He planes like he knows my heart with his heart!'

32.1 In the same way, there are those faithless individuals who went forth from the lay life to homelessness not out of faith but to earn a livelihood. They're devious, deceitful, and sneaky. They're haughty, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, and loose-tongued. They do not guard their sense doors or eat in moderation, and they are not dedicated to wakefulness. They don't care about the ascetic life, and don't keenly respect the training. They're indulgent and slack, leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion, lazy, and lacking energy. They're unmindful, lacking situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds, witless and idiotic. Venerable Sāriputta planes their faults with this exposition of the teaching as if he knows my heart with his heart![134]

32.2 But there are those gentlemen who went forth from the lay life to homelessness out of faith. They're not devious, deceitful, and sneaky. They're not haughty, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, and loose-tongued. They guard their sense doors and eat in moderation, and they are dedicated to wakefulness. They care about the ascetic life, and keenly respect the training. They're not indulgent or slack, nor are they leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion. They're energetic and determined. They're mindful, with situational awareness, immersion, and unified minds; wise and clever. Hearing this exposition of the teaching from Venerable Sāriputta, they drink it up and devour it, as it were. And in speech and thought they say: 'It's good,

133. "Pure and consolidated in the core" (*suddhā assa sāre patiṭṭhitā*) recurs at MN 72:21.5 (of an assembly) and AN 3.93:6.13 (of a crop).
134. Also at MN 107:15.2.

sir, that he draws his spiritual companions away from the unskillful and establishes them in the skillful.'[135]

33.1 Suppose there was a woman or man who was young, youthful, and fond of adornments, and had bathed their head. Presented with a garland of lotuses, jasmine, or liana flowers, they would take them in both hands and place them on the crown of the head.[136] In the same way, those gentlemen who went forth from the lay life to homelessness out of faith … say: 'It's good, sir, that he draws his spiritual companions away from the unskillful and establishes them in the skillful.'" And so these two spiritual giants agreed with each other's fine words.[137]

135. The PTS edition treats this sentence as a simple continuation of Moggallāna's speech. But it reads better as an exclamation by the good monks, as indicated by Mahāsaṅgīti's close *-ti*.

136. This simile is also found at AN 8.51:24.1. It is the inverse of the simile where a vain young person would try to remove any "blemish" from their face (eg. MN 15:8.3, AN 10.51:3.2; with *kaṇika* instead of *aṅgaṇa* at DN 2:92.1).

137. "Spiritual giant" is *nāga*, which also means a dragon, a bull elephant, or a king cobra. | This mutual admiration is also expressed between Sāriputta and Moggallāna at SN 21.3:7.1 and Ud 4.4:8.1, and between Sāriputta and Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇī at MN 24:17.13.

MN 6

One Might Wish

Ākaṅkheyyasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, live by the ethical precepts and the monastic code. Live restrained in the monastic code, conducting yourselves well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, keep the rules you've undertaken.[138]

3.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I be liked and approved by my spiritual companions, respected and admired.' So let them fulfill their precepts, be committed to inner serenity of the heart, not ne-

138. The "monastic code" (*pātimokkha*) is the primary list of rules for Buddhist monastics. There are many extant *pātimokkhas* in Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit from early Buddhist schools, all similar but with some variations especially in minor rules of etiquette. Each fortnight the *pātimokkha* is recited to affirm the communal rules of the Saṅgha. Other passages are recited as inspiration, including this exhortation to keep the rules (also at AN 4.12:1.1, AN 10.71:2.1, and Iti 111:2.1), as well as the verses known as *Ovāda Pātimokkha* (DN 14:3.28.1). | The word *pātimokkha* is defined in the canon as the "first and foremost" of skillful qualities (*mukhametaṁ pamukhametaṁ* at Kd 2:3.4.2; *mokkhaṁ pāmokkhaṁ* at Vb 12:9.1; cf. Cnd 5:45.3). However the Sanskrit form *prātimokṣa* is from the verb *pramuñcati* ("binding"; eg. Rig Veda 4.53.2, Atharva Veda 13.3, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 6.7.1.1). Pali has *paṭimokkha* ("bandage"), *paṭimukka* ("bound") and *pātimokkha* ("that which should be binding"). The Buddha says he laid down the *pātimokkha* to bind the community together like flowers bunched with string (Bu Pj 1:3.2.6).

glect absorption, be endowed with discernment, and frequent empty huts.[139]

A mendicant might wish: 'May I receive robes, almsfood, lodg- 4.1
ings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.' So let them fulfill their precepts, be committed to inner serenity of the heart, not neglect absorption, be endowed with discernment, and frequent empty huts.[140]

A mendicant might wish: 'May the services of those whose robes, 5.1
almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick I enjoy be very fruitful and beneficial for them.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

A mendicant might wish: 'When deceased family and relatives 6.1
who have passed away recollect me with a confident mind, may this be very fruitful and beneficial for them.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

A mendicant might wish: 'May I prevail over desire and discon- 7.1
tent, and may desire and discontent not prevail over me. May I live having mastered desire and discontent whenever they arose.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

A mendicant might wish: 'May I prevail over fear and dread, and 8.1
may fear and dread not prevail over me. May I live having mastered fear and dread whenever they arose.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

A mendicant might wish: 'May I get the four absorptions— 9.1
blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—

139. To "fulfill precepts" repeats the commitment to the monastic code. | "Serenity" and "absorption" are the practice of meditation to develop tranquility (*samatha*). | "Discernment" is *vipassanā* ("insight") meditation. | "Empty huts" indicates solitude. Mentioned in a list of things to be guarded by kings at Manu 9.265.

140. This series of arguments is conditional: *if* this is what you want, *then* this is how to get it. The Buddha is not encouraging people to want these things; on the contrary, he frequently warned of the dangers of such attachments. He is being pragmatic: given that people have desires, how can they be encouraged to desire something better?

when I want, without trouble or difficulty.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

10.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

11.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I, with the ending of three fetters, become a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

12.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, become a once-returner, coming back to this world once only, then making an end of suffering.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

13.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I, with the ending of the five lower fetters, be reborn spontaneously and become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.' So let them fulfill their precepts …

14.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying myself and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.' So let them fulfill their precepts …[141]

141. "Psychic powers" (*iddhi*) were much cultivated in the Buddha's day, but the means to acquire them varied: devotion to a god, brutal penances, or magic rituals. The Buddha taught that the mind developed in *samādhi* was capable of things that are normally incomprehensible. | Only a few of these are attested as events in the early texts. The most common is the ability to "materialize and dematerialize", exhibited by the Buddha (AN 8.30:2.1), some disciples (MN 37:6.1), and deities (MN 67:8.1). The Pali is *āvibhāvaṁ tirobhāvaṁ*, literally "manifest state, hidden state". Also found in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.26.1.

15.1 A mendicant might wish: 'With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, may I hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.' So let them fulfill their precepts …[142]

16.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with my mind.[143] May I understand mind with greed as "mind with greed", and mind without greed as "mind without greed"; mind with hate as "mind with hate", and mind without hate as "mind without hate"; mind with delusion as "mind with delusion", and mind without delusion as "mind without delusion"; constricted mind as "constricted mind", and scattered mind as "scattered mind"; expansive mind as "expansive mind", and unexpansive mind as "unexpansive mind"; mind that is not supreme as "mind that is not supreme", and mind that is supreme as "mind that is supreme"; mind immersed in samādhi as "mind immersed in samādhi", and mind not immersed in samādhi as "mind not immersed in samādhi"; freed mind as "freed mind", and unfreed mind as "unfreed mind". So let them fulfill their precepts …

17.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. May I remember: "There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain,

142. "Clairaudience" is a literal rendition of *dibbasota*. The root sense of *dibba* is to "shine" like the bright sky or a divine being. The senses of clarity and divinity are both present.

143. Note that the Indic idiom is not the "reading" of minds, which suggests hearing the words spoken in inner dialogue. While this is exhibited by the Buddha (eg. AN 8.30:2.1), the main emphasis is on the comprehension of the overall state of mind.

and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here." May I thus recollect my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.'[144] So let them fulfill their precepts …

18.1 A mendicant might wish: 'With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, may I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place—and understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: "These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm." And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, may I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. And may I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.'[145] So let them fulfill their precepts …

19.1 A mendicant might wish: 'May I realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.'[146] So

144. Empowered by the fourth *jhāna*, memory breaks through the veil of birth and death, revealing the vast expanse of time and dispelling the illusion that there is any place of eternal rest or sanctuary in the cycle of transmigration.

145. Here knowledge extends to the rebirths of others as well as oneself. Even more significant, it brings in the understanding of cause and effect; *why* rebirth happens the way it does. Such knowledge, however, is not infallible, as the Buddha warns in DN 1:2.5.3 and MN 136. The experience is one thing; the inferences drawn from it are another. One should draw conclusions only tentatively, after long experience.

146. This is the experience of awakening that is the true goal of the Buddhist path. The defilements—properties of the mind that create suffering—have been curbed by the practice of ethics and suppressed by the power of *jhāna*. Here they are eliminated forever.

let them fulfill their precepts, be committed to inner serenity of the heart, not neglect absorption, be endowed with discernment, and frequent empty huts.

'Mendicants, live by the ethical precepts and the monastic code. 20.1
Live restrained in the monastic code, conducting yourselves well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, keep the rules you've undertaken.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 20.3
what the Buddha said.

MN 7

The Simile of the Cloth

Vatthasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Suppose, mendicants, there was a cloth that was dirty and soiled. No matter what dye the dyer applied—whether blue or yellow or red or magenta—it would look poorly dyed and impure in color. Why is that? Because of the impurity of the cloth.

2.5 In the same way, when the mind is corrupt, a bad destiny is to be expected.[147] Suppose there was a cloth that was pure and clean. No matter what dye the dyer applied—whether blue or yellow or red or magenta—it would look well dyed and pure in color. Why is that? Because of the purity of the cloth.

2.10 In the same way, when the mind isn't corrupt, a good destiny is to be expected.

3.1 And what are the corruptions of the mind?[148] Covetousness and immoral greed, ill will, anger, acrimony, disdain, contempt, jealousy, stinginess, deceit, deviousness, obstinacy, aggression, conceit, arrogance, vanity, and negligence are corruptions of the mind.

4.1 A mendicant who understands that covetousness and immoral greed are corruptions of the mind gives them up. A mendicant who

147. A "bad destiny" (*duggati*) is any realm below the human, namely the animal, ghost, and hell realms.

148. Here the text shifts from *saṅkiliṭṭha* ("corrupt") to *upakkilesa* ("corruption"). These are general terms for unskillful qualities of mind and the change in prefix has no particular significence.

understands that ill will … negligence is a corruption of the mind gives it up.

When they have understood these corruptions of the mind for what they are, and have given them up, they have experiential confidence in the Buddha:[149] 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'[150] 5.1

They have experiential confidence in the teaching: 'The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—apparent in the present life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.'[151] 6.1

They have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is practicing the way that's good, direct, systematic, and proper. It consists of the four pairs, the eight individual persons. This is the Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples that is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of greeting with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world.'[152] 7.1

When a mendicant has discarded, eliminated, released, given up, and relinquished to this extent, thinking, 'I have experiential confidence in the Buddha … the teaching … the Saṅgha,' they find 8.1

149. "Experiential" is *avecca*, literally "having undergone". "Experiential confidence" is the faith of a stream-enterer, who has seen for themselves.

150. They have experiential confidence in the Buddha as a teacher because they have followed his path and realized the results that he speaks of.

151. A stream-enterer has direct experience of the four noble truths, so they have confirmed that the teaching is indeed realizable in this very life.

152. The suttas distinguish between two senses of Saṅgha. The "mendicant Saṅgha" (*bhikkhusaṅgha*) is the conventional community of monks and nuns. The "Saṅgha of disciples" (*sāvakasaṅgha*) is classified as fourfold according to the stages of awakening: stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection. Each of these stages is further subdivided into those of the path who are practicing for realization and those of the fruit who have realized. These are referred to as "noble disciples", four of the path and four of the fruit, making eight individuals in total. Saṅgha is not used in the sense of "spiritual community".

inspiration in the meaning and the teaching, and find joy connected with the teaching. Thinking: 'I have discarded, eliminated, released, given up, and relinquished to this extent,' they find inspiration in the meaning and the teaching, and find joy connected with the teaching. When they're joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when they're blissful, the mind becomes immersed in samādhi.[153]

12.1 When a mendicant of such ethics, such qualities, and such wisdom eats boiled fine rice with the dark grains picked out and served with many soups and sauces, that is no obstacle for them.[154] Compare with cloth that is dirty and soiled; it can be made pure and clean by pure water. Or native gold, which can be made pure and bright by a forge. In the same way, when a mendicant of such ethics, such qualities, and such wisdom eats boiled fine rice with the dark grains picked out and served with many soups and sauces, that is no obstacle for them.

13.1 They meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.[155] They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and

153. Reflection on one's progress brings joy and spurs further progress. This can be so powerful as to be a basis for *samādhi*.

154. An offering of delicious food is normally the most sensual temptation in a mendicant's day. In the Chinese parallel at EA 13.5, this is mentioned only after arahantship.

155. Here the Buddha introduces the so-called "divine meditations" (*brahmavihāra*) or "immeasurables" (*appamaññā*). These are four wholesome emotional states that can be developed as a basis for *samādhi*. They were evidently pre-Buddhist, although they have not been traced as a group in pre-Buddhist texts. However, they are shared with later non-Buddhist texts such as Yogasūtra 1.33 and the Jain Tattvārthasūtra 7.11. | "Love" (*mettā*) is a universal positive regard and well-wishing free of personal desires or attachments.

to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of compassion to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.[156] They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of rejoicing to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.[157] They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.[158]

They understand: 'There is this, there is what is worse than this, 17.1
there is what is better than this, and there is an escape beyond the scope of perception.'[159]

Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the de- 18.1
filements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 18.3
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing

156. "Compassion" (*karuṇā*) is the quality of empathy with the suffering of another or oneself and the wish to remove it.
157. "Rejoicing" (*muditā*) is joyful celebration in the success of others or oneself, free of jealousy or cynicism.
158. Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is literally "close watching", not interfering but standing ready when needed. It is not indifference, which is why it emerges only at the end, after the positive emotions are developed.
159. This is a description of advanced insight by a stream-enterer. The meditator understands the current state of their experience, namely the mind developed through *samādhi*. They know that this is conditioned and hence liable to decline to a lower state "worse than this". They know that there are still higher states of mind that can be developed. And they know that, while all states of meditation fall within the scope of perception, there is an ultimate escape, namely Nibbāna.

further for this place.' This is called a mendicant who is bathed with the inner bathing."[160]

19.1 Now at that time the brahmin Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā was sitting not far from the Buddha.[161] He said to the Buddha, "But does Worthy Gotama go to the Bāhukā River to bathe?"

19.4 "Brahmin, why go to the Bāhukā River? What can the Bāhukā River do?"

19.6 "Many people deem that the Bāhukā River leads to a heavenly world and bestows merit. And many people rinse off their bad deeds in the Bāhukā River."[162]

20.1 Then the Buddha addressed Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā in verse:

20.2 "The Bāhukā and the Adhikakkā,[163]

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160. SN 55.30:4.4 has "interior bathing" (*ajjhattaṁ nahānaṁ*) in the same sense. | "Bathed" is *sināta*, a rare variant spelling of *nhata* (Sanskrit *snāta*. *Sināta* also occurs at SN 7.9:15.3). | Later Brahmanical texts regarded external bathing as spiritually effective only when accompanied by inner bathing or purity of soul. The Mahābhārata says that "he who is bathed in the bath of self-disciple is clean inside and out" (13.111.9c, *sa snāto yo damasnātaḥ sabāhyābhyantaraḥ śuciḥ*), while the Liṅga-purāṇa (1.8.33) insists that one who has bathed externally "must also practice the inner bathing" (*snānaṁ … ābhyantaraṁ caret*).

161. It seems that the Buddha mentioned the inner bathing to provoke the brahmin. | Four of the six Chinese parallels to this passage situate it on the bank of a river.

162. *Lokkha*, elsewhere unattested in Pali, is Sanskrit *lokya*, which occurs several times in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa in the sense "conducive to a (heavenly) world" (9.5.2.16, 10.5.2.12, 11.3.3.7). The root sense of *loka* is "light" and it was originally the bright sky with its *devas* (eg. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Mādyandina 11.2.3.1–6, Kāṇva 3.2.5.1), later being extended to include all worlds. The PTS reading *mokkha* is an unwarranted normalization, although it is supported by the parallel at MA 93, which has 度. Note that the expected form *lokiya*, although common in later Pali, occurs only in one early verse (Thag 2.18:2.4). | Bathing for purity from misdeeds as a pre-Buddhist Brahmanical custom is attested in Śukla Yajurveda 3.48. The bhikkhunī Puṇṇikā pointed out that if this were true then the fish, frogs, and turtles would go to heaven (Thig 12.1:6.1); her argument was echoed by the Jains (Sūyagaḍa 1.7.14–16) and later Brahmins (Liṅga-purāṇa 1.8.33–4).

163. The Bāhukā (variant Bahukā) is mentioned only here. It may be the Bāhudā found in various Sanskrit texts (Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.19.18), both words having

at Gayā and the Sundarikā too,[164]
Sarasvatī and Payāga,[165]
and the Bāhumatī River:[166]
a fool can constantly plunge into them
but it won't purify their dark deeds.

What can the Sundarikā do? 20.8
What the Payāga or the Bāhukā?
They can't cleanse a cruel person, a sinner
from their bad deeds.

For the pure in heart it's always 20.12
the spring festival or the sabbath.[167]
For the pure in heart and clean of deed,
their vows will always be fulfilled.
It's here alone that you should bathe, brahmin,

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the sense "granter of abundance". | Adhikakkā (variant Avikakkā) is mentioned only here. The commentary says it was a ford (*tittha*).

164. Gayā is a ford on the Phalgu River by the town of Gayā, which is still a popular site for sacred bathing. Legend has it that it was named after the great titan of that name who offered his own body in sacrifice (Vāyu Purāṇa vol. ii, 43.5, Tagare translation). | Sundarikā was a river in Kosala used for Brahmanical rituals (SN 7.9, Snp 3.4). Bathing in the ford there was said to bring beauty (Mahābhārata 3.82.51).

165. Pali *sarassatī* is better known in the Sanskrit form *sarasvatī*, the most prominent river of the Vedas, who "like a snorting boar, broke the back of the mountains with her mighty waves" (Rig Veda 6.61.2). Change stole her waters and today she is lost. Researchers have identified her with the now-residual Ghaggar-Hakra system in north-west India and Pakistan or the Helmand River in Afghanistan. | Payāga (modern Prayagraj, formerly Allahabad) is the sacred ford at the confluence of the Ganges and the Yamunā beside Kosambī (see Bu Pj 1:4.18). The Mahābhārata calls it the "vulva of the world" (3.83.71), the most meritorious of all fords, where bathing can wash away a hundred crimes (3.83.82).

166. The Bāhumatī River is elsewhere only known by a passing mention in Sanskrit reference works. As an epithet of Indra it means "strong of arm".

167. "Spring festival" is *phaggu*, said to be held at Gayā (Thag 5.7:1.4, Thag 4.6:1.2), although Sanskrit sources take it as the name of a river at Gayā.

making yourself a sanctuary for all creatures.[168]

20.18 And if you speak no lies,[169]
nor harm any living creature,
nor steal anything not given,
and you're faithful and not stingy:
what's the point of going to Gayā?[170]
For any well may be your Gayā!"

21.1 When he had spoken, the brahmin Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. May I receive the going forth, the ordination in the worthy Gotama's presence?"

22.1 And the brahmin Bhāradvāja of Sundarikā received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Bhāradvāja, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

22.3 He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing

168. A *khema* ("sanctuary") is a place of safety for wild creatures, a meaning featured in several Jātaka stories (eg. Ja 482).

169. The straightforward ethical teachings here contrast with the more demanding teachings for the mendicants in the previous prose. Such teachings presage the universal values of *dharma* promoted by King Asoka in his edicts.

170. A counterpoint to Vāyu Purāṇa vol. ii, 43.15, where all the means of attaining liberation are made redundant by making an offering at Gayā: "If the son goes to Gayā, of what avail is the knowledge of Brahman? What is the necessity of dying in a cowshed? And what is the need for a residence at Kurukṣetra?"

further for this place." And Venerable Bhāradvāja became one of the perfected.

MN 8

Self-Effacement

Sallekhasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.[171]

2.1 Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Mahācunda came out of retreat and went to the Buddha. He bowed, sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha:[172]

3.1 "Sir, there are many different views that arise in the world connected with theories of self or with theories of the cosmos.[173] How

171. Of the two parallels to this sutta, MA 91 takes place at the Ghositārāma in Kosambī, while EA 47.9 is set in the Squirrels' Feeding Ground at Rājagaha. The specifics of narrative backgrounds often vary; they are not "the Buddha's word", but rather were added by editors at some point.

172. There are various Cundas whose connection is unclear. Mahācunda was one of the great disciples (MN 118, AN 6.17), who later brought the Dhamma to the land of the Cetīs (AN 6.46, AN 10.24). He once stayed with Channa and Sāriputta (MN 144:4.1, SN 35.87:1.2); the commentaries say he was in fact Sāriputta's younger brother. They also identify him with the "novice Cunda" who reported the deaths of Sāriputta (SN 47.13:1.3) and Mahāvīra (DN 29:2.1, MN 104:3.1), explaining that the title "novice" was a nickname that persisted from the time he ordained as a young novice. It is unclear whether the commentaries take the Cundaka of DN 16:4.39.2 = Ud 8.5:14.3 to be the same person, but he is there performing a similar role as carer adjacent to the Buddha's death. Later there appears a Cūḷacunda (Tha Ap 52:13.3). Thus there may have been one person known by different names, or several people whose stories have become conflated.

173. These are discussed many times in the suttas, for example doctrines of the self at MN 2:8.2 and MN 44; of the cosmos at MN 63 and MN 72; and of both at DN 1:1.30.1 and MN 102:14.1.

does a mendicant who is focusing on the starting point give up and let go of these views?"[174]

3.4 "Cunda, there are many different views that arise in the world connected with theories of self or with theories of the cosmos. A mendicant gives up and lets go of these views by truly seeing with right wisdom where they arise, where they settle in, and where they operate as: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'[175]

4.1 It's possible that a certain mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, might enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. They might think they're practicing self-effacement.[176] But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'blissful meditations in this life'.[177]

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174. The idiom *ādimeva* elsewhere occurs only when the Buddha gives a mendicant instructions for a retreat. Typically (SN 47.3:1.6, SN 47.15:1.4, SN 47.16:1.4) he says to "purify the starting point of skillful qualities", namely ethics (*sīla*) and views (*diṭṭhi*), on the latter of which Mahācunda is seeking clarification. | In the Pali the question is phrased directly and is sometimes translated "do they give them up?", but the idiom *evametāsaṁ* shifts the sense to "how do they give them up?" (MN 74:6.14, MN 137:16.8). And that is indeed the answer the Buddha gives. The commentary explains it similarly (*etena upāyena etāsaṁ*), and both Chinese texts have 云何 here, which typically stands for *kathaṁ* ("how").

175. This is the insight of stream-entry, where wrong views are fully abandoned by means of the clarified wisdom that sees the truth of conditionality. The remainder of the sutta discusses the practice leading to this point.

176. The term "self-effacement" that lends the sutta its title is Pali *sallekha*, which has the sense of "rubbing out" (an inscription or mark). It is associated with such virtues as contentment, seclusion, and simplicity (eg. MN 3:3.25). Here it refers to the strength of character to persist in "effacing" unwholesome qualities through developing their opposites, no matter what others might do. | Not to be confused with the Jain *sallekhanā*, where practitioners at the end of life refuse all food (Tattvārthasūtra 7.22). In fact, this sutta appears to emphasize the gentle nature of the Buddha's approach in deliberate contrast with the stern austerities of the Jains.

177. The sutta is not deprecating the *jhānas*, for they are a fundamental part of the early Buddhist path, and as such are included later under the heading

5.1 It's possible that some mendicant, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, might enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. They might think they're practicing self-effacement. But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'blissful meditations in this life'.

6.1 It's possible that some mendicant, with the fading away of rapture, might enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' They might think they're practicing self-effacement. But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'blissful meditations in this life'.

7.1 It's possible that some mendicant, with the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, might enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. They might think they're practicing self-effacement. But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'blissful meditations in this life'.

8.1 It's possible that some mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', might enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. They might think they're practicing self-effacement. But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'peaceful meditations'.

9.1 It's possible that some mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', might

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of "right immersion" (MN 8:12.19). Indeed, the sutta ends with the Buddha encouraging Cunda to practice *jhāna*. Rather, this text emphasizes the need to actively develop all aspects of the path, humble or exalted, and integrate them in every aspect of life, rather than solely relying on meditation in seclusion.

enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. They might think they're practicing self-effacement. But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'peaceful meditations'.

It's possible that some mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', might enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. They might think they're practicing self-effacement. But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'peaceful meditations'. 10.1

It's possible that some mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, might enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. They might think they're practicing self-effacement. But in the training of the Noble One these are not called 'self-effacement'; they're called 'peaceful meditations'. 11.1

1. The Exposition of Self-Effacement

Now in this regard, Cunda, you should work on self-effacement in each of the following ways.[178] 12.1

'Others will be cruel, but here we will not be cruel.'[179] 12.2

'Others will kill living creatures, but here we will not kill living creatures.'[180] 12.3

'Others will steal, but here we will not steal.' 12.4

'Others will be unchaste, but here we will not be unchaste.' 12.5

178. The phrase "work on self-effacement" (*sallekho karaṇīyo*) recurs in each clause but is abbreviated in translation. It echoes the phrase *sikkhā karaṇīyā* ("this training should be done") which ends each of the Vinaya "training rules". Both cases emphasize the active application of effort.

179. The list of unskillful qualities forms the skeleton of the rest of the sutta, being repeated five times with variations in the presentation. The Pali has 44 items, while MA 91 has 31 and EA 47.9 has 16. I note where the items appear in standard doctrinal lists. | Non-cruelty is mentioned first as it is the foundation of good qualities and the first moral precept, to not kill.

180. These ten make up the ten ways of doing of skillful deeds.

12.6 'Others will lie, but here we will not lie.'

12.7 'Others will backbite, but here we will not backbite.'

12.8 'Others will speak harshly, but here we will not speak harshly.'

12.9 'Others will talk nonsense, but here we will not talk nonsense.'

12.10 'Others will be covetous, but here we will not be covetous.'

12.11 'Others will have ill will, but here we will not have ill will.'

12.12 'Others will have wrong view, but here we will have right view.'[181]

12.13 'Others will have wrong purpose, but here we will have right purpose.'

12.14 'Others will have wrong speech, but here we will have right speech.'

12.15 'Others will have wrong action, but here we will have right action.'

12.16 'Others will have wrong livelihood, but here we will have right livelihood.'

12.17 'Others will have wrong effort, but here we will have right effort.'

12.18 'Others will have wrong mindfulness, but here we will have right mindfulness.'

12.19 'Others will have wrong immersion, but here we will have right immersion.'

12.20 'Others will have wrong knowledge, but here we will have right knowledge.'[182]

12.21 'Others will have wrong freedom, but here we will have right freedom.'

12.22 'Others will be overcome with dullness and drowsiness, but here we will be rid of dullness and drowsiness.'[183]

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181. This item performs double-duty as both the last of the ten ways of doing skillful deeds and the first of the noble eight (or ten) fold path.

182. These two items are sometimes added to the eightfold path to make ten (eg. MN 117:35.13). They are missing in both parallels.

183. This is the third of the five hindrances, and the final two follow in sequence. The first two of the hindrances appear above as "covetousness" and "ill will" in the ten ways of doing unskillful deeds. Notably, the same pattern occurs in MA 91, which speaks to a common ancestor on this point. This shows that these items were organized to eliminate repetition, but in other cases (such as the kinds of wrong speech and wrong action) items do repeat.

'Others will be restless, but here we will not be restless.' 12.23

'Others will have doubts, but here we will have gone beyond doubt.' 12.24

'Others will be irritable, but here we will be without anger.'[184] 12.25

'Others will be acrimonious, but here we will be without acrimony.' 12.26

'Others will be offensive, but here we will be inoffensive.' 12.27

'Others will be contemptuous, but here we will be without contempt.' 12.28

'Others will be jealous, but here we will be without jealousy.' 12.29

'Others will be stingy, but here we will be without stinginess.' 12.30

'Others will be devious, but here we will not be devious.' 12.31

'Others will be deceitful, but here we will not be deceitful.' 12.32

'Others will be pompous, but here we will not be pompous.' 12.33

'Others will be arrogant, but here we will not be arrogant.' 12.34

'Others will be hard to admonish, but here we will not be hard to admonish.'[185] 12.35

'Others will have bad friends, but here we will have good friends.' 12.36

'Others will be negligent, but here we will be diligent.' 12.37

'Others will be faithless, but here we will have faith.'[186] 12.38

'Others will be conscienceless, but here we will have a sense of conscience.' 12.39

'Others will be imprudent, but here we will be prudent.' 12.40

'Others will be unlearned, but here we will be well learned.' 12.41

'Others will be lazy, but here we will be energetic.' 12.42

'Others will be unmindful, but here we will be mindful.' 12.43

'Others will be witless, but here we will be accomplished in wisdom.' 12.44

184. These ten are included in the sixteen blemishes of MN 7.

185. These three items are not part of a defined set, and in addition are absent from MA 91.

186. These are the seven good (and bad) qualities of MN 53:11.1.

12.45 'Others will be attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go, but here we will not be attached to our own views, not holding them tight, but will let them go easily.'[187]

2. Giving Rise to the Thought

13.1 Cunda, I say that even giving rise to the thought of skillful qualities is very helpful, let alone following that path in body and speech.[188] That's why you should give rise to the following thoughts. 'Others will be cruel, but here we will not be cruel.' 'Others will kill living creatures, but here we will not kill living creatures.' … 'Others will be attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go, but here we will not be attached to our own views, not holding them tight, but will let them go easily.'

3. Bypassing

14.1 Cunda, suppose there was a rough path and another smooth path to get around it.[189] Or suppose there was a rough ford and another smooth ford to get around it. In the same way, a cruel individual bypasses it by not being cruel. An individual who kills bypasses it by not killing. …

187. Typically this follows "corrupt wishes and wrong view" (eg. AN 6.36:2.5, DN 33:2.2.61), thus is not part of a defined set in this sutta, and is also absent from MA 91.

188. This round foregrounds the "starting point". Before we do anything, we think of doing it, and that in itself is powerful, as it sets the mind in a certain direction. For the Buddha, the mental intentions that underlie bodily behaviors are crucial, whereas for the Jains it is the bodily behaviors themselves that matter.

189. When the path is rough, the Buddha encourages us to find a smoother path. The undertakings of the Buddhist path should be pleasant and lead to happiness. While the path can be difficult, the difficulty itself is of no value. This is in implicit contrast with the Jains, who gave themselves to "burning off" (*tapas*) kamma through agonizing austerities.

An individual who is attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go, gets around it by not being attached to their own views, not holding them tight, but letting them go easily. 14.5

4. Going Up

Cunda, all unskillful qualities lead downwards, while all skillful qualities lead upwards.[190] In the same way, a cruel individual is led upwards by not being cruel. An individual who kills is led upwards by not killing … An individual who is attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go, is led upwards by not being attached to their own views, not holding them tight, but letting them go easily. 15.1

5. The Exposition by Extinguishment

If you're sinking in the mud yourself, Cunda, it is quite impossible for you to pull out someone else who is sinking in the mud. But if you're not sinking in the mud yourself, it is quite possible for you to pull out someone else who is sinking in the mud. If you're not tamed, trained, and quenched yourself, it is quite impossible for you to help tame, train, and extinguish someone else. But if you are tamed, trained, and quenched yourself, it is quite possible for you to help tame, train, and extinguish someone else.[191] 16.1

In the same way, a cruel individual extinguishes it by not being cruel. An individual who kills extinguishes it by not killing. … 16.5

An individual who is attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go, extinguishes it by not being attached to their own views, not holding them tight, but letting them go easily. 16.24

190. This round emphasizes the unifying quality of good and bad, so that any good deed, no matter how small or insignificant, leads in the same direction.
191. The Buddha only ever taught people to do what he himself had achieved, following the same path he had discovered.

17.1 So, Cunda, I've taught the expositions by way of self-effacement, arising of thought, bypassing, going up, and extinguishing.[192] Out of sympathy, I've done what a teacher should do who wants what's best for their disciples. Here are these roots of trees, and here are these empty huts. Practice absorption, Cunda! Don't be negligent! Don't regret it later! This is my instruction."[193]

17.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Mahācunda approved what the Buddha said.

17.6 Forty-four items have been stated,[194]
organized into five sections.
"Effacement" is the name of this discourse,
which is deep as the ocean.

192. The Buddha lists the five rounds of the forty-four items.

193. While this exhortation is addressed to Cunda, it is phrased in plural, indicating that it is intended for the whole audience.

194. It is unusual for a summary verse (*uddāna*) to be added to an individual sutta. It is not mentioned in the commentary or subcommentary, nor is it found in the PTS edition, nor is there an equivalent in either Chinese parallel. It has obviously been added by redactors at some point. I translate it here due to its inherent interest; normally I leave the *uddānas* at the end of a chapter or other section untranslated, as they consist of little more than a list of the titles of suttas.

MN 9

Right View

Sammādiṭṭhisutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants:[195] "Reverends, mendicants!" 1.1

"Reverend," they replied. Sāriputta said this: 1.5

"Reverends, they speak of this thing called 'right view'. How do you define a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching?"[196] 2.1

"Reverend, we would travel a long way to learn the meaning of this statement in the presence of Venerable Sāriputta. May Venerable Sāriputta himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it." 2.3

"Well then, reverends, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 2.6

"Yes, reverend," they replied. Sāriputta said this: 2.7

"A noble disciple understands the unskillful and its root, and the skillful and its root.[197] When they've done this, they're defined as a 3.1

195. The Chinese and Sanskrit parallels depict this discourse as a conversation between Sāriputta and Mahākoṭṭhita, a context that appears to have been lost in the Pali. The sutta proceeds by starting with a simple analysis of right view, gradually stepping into deeper waters. Much of the discourse is framed in terms of dependent origination, but it focuses on the dependently originated phenomena, rather than the process of causality (see SN 12.20 for this distinction).

196. In other words, a stream-enterer. In MN 141:5.6, Sāriputta is said to teach students as far as as stream-entry, while his friend Moggallāna leads them to arahantship.

197. That is, the deed and the motivating force behind the deed.

noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching.[198]

4.1 But what is the unskillful and what is its root? And what is the skillful and what is its root? Killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; covetousness, ill will, and wrong view.[199] This is called the unskillful.

5.1 And what is the root of the unskillful? Greed, hate, and delusion. This is called the root of the unskillful.

6.1 And what is the skillful? Refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; refraining from speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; contentment, good will, and right view.[200] This is called the skillful.

7.1 And what is the root of the skillful? Contentment, love, and understanding. This is called the root of the skillful.

8.1 A noble disciple understands in this way the unskillful and its root, and the skillful and its root. They've completely given up the underlying tendency to greed, dispelled the underlying tendency to aversion, and eradicated the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am'. They've given up ignorance and given rise to knowledge, and make an end of suffering in this very life.[201] When

198. Sāriputta had a deliberate, systematic, and unhurried approach to teaching. First he introduces a fundamental question, in this case stream-entry. Then he gives a simple and practical answer. Then he goes on to draw out implications both broad and deep.

199. Note that covetousness, ill will, and wrong view are strong forms of greed, hate, and delusion respectively.

200. These are the "ten ways of doing skillful deeds" (*dasakusalakammapathā*). There is a detailed explanation at MN 41:7.1.

201. This passage, which is repeated throughout the sutta, indicates the arahant. The phrasing is problematic, as it suggests that one has right view (stream-entry) only after fully relinquishing all defilements (arahantship). The commentary records a discussion of this problem, but in fact it is probably due to a textual corruption in the Pali text, as the parallels at MA 29 and SA 344 lack this passage. This shows how difficulties in the Pali text can sometimes lead to fruitless discussions in the absence of the broader context offered by parallels.

they've done this, they're defined as a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching."

Saying "Good, reverend," those mendicants approved and agreed 9.1
with what Sāriputta said. Then they asked another question: "But reverend, might there be another way to describe a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching?"[202]

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands fuel, its 10.1
origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.[203] When they've done this, they're defined as a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching.

But what is fuel? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice 11.1
that leads to its cessation? These four fuels maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those about to be born.[204] What four? Edible food, whether solid or subtle; contact is the second, mental

202. By giving a brief and simple answer to a profound question, Sāriputta leaves room for the audience to request further explanation. This teaching method ensures audience engagement and conveys information in digestible doses.

203. Sāriputta introduces the framework of the four noble truths, but structured in terms of "fuel" rather than suffering. | "Fuel" (or "food" or "nutriment", *āhāra*) refers to both the thing that acts as a condition, fuel, or support, as well as the internal grasping and attachment to that thing. Its use as a philosophical term appears to be an innovation by the Buddha, replacing the *anna* so dear to Vedic seers.

204. Also at MN 38:15.1, SN 12.11, SN 12.12, SN 12.63, SN 12.64; cp Snp 1.8:5.3. | "About to be born" is *sambhavesī*, which I follow Norman and Bodhi in reading as a future active participle, although the commentary takes it in the sense "seeking" to be born. Compare such Sanskrit constructions as Rig Veda 1.66.8, *yamo ha jāto yamo janitvaṁ* ("the twin that is born and the twin about to be born") and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.3.1.24, *bhūtaṁ caiva bhaviṣyacca jātaṁ ca janiṣyamāṇaṁ* ("has become and will be, born and to be born"). | The phrase is one of several in the suttas that appears to indicate an intermediate state between one life and the next, despite the fact that this view is formally rejected by the Theravada Abhidhamma (Kv 8.2).

intention the third, and consciousness the fourth.[205] Fuel originates from craving. Fuel ceases when craving ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of fuel is simply this noble eightfold path, that is:[206] right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

12.1 A noble disciple understands in this way fuel, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation. They've completely given up the underlying tendency to greed, dispelled the underlying tendency to aversion, and eradicated the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am'. They've given up ignorance and given rise to knowledge, and make an end of suffering in this very life. When they've done this, they're defined as a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching."

13.1 Saying "Good, reverend," those mendicants … asked another question: "But reverend, might there be another way to describe a noble disciple who … has come to the true teaching?"

205. Coarse edible food sustains the bodies of beings in the human and animal realms, while fine edible food sustains the gods and ancestors, a belief intertwined with the Vedic notion that the gods partake of the food offered in sacrifice (eg. Rig Veda 1.187). | "Contact" (*phassa*) is the interaction between the inner and outer worlds, allowing us to situate ourselves in a sensory world full of fears and joys, stimulating feeling and hence the craving for more. | "Volition" (*manosañcetanā*) allows us to act in the world revealed by the senses and secure further "fuel". | "Consciousness" (*viññāṇa*) is aware of all this, experiencing suffering, and giving rise to a new "name and form" in a future life in a fruitless search to find a world free of pain. Thus the four "fuels" can be considered as a distinctive perspective on dependent origination, which is expanded further in the subsequent items.

206. The word *āhāra* ("fuel", "food", "nutriment") means literally "intake", and is etymologically parallel to *upādāna*, "grasping", "uptake". Both terms have dual senses, on the one hand denoting fuel or sustenance, and on the other grasping and attachment. That is why here (as at MN 38:16.1), *āhāra* is created by craving, just like *upādāna* in the standard sequence (MN 38:17.8).

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands suffering, 14.1
its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.[207] When they've done this, they're defined as a noble disciple who … has come to the true teaching. But what is suffering? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? Rebirth is suffering; old age is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are suffering; being coupled with the disliked is suffering; separation from the liked is suffering; not getting what you wish for is suffering. In brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering.[208] This is called suffering. And what is the origin of suffering? It's the craving that leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights. That is,[209] craving for sensual pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving for nonexistence.[210] This is called the origin of suffering. And what is the cessation of suffering? It's the fading away and cessation of that very same craving with no residue left behind;

207. Here Sāriputta gives the classic statement on the four noble truths in terms of suffering (*dukkha*).

208. The definitions of the four noble truths are direct quotes from the Buddha's first sermon, the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta (SN 56.11:4.2). They are notably emphasized by Sāriputta, who delves even further into them (MN 28:3.2, MN 141:10.2), as he does later in this sutta also.

209. This definition clarifies two common misunderstandings. First, not all desire causes suffering, for some kinds of desire lead out of suffering (SN 51.15:4.1). Second, rebirth is not a tangential part of the Buddha's teachings, uncritically inherited from cultural suppositions; it is baked into the fundamental meaning of the four noble truths. | The idiom *tatratatra* (literally "there, there") is not selective ("here and there") but distributive ("everywhere"). By taking pleasure in sense experience, the mind binds itself to the need for continued stimulation in future lives. The distancing sense "there" is important, for craving does not merely satisfy itself with what it currently experiences, but must always seek out renewed gratification. For an Upaniṣadic precursor, see the note to the same idiom at MN 2:8.8.

210. Craving is a primal desire or hunger, often unconscious. | "Craving for sensual pleasures" (*kāmataṇhā*): the desire to experience pleasure through any of the five senses. | "Craving for continued existence" (*bhavataṇhā*): the desire to continue living in some form after death. | "Craving for nonexistence" (*vibhavataṇhā*): the desire to annihilate the self.

giving it away, letting it go, releasing it, and not clinging to it.[211] This is called the cessation of suffering. And what is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view … right immersion. This is called the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.

19.1 A noble disciple understands in this way suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation. They've completely given up the underlying tendency to greed, dispelled the underlying tendency to aversion, and eradicated the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am'. They've given up ignorance and given rise to knowledge, and make an end of suffering in this very life. When they've done this, they're defined as a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching."

20.1 Saying "Good, reverend," those mendicants … asked another question: "But reverend, might there be another way to describe a noble disciple who … has come to the true teaching?"

21.1 "There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands old age and death, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation …[212] But what are old age and death? What is their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation? The old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, gray hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the

211. These terms are used widely in different senses, but here they are all synonyms of "extinction" (*nibbāna*). | Note especially the appearance of *cāga* ("giving") here. Giving is regarded as the most basic foundation of moral practice, yet even in its simplest form it partakes of the same nature as Nibbāna.

212. This is a nice example of Sāriputta's analytical genius. He picks up "old age and death" from the explanation of "suffering" and treats it within the framework of the four noble truths. This creates continuity with the previous sections, as well as situating it within the Buddha's teachings as a whole, since all footprints fit in an elephant's footprint (MN 28:2.1). Further, he *deepens* understanding by applying the four noble truths recursively, bringing small details into close focus. Meanwhile, this item, following on from "suffering", leads into the familiar sequence of items from dependent origination. Thus he simultaneously *broadens* the scope by linking the four noble truths with dependent origination.

various orders of sentient beings.[213] This is called old age. And what is death?[214] The passing away, perishing, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates, laying to rest of the corpse, and cutting off of the life faculty of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called death. Such is old age, and such is death. This is called old age and death. Old age and death originate from rebirth. Old age and death cease when rebirth ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of old age and death is simply this noble eightfold path …"[215]

"Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?" 24.1

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands rebirth, 25.1 its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation … But what is rebirth? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? The rebirth, inception, conception, regeneration, manifestation of the aggregates, and acquisition of the sense fields of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called rebirth. Rebirth originates from continued existence. Rebirth ceases when continued existence ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of rebirth is simply this noble eightfold path …"

"Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?" 28.1

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands continued 29.1 existence, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.[216] But what is continued existence? What is its origin,

213. *Jarā* is neither the process of getting old ("ageing"), nor a psychological metaphor, but the physical state of being old ("old age"). The same applies to the definitions of "death" and "rebirth".

214. Text lacks the expected question "what is old age?" on the previous section.

215. *Jāti* refers to ongoing transmigration into new lives, "rebirth". The only way to escape old age and death is to not be reborn.

216. *Bhava* means "being, existence, life" in the sense of "past and future lives". The concept of *bhava* includes both active and resultant dimensions of life. Consider it by analogy with, say, visiting a park. First there is the spark of an idea, a vague impression of a "park" in the mind, which solidifies into an intention. Acting on it, one goes to the park, where it becomes one's reality, the

its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? There are these three states of continued existence.[217] Existence in the sensual realm, the realm of luminous form, and the formless realm.[218] Continued existence originates from grasping. Continued existence ceases when grasping ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of continued existence is simply this noble eightfold path …"

32.1 "Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?"

33.1 "There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands grasping, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation …[219] But what is grasping? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? There are these four kinds of grasping. Grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and theories of a self.[220] Grasping originates from craving.

"world" one inhabits. Likewise, by creating ideas and volitions in the mind, one is aligning or tuning into the corresponding realm of existence, priming the mind to project itself into that state and make it a reality when one is reborn there.

217. The idea of three "worlds" (*loka*) or "states of existence" (*bhava*), variously defined, is shared between Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. It originally referred to the earth (*bhū, pṛthivi*), the midspace (*antarikṣa*), and the heavens or sky (*diva, svarga*), the respective abodes of humanity, the ancestors, and the gods. In the mythology underlying the Vedas they were formed by Indra's heroic deeds: empowered by soma, he first slew the dragon Vṛtra who bound the world in a mass of darkness, then he separated earth from sky, leaving the midspace between (Rig Veda 2.15), thus creating the visible or intelligible world.

218. The "sensual realm" encompasses all realms, including the human, from the lowest hell to the highest of the sensual heavens, the gods who control what is imagined by others. | "Luminous form" (*rūpa*) refers to the Brahmā realms attained through the luminous mind of *jhāna*. | The "formless" realms are attained through the formless meditations.

219. "Grasping" (*upādāna*) has the active sense of "taking up" a new life, not just "clinging" to what one has. As noted above, it has a dual sense, because, like *āhāra*, it also means the "fuel" that sustains the fire of existence (SN 3.1:10.1, SN 12.52:1.2).

220. Grasping begins with the primal desire of the senses, but the three other graspings are rather intellectual and sophisticated. Only a grown human being with a developed linguistic ability is able to formulate a view to become attached to, and likewise with attachment to religious observances and vows, and to theories of a self.

Grasping ceases when craving ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of grasping is simply this noble eightfold path …"

"Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?" 36.1

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands craving, its 37.1
origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation … But what is craving? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? There are these six classes of craving. Craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas.[221] Craving originates from feeling. Craving ceases when feeling ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of craving is simply this noble eightfold path …"

"Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?" 40.1

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands feeling, its 41.1
origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation …[222] But what is feeling? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? There are these six classes of feeling. Feeling born of contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Feeling originates from contact. Feeling ceases when contact ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of feeling is simply this noble eightfold path …"

"Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?" 44.1

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands contact, 45.1
its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation …[223] But what is contact? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? There are these six classes of con-

221. We have met the three kinds of craving above, while here craving is analyzed in terms of the six senses, which relates it to the items to come. | *Dhammataṇhā* is idiomatically translated as "craving for ideas", although its scope is broader than just discursive thinking. It refers to any kind of craving for mental phenomena, which includes, for example, craving for the mental pleasure of deep meditation.

222. "Feeling" is *vedanā*, from the root *vid* ("to experience") and having the applied meaning of "hedonic tone", whether pleasant, painful, or neutral.

223. "Contact" is *phassa*, otherwise "touch", or "impingement". It occurs when sense stimulus meets sense organ in experience.

tact. Contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.[224] Contact originates from the six sense fields. Contact ceases when the six sense fields cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of contact is simply this noble eightfold path …"

48.1 "Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?"

49.1 "There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands the six sense fields, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation …[225] But what are the six sense fields? What is their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation? There are these six sense fields. The sense fields of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.[226] The six sense fields originate from name and form. The six sense fields cease when name and form cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of the six sense fields is simply this noble eightfold path …"

52.1 "Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?"

53.1 "There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands name and form, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation …[227] But what are name and form? What is their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation? Feeling, perception, intention, contact, and application of mind—[228] this is

224. Contact through the physical senses occurs by way of impingement or physical resistance, the impact of a stimulating energy with the sense organ. Mental contact occurs by way of designation or conceptualization.

225. "Field" is *āyatana*, literally a "stretching out", i.e. a field or dimension.

226. In Buddhism, the mind is the "sixth sense", which knows mental phenomena just as physical senses know physical phenomena.

227. "Name and form" (*nāmarūpa*) is a Vedic concept referring to the multiplicity of material forms (*rūpa*) and associated names (*nāma*), especially the individual "sentient organisms" such as gods and humans (Rig Veda 5.43.10, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.6.1, Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.3.2), which are ultimately absorbed into the divine, like rivers in the ocean (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.2.8, Praśna Upaniṣad 6.5).

228. Name and form are treated analytically (see also DN 15:20.8, SN 12.2:11.1). This brings them out of the world of metaphysics and theology and into the realm of mindful experience and rational inquiry. These five factors make it possible for consciousness to function.

called name. The four principal states, and form derived from the four principal states—[229] this is called form. Such is name and such is form. This is called name and form. Name and form originate from consciousness. Name and form cease when consciousness ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of name and form is simply this noble eightfold path …"

"Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?" 56.1

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands consciousness, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation …[230] But what is consciousness? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? There are these six classes of consciousness. Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousness.[231] Consciousness originates from choices. Consciousness ceases when choices cease. The practice that leads to the cessation of consciousness is simply this noble eightfold path …" 57.1

"Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?" 59.2

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands choices, their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation …[232] But what are choices? What is their origin, their cessation, and the practice that leads to their cessation?[233] There are 61.1

229. The "principal states" (*mahābhūtā*) are earth, water, fire, and air, corresponding to the states of matter, namely solid, liquid, plasma, and gas. For the history of this term, see note on MN 28:4.2. | "Derived" (*upādāya*) form is not explained in the suttas, but one passage indicates it includes "space" (MN 28:26.1). The Abhidhamma traditions explain it as including the objects of the senses, the subtle matter that receives sense impressions, and various other material phenomena.

230. "Consciousness" (*viññāṇa*) is simple subjective awareness, the sense of knowing. It is the subjective awareness that makes the entire multiform world of concepts and appearances possible.

231. External sense consciousness is the sheer awareness of a physical property. The eye, for example, is only aware of light. The mind, relying on the five factors of "name", processes this data into meaningful concepts and ideas.

232. This is the final item in the Chinese and Sanskrit parallels.

233. *Saṅkhāra* in early Buddhism has three main doctrinal senses. (1) The broadest sense is "conditioned phenomena", which essentially means "everything except Nibbāna". (2) Sometimes it is a physical or mental "process" or "activity",

these three kinds of choice. Choices by way of body, speech, and mind.[234] Choices originate from ignorance. Choices cease when ignorance ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of choices is simply this noble eightfold path …"

64.1 "Might there be another way to describe a noble disciple?"

64.3 "There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands ignorance, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation …[235] But what is ignorance? What is its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation? Not knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. This is called ignorance. Ignorance originates from defilement. Ignorance ceases when defilement ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of ignorance is simply this noble eightfold path …"[236]

68.1 Saying "Good, reverend," those mendicants approved and agreed with what Sāriputta said. Then they asked another question: "But

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such as vitality or the breath. (3) In the five aggregates and dependent origination it has the sense of "morally potent volitions or choices" and is a synonym for *cetanā* ("intention") or *kamma* ("deed"). It is defined as good, bad, and imperturbable choices (DN 33:1.10.77, SN 12.51:9.4), the latter of which refers to the kamma of the fourth *jhāna* and above. In this sense it is the moral "choices" for good or ill that propel consciousness into a new rebirth.

234. This set of three refers to deeds carried out through the body, speech, and mind (eg. MN 57:8.2). "Mind" is *citta*, while the Sanskrit Dṛṣṭisampannasūtra has *mano* in the parallel passage (SF 172). In dependent origination these are synonyms (SN 12.61:2.1). Not to be confused with the same terms when used in the context of mindfulness of breathing (SN 41.6:1.5).

235. "Ignorance" is the only item not found in the Chinese and Sanskrit parallels. Perhaps the original form of the sutta treated ignorance solely under its inverse, which is right view itself. Thus the lack of ignorance as a separate item could have been deliberate, emphasizing how the entirety of right view, encompassing all items in the discourse, implies the opposite of ignorance.

236. The current presentation is unique, as ignorance is itself one of the defilements (*āsava*). Ignorance is normally the final item in dependent origination, the "head" from which all follows (Snp 5.1:51.1). Nonetheless, causality is not a linear process, so a starting point is identified only for practical reasons. At AN 10.62:2.4 the five hindrances are said to be the "fuel" for ignorance.

reverend, might there be another way to describe a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching?"

"There might, reverends. A noble disciple understands defile- 69.1
ment, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.[237] When they've done this, they're defined as a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching.

But what is defilement? What is its origin, its cessation, and the 70.1
practice that leads to its cessation? There are these three defilements. The defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. Defilement originates from ignorance. Defilement ceases when ignorance ceases. The practice that leads to the cessation of defilement is simply this noble eightfold path, that is:[238] right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

A noble disciple understands in this way defilement, its origin, 71.1
its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation. They've completely given up the underlying tendency to greed, dispelled the underlying tendency to aversion, and eradicated the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am'. They've given up ignorance and given rise to knowledge, and make an end of suffering in this very life. When they've done this, they're defined as a noble disciple who has right view, whose view is correct, who has experiential confidence in the teaching, and has come to the true teaching."

237. The appearance of "defilement" (*āsava*) at the end is appropriate, as its appearance in the four noble truths formula usually signifies arahantship. Nonetheless, the Chinese and Sanskrit parallels place it much earlier, after the four fuels. The sequence of the remaining items is mostly consistent between parallels.

238. Ignorance and defilements are locked in a cycle of mutual dependent conditioning: ignorance begets more ignorance. Compare the mutual conditioning of consciousness with name and form at DN 15:20.1. One implication of this is that no first point of ignorance and hence no first point of transmigration can be known.

71.3 That is what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what Sāriputta said.

MN 10

Mindfulness Meditation

Satipaṭṭhānasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[239] At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kurus, near the Kuru town named Kammāsadamma. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, the four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.[240] 2.1

239. This discourse is copied at DN 22, where the section on the four noble truths has been expanded with material mostly drawn from MN 141. These discourses are the most influential texts for modern Theravada meditation, prompting countless modern commentaries. Comparative study of the several parallel versions reveals that this discourse, while comprised almost entirely of early material, was compiled in this form as one of the latest texts in the Pali suttas (see SN 47.18 and notes). | While mindfulness is always useful (SN 46.53:15.4), the "establishment of mindfulness" (*satipaṭṭhāna*) refers especially to a conscious development of contemplative practices based on mindfulness, i.e. "mindfulness meditation" or simply "meditation".

240. The phrase *ekāyano maggo* ("path to convergence") is given multiple meanings in commentaries and ancient Chinese translations. Outside of *satipaṭṭhāna*, it is used in only one context in Pali, where it means to "come together with" (MN 12:37.5). At SN 47.18:3.4 the phrase is spoken by Brahmā, which suggests it was a Brahmanical term. Yajñavalkya—in a core passage full of details shared with the suttas—uses it for a place where things unite or converge (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.11; in the same sense also at Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.5.2; Mahābhārata 14.19.1–2). Thus *satipaṭṭhāna* leads to everything "coming together as one". In other words, as seventh factor of the noble eightfold path, it leads to *samādhi*, the eighth factor (SN 45.1:3.9; see also MN 44:12.3). *Ekāyana* is also a name for a certain Sanskrit scripture (in a list of texts at Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.1.2, 7.1.4, 7.2.1, 7.7.1; Puruṣottamasaṁhitā 1.10; Praśnasaṃhitā

3.1 What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.[241] They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.[242] They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.[243] They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.[244]

1. Observing the Body

1.1. Mindfulness of Breathing

4.1 And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of the body?

2.38). Now, the latter text discusses the *ekāyana* as *nivṛtti*, "renunciation", which is, in fact, introduced to the Vedic system by Yajñavalkya in the above-cited passage. Thus as a scripture it probably originally referred to that very passage exemplifying the Upaniṣadic teachings, which are otherwise omitted from the Chāndogya list.

241. The idiom *kāye kāyānupassī*, literally "one who observes a body in the body" refers to focusing on a specific aspect of embodied experience, such as the breath, the postures, etc. | "Keen" (or "ardent", *ātāpī*) implies effort, while "aware" (*sampajāno*) is the wisdom of understanding situation and context. | "Covetousness and displeasure" (*abhijjhādomanassaṁ*) are the strong forms of desire and aversion that are overcome by sense restraint in preparation for meditation.

242. "Feelings" (*vedanā*) are the basic tones of pleasant, painful, or neutral, not the complexes we call "emotions".

243. "Mind" (*citta*) is simple awareness. In meditation contexts, "mind" is often similar in meaning to *samādhi*.

244. "Principles" (*dhammā*) are the natural "systems" of cause and effect that underlie the "teachings". The renderings "mind objects" or "mental qualities" are incorrect, as many of the things spoken of in this section are neither mind objects nor mental qualities. "Phenomena" is a possible translation, but the emphasis is not on the "appearance" of things, but on the "principles" governing their conditional relations.

It's when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present.[245] Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out.[246] 4.2

Breathing in heavily they know: 'I'm breathing in heavily.' Breathing out heavily they know: 'I'm breathing out heavily.'[247] 4.4

Breathing in lightly they know: 'I'm breathing in lightly.' Breathing out lightly they know: 'I'm breathing out lightly.'[248] 4.5

They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the whole body.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the whole body.'[249] 4.6

They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in stilling the physical process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out stilling the physical process.'[250] 4.7

It's like a deft lathe-turner or lathe-turner's apprentice. When drawing a long pull they know: 'I'm drawing a long pull,' and when drawing a short pull they know: 'I'm drawing a short pull.' 4.8

245. The situation here—a mendicant gone to the forest—establishes that this practice takes place in the wider context of the Gradual Training. Indeed, this whole sutta can be understood as an expansion of this phrase, mentioned briefly at DN 2:67.3.

246. The most fundamental meditation instruction. Notice how the Buddha phrases it: not "concentrate on the breath" as an object, but rather "breathing" as an activity to which one brings mindfulness. The stages of breath meditation are not meant to be done deliberately, but to be observed and understood as the natural process of deepening meditation.

247. In the beginning, the breath is somewhat rough and coarse. The Pali idiom is "long" and "short" breath, but in English we usually say to breathe "heavily" or "lightly".

248. Over time, the breath becomes more subtle and soft.

249. Contextually the idiom "whole body" (*sabbakāya*) here refers to the breath, marking the fuller and more continuous awareness that arises with tranquility. Some practitioners, however, interpret it as the "whole physical body", broadening awareness to encompass the movement and settling of energies throughout the body.

250. The "physical process" (*kāyasaṅkhāra*) is the breath itself (SN 41.6:1.8). This can become so soft as to be imperceptible.

5.1 And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally, externally, and both internally and externally.[251] They meditate observing , with respect to the body, the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish.[252] Or mindfulness is established that the body exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.[253]

5.4 That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

1.2. The Postures

6.1 Furthermore, when a mendicant is walking they know: 'I am walking.' When standing they know: 'I am standing.' When sitting they know: 'I am sitting.' And when lying down they know: 'I am lying down.'[254] Whatever posture their body is in, they know it.

7.1 And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally, externally, and both internally and externally. With respect to the

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251. "Internally" is one's own body, "externally" the bodies of others, or external physical phenomena. This distinction is applied broadly in Buddhist meditation, but it is more relevant in some contexts than others. In the case of the breath, one is focusing on one's own breath, but when contemplating, say, a dead body, or the material elements, there is more of an external dimension. Starting with "me" in here and the "world" out there, this practice dissolves this distinction so that we see we are of the same nature as everything else.

252. This is the *vipassanā* ("insight" or "discernment") dimension of meditation, observing not just the rise and fall of phenomena, but also their conditioned "nature" as being "liable" (*-dhamma*) to impermanence. The meaning of this passage is explained at SN 47.42. Apart from these passages, *vipassanā* in *satipaṭṭhāna* pertains specially to the observation of principles.

253. Mindfulness meditation leads to a range of knowledges as detailed by Anuruddha at SN 52.6 and SN 52.11–24. An arahant is "independent" of any attachment (eg. MN 143), but *satipaṭṭhāna* is also taught to give up dependency on views of the past and future (DN 29:40.1).

254. In early Pali, this practice is found only in the two Satipaṭṭhānasuttas and the closely related Kāyagatāsatisutta (MN 119). It is practiced by developing a reflexive awareness of one's posture and activity as it proceeds, often assisted by moving slowly and carefully.

body, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that the body exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body. 7.4

1.3. Situational Awareness

Furthermore, a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.[255] 8.1

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally … 9.1

That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body. 9.2

1.4. Focusing on the Repulsive

Furthermore, a mendicant examines their own body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the tips of the hairs, wrapped in skin and full of many kinds of filth.[256] 'In this body there is head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, 10.1

255. "Situational awareness" (*sampajañña*) understands the context and purpose of activities. The main examples here illustrate the activities of daily monastic life: leaving the monastery on almsround, restraint while in the town, care wearing the robes, then mindfully eating and going to the toilet.

256. This practice is intended to counter sexual desire and obsession. The primary focus is on one's own body, rather than another's body, although that can be brought in also. By focusing on aspects of our body that we normally prefer to ignore, we move toward a healthy sense of acceptance and neutrality toward our body.

undigested food, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.'[257]

10.3 It's as if there were a bag with openings at both ends, filled with various kinds of grains, such as fine rice, wheat, mung beans, peas, sesame, and ordinary rice. And a person with clear eyes were to open it and examine the contents: 'These grains are fine rice, these are wheat, these are mung beans, these are peas, these are sesame, and these are ordinary rice.'[258]

11.1 And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally …

11.2 That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

1.5. Focusing on the Elements

12.1 Furthermore, a mendicant examines their own body, whatever its placement or posture, according to the elements: 'In this body there is the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.'[259]

12.3 It's as if a deft butcher or butcher's apprentice were to kill a cow and sit down at the crossroads with the meat cut into chops.[260]

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257. Thirty-one parts are mentioned in early texts, later expanded to thirty-two with the addition of the "brain" (*matthaluṅga*).

258. The "bag with openings at both ends" is the body. Not all the varieties of grains and beans can be positively identified.

259. While meditation on the elements is commonly taught in early texts, this phrase is found only in the two Satipaṭṭhānasuttas and the Kāyagatāsatisutta. Detailed instructions are found in such suttas as MN 28 and MN 140. This meditation works in any posture, whereas breath meditation is best done sitting, to allow the breath to become still.

260. This gruesome image shows that butchery of cows was a normal feature of ancient Indian life. | A wide range of skilled workers have an "apprentice", including potters, goldsmiths, accountants, carpenters, magicians, etc. The word is *antevāsī*, literally "one who dwells within", suggesting that apprentices would stay with their teacher. The same word is used for a monastic student.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally … 13.1

That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body. 13.2

1.6. The Charnel Ground Contemplations

Furthermore, suppose a mendicant were to see a corpse discarded in a charnel ground. And it had been dead for one, two, or three days, bloated, livid, and festering.[261] They'd compare it with their own body:[262] 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally … 14.1

That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body. 15.2

Furthermore, suppose they were to see a corpse discarded in a charnel ground being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, herons, hounds, tigers, leopards, jackals, and many kinds of little creatures. They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally … 16.1

That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body. 17.2

Furthermore, suppose they were to see a corpse discarded in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together by sinews … 18-23.1

261. Cremation was expensive and not available to everyone. Bodies might be left in the charnel ground for a variety of reasons, such as local customs, lack of funds, or in cases of inauspicious death such as murder or execution. This is still seen in some places today, and monastics occasionally take the opportunity to practice meditation beside a corpse. However the wording of the Pali sounds like an imaginative exercise.

262. The observed corpse is not gendered. The purpose is not to become repulsed by an objectified other, but to understand the mortality of one's own body.

18-23.2 A skeleton without flesh but smeared with blood, and held together by sinews …

18-23.3 A skeleton rid of flesh and blood, held together by sinews …

24.1 Bones rid of sinews scattered in every direction. Here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here an ankle bone, there a shin-bone, here a thigh-bone, there a hip-bone, here a rib-bone, there a back-bone, here an arm-bone, there a neck-bone, here a jaw-bone, there a tooth, here the skull. …

26-28.1 White bones, the color of shells …

29.1 Decrepit bones, heaped in a pile …

30.1 Bones rotted and crumbled to powder.[263] They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.'

31.1 And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally, externally, and both internally and externally. With respect to the body, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that the body exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

31.4 That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

2. Observing the Feelings

32.1 And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of feelings?[264]

32.2 It's when a mendicant who feels a pleasant feeling knows: 'I feel a pleasant feeling.'[265]

263. It takes decades for bones to rot to powder, again suggesting it is an imaginative contemplation.

264. Literally "a feeling among the feelings"; the practice shows that the meditator contemplates specific feelings as they occur.

265. Pali employs direct quotes to indicate reflexive awareness: you feel the feeling and you know that you feel the feeling. It does not mean that you have to

When they feel a painful feeling, they know: 'I feel a painful feeling.' 32.3

When they feel a neutral feeling, they know: 'I feel a neutral feeling.' 32.4

When they feel a pleasant feeling of the flesh, they know: 'I feel a pleasant feeling of the flesh.'[266] 32.5

When they feel a pleasant feeling not of the flesh, they know: 'I feel a pleasant feeling not of the flesh.'[267] 32.6

When they feel a painful feeling of the flesh, they know: 'I feel a painful feeling of the flesh.' 32.7

When they feel a painful feeling not of the flesh, they know: 'I feel a painful feeling not of the flesh.'[268] 32.8

When they feel a neutral feeling of the flesh, they know: 'I feel a neutral feeling of the flesh.' 32.9

When they feel a neutral feeling not of the flesh, they know: 'I feel a neutral feeling not of the flesh.'[269] 32.10

And so they meditate observing an aspect of feelings internally, externally, and both internally and externally. With respect to feelings, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that feelings exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. 33.1

That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of feelings. 33.4

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literally say "I feel a pleasant feeling", although some adopt that as a meditation method.

266. Feelings "of the flesh" (*sāmisa*) are associated with the body and sensual desires (SN 36.31:4.1).

267. Feelings "not of the flesh" (*nirāmisa*) are associated with renunciation and especially with the *jhānas* and liberation (SN 36.31:5.1).

268. This would include the feelings of loss, doubt, and dejection that can occur during the spiritual path (see MN 44:28.6).

269. The feeling of the fourth *jhāna* and higher liberations (SN 36.31:8.2).

3. Observing the Mind

34.1 And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of the mind?[270]

34.2 It's when a mendicant understands mind with greed as 'mind with greed,' and mind without greed as 'mind without greed.' They understand mind with hate as 'mind with hate,' and mind without hate as 'mind without hate.' They understand mind with delusion as 'mind with delusion,' and mind without delusion as 'mind without delusion.' They know constricted mind as 'constricted mind,'[271] and scattered mind as 'scattered mind.' They know expansive mind as 'expansive mind,'[272] and unexpansive mind as 'unexpansive mind.' They know mind that is not supreme as 'mind that is not supreme,' and mind that is supreme as 'mind that is supreme.' They know mind immersed in samādhi as 'mind immersed in samādhi,' and mind not immersed in samādhi as 'mind not immersed in samādhi.' They know freed mind as 'freed mind,' and unfreed mind as 'unfreed mind.'

35.1 And so they meditate observing an aspect of the mind internally, externally, and both internally and externally. With respect to the mind, they meditate observing the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that the mind exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

35.4 That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the mind.

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270. In Buddhist theory, awareness of the presence or absence of qualities such as greed is explained on three levels. There is the simple happenstance of whether greed is present at that time or not. Then there is the mind freed of greed through the power of absorption. Finally there is the liberation from greed which comes with full awakening.

271. The mind is "constricted internally" due to dullness and "scattered externally" due to the distractions of desire (SN 51.20:18.1).

272. The following terms "expansive" (*mahaggata*), "supreme" (*anuttara*), "immersed" (*samāhita*), and "freed" (*vimutta*) all refer to states of absorption and/or awakening.

4. Observing Principles

4.1. The Hindrances

And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of princi- 36.1
ples?

It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of princi- 36.2
ples with respect to the five hindrances.[273] And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five hindrances?

It's when a mendicant who has sensual desire in them under- 36.4
stands: 'I have sensual desire in me.' When they don't have sensual desire in them, they understand: 'I don't have sensual desire in me.' They understand how sensual desire arises; how, when it's already arisen, it's given up; and how, once it's given up, it doesn't arise again in the future.[274]

When they have ill will in them, they understand: 'I have ill will 36.5
in me.' When they don't have ill will in them, they understand: 'I don't have ill will in me.' They understand how ill will arises; how, when it's already arisen, it's given up; and how, once it's given up, it doesn't arise again in the future.

When they have dullness and drowsiness in them, they under- 36.6
stand: 'I have dullness and drowsiness in me.' When they don't have dullness and drowsiness in them, they understand: 'I don't have dullness and drowsiness in me.' They understand how dullness and drowsiness arise; how, when they've already arisen, they're given

273. The Satipaṭṭhānavibhaṅga of the Pali Abhidhamma only mentions the hindrances and awakening factors in this section (Vb 7). This, together with a range of other evidence, suggests that this was the original content of the observation of principles.

274. Here causality is introduced. In the contemplation of mind, the meditator was aware of the presence or absence of desire in the mind. Now they look deeper, investigating the cause of desire and understanding how to be free of it forever. This contemplation of the "principles" of cause and effect is the distinctive feature of this section.

up; and how, once they're given up, they don't arise again in the future.[275]

36.7 When they have restlessness and remorse in them, they understand: 'I have restlessness and remorse in me.' When they don't have restlessness and remorse in them, they understand: 'I don't have restlessness and remorse in me.' They understand how restlessness and remorse arise; how, when they've already arisen, they're given up; and how, once they're given up, they don't arise again in the future.

36.8 When they have doubt in them, they understand: 'I have doubt in me.' When they don't have doubt in them, they understand: 'I don't have doubt in me.' They understand how doubt arises; how, when it's already arisen, it's given up; and how, once it's given up, it doesn't arise again in the future.

37.1 And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing, with respect to the principles, the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that principles exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

37.4 That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five hindrances.

4.2. The Aggregates

38.1 Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five grasping aggregates. And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five grasping aggregates? It's when a mendicant contemplates: 'Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the disappearance

275. The Buddhist schools debated whether this included physical tiredness or not. The Theravada argued that it was purely a mental laziness, as even the Buddha got sleepy.

of form.[276] Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling, such is the disappearance of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the disappearance of perception.[277] Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the disappearance of choices.[278] Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the disappearance of consciousness.'

And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally 39.1
...

That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five grasping aggregates. 39.4

4.3. The Sense Fields

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the six interior and exterior sense fields. And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the six interior and exterior sense fields? 40.1

It's when a mendicant understands the eye, sights, and the fetter that arises dependent on both of these. They understand how the fetter that has not arisen comes to arise; how the arisen fetter comes to be abandoned; and how the abandoned fetter comes to not rise again in the future.[279] 40.3

276. "Form" (*rūpa*) is one's own body and the external material world experienced through the senses. More subtly, it represents the "appearance" of physical phenomena, even when experienced solely in the mind as color, visions, etc.
277. "Perception" (*saññā*) is the recognition or interpretation of experience in terms of meaningful wholes. We see, for example, "color" yet we perceive a "person". In the Vinaya we find many examples where a person perceived things in one way, yet they turned out to be something else.
278. In the five aggregates, *saṅkhārā* is a synonym for "volition" (*cetanā*). The traditions later used it as a catch-all category for everything that does not fit in the other aggregates. In the suttas, however, the purpose of the aggregates is not to classify everything that exists, but to contemplate aspects of experience that we tend to identify as a "self".
279. At SN 35.232:3.2 the "fetter that arises dependent on both" is identified as "desire and lust" (*chandarāga*).

40.4 They understand the ear, sounds, and the fetter …

40.5 They understand the nose, smells, and the fetter …

40.6 They understand the tongue, tastes, and the fetter …

40.7 They understand the body, touches, and the fetter …

40.8 They understand the mind, ideas, and the fetter that arises dependent on both of these. They understand how the fetter that has not arisen comes to arise; how the arisen fetter comes to be abandoned; and how the abandoned fetter comes to not rise again in the future.

41.1 And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally …

41.4 That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the six interior and exterior sense fields.

4.4. The Awakening Factors

42.1 Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the seven awakening factors.[280] And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the seven awakening factors?

42.3 It's when a mendicant who has the awakening factor of mindfulness in them understands: 'I have the awakening factor of mindfulness in me.' When they don't have the awakening factor of mindfulness in them, they understand: 'I don't have the awakening factor of mindfulness in me.' They understand how the awakening factor of mindfulness that has not arisen comes to arise; and how the awakening factor of mindfulness that has arisen becomes fully developed.[281]

42.4 When they have the awakening factor of investigation of principles …[282] energy … rapture … tranquility … immersion … equa-

280. These seven factors that lead to awakening (*bojjhaṅgā*, SN 46.5) are commonly presented in opposition to the five hindrances (eg. SN 46.2, SN 46.23, SN 46.55).

281. "Mindfulness" includes the recollection of the teachings (SN 46.3:1.8) as well as mindfulness meditation.

282. Likewise, this includes the inquiry into *dhammas* as "teachings" as well as "phenomena" or "principles".

nimity in them, they understand: 'I have the awakening factor of equanimity in me.' When they don't have the awakening factor of equanimity in them, they understand: 'I don't have the awakening factor of equanimity in me.' They understand how the awakening factor of equanimity that has not arisen comes to arise; and how the awakening factor of equanimity that has arisen becomes fully developed.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally, 43.1
externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing, with respect to the principles, the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that principles exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of prin- 43.4
ciples with respect to the seven awakening factors.

4.5. The Truths

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of prin- 44.1
ciples with respect to the four noble truths.[283]

And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of prin- 44.2
ciples with respect to the four noble truths? It's when a mendicant truly understands: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.'[284]

And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally, 45.1
externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing, with respect to the principles, the liability to originate, to vanish, and to originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that prin-

283. Due to their development of the two wings of *samatha* and *vipassanā* meditation as described in this sutta, practiced in the context of the teaching and training as a whole, the meditator realizes the four noble truths at the moment of stream-entry.

284. Following this section, DN 22:17.4 announces the end of the first recitation section, and goes on to expand each of the four noble truths in detail.

ciples exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world.

45.4 That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the four noble truths.

46.1 Anyone who develops these four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way for seven years can expect one of two results:[285] enlightenment in this very life, or if there's residue left behind, non-return.

46.3 Let alone seven years,[286] anyone who develops these four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way for six years … five years … four years … three years … two years … one year … seven months … six months … five months … four months … three months … two months … one month … a fortnight … Let alone a fortnight, anyone who develops these four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way for seven days can expect one of two results: enlightenment in this very life, or if there's residue left behind, non-return.

47.1 'The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it."

47.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

285. The emphasis is on "develop in this way" (*evaṁ bhāveyya*), that is, with the full practice including deep absorption as the culmination of the path as a whole.

286. A similar promise of results in at most seven years is found at DN 22:22.3, DN 25:22.9, and MN 85:59.3; and at most ten years at AN 10.46:7.3.

THE CHAPTER ON THE LION'S ROAR

MN 11

The Shorter Discourse on the Lion's Roar

Cūḷasīhanādasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[287] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "'Only here is there a true ascetic, here a second ascetic, here a third ascetic, and here a fourth ascetic.[288] Other sects are empty of ascetics.' This, mendicants, is how you should rightly roar your lion's roar.

3.1 It's possible that wanderers of other religions might say: 'But what is the source of the venerables' certainty and forcefulness that they say this?'[289] You should say to them: 'There are four things explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. Seeing these things in ourselves we say that:[290]

3.7 "Only here is there a true ascetic, here a second ascetic, here a third ascetic, and here a fourth ascetic. Other sects are empty of ascetics." What four? We have confidence in the Teacher, we have confidence in the teaching, and we have fulfilled the precepts. And

287. Multiple suttas (eg. DN 8, DN 25, MN 12, AN 6.64, AN 9.11, and AN 10.21) invoke the indomitable force of the lion's roar, the most mighty sound of the jungle (SN 22.78:1.2).

288. The same teaching is given more briefly at AN 4.241:1.1, where the four ascetics are defined as the stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner, and perfected one, and at DN 16:5.27.3, where the presence of the four ascetics is attributed to the practice of the eightfold path.

289. *Ko assāso kiṁ balaṁ* is found only here and at MN 93:6.7, where it also deals with an unequivocal claim to superiority.

290. Self-confidence is reflective, not dogmatic.

we have love and affection for those who share our path,[291] both laypeople and renunciates. These are the four things.'

It's possible that wanderers of other religions might say: 'We too have confidence in the Teacher—our Teacher; we have confidence in the teaching—our teaching; and we have fulfilled the precepts—our precepts. And we have love and affection for those who share our path, both laypeople and renunciates. What, then, is the difference between you and us?' 4.1

You should say to them: 'Well, reverends, is the goal one or many?' Answering rightly, the wanderers would say: 'The goal is one, reverends, not many.' 5.1

'But is that goal for the greedy or for those free of greed?' Answering rightly, the wanderers would say: 'That goal is for those free of greed, not for the greedy.' 5.5

'Is it for the hateful or those free of hate?' 'It's for those free of hate.' 5.8

'Is it for the delusional or those free of delusion?' 'It's for those free of delusion.' 5.11

'Is it for those who crave or those rid of craving?' 'It's for those rid of craving.' 5.14

'Is it for those who have fuel for grasping or those who do not?' 'It's for those who do not have fuel for grasping.' 5.17

'Is it for the knowledgeable or the ignorant?' 'It's for the knowledgeable.' 5.20

'Is it for those who favor and oppose or for those who don't favor and oppose?' 'It's for those who don't favor and oppose.' 5.23

'But is that goal for those who enjoy proliferation or for those who enjoy non-proliferation?'[292] Answering rightly, the wanderers would say: 'It's for those who enjoy non-proliferation, not for those who enjoy proliferation.' 5.26

291. This appears to be the only occurrence of *sahadhammika* in this sense in early Pali. Normally it has the sense "legitimate" (as eg. MN 90:5.4). The parallel at MA 103 has 同道.

292. The topic of "proliferation" (*papañca*) is explored in MN 18.

6.1 Mendicants, there are these two views: views favoring existence and views favoring nonexistence.[293] Any ascetics or brahmins who resort to, draw near to, and cling to a view favoring existence will oppose a view favoring nonexistence.[294] Any ascetics or brahmins who resort to, draw near to, and cling to a view favoring nonexistence will oppose a view favoring existence.

7.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand these two views' origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape. They're greedy, hateful, delusional, craving, grasping, and ignorant. They favor and oppose, and they enjoy proliferation. They're not freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're not freed from suffering, I say.

8.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand these two views' origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape. They're rid of greed, hate, delusion, craving, grasping, and ignorance. They don't favor and oppose, and they enjoy nonproliferation. They're freed from rebirth, old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. They're freed from suffering, I say.

9.1 There are these four kinds of grasping. What four? Grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and theories of a self.

10.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who claim to propound the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping. But they don't correctly describe the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping. They describe the complete understanding of grasping at sensual pleasures, but not views, precepts and observances, and theories of a

293. That is, the eternalists and the annihilationists.

294. The sequence of operative terms here is *allīna*, *upagata*, *ajjhosita*. Normally *allīna* in Pali means to "stick to, cling to". But read this passage compared to SN 12.15:2.5 where we find a similar movement of drawing close (*upagata*)and getting attached. The Mahāvastu in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit features *allīyati* in the sense "approach", "resort". This lends a greater coherence to this passage.

self.[295] Why is that? Because those gentlemen don't truly understand these three things. That's why they claim to propound the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping, but they don't really.

11.1 There are some other ascetics and brahmins who claim to propound the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping, but they don't really. They describe the complete understanding of grasping at sensual pleasures and views, but not precepts and observances, and theories of a self.[296] Why is that? Because those gentlemen don't truly understand these two things. That's why they claim to propound the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping, but they don't really.

12.1 There are some other ascetics and brahmins who claim to propound the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping, but they don't really. They describe the complete understanding of grasping at sensual pleasures, views, and precepts and observances, but not theories of a self.[297] Why is that? Because those gentlemen don't truly understand this one thing. That's why they claim to propound the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping, but they don't really.

13.1 In such a teaching and training, confidence in the Teacher is said to be not rightly placed.[298] Likewise, confidence in the teaching, fulfillment of the precepts, and love and affection for those sharing the same path are said to be not rightly placed. Why is that? It's because that teaching and training is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha.

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295. Renunciate orders such as the Jains abhorred sensual pleasures, while the meditations of Brahmanical rishis depended on letting go all pleasures of the flesh.

296. Perhaps referring to those such as Dīghanakha who claimed to believe in nothing (MN 74:2.4).

297. The teaching on not-self is what sets Buddhism apart from all other teachings.

298. Elsewhere *sammaggata* ("rightly placed") is an epithet of the Buddha or other well-practiced sages, where I translate as "rightly comported".

14.1 The Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha claims to propound the complete understanding of all kinds of grasping. He describes the complete understanding of grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and theories of a self.

15.1 In such a teaching and training, confidence in the Teacher is said to be rightly placed. Likewise, confidence in the teaching, fulfillment of the precepts, and love and affection for those sharing the same path are said to be rightly placed. Why is that? It's because that teaching and training is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by a fully awakened Buddha.

16.1 What is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of these four kinds of grasping?[299] Craving. And what is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of craving? Feeling. And what is the source of feeling? Contact. And what is the source of contact? The six sense fields. And what is the source of the six sense fields? Name and form. And what is the source of name and form? Consciousness. And what is the source of consciousness? Choices. And what is the source of choices? Ignorance.

17.1 When that mendicant has given up ignorance and given rise to knowledge, with the fading away of ignorance and the arising of knowledge they don't grasp at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, or theories of a self. Not grasping, they're not anxious. Not being anxious, they personally become extinguished.

17.3 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"

17.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

299. Grasping is fully understood only when its source is known. Here the Buddha begins a partial treatment of dependent origination, implicitly connecting this to his special doctrine of not-self.

MN 12

The Longer Discourse on the Lion's Roar

Mahāsīhanādasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying outside the 1.1
city of Vesālī in a woodland grove west of the town.[300]

Now at that time Sunakkhatta the Licchavi had recently left this 2.1
teaching and training.[301] He was telling a crowd in Vesālī:

"The ascetic Gotama has no superhuman distinction in knowl- 2.3
edge and vision worthy of the noble ones.[302] He teaches what he's worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing his own perspective.[303] Regardless of his goal in teaching the Dhamma, it delivers one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering."[304]

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300. This description of the Buddha's location is unique.

301. Sunakkhatta's dismal spiritual career began when he met the Buddha in MN 105. In DN 6:5.3 we learn that, after being ordained three years, he spoke of his limited success in meditation. The current sutta and DN 24 deal with Sunakkhatta's bitter criticisms of the Buddha shortly after his disrobal.

302. These distinctions are defined in the Vinaya as "absorption, release, immersion, attainment, knowledge and vision, development of the path, realization of the fruits, giving up the defilements, a mind without hindrances, delighting in an empty dwelling" (Bu Pj 4:3.8). They may be summarized as absorption, psychic abilities, and realization of the paths and fruits.

303. The Buddha taught that logic alone is an unreliable guide to the truth (MN 76:27.2, DN 1:1.34.2), a fact of which Sunakkhatta was apparently not aware.

304. The syntax of this is tricky. The passage typically occurs in contexts where it is not just the efficacy of the teaching in question, but the nature of the goal (DN 13:4.2, DN 24:1.4.14 , AN 3.64:10.2, AN 4.8:4.1). Here the opening pronouns coordinate, both in genitive: *yassa ca khv'assa*. This shows that where, later at MN 12:26.1, we find *yassa kho pana te*, the *te* is also genitive (not instrumental as might be assumed; but see DN 24:1.4.14). Thus the point of this expression is "whatever the goal is *for you*". Rhetorically, Sunakkhatta is saying that Gotama's intended goal is irrelevant. | *Niyyāti* means "emancipates", "delivers" (rather

3.1 Then Venerable Sāriputta robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. He heard what Sunakkhatta was saying.

3.6 Then he wandered for alms in Vesālī. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

4.1 "Sāriputta, Sunakkhatta, that futile man, is angry.[305] His words are spoken out of anger. Thinking he criticizes the Realized One, in fact he just praises him. For it is praise of the Realized One to say: 'Regardless of his goal in teaching the Dhamma, it delivers one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering.'

5.1 But there's no way Sunakkhatta will infer about me from the teaching:[306] 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'

6.1 And there's no way Sunakkhatta will infer about me from the teaching: 'That Blessed One wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying himself and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged

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than "leads to"), and relates to the view that is "emancipating" (*niyyānika*, MN 12:56.3). It need not, however, mean "liberation" in the Buddhist sense, for it is also used of the Brahmanical goal (DN 13:4.2). | Further, the expression "for the complete ending of suffering" refers to the one who is practicing for such a goal (SN 12.51:2.1). Thus the view or the teaching is emancipating "for one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering". | See Bodhi, *Numerical Discourses*, note 451 for the commentarial reading, which differs in some respects from mine. He gives some Chinese parallels; another at T 757 raises the question, "How could such a teaching lead to freedom from suffering?"

305. "Futile man" (*moghapurisa*) refers to someone who has been led astray by delusion.

306. "Inference from the teaching" (*dhammanvaya*) is a valid form of knowledge, where someone draws a reasoned conclusion based on fundamental principles (see SN 12.33:7.2).

through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.'[307]

7.1 And there's no way Sunakkhatta will infer about me from the teaching: 'That Blessed One, with clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, hears both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.'

8.1 And there's no way Sunakkhatta will infer about me from the teaching: 'That Blessed One understands the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind. He understands mind with greed as "mind with greed," and mind without greed as "mind without greed." He understands mind with hate … mind without hate … mind with delusion … mind without delusion … constricted mind … scattered mind … expansive mind … unexpansive mind … mind that is supreme … mind that is not supreme … mind immersed in samādhi … mind not immersed in samādhi … freed mind as "freed mind," and unfreed mind as "unfreed mind."'

9.1 There are these ten powers of a Realized One that the Realized One possesses. With these he claims the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.[308] What ten?

10.1 Firstly, the Realized One truly understands the possible as possible, and the impossible as impossible.[309] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. Relying on this he claims

307. The Buddha introduces these here because, as we know from DN 24:1.4.1, Sunakkhatta thought that such displays were a worthy goal of spiritual practice. The Chinese parallel, however, omits the psychic powers and instead has the *jhānas*. | This passage begins the six direct knowledges.

308. After the first three of the direct knowledges, the sequence is interrupted with the insertion of these ten powers of a Realized One, also found at AN 10.21 and AN 10.22. The Vibhaṅga, an early Abhidhamma book, gives a detailed explanation (Vb 16:353 ff.). | Five powers are listed at AN 5.11 and six at AN 6.64.

309. Explained in detail at MN 115:12.1–17.6.

the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.

11.1 Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the result of deeds undertaken in the past, future, and present in terms of grounds and causes.[310] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

12.1 Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands where all paths of practice lead.[311] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

13.1 Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the world with its many and diverse elements.[312] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

14.1 Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the diverse convictions of sentient beings.[313] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

15.1 Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands the faculties of other sentient beings and other individuals after encompassing them with his mind.[314] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

16.1 Furthermore, the Realized One truly understands corruption, cleansing, and emergence regarding the absorptions, liberations,

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310. The Vibhaṅga explains this as knowing the circumstances that prevent or support the fruition of deeds, namely: place of rebirth (*gati*), form of reincarnation (*upadhi*, explained by the commentary as *attabhāva*), time (*kāla*), and effort (*payoga*). | See also the analysis of "deeds" (*kamma*) in MN 57, MN 135, and MN 136.

311. Expanded below in MN 12:35.1–42.13.

312. See MN 115:4.1–9.6.

313. This is not explained explicitly, but an example is found at DN 1:1.3.2, where the Buddha knows the difference between Brahmadatta, who had faith in the triple gem, and Suppiya who did not. Thus *adhimutti* ("conviction") means "faith, belief" rather than "disposition".

314. Exemplified by the Buddha when he surveyed the world after his awakening to see the diverse spiritual potentials of beings (MN 26:21.2, MN 85:45.4, DN 14:3.6.2, SN 6.1:9.2, Kd 1:5.11.1).

immersions, and attainments.[315] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

17.1 Furthermore, the Realized One recollects many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. He remembers: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so he recollects his many kinds of past lives, with features and details.[316] Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

18.1 Furthermore, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, the Realized One sees sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. He understands how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble

315. "Corruption" is any mental factor that darkens and diminishes meditation; "cleansing" is anything that brightens and enhances it. "Emergence" refers to understanding the reasons why one comes out of a given state of meditation (eg. MN 43:29.1). | The phrase "absorptions, liberations, immersions, and attainments" indicates that, although they are given various technical definitions, these are overlapping terms that describe in different ways the same field of deep meditation experiences.

316. Here we return to the final three of the six direct knowledges, which also form the final three of the ten powers.

ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, he sees sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. He understands how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. …

19.1 Furthermore, the Realized One has realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and lives having realized it with his own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. Since he truly understands this, this is a power of the Realized One. Relying on this he claims the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.

20.1 A Realized One possesses these ten powers of a Realized One. With these he claims the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.

21.1 When I know and see in this way, suppose someone were to say this: 'The ascetic Gotama has no superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. He teaches what he's worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing his own perspective.' Unless they give up that speech and that thought, and let go of that view, they will be placed in hell as if delivered there.[317] Just as a mendicant accomplished in ethics, immersion, and wisdom would reach enlightenment in this very life, such is the consequence, I say. Unless they give up that speech and that thought, and let go of that view, they will be placed in hell as if delivered there.

317. This seems harsh, but the suttas see such denigration of the Buddha as deeply wicked, since it closes off the path to Nibbāna, as at SN 42.9:4.12 where a village chief accuses the Buddha of destroying families by encouraging renunciation. At DN 24:1.16.13 the Buddha warns Sunakkhatta that the naked ascetic Pāṭikaputta, without likewise giving up his speech, thought, and view, will not even be able to enter the Buddha's presence, much less debate him.

Sāriputta, a Realized One has four kinds of self-assurance. With 22.1
these he claims the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.[318] What four?

I see no reason for anyone—whether ascetic, brahmin, god, Māra, 23.1
or the Divinity, or anyone else in the world—to legitimately scold me, saying: 'You claim to be a fully awakened Buddha, but you don't understand these things.'[319] Since I see no such reason, I live secure, fearless, and self-assured.

I see no reason for anyone—whether ascetic, brahmin, god, Māra, 24.1
or the Divinity, or anyone else in the world—to legitimately scold me, saying: 'You claim to have ended all defilements, but you still have these defilements.' Since I see no such reason, I live secure, fearless, and self-assured.

I see no reason for anyone—whether ascetic, brahmin, god, Māra, 25.1
or the Divinity, or anyone else in the world—to legitimately scold me, saying: 'The acts that you say are obstructions are not really obstructions for the one who performs them.'[320] Since I see no such reason, I live secure, fearless, and self-assured.

I see no reason for anyone—whether ascetic, brahmin, god, Māra, 26.1
or the Divinity, or anyone else in the world—to legitimately scold me, saying: 'Regardless of your goal in teaching the Dhamma, it does not deliver one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering.' Since I see no such reason, I live secure, fearless, and self-assured.

A Realized One possesses these four kinds of self-assurance. With 27.1
these he claims the bull's place, roars his lion's roar in the assemblies, and turns the divine wheel.

318. These four "kinds of self-assurance" (*vesārajja*) are also found at AN 4.8. The first three are included in the Buddha's dressing down of Sarabha at AN 3.64.

319. In his first discourse, the Buddha says that he did not claim to be fully awakened until he had understand the four noble truths in all three rounds and twelve aspects (SN 56.11:10.1). | Here *nimitta* means "reason, ground, basis".

320. This was the accusation of Ariṭṭha (MN 22). The Chinese parallel identifies the "obstructions" as desire and lust.

28.1 When I know and see in this way, suppose someone were to say this: 'The ascetic Gotama has no superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones …' Unless they give up that speech and that thought, and let go of that view, they will be placed in hell as if delivered there.

29.1 Sāriputta, there are these eight assemblies.[321] What eight? The assemblies of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and ascetics. An assembly of the gods of the four great kings. An assembly of the gods of the thirty-three. An assembly of Māras. An assembly of divinities. These are the eight assemblies. Possessing these four kinds of self-assurance, the Realized One approaches and enters right into these eight assemblies.[322] I recall having approached an assembly of hundreds of aristocrats.[323] There I used to sit with them, converse, and engage in discussion. But I don't see any reason to feel afraid or insecure. Since I see no such reason, I live secure, fearless, and self-assured.

30.1 I recall having approached an assembly of hundreds of brahmins … householders … ascetics … the gods of the four great kings … the gods of the thirty-three … Māras … divinities. There too I used to sit with them, converse, and engage in discussion. But I don't see any reason to feel afraid or insecure. Since I see no such reason, I live secure, fearless, and self-assured.

31.1 When I know and see in this way, suppose someone were to say this: 'The ascetic Gotama has no superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones …' Unless they give up that speech and that thought, and let go of that view, they will be placed in hell as if delivered there.

321. Mentioned also at AN 8.69, DN 16:3.21.3, and DN 33:3.1.139.

322. AN 8.69 and DN 16:3.21.3 both relate the Buddha entering these assemblies, but neither they, nor the Chinese parallel to this passage, attribute his confidence to the four kinds of self-assurance.

323. *Anekasataṁ khattiyaparisaṁ* is singular, "an assembly of hundreds of aristocrats", rather than "hundreds of assemblies of aristocrats".

Sāriputta, there are these four kinds of reproduction.[324] What four? Reproduction for creatures born from an egg, from a womb, from moisture, or spontaneously.[325] 32.1

And what is reproduction from an egg? There are beings who are born by breaking out of an eggshell. This is called reproduction from an egg. And what is reproduction from a womb?[326] There are beings who are born by breaking out of the amniotic sac. This is called reproduction from a womb. And what is reproduction from moisture? There are beings who are born in a rotten fish, a rotten carcass, rotten porridge, a cesspool, or a sump. This is called reproduction from moisture. And what is spontaneous reproduction? Gods, hell-beings, certain humans, and certain beings in the lower realms. This is called spontaneous reproduction. These are the four kinds of reproduction. 33.1

When I know and see in this way, suppose someone were to say this: 'The ascetic Gotama has no superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones …' Unless they give up that speech and that thought, and let go of that view, they will be placed in hell as if delivered there. 34.1

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324. These four, which are absent from the Chinese parallel, describe the births of different kinds of *nāga* (SN 29.1) and phoenix (SN 30.1).

325. Compare the three "seeds" of Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.3.1: beings are born from an egg (*āṇḍaja*), from a living individual (*jīvaja*, i.e. "viviparous"), from a sprout (*udbhijja*, i.e. plants). Expanded to four at Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.3: from an egg, from a membrane (*jāruja* = *jarāyuja*, cf. Pali *jalābuja*), from moisture/sweat (*svedaja*, cf. Pali *saṁsedaja*), from a sprout. These are defined at Manusmṛti 1.43–6. The Jain Tattvārtha Sūtra 2.31–5 presents three kinds of birth: congealing (*sammūrcchana*), uterine (*garbha*; includes egg and womb), and spontaneous (*upapāda*, cf. Pali *opapātika* in the same sense). "Congealing" birth refers to all those not otherwise covered, and thus includes both "mosisture-born" and plants (cf. DN 15:21.2). | The Buddhist list is the only one that does not include plants, as Buddhists believe that consciousness does not take rebirth in plants. The Vedic position is that the soul (*ātman*) can be reborn in plants (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.3.2), while the Jains believed that all things living and not living possess souls (*jīva*).

326. This is literally "membranous" reproduction, in reference to the membranes that envelop the fetus.

35.1 There are these five destinations. What five? Hell, the animal realm, the ghost realm, humanity, and the gods.[327]

36.1 I understand hell, and the path and practice that leads to hell. And I understand how someone practicing that way, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. I understand the animal realm … the ghost realm … humanity … gods, and the path and practice that leads to the world of the gods. And I understand how someone practicing that way, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. And I understand extinguishment, and the path and practice that leads to extinguishment. And I understand how someone practicing that way realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and lives having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.

37.1 When I've comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand:[328] 'This individual is practicing in such a way and is riding upon such a path that when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.' Some time later I see that they have indeed been reborn in hell, where they experience absolutely painful feelings, sharp and severe. Suppose there was a pit of glowing coals deeper than a man's height, full of glowing coals that neither flamed nor smoked.[329] Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and

327. The *asuras* ("titans") are included with the gods in this classification; gods and titans are close enough to allow intermarriage (SN 11.13:11.1). The Chinese parallel, in common with later traditions, adds the titans as a separate realm here.

328. Here the Buddha describes the process by which he knows where paths lead. First he comprehends their minds, then he infers their destiny, then he confirms the outcome. It is only in this limited way that he knows the future. If, as popular tradition would have it, he was literally omniscient, there would be no need to undertake such a laborious process involving inference, as he could simply directly see whatever he wanted.

329. Such pits are frequently mentioned in the suttas and must have been a common sight. Since fired bricks were not regularly produced, perhaps they were used for metals or pottery, although kilns are also mentioned (AN 7.66:8.3, SN 12.51:12.1).

parched. And they have set out on a path that meets with that same pit of coals. If a person with clear eyes saw them, they'd say: 'This person is proceeding in such a way and is riding upon such a path that they will arrive at that very pit of coals.' Some time later they see that they have indeed fallen into that pit of coals, where they experience absolutely painful feelings, sharp and severe. …

When I've comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: 'This individual … will be reborn in the animal realm.' Some time later I see that they have indeed been reborn in the animal realm, where they suffer painful feelings, sharp and severe.[330] Suppose there was a sewer deeper than a man's height, full to the brim with feces. Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. And they have set out on a path that meets with that same sewer. If a person with clear eyes saw them, they'd say: 'This person is proceeding in such a way and is riding upon such a path that they will arrive at that very sewer.' Some time later they see that they have indeed fallen into that sewer, where they suffer painful feelings, sharp and severe. … 38.1

When I've comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: 'This individual … will be reborn in the ghost realm.' Some time later I see that they have indeed been reborn in the ghost realm, where they experience mostly painful feelings.[331] Suppose there was a tree growing on rugged ground, with thin foliage casting dappled shade.[332] Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. And they have set out on a path that meets with that same tree. If a person with clear eyes saw them, 39.1

330. Text omits *ekanta* ("exclusively"), as animals experience both pleasure and pain.

331. The pain in the ghost realm is not sharp, severe, and exclusive like in hell, nor just sharp and severe as in the animal realm, but merely "mostly painful" (*dukkhabahulā vedanā*). The pain level is gradually diminishing, and with the human realm it flips, becoming mostly pleasant, then exclusively pleasant in the heaven realms.

332. Perhaps the tree was in Australia, where the ground is stony, the leaf coverage scanty, and the flies ravenous.

they'd say: 'This person is proceeding in such a way and is riding upon such a path that they will arrive at that very tree.' Some time later they see them sitting or lying under that tree, where they experience mostly painful feelings. …

40.1 When I've comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: 'This individual … will be reborn among human beings.' Some time later I see that they have indeed been reborn among human beings, where they experience mostly pleasant feelings. Suppose there was a tree growing on smooth ground, with abundant foliage casting dense shade. Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. And they have set out on a path that meets with that same tree. If a person with clear eyes saw them, they'd say: 'This person is proceeding in such a way and is riding upon such a path that they will arrive at that very tree.' Some time later they see them sitting or lying under that tree, where they experience mostly pleasant feelings. …

41.1 When I've comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: 'This individual … will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' Some time later I see that they have indeed been reborn in a heavenly realm, where they experience feelings of absolute happiness. Suppose there was a stilt longhouse with a peaked roof, plastered inside and out, draft-free, with door fastened and window shuttered. And it had a couch spread with woolen covers—shag-piled, pure white, or embroidered with flowers—and spread with a fine deer hide, with a canopy above and red pillows at both ends. Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. And they have set out on a path that meets with that same stilt longhouse. If a person with clear eyes saw them, they'd say: 'This person is proceeding in such a way and is riding upon such a path that they will arrive at that very stilt longhouse.' Some time later they see them sitting or lying in that stilt longhouse, where they experience feelings of absolute happiness. …

42.1 When I've comprehended the mind of a certain individual, I understand: 'This individual is practicing in such a way and is riding

upon such a path that they will realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.' Some time later I see that they have indeed realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements, experiencing feelings of absolute happiness. Suppose there was a lotus pond with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. Nearby was a dense forest grove.[333] Then along comes a person struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. And they have set out on a path that meets with that same lotus pond. If a person with clear eyes saw them, they'd say: 'This person is proceeding in such a way and is riding upon such a path that they will arrive at that very lotus pond.' Some time later they would see that person after they had plunged into that lotus pond, bathed and drunk. When all their stress, weariness, and heat exhaustion had faded away, they emerged and sat or lay down in that woodland thicket, where they experienced feelings of absolute happiness.

In the same way, when I've comprehended the mind of an individual, I understand: 'This individual is practicing in such a way and is riding upon such a path that they will realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.' Some time later I see that they have indeed realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements, experiencing feelings of absolute happiness. These are the five destinations. 42.10

When I know and see in this way, suppose someone were to say this: 'The ascetic Gotama has no superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. He teaches what he's 43.1

333. We have met *tibba* above in the sense of "sharp" feelings. At Mnd 14:58.13, such a forest is said to be one of the four kinds of darkness.

worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing his own perspective.' Unless they give up that speech and that thought, and let go of that view, they will be placed in hell as if delivered there. Just as a mendicant accomplished in ethics, immersion, and wisdom would reach enlightenment in this very life, such is the consequence, I say. Unless they give up that speech and that thought, and let go of that view, they will be placed in hell as if delivered there.

44.1 Sāriputta, I recall having practiced a spiritual path consisting of four factors.[334] I used to be a fervent mortifier, the ultimate fervent mortifier. I used to live rough, the ultimate rough-liver. I used to live in disgust of sin, the ultimate one living in disgust of sin. I used to be secluded, in ultimate seclusion.[335]

45.1 And this is what my fervent mortification was like. I went naked, ignoring conventions. I licked my hands, and didn't come or stop when asked. I didn't consent to food brought to me, or food prepared specially for me, or an invitation for a meal.[336] I didn't receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or who lives with a man; or where food for distribution is advertised; or where there's a hound waiting or flies buzzing. I accepted no fish

334. The Buddha evidently introduces this topic because Sunakkhatta was impressed by displays of austerity. It is a unique description of the Bodhisatta's practices before awakening. The practices, which for the most part sound very Jain-like, were undertaken in various periods during the six years after the Bodhisatta went forth and before his awakening. | The supposedly Jain "fourfold restraint" is recorded at MN 56:12.2 and DN 2:29.2, while at DN 25:16.4 the Buddha reinterprets it as keeping precepts.

335. "Fervent mortifier" (*tapassī*), "rough-liver" (*lūkha*), "one living in disgust of sin" (*jegucchī*), "secluded" (*pavivitta*).

336. *Tapas* ("ardor, fire. fervor, fervent mortification") is the raging flame of righteous pain that courses through body when it is pushed to its extremes. This "fervor" burns off the corrupting traces of *kamma* and defilements. | Buddhist mendicants may not receive food in their hands, nor lick them while eating. Followers of the practices listed here would have walked steadily and randomly for alms, accepting only what was given at the time.

or meat or beer or wine, and drank no fermented gruel.[337] I went to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. I fed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers a day. I ate once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. I lived committed to the practice of eating food at set intervals.

45.6 I ate herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice bran, scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. I survived on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit.[338]

45.7 I wore robes of sunn hemp, mixed hemp, corpse-wrapping cloth, rags, lodh tree bark, antelope hide (whole or in strips), kusa grass, bark, wood-chips, human hair, horse-tail hair, or owls' wings.[339] I tore out hair and beard, committed to this practice.[340] I constantly stood, turning down seats.[341] I squatted, committed to the endeavor of squatting. I lay on a mat of thorns, making a mat of thorns my bed. I was devoted to ritual bathing three times a day, including at dusk.[342] And so I lived committed to practicing these various ways

337. Keeping sheep (*eḷaka*, for slaughter) goes against the Jain principle of non-violence, as does keeping weapons (*daṇḍa*). | A *musala* often means "pestle", but it can also be a "shovel"; at MN 81:18.12 it is regarded as a virtue to not use one to dig the soil (which is regarded as being alive in Jainism). | *Thusodaka* is an alcoholic porridge fermented from grain-husks, mentioned alongside *sovīraka* in the Pali commentaries and Carakasaṁhitā 27g.191.

338. It is not easy to meaningfully distinguish the various kinds of grain.

339. All are extremely uncomfortable. Christian ascetics wore a "hair shirt" in order to "mortify the flesh".

340. Jain ascetics tear out their hair at ordination, rather than shaving.

341. Remaining in one posture for months or years at a time is one of the most difficult practices.

342. The "three times" are daybreak, noon, and dusk, considered the three crucial "junctures" (*sandhyā*). This seems out of place here. It was a Brahmanical practice (SN 7.21), as the Jains refused to bathe at all, hence the "rough living" of the following section. Indeed, bathing three times a day in the Indian climate would, for most of the year, be quite pleasant. Sometimes, however, it was deliberately done in the cold (Ud 1.9:1.3).

of mortifying and tormenting the body. Such was my practice of fervent mortification.

46.1 And this is what my rough living was like.[343] The dust and dirt built up on my body over many years until it started flaking off. It's like the trunk of a pale-moon ebony tree, which builds up bark over many years until it starts flaking off. But it didn't occur to me: 'Oh, this dust and dirt must be rubbed off by my hand or another's.' That didn't occur to me. Such was my rough living.

47.1 And this is what my living in disgust of sin was like. I'd step forward or back ever so mindfully, so I was full of pity regarding even a drop of water, thinking:[344] 'May I not injure any little creatures on unclear ground.'[345] Such was my living in disgust of sin.

48.1 And this is what my seclusion was like.[346] I would plunge deep into a wilderness region and stay there. When I saw a cowherd or a shepherd, or someone gathering grass or sticks, or a lumberjack, I'd flee from forest to forest, from thicket to thicket, from valley to valley, from uplands to uplands. Why is that? So that I wouldn't see them, nor they me. I fled like a wild deer seeing a human being. Such was my practice of seclusion.[347]

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343. "Rough" (*lūkha*) is related to the Sanskrit *rūkṣa*, among the meanings of which is "soiled, smeared, dirtied".

344. The Bodhisatta learned mindfulness while doing Jain-like practices and later incorporated it into the eightfold path (see also MN 36:20.7). He also learned mindfulness under Brahmanical teachers (MN 26:15.17). | "Pity" is *dayā*, which is similar to the more commonly found terms *karuṇā* or *anukampa*.

345. To this day, Jain ascetics carry a soft broom to gently sweep away any insects in their path. | "Unclear ground" (*visamagata*) is explained by the commentary as ground that is uneven or covered in grass, branches, etc. A lion is said to reflect in the same way when setting out on a hunt (AN 10.21:1.7). | Compare Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.10.2, where a man carrying a palanquin is so scrupulous about avoiding treading on ants that he stops and starts, making the progress of the palanquin unsteady (*viṣama-gatāṁ*).

346. "Seclusion" (*viviktaśayyāsana*) is classified by the Jains as an "external austerity" (*bāhyatapas*) at Tattvārthasūtra 9.19.

347. This concludes the "spiritual path consisting of four factors" of MN 12:44.1.

I would go on all fours into the cow-pens after the cattle had left 49.1
and eat the dung of the young suckling calves. As long as my own urine and excrement lasted, I would even eat that. Such was my eating of most unnatural things.[348]

I would plunge deep into an awe-inspiring forest grove and stay 50.1
there. It was so awe-inspiring that normally it would make your hair stand on end if you weren't free of greed. And on days such as the cold spell when the snow falls in the January winter, I stayed in the open by night and in the forest by day.[349] But in the last month of summer I'd stay in the open by day and in the forest by night. And then these verses, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me:[350]

'Scorched and frozen, 50.7
alone in the awe-inspiring forest.
nude, no fire to sit beside,
the sage still pursues his quest.'

I would make my bed in a charnel ground, with the bones of the 51.1
dead for a pillow. Then village louts would come up to me. They'd spit and piss on me, throw mud on me, even poke sticks in my ears.[351] But I don't recall ever having a bad thought about them. Such was my abiding in equanimity.

348. At Kd 6:14.6.3 the four "great unnaturals" (or "filthy edibles", *mahāvikaṭa*) are said to be feces, urine, ash, and clay.

349. *Antaraṭṭhakā* (Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *aṣṭaka-rātri*) is the coldest part of Indian winter between the festival days that fall on the eighth day after the fullmoon in the two winter months of Māgha and Phagguna. This roughly corresponds with January, the coldest month in northern India.

350. "Not supernaturally inspired" (*anacchariyā*) rejects the Vedic "channeling" of scripture from the Divinity, while "not learned before in the past" (*pubbe assutapubbā*), echoing the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta (SN 56.11:5.1), rejects the oral tradition.

351. For "village louts" (*gāmaṇḍalā*), compare *aṇḍaka* in the sense "nasty, cruel" at MN 41:9.4.

52.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Purity comes from food.'[352] They say: 'Let's live on jujubes.' So they eat jujubes and jujube powder, and drink jujube juice. And they enjoy many jujube concoctions. I recall eating just a single jujube. You might think that at that time the jujubes must have been very big. But you should not see it like this. The jujubes then were at most the same size as today. Eating so very little, my body became severely emaciated. Due to eating so little, my major and minor limbs became like the joints of an eighty-year-old or a dying man,[353] my bottom became like a camel's hoof, my vertebrae stuck out like beads on a string, and my ribs were as gaunt as the broken-down rafters on an old barn. Due to eating so little, the gleam of my eyes sank deep in their sockets, like the gleam of water sunk deep down a well. Due to eating so little, my scalp shriveled and withered like a green bitter-gourd in the wind and sun. Due to eating so little, the skin of my belly stuck to my backbone, so that when I tried to rub the skin of my belly I grabbed my backbone, and when I tried to rub my backbone I rubbed the skin of my belly. Due to eating so little, when I tried to urinate or defecate I fell face down right there. Due to eating so little, when I tried to relieve my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell out.

53-55.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Purity comes from food.' They say: 'Let's live on mung beans.' … 'Let's live on sesame.' … 'Let's live on ordinary rice.' … Due to eating so little, when I tried to relieve my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell out.

56.1 But Sāriputta, I did not achieve any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones by that conduct, that

352. Compare Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.26.2: "from purity of food there is purity of being; from purity of being there is stable memory (mindfulness); relying on memory there is release from all ties" (*āhāraśuddhau sattvaśuddhiḥ; sattvaśuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ; smṛtilambhe sarvagranthīnāṁ vipramokṣaḥ*).

353. *Āsītika* is "eighty-year-old", *kāḷa* is "time (of death)" (read *kāla*), *pabba* is "joint".

practice, that grueling work. Why is that? Because I didn't achieve that noble wisdom that's noble and emancipating, and which delivers one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering.

57.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Purity comes from transmigration.'[354] But it's not easy to find a realm that I haven't previously transmigrated to in all this long time, except the gods of the pure abodes. For if I had transmigrated to the gods of the pure abodes I would not have returned to this realm again.[355]

58.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Purity comes from rebirth.'[356] But it's not easy to find any rebirth that I haven't previously been reborn in …

59.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Purity comes from abode of rebirth.' But it's not easy to find an abode where I haven't previously abided …

60.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Purity comes from sacrifice.'[357] But it's not easy to find a sacrifice that I haven't previously offered in all this long time, when I was an anointed aristocratic king or a well-to-do brahmin.

61.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Purity comes from serving the sacred flame.'[358] But it's not easy to find a fire that I haven't previously served in all this long time, when I was an anointed aristocratic king or a well-to-do brahmin.

62.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'So long as this gentleman is youthful, young, with pris-

354. A view attributed to Makkhali Gosāla (DN 2:21.3). The idea is that transmigration is limited, so one will automatically be released after a certain number of lives.

355. The gods there are all "non-returners" and will attain arahantship in that realm.

356. This view and the next appear to be different ways of repeating the same view as before. Perhaps there is a subtle difference between them.

357. This is, of course, the brahmins.

358. Again, serving the sacred flame is a fundamental, perhaps *the* fundamental, rite of the brahmins.

tine black hair, blessed with youth, in the prime of life he will be endowed with perfect lucidity of wisdom. But when he's old, elderly, and senior, advanced in years, and has reached the final stage of life—eighty, ninety, or a hundred years old—he will lose his lucidity of wisdom.' But you should not see it like this. For now I am old, elderly, and senior, I'm advanced in years, and have reached the final stage of life. I am eighty years old.[359] Suppose I had four disciples with a lifespan of a hundred years. And they each were perfect in memory, range, retention, and perfect lucidity of wisdom.[360] Imagine how easily a well-trained expert archer with a strong bow would shoot a light arrow across the shadow of a palm tree. That's how extraordinary they were in memory, range, retention, and perfect lucidity of wisdom. They'd bring up questions about the four kinds of mindfulness meditation again and again, and I would answer each question. They'd remember the answers and not ask the same question twice. And they'd pause only to eat and drink, go to the toilet, and sleep to dispel weariness. But the Realized One would not run out of Dhamma teachings, words and phrases of the teachings, or spontaneous answers. And at the end of a hundred years my four disciples would pass away. Even if you have to carry me around on a stretcher, there will never be any deterioration in the Realized One's lucidity of wisdom.

63.1 And if there's anyone of whom it may be rightly said that a being not liable to delusion has arisen in the world for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of sympathy for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans, it's of me that this should be said."

359. This situates this discourse, and hence the Sunakkhatta cycle as a whole, near the end of the Buddha's life.

360. Memory (*sati*), range (*gati*), retention (*dhiti*), and perfect lucidity of wisdom (*paññāveyyattiya*).

Now at that time Venerable Nāgasamāla was standing behind the Buddha fanning him.[361] Then he said to the Buddha: 64.1

"It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! While I was listening to this exposition of the teaching my hair stood up! What is the name of this exposition of the teaching?" 64.3

"Well then, Nāgasamāla, you may remember this exposition of the teaching as 'The Hair-raising Discourse.'"[362] 64.6

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Nāgasamāla approved what the Buddha said. 64.7

361. We meet Nāgasamāla in less auspicious circumstances at Ud 8.7, where he stubbornly disagrees with the Buddha on which path to take.

362. This original title is widely attested in the tradition, being found in some *uddāna* summary verses in Burmese and Sinhalese manuscripts, Mil 7.5.7:2.1, a Jātaka of the same name (Ja 94), several commentaries, and the Sanskrit and Chinese parallels. The subcommentary says that the name Mahāsīhanāda was given by the redactors.

MN 13

The Longer Discourse on the Mass of Suffering

Mahādukkhakkhandhasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Then several mendicants robed up in the morning and, taking their bowls and robes, entered Sāvatthī for alms. Then it occurred to them, "It's too early to wander for alms in Sāvatthī. Why don't we visit the monastery for the wanderers of other religions?" Then they went to the monastery for the wanderers of other religions and exchanged greetings with the wanderers there. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. The wanderers said to them:

3.1 "Reverends, the ascetic Gotama advocates the complete understanding of sensual pleasures, and so do we.[363] The ascetic Gotama advocates the complete understanding of forms, and so do we. The ascetic Gotama advocates the complete understanding of feelings, and so do we.[364] What, then, is the difference between the ascetic Gotama's teaching and instruction and ours?"[365]

4.1 Those mendicants neither approved nor rejected that statement of the wanderers of other religions. They rose from their seats, think-

363. This group of three—*kāma*, *rūpa*, *vedanā*—is also found at AN 3.126 and AN 10.29, where it also relates to the teachings of outsiders.

364. The text does not say what the wanderers understood by these three full understandings. The commentary says they spoke in reference to, respectively, the first absorption, the formless attainments, and the non-percipient state.

365. In questioning this, the wanderers display better discernment than many today, who leap all too readily from the discovery of something in common between religions to the assertion that they are therefore the same.

ing, "We will learn the meaning of this statement from the Buddha himself."[366]

Then, after the meal, when they returned from almsround, they went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said: 5.1

"Mendicants, when wanderers of other religions say this, you should say to them: 'But reverends, what's the gratification, the drawback, and the escape when it comes to sensual pleasures?[367] What's the gratification, the drawback, and the escape when it comes to forms? What's the gratification, the drawback, and the escape when it comes to feelings?' Questioned like this, the wanderers of other religions would be stumped, and, in addition, would get frustrated. Why is that? Because they're out of their element. I don't see anyone in this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who could provide a satisfying answer to these questions except the Realized One or his disciple or someone who has heard it from them. 6.1

And what is the gratification of sensual pleasures? There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. The pleasure and happiness that arise from these five kinds of sensual stimulation: this is the gratification of sensual pleasures. 7.1

And what is the drawback of sensual pleasures? It's when a gentleman earns a living by means such as arithmetic, accounting, calculating, farming, trade, raising cattle, archery, government service, 8.1

366. This is the quintessential Buddhist attitude when encountering something unknown: to neither accept nor reject, but inquire.

367. This set of three questions is a key analytical approach in the suttas. Without an appreciation of both the good and bad sides of things we cannot properly understand them and be free of craving for them.

or one of the professions. But they must face cold and heat, being hurt by the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles, and risking death from hunger and thirst. This is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

9.1 That gentleman might try hard, strive, and make an effort, but fail to accrue riches. If this happens, they sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion, saying: 'Oh, my hard work is wasted. My efforts are fruitless!' This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

10.1 That gentleman might try hard, strive, and make an effort, and succeed in accruing riches. But they experience pain and sadness when they try to protect it, thinking: 'How can I prevent my wealth from being taken by rulers or bandits, consumed by fire, swept away by flood, or taken by unloved heirs?' And even though they protect it and ward it, rulers or bandits take it, or fire consumes it, or flood sweeps it away, or unloved heirs take it. They sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion: 'What once was mine is gone.' This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

11.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures kings fight with kings, aristocrats fight with aristocrats, brahmins fight with brahmins, and householders fight with householders. A mother fights with her child, child with mother, father with child, and child with father. Brother fights with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, and friend fights with friend. Once they've started quarreling, arguing, and disputing, they attack each other with fists, stones, rods, and swords, resulting in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

12.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures they don their sword and shield, fasten their bow and arrows, and plunge into a

battle massed on both sides, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing. There they are struck with arrows and spears, and their heads are chopped off, resulting in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

13.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures they don their sword and shield, fasten their bow and arrows, and charge wetly plastered bastions, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing.[368] There they are struck with arrows and spears, splashed with dung, crushed by a superior force, and their heads are chopped off,[369] resulting in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

14.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures they break into houses, plunder wealth, steal from isolated buildings, commit highway robbery, and commit adultery. The rulers would arrest them and subject them to various punishments—whipping, caning, and clubbing; cutting off hands or feet, or both; cutting off ears or nose, or both; the 'porridge pot', the 'shell-shave', the 'Rāhu's mouth', the 'garland of fire', the 'burning hand', the 'bulrush twist', the 'bark dress', the 'antelope', the 'meat hook', the 'coins', the 'caustic pickle', the 'twisting bar', the 'straw mat'; being splashed with hot oil, being fed to the hounds, being impaled alive, and being beheaded.[370] These

368. Bastions were "wetly plastered" (*addāvalepana*) for resistance from fire (SN 35.243:7.1).

369. For "splashed with dung" (*chakaṇakāyapi osiñcanti*), PTS reads *pakkaṭṭhī*, but this word appears to be spurious. The commentary says *chakaṇakā* means "boiling cowdung", but nothing in the word itself suggests "boiling". The Chinese parallels at MA 99 and T 53 have "molten copper" 融銅, while EA 21.9 has "molten iron" (消鐵). | *Abhivagga* is only found here in Pali. The Atharvaveda (3.5.2, 6.54.2, 11.2.4) has *abhīvarga* apparently in the sense of "domain". The commentary says *abhivagga* was a "hundred-toothed" weapon that crushed invaders of a castle. However, *vagga* has the recognized military sense of "cadre, company, platoon", so I take *abhivagga* to mean "superior force".

370. The commentary explains these punishments thus. "Porridge pot": remove the top of the skull and drop in a hot iron ball so that the brains boil over.

result in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

15.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures, they conduct themselves badly by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.[371] This is a drawback of sensual pleasures to do with lives to come, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.[372]

16.1 And what is the escape from sensual pleasures? Removing and giving up desire and greed for sensual pleasures: this is the escape from sensual pleasures.[373]

17.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand sensual pleasures' gratification, drawback, and escape in this way for what they are. It's impossible for them to completely understand sensual pleasures themselves, or to instruct another so that, practicing accordingly, they will completely understand sensual pleasures. There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand sensual pleasures' gratification, drawback, and escape in this way for what they are. It is possible for them to completely understand sensual

"Shell-shave": grind the skull with gravel until it is smooth. "Rāhu"s mouth': force open the mouth with a skewer, put in oil and wick, and light it so it burns like the sun swallowed by the titan Rāhu (SN 2.9 and [sn2.10]). "Garland of fire": smear the body with oil and set it alight. "Burning hand": wrap the hand with oiled rags and set it alight. "Bulrush twist": flay the skin from the neck down, then twist it into a band by which to hang the victim. "Bark dress": cut the skin in strips and make it into a garment. "Antelope": pin the bound victim to the ground and roast them alive. "Meat hook": flay with double fish-hooks. "Coins": slice off disks of flesh like coins. "Caustic pickle": beat the victim, then rub the wounds with caustic solution. "Twisting bar": pin the victim to the ground by the ears and twirl them by the feet. "Straw mat": beat them until every bone is broken and the body becomes limp as a mattress.

371. The drawbacks are escalating, the point being that hell is worse than the punishments described above.

372. Previous drawbacks pertained to what is "apparent in this very life" (*sandiṭṭhika*), whereas this applies to "lives to come" (*samparāyika*).

373. This happens with the realization of non-return.

pleasures themselves, or to instruct another so that, practicing accordingly, they will completely understand sensual pleasures.

And what is the gratification of forms? Suppose there was a girl 18.1
of the brahmins, aristocrats, or householders in her fifteenth or sixteenth year, neither too tall nor too short, neither too thin nor too fat, neither too dark nor too fair. Is she not at the height of her beauty and prettiness?"

"Yes, sir." 18.3

"The pleasure and happiness that arise from this beauty and pret- 18.4
tiness is the gratification of forms.

And what is the drawback of forms? Suppose that some time later 19.1
you were to see that same sister—eighty, ninety, or a hundred years old—bent double, crooked, leaning on a staff, trembling as they walk, ailing, past their prime, with teeth broken, hair grey and scanty or bald, skin wrinkled, and limbs blotchy.[374]

What do you think, mendicants? Has not that former beauty 19.3
vanished and the drawback become clear?"

"Yes, sir." 19.5

"This is the drawback of forms. 19.6

Furthermore, suppose that you were to see that same sister sick, 20.1
suffering, gravely ill, collapsed in her own urine and feces, being picked up by some and put down by others.

What do you think, mendicants? Has not that former beauty 20.2
vanished and the drawback become clear?"

"Yes, sir." 20.4

"This too is the drawback of forms. 20.5

Furthermore, suppose that you were to see that same sister as a 21.1
corpse discarded in a charnel ground. And it had been dead for one, two, or three days, bloated, livid, and festering.[375]

374. The Buddha shifts to "sister", emphasizing closeness that is respectful but not sexual (SN 35.127:1.6, MN 82:23.3).

375. As shown in MN 10:14.3, this meditation proceeds not by objectifying the other's corpse as repulsive, but by identifying "it"—the neuter-gendered *sarīra*—with one's own body.

21.3 What do you think, mendicants? Has not that former beauty vanished and the drawback become clear?"

21.5 "Yes, sir."

21.6 "This too is the drawback of forms.

22.1 Furthermore, suppose that you were to see that same sister as a corpse discarded in a charnel ground. And it was being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, herons, hounds, tigers, leopards, jackals, and many kinds of little creatures …

23-28.1 Furthermore, suppose that you were to see that same sister as a corpse discarded in a charnel ground. And it had been reduced to a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together by sinews … A skeleton rid of flesh but smeared with blood, and held together by sinews … A skeleton rid of flesh and blood, held together by sinews … Bones rid of sinews scattered in every direction. Here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here an ankle bone, there a shin-bone, here a thigh-bone, there a hip-bone, here a rib-bone, there a back-bone, here an arm-bone, there a neck-bone, here a jaw-bone, there a tooth, here the skull. …

29.1 Furthermore, suppose that you were to see that same sister as a corpse discarded in a charnel ground. And it had been reduced to white bones, the color of shells … Decrepit bones, heaped in a pile … Bones rotted and crumbled to powder.

29.3 What do you think, mendicants? Has not that former beauty vanished and the drawback become clear?"

29.5 "Yes, sir."

29.6 "This too is the drawback of forms.

30.1 And what is the escape from forms? Removing and giving up desire and greed for forms: this is the escape from forms.[376]

31.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand forms' gratification, drawback, and escape in this way for what they are. It's impossible for them to completely understand forms themselves,

376. Since "forms" also includes the refined visions of meditation, the full understanding of forms only occurs with arahantship.

or to instruct another so that, practicing accordingly, they will completely understand forms. There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand forms' gratification, drawback, and escape in this way for what they are. It is possible for them to completely understand forms themselves, or to instruct another so that, practicing accordingly, they will completely understand forms.

And what is the gratification of feelings? It's when a mendicant, 32.1
quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[377] At that time a mendicant doesn't intend to hurt themselves, hurt others, or hurt both; they feel only feelings that are not hurtful. Freedom from being hurt is the ultimate gratification of feelings, I say.

Furthermore, a mendicant enters and remains in the second ab- 33-35.1
sorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. At that time a mendicant doesn't intend to hurt themselves, hurt others, or hurt both; they feel only feelings that are not hurtful. Freedom from being hurt is the ultimate gratification of feelings, I say.

And what is the drawback of feelings? That feelings are imper- 36.1
manent, suffering, and perishable: this is their drawback.[378]

And what is the escape from feelings? Removing and giving up 37.1
desire and greed for feelings: this is the escape from feelings.[379]

There are ascetics and brahmins who don't truly understand feel- 38.1
ings' gratification, drawback, and escape in this way for what they are. It's impossible for them to completely understand feelings themselves, or to instruct another so that, practicing accordingly, they will completely understand feelings. There are ascetics and brahmins who do truly understand feelings' gratification, drawback, and

377. The Buddha illustrates "feelings" with the highest and most refined possible feelings, those of *jhāna*.

378. This describes the stage of insight meditation. After the meditator has attained absorption, they reflect that even those sublime feelings are impermanent.

379. This occurs at arahantship.

escape in this way for what they are. It is possible for them to completely understand feelings themselves, or to instruct another so that, practicing accordingly, they will completely understand feelings."

38.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 14

The Shorter Discourse on the Mass of Suffering

Cūḷadukkhakkhandhasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery. 1.1

Then Mahānāma the Sakyan went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him,[380] "For a long time, sir, I have understood your teaching like this: 'Greed, hate, and delusion are corruptions of the mind.' Despite understanding this, sometimes my mind is occupied by thoughts of greed, hate, and delusion. I wonder what qualities remain in me that I have such thoughts?"[381] 2.1

"Mahānāma, there is a quality that remains in you that makes you have such thoughts. For if you had given up that quality you would not still be living at home and enjoying sensual pleasures. But because you haven't given up that quality you are still living at home and enjoying sensual pleasures. 3.1

Sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks. So, Mahānāma, even though a noble disciple has clearly seen this with right wisdom, as long as they do not achieve the rapture and bliss that are apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, or something even 4.1

380. Mahānāma was the brother of Anuruddha and Ānanda (Kd 17:1.1.3) which, according to the commentary, makes the Buddha his cousin. He remained in the lay life as a devoted and generous follower, keenly interested in developing his practice. The early texts do not record any occasion of his awakening. However, the commentarial claim that he was a once-returner is supported by passages such as SN 55.22:2.3 and SN 55.21:3.6 that suggest he was indeed a noble disciple.

381. As in the opening of the previous discourse, he exhibits curiosity and openness to inquiry.

more peaceful than that,[382] they can return to sensual pleasures.[383] But when they do achieve that rapture and bliss, or something more peaceful than that, they do not return to sensual pleasures.

5.1 Before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I too clearly saw with right wisdom that: 'Sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks.' But so long as I didn't achieve the rapture and bliss that are apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, or something even more peaceful than that, I didn't announce that I would not return to sensual pleasures. But when I did achieve that rapture and bliss, or something more peaceful than that, I announced that I would not return to sensual pleasures.[384]

6.1 And what is the gratification of sensual pleasures? There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. The pleasure and happiness that arise from these five kinds of sensual stimulation: this is the gratification of sensual pleasures.

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382. The "rapture and bliss that are apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities" includes the first and second *jhānas*. The text is in present tense: they *do not attain jhāna*, not *they have never attained jhāna*. In order to realize the noble truths, Mahānāma must, of course, have practiced the noble eightfold path, which includes *jhāna*. Indeed, at AN 3.73:1.6 Mahānāma said he understood that in the Buddha's teaching, "Knowledge is for those with immersion, not those without immersion." However, a stream-enterer and a once-returner have not fully given up the underlying attachment to sensual pleasures, so unless they are dedicated to regular meditation following that realization, it is possible for their mental clarity to deteriorate and sensual desires to return. It seems that the temptations and business of the lay life had distracted Mahānāma from his meditation.

383. The Pali is expressed in a double negative: "they are not one who does not return".

384. The phrasing of this passage echoes that of the first sermon (SN 56.11:9.1).

And what is the drawback of sensual pleasures? It's when a gen- 7.1
tleman earns a living by means such as arithmetic, accounting, calculating, farming, trade, raising cattle, archery, government service, or one of the professions. But they must face cold and heat, being hurt by the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles, and risking death from hunger and thirst. This is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

That gentleman might try hard, strive, and make an effort, but fail 8.1
to accrue riches. If this happens, they sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion, saying: 'Oh, my hard work is wasted. My efforts are fruitless!' This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

That gentleman might try hard, strive, and make an effort, and 9.1
succeed in accruing riches. But they experience pain and sadness when they try to protect it, thinking: 'How can I prevent my wealth from being taken by rulers or bandits, consumed by fire, swept away by flood, or taken by unloved heirs?' And even though they protect it and ward it, rulers or bandits take it, or fire consumes it, or flood sweeps it away, or unloved heirs take it. They sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion: 'What once was mine is gone.' This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures kings fight with 10.1
kings, aristocrats fight with aristocrats, brahmins fight with brahmins, and householders fight with householders. A mother fights with her child, child with mother, father with child, and child with father. Brother fights with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, and friend fights with friend. Once they've started quarreling, arguing, and disputing, they attack each other with fists, stones, rods, and swords, resulting in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback

of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

11.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures they don their sword and shield, fasten their bow and arrows, and plunge into a battle massed on both sides, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing. There they are struck with arrows and spears, and their heads are chopped off, resulting in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

12.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures they don their sword and shield, fasten their bow and arrows, and charge wetly plastered bastions, with arrows and spears flying and swords flashing. There they are struck with arrows and spears, splashed with dung, crushed by a superior force, and their heads are chopped off, resulting in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

13.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures they break into houses, plunder wealth, steal from isolated buildings, commit highway robbery, and commit adultery. The rulers would arrest them and subject them to various punishments—whipping, caning, and clubbing; cutting off hands or feet, or both; cutting off ears or nose, or both; the 'porridge pot', the 'shell-shave', the 'Rāhu's mouth', the 'garland of fire', the 'burning hand', the 'bulrush twist', the 'bark dress', the 'antelope', the 'meat hook', the 'coins', the 'caustic pickle', the 'twisting bar', the 'straw mat'; being splashed with hot oil, being fed to the hounds, being impaled alive, and being beheaded. These result in death and deadly pain. This too is a drawback of sensual pleasures apparent in the present life, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

14.1 Furthermore, for the sake of sensual pleasures, they conduct themselves badly by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place,

the underworld, hell. This is a drawback of sensual pleasures to do with lives to come, a mass of suffering caused by sensual pleasures.

15.1 Mahānāma, this one time I was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. Now at that time several Jain ascetics on the slopes of Isigili at the Black Rock were constantly standing, turning down seats. And they felt painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion.[385]

16.1 Then in the late afternoon, I came out of retreat and went to the Black Rock to visit those Jain ascetics. I said to them,[386] 'Reverends, why are you constantly standing, turning down seats, so that you suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion?'[387]

17.1 When I said this, those Jain ascetics said to me, 'Reverend, the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan claims to be all-knowing and all-seeing, to know and see everything without exception, thus:[388] "Knowledge and vision are constantly and continually present to me, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking."[389]

385. A large open area where the Buddha taught occasionally (SN 8.10), but it is most famous as the place the monks Godhika (SN 4.23) and Vakkali took their lives (SN 22.87). | The practice of constant standing was formerly undertaken by the Bodhisatta (MN 12:45.9).

386. The Buddha reports a similar, but more detailed, conversation with Jains at MN 101.

387. Even with his own extensive experience in such practices, the Buddha still asks.

388. The Jain leader Mahāvīra Vardhamāna is known as Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta in Pali texts. He is regarded as the 24th supreme leader of the Jains, although only he and his predecessor Pārśvanātha (not mentioned in the Pali) are historical. *Nigaṇṭha* means "knotless" (i.e. without attachments); it is a term for a Jain ascetic. Nātaputta indicates his clan the Ñātikas (Sanskrit *jñātiputra*; Prākrit *nāyaputta*). The Pali tradition has confused *ñāti* ("family") with *nāṭa* ("dancer"). Thus Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta means "the Jain monk of the Ñātika clan".

389. The Buddha denied possessing such omniscience; rather, he knows the three knowledges (MN 71:5.5). Nonetheless, he can be poetically considered as "all-knowing" (Thag 2.6:1.4, Thag 16.1:18.1, Thag 1.69:1.2), since he understands the "all" that is the six senses (SN 35.28).

17.4 He says, "O Jain ascetics, you have done bad deeds in a past life. Wear them away with these severe and grueling austerities.[390] And when in the present you are restrained in body, speech, and mind, you're not doing any bad deeds for the future. So, due to eliminating past deeds by fervent mortification, and not doing any new deeds, there's nothing to come up in the future. With no future consequence, deeds end. With the ending of deeds, suffering ends. With the ending of suffering, feeling ends. And with the ending of feeling, all suffering will have been worn away."[391] We endorse and accept this, and we are satisfied with it.'

18.1 When they said this, I said to them, 'But reverends, do you know for sure that you existed in the past, and it is not the case that you did not exist?'

18.4 'No we don't, reverend.'

18.5 'But reverends, do you know for sure that you did bad deeds in the past?'

18.7 'No we don't, reverend.'

18.8 'But reverends, do you know that you did bad deeds of this type or that?'

18.10 'No we don't, reverend.'

18.11 'But reverends, do you know that so much suffering has already been worn away? Or that so much suffering still remains to be worn away? Or that when so much suffering is worn away all suffering will have been worn away?'

18.13 'No we don't, reverend.'

18.14 'But reverends, do you know about giving up unskillful qualities in this very life and embracing skillful qualities?'

18.16 'No we don't, reverend.'

390. The Buddha emphasized understanding *kamma* and relinquishing the causes of new *kamma*, rather than wearing away the unknowable mass of past *kamma*. | Mahāvīra's emphasis on *bad* karma of the past presages the modern usage where karma is evoked when something inescapably bad happens.

391. The past participle with future tense (*nijjiṇṇaṁ bhavissati*) indicates a future perfect sense, "will have been worn away".

'So it seems that you don't know any of these things. That being so, when those in the world who are violent and bloody-handed and of cruel livelihood are reborn among humans they go forth as Jain ascetics.'[392] 19.1

'Reverend Gotama, pleasure is not gained through pleasure; pleasure is gained through pain.[393] For if pleasure were to be gained through pleasure, King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha would gain pleasure, since he lives in greater pleasure than Venerable Gotama.'[394] 20.1

'Clearly the venerables have spoken rashly, without reflection. Rather, I'm the one who should be asked about who lives in greater pleasure, King Bimbisāra or Venerable Gotama?'[395] 20.3

'Clearly we spoke rashly and without reflection. But let that be. Now we ask Venerable Gotama: "Who lives in greater pleasure, King Bimbisāra or Venerable Gotama?"' 20.8

'Well then, reverends, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, reverends? Is King Bimbisāra capable of experiencing absolute happiness for seven days and nights without moving his body or speaking?' 21.1

'No he is not, reverend.' 21.4

'What do you think, reverends? Is King Bimbisāra capable of experiencing absolute happiness for six days … five days … four days … three days … two days … one day?' 21.5

'No he is not, reverend.' 21.12

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392. This point is argued in more detail at MN 101:12.2 ff. | "Cruel livelihood" (*kurūrakammantā*) is defined at MN 51:9.2, etc.

393. At MN 85:10.2 the Buddha says that he too held this belief while still an unenlightened Bodhisatta. Thus not only were his austerities identical with the Jains, so were his beliefs. The Jain text Sūyagaḍa (known in Sanskrit as Sūtrakṛtāṅga) 1.3.4.6 rejects the view that pleasure is gained through pleasure, attributing it to those who disdain the noble path, which its commentary identifies with Buddhists.

394. With their path emphasizing painful austerity, there is little to support the idea that the Jains practiced meditation in the Buddhist sense, and certainly not the deep pleasure of *jhāna*.

395. He holds them to the same standard that he himself has already demonstrated: don't make assumptions, ask.

21.13 'But I am capable of experiencing absolute happiness for one day and night without moving my body or speaking. I am capable of experiencing perfect happiness for two days … three days … four days … five days … six days … seven days.[396] What do you think, reverends? This being so, who lives in greater pleasure, King Bimbisāra or I?'

21.21 'This being so, Venerable Gotama lives in greater pleasure than King Bimbisāra.'"

21.22 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Mahānāma the Sakyan approved what the Buddha said.

396. The Buddha sat for seven days after his awakening (Ud 1.1:1.3), an achievement also attested for disciples such as Mahākassapa (Ud 3.7:1.3) and the nun Uttamā (Thig 3.2:3.3).

MN 15

Measuring Up

Anumānasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time Venerable Mahāmoggallāna was 1.1
staying in the land of the Bhaggas at Crocodile's Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā's Wood.[397] There Venerable Mahāmoggallāna addressed the mendicants:[398] "Reverends, mendicants!"

"Reverend," they replied. Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said this: 1.5

"Suppose a mendicant invites[399] other mendicants to admonish 2.1
them. But they're hard to admonish, having qualities that make them hard to admonish. They're impatient, and don't take instruction respectfully. So their spiritual companions don't think it's worth advising and instructing them, and that individual doesn't gain their trust.[400]

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397. The Bhaggas were an isolated republican clan, sandwiched between the Vacchas south of the Yamuna and the Kosalans north of the Ganges. By the time of the Buddha they were evidently subject to the Vacchas. | "Crocodile's Bellow" (*susumāragira*) was their capital. The commentary says it was so-named because a crocodile bellowed in a nearby lake during the founding of the city.

398. While Moggallāna is known for his mastery of advanced psychic abilities, suttas such as this and MN 5 show his concern for even the smallest defects in ethical conduct.

399. The term "invites" (*pavāreti*) suggests a connection with the "Invitation" (*pavāraṇā*) ceremony at the end of each rains retreat, where the monastics invite each other for admonition (Kd 4). The Chinese parallels confirm this connection, saying the discourse was spoken on the Pavāraṇā.

400. This discourse acts as a sutta counterpart to the Vinaya rule Bu Ss 12, which lays down a procedure to deal with a mendicant who makes themselves incorrigible. The Pali origin story for that rule lays the blame on the monk Channa, the Buddha's former charioteer, who boasts "mine is the Buddha, mine the Dhamma!" It was evidently unsuccessful, as the Buddha on his deathbed had to further lay down the "divine punishment" for him (DN 16:6.4.1).

3.1 And what are the qualities that make them hard to admonish? Firstly, a mendicant has corrupt wishes, having fallen under the sway of corrupt wishes. This is a quality that makes them difficult to admonish.

3.5 Furthermore, a mendicant glorifies themselves and puts others down. …[401]

3.8 They're irritable, overcome by anger …

3.11 They're irritable, and acrimonious due to anger …

3.14 They're irritable, and stubborn due to anger …

3.17 They're irritable, and blurt out words bordering on anger …

3.20 When accused, they object to the accuser …

3.23 When accused, they rebuke the accuser …

3.26 When accused, they retort to the accuser …

3.29 When accused, they dodge the issue, distract the discussion with irrelevant points, and display annoyance, hate, and bitterness …

3.32 When accused, they are unable to account for the evidence …[402]

3.35 They are offensive and contemptuous …

3.38 They're jealous and stingy …

3.41 They're devious and deceitful …

3.44 They're obstinate and arrogant …

3.47 Furthermore, a mendicant is attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go.[403] This too is a quality that makes them difficult to admonish.

3.50 These are the qualities that make them hard to admonish.

4.1 Suppose a mendicant doesn't invite other mendicants to admonish them. But they're easy to admonish, having qualities that make them easy to admonish. They're accepting, and take instruction respectfully. So their spiritual companions think it's worth advising and instructing them, and that individual gains their trust.

401. "Glorifies themselves" is *attukkaṁsaka*.

402. *Apadāna* means the traces or marks left behind, in this case the evidence of misdeeds.

403. Compare MN 8:12.45.

And what are the qualities that make them easy to admonish? 5.1
Firstly, a mendicant doesn't have corrupt wishes …

Furthermore, a mendicant isn't attached to their own views, not 5.47
holding them tight, but letting them go easily.

These are the qualities that make them easy to admonish. 5.50

In such a case, a mendicant should measure themselves like this.[404] 6.1
'This individual has corrupt wishes, having fallen under the sway of corrupt wishes. And I don't like or approve of this individual. And if I were to fall under the sway of corrupt wishes, others wouldn't like or approve of me.' A mendicant who knows this should give rise to the thought: 'I will not fall under the sway of corrupt wishes.' …

'This individual is attached to their own views, holding them tight 6.47
and refusing to let go. And I don't like or approve of this individual. And if I were to be attached to my own views, holding them tight and refusing to let go, others wouldn't like or approve of me.' A mendicant who knows this should give rise to the thought: 'I will not be attached to my own views, holding them tight, but will let them go easily.'

In such a case, a mendicant should check themselves like this: 7.1
'Do I have corrupt wishes? Have I fallen under the sway of corrupt wishes?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have fallen under the sway of corrupt wishes. Then they should make an effort to give up those bad, unskillful qualities. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they haven't fallen under the sway of corrupt wishes. Then they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities. …

404. "Should measure against" is *anuminitabba*, which in its noun form *anumāna* lends the sutta its title. The normal sense in later literature is "inference" (eg. Mil 6.4.1). *Anumāna* occurs in the early texts only here and in the passive form *anumīyati* at SN 22.36:1.4, where the sense must be to "measure against". This passage also discusses how to measure oneself in relation to another, an external standard, whereas the next section on reflection applies an inner standard. Hence the commentary glosses with: "should compare, should judge" (*tuletabbo tīretabbo*).

7.87 Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they are attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go. Then they should make an effort to give up those bad, unskillful qualities. Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they're not attached to their own views, holding them tight, but let them go easily. Then they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

8.1 Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant sees that they haven't given up all these bad, unskillful qualities. Then they should make an effort to give them all up. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant sees that they have given up all these bad, unskillful qualities. Then they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

8.3 Suppose there was a woman or man who was young, youthful, and fond of adornments, and they check their own reflection in a clean bright mirror or a clear bowl of water. If they see any dirt or blemish there, they'd try to remove it.[405] But if they don't see any dirt or blemish there, they're happy, thinking: 'How fortunate that I'm clean!'

8.6 In the same way, suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant sees that they haven't given up all these bad, unskillful qualities. Then they should make an effort to give them all up. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant sees that they have given up all these bad, unskillful qualities. Then they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities."[406]

8.8 That is what Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what Mahāmoggallāna said.[407]

405. Moggallāna also takes part in a similar conversation about blemishes at MN 5:3.1.

406. The Chinese parallels continue at this point, expanding the sequence that leads from joy to immersion to insight and liberation.

407. The commentary says that the ancient teachers called this the "Bhikkhupātimokkha", perhaps an echo of the memory that it was recited on the *pavāraṇā*, which replaces the recitation of the Pātimokkha normally held on the

full moon day. It goes on to say that a mendicant should use these teachings to review themselves three times a day, or at least once.

MN 16

Hard-heartedness

Cetokhilasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, when a mendicant has not given up five kinds of hard-heartedness and severed five shackles of the heart, it's not possible for them to achieve growth, improvement, or maturity in this teaching and training.[408]

3.1 What are the five kinds of hard-heartedness they haven't given up?[409] Firstly, a mendicant has doubts about the Teacher. They're uncertain, undecided, and lacking confidence. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence,

408. The two sets of five are also found at AN 10.14. The five kinds of "hard-heartedness" are also at AN 5.205, AN 9.71, DN 33:2.1.76, and DN 34:1.6.24, and the five "shackles of the heart" are at AN 5.206, AN 9.72, AN 9.82, AN 9.92, and DN 33:2.1.84. | While this sutta is addressed as normal to the *bhikkhus*, the parallels at AN 10.14, MA 206, and EA 51.4 are all addressed to both monks and nuns. This is one of the instances showing that the term *bhikkhu* is meant to include both monks and nuns, a common feature of Pali where the default gender is masculine. Hence I translate *bhikkhu* with "mendicant", which is both literal and gender-neutral, unless it is clear that males are meant, in which case I use "monk".

409. "Hard-heartedness" or "emotional barrenness" (*cetokhila*): *ceto* is one of several words for "mind, heart" and is functionally equivalent to *citta*, yet it tends to be used in contexts that emphasize the emotional dimensions of the mind such as here. *Khila* is said, in the commentary to Snp 1.2, to be land so barren that nothing grows even if it rains for four months.

and striving. This is the first kind of hard-heartedness they haven't given up.

Furthermore, a mendicant has doubts about the teaching … This 4.1
is the second kind of hard-heartedness.

They have doubts about the Saṅgha … This is the third kind of 5.1
hard-heartedness.

They have doubts about the training …[410] This is the fourth kind 6.1
of hard-heartedness.

Furthermore, a mendicant is angry and upset with their spiri- 7.1
tual companions, resentful and closed off. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth kind of hard-heartedness they haven't given up. These are the five kinds of hard-heartedness they haven't given up.

What are the five shackles of the heart they haven't severed? 8.1
Firstly, a mendicant isn't free of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for sensual pleasures. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the first shackle of the heart they haven't severed.

Furthermore, a mendicant isn't free of greed for the body … This 9.1
is the second shackle of the heart.

Furthermore, a mendicant isn't free of greed for form … This is 10.1
the third shackle of the heart.

They eat as much as they like until their belly is full, then indulge 11.1
in the pleasures of sleeping, lying down, and drowsing … This is the fourth heart shackle.

They lead the spiritual life hoping to be reborn in one of the or- 12.1
ders of gods, thinking: 'By this precept or observance or fervent austerity or spiritual practice, may I become one of the gods!' This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth shackle of the heart they

410. While "training" includes the threefold training of ethics, meditation, and wisdom, it specially indicates the foundational training in ethics. This is emphasized in the Chinese parallels, which mention the "precepts" here.

haven't severed. These are the five shackles of the heart they haven't severed.

13.1 When a mendicant has not given up these five kinds of hard-heartedness and severed these five shackles of the heart, it's not possible for them to achieve growth, improvement, or maturity in this teaching and training.

14.1 When a mendicant has given up these five kinds of hard-heartedness and severed these five shackles of the heart, it is possible for them to achieve growth, improvement, and maturity in this teaching and training.

15.1 What are the five kinds of hard-heartedness they've given up? Firstly, a mendicant has no doubts about the Teacher. They're not uncertain, undecided, or lacking confidence. This being so, their mind inclines toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the first kind of hard-heartedness they've given up.

16.1 Furthermore, a mendicant has no doubts about the teaching …

17.1 They have no doubts about the Saṅgha …

18.1 They have no doubts about the training …

19.1 They're not angry and upset with their spiritual companions, not resentful or closed off. This being so, their mind inclines toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth kind of hard-heartedness they've given up. These are the five kinds of hard-heartedness they've given up.

20.1 What are the five shackles of the heart they've severed? Firstly, a mendicant is rid of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for sensual pleasures. This being so, their mind inclines toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the first shackle of the heart they've severed.

21.1 Furthermore, a mendicant is rid of greed for the body …

22.1 They're rid of greed for form …

23.1 They don't eat as much as they like until their belly is full, then indulge in the pleasures of sleeping, lying down, and drowsing …

24.1 They don't lead the spiritual life hoping to be reborn in one of the orders of gods, thinking: 'By this precept or observance or fer-

vent austerity or spiritual practice, may I become one of the gods!' This being so, their mind inclines toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth shackle of the heart they've severed. These are the five shackles of the heart they've severed.

25.1 When a mendicant has given up these five kinds of hard-heartedness and severed these five shackles of the heart, it is possible for them to achieve growth, improvement, or maturity in this teaching and training.[411]

26.1 They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort …[412] the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort …[413] the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to mental development, and active effort …[414] the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort. And the fifth is sheer vigor.[415] A mendicant who possesses these fifteen factors, including vigor, is capable of breaking out, becoming awakened, and reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.[416] Suppose there was a chicken

411. Up to this point, the discourse is mostly identical to AN 10.14. In the next section, the Buddha goes on to show what "growth" means; with the emotional fundamentals in place, meditation can proceed.

412. The four *iddhipada* are included in the 37 "qualities on the side of awakening" (*bodhipakkhiyadhamma*). They are an alternate presentation of the path of meditation, with a special focus on developing *samādhi*. It seems the Buddha designed this presentation of Dhamma to appeal to the many meditators who are fascinated by psychic powers, with the aim to lead them on to the higher goal of liberation. | "Enthusiasm" (*chanda*) is the desire or will to practice the Dhamma for liberation.

413. One who has the requisite enthusiasm will put forth "effort" to achieve the goal.

414. When striving, one will purify and develop the "mind". When *citta* appears in meditation contexts, it is often virtually a synonym of *samādhi* (see eg. *cittabhāvanā, cittasampadā*).

415. The mind clarified in *samādhi* can investigate the true nature of reality. | *Ussoḷhi* ("vigor") is similar in meaning to "energy" (*viriya*) and "active effort" (*saṅkhāra*), underscoring the importance of effort here.

416. *Yogakkhema* ("sanctuary from the yoke") is a metaphor for Nibbāna that draws from the literal sense of *khema* as an oasis or sanctuary for men and beasts.

with eight or ten or twelve eggs.[417] And she properly sat on them to keep them warm and incubated. Even if that chicken doesn't wish: 'If only my chicks could break out of the eggshell with their claws and beak and hatch safely!' Still they can break out and hatch safely.

27.7 In the same way, a mendicant who possesses these fifteen factors, including vigor, is capable of breaking out, becoming awakened, and reaching the supreme sanctuary from the yoke."

27.8 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

After a hard day's journey, a caravan would stop to rest, "unyoke" the draft animals, lay down the burden, and refresh themselves in the cool waters.

417. This simile recurs at MN 53:19.2 and elsewhere.

MN 17

Jungle Thickets

Vanapatthasutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I will teach you an exposition about jungle thickets.[418] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 2.1

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.3

"Mendicants, take the case of a mendicant who lives close by a jungle thicket.[419] As they do so, their mindfulness does not become established, their mind does not become immersed in samādhi, their defilements do not come to an end, and they do not arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.[420] And the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are hard to come by. That mendicant should reflect: 'While living close by this jungle thicket, my mindfulness 3.1

418. This sutta acts as a counterbalance to the many places where the Buddha encourages living secluded in the forest. The purpose of the life of solitude is to develop meditation and find freedom. But life is complicated and people are complicated, and sometimes what we think will support us becomes a hindrance. So regardless of how secluded and inspiring a place may be, it is crucial to always reflect on one's actual progress in developing the wholesome.

419. Here I translate *upanissaya* as "close by".

420. This gives a brief summary of the path of meditation. First one "establishes mindfulness", i.e. undertakes meditation based on the four *satipaṭṭhānas*. This leads to *samādhi* as the mind becomes immersed in the four *jhānas*. Then, seeing reality with the unclouded clarity of a purified mind, defilements are abandoned and one is freed from transmigration.

does not become established, my mind does not become immersed in samādhi, my defilements do not come to an end, and I do not arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. And the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are hard to come by.' That mendicant should leave that jungle thicket that very time of night or day; they should not stay there.

4.1 Take another case of a mendicant who lives close by a jungle thicket. Their mindfulness does not become established … But the necessities of life are easy to come by. That mendicant should reflect: 'While living close by this jungle thicket, my mindfulness does not become established … But the necessities of life are easy to come by. But I didn't go forth from the lay life to homelessness for the sake of a robe, almsfood, lodgings, or medicines and supplies for the sick. Moreover, while living close by this jungle thicket, my mindfulness does not become established …' That mendicant should, after appraisal, leave that jungle thicket; they should not stay there.[421]

5.1 Take another case of a mendicant who lives close by a jungle thicket. As they do so, their mindfulness becomes established, their mind becomes immersed in samādhi, their defilements come to an end, and they arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. But the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are hard to come by. That mendicant should reflect: 'While living close by this jungle thicket, my mindfulness becomes established … But the necessities of life are hard to come by. But I didn't go forth from the lay life to homelessness for the sake of a robe, almsfood, lodgings, or medicines and supplies for the sick. Moreover, while living close by this jungle thicket, my mindfulness becomes established …' That mendicant

421. In this case they should leave after reflection, not necessarily "that very day", since at least they can live comfortably and healthily, which is no small thing.

should, after appraisal, stay in that jungle thicket; they should not leave.[422]

6.1 Take another case of a mendicant who lives close by a jungle thicket. Their mindfulness becomes established … And the necessities of life are easy to come by. That mendicant should reflect: 'While living close by this jungle thicket, my mindfulness becomes established … And the necessities of life are easy to come by.' That mendicant should stay in that jungle thicket for the rest of their life; they should not leave.

7-10.1 Take the case of a mendicant who lives supported by a village …[423] town … city … country … an individual. As they do so, their mindfulness does not become established, their mind does not become immersed in samādhi, their defilements do not come to an end, and they do not arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. And the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are hard to come by. That mendicant should reflect: '… my mindfulness does not become established … And the necessities of life are hard to come by.' That mendicant should leave that individual at any time of the day or night, without taking leave; they should not follow them. …[424]

24.1 Take another case of a mendicant who lives supported by an individual. Their mindfulness does not become established … But the necessities of life are easy to come by. That mendicant should reflect: '… my mindfulness does not become established … But the necessities of life are easy to come by.' … That mendicant should, after appraisal, leave that individual having taken leave; they should not follow them. …

25.1 Take another case of a mendicant who lives supported by an individual. Their mindfulness becomes established … But the necessi-

422. Even if life is hard, meditation progress is more important.

423. In the remaining cases I translate *upanissaya* as "supported by".

424. The mendicant's supporters have not fulfilled their duty to provide adequate requisites, so the mendicant is not obliged to take leave from them.

ties of life are hard to come by. That mendicant should reflect: '… my mindfulness becomes established … But the necessities of life are hard to come by.' … That mendicant should, after appraisal, follow that individual; they should not leave.

26.1 Take another case of a mendicant who lives supported by an individual. As they do so, their mindfulness becomes established, their mind becomes immersed in samādhi, their defilements come to an end, and they arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. And the necessities of life that a renunciate requires—robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick—are easy to come by. That mendicant should reflect: 'While living supported by this individual, my mindfulness becomes established … And the necessities of life are easy to come by.' That mendicant should follow that individual for the rest of their life; they should not leave them, even if driven away."[425]

26.8 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

425. The idiom "even if driven away" (*api panujjamānena*) occurs a few times in this sense (MN 122:19.2, AN 7.37:1.1, AN 9.6:6.4).

MN 18

The Honey-Cake

Madhupiṇḍikasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[426] At one time the Buddha was staying in the land 1.1
of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.[427]

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl 2.1
and robe, entered Kapilavatthu for alms.[428] He wandered for alms in Kapilavatthu. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Great Wood for the day's meditation,[429] plunged deep into it, and sat at the root of a young wood-apple tree to meditate.

426. This is one of the most famous discourses in studies of early Buddhism, largely due to the ground-breaking analysis by Venerable Kaṭukurunde Ñāṇananda in his 1971 monograph *Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*, which established the meaning of *papañca* as "conceptual proliferation". | It is the first of the "thought trilogy", a series of discourses that deal with the activity of thinking in meditation (also MN 19, MN 20).

427. The Banyan Tree Monastery (*nigrodhārāma*) was the normal residence for the Buddha and his disciples in the Sakyan republic. It was named, according to northern traditions, after the banyan trees that grew there, while the Pali commentaries say it was named after a Sakyan called Nigrodha who donated it. The two stories are not incompatible, as the owner could have been known by his most famous attribute, his banyan grove. It has been identified by stupas located next to the village Kudan, just north of the India-Nepal border.

428. It would have been about thirty minutes walk to Kapilavatthu.

429. The Great Wood (*mahāvana*) was a favorite meditation place of the Buddha. The commentaries say it was a stretch of wilderness that reached as far as the Himalayas on one side (200 km) and the ocean on the other (1000 km). Later tradition says that a town should have three woods: a "great wood" for wilderness (*mahāvana*); a "prosperity wood" for resources (*sirivana*); and an "ascetic wood" for spiritual practice (*tapovana*).

3.1 Daṇḍapāṇi the Sakyan, while going for a walk,[430] plunged deep into the Great Wood. He approached the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood to one side leaning on his staff, and said to the Buddha, "What is the ascetic's doctrine? What does he assert?"[431]

4.1 "Respectable sir, my doctrine is such that one does not argue with anyone in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans. And it is such that perceptions do not underlie the brahmin who lives detached from sensual pleasures, without indecision, stripped of worry, and rid of craving for rebirth in this or that state.[432] That is my doctrine, and that is what I assert."

430. Daṇḍapāṇi was said to be the brother of the Buddha's birth mother Māyā and foster mother Mahāpajāpatī (Mahāvaṁsa 2.19), or else the father of the Buddha's former wife Yasodharā (or Gopā, Lalitavistara 12.15). Both could be true, making Siddhattha's wife his cousin. Reading between the lines, it seems Daṇḍapāṇi nursed a grudge against the Buddha. This would be understandable if Siddhattha's birth resulted in the death of one of Daṇḍapāṇi's sisters, while the other sister was left distraught when he went forth; and even more so if he abandoned Daṇḍapāṇi's daughter with their newborn son.

431. There is a minor Vinaya training against teaching anyone with "a staff in their hand" (*daṇḍapāṇi*, Bu Sk 58:1.3.1). This was evidently laid down because a staff could be used as a weapon, and hence was associated with royal authority or with policing and the exercise of violence. In a vision interpreted at Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.6.1.13, a man with staff in hand is identified with wrath (*krodha*).

432. In the face of Daṇḍapāṇi's evidently hostile attitude, the Buddha addresses his uncle with the respectful *āvuso* ("sir"), and emphasizes non-conflict in line with his claim that, "I do not argue with the world; it is the world that argues with me" (SN 22.94). | The expression "perceptions do not underlie" (*saññā nānusenti*) is unique to this context and must pertain to the highly-charged relation between the Buddha and Daṇḍapāṇi. "Perception" is that mode of knowing that interprets the present in terms of the past, and hence it might sometimes be translated as "recognition". The Buddha, by asserting he is no longer bound by past perceptions, is hinting that this is how Daṇḍapāṇi can get over his grudge.

When he had spoken, Daṇḍapāṇi shook his head, waggled his tongue, raised his eyebrows until his brow puckered in three furrows, and left leaning on his staff.[433] 5.1

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and went to the Banyan Tree Monastery, sat down on the seat spread out, and told the mendicants what had happened. 6.1

When he had spoken, one of the mendicants said to him, "But sir, asserting what doctrine does the Buddha not argue with anyone in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans?[434] And how is it that perceptions do not underlie the Buddha, the brahmin who lives detached from sensual pleasures, without indecision, stripped of worry, and rid of craving for rebirth in this or that state?"[435] 6.14

"Mendicant, judgments driven by proliferating perceptions beset a person.[436] If they don't find anything worth approving, welcoming, or getting attached to in the source from which these arise,[437] just this is the end of the underlying tendencies to desire, aversion, views, doubt, conceit, the desire for continued existence, and ignorance. This is the end of taking up the rod and the sword, the end of quarrels, 8.1

433. While the Buddha succeeding in deescalating possible conflict, clearly the teaching did not have the desired effect, at least right away. | Māra responds in the same way at SN 4.21:1.12.

434. The "Buddha" (*bhagavā*) is the subject and object respectively of this sentence and the next, a detail not always captured in translations.

435. The following passage, with its longer explanation below, is one of the most dense and enigmatic statements in the suttas. I shall explain the terms as they occur, and draw out the structure of the argument as it is revealed.

436. "Judgment" (*saṅkhā*) is the way we "appraise" or "assess" ourselves, especially in relation to others (cf. MN 1:3.3, DN 1:1.3.2). | "Proliferation" (*papañca*) is the compulsion of the mind to spread out in endless inner commentary that hides reality. | "Beset" (*samudācaranti*) conveys the sense that the person is overwhelmed and swamped, no longer the agent of their existence. | A "person" (*purisa*) is the conventional sense of self that arises from desire and identification.

437. *Ettha* ("regarding that") refers back to *yatonidānaṁ* ("the source from which") in the previous line. This "source" has not yet been identified.

arguments, and disputes, of accusations, backbiting, and lies.[438] This is where these bad, unskillful qualities cease without remainder."[439]

9.1 That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling.[440]

10.1 Soon after the Buddha left, those mendicants considered, "The Buddha gave this brief summary recital, then entered his dwelling without explaining the meaning in detail. Who can explain in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha?"

10.8 Then those mendicants thought, "This Venerable Mahākaccāna is praised by the Buddha and esteemed by his sensible spiritual companions.[441] He is capable of explaining in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha. Let's go to him, and ask him about this matter."

11.1 Then those mendicants went to Mahākaccāna, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. They told him what had happened, and said: "May Venerable Mahākaccāna please explain this."

12.1 "Reverends, suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But he'd pass over the roots and trunk, imagining that the heartwood should be sought in the branches and

438. Here the Buddha uses "underlying tendencies" (*anusaya*) for the normal set of seven, implying that these are meant by "perceptions" in the phrase "perceptions do not underlie the brahmin" at MN 18:4.1. | He identifies the doctrine that leads to peace as the ending of these tendencies that create proliferation and judgment about the supposed "person".

439. By this the Buddha indicates arahantship.

440. While the Buddha usually took pains to make his teaching explicit, he sometimes left his students with puzzling or enigmatic statements as a way of encouraging them to figure them out for themselves.

441. Mahākaccāna was one of the great disciples, whose teachings specially emphasized the incisive analysis of consciousness through the lens of the six senses. He was said to be the most skilled at given detailed explanations of brief teachings (AN 1.197), a skill he displayed also at MN 133, MN 138, and AN 10.172. Later he was to settle to the southwest in Avanti, where he established the Dhamma in the region.

leaves. Such is the consequence for the venerables. Though you were face to face with the Buddha, you bypassed him, imagining that you should ask me about this matter. For he is the Buddha, the one who knows and sees. He is vision, he is knowledge, he is the manifestation of principle, he is the manifestation of divinity. He is the preacher, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the bestower of freedom from death, the lord of truth, the Realized One. That was the time to approach the Buddha and ask about this matter. You should have remembered it in line with the Buddha's answer."

"Certainly he is the Buddha, the one who knows and sees. He 13.1
is vision, he is knowledge, he is the manifestation of principle, he is the manifestation of divinity. He is the preacher, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the bestower of freedom from death, the lord of truth, the Realized One. That was the time to approach the Buddha and ask about this matter. We should have remembered it in line with the Buddha's answer. Still, Mahākaccāna is praised by the Buddha and esteemed by his sensible spiritual companions. You are capable of explaining in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha. Please explain this, if it's no trouble."

"Well then, reverends, listen and apply your mind well, I will 14.1
speak."

"Yes, reverend," they replied. Venerable Mahākaccāna said this: 14.2

"Reverends, the Buddha gave this brief summary recital, then 15.1
entered his dwelling without explaining the meaning in detail:[442]
'Judgments driven by proliferating perceptions beset a person. If they don't find anything worth approving, welcoming, or getting attached to in the source from which these arise, just this is the end of the underlying tendencies to desire, repulsion, views, doubt, conceit, the desire to be reborn, and ignorance. This is the end of taking up the rod and the sword, the end of quarrels, arguments, and disputes, of accusations, backbiting, and lies. This is where these bad, unskillful

442. "Passage for recitation" is *uddesa*, which is used for a short passage to be memorized verbatim, to which is then attached a longer analysis.

qualities cease without remainder.' This is how I understand the detailed meaning of this summary recital.

16.1 Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. What you feel, you perceive. What you perceive, you think about. What you think about, you proliferate. What you proliferate is the source from which judgments driven by proliferating perceptions beset a person. This occurs with respect to sights known by the eye in the past, future, and present.[443]

16.2 Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. …

16.3 Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. …

16.4 Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. …

16.5 Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. …

16.6 Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. What you feel, you perceive. What you perceive, you think about. What you think about, you proliferate. What you proliferate is the

443. In this passage, Mahākaccāna deftly unfolds the meaning inside the syntax. For consciousness, contact, and feeling, he repeats the standard analysis of sense experience linked to dependent origination (SN 12.43), where each item, expressed as a noun, leads to the next like falling dominoes. Pivoting on feeling (cp. SN 12.43:4.5, DN 15:18.6), he switches to verbs; feeling exerts a force that motivates desire, even though desire itself is left unstated here. In the Pali, the subject of the verbs is implicit, assuming an agent who is feeling, perceiving, thinking, and proliferating. But with proliferating, the syntax changes again. The agent is fully manifest as the "person" who, tragically, is no longer the subject in control of the process, but the hapless object of the swarm of judgments that beset them. It is at this point that time is introduced, as the concept of the "person" binds the mind to suffering in the three periods of time. If we relate this to the origin story, Daṇḍapāṇi has become the "person" he is, full of bitterness and resentment, because of his chronic ruminations on perceived injustices of the past. | Mahākaccāna identifies the "source" left undefined in the Buddha's statement with proliferation itself. | This passage also clarifies the grammatical relationship between the main terms: perception leads to proliferation and proliferation results in judgments.

source from which judgments driven by proliferating perceptions beset a person. This occurs with respect to ideas known by the mind in the past, future, and present.[444]

17.1 Where there is the eye, sights, and eye consciousness, it will be possible to discover evidence of contact.[445] Where there is evidence of contact, it will be possible to discover evidence of feeling. Where there is evidence of feeling, it will be possible to discover evidence of perception. Where there is evidence of perception, it will be possible to discover evidence of thought. Where there is evidence of thought, it will be possible to discover evidence of being beset by judgments driven by proliferating perceptions.

17.6 Where there is the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, ideas, and mind consciousness, it will be possible to discover evidence of contact. Where there is evidence of contact, it will be possible to discover evidence of feeling. Where there is evidence of feeling, it will be possible to discover evidence of perception. Where there is evidence of perception, it will be possible to discover evidence of thinking. Where there is evidence of thinking, it will be possible to

444. Here, rather unsatisfactorily, "ideas" renders *dhammā*. *Dhamma* in the sense of "what is known by the mind rather than the senses" doesn't readily map on to a common concept in English. Attempts include "mind objects", which introduces the Abhidhammic idea of "object" to the suttas, where it is entirely absent; or "(mental) phenomena", which doesn't really fit the common meaning of "phenomena" as being what is perceptible by the senses. Etymologically, the correct word would be "noumena", but this is used only as a technical term in Kantian philosophy where it has a rather different sense. Ñāṇamoḷi's "idea" might be the least bad option, in the sense of a thought, concept, sensation, or image present in consciousness.

445. I take this passage as an encouragement to meditators who may be intimidated by the complex analysis that preceded. Mahākaccāna is assuring his audience that if they can see the fundamentals of sense experience, the rest of the process "will make itself known" (*paññāpessati*). | I render the repetitive phrase *phassapaññattiṁ paññāpessati* idiomatically as "will discover evidence of contact", but more literally it might be "the making known of contact will make itself known".

discover evidence of being beset by judgments driven by proliferating perceptions.

18.1 Where there is no eye, no sights, and no eye consciousness, it will not be possible to discover evidence of contact. Where there is no evidence of contact, it will not be possible to discover evidence of feeling. Where there is no evidence of feeling, it will not be possible to discover evidence of perception. Where there is no evidence of perception, it will not be possible to discover evidence of thinking. Where there is no evidence of thinking, it will not be possible to discover evidence of being beset by judgments driven by proliferating perceptions.

18.6 Where there is no ear … no nose … no tongue … no body … no mind, no ideas, and no mind consciousness, it will not be possible to discover evidence of contact. Where there is no evidence of contact, it will not be possible to discover evidence of feeling. Where there is no evidence of feeling, it will not be possible to discover evidence of perception. Where there is no evidence of perception, it will not be possible to discover evidence of thinking. Where there is no evidence of thinking, it will not be possible to discover evidence of being beset by judgments driven by proliferating perceptions.

19.1 This is how I understand the detailed meaning of that brief summary recital given by the Buddha. If you wish, you may go to the Buddha and ask him about this. You should remember it in line with the Buddha's answer."

20.1 Then those mendicants, approving and agreeing with what Mahākaccāna said, rose from their seats and went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened, adding: "Mahākaccāna clearly explained the meaning to us in this manner, with these words and phrases."

21.1 "Mahākaccāna is astute, mendicants, he has great wisdom. If you came to me and asked this question, I would answer it in exactly the same way as Mahākaccāna. That is what it means, and that's how you should remember it."

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Sir, 22.1
suppose a person who was weak with hunger was to obtain a honey-cake. Wherever they taste it, they would enjoy a sweet, delectable flavor.[446]

In the same way, wherever a sincere, proficient mendicant might 22.3
examine with wisdom the meaning of this exposition of the teaching they would only gain joy and clarity. Sir, what is the name of this exposition of the teaching?"

"Well then, Ānanda, you may remember this exposition of the 22.5
teaching as 'The Honey-Cake Discourse.'"

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda ap- 22.6
proved what the Buddha said.

446. This simile is also used for the Buddha's teachings at AN 5.194:4.1.

MN 19

Two Kinds of Thought

Dvedhāvitakkasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[447] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought:[448] 'Why don't I meditate by continually dividing my thoughts into two classes?' So I assigned sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts[449] to one class. And I assigned thoughts of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness to the second class.

3.1 Then, as I meditated—diligent, keen, and resolute—a sensual thought arose. I understood: 'This sensual thought has arisen in me.[450] It leads to hurting myself, hurting others, and hurting both.

447. This discourse shows that a meditator must abandon unwholesome thought then wholesome thought before entering absorption. It is one of several discourses that give detailed instructions on dealing with thought in meditation (eg. MN 18, MN 20, AN 3.101). While meditation existed before the Buddha, we do not find this kind of practical advice on how to go about it.

448. This period of meditative development must have taken place after giving up self-mortification practices. MN 36:34.1 says that at this point, after restoring his strength by eating solid food, he developed the absorptions, giving the impression that this happened immediately. However, the current sutta, supported by passages such as MN 128:16.2, shows that this took some time, although it is not clear how long.

449. By analyzing thoughts (*vitakka*), he is consciously developing the second factor of the noble eightfold path, right thought (*sammāsaṅkappa*). In this context, *vitakka* and *saṅkappa* are synonyms.

450. First one knows the thought, understanding it in terms of the framework.

It blocks wisdom, it's on the side of distress, and it doesn't lead to extinguishment.'[451] When I reflected that it leads to hurting myself, it went away.[452] When I reflected that it leads to hurting others, it went away. When I reflected that it leads to hurting both, it went away. When I reflected that it blocks wisdom, it's on the side of distress, and it doesn't lead to extinguishment, it went away. So I gave up, dispelled, and eliminated any sensual thoughts that arose.

Then, as I meditated—diligent, keen, and resolute—a malicious 4-5.1
thought arose …[453] a cruel thought arose. I understood: 'This cruel thought has arisen in me. It leads to hurting myself, hurting others, and hurting both. It blocks wisdom, it's on the side of distress, and it doesn't lead to extinguishment.' When I reflected that it leads to hurting myself … hurting others … hurting both, it went away. When I reflected that it blocks wisdom, it's on the side of distress, and it doesn't lead to extinguishment, it went away. So I gave up, dispelled, and eliminated any cruel thoughts that arose.

Whatever a mendicant frequently thinks about and considers 6.1
becomes their heart's inclination.[454] If they often think about and consider sensual thoughts, they've given up the thought of renunciation to cultivate sensual thought. Their mind inclines to sensual thoughts. If they often think about and consider malicious thoughts … their mind inclines to malicious thoughts. If they often think about and consider cruel thoughts … their mind inclines to cruel thoughts.

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451. Then one reflects on the causal outcome of the thought.

452. Thoughts are eradicated not by force or judgment, but by reflective wisdom.

453. The difference between "malice" (or "ill will", *byāpāda*) and "cruelty" (*vihiṁsā*) is subtle; they are the respective opposites of "love" (*mettā*) and "compassion" (*karuṇā*). *Mettā* wishes well simply and without qualification, just as "malice" wishes ill. But *karuṇa* takes pleasure in the alleviation of pain, while *vihiṁsā* takes pleasure in inflicting pain.

454. This is a key principle underlying Buddhist meditation. Compare Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.5.2.20, where the form in which one worships the divinity determines the divine manifestation.

7.1 Suppose it's the last month of the rainy season, in autumn, when the crops grow closely together, and a cowherd must take care of the cattle.[455] He'd tap and poke them with his staff on this side and that to keep them in check. Why is that? For he sees that if they wander into the crops he could be executed, imprisoned, fined, or condemned.[456]

7.5 In the same way, I saw that unskillful qualities have the drawbacks of sordidness and corruption, and that skillful qualities have the benefit and cleansing power of renunciation.

8.1 Then, as I meditated—diligent, keen, and resolute—a thought of renunciation arose. I understood: 'This thought of renunciation has arisen in me. It doesn't lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It nourishes wisdom, it's on the side of freedom from distress, and it leads to extinguishment.' If I were to keep on thinking and considering this all night … all day … all night and day, I see no danger that would come from that.[457] Still, thinking and considering for too long would tire my body. And when the body is tired, the mind is stressed. And when the mind is stressed, it's far from immersion.[458] So I stilled, settled, unified, and immersed my mind internally.[459] Why is that? So that my mind would not be stressed.

9-10.1 Then, as I meditated—diligent, keen, and resolute—a thought of good will arose … a thought of harmlessness arose. I understood:

455. Compare AN 3.101, where the Buddha illustrates the same point with a simile of smelting gold.

456. At this point, a meditator guards against unwholesome thoughts, gently and persistently.

457. Meditators often wish to reach a state free of thought, but thought is a natural and essential function of the mind and wholesome habits of thought are a part of the eightfold path.

458. Even good thought has a limit as the mind is still active. | Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.21 enjoins the contemplative not to think too much, as it is fatiguing to speech.

459. As the sutta later makes clear, this means that he entered absorption. The process described here extends over a period of time during which these different factors arose, rather than a single meditation sitting.

'This thought of harmlessness has arisen in me. It doesn't lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It nourishes wisdom, it's on the side of freedom from distress, and it leads to extinguishment.' If I were to keep on thinking and considering this all night … all day … all night and day, I see no danger that would come from that. Still, thinking and considering for too long would tire my body. And when the body is tired, the mind is stressed. And when the mind is stressed, it's far from immersion. So I stilled, settled, unified, and immersed my mind internally. Why is that? So that my mind would not be stressed.

Whatever a mendicant frequently thinks about and considers becomes their heart's inclination. If they often think about and consider thoughts of renunciation, they've given up sensual thought to cultivate the thought of renunciation. Their mind inclines to thoughts of renunciation. If they often think about and consider thoughts of good will … their mind inclines to thoughts of good will. If they often think about and consider thoughts of harmlessness … their mind inclines to thoughts of harmlessness. 11.1

Suppose it's the last month of summer, when all the crops have been gathered within a village, and a cowherd must take care of the cattle. While at the root of a tree or in the open he need only be mindful that the cattle are there. In the same way I needed only to be mindful that those things were there.[460] 12.1

My energy was roused up and unflagging, my mindfulness was established and lucid, my body was tranquil and undisturbed, and my mind was immersed and unified in samādhi.[461] 13.1

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption, which has 14.1

460. Compare MN 140:20.2 and AN 3.102:2.1, where, when smelting is going well, the goldsmith merely observes with equanimity.

461. This passage, which describes the process of entering absorption, is here shown to be the opposite of the previous situation where the mind was continuing to think even wholesome thoughts.

the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[462]

15.1 As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I entered and remained in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.[463]

16.1 And with the fading away of rapture, I entered and remained in the third absorption, where I meditated with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.'[464]

17.1 With the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, I entered and remained in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.[465]

18.1 When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and

462. The first absorption still has *vitakka*, which above was rendered "thought" since it was clearly a verbal process. *Jhāna* is, however, a state of "higher mind" where all mental processes are elevated. Pleasure is no longer the coarse stimulus of the senses, seclusion is no longer just being physically isolated, rapture is no longer exciting. And *vitakka* is no longer the activity of verbalizing thought, as the burden of the sutta is to show that even wholesome thought prevents absorption. Rather, it is explained as a subtle process of placing the mind and keeping it in place (as defined at MN 117:14.2). The English word "thought" in the sense "to bring something to mind" might be elastic enough to cover this sense, but it is apt to be misleading. | The late canonical Peṭakopadesa has an interesting analysis that precedes the commentarial Theravadin understanding of this point (Pe 7).

463. Each *jhāna* begins as the least refined aspect of the previous *jhāna* ends. This is not consciously directed, but describes the natural process of settling. The meditator is now fully confident and no longer needs to apply their mind: it is simply still and fully unified.

464. The emotional response to bliss matures from the subtle thrill of rapture to the poise of equanimity. Mindfulness is present in all states of deep meditation, but with equanimity it becomes prominent.

465. The emotional poise of equanimity leads to the feeling of pleasure settling into the more subtle neutral feeling. Pain and sadness have been abandoned long before, but are emphasized here as they are subtle counterpart of pleasure.

imperturbable—I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected many kinds of past lives, with features and details.[466]

19.1 This was the first knowledge, which I achieved in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

20.1 When my mind had become immersed in samādhi like this, I extended it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

21.1 This was the second knowledge, which I achieved in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

22.1 When my mind had become immersed in samādhi like this, I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. I truly understood: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.'

23.1 I truly understood: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements.' Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. I understood: 'Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place.'

24.1 This was the third knowledge, which I achieved in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness

466. The text is elided in the Pali, but clearly is meant to be understood in full per MN 4:27.2.

was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

25.1 Suppose that in a forested wilderness there was an expanse of low-lying marshes, and a large herd of deer lived nearby. Then along comes a person who wants to harm, injure, and threaten them. They close off the safe, secure path that leads to happiness, and open the wrong path. There they plant domesticated male and female deer as decoys so that, in due course, that herd of deer would fall to ruin and disaster. Then along comes a person who wants to help keep the herd of deer safe. They open up the safe, secure path that leads to happiness, and close off the wrong path. They get rid of the decoys so that, in due course, that herd of deer would grow, increase, and mature.

26.1 I've made up this simile to make a point. And this is what it means. 'An expanse of low-lying marshes' is a term for sensual pleasures.[467] 'A large herd of deer' is a term for sentient beings. 'A person who wants to harm, injure, and threaten them' is a term for Māra the Wicked. 'The wrong path' is a term for the wrong eightfold path, that is, wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. 'A domesticated male deer' is a term for greed and relishing. 'A domesticated female deer' is a term for ignorance. 'A person who wants to help keep the herd of deer safe' is a term for the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. 'The safe, secure path that leads to happiness' is a term for the noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

26.13 So, mendicants, I have opened up the safe, secure path to happiness and closed off the wrong path. And I have got rid of the male and female decoys.

27.1 Out of sympathy, I've done what a teacher should do who wants what's best for their disciples. Here are these roots of trees, and here

467. As at SN 22.84:10.11.

are these empty huts. Practice absorption, mendicants! Don't be negligent! Don't regret it later! This is my instruction to you."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 27.3
what the Buddha said.

MN 20

How to Stop Thinking

Vitakkasaṇṭhānasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, a mendicant committed to the higher mind should focus on five subjects from time to time.[468] What five?

3.1 Take a mendicant who is focusing on some subject that gives rise to bad, unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion. That mendicant should focus on some other subject connected with the skillful.[469] As they do so, those bad thoughts are given up and come to an end. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. It's like a deft mason or their apprentice who'd knock out or extract a large peg with a finer peg. In the same way, a mendicant … should focus on some other basis of meditation connected with the skillful …

468. The "higher mind" (*adhicitta*) is the four *jhānas* (AN 3.90:3.1). | "Subject" (*nimitta*) here has its normal meaning in meditation contexts: a property of experience that, when focused on, fosters similar properties. This is primarily the chosen subject of meditation, but it also includes any subject that the mind dwells on. | "From time to time" (*kālena kālaṁ*): these are not fundamentals of meditation like mindfulness, which should always be developed, but rather expedients for dealing with specific problems when they arise. A meditator should be familiar with these methods and apply them when needed. However, one should not be over-eager to reach for these methods; they are meant for those times when the normal process of meditation has gone awry.

469. For example, a meditator who finds themselves plagued with thoughts of annoyance, having recognized that this is happening per MN 19, should switch to a new meditation such as *mettā*.

4.1 Now, suppose that mendicant is focusing on some other subject connected with the skillful, but bad, unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion keep coming up. They should examine the drawbacks of those thoughts:[470] 'So these thoughts are unskillful, they're blameworthy, and they result in suffering.'[471] As they do so, those bad thoughts are given up and come to an end. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. Suppose there was a woman or man who was young, youthful, and fond of adornments. If the carcass of a snake or a dog or a human were hung around their neck, they'd be horrified, repelled, and disgusted. In the same way, a mendicant … should examine the drawbacks of those thoughts …

5.1 Now, suppose that mendicant is examining the drawbacks of those thoughts, but bad, unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion keep coming up. They should try to forget and ignore them.[472] As they do so, those bad thoughts are given up and come to an end. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. Suppose there was a person with clear eyes, and some undesirable sights came into their range of vision. They'd just close their eyes or look away. In the same way, a mendicant … those bad thoughts are given up and come to an end …[473]

6.1 Now, suppose that mendicant is ignoring and forgetting about those thoughts, but bad, unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion keep coming up. They should focus on stop-

470. These methods are progressive; each one assumes that the former method has failed. | Looking at the drawbacks of unskillful thoughts was the cornerstone of the Bodhisatta's method at per MN 19:3.4.

471. As per MN 19:3.4.

472. "Forget" is *asati* and "ignore" is *amanasikāra*.

473. The repetitions here are dubious. The Mahāsaṅgīti edition here and following omits the method that stops the thoughts. It is surely implied, but in the absence of any witnesses, I translate to preserve the roughness of the Pali.

ping the formation of those thoughts.[474] As they do so, those bad thoughts are given up and come to an end. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. Suppose there was a person walking quickly.[475] They'd think: 'Why am I walking so quickly? Why don't I slow down?' So they'd slow down.[476] They'd think: 'Why am I walking slowly? Why don't I stand still?' So they'd stand still. They'd think: 'Why am I standing still? Why don't I sit down?' So they'd sit down. They'd think: 'Why am I sitting? Why don't I lie down?' So they'd lie down. And so that person would shun successively coarser postures and adopt more subtle ones.

6.22 In the same way, a mendicant … those thoughts are given up and come to an end …

7.1 Now, suppose that mendicant is focusing on stopping the formation of those thoughts, but bad, unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion keep coming up. With teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of the mouth, they should squeeze, squash, and crush mind with mind.[477] As they do so, those

474. The unique phrase "stopping the formation of thoughts" (*vitakkasaṅkhārasaṇṭhānaṁ*) lends the sutta its title. Here *saṅkhāra* refers to the energy that drives the formation of thoughts. Understanding the cause helps to deprive it of its power.

475. "Walking quickly" like a person swamped by many thoughts (MN 18:16.1).

476. Multiple methods of quelling thought have failed, so this method focuses on gradually slowing down rather than stopping all at once. Asking "why am I thinking so much?" turns attention around, focusing on the previous thought rather than the next thing.

477. As a last resort, the meditator forcibly crushes unwholesome thoughts and makes themselves think wholesome thoughts. This is one of the Jain-like mortifying meditations that the Bodhisatta undertook before discovering the middle way (MN 36:20.2, MN 85:20.2, MN 100:17.2). There, compared to the other practices such as meditating without breathing, it is the first and gentlest. Thus the most gentle of the mortifying meditations becomes the harshest of the Buddhist methods. | The first two terms (*abhiniggaṇhāti*, *abhinippīḷeti*) also occur in the context of defeating an opponent in debate (AN 10.116:5.1) and sexual assault (Bu Ss 2:2.2.1). *Abhisantāpeti* does not occur elsewhere in early Pali, but at Atharvaveda 2.12.6c it is a divine punishment for heretics.

bad thoughts are given up and come to an end. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. It's like a strong man who grabs a weaker man by the head or throat or shoulder and squeezes, squashes, and crushes them. In the same way, a mendicant … with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of the mouth, should squeeze, squash, and crush mind with mind. As they do so, those bad thoughts are given up and come to an end. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi.

8.1 Now, take the mendicant who is focusing on some subject that gives rise to bad, unskillful thoughts connected with desire, hate, and delusion. They focus on some other subject connected with the skillful … They examine the drawbacks of those thoughts … They try to forget and ignore about those thoughts … They focus on stopping the formation of those thoughts … With teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of the mouth, they squeeze, squash, and crush mind with mind. When they succeed in each of these things, those bad thoughts are given up and come to an end. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. This is called a mendicant who is a master of the ways of thought. They will think what they want to think, and they won't think what they don't want to think. They've cut off craving, cast off the fetters, and by rightly comprehending conceit have made an end of suffering."[478]

478. This sentence has a number of dubious features. Up until now the Chinese parallel at MA 101 is fairly similar, but it lacks this phrase. In addition, the passage lacks the expected conditional *yato ca* construction ("When a mendicant … then they are called one who has cut off craving …", eg. MN 22.1). Moreover, being phrased in the past tense it sits uneasily with the future tense of the previous phrase, and would have made better sense reversed ("Having cut off craving … they will think what they want to think"). Taken together, these considerations suggest that this passage may have been inserted by error in the Pali. The original scope of the sutta, then, would have focused solely on the quieting of thoughts for attaining *samādhi*.

8.14 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

THE CHAPTER OF SIMILES

MN 21

The Simile of the Saw

Kakacūpamasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time, Venerable Phagguna of the Top-Knot was spending too long mixing closely with some nuns.[479] So much so that if any mendicant criticized those nuns in his presence, Phagguna of the Top-Knot got angry and upset, and even instigated disciplinary proceedings.[480] And if any mendicant criticized Phagguna of the Top-Knot in their presence, those nuns got angry and upset, and even instigated disciplinary proceedings. That's how close Phagguna of the Top-Knot was with those nuns.

3.1 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what was going on.

4.1 So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, "Please, monk, in my name tell the mendicant Phagguna of the Top-Knot that the Teacher summons him."

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479. This monk appears in three discourses, in none of which he distinguishes himself. At SN 12.12 he persistently attempts to rephrase questions on dependent origination in terms of a self. And at SN 12.32 Venerable Sāriputta gets word that Phagguna had disrobed. According to the commentary, he was called Phagguna "of the Top-Knot" because of the style he wore his hair as a layperson. The name stuck, presumably to distinguish him from the Phagguna of AN 6.56 (and probably SN 35.83) who died in robes as a non-returner after hearing a Dhamma talk.

480. A "disciplinary proceeding" (*adhikaraṇa*) is a legal case in Vinaya. A standard set of four is listed at MN 104:12.3. The kind of case is not specified in the text, but the commentary says they accused other mendicants of various offenses and got Vinaya experts to litigate them, making it a "disciplinary issue arising from accusations" (*anuvādādhikaraṇa*, Kd 14:14.2.7).

"Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to Phagguna of the Top-Knot and said to him, "Reverend Phagguna, the Teacher summons you." 4.4

"Yes, reverend," Phagguna replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him: 4.6

"Is it really true, Phagguna, that you've been spending too long mixing closely with some nuns? So much so that if any mendicant criticizes those nuns in your presence, you get angry and upset, and even instigate disciplinary proceedings? And if any mendicant criticizes you in those nuns' presence, they get angry and upset, and even instigate disciplinary proceedings? Is that how close you've become with those nuns?" 5.1

"Yes, sir." 5.6

"Phagguna, are you not a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness?" 5.7

"Yes, sir." 5.8

"As such, it's not appropriate for you to mix so closely with those nuns. So if anyone criticizes those nuns in your presence, you should give up any desires or thoughts of domestic life. If that happens, you should train like this: 'My mind will not degenerate. I will blurt out no bad words. I will remain full of sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate.' That's how you should train. 6.1

So even if someone strikes those nuns with fists, stones, rods, and swords in your presence, you should give up any desires or thoughts of domestic life.[481] If that happens, you should train like this: 'My mind will not degenerate. I will blurt out no bad words. I will remain full of sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate.' That's how you should train. 6.6

481. This does not mean, of course, that one should not defend people against violence (see eg. DN 16:1.4.15), but that even in such circumstances one should not give way to anger.

6.10 So if anyone criticizes you in your presence, you should give up any desires or thoughts of domestic life.[482] If that happens, you should train like this: 'My mind will not degenerate. I will blurt out no bad words. I will remain full of sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate.' That's how you should train.

6.13 So Phagguna, even if someone strikes you with fists, stones, rods, and swords, you should give up any desires or thoughts of domestic life.[483] If that happens, you should train like this: 'My mind will not degenerate. I will blurt out no bad words. I will remain full of sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate.' That's how you should train."

7.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants:

7.2 "Mendicants, I used to be satisfied with the mendicants. Once, I addressed them: 'I eat my food in one sitting per day.[484] Doing so, I find that I'm healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. You too should eat your food in one sitting per day. Doing so, you'll find that you're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably.' I didn't have to keep on instructing those mendicants; I just had to prompt their mindfulness.[485]

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482. The grammar here is a little tricky. The genitive plays two roles in these passages: specifying the context (*tava sammukhā*, "in your presence"), and as the object of criticism or blows (*pahāraṁ dadeyya* "if they strike" operates above on "those nuns" (*tāsaṁ bhikkhunīnaṁ*) and below on "you" (*tava*)). Here we would expect both senses to be used, but the text only has *tava* once. I assume that either one instance of *tava* has been lost or it is meant to be distributed.

483. Here *sammukhā* is omitted, as it is unnecessary to specify being hit in your own presence.

484. Eating once a day is also encouraged at MN 65, while MN 70 encourages not eating at night. In both cases, monks objected when asked to follow this practice. Thus all three instances depict the growing influence of recalcitrant monks in the Saṅgha, culminating in the Buddha laying down a formal Vinaya rule against eating at the wrong time (Bu Pc 37). Per the allowance at MN 65:4.1, the mendicants are not required to eat in one sitting, which remained as an optional ascetic practice.

485. This is referring to the early years of the dispensation, before the formal Vinaya code was laid down. The Buddha was reluctant to create a legal code and did so only when it became necessary (Bu Pj 1:3.4.6). He preferred to lead

Suppose a chariot stood harnessed to thoroughbreds at a level crossroads, with a goad ready.[486] A deft horse trainer, a master charioteer, might mount the chariot, taking the reins in his right hand and goad in the left. He'd drive out and back wherever he wishes, whenever he wishes. 7.10

In the same way, I didn't have to keep on instructing those mendicants; I just had to prompt their mindfulness. So, mendicants, you too should give up what's unskillful and devote yourselves to skillful qualities. In this way you'll achieve growth, improvement, and maturity in this teaching and training. 7.12

Suppose that not far from a town or village there was a large grove of sal trees[487] that was choked with castor-oil weeds. Then along comes a person who wants to help protect and nurture that grove. They'd cut down the crooked sal saplings that were robbing the sap, and throw them out. They'd clean up the interior of the grove, and properly care for the straight, well-formed sal saplings. In this way, in due course, that sal grove would grow, increase, and mature. 8.1

In the same way, mendicants, you too should give up what's unskillful and devote yourselves to skillful qualities. In this way you'll achieve growth, improvement, and maturity in this teaching and training. 8.7

Once upon a time, mendicants, right here in Sāvatthī there was a housewife named Vedehikā.[488] She had this good reputation: 'The housewife Vedehikā is gentle, placid, and calm.'[489] Now, Vedehikā 9.1

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without judgment and punishment, but by reason, positive encouragement, and inspiring with his own example.

486. This simile is also at MN 119:31.2, SN 35.239:2.10, and AN 5.28:10.2.

487. This is a unique simile.

488. The lady Vedehikā is known only here. According to the commentary, her name means either "daughter of the lady from Videha", or (implausibly) "wise one". However, the much earlier Arthaśāstra treats *vaidehika* either as a "merchant" (2.21.7) or as a caste name (3.7.32). This story paints a rare portrait of domestic life.

489. The same set of three in a similar context occur at AN 6.60.

had a bonded maid named Kāḷī who was deft, tireless, and well-organized in her work.[490]

9.5 Then Kāḷī thought, 'My mistress has a good reputation as being gentle, placid, and calm. But does she actually have anger in her and just not show it? Or does she have no anger? Or is it just because my work is well-organized that she doesn't show anger, even though she still has it inside? Why don't I test my mistress?'[491]

9.11 So Kāḷī got up during the day. Vedehikā said to her, 'Oi wench, Kāḷī!'[492]

9.14 'What is it, ma'am?'[493]

9.15 'You're getting up in the day—what's up with you, wench?'

9.16 'Nothing, ma'am.'

9.17 'Oh, so nothing's up, you naughty maid, but you get up in the day!' Angry and upset, she scowled.

9.18 Then Kāḷī thought, 'My mistress actually has anger in her and just doesn't show it; it's not that she has no anger. It's just because my work is well-organized that she doesn't show anger, even though she still has it inside. Why don't I test my mistress further?'

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490. According to ancient Indian law (Arthaśāstra 3.13), slaves may be born such, be captured in war, or a person in a time of trouble may bind themselves in service for a fee. Non-Aryans (*mleccha*) may indenture their children, but this is forbidden for Aryans. Such bondservants were protected against cruelty, sexual abuse, and unfair work. After earning back the fee of their indenture they were freed, retaining their original inheritance and status. | The maid's name means "black" (compare the Kāḷī at Thag 2.16:1.1 who "looks like a crow"). This is a persistent pattern in early Pali. The only other named slaves are Disā ("foe", DN 3:1.16.1), her son Kaṇha ("black", DN 3:1.16.1), and Kāka ("crow", Kd 8:1.26.6). These people were evidently non-Aryans descended from the native peoples of India, perhaps Tamils or other tribal groups.

491. To "test" (or "inquire") is *vīmaṁsā*, which features as the fourth of the bases of psychic power.

492. *He je* is an idiomatic and disrespectful form of address, offering a glimpse of colloquial speech in the formal Pali of scripture. *He* is an exclamation for calling attention, like "hey" but cruder. *Je* is a derogatory term for women, used here and by the Vajjīs to Ambapālī at DN 16:2.16.3.

493. She uses the respectful address *ayye* ("ma'am").

So Kāḷī got up later in the day. Vedehikā said to her, 'Oi wench, Kāḷī!' 9.22

'What is it, ma'am?' 9.25

'You're getting up later in the day—what's up with you, wench?' 9.26

'Nothing, ma'am.' 9.27

'Oh, so nothing's up, you naughty maid, but you get up later in the day!' Angry and upset, she blurted out angry words. 9.28

Then Kāḷī thought, 'My mistress actually has anger in her and just doesn't show it; it's not that she has no anger. It's just because my work is well-organized that she doesn't show anger, even though she still has it inside. Why don't I test my mistress further?' 9.29

So Kāḷī got up even later in the day.[494] Vedehikā said to her, 'Oi wench, Kāḷī!' 9.33

'What is it, ma'am?' 9.36

'You're getting up even later in the day—what's up with you, wench?' 9.37

'Nothing, ma'am.' 9.38

'Oh, so nothing's up, you naughty maid, but you get up even later in the day!' Angry and upset, she grabbed a door-pin and hit Kāḷī on the head, cracking it open.[495] 9.39

Then Kāḷī, with blood pouring from her cracked skull, denounced her mistress to the neighbors, 'See, ladies, what the gentle one did! See what the placid one did! See what the calm one did! How on earth can she grab a door-pin and hit her only maid on the head, cracking it open, just for getting up late?'[496] 9.40

494. Assuming that the three rounds are meant to be *divā*, *divātaraṁ*, *divātaraṁ-yeva* ("in the day", "later in the day", "even later in the day"), although this is not followed consistently in the text.

495. *Aggaḷasūci* is a "pin" (*sūci*) for fastening the "door" (*aggala*). It is sometimes translated as "rolling pin", but that would be Sanskrit *vellana* (Hindi *belan*).

496. Arthaśāstra 3.13.9 says that inflicting punishment (*daṇḍapreṣaṇam*; cf. Pali *daṇḍāpesuṁ* at Bi Ss 1:1.38) on a slave is a crime for which a master incurs a fine equivalent to the cost of the slave.

9.44 Then after some time the housewife Vedehikā got this bad reputation: 'The housewife Vedehikā is fierce, ill-tempered, and not calm at all.'[497]

10.1 In the same way, a mendicant may be the gentlest of the gentle, the most placid of the placid, the calmest of the calm, so long as they don't encounter any disagreeable criticism. But it's when they encounter disagreeable criticism that you'll know whether they're really gentle, placid, and calm. I don't say that a mendicant is easy to admonish if they make themselves easy to admonish only for the sake of robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. Why is that? Because when they don't get robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, they're no longer easy to admonish. But when a mendicant is easy to admonish purely because they honor, respect, revere, worship, and venerate the teaching, then I say that they're easy to admonish. So, mendicants, you should train yourselves: 'We will be easy to admonish purely because we honor, respect, revere, worship, and venerate the teaching.' That's how you should train.

11.1 Mendicants, there are these five ways in which others might criticize you.[498] Their speech may be timely or untimely, true or false, gentle or harsh, beneficial or harmful, from a heart of love or from secret hate. When others criticize you, they may do so in any of these ways. If that happens, you should train like this: 'Our minds will not degenerate. We will blurt out no bad words. We will remain full of sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate. We will meditate spreading a heart of love to that individual. And with them as a basis, we will meditate spreading a heart full of love to everyone in the world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.'[499] That's how you should train.

497. No blame is given to Kāḷī for her deliberate provocation.

498. At AN 5.167 and AN 10.44:7.1 the five positive ways should be established before admonishing anyone.

499. Up until now, the sutta has concerned itself with good behavior and motivations in everyday life. Now this forms a basis to support meditation.

Suppose a person was to come along carrying a spade and basket 12.1
and say, 'I shall make this great earth be without earth!' And they'd
dig all over, scatter all over, spit all over, and urinate all over, saying,
'Be without earth! Be without earth!'

What do you think, mendicants? Could that person make this 12.6
great earth be without earth?"

"No, sir. Why is that? Because this great earth is deep and limitless. 12.8
It's not easy to make it be without earth. That person will eventually
get weary and frustrated."

"In the same way, there are these five ways in which others might 13.1
criticize you. Their speech may be timely or untimely, true or false,
gentle or harsh, beneficial or harmful, from a heart of love or from
secret hate. When others criticize you, they may do so in any of these
ways. If that happens, you should train like this: 'Our minds will not
degenerate. We will blurt out no bad words. We will remain full of
sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate. We will meditate
spreading a heart of love to that individual. And with them as a basis,
we will meditate spreading a heart like the earth to everyone in the
world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.'
That's how you should train.

Suppose a person was to come along with dye such as red lac, 14.1
turmeric, indigo, or rose madder, and say, 'I shall draw pictures in
space, making pictures appear there.'

What do you think, mendicants? Could that person draw pictures 14.4
in space?"

"No, sir. Why is that? Because space has no form or appearance.[500] 14.6
It's not easy to draw pictures there. That person will eventually get
weary and frustrated."

"In the same way, if others criticize you in any of these five ways 15.1
… you should train like this: '… We will meditate spreading a heart
of love to that person. And with them as a basis, we will meditate
spreading a heart like space to everyone in the world—abundant,

500. "No form or appearance" is *arūpī anidassano*.

expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.' That's how you should train.

16.1 Suppose a person was to come along carrying a blazing grass torch, and say, 'I shall burn and scorch the Ganges River with this blazing grass torch.'

16.4 What do you think, mendicants? Could that person burn and scorch the Ganges River with a blazing grass torch?"

16.6 "No, sir. Why is that? Because the Ganges River is deep and limitless. It's not easy to burn and scorch it with a blazing grass torch. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated."

17.1 "In the same way, if others criticize you in any of these five ways … you should train like this: '… We will meditate spreading a heart of love to that individual. And with them as a basis, we will meditate spreading a heart like the Ganges to everyone in the world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.' That's how you should train.

18.1 Suppose there was a catskin bag that was rubbed, well-rubbed, very well-rubbed, soft, silky, rid of rustling and crackling. Then a person comes along carrying a stick or a stone, and says, 'I shall make this soft catskin bag rustle and crackle with this stick or stone.'

18.5 What do you think, mendicants? Could that person make that soft catskin bag rustle and crackle with that stick or stone?"

18.7 "No, sir. Why is that? Because that catskin bag is rubbed, well-rubbed, very well-rubbed, soft, silky, rid of rustling and crackling. It's not easy to make it rustle or crackle with a stick or stone. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated."

19.1 "In the same way, there are these five ways in which others might criticize you. Their speech may be timely or untimely, true or false, gentle or harsh, beneficial or harmful, from a heart of love or from secret hate. When others criticize you, they may do so in any of these ways. If that happens, you should train like this: 'Our minds will not degenerate. We will blurt out no bad words. We will remain full of sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate. We will meditate spreading a heart of love to that individual. And with them as a basis,

we will meditate spreading a heart like a catskin bag to everyone in the world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.' That's how you should train.

Even if low-down bandits were to sever you limb from limb with a two-handed saw, anyone who had a malevolent thought on that account would not be following my instructions.[501] If that happens, you should train like this: 'Our minds will not degenerate. We will blurt out no bad words. We will remain full of sympathy, with a heart of love and no secret hate. We will meditate spreading a heart of love to that individual. And with them as a basis, we will meditate spreading a heart full of love to everyone in the world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.' That's how you should train. 20.1

If you frequently reflect on this advice on the simile of the saw,[502] do you see any criticism, large or small, that you could not endure?" 21.1

"No, sir." 21.3

"So, mendicants, you should frequently reflect on this advice on the simile of the saw. This will be for your lasting welfare and happiness." 21.4

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 21.6

501. This is often depicted as one of the torments of hell.

502. This dramatic passage is quoted at MN 28:24.3, which adopts the name "The Advice on the Simile of the Saw" (*kakacūpamovāda*). It became one of the most famous similes in Buddhism. In addition to these two Majjhima suttas and their Chinese parallels, it is cited in canonical texts at Thag 6.12:5.2 and SA 497, and in commentarial texts such as the Sanskrit Abhidharma text Mahāvibhāṣā (T 1545 at T xxvii 190a28), the Pali commentary to Ud 3.3, and the Visuddhimagga chapter on loving-kindness meditation (Vsm 2.9.15). A similar sentiment, moreover, is expressed in the Jain Isibhāsiyāiṁ chapter 34.

MN 22

The Simile of the Cobra

Alagaddūpamasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time a mendicant named Ariṭṭha, who had previously been a vulture trapper, had the following harmful misconception:[503] "As I understand the Buddha's teaching, the acts that he says are obstructions are not really obstructions for the one who performs them."[504]

2.3 Several mendicants heard this rumour. They went up to Ariṭṭha and said to him, "Is it really true, Reverend Ariṭṭha, that you have such a harmful misconception: 'As I understand the Buddha's teaching, the acts that he says are obstructions are not really obstructions for the one who performs them'?"

3.4 "Indeed, reverends. As I understand the Buddha's teaching, the acts that he says are obstructions are not really obstructions for the one who performs them."

3.5 Then, wishing to dissuade Ariṭṭha from his view, the mendicants pursued, pressed, and grilled him,[505] "Don't say that, Ariṭṭha! Don't misrepresent the Buddha, for misrepresentation of the Buddha is

503. For "vulture trapper" (*gaddhabādhi*), see SN 47.7:1.4 where *√bādh* clearly means to "trap" a monkey. The commentary's "killer" seems unjustified.

504. By this he denies the third of the four kinds of self-assurance (MN 12:25.1).

505. The stock phrase "pursued, pressed, and grilled" (*samanuyuñjanti samanugāhanti samanubhāsanti*) is sometimes rendered as if it meant to "question", but here there is no question. While these terms are commonly used in a context of questioning, they do not, in and of themselves, mean to question. Rather they mean to engage with a person and push for an answer or response.

not good. And the Buddha would not say that.[506] In many ways the Buddha has said that obstructive acts are obstructive, and that they really do obstruct the one who performs them.[507] The Buddha says that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks. With the similes of a skeleton …[508] a scrap of meat … a grass torch … a pit of glowing coals … a dream … borrowed goods … fruit on a tree … a butcher's knife and chopping board … swords and spears … a cobra's head, the Buddha says that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks."

But even though the mendicants pursued, pressed, and grilled him in this way, Ariṭṭha obstinately stuck to his misconception and insisted on it. 3.19

When they weren't able to dissuade Ariṭṭha from his view, the mendicants went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. 3.21

So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, "Please, monk, in my name tell the mendicant Ariṭṭha, formerly a vulture trapper, that the Teacher summons him." 5.1

"Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to Ariṭṭha and said to him, "Reverend Ariṭṭha, the Teacher summons you." 5.4

"Yes, reverend," Ariṭṭha replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, 5.6

506. Ariṭṭha makes two mistakes: misunderstanding sensual pleasures, and misrepresenting the Buddha.

507. Ariṭṭha did not specify what "obstructions" he was referring to, but this reply by the mendicants indicates that he meant indulgence in sensual pleasures, a conclusion supported by the commentary and several parallel texts. See too Thig 16.1:45.2 where sensual pleasures are said to be "obstructive". Other things said to be obstructive are "possessions, honor, and popularity" (eg. SN 17.2:1.2) and "false speech" (Kd 2:3.3.14). In the latter context, "obstructive" is explained as preventing the attainment of *jhāna* and higher spiritual realizations.

508. The first seven of these ten similes are taught with explanations at MN 54:15.1. The full ten are quoted at AN 5.76:11.2 and by the bhikkhunī Sumedhā at Thig 16.1:41.1. With slight variations the list recurs in various parallels and some similes are found individually.

5.7 "Is it really true, Ariṭṭha, that you have such a harmful misconception: 'As I understand the Buddha's teaching, the acts that he says are obstructions are not really obstructions for the one who performs them'?"

5.9 "Indeed, sir. As I understand the Buddha's teaching, the acts that he says are obstructions are not really obstructions for the one who performs them."[509]

6.1 "Futile man, who on earth have you ever known me to teach in that way? Haven't I said in many ways that obstructive acts are obstructive, and that they really do obstruct the one who performs them? I've said that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks. With the similes of a skeleton … a scrap of meat … a grass torch … a pit of glowing coals … a dream … borrowed goods … fruit on a tree … a butcher's knife and chopping board … swords and spears … a cobra's head, I've said that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks. But still you misrepresent me by your wrong grasp, harm yourself, and brim with much wickedness. This will be for your lasting harm and suffering."[510]

7.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, "What do you think, mendicants? Has this mendicant Ariṭṭha kindled even a spark of ardor in this teaching and training?"[511]

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509. "Absolutely" renders the particle *byā*, which is a rare intensive form of *iva*. It is employed in the same manner by Sāti at MN 38:3.7, who is equally confident and equally wrong.

510. The discourse up to this point is also found twice in the Vinaya. At Bu Pc 68 the Buddha makes it a confessable offense to persistently insist on a pernicious wrong view of this sort. At Kd 11:32.1.1 the Buddha asks the Saṅgha to perform an act of suspension (or "ejection", *ukkhepanīyakamma*) against Ariṭṭha. This portion is also found in the parallel Vinayas of the Dharmaguptaka, Kāśyapīya, Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka, Mūlasarvāstivāda, and Sarvāstivāda schools.

511. "Kindled even a spark of ardor" renders *usmīkatopi*, found in a similar context at MN 38:6.3. *Usmā* elsewhere appears as bodily warmth (MN 43:22.9, cf. Brahmasūtra 4.2.11), or the initial heating of fire-sticks when rubbed together (MN 140:19.13). But the most pertinent context is Ja 526:55.4, where a young

"How could that be, sir? No, sir." When this was said, Ariṭṭha sat 7.4
silent, dismayed, shoulders drooping, downcast, depressed, with
nothing to say.

Knowing this, the Buddha said, "Futile man, you will be known 7.7
by your own harmful misconception. I'll question the mendicants
about this."

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, "Mendicants, do you un- 8.1
derstand my teaching as Ariṭṭha does, when he misrepresents me by
his wrong grasp, harms himself, and brims with much wickedness?"

"No, sir. For in many ways the Buddha has told us that obstructive 8.3
acts are obstructive, and that they really do obstruct the one who
performs them. The Buddha has said that sensual pleasures give
little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all
the more full of drawbacks. With the similes of a skeleton … a
cobra's head, the Buddha has said that sensual pleasures give little
gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the
more full of drawbacks."

"Good, good, mendicants! It's good that you understand my 8.9
teaching like this. For in many ways I have said that obstructive acts
are obstructive …

I've said that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much 8.11
suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks. But
still this Ariṭṭha misrepresents me by his wrong grasp, harms himself,
and brims with much wickedness. This will be for his lasting harm
and suffering. Truly, mendicants, it is quite impossible to perform

ascetic will swiftly lose their *usmāgataṁ*—explained by the commentary as "the fire of an ascetic" (*samaṇatejaṁ*)—should they fall prey to sensual temptation. Thus, drawing on the traditional imagery of *tapas* as heat and fervor, it refers to the kindling of ascetic ardor. It never became a technical term in Pali, but in Sanskrit Abhidharma, *uṣmagata* refers to the conjunction of radiant *samādhi* with wisdom in the initial realization of the truths, which "burns up" the defilements (Abhidharmakoṣabhāṣya 6.17, Abhidharmasamuccaya 2.4).

sensual acts without sensual desires, sensual perceptions, and sensual thoughts.[512]

10.1 Take a futile person who memorizes the teaching—statements, mixed prose & verse, discussions, verses, inspired exclamations, legends, stories of past lives, amazing stories, and elaborations.[513] But they don't examine the meaning of those teachings with wisdom, and so don't come to an acceptance of them after deliberation.[514] They memorize the teaching for the sake of finding fault and winning debates.[515] They don't realize the goal for which they memorized them. Because they're wrongly grasped, those teachings lead to their lasting harm and suffering. Why is that? Because of their wrong grasp of the teachings.[516]

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512. According to the commentary, this refers to sexual intercourse. This sentence is not found in the Chinese parallel at MA 200.

513. These nine categories (*aṅga*) of the teaching were an early organization of the Dhamma before the system of *nikāyas* (or *āgamas*) was introduced at the First Council. While their exact specification is uncertain, in my view they are most likely as follows (with an example of each). *Sutta* is short doctrinal statements (SN 12.1). *Geyya* is mixed prose and verse ("prosimetra", SN 1.1). *Veyyākaraṇa* is questions and answers (MN 22). *Gāthā* is pure verse (Thig 1.1). *Udāna* is the inspired statements identified as such in the early texts (MN 75:19.1). *Itivuttaka* perhaps means "legends of the past" (DN 27) rather than the book of that name (Iti 1). *Jātaka* are the past life stories of the Buddha found in the early texts (MN 81). *Abbhutadhamma* are stories of the amazing qualities of the Buddha or disciples (MN 123). *Vedalla* are detailed analytical elaborations (MN 43). Once the system of *aṅgas* fell into disuse, some names were repurposed as specific books (Udāna, Itivuttaka, Jātaka). Northern traditions, including the parallels to this passage, usually extend the list to twelve with the addition of *nidāna* (background stories), *apadāna* (past lives of disciples), and *upadesa* (explanatory treatises).

514. "Considered acceptance" is *nijjhānaṁ khamanti*.

515. This theme is expanded in several discourses of the Aṭṭhakavagga, such as Snp 4.8.

516. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.10 says that those who worship ignorance enter darkness, but those who love knowledge (*veda*) enter even greater darkness. This is a recurring theme; for example, Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.1.2 tells how Uddālaka saw the vanity of his son Śvetaketu when he returned from his schooling.

Suppose there was a person in need of a cobra. And while wan- 10.10
dering in search of a cobra[517] they'd see a big cobra, and grasp it by the coil or the tail. But that cobra would twist back and bite them on the hand or the arm or other major or minor limb, resulting in death or deadly pain. Why is that? Because of their wrong grasp of the cobra.

In the same way, a futile person memorizes the teaching … and 10.17
those teachings lead to their lasting harm and suffering. Why is that? Because of their wrong grasp of the teachings.

Now, take a gentleman who memorizes the teaching—statements, 11.1
mixed prose & verse, discussions, verses, inspired exclamations, legends, stories of past lives, amazing stories, and elaborations. And once he's memorized them, he examines their meaning with wisdom, and comes to an acceptance of them after deliberation.[518] He doesn't memorize the teaching for the sake of finding fault and winning debates. He realizes the goal for which he memorized them. Because they're correctly grasped, those teachings lead to his lasting welfare and happiness. Why is that? Because of his correct grasp of the teachings.

Suppose there was a person in need of a cobra. And while wan- 11.10
dering in search of a cobra they'd see a big cobra, and hold it down carefully with a cleft stick. Only then would they correctly grasp it by the neck. And even though that cobra might wrap its coils around

517. The *alagadda* appears only here in early Pali. Sanskrit sources identify *alagarda* either as a water-snake—in which case, however, it is said to be non-venomous (Kṣīrasvāmin's Amarakoṣodghāṭana 1.7.5)—or as a kind of cobra (*darvīkara*, Suśrutasaṁhitā 5.4), defined as such by its hood. The *sappa* is also said to be hooded, so I translate both words as "cobra". | As to why the man was looking for a cobra, the commentary says he was looking to harvest the snake's venom. But Candrakīrti, drawing on the pan-Indic legend that certain serpents have a "snake-gem" (*nāgamaṇi*) in their heads, says that a serpent captured with the proper herbs and incantations brings great riches, but should these fail it will turn deadly (Mūlamadhyamakavṛtti-prasannapadā, L. de La Vallée Poussin's translation, page 497).

518. This is the "follower of teachings" (*dhammānusāri*), who is mentioned near the end of the sutta.

that person's hand or arm or some other major or minor limb, that wouldn't result in death or deadly pain. Why is that? Because of their correct grasp of the cobra.

11.17 In the same way, a gentleman memorizes the teaching … and those teachings lead to his lasting welfare and happiness. Why is that? Because of his correct grasp of the teachings.

12.1 So, mendicants, when you understand what I've said, you should remember it accordingly. But if I've said anything that you don't understand, you should ask me about it, or some competent mendicants.[519]

13.1 Mendicants, I will teach you a simile of the teaching as a raft: for crossing over, not for holding on.[520] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

13.3 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

13.5 "Suppose there was a person traveling along the road. They'd see a large deluge, whose near shore was dubious and perilous, while the far shore was a sanctuary free of peril. But there was no ferryboat or bridge for crossing over. They'd think, 'Why don't I gather grass, sticks, branches, and leaves and make a raft? Riding on the raft, and paddling with my hands and feet, I can safely reach the far shore.' And so they'd do exactly that. And when they'd crossed over to the far shore, they'd think, 'This raft has been very helpful to me. Riding on the raft, and paddling with my hands and feet, I have safely crossed over to the far shore. Why don't I hoist it on my head or pick it up on my shoulder and go wherever I want?'

13.17 What do you think, mendicants? Would that person be doing what should be done with that raft?"

13.19 "No, sir."

519. As in, for example, MN 18.

520. This is the second renowned simile introduced in this discourse. It is referenced by name in MN 38:14.1. Metaphors of flood and crossing rivers abound in the Buddha's teaching, and the specific idea of using a raft to cross over recurs at Ud 8.6:27.4 = DN 16:1.33.2 = Kd 6:28.12.7, Snp 1.2:4.1, SN 35.238:5.6.

"And what, mendicants, should that person do with the raft? 13.20
When they'd crossed over they should think, 'This raft has been very helpful to me. … Why don't I beach it on dry land or set it adrift on the water and go wherever I want?' That's what that person should do with the raft.

In the same way, I have taught a simile of the teaching as a raft: 13.26
for crossing over, not for holding on. By understanding the simile of the raft, you will even give up the teachings, let alone what is not the teachings.[521]

Mendicants, there are these six grounds for views.[522] What six? 15.1
Take an unlearned ordinary person who has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons. They regard form as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self.'[523] They also regard feeling … perception … choices … whatever is seen, heard, thought, known, attained, sought, and explored by the mind as: 'This is mine, I am this, this

521. *Dhammā* in the plural refers back to "those teachings" (*tesaṁ dhammānaṁ*) of the nine categories. Accordingly, when this simile is invoked at MN 38:14.1, it is in reference to views. The pair *dhamma* and *adhamma* usually means "the teaching" and "what is not the teaching" (eg. AN 2.104). Just as the positive form, however, means more than just "teaching", but rather a teaching of natural and moral truth, the negative form implies there is something unnatural, in conflict with the way the world is.

522. "Grounds for views" (*diṭṭhiṭṭhānāni*) are the experiences or reasoning from which views are derived. The Buddha is explaining how Ariṭṭha fell into his wrong view. One of the purposes of this analysis is to show how, while divergent views might seem insightful, innovative, or courageous, they all fall back on the same basic fallacies. | For the "six" grounds, see SN 24.1:5.1.

523. The misguided person assumes that one or other of the aggregates is their self. In modern times, the teaching of the aggregates is often presented as a reductive argument: "What you take to be your self is in fact just the aggregates". But the Buddha's point is, rather: "The aggregates that you take to be your self do not have the properties of a self," namely permanence, etc.

is my self.'[524] And as for this ground for views: 'The cosmos and the self are one and the same. After death I will be that, permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, and will last forever and ever.'[525] They regard this also as: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self.'

16.1 But a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They regard form like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' They also regard feeling … perception … choices … whatever is seen, heard, thought, known, attained, sought, and explored by the mind like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' And the same for this ground for views: 'The cosmos and the self are one and the same. After death I will be that, permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, and will last forever and ever.' They also regard like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'

17.1 Seeing in this way they're not anxious about what doesn't exist."[526]

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524. Standing in place of the fifth aggregate, "consciousness", this includes all kinds of knowledge or spiritual wisdom, especially that gained through mysticism or meditation.

525. This is a both view and a ground for views. Such views, lacking empirical basis, have something dissatisfying about them, so adherent is driven to develop more and more complex metaphysical abstractions. At DN 1:1.30.1, this is treated as an eternalist view that arises from the grounds of either recollection of past lives or logic. | The repeated demonstrative pronouns in the Pali *so loko so attā* (literally, "This is the cosmos, this is the self") affirm an emphatic and absolute identity: "The cosmos and the self are one and the same". This phrase has a lexical parallel at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22, which argues for the renunciate life: "What can descendants do for those for whom the self and the cosmos are one and the same?" (*ayamātmāyaṁ loka*). Similarly, BU 1.2.7 says of the sacrificial fire as the sun, "these worlds are its self" (*tasyeme lokā ātmānaḥ*). See also the last words of a father to his son at BU 1.5.17: "You are divinity, you are the sacrifice, you are the cosmos" (*tvaṁ brahma tvaṁ yajñas tvaṁ loka*). | In this passage the terms *attā* and *loko* are reversed, presumably by textual error. It does not affect the meaning.

526. "What does not exist" (*asati*) is the self. | To be "anxious" (*paritassati*) is to be caught between desire and fear. It seems to be a word of specifically Buddhist

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, "Sir, 18.1
can there be anxiety about what doesn't exist externally?"[527]

"There can, mendicant," said the Buddha. "It's when someone 18.3
thinks, 'Oh, it once was mine but is mine no more. Oh, it could be mine but I do not get it.' They sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. That's how there is anxiety about what doesn't exist externally."

"But can there be no anxiety about what doesn't exist externally?" 19.1

"There can, mendicant," said the Buddha. "It's when someone 19.2
doesn't think, 'Oh, it once was mine but is mine no more. Oh, it could be mine but I do not get it.' They don't sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. That's how there is no anxiety about what doesn't exist externally."

"But can there be anxiety about what doesn't exist internally?" 20.1

"There can, mendicant," said the Buddha. "It's when someone has 20.2
such a view: 'The cosmos and the self are one and the same. After death I will be that, permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, and will last forever and ever.' They hear the Realized One or their disciple teaching Dhamma for the uprooting of all grounds, fixations, obsessions, insistences, and underlying tendencies regarding views; for the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment.[528] They think, 'Whoa, I'm going to be annihilated and destroyed! I won't even exist any more!'[529] They sorrow and wail and lament, beating

usage, leaning equally on the roots √*tras* (to tremble in fear) and √*tṛṣ* (to thirst for or crave).

527. By adding "externally" the focus is shifted from the self to "what belongs to the self", namely possessions. However, the Chinese parallel at MA 200 apparently takes it in reference to the anxiety of an eternalist who hears the Buddha teaching "externally".

528. The structure of this long compound is revealed at AN 10.96:14.1, which shows that "views" is not one item on the list, but applies to each item.

529. They can only see the extremes: if not eternalism it must be annihilationism.

their breast and falling into confusion. That's how there is anxiety about what doesn't exist internally."

21.1 "But can there be no anxiety about what doesn't exist internally?"

21.2 "There can," said the Buddha. "It's when someone doesn't have such a view: 'The cosmos and the self are one and the same. After death I will be that, permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, and will last forever and ever.' They hear the Realized One or their disciple teaching Dhamma for the uprooting of all grounds, fixations, obsessions, insistences, and underlying tendencies regarding views; for the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment. They don't think, 'Whoa, I'm going to be annihilated and destroyed! I won't even exist any more!' They don't sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. That's how there is no anxiety about what doesn't exist internally.

22.1 Mendicants, it would make sense to be possessive about something that's permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, and will last forever and ever. But do you see any such possession?"

22.3 "No, sir."

22.4 "Good, mendicants! I also can't see any such possession.

23.1 It would make sense to grasp at a theory of self that didn't give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. But do you see any such theory of self?"

23.3 "No, sir."

23.4 "Good, mendicants! I also can't see any such theory of self.

24.1 It would make sense to rely on a view that didn't give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. But do you see any such view to rely on?"

24.3 "No, sir."

24.4 "Good, mendicants! I also can't see any such view to rely on.

25.1 Mendicants, were a self to exist, would there be the thought, 'Belonging to my self'?"

25.2 "Yes, sir."

"Were what belongs to a self to exist, would there be the thought, 'My self'?" 25.3

"Yes, sir." 25.4

"But since a self and what belongs to a self are not found as a genuine fact, is not the following a totally foolish teaching:[530] 'The cosmos and the self are one and the same. After death I will be that, permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, and will last forever and ever'?" 25.5

"How could it not, sir? It's a totally foolish teaching." 25.8

"What do you think, mendicants?[531] Is form permanent or impermanent?" 26.1

"Impermanent, sir." 26.3

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?" 26.4

"Suffering, sir." 26.5

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 26.6

"No, sir." 26.8

"What do you think, mendicants? Is feeling … perception … choices … consciousness permanent or impermanent?" 26.9

"Impermanent, sir." 26.14

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?" 26.15

"Suffering, sir." 26.16

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 26.17

"No, sir." 26.19

"So, mendicants, you should truly see any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' You should truly 27.1

530. "Not found as a genuine fact" renders *saccato thetato anupalabbhamāne*.

531. The following question and answer section is quoted verbatim from the Anattalakkhaṇasutta (SN 22.59:6.1). It appears twice elsewhere in the Majjhima (MN 35:20.4, MN 109:15.1), in the Vinaya (Kd 1:6.42.1), and about fifty times in the Saṁyutta.

see any kind of feeling … perception … choices … consciousness at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'

28.1 Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

29.2 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

30.1 Such a mendicant is one who is called 'one who has lifted the cross-bar', 'one who has filled in the moat', 'one who has pulled up the pillar', 'one who is unimpeded', and also 'a noble one with banner lowered and burden dropped, detached'.[532]

31.1 And how has a mendicant raised the cross-bar?[533] It's when a mendicant has given up ignorance, cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it, so it's unable to arise in the future. That's how a mendicant has lifted the cross-bar.

32.1 And how has a mendicant filled in the moat?[534] It's when a mendicant has given up transmigrating through births in future lives, cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it, so it's unable to arise in the future. That's how a mendicant has filled in the moat.

532. These similes recur at AN 5.71 and AN 5.72. They reflect ideas of entrapment and freedom.

533. Ignorance is a "hindrance" (*nīvaraṇa*), an image that ultimately draws on the Vedic myth of Vṛtra, a giant "constrictor" who trapped the waters (and sometimes cattle and sun) in darkness until it was slain by Indra and the waters released. Removing the bar permits escape from entrapment. At Chāndogya Upaniṣad 2.24.6, it is said that a devoted sacrificer may, at the time of death, pray that the cross-bar blocking entry to the next world be removed.

534. An elephant may be trapped by a moat Cariyapiṭaka 11:3.1, so when it is filled in it may roam free.

And how has a mendicant pulled up the pillar?[535] It's when a mendicant has given up craving, cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it, so it's unable to arise in the future. That's how a mendicant has pulled up the pillar. 33.1

And how is a mendicant unimpeded?[536] It's when a mendicant has given up the five lower fetters, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them, so they're unable to arise in the future. That's how a mendicant is unimpeded. 34.1

And how is a mendicant a noble one with with banner lowered and burden dropped, detached?[537] It's when a mendicant has given up the conceit 'I am', cut it off at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it, so it's unable to arise in the future. That's how a mendicant is a noble one with banner lowered and burden dropped, detached. 35.1

When a mendicant's mind was freed like this, the gods together with Indra, the Divinity, and the Progenitor, search as they may, will not discover:[538] 'This is the basis of that realized one's conscious- 36.1

535. Likewise, an elephant may be tethered to a pillar (MN 125:12.11, Thag 19.1:51.2, Cariyapiṭaka 11:3.2). The term for "pillar" here (*esikā*) also serves as a pun for "search" (*esanā*). Two of the three "searches" (sensual pleasures and continued existence, SN 45.161) overlap with two of the three "cravings".

536. Giving up the five lower "fetters" (thus becoming a non-returner) makes you "unbarred" (*niraggaḷa*). This is also the name of a Vedic sacrifice (SN 3.9:4.3), where it is probably a name for the horse sacrifice, during which the horse is set free to roam for a year.

537. A "banner" is held aloft as a sign of identity. | At SN 22.22, the "burden" is said to be the five aggregates, and the burden is put down with the end of craving.

538. This expression conveys a deep sense of wonder when faced with a state of meditative consciousness so profound that its "basis" is unknown (AN 11.9:3.15, SN 22.79:14.26). The "basis" is that on which consciousness depends, which fuels it and keeps it going. All such dependencies have been uprooted. | For the phrase *saindā devā sabrahmakā sapajāpatikā* compare *sa indraḥ sa prajāpatis tad brahma* (Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa 8.4.15) or *sa indralokam sa prajāpatilokam sa brahmalokam* (Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka 3.3).

ness.'[539] Why is that? Because even in this very life that realized one is not found, I say.[540]

37.1 Though I state and assert this, certain ascetics and brahmins misrepresent me with the incorrect, hollow, false, untruthful claim: 'The ascetic Gotama is an exterminator. He advocates the annihilation, eradication, and nonexistence of an existing being.'[541] They misrepresent me as what I am not, and saying what I do not say. In the past, as today, what I describe is suffering and the cessation of suffering.[542] This being so, if others abuse, attack, harass, and trouble the Realized One, he doesn't get resentful, bitter, and emotionally exasperated.

38.1 Or if others honor, respect, revere, or venerate him, he doesn't get thrilled, elated, and emotionally excited.[543] If they praise him, he just thinks, 'They do such things for me regarding what in the past was completely understood.'[544]

39.1 So, mendicants, if others abuse, attack, harass, and trouble you, don't make yourselves resentful, bitter, and emotionally exasperated. Or if others honor, respect, revere, or venerate you, don't make yourselves thrilled, elated, and emotionally excited. If they praise you,

539. "Realized one" (*tahāgata*) usually refers to the Buddha, but sometimes, as here, it applies to any arahant.

540. Here "not found" renders *ananuvijja*, whereas at MN 22:25.5 above it rendered *anupalabbhamāna*. Both terms refer to the self that is not discovered or discoverable.

541. This is the annihilationist view, exemplified by Ajita of the hair blanket (DN 2:22.1), and referred to above at MN 22:20.7.

542. The particle *c'eva* here has its normal role of slight emphasis in conjunctions, and so this phrase does not mean, "I *only* teach suffering and the end of suffering". The point, rather, is that when he speaks of cessation, it is the cessation of suffering, not the cessation of an "existing being". This saying is also at SN 22.86:13.2 and SN 44.2:17.13.

543. The Buddha teaches a similar equanimity at DN 1:1.5.1.

544. Read *tattha me* "regarding that for me" rather than commentary's *tattha (i)me* "regarding that for these [aggregates]". The latter reading is supported by BJT's *tatrime*, but I think this is probably a backreading from the commentary. In the parallel phrase for the monks below, we would expect *tattha no*, which is in fact attested in the Thai and PTS editions, so I translate "us" accordingly.

just think, 'They do such things for us regarding what in the past was completely understood.'[545]

So, mendicants, give up what isn't yours.[546] Giving it up will be 40.1
for your lasting welfare and happiness.

And what isn't yours? Form isn't yours: give it up. Giving it up 41.1
will be for your lasting welfare and happiness.

Feeling … perception … choices … consciousness isn't yours: 41.4
give it up. Giving it up will be for your lasting welfare and happiness.

What do you think, mendicants? Suppose a person was to carry 41.12
off the grass, sticks, branches, and leaves in this Jeta's Grove, or burn them, or do what they want with them. Would you think, 'This person is carrying us off, burning us, or doing what they want with us'?"

"No, sir. Why is that? Because to us that's neither self nor belong- 41.16
ing to self."

"In the same way, mendicants, give up what isn't yours. Giving 41.19
it up will be for your lasting welfare and happiness. And what isn't yours? Form … feeling … perception … choices … consciousness isn't yours: give it up. Giving it up will be for your lasting welfare and happiness.

The teaching well-explained thus by me is clarified, revealed, illu- 42.1
minated, and stripped of patchwork.[547] In this teaching thus well-

545. This seems out of place here, for "completely understood" refers to arahantship, yet as a general teaching this should include everyone. In the Chinese parallel at MA 200, after being abused, one reflects that it is due to past deeds, and after being praised, one reflects that it is due to present knowledge and elimination of defilements. Anālayo (*Comparative Study*, pp. 56–7) suggests that the Pali phrase *pubbe pariññātaṁ* might be a conflation of these two ideas due to a textual confusion which also left the Pali without a reflection on being abused. While this must remain conjectural, it is a neat explanation for the several doctrinal and textual problems of this passage.

546. This passage is found in several other suttas such as SN 22.33, and applied to the six senses at SN 35.101, etc.

547. Also at SN 12.22:2.1. | "Stripped of patchwork" (*chinnapilotika*) because, while the Dhamma has many and varied aspects, they all form a unified whole, not just scraps sewn together.

explained, for those mendicants who are perfected, who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment, there is no cycle of rebirths to be found. …[548]

43.1 In this teaching thus well-explained, those mendicants who have given up the five lower fetters are all reborn spontaneously. They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world. …[549]

44.1 In this teaching thus well-explained, those mendicants who, having given up three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion, are all once-returners. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. …

45.1 In this teaching thus well-explained, those mendicants who have ended three fetters are all stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. …

46.1 In this teaching thus well-explained, those mendicants who are followers of teachings or followers by faith are all are assured, destined for awakening.[550]

47.1 The teaching well-explained thus by me is clarified, revealed, illuminated, and stripped of patchwork. In this teaching thus well-explained, those who have a degree of faith and love for me are all bound for heaven."[551]

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548. For the phrase "no cycle of rebirths to be found" (*vaṭṭaṁ tesaṁ natthi paññāpanāya*), compare DN 15:22.6.

549. The qualifier "all of them" (*sabbe te*) here and below is not found in similar passages.

550. A "follower of teachings" is someone who accepts the teachings after reflecting on them with wisdom, while a "follower by faith" accepts the teachings due to their confidence in the teacher. They are both considered to be "practicing to realize the fruit of stream-entry" (*sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno*), and, with the maturing of their faculties (SN 48.18:1.5), will assuredly attain stream-entry in this life (SN 25.1).

551. *Saddhāmatta* ("a degree of faith") is to be distinguished from *saddhāmattaka* ("mere faith"). The former is sufficient for one to progress in the path (MN 70:21.2), but with the latter one just gets by (MN 65:28.7).

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 47.3

MN 23

The Termite Mound

Vammikasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Now at that time Venerable Kassapa the Prince was staying in the Dark Forest.[552]

1.4 Then, late at night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire Dark Forest, went up to Kassapa the Prince, stood to one side, and said:[553]

552. "Kassapa the Prince" (Kumārakassapa) was ordained at twenty (Kd 1:75.1.1). His verses are collected in the Theragāthā (Thag 2.41). His love of elaborate similes and playful similes is shown in the Pāyāsisutta (DN 23), and echoed here in the teachings given to him. He was declared the foremost of those with brilliant speech (AN 1.217). | The Dark Forest (*andhavana*) was a thick grove south of Sāvatthī often visited by monks and nuns for meditation. However, this is the only discourse where someone is said to be staying there. The commentary says the name means "Blind Man's Forest", giving an improbable origin story. But compare Sanskrit *andhakūpa*, "dark well" or "blind well", a well covered over with a lid or overgrowth; also the name of a hell.We might translate "Mirkwood".

553. The deity offers a series of obscure riddles full of secret meaning, almost like a dream sequence. The deliberate use of obscurity is a hallmark of Brahmanical literature, for "the gods love hidden things" (*parokṣakāmā hi devāḥ*, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.6.2.2 and throughout). The sequence is set out as a quest for buried treasure. This mytheme is implicit in the Vedic myth of Indra freeing the cattle and the sun from the Vala cave, an act that liberates the truth. Sometimes it is made explicit, as when Indra is said to bring up the treasures buried deep (Rig Veda 8.66.4). The Aśvins are also associated with unearthing buried gems (Rig Veda 1.117.5) or gold (Rig Veda 1.117.12), imagery ultimately based in mining for the wealth of minerals underground.

"Monk, monk! This termite mound fumes by night and flames by day.[554] The brahmin said, 'Dig, clever one, having picked up the sword!'[555] 2.1

Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a sticking point:[556] 'A sticking point, sir!' The brahmin said, 'Throw out the sticking point! Dig, clever one, having picked up the sword!' 2.4

Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a bullfrog:[557] 'A bullfrog, sir!' The brahmin said, 'Throw out the bullfrog! Dig, clever one, having picked up the sword!' 2.9

554. Worship of termite mounds and the deadly snakes they harbor is still common in India today and is probably pre-Vedic. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa acknowledges a ritual significance to the anthill as a creative manifestation of the earth upon which offerings may be laid and whose ants were divine (2.6.2.17, 6.3.3.5, 14.1.2.10). In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.7, Yājñavalkya compares a dead body bereft of soul to the lifeless slough of a snake on an anthill. | While anthills don't "fume" and "flame", large termite mounds leverage the temperature differential of day and night to create convection flows that regulate temperature and flush carbon dioxide.

555. The sword is taken up, a symbol whose roots lie in the discovery of metal smelting and the power this grants to the one who wields the sword. But the phrase has a double meaning, for *sattha* means both "sword" and "sacred treatise", while *abhikkhaṇa* means both "dig" (*abhi* + √*khaṇ*) and "see" (*abhi* + √*ikkh*; this sense not in Pali, but cf. Vedic *abhikhyā*). Thus, having entered the Dark Wood, the "clever one" (*sumedha*) is urged to use the wisdom of scripture in order to see. This sense is reinforced by the fact that it is the "brahmin" who says this.

556. *Laṅgi* occurs only here, and is glossed by the commentary with *paligha* ("obstacle"). Such an obscure term must have been selected for a play on words. Sanskrit *lagna* has the primary sense "to stick, adhere", while also having a sense of the beginning or coming into contact with something. In modern languages such as Hindi, Marathi, or Kannada it has taken on the sense of "marriage", and perhaps here we see an anticipation of this. If we are on the right track, the *laṅgi* would be the initial challenge for a mendicant seeker, namely their attachment to family. This would explain why it is the first obstacle.

557. The male Indian bullfrog possesses a pair of prominent dark-blue vocal sacs that puff up and down as it croaks, hence the Pali name *uddhumāyika* ("puffer"). | Rig Veda 7.10 is addressed to frogs, who lie fallow in the dry but spring to life in the rains, filling the countryside with their amorous croaks, like the brahmin priests reciting their verses and passing them down to students. Vedic scholasticism is, it would seem, the second obstacle to be surmounted.

2.14 Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a forked path:[558] 'A forked path, sir!' The brahmin said, 'Throw out the forked path! Dig, clever one, having picked up the sword!'

2.19 Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a filter of ash:[559] 'A filter of ash, sir!' The brahmin said, 'Throw out the filter of ash! Dig, clever one, having picked up the sword!'

2.24 Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a tortoise:[560] 'A tortoise, sir!' The brahmin said, 'Throw out the tortoise! Dig, clever one, having taken up the sword!'

2.29 Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a butcher's knife and chopping board:[561] 'A butcher's knife and chopping board,

558. Rig Veda 10.88.15 speaks of the two paths of gods and mortals (*devānām uta martyānām*), later formalized as the path of the forefathers (*pitṛyāna*) leading to rebirth and that of the gods (*devayāna*) leading to liberation. This corresponds to the twofold choice of the young Siddhattha: to stay at home or to go forth. It might also be the paths open to the Bodhisatta under his Brahmanical teachers: to seek eternal existence or an escape from rebirth.

559. *Caṅgavāra* is a filter through which, according to Ja 525:29.2, water drips away like the brief days of our lives. The commentaries say that such alkaline (*khāra*) filters were used by laundrymen. This refers to the traditional method of creating lye (a soap precursor) for washing, where a barrel is filled with wood ash through which water is passed. No matter how many pots of water are poured in, the commentary adds, it keeps dripping.

560. As described in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 7.5.1, a tortoise was placed on the altar to represent the primordial powers of creation: the sap of life, the sun, the breath, and the act of creation itself. Its lower and upper shells and its body in-between correspond to the three worlds: the earth, the heavens, and the midspace. It therefore connotes the ancient, endless movement of life.

561. In this brutal simile, *asi* is a knife and *sūna* is a place where animals are slaughtered, either a slaughterhouse or, as here, an implement for the slaughter. Mnd 1:23.18 says this phrase has the meaning of "chopping" (*adhikuṭṭanaṭṭhena*). Compare with *asiṁ sūnāṁ* in the violent, sexually graphic hymn at Rig Veda 10.86.18c. Vedic *sūna* was a (sewn) "basket" for carrying the flesh of a slaughtered beast (see also Rig Veda 1.161.10), a sense that developed to "chopping block" and "slaughterhouse". Jamison and Brereton read the Vedic passage as an analogy for the horse sacrifice, at the climax of which the queen has vulgar and very public sex with the dead horse. This cements in the most explicit way possible the oneness of sexual potency with the cycle of life and death.

sir!' The brahmin said, 'Throw out the butcher's knife and chopping board! Dig, clever one, having picked up the sword!'

Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a scrap of 2.34
meat:[562] 'A scrap of meat, sir!' The brahmin said, 'Throw out the scrap of meat! Dig, clever one, having picked up the sword!'

Picking up the sword and digging, the clever one saw a king co- 2.39
bra:[563] 'A king cobra, sir!' The brahmin said, 'Leave the king cobra! Do not disturb the cobra! Worship the cobra!'

Mendicant, go to the Buddha and ask him about this riddle. You 2.43
should remember it in line with his answer. I don't see anyone in this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who could provide a satisfying answer to this riddle except the Realized One or his disciple or someone who has heard it from them."[564]

That is what that deity said before vanishing right there. 2.45

Then, when the night had passed, Kassapa the Prince went to 3.1
the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. Then he asked:

"Sir, what is the termite mound? What is the fuming by night and 3.8
flaming by day? Who is the brahmin, and who the clever one? What are the sword, the digging, the sticking point, the bullfrog, the forked path, the filter of ash, the tortoise, the butcher's knife and chopping board, and the scrap of meat? And what is the king cobra?"

"Mendicant, 'termite mound' is a term for this body made up of 4.1
the four principal states, produced by mother and father, built up

562. Another simile shared with MN 22:3.10. A *maṁsapesi* is small enough to be grabbed by a crow (MN 54:16.1), or to quickly disintegrate on a stove (AN 7.74:7.1), thus is a "scrap of meat" rather than a substantial piece. It emphasizes the meanness and poverty of mortal life, our desires and attachments bound up with this transient "scrap of meat" we call a body.

563. *Nāga* here means both a cobra—the literal snake that lives underneath an anthill—and the serpent of mysterious power that is analogous to an arahant, the "spiritual giant".

564. This is, of course, a direct slight on the brahmins who prided themselves on finding explanations for the most obscure and puzzling passages.

from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away and erosion, to breaking up and destruction.[565]

4.2 Thinking and considering all night about what you did during the day—[566] this is the fuming at night. The work you apply yourself to during the day by body, speech, and mind after thinking about it all night—this is the flaming by day.

4.6 'Brahmin' is a term for the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. 'Clever one' is a term for the trainee mendicant.

4.8 'Sword' is a term for noble wisdom. 'Digging' is a term for rousing energy.

4.10 'Sticking point' is a term for ignorance. 'Throw out the sticking point' means 'give up ignorance, dig, clever one, having picked up the sword.'

4.13 'Bullfrog' is a term for anger and distress.[567] 'Throw out the bullfrog' means 'give up anger and distress' …

4.16 'A forked path' is a term for doubt. 'Throw out the forked path' means 'give up doubt' …

4.19 'A filter of ash' is a term for the five hindrances, that is:[568] the hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. 'Throw out the filter of ash' means 'give up the five hindrances' …

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565. Just as a termite mound is created by activity driven by eating and excreting, so this body is created from within by food. Also, the body, like a termite mound, is home to countless small creatures.

566. Apparently stressing oneself at night over work is not a modern phenomenon.

567. The bullfrog (*uddhumāyika*) evokes those renunciates who become puffed up (*uddhata*) and argumentative over doctrines (eg. Thag 17.1:11.1).

568. The commentary says that, just as water continually drips through such a filter, the mind of someone beset by the five hindrances cannot stay fixed internally on what is wholesome. This contrasts with the mind in absorption, which is illustrated with similes of water that emphasize stillness and containment (DN 2:76.1, etc.).

'Tortoise' is a term for the five grasping aggregates, that is:[569] 4.23
form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. 'Throw out the tortoise' means 'give up the five grasping aggregates' …

'Butcher's knife and chopping board' is a term for the five kinds of 4.27
sensual stimulation.[570] Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. 'Throw out the butcher's knife and chopping board' means 'give up the five kinds of sensual stimulation' …

'Scrap of meat' is a term for greed and relishing. 'Throw out the 4.35
scrap of meat' means 'give up greed and relishing' …

'King cobra' is a term for a mendicant who has ended the defile- 4.38
ments. This is the meaning of: 'Leave the king cobra! Do not disturb the cobra! Worship the cobra!'"

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Kassapa the 4.40
Prince approved what the Buddha said.

569. The five aggregates are the tortoise's five limbs, with consciousness as the head. The aggregates represent the changing world of conditions driven by karma, just as the tortoise is the creative force and life of the three worlds. In *samādhi*, the senses are withdrawn like a tortoise's limbs (SN 35.240:1.4).

570. The senses work because the sense stimulus smashes into the sense organ, like a knife on a chopping block. We seek pleasurable sensations to mask the inherently turbulent nature of sense experience.

MN 24

Chariots at the Ready

Rathavinītasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.[571]

2.1 Then several mendicants who had completed the rainy season residence in their native land went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to them:[572]

2.2 "In your native land, mendicants, which of the native mendicants is esteemed in this way: 'Personally having few wishes, they speak to the mendicants on having few wishes. Personally having contentment, seclusion, aloofness, energy, ethics, immersion, wisdom, freedom, and the knowledge and vision of freedom, they speak to the mendicants on all these things. They're an adviser and counselor, one who educates, encourages, fires up, and inspires their spiritual companions.'"

2.4 "Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇī, sir, is esteemed in this way in our native land."[573]

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571. The Bamboo Grove was a major monastery near Rājagaha. According to Kd 1:22.16.1, it was offered by King Bimbisāra as the very first monastery dedicated to the Saṅgha.

572. The commentary says *jātibhūmi* means the Buddha's native land, but the word occurs at AN 6.54, Pvr 14:2.1, Ja 537:26.1, and Ja 546:43.1, where it always means "one's native land". Given that Puṇṇa, the most famous teacher of their land, was unknown by Sāriputta, it seems likely that it was somewhat remote. One of the Chinese parallels (MA 9) describes him as of light skin and prominent nose, a description that might befit someone from the north-west of India.

573. Although said to be the foremost Dhamma speaker (AN 1.196:1.1, see SN 14.15:2.14), few of his teachings are recorded. At SN 22.83, Ānanda attributes his initial breakthrough to Puṇṇa, while a single verse is attributed to him at Thag

Now at that time Venerable Sāriputta was sitting not far from the Buddha. Then he thought: 3.1

"Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇī is fortunate, so very fortunate, in that his sensible spiritual companions praise him point by point in the presence of the Teacher, and that the Teacher seconds that appreciation. Hopefully, some time or other I'll get to meet Venerable Puṇṇa, and we can have a discussion." 3.3

When the Buddha had stayed in Rājagaha as long as he pleased, he set out for Sāvatthī. Traveling stage by stage, he arrived at Sāvatthī, where he stayed in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. Puṇṇa heard that the Buddha had arrived at Sāvatthī. 4.1

Then he set his lodgings in order and, taking his bowl and robe, set out for Sāvatthī. Eventually he came to Sāvatthī and Jeta's Grove. He went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk. Then, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, Puṇṇa rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right. Then he went to the Dark Forest for the day's meditation. 5.1

Then a certain mendicant went up to Venerable Sāriputta, and said to him, "Reverend Sāriputta, the mendicant named Puṇṇa, of whom you have often spoken so highly, after being inspired by a talk of the Buddha's, left for the Dark Forest for the day's meditation." 6.1

Sāriputta quickly grabbed his sitting cloth and followed behind Puṇṇa, keeping sight of his head.[574] Puṇṇa plunged deep into the Dark Forest and sat at the root of a tree for the day's meditation. And Sāriputta did likewise. 7.1

1.4. | Puṇṇa was evidently from the same maternal clan as Aṅgulimāla (MN 86:12.12). This name does not seem to occur in Sanskrit texts, but Mahāvastu 3.377 spells it as Maitrāyaṇī, a name shared with the Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā, the oldest ritual text of the Black Yajurveda.

574. While similar actions are found elsewhere, they are not said to be done "quickly" (*taramānarūpo*). Sāriputta's urgency here reinforces the impression that Puṇṇa lived somewhere distant and visited the central regions only occasionally.

8.1 Then in the late afternoon, Sāriputta came out of retreat, went to Puṇṇa, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Puṇṇa:[575]

9.1 "Reverend, is our spiritual life lived under the Buddha?"[576]

9.2 "Yes, reverend."

9.3 "Is the spiritual life lived under the Buddha for the sake of purification of ethics?"[577]

9.4 "Certainly not."

9.5 "Well, is the spiritual life lived under the Buddha for the sake of purification of mind?"[578]

9.6 "Certainly not."

9.7 "Is the spiritual life lived under the Buddha for the sake of purification of view?"[579]

9.8 "Certainly not."

9.9 "Well, is the spiritual life lived under the Buddha for the sake of purification by traversing doubt?"[580]

9.10 "Certainly not."

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575. The following seven "purifications" became one of the primary textual sources for the commentarial system of "insight knowledges" (*vipassanañāṇa*) that became central to later Theravada meditation. It would be a mistake, however, to interpret this sutta in light of the insight knowledges, which were developed over a thousand years.

576. Puṇṇa was a stranger, so Sāriputta begins by establishing common ground before asking a series of questions to which he expects a negative answer.

577. The questions are framed in an unusual paired syntax: *kiṁ nu kho, āvuso* alternates with *kiṁ panāvuso*.

578. "Purification of mind" is the development of absorption to abandon the hindrances (AN 4.194:4.1).

579. "Purified view" is the right view of the stream-enterer who has seen the four noble truths (AN 4.194:5.1) and rejected the fetter of views of a self (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*). | Likewise, the five items from here down to "knowledge and vision" all refer to stream-entry. This sutta departs from other early presentations in presenting these as a sequence, whereas normally they are different facets of the experience of stream-entry.

580. Doubt is one of the fetters overcome by the stream-enterer (eg. MN 64:6.4), since they have the confidence born of direct experience of the four

"Is the spiritual life lived under the Buddha for the sake of purification of knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path?"[581] 9.11

"Certainly not." 9.12

"Well, is the spiritual life lived under the Buddha for the sake of purification of knowledge and vision of the practice?"[582] 9.13

"Certainly not." 9.14

"Is the spiritual life lived under the Buddha for the sake of purification of knowledge and vision?"[583] 9.15

"Certainly not." 9.16

"When asked each of these questions, you answered, 'Certainly not.' Then what exactly is the goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha?" 10.1

"The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping."[584] 10.9

"Reverend, is purification of ethics complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping?" 11.1

"Certainly not, reverend." 11.2

"Is purification of mind … 11.3

purification of view … 11.5

purification by traversing doubt … 11.7

purification of knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path … 11.9

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noble truths. | At Ud 5.7 "purification by traversing doubt" is said to be achieved by the practice of *jhāna*.

581. From their own experience, a stream-enterer knows what leads to the goal and what does not, hence they give up the fetter of "misapprehension of precepts and observances". | For *maggāmagga*, see the debate between brahmin students at DN 13:3.1, which shows that this term is not unique to Buddhism. There is, however, no evidence that the sequence of purifications is found outside of Buddhism.

582. A stream-enterer not only understands what the correct path is, they have actually practiced it (SN 55.5:3.3).

583. This is the vision of the four noble truths at stream-entry (SN 25.1:2.4).

584. In other words, for arahantship not stream-entry.

11.11 purification of knowledge and vision of the practice …

11.13 Is purification of knowledge and vision complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping?"

11.14 "Certainly not."

11.15 "Then is complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping something apart from these things?"

11.16 "Certainly not."

12.1 "When asked each of these questions, you answered, 'Certainly not.' How then should we see the meaning of this statement?"

13.1 "If the Buddha had asserted purification of ethics to be complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping, he would have asserted that which grasps fuel to be complete extinguishment without grasping fuel.[585] If the Buddha had asserted purification of mind … purification of view … purification by traversing doubt … purification of knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path … purification of knowledge and vision of the practice … If the Buddha had asserted purification of knowledge and vision to be complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping, he would have asserted that which grasps fuel to be complete extinguishment without grasping fuel. But if complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping was something apart from these things, an ordinary person would become extinguished.[586] For an ordinary person lacks these things.

14.1 Well then, reverend, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said.

14.3 Suppose that, while staying in Sāvatthī, King Pasenadi of Kosala had some urgent business come up in Sāketa. Now, between Sāvatthī and Sāketa seven chariots were stationed at the ready for him.[587]

585. Compare the simile of the raft at MN 22:13.1.

586. That is to say, the goal is not the same as the path, but it cannot be attained without the path.

587. *Rathavinīta*, which lends the sutta its title, is explained by the commentary as "seven chariots with horses at the ready", where *vinīta* has its usual sense of "trained, readied". While the series of chariots forms a relay, the word *vinīta* does not mean "relay". The term and the simile are unique to this sutta.

Then Pasenadi, exiting Sāvatthī, mounted the first chariot at the ready by the gate of the royal compound. The first chariot at the ready would bring him to the second, where he'd dismount and mount the second chariot. The second chariot at the ready would bring him to the third … The third chariot at the ready would bring him to the fourth … The fourth chariot at the ready would bring him to the fifth … The fifth chariot at the ready would bring him to the sixth … The sixth chariot at the ready would bring him to the seventh, where he'd dismount and mount the seventh chariot. The seventh chariot at the ready would bring him to the gate of the royal compound of Sāketa.[588] And when he was at the gate, friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would ask him: 'Great king, did you come to Sāketa from Sāvatthī by this chariot at the ready?' If asked this, how should King Pasenadi rightly reply?"

"The king should reply: 'Well, while staying in Sāvatthī, I had 14.15
some urgent business come up in Sāketa. Now, between Sāvatthī and Sāketa seven chariots were stationed at the ready for me. Then, exiting Sāvatthī, I mounted the first chariot at the ready by the gate of the royal compound. The first chariot at the ready brought me to the second, where I dismounted and mounted the second chariot. … The second chariot brought me to the third … the fourth … the fifth … the sixth … The sixth chariot at the ready brought me to the seventh, where I dismounted and mounted the seventh chariot. The seventh chariot at the ready brought me to the gate of the royal compound of Sāketa.' That's how King Pasenadi should rightly reply."

"In the same way, reverend, purification of ethics is only for the 15.1
sake of purification of mind. Purification of mind is only for the sake

588. Sāketa was one of the great cities (DN 17:1.2.4), a former capital of Kosala, and a regular stop on the road near Sāvatthī (SN 44.1:1.2, Snp 5.1:37.1). Situated on the banks of the Sarabhū (modern Sarayu), it had several forests nearby where ascetics would stay. It is identified with the modern city of Ayodhya, about 95 km south of Sāvatthī. See also note on SN 22.95:1.1. | If the distance traveled by each chariot was one "yoking" (*yojana*, "league"), this gives us a league of approximately 14 km.

of purification of view. Purification of view is only for the sake of purification by traversing doubt. Purification by traversing doubt is only for the sake of purification of knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path. Purification of knowledge and vision of what is the path and what is not the path is only for the sake of purification of knowledge and vision of the practice. Purification of knowledge and vision of the practice is only for the sake of purification of knowledge and vision. Purification of knowledge and vision is only for the sake of extinguishment with no fuel for grasping. The spiritual life is lived under the Buddha for the sake of complete extinguishment with no fuel for grasping."

16.1 When he said this, Sāriputta said to Puṇṇa, "What is the venerable's name? And how are you known among your spiritual companions?"

16.3 "Reverend, my name is Puṇṇa. And I am known as 'son of Mantāṇī' among my spiritual companions."

16.5 "It's incredible, reverend, it's amazing! Venerable Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇī has answered each deep question point by point, as a learned disciple who rightly understands the Teacher's instructions. It is fortunate for his spiritual companions, so very fortunate, that they get to see Venerable Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇī and pay homage to him. Even if they only got to see him and pay respects to him by carrying him around on their heads on a roll of cloth, it would still be very fortunate for them! And it's fortunate for me, so very fortunate, that I get to see the venerable and pay homage to him."[589]

17.1 When he said this, Puṇṇa said to Sāriputta, "What is the venerable's name? And how are you known among your spiritual companions?"

17.3 "Reverend, my name is Upatissa. And I am known as Sāriputta among my spiritual companions."

589. "A roll of cloth" (*celaṇḍuka*) is a unique term, and these are unique words of praise.

"Goodness! I had no idea I was consulting with *the* Venerable 17.5
Sāriputta, the disciple who is fit to be compared with the Teacher himself![590] If I'd known, I would not have said so much. It's incredible, reverend, it's amazing! Venerable Sāriputta has asked each deep question point by point, as a learned disciple who rightly understands the Teacher's instructions.[591] It is fortunate for his spiritual companions, so very fortunate, that they get to see Venerable Sāriputta and pay homage to him. Even if they only got to see him and pay respects to him by carrying him around on their heads on a roll of cloth, it would still be very fortunate for them! And it's fortunate for me, so very fortunate, that I get to see the venerable and pay homage to him."

And so these two spiritual giants agreed with each other's fine 17.13
words.[592]

590. "Fit to be compared with the Teacher" (*satthukappa*) is another term that is unique in early Pali.

591. "Point by point" (*anumassa anumassa*), found several times above, is yet another phrasing unique to this sutta. | This sutta has several features that, taken together, indicate that it is later than the bulk of the four nikāyas: many unique phrases; the hints that Puṇṇa is from a distant land; and most of all, the doctrine. The text here takes the set of four purifications at AN 4.194 and expands "view" into five to make the seven of the current sutta. Now, AN 4.194 lacks any mention of where the Buddha was at the time and hence was likely taught by Ānanda after the Buddha's death. Then the set is expanded to nine (plus wisdom and freedom) at DN 34:2.2.6, one of the latest suttas in the nikāyas. Most importantly, the five items pertaining to stream-entry are presented here as a linear sequence, anticipating the detailed analysis of stages of insight in later Theravada. Thus not only are the associated suttas late, this sutta is developed further than them.

592. See MN 5:33.4.

MN 25

Sowing

Nivāpasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, a sower does not sow seed for deer thinking,[593] 'May the deer, enjoying this seed, be long-lived and beautiful. May they live long and prosper!' A sower sows seed for deer thinking, 'When these deer encroach on where I sow the seed, they'll recklessly enjoy eating it. They'll become indulgent, then they'll become negligent, and then I'll be able to do what I want with them on account of this seed.'

3.1 And indeed, the first herd of deer encroached on where the sower sowed the seed and recklessly enjoyed eating it. They became indulgent, then they became negligent, and then the sower was able to do what he wanted with them on account of that seed. And that's how the first herd of deer failed to get free from the sower's power.

4.1 So then a second herd of deer thought up a plan, 'The first herd of deer became indulgent … and failed to get free of the sower's power. Why don't we refrain from eating the seed altogether? Refraining

593. "Sower sows seed" renders the triplicated expression *nevāpiko nivāpaṁ nivapati*. The root sense of *vap* is to "cast down" or "sow" seed; it is also used of offerings for the ancestors in the *śrāddha* ceremony. It is tempting to translate this phrase as a "trapper" who lays "bait". But the aim of the "sower" is simply to grow a crop, and to do this they need to keep the deer out. That is the guile of the story: they appear harmless. | For an amicable solution to this problem, see the conclusion to the Rurumigarāja Jātaka (Ja 482) | *Migajāta* ("deer") might be better translated as "wild animals" here.

from dangerous food, we can venture deep into a wilderness region and live there.' And that's just what they did. But when it came to the last month of summer, the grass and water ran out. Their bodies became much too thin, and they lost their strength and energy. So they returned to where the sower had sown the seed. Encroaching, they recklessly enjoyed eating it … And that's how the second herd of deer failed to get free from the sower's power.

So then a third herd of deer thought up a plan, 'The first … and 5.1
second herds of deer … failed to get free of the sower's power. Why don't we set up our lair close by where the sower has sown the seed? Then we can encroach and enjoy eating without being reckless. We won't become indulgent, then we won't become negligent, and then the sower won't be able to do what he wants with us on account of that seed.' And that's just what they did.

So the sower and his helpers thought, 'Wow, this third herd of 5.19
deer is so sneaky and devious, they must be some kind of strange spirits with magical abilities![594] For they eat the seed we've sown without us knowing how they come and go. Why don't we surround the seed on all sides by staking out high nets? Hopefully we might get to see the lair where they go to hide out.'[595] And that's just what they did. And they saw the lair where the third herd of deer went to hide out. And that's how the third herd failed to get free from the sower's power.

So then a fourth herd of deer thought up a plan, 'The first … 6.1
second … and third herds of deer … failed to get free of the sower's power. Why don't we set up our lair somewhere the sower and

594. The repeated *nāma* is strongly emphatic. | *Parajana* sometimes means "stranger" (Mil 6.3.1:13.2), but the commentary here glosses it as *yakkha*, and a *yakkha* named Parajana makes an appearance in (MN 31:21.1). Presumably it has a sense not dissimilar to *amanussa*, "non-human". Compare the *itarajanā* of Atharvaveda Saṁhita 8.10.28a.

595. *Vākarā* (variant *vāgurā*, which is also the Sanskrit form) is a net or snare, which here is staked out on sticks. The deer would have to leap over it, revealing their position. | *Gāha* here is from √*gāh* ("deep place, hidey-hole") rather than √*gah* ("take").

his helpers can't go? Then we can intrude on where the sower has sown the seed and enjoy eating it without being reckless. We won't become indulgent, then we won't become negligent, and then the sower won't be able to do with us what he wants on account of that seed.' And that's just what they did.

6.31 So the sower and his helpers thought, 'Wow, this fourth herd of deer is so sneaky and devious, they must be some kind of strange spirits with magical abilities! For they eat the seed we've sown without us knowing how they come and go. Why don't we surround the seed on all sides by staking out high nets? Hopefully we might get to see the lair where they go to hide out.' And that's just what they did. But they couldn't see the lair where the fourth herd of deer went to hide out. So the sower and his helpers thought, 'If we disturb this fourth herd of deer, they'll disturb others, who in turn will disturb even more. Then all of the deer will escape this seed we've sown. Why don't we just keep an eye on that fourth herd?' And that's just what they did. And that's how the fourth herd of deer escaped the sower's power.

7.1 I've made up this simile to make a point. And this is what it means.

7.3 'Seed' is a term for the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

7.4 'Sower' is a term for Māra the Wicked.

7.5 'Sower's helpers' is a term for Māra's assembly.

7.6 'Deer' is a term for ascetics and brahmins.

8.1 Now, the first group of ascetics and brahmins encroached on where the seed and the worldly pleasures of the flesh were sown by Māra and recklessly enjoyed eating it. They became indulgent, then they became negligent, and then Māra was able to do what he wanted with them on account of that seed and the worldly pleasures of the flesh. And that's how the first group of ascetics and brahmins failed to get free from Māra's power. This first group of ascetics and brahmins is just like the first herd of deer, I say.

9.1 So then a second group of ascetics and brahmins thought up a plan, 'The first group of ascetics and brahmins became indulgent … and failed to get free of Māra's power. Why don't we refrain from

eating the seed and the worldly pleasures of the flesh altogether? Refraining from dangerous food, we can venture deep into a wilderness region and live there.'[596] And that's just what they did. They ate herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice bran, scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. They survived on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit.

But when it came to the last month of summer, the grass and 9.9
water ran out. Their bodies became much too thin, and they lost their strength and energy. Because of this, they lost their heart's release,[597] so they went back to where Māra had sown the seed and the worldly pleasures of the flesh. Intruding on that place, they recklessly enjoyed eating them … And that's how the second group of ascetics and brahmins failed to get free from Māra's power. This second group of ascetics and brahmins is just like the second herd of deer, I say.

So then a third group of ascetics and brahmins thought up a plan, 10.1
'The first … and second groups of ascetics and brahmins … failed to get free of Māra's power. Why don't we set up our lair close by where Māra has sown the seed and those worldly pleasures of the flesh? Then we can encroach on it and enjoy eating without being reckless. We won't become indulgent, then we won't become negligent, and then Māra won't be able to do what he wants with us on account of that seed and those worldly pleasures of the flesh.'

596. Following this the Mahāsaṅgīti edition has a ghost sentence, formed by adding the first part of the subsequent sentence with the second part of the previous. It is absent from the PTS text.

597. "Heart's release" (*cetovimutti*) is a term for the meditative absorptions, which are listed below. | While these meditators did indeed escape Māra for a while, from the point of view of the eightfold path, they were neglecting right livelihood. A Buddhist mendicant relies on alms, which not only ensures adequate nutrition, but helps build community and spread the Dhamma. | For the dependency of absorption on food, see also the Buddha's account of his own practice before awakening (MN 36:33.2).

10.17 And that's just what they did. Still, they had such views as these:[598] 'The cosmos is eternal' or 'The cosmos is not eternal';[599] 'The cosmos is finite' or 'The cosmos is infinite'; 'The soul and the body are one and the same' or 'The soul is one thing, the body another'; or that after death, a realized one still exists, or no longer exists, or both still exists and no longer exists, or neither still exists nor no longer exists. And that's how the third group of ascetics and brahmins failed to get free from Māra's power. This third group of ascetics and brahmins is just like the third herd of deer, I say.

11.1 So then a fourth group of ascetics and brahmins thought up a plan, 'The first … second … and third groups of ascetics and brahmins … failed to get free of Māra's power. Why don't we set up our lair where Māra and his assembly can't go? Then we can encroach on where Māra has sown the seed and those worldly pleasures of the flesh, and enjoy eating without being reckless. We won't become indulgent, then we won't become negligent, and then Māra won't be able to do what he wants with us on account of that seed and those worldly pleasures of the flesh.'

11.29 And that's just what they did. And that's how the fourth group of ascetics and brahmins got free from Māra's power. This fourth group of ascetics and brahmins is just like the fourth herd of deer, I say.

12.1 And where is it that Māra and his assembly can't go? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from

598. This group failed to develop right view. For more on these speculative views, see MN 63 and MN 72.

599. This is the famous list of ten "undeclared points", which are found throughout the suttas (eg. DN 9:25.3, MN 63:2.3, MN 72:3.1, and the whole of SN 44). They seem to have functioned as a kind of checklist by which philosophers could be evaluated and classified. In the Jain Bhagavatisūtra 9.33, Indrabhūti Gautama tests the impostor Jamāli's bona fides by asking about the eternity of the world and the soul. When Jamāli failed to answer, Mahāvīra stepped in, explaining that both the soul and the world are in one sense eternal since they last forever, but in another sense they are transient since they go through different phases. | The word *loka* occurs in a number of senses, but here it refers to the entire "cosmos" of countless worlds.

unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[600] This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra, put out his eyes without a trace, and gone where the Wicked One cannot see.

13.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

14.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

15.1 Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

16.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

17.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

600. Here the text shifts from "ascetics and brahmins"—that is, any kind of religious practitioner—to "mendicants", who were Buddhist alms-gatherers. Having learned the importance of right livelihood and right view, they are now practicing absorption as part of the noble eightfold path.

18.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

19.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

20.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. And, having seen with wisdom, their defilements come to an end.[601] This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra, put out his eyes without a trace, and gone where the Wicked One cannot see. And they've crossed over clinging to the world."

20.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

601. The "cessation of perception and feeling" (*saññāvedayitanirodha*) is a culminating meditation state of supreme subtlety that often leads directly to awakening (but see AN 5.166). The state itself, like all meditation states, is temporary, but afterwards the defilements can be eliminated forever. This liberating insight is the consequence of the balanced development of all eight factors of the path.

MN 26

The Noble Quest

Pāsarāsisutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[602] At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl 2.1
and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. Then several mendicants went up to Venerable Ānanda and said to him, "Reverend, it's been a long time since we've heard a Dhamma talk from the Buddha.[603] It would be good if we got to hear a Dhamma talk from the Buddha."

602. This discourse is known in Pali manuscripts and commentaries either as "The Noble Quest" or "The Pile of Snares", whereas the Chinese parallel at MA 204 is titled "The Discourse at Rāma's Hermitage". It is one of several discourses in the Majjhima that include a partial account of Siddhattha's practice before awakening, an account that became one of the key events in the Buddha's biography. This particular version focuses on his experience with Brahmanical teachers, while MN 36, MN 85, and MN 100 include a long passage detailing his Jain-like fervent austerities.

603. Why was the Buddha reluctant to teach? This is puzzling because where we find this trope elsewhere there is a clear reason: at AN 7.52:1.3 the Buddha was making one of his rare visits to Campā, while at SN 22.81:3.5 he had left the squabbling Saṅgha for the seclusion of the forest. Here, in the central teaching location of Sāvatthī, there is no such reason. Rather, the events are best understood as narrative foreshadowing. His reluctance requires an intervention by others, and when the teaching finally takes place it is not in a Buddhist monastery but on Brahmanical grounds. The story goes on to tell how, after his awakening, he was reluctant to teach until the intervention of Brahmā (MN 26:19.1). This narrative mirroring creates a hidden link (*sandhi*) that frames the awakening in a Brahmanical context. The very obscurity of the connection is the point, for "the gods love hidden things". The theme of reluctance is extended further to the reluctance of the five mendicants to receive the Buddha. It draws on the precedent of Yājñavalkya's reluctance to teach Janaka (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.1).

2.5 "Well then, reverends, go to the brahmin Rammaka's hermitage.[604] Hopefully you'll get to hear a Dhamma talk from the Buddha."

2.7 "Yes, reverend," they replied.

3.1 Then, after the meal, on his return from almsround, the Buddha addressed Ānanda,[605] "Come, Ānanda, let's go to the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery for the day's meditation."[606]

3.3 "Yes, sir," Ānanda replied. So the Buddha went with Ānanda to the Eastern Monastery for the day's meditation. In the late afternoon the Buddha came out of retreat and addressed Ānanda, "Come, Ānanda, let's go to the eastern gate to bathe."

3.7 "Yes, sir," Ānanda replied.

3.8 So the Buddha went with Ānanda to the eastern gate to bathe. When he had bathed and emerged from the water he stood in one robe drying his limbs. Then Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Sir, the hermitage of the brahmin Rammaka is nearby. It's so delightful, so lovely. Please visit it out of sympathy." The Buddha consented with silence.

4.1 He went to the brahmin Rammaka's hermitage. Now at that time several mendicants were sitting together in the hermitage talking

604. Rammaka appears only here, and the commentary offers no information. His name presumably signifies that he was a follower of the teacher Rāma who appears below. This complements AN 3.126:3.3, where the Buddha stays in the hermitage of Bharaṇḍu the Kālāma, who was apparently a student of Āḷāra Kālāma.

605. The narrative sequence from the Buddha returning from alms round to coming out from his bath is also found at AN 6.43:1.3. There, there is a clear justification for the story, as the discourse concerns a royal elephant parade seen after bathing. Here, once more, the purpose is implicit: a brahmanical student must bathe before any ritual.

606. After the Jetavana, this was the best-known monastery in Sāvatthī. It was offered by the lady Visākhā, known as Migāra's mother.

about the teaching.[607] The Buddha stood outside the door waiting for the talk to end. When he knew the talk had ended he cleared his throat and knocked on the door-panel.[608] The mendicants opened the door for the Buddha, and he entered the hermitage, where he sat down on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?"

"Sir, our unfinished discussion on the teaching was about the 4.9
Buddha himself when the Buddha arrived."

"Good, mendicants! It's appropriate for gentlemen like you, who 4.10
have gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, to sit together and talk about the teaching. When you're sitting together you should do one of two things: discuss the teachings or keep noble silence.[609]

Mendicants, there are these two quests:[610] the noble quest and 5.1
the ignoble quest.[611]

And what is the ignoble quest? It's when someone who is them- 5.3
selves liable to be reborn seeks what is also liable to be reborn. Themselves liable to grow old, fall sick, die, sorrow, and become corrupted, they seek what is also liable to these things.

607. Here (and at MN 92:4.1) a "hermitage" (*assama*, "ashram") is a sizable building suitable for gatherings, whereas at SN 11.9:1.4 it is a gated compound with leaf huts. It is normally used for Brahmanical places.

608. As at AN 9.4:1.4.

609. "Noble silence" is narrowly defined as the second absorption (SN 21.1).

610. The Buddha picks up from the fact that the mendicants were talking about him, but continues in a depersonalized manner. | The substance of this passage is taught more briefly at AN 4.255.

611. These opposing quests (or "searches", *pariyesanā*) respond to Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22, which we have already noted as a source for the phrase *so attā so loko* (MN 22:15.10). It says that the wise ones of old, renouncing the search for sons, for wealth, and for the heavenly worlds, lived the mendicant's life (*putraiṣaṇāyāśca vittaiṣaṇāyāśca lokaiṣaṇāyāśca vyutthāyātha bhikśācaryaṁ caranti*). The inner self sought by the brahmins is described as unborn, made of consciousness, undecaying, unattached, and unaffected by karma; knowing it one becomes a sage. See too BU 3.5.1.

6.1 And what should be described as liable to be reborn?[612] Partners and children, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants and cattle, and gold and currency are liable to be reborn.[613] These attachments are liable to be reborn. Someone who is tied, infatuated, and attached to such things, themselves liable to being reborn, seeks what is also liable to be reborn.

7.1 And what should be described as liable to grow old? Partners and children, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants and cattle, and gold and currency are liable to grow old.[614] These attachments are liable to grow old. Someone who is tied, infatuated, and attached to such things, themselves liable to grow old, seeks what is also liable to grow old.

8.1 And what should be described as liable to fall sick? Partners and children, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and elephants and cattle are liable to fall sick. These attachments are liable to fall sick. Someone who is tied, infatuated, and attached to such things, themselves liable to falling sick, seeks what is also liable to fall sick.

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612. The Pali includes "gold and money" among those things subject to birth, old age, and defilement. The Chinese parallel MA 204 (T i 776a7; cf. T 765 at T xvii 679b23) does not mention "birth" but says money and jewelry are subject to old age, defilement, etc. Elsewhere in the suttas, rebirth, old age, and defilement are qualities of sentient beings, not inanimate objects, so this might be a textual corruption. Nonetheless, the commentary offers explanations for why gold and money are included under these specific categories and not the rest, and this, together with the Chinese text, shows that if it is a corruption it is an old one. I give the commentarial explanations.

613. Gold and money are subject to "birth" because they are produced by heat (*utusamuṭṭhāna*). | The word for "gold" here, one of several in Pali, is *jātarūpa*, literally "born form", i.e. that which is naturally beautiful. In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.25, a newborn infant is to be fed mixed curd, honey, and ghee with a piece of *jātarūpa*, thus placing "golden" Vedic speech in him. This rare early instance of *jātarūpa* shows that it had a felt connection with the idea of birth. Perhaps this connection prompted its inclusion here. From that, "money" (*rajata*) was brought in as the two form a stock phrase, and they were then applied elsewhere in the list.

614. Gold and money grow old due to rust or grime.

And what should be described as liable to die? Partners and children, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and elephants and cattle are liable to die. These attachments are liable to die. Someone who is tied, infatuated, and attached to such things, themselves liable to die, seeks what is also liable to die. 9.1

And what should be described as liable to sorrow? Partners and children, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and elephants and cattle are liable to sorrow. These attachments are liable to sorrow. Someone who is tied, infatuated, and attached to such things, themselves liable to sorrow, seeks what is also liable to sorrow. 10.1

And what should be described as liable to corruption? Partners and children, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants and cattle, and gold and currency are liable to corruption.[615] These attachments are liable to corruption. Someone who is tied, infatuated, and attached to such things, themselves liable to corruption, seeks what is also liable to corruption. This is the ignoble quest. 11.1

And what is the noble quest? It's when someone who is themselves liable to be reborn, understanding the drawbacks in being liable to be reborn, seeks that which is free of rebirth, the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, extinguishment. Themselves liable to grow old, fall sick, die, sorrow, and become corrupted, understanding the drawbacks in these things, they seek that which is free of old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and corruption, the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, extinguishment.[616] This is the noble quest. 12.1

Mendicants, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I too, being liable to be reborn, sought what is also liable to be reborn. Myself liable to grow old, fall sick, 13.1

615. Gold and money are liable to corruption by iron, etc.

616. As pointed out by K.R. Norman in his *Mistaken Ideas About Nibbāna* (1994), the epithets *ajātaṁ* (etc.) don't mean that Nibbāna is "unborn", but rather that in Nibbāna there is no rebirth. Likewise, *amata* does not mean "immortal" or "deathless" but "freedom from death".

die, sorrow, and become corrupted, I sought what is also liable to these things. Then it occurred to me: 'Why do I, being liable to be reborn, grow old, fall sick, sorrow, die, and become corrupted, seek things that have the same nature? Why don't I seek that which is free of rebirth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and corruption, the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, extinguishment?'

14.1 Some time later, while still with pristine black hair, blessed with youth, in the prime of life—though my mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces—I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.[617]

15.1 Once I had gone forth I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him,[618] 'Reverend Kālāma, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.'[619]

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617. This contrasts with the legend that he slipped away in the dead of night.

618. "To discover what is skillful" (*kiṁkusalagavesī*) might also be translated, "seeking to answer the question, 'what is good?'" At this point he did not know the path so he sought an answer from the best teachers of his day. | At MN 102:25.1, the "supreme state of sublime peace" (*santivarapada*) is said to be "liberation without grasping" (*anupādāvimokkha*). | Āḷāra Kālāma was a senior teacher in the contemplative and renunciate tradition of the Upaniṣads. His meditative prowess is praised by his student Pukkusa the Mallian at DN 16:4.26.1, but is seen to be inferior to the Buddha's. At AN 3.126:6.2 an apparent former student of Āḷāra advocates that teachers who teach full understanding of different things are nonetheless leading to the same goal. Thus, in line with Upaniṣadic philosophy, Āḷāra saw the apparent diversity of phenomena as partial manifestations of the immanent cosmic divinity. Āḷāra is usually understood to be named after his people, the Kālāmas. But it is possible we should accept the variant Kālāpa, indicating that he follows the Black Yajurveda.

619. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.4.1 sets out the initiation (*upanayana*) into "spiritual life" (*brahmacarya*) according to Yājñavalkya. The student says, "I have come for *brahmacarya*" or "Let me be a *brahmacāri*". The teacher responds by asking, "What is your name" (*ko nāmāsīti*). The same phrase is used in the Buddhist ordination procedure (*kiṁnāmosi*, Kd 1:76.1.15). But whereas in Buddhism this is merely a personal identification, for the brahmins this naming signifies a mystical identity with the creator Prajāpati, who is *ka*.

Āḷāra Kālāma replied, 'Stay, venerable.[620] This teaching is such 15.3
that a sensible person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.'[621]

I quickly memorized that teaching.[622] As far as lip-recital and 15.6
verbal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.[623]

620. Āḷāra Kālāma calls his student *āyasmā* (Sanskrit *āyuṣmant*), an honorific that in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa is reserved for the god Agni (13.8.4.8–9). By this he indicates the student's divine status. | Compare with the first phrase used by the Buddha to ordain his students, "Come, mendicant" (*ehi bhikkhu*, Kd 1:6.32.3).

621. "Their own denomination" (*sakaṁ ācariyakaṁ*, also found in the abbreviated form *sācariyaka*), is literally "what stems from one's own tutor". It is a word for one's own particular religious or philosophical school. In the Brahmanical initiation, having accepted the student, the brahmin takes him by the hand and says, "Agni is your teacher, I am your teacher" (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.4.2). This claims both the universal authority of the divine lineage as well as the personal lineage of that teacher. | "Their own insight" (*sayaṁ abhiññā*); Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa repeatedly emphasizes that the benefits of initiation are for "one who knows this" (*ya evaṁ veda*, 11.5.4.2, etc.).

622. The text does not specify the scripture that he learned, but it must have been Brahmanical, for they were the only scriptures known. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.4.13 instructs the new student to first learn the Sāvitrī, specifying the version in Gāyatrī metre (see also Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.14). The Buddha refers to this as the foremost verse (MN 92:26.2), and he even specifies the Gāyatrī version (Snp 3.4:7.3). Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.7 goes on to encourage the student in daily recitation of the four Vedas and ancillary literature.

623. "I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine" (*ñāṇavādañca vadāmi theravādañca*). Taken together, the sense is that his personal understanding agreed with tradition. A less literal translation might be, "I spoke with knowledge and authority." | For *ñāṇavāda*, compare such passages as Snp 4.3:2.4, "as you know, so you speak" (*yathā hi jāneyya tathā vadeyya*). In the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads, knowledge refers to the hidden connections between the Vedas and the world which reveal the divinity immanent in all things. | *Thera* (Sanskrit *sthavira*) has the senses "steady, strong" (so commentary's *thirabhāva*) as well as "elder", for which see Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa 26.2.5, where Jātūkarṇya, a teacher of old, is called *sthavira*. I take it to mean the "lasting doctrine of the ancients". This is the oldest use of the word *theravāda*, long before it was applied to a Buddhist school.

15.8 Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Āḷāra Kālāma declares: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it."[624] Surely he meditates knowing and seeing this teaching.'

15.11 So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, 'Reverend Kālāma, to what extent do you say you've realized this teaching with your own insight?' When I said this, he declared the dimension of nothingness.[625]

15.14 Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Āḷāra Kālāma who has faith,[626] energy, mindfulness, immersion,[627] and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that

624. "Faith" (or "trust", *saddhā*, Sanskrit *śraddhā*) was regarded as a quality of the "heart" through which one gained remuneration in the form of fees for priestly services (Rig Veda 10.151.4, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.21). It is like the "trust" that one would place in a bank: an investment is made in expectation of a reward. | For the syntax here, compare with *kevalaṁ vassagaṇanamattena* at AN 7.43:5.6.

625. This is said to be the best of the four perceptions at (AN 10.29:18.1). Buddhist texts portray this as a favorite meditation among brahmin contemplatives (eg. Snp 5.15:2.1, Snp 5.7:2.1). While one might expect that the brahmins would identify their goal in a positive sense, this is not always the case. A text of the Black Yajurveda, Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.11, says that beyond the great Soul, beyond the unmanifest, beyond the Person, is nothing: and that is the ultimate goal (*puruśān na paraṃ kiṃcit*). See too Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.12.1, which illustrates how divinity is too subtle for normal perception. The teacher, breaking the kernel of a seed, asked the student, "'What do you see there?' 'Nothing'" (*kimatra paśyasīti, na kiṁcana*). Compare the description of this state at Snp 5.15:2.4, "one sees nothing at all" (*natthi kiñcīti passato*). This is also similar to the teaching of Uddaka (MN 26:16.1).

626. The Buddha called these the five "faculties" (SN 48.10) or "powers" (AN 5.14). All except "immersion" (*samādhi*) are frequently mentioned in pre-Buddhist texts, but not as a set of five. The five are, however, found some centuries after the Buddha in Pātañjali's Yogasūtra 1.20: "For others, faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom come first." (*śraddhāvīryasmṛtisamādhiprajñāpūrvaka itareṣām*).

627. The mention of "immersion" implies the prior development of the four absorptions. The formless attainments are "progressive meditations" (AN 9.32) achieved by a process of "progressive cessation" (AN 9.31). Though formless, they are dependent on form (SN 14.11:3.3).

Āḷāra Kālāma says he has realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.[628]

So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, 'Reverend Kālāma, 15.22
is it up to this point that you realized this teaching with your own insight, and declare having achieved it?'[629]

'I have, reverend.' 15.24

'I too, reverend, have realized this teaching with my own insight 15.25
up to this point, and live having achieved it.'

'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable 15.26
such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that I've realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, I've realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it. So the teaching that I know, you know, and the teaching that you know, I know.[630] I am like you and you are like me. Come now, reverend! We should both lead this community together.'[631]

And that is how my tutor Āḷāra Kālāma placed me, his pupil, on 15.33
the same position as him, and honored me with high praise.

Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusion- 15.34
ment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of noth-

628. This phrasing echoes part of the description of arahantship (MN 85:51.12).

629. Having achieved that state, Āḷāra Kālāma "declares" (*pavedeti*) it as the teacher, while the Bodhisatta "dwells" in it (*viharati*).

630. Almost exactly the same words were spoken by Pokkharasāti to his student Ambaṭṭha (DN 3:1.3.2). This connects Pokkharasāti with Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, suggesting that the uplifting of a talented student in this way was a regular practice of wise brahmins.

631. This invitation shows his grace and humility.

ingness.'[632] Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

16.1 I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him,[633] 'Reverend, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.'[634]

16.3 Uddaka replied, 'Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.'

16.6 I quickly memorized that teaching. As far as lip-recital and verbal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

16.8 Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Rāma declared: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live hav-

632. It does not fulfill the requirements of the "noble quest". | Compare the pre-Buddhist meditation practice of Govinda (DN 19:50.9), Mātaṅga (Snp 1.7:27.6), and Maghadeva (MN 83:21.7), which in all cases "leads to rebirth in the Brahmā realm" (*brahmalokūpapattiyā*). Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.3.16, concluding the ancient portion of this text, says that the wise man attains glory in the world of divinity (*medhāvī brahmaloke mahīyate*).

633. Uddaka's teachings are cited at SN 35.103:1.1 and DN 29:16.13. In the former, his obscure verse assumes the identity of "this" (the impersonal cosmic divinity) with himself, while the latter is a distorted reference to Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.7. Further, AN 10.29:20.1 implies that he taught the "ultimate purity of the spirit". While "spirit" (*yakkha*, Sanskrit *yakṣa*) is normally a worldly deity, it is identified with the ultimate Brahman at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.4.1 and Kena Upaniṣad 4.1. Uddaka is apparently the "ascetic Rāmaputta" who was revered by the king, criticized by some brahmins, but defended by Todeyya, a leading brahmin of Kosala often mentioned along with Pokkharasāti (AN 4.187:4.2).

634. In contrast with Āḷāra Kālāma, here the name is omitted.

ing achieved it."[635] Surely he meditated knowing and seeing this teaching.'

So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, to what extent did Rāma say he'd realized this teaching with his own insight?' 16.11

When I said this, Uddaka son of Rāma declared the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.[636] 16.13

Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Rāma who had faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Rāma said he had realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it. 16.14

So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, had Rāma realized this teaching with his own insight up to this point, and declared having achieved it?' 16.22

'He had, reverend.' 16.24

635. The text shifts from Rāmaputta to just Rāma, while at the same time shifting to the past tense. Uddaka was thus the (spiritual and/or biological) "son of Rāma". This detail is preserved reliably in the different versions of the text. It seems that Rāmaputta had not personally attained the meditation he was teaching. This would also explain why, just a little below, he invites the Bodhisatta to lead the community rather than to share leadership like Āḷāra Kālāma (MN 26:16.32). SN 35.103:1.6 shows that he did, however, make claims to being spiritually attained.

636. In Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12 and 4.5.13, the sage Yājñavalkya says that the true Self is a sheer mass of "consciousness" (*vijñāna*, Pali *viññāṇa*), which is "great, endless, infinite reality". After realizing this, he says, there is no "perception" (*saṁjñā*, Pali *saññā*). This passage seems to have sparked the conversation at DN 9:6.4, where the Buddha goes on to speak of meditative training to refine perception. Notably, there he mentions all the *jhānas* and formless attainments *except* the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, which is beyond the topic of perception under discussion. This meditative state may be related to the state with "no perception" spoken of by Yājñavalkya. However, it is not possible to literally identify such subtle meditative states on such slender evidence. The point is simply that the contemplative brahmins of the Upaniṣadic tradition of Yājñavalkya did indeed describe their highest state in terms of perception.

16.25 'I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.'

16.26 'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it. So the teaching that Rāma directly knew, you know, and the teaching you know, Rāma directly knew. Rāma was like you and you are like Rāma. Come now, reverend! You should lead this community.'

16.33 And that is how my spiritual companion Uddaka son of Rāma placed me in the position of a tutor and honored me with high praise.[637]

16.34 Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

17.1 I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. Traveling stage by stage in the Magadhan lands, I arrived at the town of Senā in Uruvelā.[638] There I saw a delightful

637. An *ācariya* is special teacher who has a close, ongoing relationship with a student, signified by the fact that the student of an *ācāriya* is called an *antevāsī*, literally "one who lives within" the teacher's home. This passage confirms that this usage carries over from the Brahmanical tradition, where it is a common term in the same sense. Thus Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.1.2 speaks of "mother, father, and teacher", while Chāndogya Upaniṣad 2.23.1 enjoins a student to "live with the teacher until death", and at 4.9.1ff. we see the journey of a student to their teacher's house, where he is looked after by the teacher and his wife. The same sense prevails throughout the suttas and Vinaya, so I translate as "tutor" to identify a close personal teacher.

638. In modern times this is the pilgrimage site Bodhgaya in the Gaya district of Bihar. It lies by a wide river that is dry in summer but abundant in the rains. Today it is named Līlajan and in Pali Nerañjarā, although that name is not

park, a lovely grove with a flowing river that was clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby was a village to resort to for alms.[639]

17.3 Then it occurred to me, 'This park is truly delightful, a lovely grove with a flowing river that's clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby there's a village to resort to for alms. This is good enough for striving for a gentleman wanting to strive.'[640] So I sat down right there, thinking, 'This is good enough for striving.'

18.1 And so, being myself liable to be reborn, understanding the drawbacks in being liable to be reborn, I sought that which is free of rebirth, the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, extinguishment—and I found it. Being myself liable to grow old, fall sick, die, sorrow, and become corrupted, understanding the drawbacks in these things, I sought that which is free of old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and corruption, the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, extinguishment—and I found it.[641]

18.2 Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'My freedom is unshakable; this is my last rebirth; now there'll be no more future lives.'[642]

19.1 Then it occurred to me, 'This principle I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope

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mentioned in this passage. Uruvelā, which aptly means "Broadbanks", was a locality centered around the market town of Senānigama ("Marshalltown"). There was also a sizable hermitage nearby with matted-hair Brahmanical ascetics (*jaṭilā*) who ritually bathed in the water (Kd 1:20.15.1). After teaching the five monks in Varanasi, the Buddha returned here to teach them, but there is no record of him visiting subsequently.

639. The Buddha's rejection of sensual pleasures does not preclude his appreciation of nature's beauty. | The local alms villages in Uruvelā are named in Mahāvastu 2.207 as Praskandaka, Balākalpa, Ujjaṁgala, and Jaṁgala.

640. *Padhāna* means to "strive". It is frequently used in the sense of applying oneself to meditation, but here it leads into the painful "striving" of fervent austerity (MN 36:20.7).

641. While this skips directly from his arrival in Uruvelā to his awakening, other texts describe his practice of fervent austerities here, which must have taken a considerable time (MN 36:16.7, MN 85:15.1).

642. This is the realization of arahantship. Elsewhere the Buddha goes into more detail as to the process of meditation that led to this point.

of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute.[643] But people like clinging, they love it and enjoy it. It's hard for them to see this topic; that is, specific conditionality, dependent origination.[644] It's also hard for them to see this topic; that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment. And if I were to teach this principle, others might not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome for me.'[645]

19.7 And then these verses, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me:

19.8 'I've struggled hard to realize this,
there's no need to reveal it now!
Those mired in greed and hate
can't really understand this teaching.

19.12 It goes against the stream, subtle,
deep, obscure, and very fine.
Those besotted by greed cannot see,
for they're cloaked in a mass of darkness.'

19.16 So, as I reflected like this, my mind inclined to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.[646]

20.1 Then the divinity Sahampati, knowing my train of thought, thought,[647] 'Oh lord! The world will be lost, the world will per-

643. A similar account is told of Gotama Buddha at SN 6.1:1.4, MN 85:43.2, and Kd 1:5.2.2, and of Vipassī at DN 14:3.1.4.

644. The Buddha identifies the two most difficult topics in his philosophy: dependent origination and Nibbāna.

645. Up to this point, the Bodhisatta has been solely concerned with finding the answer to his quest, and only now does he think of sharing it with others. The idea that he had made an aspiration for Buddhahood in the long ago past out of a desire to help all sentient beings is not supported in early texts.

646. Had he followed this inclination he would have been a *paccekabuddha*, a Buddha "awakened for himself".

647. While Sahampati features prominently in the suttas, no deity of that name is found in early Brahmanical texts. He seems, however, to be the Buddhist

ish! For the mind of the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, inclines to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.'[648]

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their 20.3
arm, the divinity Sahampati vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of me. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward me, and said, 'Sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! Let the Holy One teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They're in decline because they haven't heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!'[649]

That is what the divinity Sahampati said. Then he went on to say: 20.8

'Among the Magadhans there appeared in the past 20.10
an impure teaching thought up by the stained.[650]

version of Brahmā Svayambhū, the "Self-born Divinity", to whom Yājñavalkya traces the authority of his teaching lineage (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.6.3, 4.5.3, 6.5.4). Yājñavalkya identifies this "self-born" with the sun (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.9.3.16; see also Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā 4.6.6) and with Prajāpati (13.5.3.1). Explaining the origin of the soma rite of the "All-Sacrifice", he says that Brahmā Svayambhū, while performing fervent austerities, decided to offer his self to all creatures and all creatures to his self, thus establishing lordship (*adhipatya*) over all creatures (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.7.1.1). The root *pati* ("lord") here establishes a linguistic link with *sahampati*. Further, in the earliest use of *svayambhū* at Rig Veda 10.83.4, the "self-born" deity Manyu "prevails" (*sahuriḥ sahāvān*) in battle. Thus we can identify Sahampati, the "Lord Who Prevails", with the highest divinity recognized by Yājñavalkya, who originated as victor in battle, whose physical manifestation is the sun, whose spiritual function is to imbue all creatures with divinity, and who serves as the ultimate source of authority. Meanwhile, the epithet *sayambhū* was taken for the Buddha (Kd 11:35.1.37).

648. Having surpassed the greatest of the Brahmanical contemplatives, the Buddha's achievement is recognized by the chief Brahmanical divinity.

649. Sahampati is the one who recognizes the potential in all beings, since it was he who imbued them with divinity. He did this to ensure dominance, but now his motive has transformed into compassion.

650. The "impure teaching" was, according to the commentary, that of the six ascetic teachers, who are regularly associated with Magadha (eg. SN 2.30, Snp

Fling open the door to freedom from death![651]
Let them hear the teaching
the immaculate one discovered.

20.14 Standing high on a rocky mountain,
you can see the people all around.
In just the same way, All-seer, so intelligent,
having ascended the Temple of Truth,
rid of sorrow, look upon the people
swamped with sorrow, overcome by rebirth and old age.

20.20 Rise, hero! Victor in battle, caravan leader,[652]
wander the world free of debt.[653]
Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!
There will be those who understand!'

3.6, DN 2). Less likely it refers to Brahmanical teachers like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, who are more closely associated with Kosala and whose system is regarded as passed down rather than "thought up".

651. "Freedom from death" (*amata*, Sanskrit *amṛta*) is yet another Brahmanical term transformed by the Buddha. Its Vedic meaning was "immortality", and hence the "ambrosia" of soma through which immortality was gained. For the Buddha, as seen in the "noble quest" itself, it was the freedom from the cycles of birth, aging, and death.

652. Here we see a verbal echo of Sahampati's martial origins.

653. A "caravan leader" (*satthavāha*) guides their flock through treacherous deserts and wastelands, as illustrated at DN 23:23.3. | *Anaṇa* ("debtless") is a technical term in the Vedic system. According to Manu 6.35–7, a renunciate must first pay off three debts: study of Vedas, begetting a son, and offering of sacrifices. One who goes forth with these debts unpaid is headed for a downfall. The Buddha has indeed paid off all these debts: he studied the Vedas under his former teachers (MN 26:15.6); he has a son Rāhula; and his path is regarded as the highest form of sacrifice (DN 5:24.1). But in Buddhism the concept is reinterpreted as meaning one has let go of all defilements, becoming a "perfected", literally "worthy" one, after which one can eat almsfood free of debt (MN 124:38.1, SN 16.11:13.2).

Then, understanding the Divinity's invitation, I surveyed the 21.1
world with the eye of a Buddha, because of my compassion for sentient beings. And I saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes; with keen faculties and with weak faculties, with good qualities and with bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach. And some of them lived seeing the danger in the fault to do with the next world, while others did not.[654] It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. Some of them sprout and grow in the water reaching the water's surface. And some of them sprout and grow in the water but rise up above the water and stand with no water clinging to them. In the same way, I saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes.

Then I replied in verse to the divinity Sahampati: 21.5

'Flung open are the doors to freedom from death! 21.6
Let those with ears to hear commit to faith.[655]
Thinking it would be troublesome, Divinity,
I did not teach
the sophisticated, sublime Dhamma among mankind.'

654. Here we see the sense of *indriya* as "spiritual potential". Originally it was the state of excited energy produced by soma that allowed Indra to manifest his full power and overcome his foes. It implicitly links back to the five spiritual qualities that the Buddha attributed to his teachers, which he later formalized as "faculties". Here as there, the idea creates a connection between beings, a recognition of shared qualities that, when properly nurtured, can mature into awakening.

655. *Pamuñcantu saddhaṁ* has long troubled translators, as the basic sense of *pamuñcantu* is "release". Sanskrit variants include *pramodantu* ("celebrate") or *praṇudantu kāṅkṣāḥ* ("dispel doubts"). I think it is a poetic variant of *adhimuñcantu*, to "decide" or "commit" to faith. Pali commonly uses synonymous verbs to reinforce the sense of the noun. In Snp 5.19, *muttasaddho*, *pamuñcassu saddhaṁ*, and *adhimuttacittaṁ* are all used in this sense.

21.10 Then the divinity Sahampati, knowing that his request for me to teach the Dhamma had been granted, bowed and respectfully circled me, keeping me on his right, before vanishing right there.

22.1 Then I thought, 'Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand this teaching?'

22.4 Then it occurred to me, 'That Āḷāra Kālāma is astute, competent, intelligent, and has long had little dust in his eyes. Why don't I teach him first of all? He'll quickly understand the teaching.'

22.8 But a deity came to me and said, 'Sir, Āḷāra Kālāma passed away seven days ago.'

22.10 And knowledge and vision arose in me, 'Āḷāra Kālāma passed away seven days ago.'

22.12 I thought, 'This is a great loss for Āḷāra Kālāma. If he had heard the teaching, he would have understood it quickly.'

23.1 Then I thought, 'Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand this teaching?'

23.4 Then it occurred to me, 'That Uddaka son of Rāma is astute, competent, intelligent, and has long had little dust in his eyes. Why don't I teach him first of all? He'll quickly understand the teaching.'

23.8 But a deity came to me and said, 'Sir, Uddaka son of Rāma passed away just last night.'

23.10 And knowledge and vision arose in me, 'Uddaka son of Rāma passed away just last night.'

23.12 I thought, 'This is a great loss for Uddaka. If he had heard the teaching, he would have understood it quickly.'[656]

24.1 Then I thought, 'Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand this teaching?'

656. While this passage is clearly heightened for dramatic effect, it is not surprising that they have passed away. It has been several years since he studied with these teachers, and they were probably elderly at the time, as perhaps hinted in their eagerness to appoint Siddhattha as heirs.

Then it occurred to me, 'The group of five mendicants were very helpful to me. They looked after me during my time of resolute striving.[657] Why don't I teach them first of all?' 24.4

Then I thought, 'Where are the group of five mendicants staying these days?' With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman I saw that the group of five mendicants were staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana. So, when I had stayed in Uruvelā as long as I pleased, I set out for Varanasi.[658] 24.7

While I was traveling along the road between Gayā and Bodhgaya, the Ājīvaka ascetic Upaka saw me[659] and said, 'Reverend, your faculties are so very clear, and your complexion is pure and bright.[660] In whose name have you gone forth, reverend? Who is your Teacher? Whose teaching do you believe in?' 25.1

I replied to Upaka in verse: 25.5

'I am the vanquisher of all, the knower of all, 25.6
unsullied in the midst of all things.
I've given up all, freed through the ending of craving.
Since I know for myself, whose follower should I be?

I have no tutor. 25.10
There is no one like me.

657. The five mendicants appear abruptly here and the reason for their behavior is only clear in light of the fuller accounts (MN 36:33.4, MN 85:33.4, MN 100:30.5). The Buddha's praise for them is more muted than for the Brahmanical teachers, showing how he valued advanced meditation over austerities. Their names are listed in the Vinaya account: Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma, and Assaji (Kd 1:6.31.6). | Note that he calls them "mendicants", a term typically reserved for Buddhist renunciates. For a similar usage, see MN 140:3.4.

658. Several suttas relate further details in this period (eg. SN 47.43, Ud 1.3–4, etc.)

659. For the Ājīvakas, see MN 5:31.7 and DN 2:20.2. Upaka is met only here; his name means "nearly there". | The place of awakening is referred to as *bodhi*. These places are about twenty kilometers apart.

660. Here "faculties" refers to visible features such as bright eyes. Compare Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.14.2, where a student's face is seen as bright and glowing due to their recent insights.

In the world with its gods,
I have no rival.

25.14 For in this world, I am the perfected one;
I am the supreme Teacher.
I alone am fully awakened,
cooled, quenched.

25.18 I am going to the city of Kāsi
to roll forth the Wheel of Dhamma.
In this world that is so blind,
I'll beat the drum of freedom from death!'[661]

25.22 'According to what you claim, reverend, you ought to be the Infinite Victor.'[662]

25.23 'The victors are those who, like me,
have reached the ending of defilements.
I have conquered bad qualities, Upaka—
that's why I'm a victor.'

25.27 When I had spoken, Upaka said: 'If you say so, reverend.' Shaking his head, he took a wrong turn and left.

26.1 Traveling stage by stage, I arrived at Varanasi, and went to see the group of five mendicants in the deer park at Isipatana. The group of five mendicants saw me coming off in the distance and stopped each other, saying,[663] 'Here comes the ascetic Gotama. He's so indulgent; he strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence. We

661. *Āhañchaṁ* is first person future singular of *āhanati*, "one beats".
662. "Infinite Victor" (*anantajina*) is unknown elsewhere and may be an Ājīvaka term. It relates to the epithet *jina* of the teacher Mahāvīra, after which his followers the Jains were named. Mahāvīra and the Ājīvaka founder Gosāla practiced together for six years, so it comes as no surprise that they shared terminology.
663. For "they stopped each other" (*aññamaññaṁ saṇṭhapesuṁ*), see AN 10.93:2.4.

shouldn't bow to him or rise for him or receive his bowl and robe. But we can set out a seat; he can sit if he likes.' Yet as I drew closer, the group of five mendicants were unable to stop themselves per their own agreement. Some came out to greet me and receive my bowl and robe, some spread out a seat, while others set out water for washing my feet. But they still addressed me by name and as 'reverend'.[664]

27.1 So I said to them, 'Mendicants, don't address me by name and as "reverend". The Realized One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved freedom from death! I shall instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. You will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.'

27.6 But they said to me, 'Reverend Gotama, even by that conduct, that practice, that grueling work you did not achieve any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. How could you have achieved such a state now that you've become indulgent, strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence?'[665]

27.8 So I said to them, 'The Realized One has not become indulgent, strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence. The Realized One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved freedom from death! I shall instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life.'

664. These ways of address are suitable for a senior speaking to a junior (DN 16:6.2.2).

665. Where "that practice" appears in MN 12:56.1 and MN 85:51.7, it refers to the austere practices that have just been described. Taken together with the abrupt skip at MN 26:18.1 above, and the equally abrupt mention of the five mendicants at MN 26:24.5, it seems likely the passage on the austerities has been removed in order to focus on the Brahmanical context.

27.13 But for a second time they said to me, 'Reverend Gotama … you've returned to indulgence.'

27.15 So for a second time I said to them, 'The Realized One has not become indulgent …'

27.18 But for a third time they said to me, 'Reverend Gotama, even by that conduct, that practice, that grueling work you did not achieve any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. How could you have achieved such a state now that you've become indulgent, strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence?'

28.1 So I said to them, 'Mendicants, have you ever known me to speak like this before?'

28.3 'No sir, we have not.'[666]

28.4 'The Realized One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved freedom from death! I shall instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. You will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.'

29.1 I was able to persuade the group of five mendicants.[667] Then sometimes I advised two mendicants, while the other three went for alms. Then those three would feed all six of us with what they brought back. Sometimes I advised three mendicants, while the other two went for alms. Then those two would feed all six of us with what they brought back.

30.1 As the group of five mendicants were being advised and instructed by me like this, being themselves liable to be reborn, understanding the drawbacks in being liable to be reborn, they sought that which is free of rebirth, the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, ex-

666. Here they adopt the more respectful term of address *bhante* ("sir").

667. Again the narrative skips. Here the Buddha taught the "Rolling Forth of the Wheel of the Dhamma" (SN 56.11). The full sequence of events is related in Kd 1:6.16.9.

tinguishment—and they found it. Being themselves liable to grow old, fall sick, die, sorrow, and become corrupted, understanding the drawbacks in these things, they sought that which is free of old age, sickness, death, sorrow, and corruption, the supreme sanctuary from the yoke, extinguishment—and they found it. Knowledge and vision arose in them: 'Our freedom is unshakable; this is our last rebirth; now there'll be no more future lives.'[668]

Mendicants, there are these five kinds of sensual stimulation.[669] 31.1
What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

There are ascetics and brahmins who enjoy these five kinds of 32.1
sensual stimulation tied, infatuated, attached, blind to the drawbacks, and not understanding the escape. You should understand that they[670] have met with calamity and disaster, and the Wicked One can do with them what he wants.

Suppose a deer in the wilderness was lying caught on a pile of 32.3
snares.[671] You'd know that it has met with calamity and disaster, and the hunter can do with them what he wants. And when the hunter comes, it cannot flee where it wants.

In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who enjoy these 32.7
five kinds of sensual stimulation tied, infatuated, attached, blind to the drawbacks, and not understanding the escape. You should

668. This occurred with the teaching of the "Discourse on the Characteristic of Not Self" (SN 22.59).

669. The Buddha rather abruptly returns to a direct teaching for the mendicants in Rammaka's hermitage. The topic harks back to the simile of the sappy log, absent from here, but which in MN 36:17.1 is introduced as the Bodhisatta undertook striving at Uruvelā.

670. The Pali word *paribhuñjati* means "to have something satisfying" as well as "to take pleasure in", much like the English word "enjoys".

671. This image and the teaching that follows links this sutta with the previous.

understand that they have met with calamity and disaster, and the Wicked One can do with them what he wants.

33.1 There are ascetics and brahmins who enjoy these five kinds of sensual stimulation without being tied, infatuated, or attached, seeing the drawbacks, and understanding the escape. You should understand that they haven't met with calamity and disaster, and the Wicked One cannot do what he wants with them.

33.3 Suppose a deer in the wilderness was lying on a pile of snares without being caught. You'd know that it hasn't met with calamity and disaster, and the hunter cannot do what he wants with them. And when the hunter comes, it can flee where it wants.

33.7 In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who enjoy these five kinds of sensual stimulation without being tied, infatuated, or attached, seeing the drawbacks, and understanding the escape. You should understand that they haven't met with calamity and disaster, and the Wicked One cannot do what he wants with them.

34.1 Suppose there was a wild deer wandering in the forest that walked, stood, sat, and laid down in confidence. Why is that? Because it's out of the hunter's range.

34.4 In the same way, a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra, put out his eyes without a trace, and gone where the Wicked One cannot see.

35.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

36.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one

meditates in bliss.' This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

37.1 Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

38.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

39.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

40.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness.[672] This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

41.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra …

42.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. And, having seen with wisdom, their defilements come to an end. This is called a mendicant who has blinded Māra, put out his eyes without a trace, and gone where the Wicked One cannot see. They've crossed over clinging to the

672. This passage and the next affirm that these meditations, learned under Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, were adopted by the Buddha as part of his practice.

world. And they walk, stand, sit, and lie down in confidence. Why is that? Because they're out of the Wicked One's range."

42.6 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 27

The Shorter Simile of the Elephant's Footprint

Cūḷahatthipadopamasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[673] At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time the brahmin Jānussoṇi drove out from Sāvatthī 2.1
in the middle of the day in an all-white chariot drawn by mares.[674]
He saw the wanderer Pilotika coming off in the distance,[675] and said
to him, "So, worthy Vacchāyana, where are you coming from in the
middle of the day?"

"Just now, worthy sir, I've come from the presence of the ascetic 2.5
Gotama."

"What do you think of the ascetic Gotama's lucidity of wisdom? 2.6
Do you think he's astute?"

673. This sutta urges against drawing rash conclusions, insisting on a cautious and pragmatic approach to the truth. The theme of epistemological caution is further developed in such suttas as MN 47, MN 60, and MN 99. | According to the Sinhalese chronicle Mahāvaṁsa 14.22, this was the first discourse taught by the arahant Mahinda to King Devanampiyatissa, leading to his conversion and the spread of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. This would have been around 250 BCE.

674. A chariot drawn by mares was the preferred vehicle of Jānussoṇi (MN 99:30.1, SN 45.4:1.3), as well as the brahmin student Ambaṭṭha DN 3:1.6.1. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.2.1 depicts Jānaśruti's wealth as including cows, gold, and a chariot drawn by mules.

675. Pilotika Vacchāyana is not mentioned elsewhere. His first name means "patch" and may be a reference to his patchwork robe (cp. "Ajita of the hair-blanket"). Vacchāyana is a patronymic, possibly indicating he was of the lineage of Vātsya, a student of Yājñavalkya (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 9.5.1.62, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 2.35.29).

2.7 "Worthy sir, who am I to judge the ascetic Gotama's lucidity of wisdom?[676] You'd really have to be on the same level to judge his lucidity of wisdom."

2.9 "Worthy Vacchāyana praises the ascetic Gotama with high praise indeed."

2.10 "Who am I to praise the ascetic Gotama? He is praised by the praised as the first among gods and humans."

2.12 "But for what reason are you so devoted to the ascetic Gotama?"

3.1 "Suppose that a skilled bull elephant tracker were to enter a bull elephant wood.[677] There he'd see a large elephant's footprint, long and broad. He would come to the conclusion,[678] 'This must be a big bull elephant.'

3.5 In the same way, because I saw four footprints of the ascetic Gotama I came to the conclusion, 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

4.1 What four? Firstly, I see some astute aristocrats who are subtle, accomplished in the doctrines of others, hair-splitters. You'd think they live to demolish convictions with their intellect. They hear, 'So, worthy sir, that ascetic Gotama will come down to such-and-such village or town.' They formulate a question, thinking, 'We'll approach the ascetic Gotama and ask him this question. If he answers like this, we'll refute him like that; and if he answers like that, we'll refute him like this.'

4.9 When they hear that he has come down they approach him. The ascetic Gotama educates, encourages, fires up, and inspires them with a Dhamma talk. They don't even get around to asking their

676. As at MN 99:30.7 and AN 5.194:2.4. The Buddha speaks of his own lucidity of wisdom at MN 12:62.6.

677. The text differentiates "bull elephant" (*nāga*), "elephant" (*hatthi*), and "cow elephant" (*hatthinī*). This is essential to the parable, as the tracker is specifically seeking a bull.

678. The Pali phrase *niṭṭhaṁ gaccheyya* is an exact match for the English idiom "come to a conclusion".

question to the ascetic Gotama, so how could they refute his answer? Invariably, they become his disciples. When I saw this first footprint of the ascetic Gotama, I came to the conclusion, 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

Furthermore, I see some astute brahmins … some astute house- 5.1
holders … they become his disciples.

Furthermore, I see some astute ascetics who are subtle, accom- 7.1
plished in the doctrines of others, hair-splitters. … They don't even get around to asking their question to the ascetic Gotama, so how could they refute his answer? Invariably, they ask the ascetic Gotama for the chance to go forth. And he gives them the going-forth. Soon after going forth, living withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, they realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. They live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

They say, 'We were almost lost! We almost perished! For we 7.14
used to claim that we were ascetics, brahmins, and perfected ones, but we were none of these things. But now we really are ascetics, brahmins, and perfected ones!' When I saw this fourth footprint of the ascetic Gotama, I came to the conclusion, 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

It's because I saw these four footprints of the ascetic Gotama 7.20
that I came to the conclusion, 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'"

When he had spoken, Jānussoṇi got down from his chariot, ar- 8.1
ranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and expressed this heartfelt sentiment three times:

"Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awak- 8.2
ened Buddha!

Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully 8.3
awakened Buddha!

8.4 Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

8.5 Hopefully, some time or other I'll get to meet the worthy Gotama, and we can have a discussion."

9.1 Then the brahmin Jānussoṇi went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and informed the Buddha of all he had discussed with the wanderer Pilotika.

9.4 When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him, "Brahmin, the simile of the elephant's footprint is not yet completed in detail. As to how it is completed in detail, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

9.8 "Yes, worthy sir," Jānussoṇi replied. The Buddha said this:

10.1 "Suppose a bull elephant tracker were to enter a bull elephant wood. There they'd see a large elephant's footprint, long and broad. A skilled bull elephant tracker does not yet come to the conclusion, 'This must be a big bull elephant.' Why not? Because in an elephant wood there are dwarf cow elephants with big footprints, and this footprint might be one of theirs.[679]

10.7 They keep following the track until they see a big footprint, long and broad, and traces high up. A skilled bull elephant tracker does not yet come to the conclusion, 'This must be a big bull elephant.' Why not? Because in an elephant wood there are tall lofty cow elephants with big footprints, and this footprint might be one of theirs.[680]

10.13 They keep following the track until they see a big footprint, long and broad, and traces and tusk-marks high up. A skilled bull elephant tracker does not yet come to the conclusion, 'This must be a big

679. This passage names three kinds of cow elephants unknown elsewhere. From the context they must be of ascending height. The first is the "dwarf" (*vāmanikā*).

680. *Kāḷārikā* is related to Sanskrit *karāla*, which may mean "lofty" or "with gaping teeth". The commentary applies the latter meaning, but surely the former fits the context.

bull elephant.' Why not? Because in an elephant wood there are tall matriarch cow elephants with big footprints, and this footprint might be one of theirs.[681]

They keep following the track until they see a big footprint, long 10.19
and broad, and traces, tusk-marks, and broken branches high up. And they see that bull elephant walking, standing, sitting, or lying down at the root of a tree or in the open. Then they'd come to the conclusion, 'This is that big bull elephant.'

In the same way, brahmin, a Realized One arises in the world, 11.1
perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.[682] He realizes with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely complete and pure.

A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or 12.1
someone reborn in a good family. They gain faith in the Realized One, and reflect: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

681. One of the many Indic names for elephants, especially cows, is *kareṇu* (Pali *kaṇeru* by metathesis), which, being from the root *kara* ("doer" = "hand"), has the same meaning as the more common *hatthi*, namely "handy". I think the *kaṇerukā* is the "leader of the cows", i.e. the matriarch.

682. This is the start of the teaching on the Gradual Training, encompassing ethics (*sīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*paññā*).

13.1 Once they've gone forth, they take up the training and livelihood of the mendicants. They give up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings.[683]

13.2 They give up stealing. They take only what's given, and expect only what's given. They keep themselves clean by not thieving.[684]

13.3 They give up unchastity. They are chaste, set apart, refraining from the vulgar act of sex.[685]

13.4 They give up lying. They speak the truth and stick to the truth. They're honest and dependable, and don't trick the world with their words.[686]

13.5 They give up backbiting. They don't repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, they reconcile those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony.[687]

13.6 They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, likable, and agreeable to the people.

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683. The first and most important precept. It is not just the negative injunction to avoid killing, but also the positive injunction to have compassion for all creatures. If a monastic murders a human being they are immediately and permanently expelled.

684. To steal anything of substantial value is an expulsion offense.

685. "Chastity" is *brahmacariya*, literally "divine conduct". Here it is used in the narrow sense of refraining from sex, but more commonly it has a broader sense of "spiritual life". Buddhist monastics are forbidden from any form of sexual activity. To engage in penetrative intercourse is an expulsion offense.

686. This is the first of the four kinds of right speech. Just as the precept of not killing implies the positive injunction to live with compassion, the precepts on speech enjoin a positive and constructive use of speech. If a monastic falsely claims states of enlightenment or deep meditation they are expelled. Lying is further explained at MN 41:9.2 as perjury.

687. "Harmony" (or "unanimity", *samagga*) does not excuse untrue, bigoted, or otherwise harmful speech. True harmony is only achieved in the presence of the Dhamma (MN 104:14.4).

They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.[688] 13.7

They refrain from injuring plants and seeds.[689] They eat in one part of the day, abstaining from eating at night and at the wrong time.[690] They refrain from seeing shows of dancing, singing, and music.[691] They refrain from attiring and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup.[692] They refrain from high and luxurious beds.[693] They refrain from receiving gold and currency,[694] raw grains,[695] raw meat, women and girls, male and female bondservants,[696] goats and sheep,[697] chickens and pigs, elephants, cows, 13.8

688. "Talking nonsense" is *samphappalāpa*, which seems only attested in Buddhism. *Sampha* is apparently Sanskrit *śaṣpa*, young sprouting grass; but Sanskrit lexicographers also give the meaning "loss of intelligence". The connection is perhaps because *śaṣpa* is an ingredient in beer (see Eggling's note on Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 12.7.3.5). | *Attha* is a polyvalent term, here taking the senses "meaningful" and "beneficial". Elsewhere it means "goal", "need", "purpose", "lawsuit", or "ending", and the senses are not always easy to untangle.

689. Buddhists generally do not regard plants as sentient, but value them as part of the ecosystem that supports all life.

690. From MN 66:6.4 and MN 70:4.8 we can see that "at night" means after dark, while "at the wrong time" means in the afternoon. More explicitly, these are the "wrong time at night" and the "wrong time in the day", in which case they are both the "wrong time".

691. Such sensual entertainments distract and excite the mind. This and the next three precepts encourage peace of mind for meditation.

692. This was ignored by the Buddha's cousin, Nanda (SN 21.8:1.2).

693. To avoid sleeping too much.

694. Literally "gold and silver" (*jātarūparajata*), but *rajata* is explained in Bu NP 18:2.8 as currency of any kind.

695. Mendicants receive only the day's meal and do not store or cook food.

696. According to ancient Indian law (Arthaśāstra 3.13), a person in a time of trouble may bind themselves in service for a fee. Such bondservants were protected against cruelty, sexual abuse, and unfair work. After earning back the fee of their indenture they were freed, retaining their original inheritance and status.

697. These are animals raised for food.

horses, and mares, and fields and land.[698] They refrain from running errands and messages;[699] buying and selling;[700] falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence.

14.1 They're content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things.[701] They're like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves.[702]

15.1 When they see a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint.[703] When they hear a sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know an idea with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of

698. Land for a monastery may be accepted by the Saṅgha as a community, but not by individual mendicants.

699. These items are discussed in detail below. | Acting as a go-between for lay business was tempting due to the mendicants' wandering lifestyle. However, it exposes them to risk if the message is not delivered or if it is bad news.

700. For example, trading in monastery property.

701. A Buddhist monk has three robes: a lower robe (sabong or sarong), an upper robe, and an outer cloak. | Here begins the series of practices that build on moral fundamentals to lay the groundwork for meditation. The sequence of contentment, mindfulness, and sense restraint sometimes varies (eg. DN 2:64.1).

702. As at DN 2:63.4. This phrase perhaps belongs before contentment.

703. It is not that one cannot see things, but that, mindful of its effect, one avoids unnecessary stimulation. | "Covetousness and bitterness" (*abhijjhā domanassā*) are the strong forms of desire and aversion caused by lack of restraint.

mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. When they have this noble sense restraint, they experience an unsullied bliss inside themselves.[704]

They act with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.[705] 16.1

When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, this noble contentment, this noble sense restraint, and this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, they frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw.[706] 17.1

After the meal, they return from almsround, sit down cross-legged, set their body straight, and bring mindfulness to the present.[707] 18.1

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704. As at DN 2:64.10, their happiness deepens, as they see that not only their actions but also their mind is becoming free of anything unwholesome.

705. Situational awareness is a psychological term popularized in the 1990s. It has to do with the perception of environmental phenomena and the comprehension of their meaning, which is very close to the sense of the Pali term *sampajañña*. | These acts describe the daily life of a mendicant: going into the village for alms, at which time there are many distracting sights. Then they return, eat their meal, and spend their day in meditation.

706. The Jain Ācārāṅgasūtra 1.8.2 notes many places used by Mahāvīra for meditation, including a charnel ground, an empty hut, and the root of a tree.

707. For *parimukhaṁ* ("present") we find *pratimukha* in Sanskrit, which can mean "presence" or the reflection of the face. Late canonical Pali explains *parimukhaṁ* as "the tip of the nose or the reflection of the face (*mukhanimitta*)". *Parimukha* in Sanskrit is rare, but it appears in Pāṇini 4.4.29, which the commentary illustrates with the example of a servant "in the presence" of their master (cp. SN 47.8). So it seems the sense is "before the face" or more generally "in the presence". | To "bring mindfulness" (*satiṁ upaṭṭhapetvā*) is to "do satipaṭṭhāna". The root sense of *upaṭṭhāna* is to "stand near" or "attend" (like a nurse on a patient, SN 47.13:1.3), and the Sanskrit *upasthāna* is commonly used in the

Giving up covetousness for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness.[708] Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will.[709] Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness.[710] Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse.[711] Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.[712]

19.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom.[713] Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. This, brahmin, is that which is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' and also 'a trace of the Realized One' and also 'a mark of the Realized One'.[714] But a

sense "homage" of the gods, based on the idea of "attending" the sacred flame. A literal translation of the phrase might be, "having made memory attend to what is present".

708. Covetousness (*abhijjha*) has been curbed by sense restraint, and now is fully abandoned.

709. Likewise ill will (*byāpādapadosa*), which was called *domanassa* in the formula for sense restraint.

710. "Mindfulness and situational awareness" has a prominent role in abandoning dullness.

711. Restlessness hankers for the future and is countered by contentment. Remorse digs up the past and is countered by ethical purity.

712. The meditator set out on their path after gaining faith in the Buddha.

713. The five hindrances remain a pillar of meditation teaching. The root sense means to "obstruct" but also to "obscure, darken, veil".

714. The first true footprint of the Buddha is jhāna, not skill in debate or conversion, nor even ethical conduct. Compare DN 2:76.3, where jhāna was the first superior fruit of the spiritual life.

noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion,[715] 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected 20.1
are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This too is what is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' …

Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters 21.1
and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' This too is what is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' …

Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the dis- 22.1
appearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This too is what is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' …

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 23.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives, that is, one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. … They recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. This too is what is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' …

715. Just as the bull elephant tracker does not come to a conclusion until they have found a bull elephant, here the meditator has not confirmed that the Buddha's teaching leads to the goal that was promised.

24.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and surpasses the human, they understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. This too is what is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' …

25.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements.' This, brahmin, is what is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' and also 'a trace of the Realized One' and also 'a mark of the Realized One'. At this point a noble disciple has not yet come to a conclusion, but they are coming to the conclusion,[716] 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

26.1 Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

26.3 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.' This, brahmin, is what is called 'a footprint of the Realized One' and also 'a trace of the Realized One' and also 'a mark of the Realized One'. At this point a noble disciple has come to the conclusion,[717] 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha.

716. They are in the culminating stages of the path.

717. Faith, reason, evidence, and experience have all played a role in the discovery of truth. But there can be no certainty until the truth has accomplished its ultimate function, freedom from suffering.

The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.' And it is at this point that the simile of the elephant's footprint has been completed in detail."

When he had spoken, the brahmin Jānussoṇi said to the Buddha, 27.1
"Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

MN 28

The Longer Simile of the Elephant's Footprint

Mahāhatthipadopamasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants,[718] "Reverends, mendicants!"

1.5 "Reverend," they replied. Sāriputta said this:

2.1 "The footprints of all creatures that walk can fit inside an elephant's footprint, so an elephant's footprint is said to be the biggest of them all. In the same way, all skillful qualities are included in the four noble truths.[719] What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.

3.1 And what is the noble truth of suffering? Rebirth is suffering; old age is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness,

718. This sutta is a masterclass on the methods employed by the Buddha's greatest student, Sāriputta. He begins with the four noble truths, then proceeds to unpack them systematically, leading to a lengthy analysis of the four elements. But the unpacking takes surprising directions as Sāriputta draws on unexpected layers of the Dhamma to illustrate a familiar teaching in new ways. All the while, he conveys warmth and compassion, illustrating in his manner of teaching the connection that is also the topic of the teaching.

719. Sāriputta's emphasis on the four noble truths is also shown in MN 141, where he is said to focus on teaching new students as far as stream-entry. The current sutta illustrates how he did this, carefully explaining fundamental concepts and showing their real world impacts, while offering pragmatic and reassuring advice. Along the way, he introduces all the major wisdom teachings of Buddhism, demonstrating exactly how they fit into the four noble truths. | The idea of "inclusion" (*saṅgaha*) became a fundamental method of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, especially the Dhātukathā, which systematized the mapping of inclusion or exclusion regarding all phenomena (see too MN 44:11.1).

and distress are suffering; not getting what you wish for is suffering. In brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering. And what are the five grasping aggregates? They are as follows: the grasping aggregates of form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness.

And what is the grasping aggregate of form? The four principal states, and form derived from the four principal states.[720] 4.1

And what are the four principal states?[721] The elements of earth, water, fire, and air.[722] 5.1

And what is the earth element? The earth element may be interior or exterior.[723] And what is the interior earth element? Anything internal, personal, that's hard, solid, and appropriated. This includes:[724] head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, 6.1

720. The Buddha's use of *mahābhūtā* ("principal states") responds to Yājñavalkya's core teaching at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12, where the several "states" or "real entities" (*bhūtā*)—namely the diverse manifestations of creation—arise from and dissolve into the "principal state" (*mahābhūta*) of the Self, singular and infinite. For the Buddha, the "principal states" are themselves plural, as there is no underlying singular reality. Later Sanskrit literature lists the "five states" (*pañcabhūta*) as earth, water, fire, air, and space.

721. Delving into the four noble truths leads us to the actual topic, the four elements. But in this topic we will find not just matter, but connections that lead us back to the four noble truths.

722. Each of these "elements" was a major deity of the Vedas, called by many names in addition to the obvious Pṛthivī, Agni, Āpas, and Vāyu. Nature was a realm of divine powers invoked and hopefully tamed by hymn and ritual. The Buddha treated elements as natural phenomena rather than divinities, but this creates a potential problem. If prayer and sacrifice is no longer effective, are we just victims of the arbitrary threats of an uncaring world? Our modern solution is to subjugate the world of nature, to set ourselves above it and beat it into submission with our technology. For the Buddha, the solution was, rather, to dissolve the difference between self and other: if we are no more than elements, elements are no less than us. While the impermanence of the elements was inescapable, we can master our own responses. Thus we do not live in a world stripped of meaning, but one full of the potential for freedom.

723. That is to say, inside oneself or in the world outside oneself.

724. "Appropriated" (*upādinna*) is a technical term referring to matter that has been "taken up" or "grasped" at birth, namely the organic body.

intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces; or anything else internal, personal, that's hard, solid, and appropriated.[725] This is called the interior earth element. The interior earth element and the exterior earth element are just the earth element.[726] This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'[727] When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the earth element, detaching the mind from the earth element.

7.1 There comes a time when the exterior water element flares up.[728] At that time the exterior earth element vanishes. So for all its great age, the earth element will be revealed as impermanent, liable to end, vanish, and perish.[729] What then of this ephemeral body appropriated by craving? Rather than 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am', they consider it to be none of these things.[730]

725. The phrase "or anything else" (*yaṁ vā panaññampi kiñci*) indicates that the analysis is meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. Early Buddhism makes no claim to list all the different manifestations of the elements.

726. The exterior element is not defined here. Rather, the sutta moves by collapsing the distinction between interior and exterior.

727. Since what is "in here" and what is "out there" are the same element, how can it be "my" body? | In this standard reflection on not-self, "this is not mine" counters craving due to a sense of ownership; "I am not this" counters the conceit of identification; and "this is not my self" counters views based on speculation.

728. This is in reference to the belief that the earth rests upon water, and if the water is disturbed it shakes the earth (AN 8.70:14.3, DN 16:3.13.3). Thus this is a reference to calamity by earthquake rather than flood. Apparently it was believed that an extreme earthquake could shake apart the whole earth.

729. Read *mahallikā* as "old" rather than "large". | Note that "impermanence" in the suttas is not reduced to "momentariness". It applies equally to the largest and smallest scales, as well as the living scale of the human life.

730. The key to this difficult sentence is recognizing that *atha kho* here is adversative (compare DN 23:8.1: "Even though Master Kassapa says this, nonetheless I think that", *kiñcāpi bhavaṁ kassapo evamāha, atha kho evaṁ me ettha hoti*). | *Notevettha hoti* resolves as follows: *not(i)* is the negative, which is distributed across the three terms, I, mine, I am; *ev(a)* conveys exclusivity; *ettha* with *hoti* and the genitive means "think about that" (eg. MN 38:18.4). | "Ephemeral" is *mattaṭṭhaka*, "standing" (*(ṭ)ṭha*) for "a while" (*matta*).

If others abuse, attack, harass, and trouble that mendicant, they 8.1
understand:[731] 'This painful feeling born of ear contact has arisen in me.[732] That's dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.' They see that contact, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are impermanent.[733] Based on that element alone, their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided.[734]

Others might treat that mendicant with disliking, loathing, and 9.1
detestation, striking them with fists, stones, sticks, and swords. They understand: 'This body is such that fists, stones, sticks, and swords strike it. But the Buddha has said in the Advice on the Simile of the Saw:[735]

"Even if low-down bandits were to sever you limb from limb with 9.6
a two-handed saw, anyone who had a malevolent thought on that account would not be following my instructions." My energy shall be roused up and unflagging, my mindfulness established and lucid, my body tranquil and undisturbed, and my mind immersed and unified in samādhi. Gladly now, let fists, stones, sticks, and swords strike this body! For this is how the instructions of the Buddhas are followed.'

While recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in 10.1
this way, equanimity based on the skillful may not become stabilized

731. The motif of mendicants being attacked is found occasionally in the suttas, but more commonly in texts of the Jains, who went naked and did not bathe.
732. Sāriputta brings in a reflection on conditionality, not as a philosophy, but as a skillful method of defusing reactive emotions.
733. With the previously-mentioned form, now all five aggregates are included.
734. Here the elements serve for calming the mind (*samatha*) as earlier they served for insight (*vipassanā*) | *Ārammaṇa* does not mean "object", an Abhidhamma concept foreign to the suttas: existence is relational, not objective. Rather, it is a "support" upon which the mind relies. The "support" itself is impermanent and conditioned, but it serves to achieve the purpose. | The phrase *pakkhandati pasīdati santiṭṭhati adhimuccati* is stock, so *pakkhandati* does not mean to "enter into" but rather to be "secure".
735. Sāriputta is quoting from MN 21:21.1.

in them.[736] In that case they stir up a sense of urgency: 'It's my loss, my misfortune, that while recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on the skillful does not become stabilized in me.' They're like a daughter-in-law who stirs up a sense of urgency when they see their father-in-law.[737] But if, while recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on the skillful does become stabilized in them, they're happy with that. At this point, much has been done by that mendicant.[738]

11.1 And what is the water element? The water element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior water element? Anything internal, personal, that's water, watery, and appropriated. This includes: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine; or anything else internal, personal, that's water, watery, and appropriated. This is called the interior water element. The interior water element and the exterior water element are just the water element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the water element, detaching the mind from the water element.

12.1 There comes a time when the exterior water element flares up. It sweeps away villages, towns, cities, countries, and regions.[739] There comes a time when the water in the ocean sinks down a hundred leagues, or two, three, four, five, six, up to seven hundred leagues.

736. Again the teaching is pragmatic rather than theoretical, as Sāriputta is reassuring young students. It often happens in the course of practice that even when doing what is said to be the right thing, the results are not what you hoped.
737. This alludes to the idea that a newlywed bride moving in to her husband's home would be on her best behavior.
738. Sāriputta offers positive reinforcement. Even an apparently small instance of overcoming anger is a significant step in mental training.
739. Flood was and remains an ever-present threat in the Indo-Gangetic Plain. | I am writing this note in eastern Australia in 2023, where, due to the impermanence of the elements driven by human greed, we have just endured multiple devastating floods and now face summers of fire.

There comes a time when the water in the ocean stands just seven palm trees deep, or six, five, four, three, two, or even just one palm tree deep. There comes a time when the water in the ocean stands just seven fathoms deep, or six, five, four, three, two, or even just one fathom deep. There comes a time when the water in the ocean stands just half a fathom deep, or waist deep, or knee deep, or even just ankle deep. There comes a time when there's not even enough water left in the great ocean to wet the tip of the toe. So for all its great age, the water element will be revealed as impermanent, liable to end, vanish, and perish. What then of this ephemeral body appropriated by craving? Rather than 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am', they consider it to be none of these things. … If, while recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on the skillful does become stabilized in them, they're happy with that. At this point, much has been done by that mendicant.

And what is the fire element? The fire element may be interior or 16.1
exterior. And what is the interior fire element? Anything internal, pertaining to an individual that's fire, fiery, and appropriated. This includes: that which warms, that which ages, that which heats you up when feverish, that which properly digests food and drink; or anything else internal, personal, that's fire, fiery, and appropriated. This is called the interior fire element. The interior fire element and the exterior fire element are just the fire element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the fire element, detaching the mind from the fire element.

There comes a time when the exterior fire element flares up. It 17.1
burns up villages, towns, cities, countries, and regions until it reaches a green field, a roadside, a cliff's edge, a body of water, or cleared parkland, where it's extinguished due to not being fed. There comes a time when they go looking for a fire, taking just a chicken feather or a scrap of sinew as kindling. So for all its great age, the fire element will be revealed as impermanent, liable to end, vanish, and perish.

What then of this ephemeral body appropriated by craving? Rather than 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am', they consider it to be none of these things. …

18-20.1 If, while recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on the skillful does become stabilized in them, they're happy with that. At this point, much has been done by that mendicant.

21.1 And what is the air element? The air element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior air element? Anything internal, personal, that's air, airy, and appropriated. This includes: winds that go up or down, winds in the belly or the bowels, winds that flow through the limbs, in-breaths and out-breaths; or anything else internal, personal, that's air, airy, and appropriated.[740] This is called the interior air element. The interior air element and the exterior air element are just the air element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the air element, detaching the mind from the air element.

22.1 There comes a time when the exterior air element flares up. It sweeps away villages, towns, cities, countries, and regions. There comes a time, in the last month of summer, when they look for wind by using a palm-leaf or fan, and even the grasses in the drip-fringe of a thatch roof don't stir. So for all its great age, the air element will be revealed as impermanent, liable to end, vanish, and perish. What then of this ephemeral body appropriated by craving? Rather than 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am', they consider it to be none of these things.

23.1 If others abuse, attack, harass, and trouble that mendicant, they understand: 'This painful feeling born of ear contact has arisen in me.

740. The "winds" (*vātā*) include both literal gas and movements of energy. | The study of such winds was a major theme of the early Upaniṣads. The very first sentence of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says that, for the sacrificial horse, the wind (*vātā*) is the breath (or vital force, *prāṇa*), a concept it goes on to mention no fewer than 160 times.

That's dependent, not independent. Dependent on what? Dependent on contact.' They see that contact, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are impermanent. Based on that element alone, their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided.

24.1 Others might treat that mendicant with disliking, loathing, and detestation, striking them with fists, stones, sticks, and swords. They understand: 'This body is such that fists, stones, sticks, and swords strike it. But the Buddha has said in the Advice on the Simile of the Saw: "Even if low-down bandits were to sever you limb from limb with a two-handed saw, anyone who had a thought of hate on that account would not be following my instructions." My energy shall be roused up and unflagging, my mindfulness established and lucid, my body tranquil and undisturbed, and my mind immersed and unified in samādhi. Gladly now, let fists, stones, sticks, and swords strike this body! For this is how the instructions of the Buddhas are followed.'

25.1 While recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on the skillful may not become stabilized in them. In that case they stir up a sense of urgency: 'It's my loss, my misfortune, that while recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on the skillful does not become stabilized in me.' They're like a daughter-in-law who stirs up a sense of urgency when they see their father-in-law. But if, while recollecting the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in this way, equanimity based on the skillful does become stabilized in them, they're happy with that. At this point, much has been done by that mendicant.

26.1 When a space is enclosed by sticks, creepers, grass, and mud it becomes known as a 'building'.[741] In the same way, when a space is

741. Sāriputta extends the teaching in a new way by including the space element. But this is not arbitrarily added to the previous discussion. Rather, he begins by defining space as that which is physically delimited by the other elements. Thus space is considered as a kind of "derived form" (*upādāyarūpa*). This point

enclosed by bones, sinews, flesh, and skin it becomes known as a 'form'.

27.1 Reverends, though the interior eye is intact, so long as exterior sights don't come into range and there's no corresponding engagement, there's no manifestation of the corresponding type of consciousness.[742] Though the interior eye is intact and exterior sights come into range, so long as there's no corresponding engagement, there's no manifestation of the corresponding type of consciousness. But when the interior eye is intact and exterior sights come into range and there is corresponding engagement, there is the manifestation of the corresponding type of consciousness.

28.1 The form produced in this way is included in the grasping aggregate of form. The feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness produced in this way are each included in the corresponding grasping aggregate.[743]

28.2 They understand: 'So this is how there comes to be inclusion, gathering together, and assimilation into these five grasping aggregates. But the Buddha has said:[744] "One who sees dependent origination sees the teaching.[745] One who sees the teaching sees dependent origination." And these five grasping aggregates are indeed dependently originated. The desire, clinging, attraction, and attachment for these five grasping aggregates is the origin of suffering.[746] Giving up and

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was contested by some later schools of Buddhism, who believed that space was unconditioned.

742. This expands the normal explanation of sense experience, found for example at MN 148:7.3.

743. Sāriputta shows the connection between the six senses and the five aggregates.

744. This statement is not found in the Pali canon. See, however, SN 22.87:3.2, "one who sees the teaching sees me."

745. Bringing in dependent origination, Sāriputta integrates in a single discourse all the major wisdom frameworks: the truths, aggregates, senses, elements, and dependent origination. This is especially useful for students, as they would have heard these individual teachings many times, but might be unclear how they are connected.

746. He brings the teaching back around to the four noble truths.

getting rid of desire and greed for these five grasping aggregates is the cessation of suffering.' At this point, much has been done by that mendicant.

Though the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind is intact internally, so long as exterior ideas don't come into range and there's no corresponding engagement, there's no manifestation of the corresponding type of consciousness.[747] 29-30.1

Though the mind is intact internally and exterior ideas come into range, so long as there's no corresponding engagement, there's no manifestation of the corresponding type of consciousness. But when the mind is intact internally and exterior ideas come into range and there is corresponding engagement, there is the manifestation of the corresponding type of consciousness. 38.1

The form produced in this way is included in the grasping aggregate of form. The feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness produced in this way are each included in the corresponding grasping aggregate. They understand: 'So this is how there comes to be in- 38.3

747. The "mind" (*mano*, Sanskrit *manas*) here is presumably what is elsewhere called the "mind element" (*manodhātu*, eg. MN 155:4.8), since both are connected with "ideas" (*dhammā*) and "mind consciousness" (*manoviññāṇa*). The exact nature of *mano* here is not specified in early texts. Judging from this sutta, it parallels the physical basis for the other five kinds of consciousness (already in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.1.8: "seeing through the eye, hearing through the ear, knowing through the mind"), in which case it might be the physical basis for consciousness. The suttas do not specify what this is; tradition calls it the *hadayavatthu*, the "heart basis", while today we would recognize it as the brain. Compare Aitareya Upaniṣad, which says that the mind (*manas*) creates the heart, which in turn creates the moon (1.1.4); when man was formed, the moon, having become *manas*, entered the heart (1.2.4); mind and heart are then said to be the same (3.2). As with the other senses, the mind remains inert until actuated by the Self. Leaving aside the metaphysics, the conception of *manas* as the underlying potential for consciousness is similar, regardless of whether this was a physical organ, or a process of ongoing consciousness awaiting stimulation per the commentary (*bhavaṅgacitta*). The Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga alludes to this passage when it says that the mind element arises either following sense stimulus, or else at the "initial engagement with all mental phenomena" (Vb 3:48.6).

clusion, gathering together, and assimilation into these five grasping aggregates.

38.6 But the Buddha has also said: "One who sees dependent origination sees the teaching. One who sees the teaching sees dependent origination." And these five grasping aggregates are indeed dependently originated. The desire, clinging, attraction, and attachment for these five grasping aggregates is the origin of suffering. Giving up and getting rid of desire and greed for these five grasping aggregates is the cessation of suffering.' At this point, much has been done by that mendicant."

38.13 That is what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what Sāriputta said.

MN 29

The Longer Simile of the Heartwood

Mahāsāropamasutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rā- 1.1
jagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain, not long after Devadatta had left.[748] There the Buddha spoke to the mendicants about Devadatta:

"Mendicants, take the case of a gentleman who has gone forth out 2.1
of faith from the lay life to homelessness, thinking, 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. They're happy with that, and they've got all they wished for. And they glorify themselves and put others down because of that: 'I'm the one with possessions, honor, and popularity. These other mendicants are obscure and insignificant.' And so they become indulgent and fall into negligence on account of those possessions, honor, and popularity. And being negligent they live in suffering.[749]

Suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while 2.9
wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But, passing over the heartwood, softwood, bark, and shoots, he'd cut off the branches and leaves and leave imag-

748. Devadatta was the Buddha's cousin and nemesis. After going forth together with several other relatives of the Buddha (Kd 17:1.4.1), his initial success in meditation was corrupted by his desire for gains and fame (SN 17.35). He tried to take over the Saṅgha but was denounced by the Buddha. His attempt to create a schismatic faction failed and he died in disgrace.

749. The Chinese parallel at EA 43.4 says that this discourse was given during the time he was being lavishly supported by Prince Ajātasattu (SN 17.36, Kd 17:2.1.1).

ining they were heartwood.[750] If a person with clear eyes saw him they'd say, 'This gentleman doesn't know what heartwood, softwood, bark, shoots, or branches and leaves are. That's why he passed them over, cut off the branches and leaves, and left imagining they were heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he won't succeed.' …

2.14 This is called a mendicant who has grabbed the branches and leaves of the spiritual life and stopped short with that.

3.1 Next, take a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness … When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. They're not happy with that, and haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. Nor do they become indulgent and fall into negligence on account of those possessions, honor, and popularity. Being diligent, they achieve accomplishment in ethics. They're happy with that, and they've got all they wished for. And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that: 'I'm the one who is ethical, of good character. These other mendicants are unethical, of bad character.' And so they become indulgent and fall into negligence regarding their accomplishment in ethics. And being negligent they live in suffering.

3.13 Suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But, passing over the heartwood, softwood, and bark, he'd cut off the shoots and leave imagining they were heartwood. If a person with clear eyes saw him they'd say, 'This gentleman doesn't know what heartwood, softwood, bark, shoots, or branches and leaves are. That's why he passed them over, cut off the shoots, and left imagining they were heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he won't succeed.' …

750. Compare the "noble quest" on MN 26 and the search for a "bull elephant" in MN 27. In each case the metaphor emphasizes the specific and uncompromising nature of the goal. The moral is to not stop until the journey is truly complete.

This is called a mendicant who has grabbed the shoots of the spiritual life and stopped short with that. 4.1

Next, take a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness … When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. … Being diligent, they achieve accomplishment in immersion. They're happy with that, and they've got all they wished for. And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that: 'I'm the one with immersion and unified mind. These other mendicants lack immersion, they have straying minds.' And so they become indulgent and fall into negligence regarding that accomplishment in immersion. And being negligent they live in suffering. 4.15

Suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But, passing over the heartwood and softwood, he'd cut off the bark and leave imagining it was heartwood. If a person with clear eyes saw him they'd say: 'This gentleman doesn't know what heartwood, softwood, bark, shoots, or branches and leaves are. That's why he passed them over, cut off the bark, and left imagining it was heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he won't succeed.' … 4.30

This is called a mendicant who has grabbed the bark of the spiritual life and stopped short with that. 4.34

Next, take a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness … When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. … Being diligent, they achieve knowledge and vision.[751] They're happy with that, and they've got 5.1

751. While "knowledge and vision" (*ñāṇadassana*) that is "in accordance with reality" (*yathābhūta*) refers to the vision of the four noble truths at stream-entry, "knowledge and vision" by itself does not have a well established technical meaning. At DN 2:83.1 it is said to be a vision of the body with its consciousness, although this passage is rare and in MN 77:29.11 is not described as "knowledge and vision". Elsewhere it is used in a variety of senses for a kind of clear and enhanced spiritual understanding.

all they wished for. And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that, 'I'm the one who meditates knowing and seeing. These other mendicants meditate without knowing and seeing.' And so they become indulgent and fall into negligence regarding that knowledge and vision. And being negligent they live in suffering.

5.20 Suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But, passing over the heartwood, he'd cut out the softwood and leave imagining it was heartwood. If a person with clear eyes saw him they'd say, 'This gentleman doesn't know what heartwood, softwood, bark, shoots, or branches and leaves are. That's why he passed them over, cut out the softwood, and left imagining it was heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he won't succeed.' …

5.25 This is called a mendicant who has grabbed the softwood of the spiritual life and stopped short with that.

6.1 Next, take a gentleman who has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, thinking, 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. They're not happy with that, and haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. Nor do they become indulgent and fall into negligence on account of those possessions, honor, and popularity. Being diligent, they achieve accomplishment in ethics. They're happy with that, but they haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. Nor do they become indulgent and fall into negligence regarding that accomplishment in ethics. Being diligent, they achieve accomplishment in immersion. They're happy with that, but they haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. Nor do they become indulgent and fall into negligence regarding that accom-

plishment in immersion. Being diligent, they achieve knowledge and vision. They're happy with that, but they haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. Nor do they become indulgent and fall into negligence regarding that knowledge and vision. Being diligent, they achieve irreversible freedom.[752] And it's impossible for that mendicant to fall away from that irreversible freedom.

Suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wan- 6.18
dering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. He'd cut out just the heartwood and leave knowing it was heartwood. If a person with clear eyes saw him they'd say, 'This gentleman knows what heartwood, softwood, bark, shoots, and branches and leaves are. That's why he cut out just the heartwood and left knowing it was heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he will succeed.' …

It's impossible for that mendicant to fall away from that ir- 6.23
reversible freedom.

And so, mendicants, this spiritual life is not lived for the sake of 7.1
possessions, honor, and popularity, or for accomplishment in ethics, or for accomplishment in immersion, or for knowledge and vision. It is this unshakable freedom of heart[753] that is the goal of the spiritual life, the core and the final end."

752. The "irreversible freedom" (*asamaya*, literally "not temporary") is that of arahantship, as opposed to the "temporary freedom" of *samādhi*, from which one can fall away due to bad conduct (AN 5.149), like Devadatta. | Text inconsistently has *vimokkha* ("liberation") here and *vimutti* ("freedom") in the next line, although elsewhere the suttas always read *vimutti*. It seems that when these attainments came to be included in the *Vimokkha* Chapter of the Paṭisambhidāmagga (a late canonical Abhidhamma-style text), they were renamed *vimokkha* to fit the context (Ps 1.5:2.10). The commentary then cited that passage here using *vimokkha*, but the commentarial gloss must have contaminated the text. I translate under the assumption that the correct reading is *vimutti*, although it makes no practical difference.

753. This links the "irreversible" freedom with the "unshakable" freedom of arahantship; the two are equated at MN 122:4.1.

7.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 30

The Shorter Simile of the Heartwood

Cūḷasāropamasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then the brahmin Piṅgalakoccha went up to the Buddha, and 2.1
exchanged greetings with him.[754] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

"Worthy Gotama, there are those ascetics and brahmins who lead 2.3
an order and a community, and tutor a community. They're well-known and famous religious founders, deemed holy by many people. Namely: Pūraṇa Kassapa, the bamboo-staffed ascetic Gosāla, Ajita of the hair blanket, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, and the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan. According to their own claims, did all of them have direct knowledge, or none of them, or only some?"[755]

"Enough, brahmin, let this be:[756] 'According to their own claims, 2.6
did all of them have direct knowledge, or none of them, or only

754. Not mentioned elsewhere in the Pali, this brahmin's name means "tawny" (or "blotchy") Koccha. His name suggests he was of the lineage of Kutsa Āṅgirasa, an oft-mentioned sage and ally (and sometime foe) of Indra in the Rig Veda. The name Kautsa appears in the same lineage lists as Vātsya (eg. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.5.4; see MN 27:2.2).

755. While some such as Mahāvīra the Ñātika (MN 14:17.2) and Pūraṇa Kassapa (AN 9.38:2.1) claimed to have direct knowledge, others such as Ajita Kesakambala denied that such knowledge was possible (DN 2:23.2).

756. The Buddha responded the same way when asked this question by Subhadda (DN 16:5.26.5).

some?' I will teach you the Dhamma. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.10 "Yes, worthy sir," Piṅgalakoccha replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "Suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But, passing over the heartwood, softwood, bark, and shoots, he'd cut off the branches and leaves and leave imagining they were heartwood. If a person with clear eyes saw him they'd say: 'This gentleman doesn't know what heartwood, softwood, bark, shoots, or branches and leaves are. That's why he passed them over, cut off the branches and leaves, and left imagining they were heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he won't succeed.'

4.1 Suppose there was another person in need of heartwood … he'd cut off the shoots and leave imagining they were heartwood …

5.1 Suppose there was another person in need of heartwood … he'd cut off the bark and leave imagining it was heartwood …

6.1 Suppose there was another person in need of heartwood … he'd cut out the softwood and leave imagining it was heartwood …

7.1 Suppose there was another person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. He'd cut out just the heartwood and leave knowing it was heartwood. If a person with clear eyes saw him they'd say: 'This gentleman knows what heartwood, softwood, bark, shoots, or branches and leaves are. That's why he cut out just the heartwood and left knowing it was heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he will succeed.'

8.1 In the same way, take a certain individual who goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, thinking: 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. They're happy with that, and they've got all they wished for. And they glorify

themselves and put others down on account of that: 'I'm the one with possessions, honor, and popularity. These other mendicants are obscure and insignificant.' They become lazy and slack on account of their possessions, honor, and popularity, not generating enthusiasm or trying to realize those things that are better and finer. …[757] They're like the individual who mistakes branches and leaves for heartwood, I say.

Next, take an individual who has gone forth out of faith from the 9.1
lay life to homelessness … When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. They're not happy with that, and haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. They don't become lazy and slack regarding their possessions, honor, and popularity, but generate enthusiasm and try to realize those things that are better and finer. They achieve accomplishment in ethics. They're happy with that, and they've got all they wished for. And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that: 'I'm the one who is ethical, of good character. These other mendicants are unethical, of bad character.' They become lazy and slack regarding their accomplishment in ethics, not generating enthusiasm or trying to realize those things that are better and finer. … They're like the individual who mistakes shoots for heartwood, I say.

Next, take an individual who has gone forth out of faith from the 10.1
lay life to homelessness … They achieve accomplishment in ethics … and immersion. … They become lazy and slack regarding their accomplishment in immersion, not generating enthusiasm or trying to realize those things that are better and finer. … They're like the individual who mistakes bark for heartwood, I say.

Next, take an individual who has gone forth out of faith from 11.1
the lay life to homelessness … They achieve accomplishment in ethics … immersion … and knowledge and vision. They become

757. This sentence differentiates this from the corresponding passage in the preceding sutta MN 29:2.8.

lazy and slack regarding their knowledge and vision, not generating enthusiasm or trying to realize those things that are better and finer. … They're like the individual who mistakes softwood for heartwood, I say.

12.1 Next, take an individual who has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, thinking: 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can find an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth they generate possessions, honor, and popularity. They're not happy with that, and haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. They don't become lazy and slack on account of their possessions, honor, and popularity, but generate enthusiasm and try to realize those things that are better and finer. They become accomplished in ethics. They're happy with that, but they haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. They don't become lazy and slack regarding their accomplishment in ethics, but generate enthusiasm and try to realize those things that are better and finer. They become accomplished in immersion. They're happy with that, but they haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. They don't become lazy and slack regarding their accomplishment in immersion, but generate enthusiasm and try to realize those things that are better and finer. They achieve knowledge and vision. They're happy with that, but they haven't got all they wished for. They don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. They don't become lazy and slack regarding their knowledge and vision, but generate enthusiasm and try to realize those things that are better and finer.

12.20 And what are those things that are better and finer than knowledge and vision?

13.1 Take a mendicant who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first

absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[758] This is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

14.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

15.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

16.1 Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

17.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

758. Where the previous sutta went directly from "knowledge and vision" to final liberation (MN 29:6.16), the current sutta adds an extensive passage on the nine attainments. Several details indicate that this passage is a later insertion. First, the *jhānas* are already included under immersion above (MN 30:10.12). There, immersion leads to knowledge and vision following the normal sequence (eg. DN 2:83.1), rather than being superior to it as here. Further, this discourse is distinguished as "short" compared to the previous "large" discourse, but it is in fact longer due to this extra material, which was presumably added after the title was established. EA 43.4, which is the only Chinese parallel to both these discourses, also lacks this extra passage.

18.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

19.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

20.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision.

21.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. And, having seen with wisdom, their defilements come to an end. This too is something better and finer than knowledge and vision. These are the things that are better and finer than knowledge and vision.

22.1 Suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. He'd cut out just the heartwood and leave knowing it was heartwood. Whatever he needs to make from heartwood, he will succeed. That's what this individual is like, I say.

23.1 And so, brahmin, this spiritual life is not lived for the sake of possessions, honor, and popularity, or for accomplishment in ethics, or for accomplishment in immersion, or for knowledge and vision. It is this unshakable freedom of heart that is the goal of the spiritual life, the core and the final end."

24.1 When he had spoken, the brahmin Piṅgalakoccha said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

THE GREATER CHAPTER ON PAIRS

MN 31

The Shorter Discourse at Gosiṅga

Cūḷagosiṅgasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[759] At one time the Buddha was staying at Ñātika in the brick house.[760]

2.1 Now at that time the venerables Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila were staying in the sal forest park at Gosiṅga.[761]

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759. This discourse is a favorite among monastics, depicting an ideal life of simplicity and friendship. The introduction recurs at Kd 10:4.2.1 and, with a different teaching portion, at MN 128:8.1. In both those cases it is set after the Buddha left the quarreling monks of Kosambī. | This discourse and MN 128 appear to be influenced by Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3, a famous dialogue where an unusually reluctant Yājñavalkya is repeatedly pressed by King Janaka to reveal the true nature of a person's light. At SN 7.9:14.4 this passage is alluded to directly.

760. Ñātika (also spelled *nātika*, or *nādika*; Sanskrit *jñātṛka*; Prākrit *nāyika*) was the clan to which the Jain leader Mahāvīra (called Nāṭaputta, i.e. Ñātiputta) belonged. This is the chief town of the clan. It was part of the Vajjian Federation (See DN 16:2.5.1). | Over a millennium previously, the Indus Valley Civilization had built cities of fired brick with standardized size and construction methods, but in the Buddha's day most buildings were wood. This is the only brick building mentioned in the suttas, although brick construction is also discussed in the Vinaya.

761. Anuruddha was the brother of Ānanda and Mahānāma (Kd 17:1.1.3) which, according to the commentary, makes the Buddha his cousin. He was an exponent of mindfulness meditation (SN 52.1, etc.) and master of clairvoyance (AN 1.192:1.1). | Kimbila was one of the seven leading Sakyans, including Anuruddha and Ānanda, who went forth together (Kd 17:1.4.1). | Several Nandiyas are known in the suttas, one of whom was a Sakyan (SN 55.40, AN 11.13; the root *nand* ("joy") was a popular choice for Sakyan names: Ānanda, Nanda, Upananda). While Nandiya is not mentioned as having gone forth with the seven, Kimbila refers to their group as the "Sakyan friends" in his verses at Thag 2.18, so it seems likely he was indeed the Sakyan Nandiya; perhaps he went forth later than his friends.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and 3.1
went to that park. The park keeper saw the Buddha coming off in the distance[762] and said to him, "Don't come into this park, ascetic. There are three gentlemen staying here whose nature is to desire self-knowledge.[763] Do not disturb them."

Anuruddha heard the park keeper conversing with the Buddha, 4.1
and said to him, "Don't keep the Buddha out, good park keeper! Our Teacher, the Blessed One, has arrived." Then Anuruddha went to Nandiya and Kimbila, and said to them, "Come forth, venerables, come forth! Our Teacher, the Blessed One, has arrived!"

Then Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila came out to greet the 5.1
Buddha. One received his bowl and robe, one spread out a seat, and one set out water for washing his feet. The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out, and washed his feet. Those venerables bowed and sat down to one side.

762. This is one of several instances showing that the Buddha looked like an ordinary ascetic (see also DN 2:11.2, MN 140:5.11).

763. *Attakāmarūpa* is glossed by the commentary as "those whose nature is to desire their own welfare". In the Vinaya (*attakāma*) means to serve "one's own desires" (Bu Ss 4). But here it draws on Yājnavalkya's description of one whose form is such that, having attained their only desire, the Self, they have become without desire (*ātmakāmam āptakāmam akāmaṁ rūpaṁ*, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 14.7.1.21, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.21. Cf. *niṣkāma āptakāma ātmakāmo*, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 14.7.2.8, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.6. In both cases the Bṛhadāraṇyaka reverses the sequence of *āpta … ātma*.) This describes a sage who is fully immersed in the realization of Brahman in death or dreamless sleep. Such realization is a form of "knowledge" (*veda*). Here the suffix *-rūpa* does not mean "seemingly", nor is it to be discarded as a mere idiom, but has the sense given in the commentary, a person's true form or true nature (*sabhāva*). This is, of course, not a Buddhist concept. But it is spoken by the keeper of a park (not a monastery) who fails to even recognize the Buddha. There is no reason he should be Buddhist. To this day, Buddhist monastics are received with kindness and unhesitatingly supported by Hindus, who readily interpret and describe the monastics' practice in their own terms.

5.6 The Buddha said to Anuruddha, "I hope you're keeping well, Anuruddha and friends, I hope you're all right. And I hope you're having no trouble getting almsfood."[764]

5.8 "We're keeping well, Blessed One, we're getting by. And we have no trouble getting almsfood."

6.1 "I hope you're living in harmony, appreciating each other, without quarreling, blending like milk and water, and regarding each other with kindly eyes?"[765]

6.2 "Indeed, sir, we live in harmony as you say."

6.3 "But how do you live this way?"

7.1 "In this case, sir, I think: 'I'm fortunate, so very fortunate, to live together with spiritual companions such as these.' I consistently treat these venerables with kindness by way of body, speech, and mind, both in public and in private.[766] I think, 'Why don't I set aside my own ideas and just go along with these venerables' ideas?' And that's what I do. Though we're different in body, sir, we're one in mind, it seems to me."

7.11 And the venerables Nandiya and Kimbila spoke likewise, and they added: "That's how we live in harmony, appreciating each other,

764. The text refers to "Anuruddhas" in plural, referring to the group via their most senior member.

765. The emphasis on harmonious living fits the accounts in Kd 10:4.2.1 and MN 128, where the Buddha had just left the quarreling community of Kosambī. This suggests that the introduction belongs there, when the three friends were practicing together in the Eastern Bamboo Park near Kosambī. The current sutta is set around 400 km to the east near Vesālī, and it is hardly likely that the Buddha went straight there after leaving Kosambī. In addition, in MN 128 the three friends are still developing their meditation, whereas in the current sutta they have already achieved arahantship. Also, the location there is said to be the site of a hall for Vedic rituals, which suits the evidently non-Buddhist park keeper. It seems that the popular introduction of MN 128 was reused to frame a later conversation with the three friends, despite the implausibility of the same events happening in the same way twice.

766. These are three of the six "warm-hearted qualities" of MN 48:6.2 and AN 6.11:1.1.

without quarreling, blending like milk and water, and regarding each other with kindly eyes."

"Good, good, Anuruddha and friends! But I hope you're living diligently, keen, and resolute?"[767] 8.1

"Indeed, sir, we live diligently." 9.1

"But how do you live this way?" 9.2

"In this case, sir, whoever returns first from almsround prepares the seats, and puts out the drinking water and the rubbish bin. If there's remainder, whoever returns last eats it if they like. Otherwise they throw it out where there is little that grows, or drop it into water that has no living creatures. Then they put away the seats, drinking water, and rubbish bin, and sweep the refectory. If someone sees that the pot of water for washing, drinking, or the toilet is empty they set it up. If he can't do it, he summons another with a wave of the hand, and they set it up by lending each other a hand to lift. But we don't break into speech for that reason.[768] And every five days we sit together for the whole night and discuss the teachings.[769] That's how we live diligently, keen, and resolute."[770] 9.3

"Good, good, Anuruddha and friends! But as you live diligently like this, have you achieved any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable meditation?" 10.1

767. Normally I render *viharati* in such instances as "meditate". But Anuruddha's response avoids talking about meditation. I think he is deliberately avoiding the topic, skirting the obvious intended meaning by seizing on an ambiguity. His reticence echoes Yājñavalkya's reticence to answer Janaka on the topic of a person's light (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.1).

768. For *hatthavilaṅghaka* ("lending a hand up") see MN 125:9.2. | The Chinese parallels (MA 128 at T i 729c9 and EA 24.8 at T ii 629a23) both add that they then retire for meditation.

769. That is, three times in each *uposatha* period lasting a fortnight. | The Chinese parallels add that they might also sit in noble silence (in accord with MN 26:4.13).

770. Here the Vinaya account ends, as it is concerned with the settlement of the quarrel among the monks of Kosambī.

10.3 "How could we not, sir? Whenever we want, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, we enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[771] This is a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable meditation, that we have achieved while living diligent, keen, and resolute."

11-13.1 "Good, good! But have you achieved any other superhuman distinction for going beyond and stilling that meditation?"[772]

11-13.3 "How could we not, sir? Whenever we want, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, we enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is another superhuman distinction that we have achieved for going beyond and stilling that meditation."

14.1 "Good, good! But have you achieved any other superhuman distinction for going beyond and stilling that meditation?"

14.3 "How could we not, sir? Whenever we want, with the fading away of rapture, we enter and remain in the third absorption, where we meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' This is another superhuman distinction that we have achieved for going beyond and stilling that meditation."

15.1 "Good, good! But have you achieved any other superhuman distinction for going beyond and stilling that meditation?"

15.3 "How could we not, sir? Whenever we want, with the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness

771. The first absorption is defined at Bu Pj 4:4.1.3.1 as the most basic "superhuman distinction". Thus Anuruddha is answering the question directly but humbly, revealing as little as possible.

772. *Samatikkamāya* ("for going beyond") is used in a similar sense at MN 10:47.1.

and sadness, we enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is another superhuman distinction that we have achieved for going beyond and stilling that meditation."

"Good, good! But have you achieved any other superhuman dis- 16.1
tinction for going beyond and stilling that meditation?"

"How could we not, sir? Whenever we want, going totally be- 16.3
yond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', we enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is another superhuman distinction that we have achieved for going beyond and stilling that meditation."

"Good, good! But have you achieved any other superhuman dis- 17.1
tinction for going beyond and stilling that meditation?"

"How could we not, sir? Whenever we want, going totally beyond 17.3
the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', we enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. … going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', we enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. … going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, we enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is another superhuman distinction that we have achieved for going beyond and stilling that meditation."

"Good, good! But have you achieved any other superhuman dis- 18.1
tinction for going beyond and stilling that meditation?"

"How could we not, sir? Whenever we want, going totally beyond 18.3
the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, we enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. And, having seen with wisdom, our defilements have come to an end. This is another superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable meditation, that we have achieved for going beyond and stilling that meditation. And we don't see any better or finer way of meditating comfortably than this."

18.7 "Good, good! There is no better or finer way of meditating comfortably than this."

19.1 Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired the venerables Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila with a Dhamma talk, after which he rose from his seat and left.

20.1 The venerables then accompanied the Buddha for a little way before turning back. Nandiya and Kimbila said to Anuruddha, "Did we ever tell you that we had gained such and such meditations and attainments, up to the ending of defilements, as you revealed to the Buddha?"[773]

20.4 "The venerables did not tell me that they had gained such meditations and attainments. But I discovered it by encompassing your minds, and deities also told me. I answered when the Buddha directly asked about it."

21.1 Then the native spirit Dīgha Parajana went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him,[774] "The Vajjis are lucky! The Vajjian people are so very lucky[775] that the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha stays there, as well as these three gentlemen, the venerables Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila."

21.5 Hearing the cry of Dīgha Parajana, the earth gods raised the cry …

21.9 Hearing the cry of the earth gods, the gods of the four great kings … the gods of the thirty-three … the gods of Yama … the joyful

773. Even such close monks did not reveal their attainments to each other, a testament to their character. This is a reminder of the virtue of discretion when speaking of such subtle matters. They are not things to be bandied about in common conversation.

774. *Parajana* means "stranger" (Mil 6.3.1:13.2) or "strange spirit" (MN 25:5.20). The commentary identifies him with the Dīgha of DN 32:10.18. He must have been the deity of a local shrine. This passage shows how the intercession of even such a humble spirit can resound among all the gods.

775. The praise that follows is unusually effusive and can be compared with the equally unusual recounting of the enlightened devotees of Ñātika (DN 16:2.5.1). Both passages serve to extol Buddhism in the home of Mahāvīra, the Buddha's elder rival.

gods … the gods who love to create … the gods who control what is created by others … the gods of the Divinity's host raised the cry, "The Vajjis are lucky! The Vajjian people are so very lucky that the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha stays there, as well as these three gentlemen, the venerables Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila."

And so at that moment, that second, that hour, those venerables were known as far as the realm of divinity. 21.19

"That's so true, Dīgha! That's so true! If the family from which those three gentlemen went forth from the lay life to homelessness were to recollect those venerables with confident heart, that would be for that family's lasting welfare and happiness. If the family circle … village … town … city … country … all the aristocrats … all the brahmins … all the peasants … all the workers were to recollect those venerables with confident heart, that would be for all those menials' lasting welfare and happiness. 22.1

If the whole world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—were to recollect those venerables with confident heart, that would be for the whole world's lasting welfare and happiness. 22.12

See, Dīgha, how those three gentlemen are practicing for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of sympathy for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans!" 22.13

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the native spirit Dīgha Parajana approved what the Buddha said. 22.14

MN 32

The Longer Discourse at Gosiṅga

Mahāgosiṅgasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the sal forest park at Gosiṅga, together with several well-known senior disciples, such as[776] the venerables Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna, Mahākassapa, Anuruddha, Revata, Ānanda, and others.

2.1 Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna came out of retreat, went to Venerable Mahākassapa, and said, "Come, Reverend Kassapa, let's go to Venerable Sāriputta to hear the teaching."

2.3 "Yes, reverend," Mahākassapa replied. Then, together with Venerable Anuruddha, they went to Sāriputta to hear the teaching.

3.1 Seeing them, Venerable Ānanda went to Venerable Revata, told him what was happening, and invited him also.

4.1 Sāriputta saw them coming off in the distance and said to Ānanda, "Come, Venerable Ānanda. Welcome to Ānanda, the Buddha's attendant, who is so close to the Buddha. Reverend Ānanda, the sal forest park at Gosiṅga is lovely, the night is bright, the sal trees are in full blossom, and heavenly scents seem to float on the air. What kind of mendicant would grace this park?"

4.7 "Reverend Sāriputta, it's a mendicant who is very learned, remembering and keeping what they've learned. These teachings are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased, describing a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. They are very learned in such teachings, remembering them, rehearsing them, mentally scrutinizing them, and penetrating

776. From MN 31:3.1 we know that this park was near Ñātika in the Vajjian country.

them theoretically.[777] And they teach the four assemblies in order to uproot the underlying tendencies with well-rounded and coherent words and phrases.[778] That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park."

When he had spoken, Sāriputta said to Revata, "Reverend Revata, 5.1
Ānanda has answered according to his own inspiration. And now we ask you the same question."

"Reverend Sāriputta, it's a mendicant who enjoys retreat and loves 5.6
retreat. They're committed to inner serenity of the heart, they don't neglect absorption, they're endowed with discernment, and they frequent empty huts.[779] That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park."

When he had spoken, Sāriputta said to Anuruddha, "Reverend 6.1
Anuruddha, Revata has answered according to his own inspiration. And now we ask you the same question."

"Reverend Sāriputta, it's a mendicant who surveys a thousandfold 6.6
galaxy with clairvoyance that is purified and surpasses the human,[780] just as a person with clear eyes could survey a thousand orbits from

777. Ānanda was renowned as the most learned monk in the Saṅgha (AN 1.219).

778. Typically inclusive, Ānanda mentions the four assemblies of monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

779. There were two prominent Revatas in the early Saṅgha. There was Revata of the Acacia Wood, who was said to be the foremost of forest dwellers (AN 1.203, Thag 14.1, Thag 1.42). But this is probably Revata the Doubter, who was the most skilled in *jhāna* (AN 1.204, Thag 1.3). Early in his monastic life he struggled with doubt over small matters (Kd 6:16.1.1). He overcame this (Ud 5.7), but the name stuck.

780. Anuruddha is identified as foremost in clairvoyance at AN 1.192. | The verb *voloketi* ("surveys") is an elevated usage, only used of Anuruddha's ability (see AN 3.130:2.2) and when describing a Buddha "surveying" the world (MN 26:21.1).

the upper floor of a royal longhouse.[781] That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park."

7.1 When he had spoken, Sāriputta said to Mahākassapa, "Reverend Kassapa, Anuruddha has answered according to his own inspiration. And now we ask you the same question."

7.6 "Reverend Sāriputta, it's a mendicant who lives in the wilderness, eats only almsfood, wears rag robes, and owns just three robes; and they praise these things. They are of few wishes, content, secluded, aloof, and energetic; and they praise these things. They are accomplished in ethics, immersion, wisdom, freedom, and the knowledge and vision of freedom; and they praise these things.[782] That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park."

8.1 When he had spoken, Sāriputta said to Mahāmoggallāna, "Reverend Moggallāna, Mahākassapa has answered according to his own inspiration. And now we ask you the same question."

8.6 "Reverend Sāriputta, it's when two mendicants engage in discussion about the teaching. They question each other and answer each other's questions without faltering, and their discussion on the teach-

781. This power is compared (in the Majjhima) with a man standing between two doors watching people come to and fro (MN 39:20.3, MN 77:35.2, MN 130:2.1), and (in the Dīgha) with someone in a longhouse watching people move about in the town square (DN 2:96.1, DN 10:2.33.1). The unique phrasing here evokes the Wheel that manifests to a Wheel-Turning Monarch as he stands upstairs in the royal longhouse, which is thousand-spoked and complete with rim (*sahassāraṁ sanemikaṁ*, MN 129:34.2, DN 26:4.9). The simile was evidently unclear to the ancients, as one Chinese parallel has instead "a thousand bricks" (presumably laid out to dry in the sun, MA 184 at T i 727b14). In the Pali tradition, *nemimaṇḍala* is the outer cladding of a wheel rim, often iron (see commentary to Ja 475). However, normally sutta similes draw directly from experience, and it is hard to imagine how one would survey a thousand wheel rims (unless perhaps a king overseeing chariot construction in his forecourt?) On the other hand, the Wheel is a solar symbol and *nemimaṇḍala* could easily refer to the orbits of the stars, which would explain "looking at the sky" of EA 37.3 (at T ii 711a3). On balance, I think the simile refers to a star-gazing king.

782. Mahākassapa's austere lifestyle was renowned (AN 1.191).

ing flows on.[783] That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park."

Then Mahāmoggallāna said to Sāriputta, "Each of us has spoken 9.1
from our heart. And now we ask you: Reverend Sāriputta, the sal forest park at Gosiṅga is lovely, the night is bright, the sal trees are in full blossom, and heavenly scents seem to float on the air. What kind of mendicant would grace this park?"

"Reverend Moggallāna, it's when a mendicant masters their mind 9.6
and is not mastered by it.[784] In the morning, they abide in whatever meditation or attainment they want. At midday, and in the evening, they abide in whatever meditation or attainment they want. Suppose that a ruler or their chief minister had a chest full of garments of different colors. In the morning, they'd don whatever pair of garments they wanted. At midday, and in the evening, they'd don whatever pair of garments they wanted.

In the same way, a mendicant masters their mind and is not mas- 9.14
tered by it. In the morning, they abide in whatever meditation or attainment they want. At midday, and in the evening, they abide in whatever meditation or attainment they want. That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park."

Then Sāriputta said to those venerables, "Each of us has spoken 10.1
from the heart. Come, reverends, let's go to the Buddha, and inform him about this. As he answers, so we'll remember it."

"Yes, reverend," they replied. Then those venerables went to the 10.5
Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Venerable Sāriputta told the Buddha of how the mendicants had come to see him, and

783. In the suttas, *abhidhamma* means "about the teaching". Here the prefix *abhi-* conveys the same sense as the English "meta-". | This is a surprising topic for Moggallāna, and all three Chinese parallels as well as Sanskrit fragments say Moggallāna praised psychic powers, in which he was the recognized expert (AN 1.190). It seems certain the Pali is corrupt here, and MA 185 more plausibly attributes discussion on the teaching to Mahākaccāna.

784. While one might expect Sāriputta to praise wisdom, all the parallels agree on this point. Indeed, Sāriputta also speaks in a similar way on mental mastery at SN 46.4.

how he had asked Ānanda: "'Ānanda, the sal forest park at Gosiṅga is lovely, the night is bright, the sal trees are in full blossom, and heavenly scents seem to float on the air. What kind of mendicant would grace this park?' When I had spoken, Ānanda said to me: 'Reverend Sāriputta, it's a mendicant who is very learned … That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park.'"

11.12 "Good, good, Sāriputta! Ānanda answered in the right way for him. For Ānanda is very learned …"

12.1 "Next I asked Revata the same question. He said: 'It's a mendicant who enjoys retreat … That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park.'"

12.9 "Good, good, Sāriputta! Revata answered in the right way for him. For Revata enjoys retreat …"

13.1 "Next I asked Anuruddha the same question. He said: 'It's a mendicant who surveys the thousandfold galaxy with clairvoyance that is purified and surpasses the human … That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park.'"

13.8 "Good, good, Sāriputta! Anuruddha answered in the right way for him. For Anuruddha surveys the thousandfold galaxy with clairvoyance that is purified and surpasses the human."

14.1 "Next I asked Mahākassapa the same question. He said: 'It's a mendicant who lives in the wilderness … and is accomplished in the knowledge and vision of freedom; and they praise these things. That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park.'"

14.8 "Good, good, Sāriputta! Kassapa answered in the right way for him. For Kassapa lives in the wilderness … and is accomplished in the knowledge and vision of freedom; and he praises these things."

15.1 "Next I asked Mahāmoggallāna the same question. He said: 'It's when two mendicants engage in discussion about the teaching … That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park.'"

15.8 "Good, good, Sāriputta! Moggallāna answered in the right way for him. For Moggallāna is a Dhamma speaker."

16.1 When he had spoken, Moggallāna said to the Buddha, "Next, I asked Sāriputta: 'Each of us has spoken according to our own

inspiration. And now we ask you: Reverend Sāriputta, the sal forest park at Gosiṅga is lovely, the night is bright, the sal trees are in full blossom, and heavenly scents seem to float on the air. What kind of mendicant would grace this park?' When I had spoken, Sāriputta said to me: 'Reverend Moggallāna, it's when a mendicant masters their mind and is not mastered by it … That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park.'"

"Good, good, Moggallāna! Sāriputta answered in the right way for him. For Sāriputta masters his mind and is not mastered by it …" 16.21

When he had spoken, Sāriputta asked the Buddha, "Sir, who has spoken well?" 17.1

"You've all spoken well in your own way.[785] However, listen to me also as to what kind of mendicant would grace this sal forest park at Gosiṅga. It's a mendicant who, after the meal, returns from almsround, sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present, thinking:[786] 'I will not break this sitting posture until my mind is freed from the defilements by not grasping!' That's the kind of mendicant who would grace this park." 17.3

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, those venerables approved what the Buddha said. 17.8

785. The Buddha gives positive reinforcement, not only to the wholesome qualities of others, but to the fact that they appreciate their own good qualities. This is not conceit, but a form of rejoicing (*muditā*).

786. While the others spoke of results, the Buddha speaks of causes. Compare MN 123:22.1, where the Buddha similarly brings the conversation back to meditation practice.

MN 33

The Longer Discourse on the Cowherd

Mahāgopālakasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, a cowherd with eleven factors can't maintain and expand a herd of cattle.[787] What eleven? It's when a cowherd doesn't know form, is unskilled in characteristics, doesn't pick out flies' eggs, doesn't dress wounds, doesn't spread smoke, doesn't know the ford, doesn't know satisfaction, doesn't know the trail, is not skilled in ranges, milks dry, and doesn't show extra respect to the bulls who are fathers and captains of the herd.[788] A cowherd with these eleven factors can't maintain and expand a herd of cattle.

3.1 In the same way, a mendicant with eleven qualities can't achieve growth, improvement, or maturity in this teaching and training. What eleven? It's when a mendicant doesn't know form, is unskilled in characteristics, doesn't pick out flies' eggs, doesn't dress wounds, doesn't spread smoke, doesn't know the ford, doesn't know satisfaction, doesn't know the trail, is not skilled in ranges, milks dry, and

787. Since organizing teachings by number is the hallmark of the Aṅguttara Nikāya, it comes as no surprise to see this pattern repeated in the Book of the Elevens at AN 11.17, AN 11.22–29, and AN 11.502–981.

788. "Knowing form" (*rūpaññū*) means being able to keep track of the herd by reckoning or recognizing them. A better translation would be "appearance", but I use "form" for consistency. | "Ford" (*titttha*) is a way across the river. | "Spreads smoke" (*dhūmaṁ kattā*) is the traditional practice of warding off flies and other pests by burning cow dung, etc. | "Satisfy" (*pīta*) is less literal than "drink", but clarifies the simile later on.

doesn't show extra respect to senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha.

And how does a mendicant not know form? It's when a mendicant doesn't truly understand that all form is the four principal states, or form derived from the four principal states. That's how a mendicant doesn't know form. 4.1

And how is a mendicant not skilled in characteristics? It's when a mendicant doesn't understand that a fool is characterized by their deeds, and an astute person is characterized by their deeds. That's how a mendicant isn't skilled in characteristics. 5.1

And how does a mendicant not pick out flies' eggs? It's when a mendicant tolerates a sensual, malicious, or cruel thought that has arisen. They tolerate any bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen. They don't give them up, dispel them, eliminate them, and obliterate them. That's how a mendicant doesn't pick out flies' eggs. 6.1

And how does a mendicant not dress wounds? When a mendicant sees a sight with their eyes, they get caught up in the features and details. Since the faculty of sight is left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure become overwhelming. They don't practice restraint, they don't protect the faculty of sight, and they don't achieve its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears … smell an odor with their nose … taste a flavor with their tongue … feel a touch with their body … know an idea with their mind, they get caught up in the features and details. Since the faculty of the mind is left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure become overwhelming. They don't practice restraint, they don't protect the faculty of the mind, and they don't achieve its restraint. That's how a mendicant doesn't dress wounds. 7.1

And how does a mendicant not spread smoke? It's when a mendicant doesn't teach others the Dhamma in detail as they learned and memorized it. That's how a mendicant doesn't spread smoke. 8.1

9.1 And how does a mendicant not know the ford?[789] It's when a mendicant doesn't from time to time go up to those mendicants who are very learned—inheritors of the heritage, who have memorized the teachings, the monastic law, and the outlines—and ask them questions:[790] 'Why, sir, does it say this? What does that mean?' Those venerables don't reveal what is hidden, clarify what is unclear, and dispel doubt regarding the many doubtful matters. That's how a mendicant doesn't know the ford.

10.1 And how does a mendicant not know satisfaction? It's when a mendicant, when the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One are being taught, finds no inspiration in the meaning and the teaching, and finds no joy connected with the teaching.[791] That's how a mendicant doesn't know satisfaction.

11.1 And how does a mendicant not know the trail? It's when a mendicant doesn't truly understand the noble eightfold path. That's how a mendicant doesn't know the trail.

12.1 And how is a mendicant not skilled in ranges? It's when a mendicant doesn't truly understand the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.[792] That's how a mendicant is not skilled in ranges.

13.1 And how does a mendicant milk dry? It's when a mendicant is invited by a householder to accept robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, and that mendicant doesn't know moderation in accepting. That's how a mendicant milks dry.

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789. A *tittha* ("ford") is a path to salvation, usually used of non-Buddhist religions, whose founders are "ford-makers" (*titthakāra*).

790. "Inheritors of the heritage" is *āgatāgamā*, where *āgama* means "what has come down", namely the scriptural heritage. *Āgama* is a synonym for *nikāya* in the sense of "collection of scripture". | The "outlines" (*mātikā*, literally "matrix") are the summary outlines of topics that served as seeds for the development of Abhidhamma. DN 16:3.50.5 features one of the earliest of such lists, the 37 path factors that the Buddha "taught from his own direct knowledge". These serve as outline for the section on the path in the Saṁyutta, from where they were adopted in various Abhidhamma texts such as the Vibhaṅga.

791. This plays on the similarity of *pīta* ("to have drunk, to have found satisfaction") and *pīti* ("rapture, joy"); see also Snp 2.3:5.1.

792. See SN 47.6.

And how does a mendicant not show extra respect to senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha? It's when a mendicant doesn't consistently treat senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha with kindness by way of body, speech, and mind, both in public and in private. That's how a mendicant doesn't show extra respect to senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha. 14.1

A mendicant with these eleven qualities can't achieve growth, improvement, or maturity in this teaching and training. 14.6

A cowherd with eleven factors can maintain and expand a herd of cattle. What eleven? It's when a cowherd knows form, is skilled in characteristics, picks out flies' eggs, dresses wounds, spreads smoke, knows the ford, knows satisfaction, knows the trail, is skilled in ranges, doesn't milk dry, and shows extra respect to the bulls who are fathers and captains of the herd. A cowherd with these eleven factors can maintain and expand a herd of cattle. 15.1

In the same way, a mendicant with eleven qualities can achieve growth, improvement, and maturity in this teaching and training. What eleven? It's when a mendicant knows form, is skilled in characteristics, picks out flies' eggs, dresses wounds, spreads smoke, knows the ford, knows satisfaction, knows the trail, is skilled in ranges, doesn't milk dry, and shows extra respect to senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha. 16.1

And how does a mendicant know form? It's when a mendicant truly understands that all form is the four principal states, or form derived from the four principal states. That's how a mendicant knows form. 17.1

And how is a mendicant skilled in characteristics? It's when a mendicant understands that a fool is characterized by their deeds, and an astute person is characterized by their deeds. That's how a mendicant is skilled in characteristics. 18.1

And how does a mendicant pick out flies' eggs? It's when a mendicant doesn't tolerate a sensual, malicious, or cruel thought that 19.1

has arisen. They don't tolerate any bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen, but give them up, dispel them, eliminate them, and obliterate them. That's how a mendicant picks out flies' eggs.

20.1 And how does a mendicant dress wounds? When a mendicant sees a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears … smell an odor with their nose … taste a flavor with their tongue … feel a touch with their body … know an idea with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. That's how a mendicant dresses wounds.

21.1 And how does a mendicant spread smoke? It's when a mendicant teaches others the Dhamma in detail as they learned and memorized it. That's how a mendicant spreads smoke.

22.1 And how does a mendicant know the ford? It's when from time to time a mendicant goes up to those mendicants who are very learned—inheritors of the heritage, who have memorized the teachings, the monastic law, and the outlines—and asks them questions: 'Why, sir, does it say this? What does that mean?' Those venerables reveal what is hidden, clarify what is unclear, and dispel doubt regarding the many doubtful matters. That's how a mendicant knows the ford.

23.1 And how does a mendicant know satisfaction? It's when a mendicant, when the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One are being taught, finds inspiration in the meaning and the teaching, and finds joy connected with the teaching. That's how a mendicant knows satisfaction.

And how does a mendicant know the trail? It's when a mendicant truly understands the noble eightfold path. That's how a mendicant knows the trail. 24.1

And how is a mendicant skilled in ranges? It's when a mendicant truly understands the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. That's how a mendicant is skilled in ranges. 25.1

And how does a mendicant not milk dry? It's when a mendicant is invited by a householder to accept robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, and that mendicant knows moderation in accepting. That's how a mendicant doesn't milk dry. 26.1

And how does a mendicant show extra respect to senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha? It's when a mendicant consistently treats senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha with kindness by way of body, speech, and mind, both in public and in private. That's how a mendicant shows extra respect to senior mendicants of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha. 27.1

A mendicant with these eleven qualities can achieve growth, improvement, and maturity in this teaching and training." 27.6

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 27.7

MN 34

The Shorter Discourse on the Cowherd

Cūḷagopālakasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Vajjis near Ukkacelā on the bank of the Ganges River.[793] There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Once upon a time, mendicants, there was an unintelligent Magadhan cowherd. In the last month of the rainy season, in autumn, without inspecting the near shore or the far shore, he drove his cattle across a place with no ford on the Ganges River to the northern shore among the Suvidehans.[794]

3.1 But the cattle bunched up in mid-stream and came to ruin right there. Why is that? Because the unintelligent cowherd failed to inspect the shores before driving the cattle across at a place with no ford. In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who are unskilled in this world and the other world, unskilled in Māra's dominion and its opposite, and unskilled in Death's dominion and its opposite. If anyone thinks they are worth listening to and trusting, it will be for their lasting harm and suffering.

793. The Buddha also gave a discourse here shortly after the deaths of Sāriputta and Moggallāna (SN 47.14:1.1).

794. Thus illustrating the need to "know the ford" in the previous sutta (MN 33:2.3). | The Suvidehans are not mentioned anywhere else, and the commentary simply treats them as Videhans. But Videha lay to the north-east of Vajjī, and since the expansion of Vajjī and contraction of Videha before the Buddha's time, it is unlikely that it bordered the Ganges opposite Magadha. Perhaps this story stems from a time when Videha did expand to the river, or perhaps there were folks who called themselves "good Videhans" after the eclipse of the kingdom.

Once upon a time, mendicants, there was an intelligent Magadhan cowherd. In the last month of the rainy season, in autumn, after inspecting the near shore and the far shore, he drove his cattle across a ford on the Ganges River to the northern shore among the Suvidehans. 4.1

First he drove across the bulls, the fathers and captains of the herd. They breasted the stream of the Ganges and safely reached the far shore. Then he drove across the strong and tractable cattle. They too breasted the stream of the Ganges and safely reached the far shore. Then he drove across the bullocks and heifers. They too breasted the stream of the Ganges and safely reached the far shore. Then he drove across the calves and weak cattle. They too breasted the stream of the Ganges and safely reached the far shore. Once it happened that a baby calf had just been born. Urged on by its mother's lowing, even it managed to breast the stream of the Ganges and safely reach the far shore.[795] Why is that? Because the intelligent cowherd inspected both shores before driving the cattle across at a ford. 5.1

In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who are skilled in this world and the other world, skilled in Māra's dominion and its opposite, and skilled in Death's dominion and its opposite. If anyone thinks they are worth listening to and trusting, it will be for their lasting welfare and happiness. 5.12

Just like the bulls, fathers and captains of the herd, who crossed the Ganges to safety are the mendicants who are perfected, who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment. Having breasted Māra's stream, they have safely crossed over to the far shore. 6.1

Just like the strong and tractable cattle who crossed the Ganges to safety are the mendicants who, with the ending of the five lower 7.1

795. Typically *bhūtapubbaṁ* is used for fables ("once upon a time"), but see also MN 36:4.3.

fetters, are reborn spontaneously. They're extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world. They too, having breasted Māra's stream, will safely cross over to the far shore.

8.1 Just like the bullocks and heifers who crossed the Ganges to safety are the mendicants who, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, are once-returners. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. They too, having breasted Māra's stream, will safely cross over to the far shore.

9.1 Just like the calves and weak cattle who crossed the Ganges to safety are the mendicants who, with the ending of three fetters are stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. They too, having breasted Māra's stream, will safely cross over to the far shore.

10.1 Just like the baby calf who had just been born, but, urged on by its mother's lowing, still managed to cross the Ganges to safety are the mendicants who are followers of teachings, followers by faith. They too, having breasted Māra's stream, will safely cross over to the far shore.

11.1 Mendicants, I am skilled in this world and the other world, skilled in Māra's dominion and its opposite, and skilled in Death's dominion and its opposite. If anyone thinks I am worth listening to and trusting, it will be for their lasting welfare and happiness."

12.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:[796]

12.3 "This world and the other world[797]
have been clearly explained by one who knows;
as well as Māra's reach,
and what's out of Death's reach.

796. While commonly found elsewhere, this tag line is only used three times in the Majjhima Nikāya (MN 130:30.2, MN 142:14.2).

797. This echoes Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.1 (*ayaṁ ca lokaḥ paraśca lokaḥ*).

Directly knowing the whole world, 12.7
the Buddha who understands
has opened the door to freedom from death,[798]
for finding the sanctuary, extinguishment.

The Wicked One's stream has been cut, 12.11
it's blown away and mown down.
Be full of joy, mendicants,
set your heart on sanctuary!"[799]

798. Compare MN 26:20.12.
799. Read *patthetha* ("set your heart").

MN 35

The Shorter Discourse With Saccaka

Cūḷasaccakasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

2.1 Now at that time Saccaka, the son of Jain parents, was staying in Vesālī. He was a controversialist who pretended to be astute and was deemed holy by many people.[800] He was telling a crowd in Vesālī, "I don't see any ascetic or brahmin who would not shake and rock and tremble, sweating from the armpits, were I to take them on in debate—not a leader of an order or a community, or the tutor of a community, and not even one who claims to be a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. Even an insentient post would shake and rock and tremble were I to take it on in debate. How much more then a human being!"

3.1 Then Venerable Assaji robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms.[801] As Saccaka was going for

800. Saccaka is called *niganṭhaputta*, being the only person so described. The *niganṭhas* ("knotless ones") were Jain ascetics and their followers were *niganṭha-sāvaka* (SN 42.9:2.3). The commentary says he was the son of Jain parents. From the ending of this sutta, where he makes an offering of food, we can see he was not an ascetic, and from MN 36:48.11 it is clear he was not a Jain. | This sutta includes a number of images, phrases, and allusions that appear reminiscent of the Brahmanical teacher Uddālaka Āruṇi, although none of the references are definitive. The bulk of Uddālaka's teachings were to his son Śvetaketu, who became arrogant due to his learning (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.1.2), paralleling Saccaka's arrogance.

801. Assaji was one the group of five mendicants who received the Buddha's first discourse (Kd 1:6.36.1). Shortly afterwards he inspired Sāriputta with a classic epitome of the teaching (Kd 1:23.2.1). Note that Sāriputta waited politely until almsround was complete before approaching, whereas Saccaka

a walk he saw Assaji coming off in the distance. He approached him and exchanged greetings with him.

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, Saccaka 3.4
stood to one side and said to Assaji, "Worthy Assaji, how does the ascetic Gotama guide his disciples? And on what topics does instruction to his disciples generally proceed?"[802]

"Aggivessana, this is how the Buddha guides his disciples, and his 4.2
instructions to disciples generally proceed on these topics:[803] 'Form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are impermanent.[804] Form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are not-self. All conditions are impermanent. All things are not-self.' This is how the Buddha guides his disciples, and how instruction to his disciples generally proceeds."[805]

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just goes right ahead. We hear of a grave illness Assaji suffered later (SN 22.88). | Another Assaji, who is always paired with his friend Punabbasuka, was a lazy and indulgent monk (MN 70:4.1).

802. *Sāvake vineti* ("guide his disciples") is typically used by non-Buddhists. | The phrase *kathaṁbhāgā* (and its counterpart *evaṁbhāgā* in the next line) are unique. The literal sense is "with what portion", and given the answer I think Saccaka is asking for a list of topics.

803. Saccaka is addressed with the Brahmanical clan name Aggivessana, probably after the lineage of his clan's *purohita*, just as the Sakyans are called Gotama and the Mallas Vāseṭṭha. A Vajjiputta is referred to as Gotama at Thag 1.119.

804. The five aggregates are mentioned as if the listener is expected to know them.

805. Despite this, this teaching that omits "suffering" (*dukkha*) is not taught by the Buddha at all. It only appears in one other sutta, where it is spoken by the mendicants after the Buddha's passing (SN 22.90:2.2; but see below at MN 35:9.5). Strikingly, both the current sutta and SN 22.90 share a common narrative pattern. In both cases, an interlocuter (Saccaka or Channa, both known for their conceit) asks for teaching from a lesser teacher (Assaji or unnamed mendicants). Their reply omits suffering, but this fails. So they seek a better teacher (the Buddha, Ānanda) who not only includes suffering, but specially emphasizes it (MN 35:21.2, SN 22.90:9.7). This teaching is successful. This narrative journey mirrors that of Śvetaketu, who studied with others for twelve years before being shown true wisdom by his father Uddālaka. If we are on the right track, the point of the narrative is that it is essential to include suffering. This suggests that the Chinese parallels (SA 110 at T ii 35b4 and EA 37.10 at T ii

4.7 "It's sad to hear, worthy Assaji, that the ascetic Gotama has such a doctrine. Hopefully, some time or other I'll get to meet the worthy Gotama, and we can have a discussion. And hopefully I can dissuade him from this harmful misconception."

5.1 Now at that time around five hundred Licchavis were sitting together at the town hall on some business.[806] Then Saccaka went up to them and said, "Come forth, good Licchavīs, come forth! Today I am going to have a discussion with the ascetic Gotama. If he stands by the position stated to me by one of his well-known disciples—a mendicant named Assaji—I'll take him on in debate and drag him to and fro and round about, like a strong man would grab a fleecy sheep and drag it to and fro and round about! Taking him on in debate, I'll drag him to and fro and round about, like a strong brewer's worker would toss a large brewer's sieve into a deep lake, grab it by the corners, and drag it to and fro and round about! Taking him on in debate, I'll shake him down and about, and give him a beating, like a strong brewer's mixer would grab a strainer by the corners and shake it down and about, and give it a beating![807] I'll play a game of hemp-washing with the ascetic Gotama, like a sixty-year-old elephant would plunge into a deep lotus pond and play a game of hemp-washing![808] Come forth, good Licchavīs, come forth! Today I am going to have a discussion with the ascetic Gotama."

6.1 At that, some of the Licchavis said, "How can the ascetic Gotama refute Saccaka's doctrine, when it is Saccaka who will refute Gotama's doctrine?"

715b4), which do include the characteristic of *dukkha* here, would be a product of later expansion and normalization.

806. The Licchavis, whose name is derived from "bear", dominated the Vajji Federation.

807. See AN 6.53 and SN 22.102.

808. Hemp was beaten and washed in water before being woven into ropes or cloth. (Also at MN 56:7.10; see AN 10.99:3.4 for an elephant's "ear-washing".)

But some of the Licchavis said, "Who is Saccaka to refute the Buddha's doctrine, when it is the Buddha who will refute Saccaka's doctrine?" 6.3

Then Saccaka, escorted by the five hundred Licchavis, went to the hall with the peaked roof in the Great Wood. 6.5

At that time several mendicants were walking mindfully in the open air. Then Saccaka went up to them and said, "Good fellows, where is the worthy Gotama at present? For we want to see him." 7.1

"Aggivessana, the Buddha has plunged deep into the Great Wood and is sitting at the root of a tree for the day's meditation." 7.5

Then Saccaka, together with a large group of Licchavis, went to the Buddha in the Great Wood, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Before sitting down to one side, some of the Licchavīs bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their cupped palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. 8.1

Then Saccaka said to the Buddha, "I'd like to ask the worthy Gotama about a certain point, if you'd take the time to answer." 9.1

"Ask what you wish, Aggivessana." 9.3

"How does the worthy Gotama guide his disciples? And on what topics does instruction to his disciples generally proceed?" 9.4

"This is how I guide my disciples, and my instructions to disciples generally proceed on these topics:[809] 'Form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are impermanent. Form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are not-self. All conditions are impermanent. All things are not-self.' This is how I guide my disciples, and how instruction to my disciples generally proceeds." 9.5

"A simile strikes me, worthy Gotama." 10.1

809. If, as I have argued, Assaji's presentation is meant to be inadequate, why does the Buddha endorse it here? The Buddha commonly endorses answers given by disciples, and this could have been a product of editorial standardization. After all, it remains the fact that it simply is not true that the Buddha normally teaches in this way.

10.2 "Then speak as you feel inspired," said the Buddha.

10.3 "All the plants and seeds that achieve growth, increase, and maturity do so depending on the earth and grounded on the earth.[810] All the hard work that gets done depends on the earth and is grounded on the earth.

10.7 In the same way, an individual person's self is form. Established on form they brim with merit and wickedness. An individual person's self is feeling … perception … choices … consciousness. Established on consciousness they brim with merit and wickedness."[811]

11.1 "Aggivessana, are you not saying this: 'Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, choices are my self, consciousness is my self'?"

11.3 "Indeed, worthy Gotama, that is what I am saying. And this big crowd agrees with me!"

11.5 "What has this big crowd to do with you? Please just unpack your own statement."

11.7 "Then, worthy Gotama, what I am saying is this: 'Form is my self, feeling is my self, perception is my self, choices are my self, consciousness is my self'."

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810. Saccaka argues by naturalistic analogy from singularity to plurality. Likewise Uddālaka, observing the natural world, pointed to the way that multiplicity emerges from singleness. When asked who he worships as self, Uddālaka answers the "earth", which is said to be the "ground" (*pratiṣṭhā*, Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.17); due to this worship he enjoys food and offspring. However, he points to water rather than earth as the origin of *anna*, which is (plant) food but also stands for solidity in general (6.2.4; see too 6.11.1–2).

811. Saccaka treats the five aggregates as categories for classifying the self. And indeed elsewhere, such as DN 1, we find various theorists describe the self as "form", experiencing "feelings", being "percipient", etc. In identifying each of the five aggregates as self, Saccaka follows the method of "affirmation" whereby multiple phenomena are affirmed to be the self at deeper and deeper levels, in contrast with the method of "negation" where potential candidates for the self are denied until the final self is revealed. Uddālaka also preferred the method of affirmation, arguing that existence comes first and that the divinity pours itself in all the manifold forms of the world (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.2ff.). | Note Saccaka's use of the term "individual person" (*purisapuggala*), for which see SN 22.22 and notes.

"Well then, Aggivessana, I'll ask you about this in return, and you 12.1
can answer as you like. What do you think, Aggivessana? Consider an anointed aristocratic king such as Pasenadi of Kosala or Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of the princess of Videha. Would they have the power in their own realm to execute those who have incurred execution, fine those who have incurred fines, or banish those who have incurred banishment?"[812]

"An anointed king would have such power, worthy Gotama. Even 12.5
federations such as the Vajjis and Mallas have such power in their own realm.[813] So of course an anointed king such as Pasenadi or Ajātasattu would wield such power, as is their right."[814]

"What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, 'Form is my 13.1
self,' do you have power over that form to say: 'May my form be like this! May it not be like that'?"[815] When he said this, Saccaka kept silent. The Buddha asked the question a second time, but Saccaka still kept silent. So the Buddha said to Saccaka, "Answer now, Aggivessana. Now is not the time for silence. If someone fails to answer a legitimate question when asked three times by the Buddha, their head explodes into seven pieces there and then."[816]

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812. The Pali uses the future passive participle, sometimes interpreted as "deserving of execution". But this would imply that the Buddha endorsed capital punishment, which is unsupported elsewhere and contradicts his ethical principles. Rather, read in its weaker literal sense, "execute those to be executed", i.e. those who have been found guilty of a crime incurring capital punishment. It is an acknowledgment of the king's powers, not an endorsement of them.

813. Saccaka cannily appeals to the Licchavis by asserting their right to rule.

814. Overstepping the Buddha's position, Saccaka's endorsement of capital punishment shows how far he has drifted from the non-violent doctrine of his Jain parents.

815. Also at SN 22.59:2.3. This responds to the "inner controller" (*antaryāmin*) of Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7. Uddālaka learned this from the centaur Kabandha in Madra (near modern Islamabad). He challenges Yājñavalkya, who explains it as the self who lives in the midst of all things, unknown but knowing, controlling all from within.

816. The threat of losing one's head is found at eg. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.8.6 and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.3.24, or at 3.9.26 when it actually did fall off. I

14.1 Now at that time the spirit Vajirapāṇī, taking up a burning iron thunderbolt, blazing and glowing, stood in the air above Saccaka, thinking,[817] "If this Saccaka doesn't answer when asked a third time, I'll blow his head into seven pieces there and then!" And both the Buddha and Saccaka could see Vajirapāṇī.

14.4 Saccaka was terrified, shocked, and awestruck. Looking to the Buddha for shelter, asylum, and refuge, he said, "Ask me, worthy Gotama. I will answer."

15.1 "What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, 'Form is my self,' do you have power over that form to say: 'May my form be like this! May it not be like that'?"

15.5 "No, worthy Gotama."

16.1 "Think about it, Aggivessana![818] You should think before answering. What you said before and what you said after don't match up. What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, 'Feeling is my self,' do you have power over that feeling to say: 'May my feeling be like this! May it not be like that'?"

16.8 "No, worthy Gotama."

17.1 "Think about it, Aggivessana! You should think before answering. What you said before and what you said after don't match up. What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, 'Perception is my self,' do you have power over that perception to say: 'May my perception be like this! May it not be like that'?"

17.8 "No, worthy Gotama."

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cannot trace the detail of heads being split in seven to any early Sanskrit texts, but it is found in later texts such as Rāmāyaṇa 7.26.44c and Mahābhārata 14.7.2c.

817. Vajirapāṇī ("lightning-bolt in hand") appears here and in the parallel passage at DN 3:1.21.1. The synonymous Vajrahasta (Pali *vajirahattha*, DN 20:12.1) is a frequent epithet of Indra in the Vedas (eg. *indro vajrahastaḥ*, Rig Veda 1.173.10a), confirming the commentary's identification with Sakka. Much later, Mahayana texts adopted the name for a fierce Bodhisattva who was protector of the Dhamma.

818. Here neither "attention" nor "focus" quite fits *manasikāra*. The Buddha is telling Saccaka to recollect an earlier statement when making a later one, i.e. to practice rationality.

"Think about it, Aggivessana! You should think before answering. 18.1
What you said before and what you said after don't match up. What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, 'Choices are my self,' do you have power over those choices to say: 'May my choices be like this! May they not be like that'?"

"No, worthy Gotama." 18.8

"Think about it, Aggivessana! You should think before answering. 19.1
What you said before and what you said after don't match up. What do you think, Aggivessana? When you say, 'Consciousness is my self,' do you have power over that consciousness to say: 'May my consciousness be like this! May it not be like that'?"

"No, worthy Gotama." 19.8

"Think about it, Aggivessana! You should think before answering. 20.1
What you said before and what you said after don't match up. What do you think, Aggivessana? Is form permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent." 20.6

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"[819] 20.7

"Suffering." 20.8

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be 20.9
regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"[820]

"No, worthy Gotama." 20.11

"What do you think, Aggivessana? Is feeling … perception … 20.12
choices … consciousness permanent or impermanent?"

"Impermanent." 20.17

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?" 20.18

819. Here the Buddha introduces "suffering", despite its omission earlier.

820. This directly rejects all forms of self, but especially the highest conception of self as expressed in the Upaniṣads. *Etaṁ mama* occurs as *mamedaṁ* ("this is mine", Maitrī Upaniṣad 3.2), which in context is a limited view of self. *Eso'hamasmi* is Yājñavalkya's *so'hamasmi* ("I am that", Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.1; BU 5.15.1 = Īśā Upaniṣad 16; Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.11.1, 4.12.1, 4.13.1; Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka 3.6), which Uddālaka's *tattvamasi* puts in second person (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7). The same passage also parallels *eso me attā* with *sa ātmā* ("that is the self"), for which we also find *eṣa ma ātmā* (CU 3.14.3), and in the optative mood, *ma idaṁ syād ātman* (BU 1.2.7).

20.19 "Suffering."

20.20 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

20.22 "No, worthy Gotama."

21.1 "What do you think, Aggivessana? Consider someone who resorts, draws near, and clings to suffering, regarding it thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self.' Would they be able to completely understand suffering themselves, or live having wiped out suffering?"

21.3 "How could they? No, worthy Gotama."

21.5 "What do you think, Aggivessana? This being so, aren't you someone who resorts, draws near, and clings to suffering, regarding it thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

21.8 "How could I not? Yes, worthy Gotama."

22.1 "Suppose, Aggivessana, there was a person in need of heartwood. Wandering in search of heartwood, they'd take a sharp axe and enter a forest. There they'd see a big banana trunk, straight and young and grown unskewed. They'd cut it down at the base, cut off the top, and unroll the coiled sheaths. But they wouldn't even find sapwood, much less heartwood.

22.5 In the same way, when pursued, pressed, and grilled by me on your own doctrine, you turn out to be vacuous, hollow, and mistaken. But it was you who stated before the assembly of Vesālī: 'I don't see any ascetic or brahmin who would not shake and rock and tremble, sweating from the armpits, were I to take them on in debate—not a leader of an order or a community, or the tutor of a community, and not even one who claims to be a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. Even an insentient post would shake and rock and tremble were I to take it on in debate. How much more then a human being!' But sweat is pouring from your forehead; it's soaked through your robe and drips on the ground.[821] While I now

821. The oddly prominent role of sweat in the discourse finds its parallel in Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.2.3, where Uddālaka argues that existence (*sat*) produces fire (*tejas*) and fire produces water, which is why you sweat when hot.

have no sweat on my body." So the Buddha revealed his golden body to the assembly. When this was said, Saccaka sat silent, dismayed, shoulders drooping, downcast, depressed, with nothing to say.

Knowing this, the Licchavi Dummukha said to the Buddha,[822] "A simile strikes me, Blessed One." 23.1

"Then speak as you feel inspired," said the Buddha. 23.3

"Sir, suppose there was a lotus pond not far from a town or village,[823] and a crab lived there. Then several boys or girls would leave the town or village and go to the pond, where they'd pull out the crab and put it on solid ground. Whenever that crab extended a claw, those boys or girls would snap, crack, and break it off with a stick or a stone.[824] And when that crab's claws had all been snapped, cracked, and broken off it wouldn't be able to return down into that lotus pond. In the same way, sir, the Buddha has snapped, cracked, and broken off all Saccaka's twists, ducks, and dodges. Now he can't get near the Buddha again looking for a debate." 23.4

But Saccaka said to him, "Hold on, Dummukha, hold on! I wasn't talking with you, I was talking with the worthy Gotama. 24.1

Worthy Gotama, leave aside that statement I made—as did various other ascetics and brahmins—it was, like, just a bit of nonsense.[825] How do you define a disciple of the worthy Gotama who follows instructions and responds to advice; who has gone beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, gained assurance, and is independent of others in the Teacher's instructions?" 24.3

"It's when one of my disciples truly sees any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior 24.6

822. Dummukha the Licchavi appears only here. The name, meaning "Ugly Face" seems odd, but it is also a term for a horse. A number of individuals of this name appear in Sanskritic literature, including one from Uddālaka's home country of Pañcāla (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 8.23).

823. The same simile appears at SN 4.24:8.1.

824. The crab "extends" a claw as a meditator after absorption "extends" the mind to insight (MN 4:27.1). See too the simile at SN 35.240.

825. Saccaka tries to wriggle out of his initial statement, just as modern trolls claim to speak in irony or humor.

or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'[826] They truly see any kind of feeling … perception … choices … consciousness at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' That's how to define one of my disciples who follows instructions and responds to advice; who has gone beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, gained assurance, and is independent of others in the Teacher's instructions."

25.1 "But how do you define a mendicant who is a perfected one, with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment?"

25.2 "It's when a mendicant truly sees any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' And having seen this with right understanding they're freed by not grasping. They truly see any kind of feeling … perception … choices … consciousness at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' And having seen this with right understanding they're freed by not grasping. That's how to define a mendicant who is a perfected one, with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment.

826. This is the trainee (*sekha*). Knowing Saccaka's attachment to his self theories, the Buddha frames his response with the standard passage on not-self.

A mendicant whose mind is freed like this has three unsur- 26.1
passable qualities: unsurpassable seeing, practice, and freedom.[827] They honor, respect, esteem, and venerate only the Realized One: 'The Blessed One is awakened, tamed, serene, crossed over, and quenched. And he teaches Dhamma for awakening, self-control, serenity, crossing over, and extinguishment.'"

When he had spoken, Saccaka said to him, "Worthy Gotama, it 27.1
was rude and impudent of me to imagine I could attack you in debate. For a person might find safety after attacking a rutting elephant, but not after attacking the worthy Gotama. A person might find safety after attacking a blazing mass of fire, but not after attacking the worthy Gotama. They might find safety after attacking a poisonous viper, but not after attacking the worthy Gotama. It was rude and impudent of me to imagine I could attack you in debate. Would the worthy Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me?" The Buddha consented with silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Saccaka addressed 28.1
those Licchavis, "Listen, gentlemen. I have invited the ascetic Gotama together with the Saṅgha of mendicants for tomorrow's meal. You may all bring me what you think is suitable."

Then, when the night had passed, those Licchavis presented Sac- 29.1
caka with an offering of five hundred servings of food.[828] And Saccaka had delicious fresh and cooked foods prepared in his own park.

827. Also at DN 33:1.10.119, which is doubtless lifted from the current passage. A list of six unsurpassables is found at AN 6.30, but the only common item is "seeing" (*dassana*), which is defined as seeing the Buddha and his disciples. Here "seeing" is either seeing the Buddha which gives rise to faith, or else "seeing" the four noble truths; practice is the noble eightfold path; and freedom is the result of that path, arahantship. | As to why this unique set is chosen here, it is perhaps notable that three of the final similes of Uddālaka's "subtlest" self (as above, MN 35:20.10) in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad speak of *seeing* (the kernel of a seed, 6.12.1–2), *walking* (from one village to the next, 6.14.2), and *freedom* (from punishment, 6.16.2).

828. The idiom "presented with servings of food" (*thālipākaā bhattābhihāraṁ*) is elevated, occurring only in the context of aristocracy and sacrifice.

Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying, "It's time, worthy Gotama, the meal is ready."

30.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Saccaka's park, where he sat down on the seat spread out together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Then Saccaka served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Saccaka took a low seat and sat to one side.

30.4 Then Saccaka said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama, may the merit and the growth of merit in this gift be for the happiness of the donors."[829]

30.6 "Aggivessana, whatever comes from giving to a recipient of a religious donation such as yourself—who is not free of greed, hate, and delusion—will accrue to the donors.[830] Whatever comes from giving to a recipient of a religious donation such as myself—who is free of greed, hate, and delusion—will accrue to you."

829. *Puññamahī* ("flourishing of merit"), for which there are several variants in text and commentary, is found only here and at AN 7.53:6.10, where it also concerns the dedication of merit to another. It might refer to the glorious results of merit, for which compare Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.2, "endowed with that (divine fruit for which he wished) he flourishes (*tena sampanno mahīyate*). Or else it might invoke the idea that merit flourishes depending on the recipient (MN 142), like a seed on the earth (*mahī*; cp. *puññakkhetta*), which fits nicely with the Buddha's response here. | Bhikkhu Bodhi's remark that Saccaka "must have still considered himself a saint" is unwarranted, as the same phrase at AN 7.53 is used by a devoted lay follower. Clearly he was arrogant, but it was others who called him *sādhu*.

830. According to one of the Chinese parallels, this statement was made by the Buddha in answer to a question by the mendicants after returning to the monastery (SA 110 at T ii 37b22).

MN 36

The Longer Discourse With Saccaka

Mahāsaccakasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, 1.1
at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

Now at that time in the morning the Buddha, being properly 2.1
dressed, took his bowl and robe, wishing to enter Vesālī for alms.

Then as Saccaka, the son of Jain parents, was going for a walk 3.1
he approached the hall with the peaked roof in the Great Wood.[831]
Venerable Ānanda saw him coming off in the distance, and said to
the Buddha, "Sir, Saccaka, the son of Jain parents, is coming. He's
a controversialist who pretends to be astute and is deemed holy by
many people.[832] He wants to discredit the Buddha, the teaching,
and the Saṅgha. Please, sir, sit for an hour out of sympathy." The
Buddha sat down on the seat spread out.

Then Saccaka went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings 3.8
with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he
sat down to one side and said to the Buddha,

"Worthy Gotama, there are some ascetics and brahmins who live 4.1
committed to the practice of developing physical endurance, without
developing the mind.[833] They suffer painful physical feelings. This

831. This discourse appears to be set after the previous. In both suttas, while Saccaka is impressed by the Buddha, he does not go for refuge or indicate that he has been persuaded by his teachings.

832. *Bhassappavādaka* ("contoversialist") is unique. | For "pretends to be astute" (*paṇḍitavāda*) see Monier-Williams under *paṇḍitavādin*.

833. "Development of physical endurance" is *kāyabhāvanā*, which is not a normal Buddhist term. It is introduced by Saccaka here and collected in DN 33:1.10.117. The literal meaning is "development of the body", but I translate in accord with the sense.

happened to someone once. Their thighs became paralyzed, their heart burst, hot blood gushed from their mouth, and they went mad and lost their mind. Their mind was subject to the body, and the body had power over it. Why is that? Because their mind was not developed. There are some ascetics and brahmins who live committed to the practice of developing the mind, without developing physical endurance. They suffer painful mental feelings. This happened to someone once. Their thighs became paralyzed, their heart burst, hot blood gushed from their mouth, and they went mad and lost their mind. Their body was subject to the mind, and the mind had power over it. Why is that? Because their physical endurance was not developed.[834] It occurs to me that The worthy Gotama's disciples must live committed to the practice of developing the mind, without developing physical endurance."

5.1 "But Aggivessana, what have you heard about the development of physical endurance?"

5.2 "Take, for example, Nanda Vaccha, Kisa Saṅkicca, and the bamboo-staffed ascetic Gosāla.[835] They go naked, ignoring conventions. They lick their hands, and don't come or wait when called. They don't consent to food brought to them, or food prepared on their behalf, or an invitation for a meal. They don't receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or who lives with a man; or where there's a hound waiting or flies buzzing. They accept no fish or meat or beer or wine, and drink no fermented gruel. They go to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two

834. Saccaka's question shows he was aware of the danger of pursuing of extreme practices and the need for balance. It remains the case today that imbalanced and excessive practices lead to physical and mental breakdowns.

835. Described as prominent sages of the Ājīvakas at MN 76:53.6 and AN 6.57:7.1. Gosāla was one of the oft-mentioned six ascetic teachers (see below MN 36:48.7), while the other two are unknown outside of these passing mentions. But the phrasing of this passage suggests that they too, like Gosāla, were contemporaries of the Buddha.

houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. They feed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers a day. They eat once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. They live committed to the practice of eating food at set intervals."[836]

"But Aggivessana, do they get by on so little?" 6.1

"No, worthy Gotama. Sometimes they eat luxury fresh and cooked foods and drink a variety of luxury beverages. They gather their body's strength, build it up, and get fat." 6.2

"What they earlier gave up, they later got back. That is how there is the increase and decrease of this body. But Aggivessana, what have you heard about development of the mind?" When Saccaka was questioned by the Buddha about development of the mind, he was stumped.[837] 6.5

So the Buddha said to Saccaka, "The development of physical endurance that you have described is not the legitimate development of physical endurance in the Noble One's training. And since you don't even understand the development of physical endurance, how can you possibly understand the development of the mind? Still, as to how someone is undeveloped in physical endurance and mind, and how someone is developed in physical endurance and mind, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 7.1

"Yes, worthy sir," replied Saccaka. The Buddha said this: 7.6

"And how is someone undeveloped in physical endurance and mind? Take an unlearned ordinary person who has a pleasant feeling. When they experience a pleasant feeling they become full of lust for it. Then that pleasant feeling ceases. And when it ceases, a painful feeling arises. When they suffer painful feeling, they sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. 8.1

836. The earliest Jain text speaks of Mahāvīra eating "only every sixth meal, or eighth, or tenth, or twelfth" (Ācāraṅgasūtra 1.8.4.7).

837. While pre-Buddhist texts describe a contemplative and reflective culture, they do not contain clear instructions for meditation. It seems that the practice of explicitly teaching meditation methods was an innovation of the Buddha.

Because their physical endurance is undeveloped, pleasant feelings occupy the mind. And because their mind is undeveloped, painful feelings occupy the mind. Anyone whose mind is occupied by both pleasant and painful feelings like this is undeveloped both in physical endurance and in mind.

9.1 And how is someone developed in physical endurance and mind? Take a learned noble disciple who has a pleasant feeling. When they experience a pleasant feeling they don't become full of lust for it. Then that pleasant feeling ceases. And when it ceases, painful feeling arises. When they suffer painful feelings they don't sorrow or wail or lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. Because their physical endurance is developed, pleasant feelings don't occupy the mind. And because their mind is developed, painful feelings don't occupy the mind. Anyone whose mind is not occupied by both pleasant and painful feelings like this is developed both in physical endurance and in mind."

10.1 "I am quite confident that the worthy Gotama is developed in physical endurance and in mind."

10.3 "Your words are clearly invasive and intrusive, Aggivessana.[838] Nevertheless, I will answer you. Ever since I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness, it has not been possible for any pleasant or painful feeling to occupy my mind."[839]

11.1 "Worthy Gotama mustn't have experienced the kind of pleasant or painful feelings that would occupy the mind."[840]

12.1 "How could I not, Aggivessana? Before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy

838. This is a standard response to someone making unwarranted assumptions about personal spiritual development (AN 3.60:18.1, AN 4.35:5.1, MN 127:17.8).

839. The Buddha is not speaking about enlightenment, but about his determination to persevere.

840. For the idiom *na hi nūna*, compare AN 8.86:5.3 and AN 4.67:2.1.

for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?'

13.1 Some time later, while still with pristine black hair, blessed with youth, in the prime of life—though my mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces—I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.

13.2 Once I had gone forth I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him,[841] 'Reverend Kālāma, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.'

13.4 Āḷāra Kālāma replied, 'Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.'

13.7 I quickly memorized that teaching. As far as lip-recital and verbal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

13.9 Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Āḷāra Kālāma declares: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it." Surely he meditates knowing and seeing this teaching.'

13.12 So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, 'Reverend Kālāma, to what extent do you say you've realized this teaching with your own insight?' When I said this, he declared the dimension of nothingness.

13.15 Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Āḷāra Kālāma who has faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Āḷāra Kālāma says he has realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

841. See MN 26:14.1ff. for notes.

14.1 So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, 'Reverend Kālāma, is it up to this point that you realized this teaching with your own insight, and declare having achieved it?'

14.3 'I have, reverend.'

14.4 'I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.'

14.5 'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that I've realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, I've realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it. So the teaching that I know, you know, and the teaching you know, I know. I am like you and you are like me. Come now, reverend! We should both lead this community together.' And that is how my tutor Āḷāra Kālāma placed me, his pupil, on the same position as him, and honored me with high praise.

14.13 Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of nothingness.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

15.1 I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.'

15.3 Uddaka replied, 'Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.'

15.6 I quickly memorized that teaching. As far as lip-recital and verbal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

15.8 Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Rāma declared: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it." Surely he meditated knowing and seeing this teaching.'

So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, 15.11
to what extent did Rāma say he'd realized this teaching with his own insight?' When I said this, Uddaka son of Rāma declared the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Rāma who had faith, energy, 15.14
mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Rāma said he had realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, 15.22
had Rāma realized this teaching with his own insight up to this point, and declared having achieved it?'

'He had, reverend.' 15.24

'I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this 15.25
point, and live having achieved it.'

'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable 15.26
such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it. So the teaching that Rāma directly knew, you know, and the teaching you know, Rāma directly knew. Rāma was like you and you are like Rāma. Come now, reverend! You should lead this community.' And that is how my spiritual companion Uddaka son of Rāma placed me in the position of a tutor and honored me with high praise.

Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusion- 15.33
ment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of 16.1
sublime peace. Traveling stage by stage in the Magadhan lands, I

arrived at the town of Senā in Uruvelā. There I saw a delightful park, a lovely grove with a flowing river that was clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby was a village to resort to for alms. Then it occurred to me, 'This park is truly delightful, a lovely grove with a flowing river that's clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby there's a village to resort to for alms. This is good enough for striving for a gentleman wanting to strive.' So I sat down right there, thinking: 'This is good enough for striving.'

17.1 And then these three similes, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me.[842] Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying in water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Aggivessana? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log lying in water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"[843]

17.7 "No, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because it's a green, sappy log, and it's lying in the water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated."

17.11 "In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. They haven't internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the first example that occurred to me.

842. Also at MN 85:15.1 and MN 100:14.1. These similes, which illustrate the importance of detachment from sensual pleasures and the uselessness of fervent austerities, would fit better below, after the austerities and before *jhāna* (MN 36:30.1). A parallel to this passage preserved in a fragmentary Sanskrit manuscript of the Dīrgha Āgama does indeed place these similes there, while other parallels vary the content or position of the similes to a degree.

843. *Abhimanthento* must be "drilling" rather than "rubbing", which does not produce fire. See too the simile of the man "drilling" into the head below (MN 36:22.5).

Then a second example occurred to me. Suppose there was a 18.1
green, sappy log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Aggivessana? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

"No, worthy Gotama. Why not? Because it's still a green, sappy 18.7
log, despite the fact that it's lying on dry land far from water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated."

"In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live with- 18.11
drawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. But they haven't internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the second example that occurred to me.

Then a third example occurred to me. Suppose there was a dried 19.1
up, withered log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Aggivessana? By drilling the stick against that dried up, withered log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

"Yes, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because it's a dried up, with- 19.7
ered log, and it's lying on dry land far from water."

"In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live with- 19.10
drawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. And they have internally given up and stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are capable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the third example that occurred to me. These are the three similes, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, that occurred to me.

20.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, squeeze, squash, and scorch mind with mind?'[844] So that's what I did, until sweat ran from my armpits. It was like when a strong man grabs a weaker man by the head or throat or shoulder and squeezes, squashes, and crushes them. In the same way, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I squeezed, squashed, and crushed mind with mind until sweat ran from my armpits. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving. But even such painful feeling did not occupy my mind.

21.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice the breathless absorption?'[845] So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then winds came out my ears making a loud noise, like the puffing of a blacksmith's bellows. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving. But even such painful feeling did not occupy my mind.

22.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then strong winds ground my head, like a strong man

844. This, the most gentle of the austere practices, was occasionally recommended by the Buddha as a last resort (MN 20:7.2).

845. This practice seems like an extreme form of "breath control" (*prāṇayāma*) which was a prominent feature of later Yoga. While the breath played an extremely important role in pre-Buddhist texts, no corresponding practice is detailed. However, precursors may be seen in passages such as Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.7.16, where in response to Uddālaka's question, Yājnavalkya says, "He who controls the breath within is the self, the inner controller, the immortal" (*yaḥ prāṇamantaro yamayati, eṣa ta ātmāntaryāmyamṛtaḥ*). Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 1.42 describes a practice of deliberate asphyxiation to induce a near-death experience. Varuṇa deprived his son Bhṛgu of breath in order to send him on a journey to the "other world". There Bhṛgu saw men cutting other men to pieces and eating them, and other sights both horrifying and beautiful, all the while wondering if what he saw was real, before his breath was returned to him.

was drilling into my head with a sharp point. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving. But even such painful feeling did not occupy my mind.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless 23.1
absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then I got a severe headache, like a strong man was tightening a strong leather strap around my head. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving. But even such painful feeling did not occupy my mind.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breath- 24.1
less absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then strong winds carved up my belly, like a deft butcher or their apprentice was slicing my belly open with a sharp meat cleaver. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving. But even such painful feeling did not occupy my mind.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breath- 25.1
less absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then there was a severe burning in my body, like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving. But even such painful feeling did not occupy my mind.

Then some deities saw me and said, 'The ascetic Gotama is dead.' 26.1
Others said, 'He's not dead, but he's dying.' Others said, 'He's not dead or dying. The ascetic Gotama is a perfected one, for that is how the perfected ones live.'

27.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice completely cutting off food?' But deities came to me and said, 'Good fellow, don't practice totally cutting off food. If you do, we'll infuse heavenly nectar into your pores and you will live on that.' Then it occurred to me, 'If I claim to be completely fasting while these deities are infusing heavenly nectar in my pores, that would be a lie on my part.' So I refused those deities, saying, 'There's no need.'

28.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I just take a little bit of food each time, a handful of broth made from mung beans, horse gram, chickpeas, or green gram?' So that's what I did, until my body became severely emaciated. Due to eating so little, my major and minor limbs became like the joints of an eighty-year-old or a dying man, my bottom became like a camel's hoof, my vertebrae stuck out like beads on a string, and my ribs were as gaunt as the broken-down rafters on an old barn. Due to eating so little, the gleam of my eyes sank deep in their sockets, like the gleam of water sunk deep down a well. Due to eating so little, my scalp shriveled and withered like a green bitter-gourd in the wind and sun.

28.11 Due to eating so little, the skin of my belly stuck to my backbone, so that when I tried to rub the skin of my belly I grabbed my backbone, and when I tried to rub my backbone I rubbed the skin of my belly. Due to eating so little, when I tried to urinate or defecate I fell face down right there. Due to eating so little, when I tried to relieve my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell out.

29.1 Then some people saw me and said: 'The ascetic Gotama is black.' Some said: 'He's not black, he's brown.' Some said: 'He's neither black nor brown. The ascetic Gotama has dingy skin.'[846] That's how far the pure, bright complexion of my skin had been ruined by taking so little food.

846. His skin was "dingy" (*maṅgura*, Sanskrit *maṅgura* or *madgura*) like the blotchy mud-green of common catfish (*clarias magur*), which has a dingy greenish or muddy color for camouflage on the riverbed. See also SN 19.14.

Then it occurred to me, 'Whatever ascetics and brahmins have 30.1
experienced painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion—
whether in the past, future, or present—this is as far as it goes, no-one
has done more than this. But I have not achieved any superhuman
distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones by this
severe, grueling work. Could there be another path to awakening?'

Then it occurred to me, 'I recall sitting in the cool shade of a 31.1
black plum 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.[847] Could that be the path to awakening?'

Stemming from that memory came the understanding: '*That* is 31.4
the path to awakening!'[848]

Then it occurred to me, 'Why am I afraid of that pleasure, for it has 32.1
nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities?' Then it
occurred to me, 'I'm not afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to
do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities.'

Then it occurred to me, 'I can't achieve that pleasure with a body 33.1
so severely emaciated. Why don't I eat some solid food, some rice
and porridge?'[849] So I ate some solid food.

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847. The gentle and pleasant practice of *jhāna* is contrasted with the fiery austerities. The Bodhisatta had previously developed meditation under his former teachers, which included the practice of *jhāna*. But there the practice was embedded in theory, since he first memorized scripture, which would have taught him that such states were a revelation of the true self as the cosmic divinity of sheer consciousness. Thus what he rejected was "that teaching", i.e. the system of philosophy and practice as a whole, which leads only to rebirth in a realm that, for all its sublimity, is still conditioned. Now he recalls entering deep meditation with the innocence of youth, following no system or philosophy. This showed him that peace of mind is a natural process of letting go, not dependent on (Upaniṣadic) metaphysics.

848. Compare Dhp 274:1.

849. The dependence of the mind on food was proven by Uddālaka when he asked Śvetaketu to go without food for fifteen days, after which he could not

33.4 Now at that time the group of five mendicants were attending on me, thinking, 'The ascetic Gotama will tell us of any truth that he realizes.' But when I ate some solid food, they left disappointed in me, saying, 'The ascetic Gotama has become indulgent; he has strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence.'

34.1 After eating solid food and gathering my strength, 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. But even such pleasant feeling did not occupy my mind.

35-37.1 As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I entered and remained in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. But even such pleasant feeling did not occupy my mind. And with the fading away of rapture, I entered and remained in the third absorption, where I meditated with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' But even such pleasant feeling did not occupy my mind. With the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, I entered and remained in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. But even such pleasant feeling did not occupy my mind.

38.1 When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

39.1 This was the first knowledge, which I achieved in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is

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recall any of the hymns (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.7). | Note how this contrasts with the unhealthy cycle of starving and fattening described above (MN 36:6.5).

diligent, keen, and resolute. But even such pleasant feeling did not occupy my mind.

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 40.1

This was the second knowledge, which I achieved in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute. But even such pleasant feeling did not occupy my mind. 41.1

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. I truly understood: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' I truly understood: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements.' 42.1

Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When it was freed, I knew it was freed. 43.1

I understood: 'Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place.' 43.3

This was the third knowledge, which I achieved in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is 44.1

diligent, keen, and resolute. But even such pleasant feeling did not occupy my mind.

45.1 Aggivessana, I recall teaching the Dhamma to an assembly of many hundreds,[850] and each person thought that I was teaching the Dhamma especially for them. But it should not be seen like this. The Realized One teaches others only so that they can understand. When that talk was finished, I stilled, settled, unified, and immersed my mind in samādhi internally in the same meditation subject as a basis of immersion as before, in which I regularly meditate."[851]

45.7 "I'd believe that of the worthy Gotama, just like a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha.[852] But do you ever recall sleeping during the day?"[853]

46.1 "I do recall that in the last month of the summer, I have spread out my outer robe folded in four and lain down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware."

46.2 "Some ascetics and brahmins call that a deluded abiding."[854]

46.3 "That's not how to define whether someone is deluded or not. But as to how to define whether someone is deluded or not, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

46.6 "Yes, worthy sir," replied Saccaka.

46.7 The Buddha said this:

47.1 "Anyone who has not given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death is deluded, I say. For it's not giving up

850. This passage is unique and its purpose here unclear,

851. Here *samādhinimitta* as usual means the subject of meditation, probably the breath. | *Niccakappa* ("continuously") occurs only here and at MN 144:11.2 = SN 35.87:11.2 where it also used in the sense of "regular subject of contemplation".

852. Saccaka is not saying that the Buddha *is* enlightened, merely he is *like* one who is enlightened (*yathā taṁ arahato*).

853. Saccaka reveals his bad faith; he is more interested in trapping the Buddha than in learning.

854. He deflects by pointing to others, as he also did at MN 35:11.4.

the defilements that makes you deluded. Anyone who has given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death—is not deluded, I say. For it's giving up the defilements that makes you not deluded.

The Realized One has given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. He has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them so they are unable to arise in the future. Just as a palm tree with its crown cut off is incapable of further growth, in the same way, the Realized One has given up the defilements so they are unable to arise in the future." 47.5

When he had spoken, Saccaka said to him, "It's incredible, worthy Gotama, it's amazing! How when the worthy Gotama is repeatedly attacked with inappropriate and intrusive criticism, the complexion of his skin brightens and the color of his face becomes clear, just like a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha! 48.1

I recall taking on Pūraṇa Kassapa in debate. He dodged the issue, distracting the discussion with irrelevant points, and displaying annoyance, hate, and bitterness. But when the worthy Gotama is repeatedly attacked with inappropriate and intrusive criticism, the complexion of his skin brightens and the color of his face becomes clear, just like a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. 48.4

I recall taking on the bamboo-staffed ascetic Gosāla, Ajita of the hair blanket, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, and the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan in debate.[855] They all dodged the issue, distracting the discussion with irrelevant points, and displaying annoyance, hate, and bitterness. But when the worthy Gotama is repeatedly attacked with inappropriate and intrusive criticism, the 48.7

855. This shows that despite his Jain parentage, and despite his citation of Ājīvakas above, Saccaka was no adherent of these philosophies. It seems that he was a contrarian at heart.

complexion of his skin brightens and the color of his face becomes clear, just like a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha.

48.14 Well, now, worthy Gotama, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do."

48.16 "Please, Aggivessana, go at your convenience."

48.17 Then Saccaka, the son of Jain parents, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, rose from his seat and left.

MN 37

The Shorter Discourse on the Ending of Craving

Cūḷataṇhāsaṅkhayasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery.

And then Sakka, lord of gods, went up to the Buddha, bowed, 2.1
stood to one side, and said to him:[856]

"Sir, how do you briefly define a mendicant who is freed through 2.2
the ending of craving, who has reached the ultimate end, the ultimate sanctuary from the yoke, the ultimate spiritual life, the ultimate goal, and is best among gods and humans?"[857]

"Lord of gods, take a mendicant who has heard: 'Nothing is 3.1
worth insisting on.'[858] When a mendicant has heard that nothing is worth insisting on, they directly know all things. Directly knowing all things, they completely understand all things. Completely understanding all things, when they experience any kind of feeling—

856. A long account of Sakka's first meeting with the Buddha and conversion is found at DN 21. There he is said to have attained stream-entry, and so is destined for full awakening. Yet even a stream-enterer may slow their progress by negligence (Snp 2.1:9.3) | Sakka's epithet "lord of gods" (*devānamindo*) evokes his more familiar Sanskrit name, Indra.

857. This question directly follows on from the final question at DN 21:2.6.9, where Sakka asks *whether* all ascetics and brahmins have reached the ultimate goal. Here he delves deeper into what that means. | Now that he is a confirmed Buddhist, Sakka switches from "ascetics and brahmins" to "mendicants". | This passage has an exact parallel at AN 7.61:12.2, and a variation at SN 22.4:1.5.

858. The Buddha is calling back to the previous conversation, where immediately before asking about the ultimate goal, Sakka had asked why all ascetics did not share a common doctrine (DN 21:2.6.6). The Buddha answered that, though the world has many and diverse elements, ascetics tend to fixate on one aspect and "insist" it is the only truth.

pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—[859] they meditate observing impermanence, dispassion, cessation, and letting go in those feelings. Meditating in this way, they don't grasp at anything in the world. Not grasping, they're not anxious. Not being anxious, they personally become extinguished. They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.' That's how I briefly define a mendicant who is freed through the ending of craving, who has reached the ultimate end, the ultimate sanctuary from the yoke, the ultimate spiritual life, the ultimate goal, and is best among gods and humans."

4.1 Then Sakka, lord of gods, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.

5.1 Now at that time Venerable Mahāmoggallāna was sitting not far from the Buddha. He thought, "Did that spirit comprehend what the Buddha said when he agreed with him, or not?[860] Why don't I find out?"

6.1 And then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from the Eastern Monastery and reappeared among the gods of the thirty-three.[861] Now at that time Sakka was amusing himself in the Single Lotus Park, supplied and provided with a heavenly orchestra.[862]

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859. One who has learned the theory of non-attachment is still liable to become attached, so they apply their knowledge to experiential insight into "all things". Normally "complete understanding" (*pariññā*) indicates arahantship, but here it reinforces "direct knowledge" (*abhiññā*) as the wisdom of stream-entry. However, the force of attachment is so deeply ingrained that even a stream-enterer, such as Sakka, with both theoretical and experiential wisdom is still not free. So they must then continue to meditate on the feelings in order to let go fully.

860. Moggallāna refers to Sakka as a "spirit" (*yakkha*).

861. Moggallāna was the foremost in psychic powers.

862. A *pañcaṅgikatūriya* is a band of five musicians, a "quintet". Here it is amplified a hundredfold, so I translate "orchestra". | "Single lotus" (*ekapuṇḍarīka*) appears as an auspicious epithet in a prayer for wealth at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.3.6.

Seeing Mahāmoggallāna coming off in the distance, he waved off 7.2
the orchestra, approached Mahāmoggallāna, and said,[863] "Come, my good fellow Moggallāna! Welcome, my good fellow! It's been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Sit, my good Moggallāna, here, a seat is ready." Mahāmoggallāna sat down on the seat spread out, while Sakka took a low seat and sat to one side.

Mahāmoggallāna said to him, "Kosiya, how did the Buddha briefly 7.9
explain freedom through the ending of craving?[864] Please share this talk with me so that I can also get to hear it."

"My good Moggallāna, I have many duties, and much to do, not 8.3
only for myself, but also for the gods of the thirty-three. Still, what is properly heard, learned, attended, and memorized does not vanish all of a sudden.[865] Once upon a time, a battle was fought between

863. The Pali *paṭippaṇāmeti*, literally "bend back", occurs also in the "fending off" of Lady Luck at MN 49:5.9. Sometimes it has a metaphorical meaning (AN 6.42:10.2), but there it seems to indicate a physical movement with a staff, a waving gesture to ward off an ill omen. Normally the verb *paṇamati* means to "bow", so it too has a physical meaning, even though the connotation is opposite. It is used by the Buddha in "dismissing" a badly behaved Saṅgha (MN 67:5.1). Perhaps there, as here, it also retains a physical aspect, to "wave off".

864. Moggallāna refers to Sakka as "Kosiya" rather than the Buddha's "lord of gods". Old gods like Sakka tend to accrue many names. The word *kosiya* is explained by the commentaries as "owl", which, if correct, would have been the totem for a clan of that name. It is, however, a patronymic: Rig Veda 1.10.11 has *indra kauśika* which means "Indra, son of Kuśika (or Kuśa)". *Kuśa* grass is critical to the performance of Vedic rites, and the label probably initially implied "Brahmanized", i.e. a king whose reign was authorized according to Vedic ritual. Kosiya is said to be a low class family name (Bu Pc 2:2.1.18).

865. The commentary reads *no* as a personal pronoun (*amhākaṁ*) which results in the sense, "Even what I have well remembered quickly vanishes." This is logically dubious—how is it "properly learned" if it quickly vanishes?—and contradicted below where Sakka shows that he does in fact remember perfectly well (MN 37:12.5). Instead, read *no* as negative particle. Sakka is brushing Moggallāna off by insisting he has learned his lesson, without taking the trouble to actually remember it.

the gods and the titans.[866] In that battle the gods won and the titans lost. When I returned from that battle as a conqueror, I created the Palace of Victory. The Palace of Victory has a hundred towers. Each tower has seven hundred chambers. Each chamber has seven nymphs. Each nymph has seven maids. Would you like to see the lovely Palace of Victory?" Mahāmoggallāna consented with silence.

9.1 Then, putting Venerable Mahāmoggallāna in front, Sakka, lord of gods, and Vessavaṇa, the Great King, went to the Palace of Victory.[867] When they saw Moggallāna coming off in the distance, Sakka's maids, being discreet and prudent, each went to her own bedroom.[868] They were just like a daughter-in-law who is discreet and prudent when they see their father-in-law.

10.3 Then Sakka and Vessavaṇa encouraged Moggallāna to wander and explore the palace, saying,[869] "See, in the palace, my good Moggallāna, this lovely thing! And that lovely thing!"[870]

10.6 "That looks beautiful for the venerable Kosiya, as befits one who has made merit in the past.[871] Humans, when they see something lovely, also say: 'It looks beautiful enough for the gods of the thirty-

866. He tries to distract Moggallāna with talk of his glory days, rehashing vendettas that were old even in the Vedas.

867. Also known as Kuvera (DN 20:9.31, Snp 2.14:6.1), the name Vessavaṇa means "Son of the Renowned" from his father Viśrava, although DN 32:7.40 explains it as from the name of his city. He is one of the four great kings and guards the northern quarter.

868. The maids are described as possessing the cardinal virtues of *hiri* (conscience, discretion) and *otappa* (prudence), the "guardians of the world" and the foundations of moral integrity. Former translators have rendered this as if the maids were "embarrassed and ashamed", but this is unwarranted. The maids were born in this realm as the result of their good kamma in past lives and are simply residing there in their own home. Unlike Sakka, who neglected his lesson and then tried to distract attention when reminded of it, they have nothing to be ashamed of.

869. This is a good example of *(anu)-vicāra* in the sense of "explore".

870. The gods are pointing out various pretty features in the palace.

871. After Sakka's disappointing response, Moggallāna is trying to say something nice. At the same time, he subtly implies the difference between his past merit and present negligence.

three!' That looks beautiful for the venerable Kosiya, as befits one who has made merit in the past."

Then Moggallāna thought, "This spirit lives much too negligently. 11.1
Why don't I stir up a sense of urgency in him?"

Then Moggallāna used his psychic power to make the Palace of 11.4
Victory shake and rock and tremble with his big toe.[872] Then Sakka, Vessavaṇa, and the gods of the thirty-three, their minds full of wonder and amazement, thought, "Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! The ascetic has such power and might that he makes the god's home shake and rock and tremble with his big toe!"

Knowing that Sakka was shocked and awestruck, Moggallāna 12.1
said to him, "Kosiya, how did the Buddha briefly explain freedom through the ending of craving? Please share this talk with me so that I can also get to hear it."

"My good fellow Moggallāna, I approached the Buddha, bowed, 12.4
stood to one side, and said to him, 'Sir, how do you briefly define a mendicant who is freed with the ending of craving, who has reached the ultimate end, the ultimate sanctuary from the yoke, the ultimate spiritual life, the ultimate goal, and is best among gods and humans?'

When I had spoken the Buddha said to me: 'Lord of gods, it's 13.1
when a mendicant has heard: "Nothing is worth insisting on." When a mendicant has heard that nothing is worth insisting on, they directly know all things. Directly knowing all things, they completely understand all things. Having completely understood all things, when they experience any kind of feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—they meditate observing impermanence, dispassion, cessation, and letting go in those feelings. Meditating in this way, they don't grasp at anything in the world. Not grasping, they're not anxious. Not being anxious, they personally become extinguished. They understand: "Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing

872. Referred to at Thag 20.1:55.1. Moggallāna displayed a similar wonder at SN 51.14:3.1, also a means of last resort in the face of negligence.

further for this place." That's how I briefly define a mendicant who is freed through the ending of craving, who has reached the ultimate end, the ultimate sanctuary from the yoke, the ultimate spiritual life, the ultimate goal, and is best among gods and humans.' That's how the Buddha briefly explained freedom through the ending of craving to me."

14.1 Moggallāna approved and agreed with what Sakka said. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from among the gods of the thirty-three and reappeared in the Eastern Monastery.

14.2 Soon after Moggallāna left, Sakka's maids said to him, "Good fellow, was that the Blessed One, your Teacher?"

14.4 "No, it was not. That was my spiritual companion Venerable Mahāmoggallāna."[873]

14.6 "You're fortunate, good fellow, so very fortunate, to have a spiritual companion of such power and might! We can't believe that's not the Blessed One, your Teacher!"

15.1 Then Mahāmoggallāna went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, do you recall briefly explaining freedom through the ending of craving to a certain well-known and illustrious spirit?"[874]

15.3 "I do, Moggallāna." And the Buddha retold all that happened when Sakka came to visit him, adding:

15.5 "That's how I recall briefly explaining freedom through the ending of craving to Sakka, lord of gods."

15.18 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna approved what the Buddha said.

873. "Spiritual companion" (*sabrahmacārī*) normally refers to a fellow monastic, but here it alludes to the fact that both of them have seen the Dhamma.

874. It is unclear why Moggallāna asked for a repetition of the teaching at which he was present. One might have expected that he would report to the Buddha the events at Sakka's palace.

MN 38

The Longer Discourse on the Ending of Craving

Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhayasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time a mendicant named Sāti, the fisherman's son, 2.1
had the following harmful misconception:[875] "As I understand the Buddha's teaching, it is this very same consciousness that roams and transmigrates, not another."[876]

Several mendicants heard this rumour. They went up to Sāti and 3.1
said to him, "Is it really true, Reverend Sāti, that you have such a

875. The opening of this sutta is similar to MN 22.

876. Sāti attributes three teachings to the Buddha. First, that there is a "transmigration" (*saṁsāra*) from one life to another. Second, that the primary locus of transmigration is "consciousness" (*viññāṇa*). And thirdly, that the consciousness that transmigrates remains "this very same" (*tadevidaṁ*), not another (*anaññaṁ*); in other words, it retains its self-same identity through the process of rebirth. The Buddha did in fact teach the first two of these ideas, but not the third, as he will explain below. | The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad says that as death approaches, the senses and vital energies withdraw into the heart (*hṛdaya*), from the top of which the self departs. That same consciousness proceeds to a new body (4.4.2: *savijñāno bhavati, savijñānamevānvavakrāmati*). This core Upaniṣadic chapter on rebirth reflects Sāti's wording as well as his meaning. Sāti asserts emphatic identity using doubled demonstrative pronouns conjoined with *(e)va* (*tadevidaṁ*), and identical constructions are found throughout the Bṛhadāraṇyaka chapter: *sa vā ayam* (4.4.5), *sa vā eṣa* (4.4.22, 4.4.24, 4.4.25); see also *tameva* (4.4.17). For *anaññaṁ* we find the inverse *anya* for the "other" body (4.4.3, 4.4.4). For the Pali verbs *sandhāvati saṁsarati* we have instead *avakrāmati* (4.4.1, 4.4.2). But the connection with *saṁsarati* is made in the Brahmanical tradition itself, for it says below, "That self is indeed divinity, made of consciousness" (*sa vā ayamātmā brahma vijñānamayo*; 4.4.5, see too 4.4.22), which the commentator Śaṅkara explains as "the transmigrating self" (*saṁsaratyātmā*).

harmful misconception: 'As I understand the Buddha's teaching, it is this very same consciousness that roams and transmigrates, not another'?"

3.7 "Indeed, reverends. As I understand the Buddha's teaching, it is this very same consciousness that roams and transmigrates, not another."

3.8 Then, wishing to dissuade Sāti from his view, the mendicants pursued, pressed, and grilled him, "Don't say that, Sāti! Don't misrepresent the Buddha, for misrepresentation of the Buddha is not good. And the Buddha would not say that. In many ways the Buddha has said that consciousness is dependently originated, that without a cause, consciousness does not come to be."[877]

3.11 But even though the mendicants pressed him in this way, Sāti obstinately stuck to his misconception and insisted on it.

4.1 When they weren't able to dissuade Sāti from his view, the mendicants went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

5.1 So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, "Please, monk, in my name tell the mendicant Sāti that the Teacher summons him."

5.4 "Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to Sāti and said to him, "Reverend Sāti, the Teacher summons you."

5.6 "Yes, reverend," Sāti replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Is it really true, Sāti, that you have such a harmful misconception: 'As I understand the Buddha's teaching, it is this very same consciousness that roams and transmigrates, not another'?"

5.9 "Indeed, sir. As I understand the Buddha's teaching, it is this very same consciousness that roams and transmigrates, not another."

5.10 "Sāti, what is that consciousness?"

877. If consciousness is dependent it is changeable and cannot be "that very same". The Buddha spoke of consciousness as a process of phenomena evolving and flowing, ever changing like a stream.

"Sir, he is the one who speaks, the one who knows, who experiences the results of good and bad deeds in all the different realms."[878] 5.11

"Futile man, who on earth have you ever known me to teach in that way? Haven't I said in many ways that consciousness is dependently originated, that without a cause, consciousness does not come to be? But still you misrepresent me by your wrong grasp, harm yourself, and brim with much wickedness. This will be for your lasting harm and suffering." 5.12

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, "What do you think, mendicants? Has this mendicant Sāti kindled even a spark of ardor in this teaching and training?"[879] 6.1

"How could that be, sir? No, sir." When this was said, Sāti sat silent, dismayed, shoulders drooping, downcast, depressed, with nothing to say. 6.4

Knowing this, the Buddha said, "Futile man, you will be known by your own harmful misconception. I'll question the mendicants about this." 6.7

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, "Mendicants, do you understand my teachings as Sāti does, when he misrepresents me by his wrong grasp, harms himself, and brims with much wickedness?" 7.1

"No, sir. For in many ways the Buddha has told us that consciousness is dependently originated, that without a cause, consciousness does not come to be." 7.3

"Good, good, mendicants! It's good that you understand my teaching like this. For in many ways I have told you that consciousness is dependently originated, that without a cause, consciousness does not come to be. But still this Sāti misrepresents me by his wrong grasp, harms himself, and brims with much wickedness. This will be for his lasting harm and suffering. 7.5

878. See MN 2:8.8.
879. See MN 22:7.3.

8.1 Consciousness is reckoned according to the very same condition dependent upon which it arises.[880] Consciousness that arises dependent on the eye and sights is reckoned as eye consciousness. Consciousness that arises dependent on the ear and sounds is reckoned as ear consciousness. Consciousness that arises dependent on the nose and smells is reckoned as nose consciousness. Consciousness that arises dependent on the tongue and tastes is reckoned as tongue consciousness. Consciousness that arises dependent on the body and touches is reckoned as body consciousness. Consciousness that arises dependent on the mind and ideas is reckoned as mind consciousness.

8.8 It's like fire, which is reckoned according to the very same condition dependent upon which it burns.[881] A fire that burns dependent on logs is reckoned as a log fire. A fire that burns dependent on twigs is reckoned as a twig fire. A fire that burns dependent on grass is reckoned as a grass fire. A fire that burns dependent on cow-dung is reckoned as a cow-dung fire. A fire that burns dependent on husks is reckoned as a husk fire. A fire that burns dependent on rubbish is reckoned as a rubbish fire.

8.15 In the same way, consciousness is reckoned according to the very same condition dependent upon which it arises. …

9.1 Mendicants, do you see that this has come to be?"[882]

9.2 "Yes, sir."

9.3 "Do you see that it came to be with that as fuel?"

9.4 "Yes, sir."

9.5 "Do you see that when that fuel ceases, what has come to be is liable to cease?"

880. The Buddha's use of duplicated pronouns with *eva* here echoes Sāti's language, but to the opposite effect. Rather than emphasizing the self-sameness of transmigrating consciousness, the Buddha states with equal emphasis the dependence of consciousness on specific conditions, whatever they may be.

881. A similar argument is made in the context of caste at MN 93:11.5.

882. "This has come to be" (*bhūtamidaṁ*) refers to dependently originated consciousness (implied by the neuter pronoun *idaṁ*). See SN 12.31:7.1.

"Yes, sir." 9.6

"Does doubt arise when you're uncertain whether or not this has come to be?" 10.1

"Yes, sir." 10.2

"Does doubt arise when you're uncertain whether or not this has come to be with that as fuel?" 10.3

"Yes, sir." 10.4

"Does doubt arise when you're uncertain whether or not when that fuel ceases, what has come to be is liable to cease?" 10.5

"Yes, sir." 10.6

"Is doubt given up in someone who truly sees with right understanding that this has come to be?"[883] 11.1

"Yes, sir." 11.2

"Is doubt given up in someone who truly sees with right understanding that this has come to be with that as fuel?" 11.3

"Yes, sir." 11.4

"Is doubt given up in someone who truly sees with right understanding that when that fuel ceases, what has come to be is liable to cease?" 11.5

"Yes, sir." 11.6

"Are you free of doubt as to whether this has come to be?" 12.1

"Yes, sir." 12.2

"Are you free of doubt as to whether this has come to be with that as fuel?" 12.3

"Yes, sir." 12.4

"Are you free of doubt as to whether when that fuel ceases, what has come to be is liable to cease?" 12.5

"Yes, sir." 12.6

"Have you truly seen clearly with right understanding that this has come to be?" 13.1

"Yes, sir." 13.2

883. This is the stream-enterer, who has seen dependent origination and given up doubt.

13.3 "Have you truly seen clearly with right understanding that this has come to be with that as fuel?"

13.4 "Yes, sir."

13.5 "Have you truly seen clearly with right understanding that when that fuel ceases, what has come to be is liable to cease?"

13.6 "Yes, sir."

14.1 "Pure and bright as this view is, mendicants, if you cling to it, dally with it, treasure it, and treat it as your own, would you be understanding my simile of the teaching as a raft: for crossing over, not for holding on?"[884]

14.2 "No, sir."

14.3 "Pure and bright as this view is, mendicants, if you don't cling to it, dally with it, treasure it, and treat it as your own, would you be understanding my simile of the teaching as a raft: for crossing over, not for holding on?"

14.4 "Yes, sir."

15.1 "Mendicants, these four fuels maintain sentient beings that have been born and help those about to be born. What four? Edible food, whether solid or subtle; contact is the second, mental intention the third, and consciousness the fourth.[885]

16.1 What is the source, origin, birthplace, and inception of these four fuels?[886] Craving.

16.3 And what is the source of craving? Feeling.

16.5 And what is the source of feeling? Contact.

16.7 And what is the source of contact? The six sense fields.

16.9 And what is the source of the six sense fields? Name and form.

16.11 And what is the source of name and form? Consciousness.

884. An allusion to MN 22:13.1. The verbs here are used of children playing with sandcastles at SN 23.2:2.2.

885. As at MN 9:11.4.

886. The word *āhāra* ("fuel", "food", "nutriment") means literally "intake", and is etymologically parallel to *upādāna*, "grasping", "uptake". Both terms have dual senses, on the one hand denoting fuel or sustenance, and on the other grasping and attachment. That is why here (as at MN 9:11.5), *āhāra* is created by craving, just like *upādāna* in the standard sequence (MN 38:17.8).

And what is the source of consciousness? Choices. 16.13

And what is the source of choices? Ignorance. 16.15

So, ignorance is a requirement for choices.[887] Choices are a requirement for consciousness.[888] Consciousness is a requirement for name and form.[889] Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields.[890] The six sense fields are requirements for contact.[891] Contact is a requirement for feeling.[892] Feeling is a requirement for craving.[893] Craving is a requirement for grasping.[894] Grasping is a requirement for continued existence.[895] Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth.[896] Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be.[897] That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. 17.1

887. Here begins the full presentation of the standard sequence of dependent origination in forward order. Formal definitions are found at SN 12.2. Here I briefly indicate the nature of the conditioned links. | Because we are ignorant of the four noble truths, we make morally potent choices by body, speech, and mind.

888. These choices are creative forces or energies in the mind that sustain the ongoing stream of sense consciousness from one life to the next.

889. Consciousness functions in relation to a cluster of phenomena both mental—feeling, perception, intention, contact, and application of mind—and physical—the four elements. These form an organism that grows and evolves.

890. The sentient organism of the body requires senses to feed it stimuli.

891. Through these the sentient organism encounters the world outside and learns to make sense of it.

892. It distinguishes experiences that are pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral.

893. It reacts by wanting to have more pleasure and to escape pain.

894. Grasping at pleasures, view, observances, and theories of self, one makes sense of the world so as to optimize the capacity of oneself to experience pleasure.

895. This grasping binds one to time, to a continuity of existence in the realms of the senses or those of refined consciousness.

896. Shedding the body one takes up a new one in one of the realms of existence, perpetuating the cycle.

897. Being born, it is inevitable that one will experience the pains of broken teeth, wrinkled skin, crooked back, and ultimately the failure of the body that we call death.

18.1 'Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death.' That's what I said.[898] Is that how you see this or not?"

18.3 "That's how we see it."

18.6 "'Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth.' …

18.50 'Ignorance is a requirement for choices.' That's what I said. Is that how you see this or not?"

18.52 "That's how we see it."

19.1 "Good, mendicants! So both you and I say this. When this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises. That is:[899] Ignorance is a requirement for choices. Choices are a requirement for consciousness. Consciousness is a requirement for name and form. Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are requirements for contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

20.1 When ignorance fades away and ceases with no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When

898. The Buddha grills his students, reinforcing learning by making sure they understand each point.

899. This is the abstract principle of dependent origination. It establishes that dependent origination is concerned, not with universal truisms such as "everything is connected" or "everything must have a cause", but with establishing specific links between one thing and another. This is a form of necessary condition—without one thing, the other cannot be. But it is stronger than mere necessity, as each condition is a close and vital support for its descendant. This abstract principle is often called "specific conditionality" (*idappaccayatā*), but note that in the suttas *idappaccayatā* is a synonym of dependent origination as a whole.

feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

'When rebirth ceases, old age and death cease.' That's what I said. Is that how you see this or not?" 21.1

"That's how we see it." 21.3

"'When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases.' … 21.6

'When ignorance ceases, choices cease.' That's what I said. Is that how you see this or not?" 21.51

"That's how we see it." 21.53

"Good, mendicants! So both you and I say this. When this doesn't exist, this doesn't come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. That is: When ignorance ceases, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases. 22.1

Knowing and seeing in this way, mendicants, would you turn back to the first beginning, thinking,[900] 'Did we exist in the past? Did we not exist in the past? What were we in the past? How were we in the past? After being what, what did we become in the past?'?"[901] 23.1

"No, sir." 23.3

900. This passage unpacks certain aspects of ignorance. | Compare SN 12.20:5.1.

901. These are called "irrational thoughts" at MN 2:7.3.

23.4 "Knowing and seeing in this way, mendicants, would you turn forward to the final end, thinking,[902] 'Will we exist in the future? Will we not exist in the future? What will we be in the future? How will we be in the future? After being what, what will we become in the future?'?"

23.6 "No, sir."

24.1 "Knowing and seeing in this way, mendicants, would you be undecided about the present, thinking, 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? This sentient being—where did it come from? And where will it go?'?"[903]

24.3 "No, sir."

24.4 "Knowing and seeing in this way, would you say, 'Our teacher is respected. We speak like this out of esteem for our teacher'?"[904]

24.6 "No, sir."

24.7 "Knowing and seeing in this way, would you say, 'Our ascetic says this. We speak like this because it is what he says'?"[905]

24.9 "No, sir."

24.10 "Knowing and seeing in this way, would you dedicate yourself to another teacher?"

24.11 "No, sir."

24.12 "Knowing and seeing in this way, would you believe that the observances and boisterous, superstitious rites of the various ascetics and brahmins are essential?"[906]

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902. Mahāsaṅgīti edition has the same verb *paṭidhāv-* here as above ("turn back to"). PTS and BJT have here *ādhav-* with *paṭidhāv-* as variant. At SN 12.20:5.3 all three editions have *upadhāv-*, with *apadhāv-* as variant in PTS. Whatever the correct reading might be, it is clear the intent is convey the opposite direction.

903. Although the question is still in plural, the answer shifts to singular, perhaps by mistake because elsewhere this passage is always singular.

904. "Respect for our teacher" is *satthā no garu*; compare *samaṇo no garu* at AN 3.65:4.1.

905. Readings here are problematic and not cleared up by the commentary. I follow BJT and MS, which have a similar sense. However, both PTS and BJT plausibly have the pronoun *no* ("our"), which I add though absent from MS.

906. In Buddhism, performance of rituals is not in itself forbidden; the main point is that they are not considered "essential" (*sārato*). Note that rituals were

"No, sir." 24.13

"Aren't you speaking only of what you have known and seen and realized for yourselves?" 24.14

"Yes, sir." 24.15

"Good, mendicants! You have been guided by me with this teaching that's apparent in the present life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves. For when I said that this teaching is apparent in the present life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves, this is what I was referring to. 25.1

Mendicants, when three things come together an embryo is conceived.[907] In a case where the mother and father come together, but the mother is not in the fertile phase of her menstrual cycle, and the virile spirit is not ready, the embryo is not conceived.[908] In a 26.1

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regarded as efficacious acts, and hence correspond to "choices" (*saṅkhārā*), a word that can also mean "rite". | "Boisterous" (*kotūhala*) is literally "whence the hubbub?" This basic sense comes across clearly in the Arthaśāstra, which describes a spy's spell for putting to sleep the men or dogs that guard a village, who are always listening out for sounds (14.3.21cd, 14.3.37ab). Vedic rituals, with their multiple reciters and arcane rites, took on a noisy and festive air.

907. This section illustrates dependent origination by way of the birth and physical and psychological development of a person from conception to adulthood. From passages such as DN 15:21.2, we know that conception occurs at the nexus of "consciousness" and "name and form" in dependent origination. Since it starts with this life only, the first two factors, ignorance and choices, are omitted here, but are implicitly covered in the preceding passage. | For the "conception" or more literally "descent" of the embryo, the Buddha uses the same term *avakkanti* that, as we have noted (MN 38:2.2), was preferred by Yajñavālkya in the same context.

908. According to MN 93:18.61 this was a doctrine of the brahmins, and it was evidently adopted in this sutta as a popular theory of conception. I discuss the role of the *gandhabba* in my notes there. | *Utu* ("the fertile phase of her menstrual cycle") literally means "season". As the earth needs rain, a womb is dry and infertile until it is moistened by blood, for the fortnight following which it is fertile and "in season". Thus *utu* can be both menstruation, during which sex was taboo for the brahmins, as well as the fertile fortnight that follows, outside of which sex was also taboo (Snp 2.7:9.2). Atharvaveda 14.2.37a speaks of parents

case where the mother and father come together, the mother is in the fertile phase of her menstrual cycle, but the virile spirit is not ready, the embryo is not conceived. But when these three things come together—the mother and father come together, the mother is in the fertile phase of her menstrual cycle, and the virile spirit is ready—an embryo is conceived.

27.1 The mother nurtures the embryo in her womb for nine or ten months at great risk to her heavy burden.[909] When nine or ten months have passed, the mother gives birth at great risk to her heavy burden. When the infant is born she nourishes it with her own blood. For mother's milk is regarded as blood in the training of the Noble One.[910]

28.1 That boy grows up and his faculties mature.[911] He accordingly plays childish games such as toy plows, tipcat, somersaults, pinwheels, toy measures, toy carts, and toy bows.[912]

29.1 That boy grows up and his faculties mature further. He accordingly amuses himself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of

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coming together "in season". Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.6 expresses the same idea by saying the woman should be approached for sex when she has removed her soiled garments (since she may not change clothes while menstruating, 6.4.13). Manu 3.46 defines the "season" as the sixteen days beginning with the appearance of the menstrual flow. The first four days are deemed inappropriate for sex on account of menstruation; and the eleventh and thirteenth day are also excluded, leaving ten days suitable for sex.

909. "At great risk" is *mahatā saṁsayena*. | A term of pregnancy of "nine or ten months" is also found at Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.9.1. | For "heavy burden" (*garubhāra*) see Bi Pc 61:1.5.

910. In context, this speaks to the mother's sacrifice. The commentary says that the blood is made white by the mother's love for her child. | It does seem to be the case that this idea is peculiar to the "training of the Noble One", as I cannot locate it in non-Buddhist texts.

911. This shows that dependent origination does not happen all at once; it is a process of growth and maturation. A child, whose faculties are not developed, does not perpetuate the cycle because they have no formed moral intentions.

912. A more extensive list of games is found at DN 1:1.14.2.

sensual stimulation. Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing.[913]

Sounds known by the ear … 29.4

Smells known by the nose … 29.5

Tastes known by the tongue … 29.6

Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. 29.7

When they see a sight with their eyes, if it's pleasant they desire it, but if it's unpleasant they dislike it. They live with mindfulness of the body unestablished and their heart stunted.[914] And they don't truly understand the freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom where those arisen bad, unskillful qualities cease without remainder. 30.1

Being so full of favoring and opposing, when they experience any kind of feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—they approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it. This gives rise to relishing. Relishing feelings is grasping. Their grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be.[915] That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. 30.3

When they hear a sound with their ears … 30.7

When they smell an odor with their nose … 30.8

When they taste a flavor with their tongue … 30.9

When they feel a touch with their body … 30.10

When they know an idea with their mind, if it's pleasant they desire it, but if it's unpleasant they dislike it. They live with mindfulness of the body unestablished and their heart stunted. And they 30.11

913. In dependent origination, this parallels contact through the senses giving rise to feelings.

914. In dependent origination, feeling gives rise to craving. | Parallel passages in the Saṁyutta (eg. SN 35.132:12.3) in parallels for this passage have *adhimuccati* ("commits to, holds on to") rather than *sārajjati* ("desires").

915. Now we rejoin the standard sequence of dependent origination.

don't truly understand the freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom where those arisen bad, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

30.13 Being so full of favoring and opposing, when they experience any kind of feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—they approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it. This gives rise to relishing. Relishing feelings is grasping. Their grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

31.1 But consider when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.[916] He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He proclaims a teaching that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. He reveals an entirely full and pure spiritual life.

32.1 A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or someone reborn in a good family. They gain faith in the Realized One and reflect: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from lay life to homelessness?' After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

916. Just as the sutta illustrated the abstract arising of suffering with the concrete example of a child growing up, it now illustrates the unraveling of dependent origination with the Gradual Training (see MN 27:11.1).

Once they've gone forth, they take up the training and livelihood 33.1
of the mendicants. They give up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings.

They give up stealing. They take only what's given, and expect 33.2
only what's given. They keep themselves clean by not thieving.

They give up unchastity. They are chaste, set apart, refraining from 33.3
the vulgar act of sex.

They give up lying. They speak the truth and stick to the truth. 33.4
They're honest and dependable, and don't trick the world with their words.

They give up backbiting. They don't repeat in one place what they 33.5
heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, they reconcile those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony.

They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, 33.6
pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people.

They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and 33.7
meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.

They refrain from injuring plants and seeds. They eat in one part 33.8
of the day, abstaining from eating at night and food at the wrong time. They refrain from seeing shows of dancing, singing, and music. They refrain from attiring and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. They refrain from high and luxurious beds. They refrain from receiving gold and currency, raw grains, raw meat, women and girls, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants, cows, horses, and mares, and fields and land. They refrain from running errands and messages; buying and selling; falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud,

cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence.

34.1 They're content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. They're like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves.

35.1 When they see a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint.

35.3 When they hear a sound with their ears …

35.4 When they smell an odor with their nose …

35.5 When they taste a flavor with their tongue …

35.6 When they feel a touch with their body …

35.7 When they know an idea with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. When they have this noble sense restraint, they experience an unsullied bliss inside themselves.

36.1 They act with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.

37.1 When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, this noble contentment, this noble sense restraint, and this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, they frequent a secluded lodging—a wilder-

ness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw.

38.1 After the meal, they return from almsround, sit down cross-legged, set their body straight, and bring mindfulness to the present. Giving up covetousness for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

39.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption.

40.1 When they see a sight with their eyes, if it's pleasant they don't desire it, and if it's unpleasant they don't dislike it. They live with mindfulness of the body established and a limitless heart.[917] And they truly understand the freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom where those arisen bad, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

40.3 Having given up favoring and opposing, when they experience any kind of feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—they don't

917. This resumes the teaching on attachment to the senses (from MN 38:30.1), having shown what is required to let go such attachment. Here, one experiences the feelings through the senses, but without any attachment.

approve, welcome, or keep clinging to it. As a result, relishing of feelings ceases. When their relishing ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

41.1 When they hear a sound with their ears …

41.2 When they smell an odor with their nose …

41.3 When they taste a flavor with their tongue …

41.4 When they feel a touch with their body …

41.5 When they know an idea with their mind, if it's pleasant they don't desire it, and if it's unpleasant they don't dislike it. They live with mindfulness of the body established and a limitless heart. And they truly understand the freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom where those arisen bad, unskillful qualities cease without remainder.

41.7 Having given up favoring and opposing, when they experience any kind of feeling—pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral—they don't approve, welcome, or keep clinging to it. As a result, relishing of feelings ceases. When their relishing ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.

41.11 Mendicants, you should memorize this brief statement on freedom through the ending of craving. But the mendicant Sāti, the fisherman's son, is caught in a vast net of craving, a tangle of craving."[918]

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918. The mention of the "brief statement" at the end of a long discourse is puzzling. A similar exhortation to "memorize" a "brief" passage is found in only one other passage, where it is in reference to the short summary passage around which the sutta is based (MN 140:32.3). Compare the preceding sutta, MN 37, which revolves around a short passage for memorization that is fittingly described as "brief" throughout. That "brief" passage opens by saying "nothing is worth insisting on", advice that is disregarded by Sāti who "insists" on his own view (MN 38:3.11). No "brief statement" is mentioned in the Chinese

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 41.12

parallel (MA 201 at T i 769c28), which speaks instead of the shaking of the three-thousand-fold world system.

MN 39

The Longer Discourse at Assapura

Mahāassapurasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Aṅgas, near the Aṅgan town named Assapura.[919] There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, people label you as ascetics. And when they ask you what you are, you claim to be ascetics.[920]

2.3 Given this label and this claim, you should train like this: 'We will proceed having undertaken the things that make one an ascetic and a brahmin. That way our label will be accurate and our claim correct. The services of those whose robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick we enjoy shall be very fruitful and beneficial for them. And our going forth will not be barren, but will be fruitful and fertile.'

3.1 And what are the things that make one an ascetic and a brahmin? You should train like this: 'We will have conscience and prudence.' Now, mendicants, you might think, 'We have conscience and prudence. This is sufficient; enough has been done. We have achieved

919. Assapura, the "horse fort", appears to be unknown apart from its mention here and the next sutta. Contra *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, this is not the same Assapura referred to in Ja 422, as that lay south of Ceti, far to the west. An Aśvapura is mentioned in Jain legends, but there is nothing to link this with the Aṅgan town. | Aṅga lay to the east of Magadha on the Ganges, toward modern Bengal.

920. This sutta deals with the difference between outer perception and inner reality, addressing what we call "imposter syndrome". The Buddha inspires students to aspire to the highest ideal through the practice of the Gradual Training so that they live up to their labels and claims.

the goal of life as an ascetic. There is nothing more to do.' And you might rest content with just that much. I declare this to you, mendicants, I announce this to you: 'You who seek to be true ascetics, do not lose sight of the goal of the ascetic life while there is still more to do.'

What more is there to do? You should train like this: 'Our bod- 4.1
ily behavior will be pure, clear, open, neither inconsistent nor secretive.[921] And we won't glorify ourselves or put others down on account of our pure bodily behavior.' Now, mendicants, you might think, 'We have conscience and prudence, and our bodily behavior is pure. This is sufficient …' I declare this to you, mendicants, I announce this to you: 'You who seek to be true ascetics, do not lose sight of the goal of the ascetic life while there is still more to do.'

What more is there to do? You should train like this: 'Our verbal 5.1
behavior … mental behavior … livelihood will be pure, clear, open, neither inconsistent nor secretive. And we won't glorify ourselves or put others down on account of our pure livelihood.' Now, mendicants, you might think, 'We have conscience and prudence, our bodily, verbal, and mental behavior is pure, and our livelihood is pure. This is sufficient; enough has been done. We have achieved the goal of life as an ascetic. There is nothing more to do.' And you might rest content with just that much. I declare this to you, mendicants, I announce this to you: 'You who seek to be true ascetics, do not lose sight of the goal of the ascetic life while there is still more to do.'

What more is there to do? You should train yourselves like this: 8.1
'We will restrain our sense doors. When we see a sight with our eyes, we won't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of

921. *Chiddavā* ("inconsistent") is more literally "full of holes". Its opposite (*acchidda*) is one of the standard descriptors of "impeccable" precepts (eg. MN 48:6.12). | *Saṁvuta* (past participle of *saṁvara*) can mean either "restrained" or "hidden, secretive". The sense depends on the syntax; the two instances of *ca* split the listed items into three plus two, with the negative distributed over the last two items. This agrees with the commentary, which explains "secretive" as "concealing one's faults". *Saṁvara* appears in the sense of sense restraint below (MN 39:8.4).

sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, we will practice restraint, we will protect the faculty of sight, and we will achieve its restraint. When we hear a sound with our ears … When we smell an odor with our nose … When we taste a flavor with our tongue … When we feel a touch with our body … When we know an idea with our mind, we won't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, we will practice restraint, we will protect the faculty of mind, and we will achieve its restraint.' Now, mendicants, you might think, 'We have conscience and prudence, our bodily, verbal, and mental behavior is pure, our livelihood is pure, and our sense doors are restrained. This is sufficient …'

9.1 What more is there to do? You should train yourselves like this: 'We will not eat too much. We will only eat after reflecting rationally on our food. We will eat not for fun, indulgence, adornment, or decoration, but only to sustain this body, to avoid harm, and to support spiritual practice. In this way, we shall put an end to old discomfort and not give rise to new discomfort, and we will have the means to keep going, blamelessness, and a comfortable abiding.' Now, mendicants, you might think, 'We have conscience and prudence, our bodily, verbal, and mental behavior is pure, our livelihood is pure, our sense doors are restrained, and we don't eat too much. This is sufficient …'

10.1 What more is there to do? You should train yourselves like this: 'We will be dedicated to wakefulness. When practicing walking and sitting meditation by day, we will purify our mind from obstacles. In the first watch of the night, we will continue to practice walking and sitting meditation. In the middle watch, we will lie down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware, and focused on the time of getting up. In the last watch, we will get up and continue to practice walking and sitting meditation, purifying our mind from obstacles.' Now, mendicants,

you might think, 'We have conscience and prudence, our bodily, verbal, and mental behavior is pure, our livelihood is pure, our sense doors are restrained, we don't eat too much, and we are dedicated to wakefulness. This is sufficient …'

What more is there to do? You should train yourselves like this: 11.1
'We will have situational awareness and mindfulness. We will act with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.' Now, mendicants, you might think, 'We have conscience and prudence, our bodily, verbal, and mental behavior is pure, our livelihood is pure, our sense doors are restrained, we don't eat too much, we are dedicated to wakefulness, and we have mindfulness and situational awareness. This is sufficient …'

What more is there to do? Take a mendicant who frequents a 12.1
secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw.

After the meal, they return from almsround, sit down cross-legged, 13.1
set their body straight, and bring mindfulness to the present. Giving up covetousness for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

14.1 Suppose a man who has gotten into debt were to apply himself to work,[922] and his efforts proved successful. He would pay off the original loan and have enough left over to support his partner. Thinking about this, he'd be filled with joy and happiness.

14.8 Suppose a person was sick, suffering, gravely ill. They'd lose their appetite and get physically weak. But after some time they'd recover from that illness, and regain their appetite and their strength. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

14.13 Suppose a person was imprisoned in a jail. But after some time they were released from jail, safe and sound, with no loss of wealth. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

14.18 Suppose a person was a bondservant. They would not be their own master, but indentured to another, unable to go where they wish. But after some time they'd be freed from servitude. They would be their own master, not indentured to another, a freeman able to go where they wish. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

14.23 Suppose there was a person with wealth and property who was traveling along a desert road. But after some time they crossed over the desert, safe and sound, with no loss of wealth. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

14.29 In the same way, as long as these five hindrances are not given up inside themselves, a mendicant regards them as a debt, a disease, a prison, slavery, and a desert crossing. But when these five hindrances are given up inside themselves, a mendicant regards this as freedom from debt, good health, release from prison, emancipation, and a place of sanctuary at last.

15.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while

922. The similes for the hindrances and jhānas feature also in DN 2:69.1 and DN 10:2.7.1.

placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion.[923] It's like when a deft bathroom attendant or their apprentice pours bath powder into a bronze dish, sprinkling it little by little with water. They knead it until the ball of bath powder is soaked and saturated with moisture, spread through inside and out; yet no moisture oozes out.[924]

In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads 15.5
themselves with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected 16.1
are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion. It's like a deep lake fed by spring water. There's no inlet to the east, west, north, or south, and the heavens would not properly bestow showers from time to time. But the stream of cool water welling up in the lake drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads throughout the lake. There's no part of the lake that's not spread through with cool water.[925]

In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads 16.4
themselves with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no

923. As a meditator proceeds, their subjective experience of the "body" evolves from tactile sense impressions (*phoṭṭhabba*), to the interior mental experience of bliss and light (*manomayakāya*), to the direct personal realization of highest truth (MN 70:23.2: *kāyena ceva paramasaccaṁ sacchikaroti*).

924. The kneading is the "placing the mind and keeping it connected", the water is bliss, while the lack of leaking speaks to the contained interiority of the experience.

925. The simile emphasizes the water as bliss, while the lack of inflow expresses containment and unification. The water welling up is the rapture, which is the uplifting emotional response to the experience of bliss.

part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion.

17.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture. It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. From the tip to the root they're drenched, steeped, filled, and soaked with cool water. There's no part of them that's not soaked with cool water.[926]

17.4 In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads themselves with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture.

18.1 Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. They sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind. It's like someone sitting wrapped from head to foot with white cloth. There's no part of the body that's not spread over with white cloth.[927]

18.4 In the same way, they sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind.

19.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives.

926. The meditator is utterly immersed in stillness and bliss.

927. The white cloth is the purity and brightness of equanimity. The commentary explains this as a person who has just got out of a bath and sits perfectly dry and content.

They recollect many kinds of past lives, with features and details. Suppose a person was to leave their home village and go to another village. From that village they'd go to yet another village. And from that village they'd return to their home village. They'd think: 'I went from my home village to another village. There I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. From that village I went to yet another village. There too I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. And from that village I returned to my home village.'

In the same way, a mendicant recollects their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. 19.4

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. Suppose there were two houses with doors. A person with clear eyes standing in between them would see humans entering and leaving a house and wandering to and fro. 20.1

In the same way, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 20.4

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the 21.1

practice that leads to the cessation of defilements.' Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed. They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

21.7 Suppose that in a mountain glen there was a lake that was transparent, clear, and unclouded. A person with clear eyes standing on the bank would see the clams and mussels, and pebbles and gravel, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still. They'd think: 'This lake is transparent, clear, and unclouded. And here are the clams and mussels, and pebbles and gravel, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still.'

21.11 In the same way, a mendicant truly understands: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' They understand: '… there is nothing further for this place.'

22.1 This mendicant is one who is called an 'ascetic', a 'brahmin', a 'bathed initiate', a 'knowledge master', a 'scholar', a 'noble one', and also a 'perfected one'.[928]

23.1 And how is a mendicant an ascetic?[929] They have assuaged the bad, unskillful qualities that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. That's how a mendicant is an ascetic.

24.1 And how is a mendicant a brahmin?[930] They have banished the bad, unskillful qualities. That's how a mendicant is a brahmin.

928. This series of epithets is also found at AN 7.85–92, split over separate suttas, and with other terms and explanations in Snp 3.6. The explanations here rely on puns, the feel of which I have tried to echo in English.

929. *Samaṇa* ("ascetic") is from a root meaning to exert or weary oneself, but here is explained as if related to *samita* ("assuaged", "calmed").

930. The root sense of *brah-* is to "amplify" or "empower", but is explained as *bāhita* ("banished", "expelled"). This is a common play on words, eg. Ud 1.4:4.1, Dhp 388:1.

And how is a mendicant a bathed initiate?[931] They have bathed off the bad, unskillful qualities. That's how a mendicant is a bathed initiate. 25.1

And how is a mendicant a knowledge master?[932] They have known the bad, unskillful qualities. That's how a mendicant is a knowledge master. 26.1

And how is a mendicant a scholar?[933] They have scoured off the bad, unskillful qualities. That's how a mendicant is a scholar. 27.1

And how is a mendicant a noble one?[934] They have nobbled their foes, the bad, unskillful qualities. That's how a mendicant is a noble one. 28.1

931. A *nhātaka* (Sanskrit *snātaka*) is one who has performed the ritual ablutions on the completion of his studies.

932. The "knowledge" in *vedagū* is the Vedas in Brahmanism and the three knowledges in Buddhism. Curiously, it is not an attested term in Brahmanical texts. Perhaps it arose by contraction from Sanskrit *vedapāraga*, or such passages as *(tiṇṇaṁ) vedānaṁ pāragū*.

933. *Sottiya* ("scholar") is from the root "to hear", as is the more familiar Pali term *sāvaka* ("disciple", "student", literally "hearkener"). In Brahmanism *śrotrīya* refers to one who is well versed in the Vedas. Here, however, it is connected with the root *su* ("to flow"), as in one who has "rinsed off" or "scoured off" bad things.

934. Both *ariya* and *arahant* are explained with the same word *āraka*, meaning "far from (defilements)". The commentary gives *āraka* in both cases, but explains *ariya* as "slayer" and *arahant* as "far from". At AN 7.91, PTS has *arīhatattā*, "foe-slayer" for *ariya* (BJT omits, while at least one more variant is attested). This is a slightly better pun for *ariya* than *āraka*, although at Snp 3.6:38.1 *ariya* is punned with *ālaya* ("clinging"), which is better than both. Where both MA 182 and the parallel to MN 40 at MA 183 at T i 726c13 mention the *ariya*, the Indic pun underlying EA 49.8 seems to be that a *kṣatriya* is so called because they "end" (Sanskit *kṣaya*) the defilements. Neither of the Chinese parallels (MA 182 at T i 725c4, EA 49.8 at T ii 802b4) mentions the *arahant*, suggesting it was added later, which would explain the duplication of *āraka*. However, given that "far from" is consistently attested for the *arahant* in all editions and commentary; that "foe-slayer" is attested for *ariya* in some texts and commentaries; and that *kṣatriya* in the sense of "warrior" is loosely in the same semantic realm as "foe-slayer", I translate accordingly.

29.1 And how is a mendicant a perfected one?[935] They are impeccably remote from the bad, unskillful qualities that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. That's how a mendicant is a perfected one."

29.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

935. *Arahant* ("perfected one") has the root sense "worthy" and in Buddhism has the sense of one who has perfectly or "impeccably" removed all defilements.

MN 40

The Shorter Discourse at Assapura

Cūḷaassapurasutta

So I have heard.[936] At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Aṅgas, near the Aṅgan town named Assapura. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, people label you as ascetics. And when they ask you what you are, you claim to be ascetics. 2.1

Given this label and this claim, you should train like this: 'We will practice in the way that is proper for an ascetic. That way our label will be accurate and our claim correct. The services of those whose robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick we enjoy shall be very fruitful and beneficial for them. And our going forth will not be barren, but will be fruitful and fertile.' 2.3

And how does a mendicant not practice in the way that is proper for an ascetic?[937] 3.1

Any mendicant who has not given up covetousness, ill will, irritability, acrimony, disdain, contempt, jealousy, stinginess, deviousness, deceit, corrupt wishes, and wrong view[938] is not practicing in the way that is proper for an ascetic, I say. And that is due to not giving up these stains, defects, and dregs of an ascetic, these grounds for rebirth in places of loss, to be experienced in bad places. I say that such a mendicant's going forth may be compared to the kind 3.2

936. This sutta deals with a similar topic to the previous, with differences in phrasing and content.

937. These are forms of "misapprehension of precepts and observances" which do not in and of themselves signify spiritual purity.

938. Compare the "corruptions of the mind" at MN 7:3.2.

of weapon called 'deadborn'—double-edged, whetted with yellow arsenic—that has been covered and wrapped in an outer robe.[939]

5.1 I say that you don't deserve the label 'outer robe wearer' just because you wear an outer robe. You don't deserve the label 'naked ascetic' just because you go naked. You don't deserve the label 'dust and dirt wearer' just because you're caked in dust and dirt.[940] You don't deserve the label 'water immerser' just because you immerse yourself in water. You don't deserve the label 'tree root dweller' just because you stay at the root of a tree. You don't deserve the label 'open air dweller' just because you stay in the open air. You don't deserve the label 'stander' just because you continually stand. You don't deserve the label 'interval eater' just because you eat food at set intervals. You don't deserve the label 'reciter' just because you recite hymns. You don't deserve the label 'matted-hair ascetic' just because you have matted hair.[941]

6.1 Imagine that just by wearing an outer robe someone with covetousness, ill will, irritability, acrimony, disdain, contempt, jealousy, stinginess, deviousness, deceit, corrupt wishes, and wrong view could give up these things. If that were the case, your friends and

939. "Deadborn" (*mataja*) is explained by the commentary as meaning forged from iron filings recovered from the corpse of a dead heron, which was force-fed them for that purpose. It sounds bizarre, and I have not been able to trace this practice elsewhere, but people do a lot of bizarre things. | *Pītanisita* may mean "sharpened with a wet (*pīta*) stone" per the commentary, or else "sharpened with yellow arsenic" (*pīta*). Arthaśāstra 2.14.48 describes how metals may be rubbed with yellow arsenic (here = *haritāla*) to disguise them. This fits the context, where a supposed monk wrapped in the ocher robe is like the metal, outwardly shiny yellow, but inside is deadly.

940. Wearers of dust and dirt are mentioned at DN 8:14.18 and DN 25:8.16, along with several other items on this list; see too Dhp 141 and Thag 4.5:1.2, and the description of the Bodhisatta at MN 12:46.5. Some ascetics, such as Jains, did not bathe.

941. Such "matted-hair ascetics" are apparently the "forest hermits" (*vānaprastha*) whose lifestyle Kauṭilya describes as "celibacy, sleeping on the ground, wearing matted hair and antelope skin, offering daily fire sacrifice, bathing, venerating gods, ancestors, and guests, and eating forest produce" (Arthaśāstra 1.3.11, Olivelle's translation).

colleagues, relatives and kin would make you an outer robe wearer as soon as you were born. They'd encourage you: 'Please, dearest, wear an outer robe! By doing so you will give up covetousness, ill will, irritability, acrimony, disdain, contempt, jealousy, stinginess, deviousness, deceit, corrupt wishes, and wrong view.'[942] But sometimes I see someone with these bad qualities who is an outer robe wearer. That's why I say that you don't deserve the label 'outer robe wearer' just because you wear an outer robe.

Imagine that just by going naked … wearing dust and dirt … 6.4
immersing in water … staying at the root of a tree … staying in the open air … standing continually … eating at set intervals … reciting hymns … having matted hair someone with covetousness, ill will, irritability, acrimony, disdain, contempt, jealousy, stinginess, deviousness, deceit, corrupt wishes, and wrong view could give up these things. If that were the case, your friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would make you a matted-hair ascetic as soon as you were born. They'd encourage you: 'Please, dearest, become a matted-hair ascetic! By doing so you will give up covetousness, ill will, irritability, hostility, disdain, contempt, jealousy, stinginess, deviousness, deceit, corrupt wishes, and wrong view.' But sometimes I see someone with these bad qualities who is a matted-hair ascetic. That's why I say that you don't deserve the label 'matted-hair ascetic' just because you have matted hair.

942. *Bhadramukha* is used here by family for a child. Elsewhere, by lay people addressing monks (MN 81:21.1); by a laywoman addressing a deity (AN 7.53:3.4); by a king of his grown son (SN 3.7:1.5); and, with the addition of the familiar *tāta*, by a brahmin wife to her husband (MN 100:3.5). The term is of Sanskritic form and is found commonly in the Avadāna literature. Turning to later Sanskrit sources, Nāṭyaśāstra 19.12 says it should be used when addressing inferiors, while Sāhityadarpaṇa 6.154 says it is used when addressing a prince (see SN 3.7 above). The early Pali usage, however, suggests it was an affectionate and respectful term of somewhat elevated usage, but not restricted by status. Since *bhadda* by itself is a common form of address in the sense "my dear", I think the suffix *-mukha* has its intensive sense here, "dearest", rather than "dear face".

7.1 And how does a mendicant practice in the way that is proper for an ascetic?

7.2 Any mendicant who has given up covetousness, ill will, irritability, acrimony, disdain, contempt, jealousy, stinginess, deviousness, deceit, corrupt wishes, and wrong view is practicing in the way that is proper for an ascetic, I say. And that is due to giving up these stains, defects, and dregs of an ascetic, these grounds for rebirth in places of loss, to be experienced in bad places.

8.1 They see themselves purified from all these bad, unskillful qualities. Seeing this, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed in samādhi.

9.1 They meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

10-12.1 They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion …

10-12.2 They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing …

10-12.3 They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

13.1 Suppose there was a lotus pond with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. Then along comes a person—whether from the east, west, north, or south—struggling in the oppressive heat, weary, thirsty, and parched. No matter what direction they come from, when they arrive at that lotus pond they would alleviate their thirst and heat exhaustion.[943]

943. In such cases *pariḷāha* refers to "heat exhaustion" rather than "fever".

In the same way, suppose someone has gone forth from the lay life 13.4
to homelessness—whether from a family of aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, or menials—and has arrived at the teaching and training proclaimed by a Realized One. Having developed love, compassion, rejoicing, and equanimity in this way they gain inner peace. Because of that inner peace they are practicing the way proper for an ascetic, I say.

And suppose someone has gone forth from the lay life to home- 14.1
lessness—whether from a family of aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, or workers—and they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. They're an ascetic because of the ending of defilements."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 14.4
what the Buddha said.

THE LESSER CHAPTER ON PAIRS

MN 41

The People of Sālā

Sāleyyakasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Kosalan brahmins named Sālā.[944] 1.1

The brahmins and householders of Sālā heard, "It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—while wandering in the land of the Kosalans has arrived at Sālā, together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. He reveals an entirely full and pure spiritual life. It's good to see such perfected ones." 2.1

Then the brahmins and householders of Sālā went up to the Buddha. Before sitting down to one side, some bowed, some exchanged 3.1

944. This village is possibly connected to the Śālagrāma famed in later years as the origin of the ammonite stones found on the Gaṇḍakī river and worshiped as aniconic forms of Vishnu. Against this theory is that Śālagrāma is too far to the north-east, although in truth we do not know the exact extent of Kosala. The feminine ending of the Pali form suggests that the name means "hall", but Sanskrit sources trace Śālagrāma to the sal trees that grow abundantly in the Himalayan foothills. | The same framing narrative recurs at MN 60, where the topic of rebirth is also discussed.

greetings and polite conversation, some held up their cupped palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. Seated to one side they said to the Buddha:

4.1 "What is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell?[945] And what is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm?"

5.1 "Unprincipled and immoral conduct is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. Principled and moral conduct is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm."

6.1 "We don't understand the detailed meaning of the worthy Gotama's brief statement. Worthy Gotama, please teach us this matter in detail so we can understand the meaning."

6.3 "Well then, householders, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

6.4 "Yes, worthy sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

7.1 "Householders, unprincipled and immoral conduct is threefold by way of body, fourfold by way of speech, and threefold by way of mind.[946]

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945. Multiple theories of rebirth are found in Brahmanical texts. For example, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.5 says that rebirth depends on good or bad deeds, but notes the differing opinion that desire is all that matters. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.10.1–5 describes two paths: forest ascetics go the Brahmā realm, while ritualists go to the moon, from whence those who did good deeds are reborn as human in a good caste, but those who did bad deeds are reborn as outcastes, pigs, or dogs. Those who follow neither path are reborn as small animals or insects.

946. This analysis, found frequently in the suttas, became known as the "ten pathways of skillful deeds" (*dasakusalakammapatha*). It was adopted in the treatment of *karma* in Manusmṛti 12, where we find a very similar division of "ten characteristics" (*daśalakṣaṇa*).

And how is unprincipled and immoral conduct threefold by way of body? It's when someone kills living creatures. They're violent, bloody-handed, a hardened killer, merciless to living beings.[947] 8.1

They steal. With the intention to commit theft, they take the wealth or belongings of others from village or wilderness. 8.3

They commit sexual misconduct. They have relations with women who have their mother, father, both mother and father, brother, sister, relatives, or clan as guardian. They have relations with a woman who is protected on principle, or who has a husband, or whose violation is punishable by law, or even one who has been garlanded as a token of betrothal.[948] This is how unprincipled and immoral conduct is threefold by way of body. 8.4

And how is unprincipled and immoral conduct fourfold by way of speech? It's when someone lies. They're summoned to a council, an assembly, a family meeting, a guild, or to the royal court, and asked to bear witness: 'Please, my friend, say what you know.' Not knowing, they say 'I know.' Knowing, they say 'I don't know.' Not seeing, they say 'I see.' And seeing, they say 'I don't see.' So they deliberately lie for the sake of themselves or another, or for some trivial worldly reason.[949] 9.1

947. The same description is applied to the notorious serial killer Aṅgulimāla (MN 86:2.1). These definitions dramatically present clear cases of violation and are not intended to be complete or to cover all grey areas. The Vinaya rules analyze these transgressions in detail as they apply to monastic conduct.

948. This definition covers a number of sexual transgressions from a male heteronormative perspective that, with due allowance for social change, would also be considered inappropriate today: when a woman is married or engaged, or illegal sex, or if she is under guardianship, such as for a child or teen. Elsewhere, the texts identify a number of other illicit sexual acts, such as rape (AN 8.84:1.3), child abuse (Snp 1.6:21.2), incest (AN 5.55), bestiality (Bu Pj 1:6.30), necrophilia (Bu Pj 1:10.13.1), and womanizing or promiscuity in general (AN 8.54:6.2). Notably absent is any criticism of homosexuality, sex outside of marriage, relations with more than two partners, sex work, masturbation, or specific sexual acts.

949. Perjury is a severe example of lying.

9.3 They backbite. They repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. And so they divide those who are harmonious, supporting division, delighting in division, loving division, speaking words that promote division.

9.4 They speak harshly. They use the kinds of words that are cruel, nasty, hurtful, offensive, bordering on anger, not leading to immersion.

9.5 They talk nonsense. Their speech is untimely, and is neither factual nor beneficial. It has nothing to do with the teaching or the training. Their words have no value, and are untimely, unreasonable, rambling, and pointless. This is how unprincipled and immoral conduct is fourfold by way of speech.

10.1 And how is unprincipled and immoral conduct threefold by way of mind?[950] It's when someone is covetous. They covet the wealth and belongings of others: 'Oh, if only their belongings were mine!'

10.3 They have ill will and malicious intentions: 'May these sentient beings be killed, slaughtered, slain, destroyed, or annihilated!'

10.4 They have wrong view. Their perspective is distorted: 'There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There's no such thing as mother and father, or beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.'[951] This is how unprincipled and immoral conduct is threefold by way of mind.

10.7 That's how unprincipled and immoral conduct is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

11.1 Householders, principled and moral conduct is threefold by way of body, fourfold by way of speech, and threefold by way of mind.

950. These three correspond with the respective defilements greed, hate, and delusion.

951. This includes the wrong view that there is no afterlife, but goes beyond that to assert moral nihilism.

And how is principled and moral conduct threefold by way of body? It's when someone gives up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings. 12.1

They give up stealing. They don't, with the intention to commit theft, take the wealth or belongings of others from village or wilderness. 12.3

They give up sexual misconduct. They don't have relations with women who have their mother, father, both mother and father, brother, sister, relatives, or clan as guardian. They don't have relations with a woman who is protected on principle, or who has a husband, or whose violation is punishable by law, or even one who has been garlanded as a token of betrothal. This is how principled and moral conduct is threefold by way of body. 12.4

And how is principled and moral conduct fourfold by way of speech? It's when someone gives up lying. They're summoned to a council, an assembly, a family meeting, a guild, or to the royal court, and asked to bear witness: 'Please, my friend, say what you know.' Not knowing, they say 'I don't know.' Knowing, they say 'I know.' Not seeing, they say 'I don't see.' And seeing, they say 'I see.' So they don't deliberately lie for the sake of themselves or another, or for some trivial worldly reason. 13.1

They give up backbiting. They don't repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, they reconcile those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. 13.3

They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, likable, and agreeable to the people. 13.4

They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and bene- 13.5

ficial. This is how principled and moral conduct is fourfold by way of speech.

14.1 And how is principled and moral conduct threefold by way of mind? It's when someone is not covetous. They don't covet the wealth and belongings of others: 'Oh, if only their belongings were mine!'

14.3 They have a kind heart and loving intentions: 'May these sentient beings live free of enmity and ill will, untroubled and happy!'

14.4 They have right view, an undistorted perspective: 'There is meaning in giving, sacrifice, and offerings. There are fruits and results of good and bad deeds. There is an afterlife. There are such things as mother and father, and beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there are ascetics and brahmins who are rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describe the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' This is how principled and moral conduct is threefold by way of mind.

14.7 This is how principled and moral conduct is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

15.1 Someone of principled and moral conduct might wish: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of well-to-do aristocrats!'[952] It's possible that this might happen. Why is that? Because they have principled and moral conduct.

16-17.1 Someone of principled and moral conduct might wish: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of well-to-do brahmins … well-to-do householders … the gods of the four great kings … the gods of the thirty-three … the gods of Yama … the joyful gods … the gods who love to create … the gods who control what is created by others … the gods of the Divinity's

952. The Buddha is, of course, not recommending this, merely accommodating it. At this point, the ten ways of skillful deeds are both necessary and sufficient for the desired outcome. This changes with the higher realms, where absorption is also required, and the realization of arahantship, which requires the whole noble eightfold path. See note at MN 120:12.12.

host …[953] the radiant gods …[954] the gods of limited radiance … the gods of limitless radiance … the gods of streaming radiance … the gods of limited beauty …[955] the gods of limitless beauty … the gods of universal beauty … the gods of abundant fruit …[956] the gods of Aviha …[957] the gods of Atappa … the gods fair to see … the fair seeing gods … the gods of Akaniṭṭha … the gods of the dimension of infinite space …[958] the gods of the dimension of infinite consciousness … the gods of the dimension of nothingness … the gods of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' It's possible that this might happen. Why is that? Because they have principled and moral conduct.

Someone of principled and moral conduct might wish: 'If only I might realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.' It's possible that this might happen. Why is that? Because they have principled and moral conduct." 43.1

When he had spoken, the brahmins and householders of Sālā said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear 44.1

953. Rebirth in this realm and higher is said to depend, not just on the ten ways of doing skillful deeds, but on the development of absorption meditation (DN 13:76.1). Sometimes this is expressed by saying that they are "free from desire" (AN 8.35:4.11, DN 33:3.1.136), a stipulation that is in fact stated in the Chinese parallel to this sutta (SA 1042 at T ii 273a13).

954. The radiant gods are reborn dependent on the second absorption. The following three classes of gods with "radiance" in their names are subsets of the radiant gods.

955. The three classes of devas with "beauty" (*subha*) in their names are reborn due to the third absorption. Some editions have a separate class of "beautiful gods", of which these three are the subsets, making these follow the same pattern as the "radiant" gods.

956. This corresponds to the fourth absorption.

957. These five realms are the Pure Abodes, which are the resort of non-returners only.

958. These four correespond to the formless attainments.

eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. We go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life."

MN 42

The People of Verañjā

Verañjakasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[959] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. 1.1

Now at that time the brahmins and householders of Verañjā were residing in Sāvatthī on some business.[960] The brahmins and householders of Verañjā heard: 2.1

"It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—is staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. He has this good reputation … It's good to see such perfected ones." 2.3

… They said to the Buddha: "What is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell? And what is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm?" 3.1

959. This discourse is identical with the previous except for the location, and a very slight difference in phrasing at MN 42:7.1 compared to MN 41:7.1. The Chinese parallels (SA 1042 and SA 1043 at T ii 272c-273b) are also nearly identical to each other, sharing the same location (Sāvatthī), and varying only in the names of the brahmins and their manner of approaching the Buddha.

960. Verañjā has not been conclusively identified, but it lay between Madhurā (AN 4.53:1.1) and Soreyya (Bu Pj 1:4.18). If modern Soron is Soreyya, it is tempting to accept Dhammika's identification of Verañjā with Atranjikhera (note to Bu Pj 1:4.18) just north of Etah in Uttar Pradesh. Atranjikhera is a huge mound whose excavation revealed four layers of occupation, the latest of which was the Northern Black Polished Ware culture of the Buddha's day. It was a staging ground for horse traders from Kasmir along the northern route from Kashmir, which more or less followed the course of the Ganges.

5.1 "Unprincipled and immoral conduct is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. Principled and moral conduct is the reason why some sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm."

6.1 "We don't understand the detailed meaning of the worthy Gotama's brief statement. …"

7.1 "Householders, a person of unprincipled and immoral conduct is threefold by way of body, fourfold by way of speech, and threefold by way of mind. …" …

MN 43

The Great Elaboration

Mahāvedallasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[961] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. 1.1

Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita came out of retreat, went to Venerable Sāriputta, and exchanged greetings with him.[962] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Sāriputta: 1.3

"Reverend, they speak of 'a witless person'. How is a witless person defined?" 2.1

"Reverend, they're called witless because they don't understand. And what don't they understand? They don't understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' They're called witless because they don't understand." 2.3

961. This sutta and the next are named for the class of scripture called *vedalla*, being the only suttas explicitly labelled as such. The root sense is to "split open" (*vi-√dal*) like a blossoming flower. These texts go beyond simple analysis or classification to "elaborate" the basic teachings (cf. the Sanskrit, which here has *vaipulya*, "expansion"). They share a similar method, where a series of questions and answers are carefully laid out, without revealing their purpose, but relentlessly driving toward the unraveling of the deepest meditation states emerging in Nibbāna. While the Chinese parallels are broadly similar, there are many differences in detail, so they should be carefully studied before drawing any conclusions based on such "elaborations".

962. Mahākoṭṭhita was one of the great disciples, and many of his conversations with Sāriputta are recorded. He was said to be foremost in the methods of textual analysis (AN 1.218:1.1), exemplified by such discussions as this. His verse is at Thag 1.2:0.4.

2.7 Saying "Good, reverend," Mahākoṭṭhita approved and agreed with what Sāriputta said. Then he asked another question:

3.1 "They speak of 'a wise person'. How is a wise person defined?"

3.3 "They're called wise because they understand. And what do they understand? They understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' They're called wise because they understand."

4.1 "They speak of 'consciousness'. How is consciousness defined?"

4.3 "It's called consciousness because it cognizes.[963] And what does it cognize? It cognizes 'pleasure' and 'pain' and 'neutral'.[964] It's called consciousness because it cognizes."

5.1 "Wisdom and consciousness—are these things mixed or separate? And can we completely disentangle them so as to describe the difference between them?"[965]

5.4 "Wisdom and consciousness—[966] these things are mixed, not separate. And you can never completely disentangle them so as to describe the difference between them. For you understand what you cognize, and you cognize what you understand. That's why

963. In defining a noun by its verb, Sāriputta clarifies that consciousness is not an entity but a function. Consciousness is simply the act of being conscious. Similar definitions are proposed for other fundamental Dhamma terms such as "feeling" and "perception".

964. This definition is subtly different from that of "feeling" below (MN 43:7.5). The addition of the quotative particle *-ti* distances the verb for cognizing from the noun that is cognized. The Chinese and Tibetan parallels to this passage define consciousness here in the standard way as awareness of sense phenomena (MA 211 at T i 790c7, D 4094 *mngon pa, nyu* 81a7), which is more straightforward, but could be a result of normalization. Note too that the definition at SN 22.79:6.4 differs, where the context is universal experience in transmigration, rather than the development of meditation.

965. *Vinibbhujati* ("disentangle") is used for the dissection of a corpse (Thig 16.1:24.1) or the unravelling of coiled banana sheaths (MN 35:22.3).

966. "Wisdom" (*paññā*) and "consciousness" (*viññāṇa*) are two of the very many terms derived from the root *ñā*, "to know". The prefixes act as intensifiers, but do not decisively distinguish the meaning, so while they are used consistently in doctrinal contexts, more loosely they can be interchangeable.

these things are mixed, not separate. And you can never completely disentangle them so as to describe the difference between them."[967]

"Wisdom and consciousness—what is the difference between 6.1
these things that are mixed, not separate?"

"The difference between these things is that wisdom should be de- 6.3
veloped, while consciousness should be completely understood."[968]

"They speak of this thing called 'feeling'. How is feeling defined?" 7.1

"It's called feeling because it feels. And what does it feel? It feels 7.3
pleasure, pain, and neutral.[969] It's called feeling because it feels."

"They speak of this thing called 'perception'. How is perception 8.1
defined?"

"It's called perception because it perceives. And what does it 8.3
perceive? It perceives blue, yellow, red, and white.[970] It's called
perception because it perceives."

"Feeling, perception, and consciousness—are these things mixed 9.1
or separate? And can we completely disentangle them so as to de-
scribe the difference between them?"

"Feeling, perception, and consciousness—these things are mixed, 9.4
not separate. And you can never completely disentangle them so

967. This dialogue cautions against pushing analysis too far.

968. This refers to the fundamental distinction made in the first discourse (SN 56.11): that which is to be developed ("wisdom") pertains to the fourth noble truth, while that which is to be completely understood ("consciousness") pertains to the first noble truth. Again, the distinction between them is functional rather than ontological.

969. This definition is similar to that for consciousness, except without the distancing *-ti*. The feeling is the experience, whereas consciousnesses is that which is aware of the feeling. | The progress of the text is more subtle than it appears, as the question on feeling and consciousness starts to lay the groundwork for understanding the deep states of meditation that are discussed later.

970. "Color" is a more sophisticated and less universal aspect of awareness than "feeling", reflecting the fact that "perception" relates to higher-order functions like recognition and interpretation, which are involved in concept formation. The "perception" of lights and colors is often connected with the development of the four "form" *jhānas* (eg. MN 77:23.14), so we are paving the way for the apparently abrupt transition to the formless dimensions at MN 43:10.2 below.

as to describe the difference between them. For you perceive what you feel, and you cognize what you perceive. That's why these things are mixed, not separate. And you can never completely disentangle them so as to describe the difference between them."

10.1 "What can be known by purified mind consciousness released from the five senses?"[971]

10.2 "Aware that 'space is infinite' it can know the dimension of infinite space. Aware that 'consciousness is infinite' it can know the dimension of infinite consciousness. Aware that 'there is nothing at all' it can know the dimension of nothingness."

11.1 "How do you understand something that can be known?"

11.2 "You understand something that can be known with the eye of wisdom."[972]

12.1 "What is the goal of wisdom?"

12.2 "The goal of wisdom is direct knowledge, complete understanding, and giving up."[973]

13.1 "How many conditions are there for the arising of right view?"[974]

13.2 "There are two conditions for the arising of right view: the voice of another and rational application of mind.[975] These are the two conditions for the arising of right view."

14.1 "When right view is supported by how many factors does it have freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom as its fruit and benefit?"[976]

14.2 "When right view is supported by five factors it has freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom as its fruit and benefit. It's when right view is supported by ethics, learning, discussion, serenity, and discernment. When right view is supported by these five factors it has freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom as its fruit and benefit."

971. The key term "purified" (*parisuddha*) indicates the fourth absorption.

972. In other words, through personal experience rather than scripture, tradition, etc.

973. Wisdom is explained in functional terms through the effect that it produces.

974. That is, for stream-entry.

975. The "voice of another" is the teachings of the Dhamma, but these have to be actually investigated and applied internally.

976. That is, how does a stream-enterer practice further for arahantship?

"How many states of existence are there?" 15.1

"Reverend, there are these three states of existence.[977] Existence 15.2
in the sensual realm, the realm of luminous form, and the formless realm."

"But how is there regeneration into a new state of existence in the 16.1
future?"

"It's because of sentient beings—shrouded by ignorance and fet- 16.2
tered by craving—taking pleasure wherever they land.[978] That's how there is regeneration into a new state of existence in the future."

"But how is there no regeneration into a new state of existence in 17.1
the future?"

"It's when ignorance fades away, knowledge arises, and craving 17.2
ceases. That's how there is no regeneration into a new state of existence in the future."

"But what, reverend, is the first absorption?" 18.1

"Reverend, it's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual 18.2
pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is called the first absorption."

"But how many factors does the first absorption have?" 19.1

"The first absorption has five factors. When a mendicant has 19.2
entered the first absorption, placing the mind, keeping it connected, rapture, bliss, and unification of mind are present.[979] That's how the first absorption has five factors."

977. These three questions summarize dependent origination.

978. The term "shrouded by ignorance" (*avijjānīvaraṇa*) draws on the connection between *nīvaraṇa*, normally translated "hindrance", and the cosmic serpent Vṛtra, the "constrictor" who wraps the world in darkness.

979. These five absorption factors are found in the suttas here and, with other factors appended, at MN 111:4.1. The list summarizes the normal depiction of the first absorption, as the first four factors are all part of the standard first absorption formula, and all absorption or *samādhi* is characterized by unification of mind (eg. MN 20:3.3). They became a standard analysis of the first absorption in late canonical texts (eg. Ps 1.5:10.2, Ds 2.1.1:3.1, Vb 12:99.1, Pe 6:66.2).

20.1 "But how many factors has the first absorption given up and how many does it possess?"

20.2 "The first absorption has given up five factors and possesses five factors. When a mendicant has entered the first absorption, sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt are given up. Placing the mind, keeping it connected, rapture, bliss, and unification of mind are present.[980] That's how the first absorption has given up five factors and possesses five factors."

21.1 "Reverend, these five faculties have different domains and different ranges, and don't experience each other's domain and range. That is,[981] the faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body. What do these five faculties, with their different domains and ranges, have recourse to? What experiences their domains and ranges?"

21.4 "These five faculties, with their different domains and ranges, have recourse to the mind. And the mind experiences their domains and ranges."[982]

22.1 "These five faculties depend on what to continue?"

22.4 "These five faculties depend on vitality to continue."

22.7 "But what does vitality depend on to continue?"

22.8 "Vitality depends on warmth to continue."

22.9 "But what does warmth depend on to continue?"

22.10 "Warmth depends on vitality to continue."

22.11 "Just now I understood you to say: 'Vitality depends on warmth to continue.' But I also understood you to say: 'Warmth depends on vitality to continue.' How then should we see the meaning of this statement?"

22.16 "Well then, reverend, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is

980. All of these, except unification, are present to some degree before absorption, but now they manifest fully.

981. Again, apparently general questions are in fact laying the groundwork for a discussion on subtle states of meditation.

982. Each kind of sense experience is quite separate and distinct. The mind brings them all together and creates a sensible world in which a "self" can operate.

said. Suppose there was an oil lamp burning. The luminosity appears dependent on the flame, and the flame appears dependent on the luminosity. In the same way, vitality depends on warmth to continue, and warmth depends on vitality to continue."

23.1 "Are the vital forces and the phenomena that are felt one and the same? Or are the vital forces one thing, and the phenomena that are felt another?"[983]

23.2 "The vital forces are not the same things as the phenomena that are felt. For if the vital forces and the phenomena that are felt were the same things, a mendicant who had attained the cessation of perception and feeling would not emerge from it.[984] But because the vital forces and the phenomena that are felt are different things, a mendicant who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling can emerge from it."

24.1 "How many things must this body lose before it lies abandoned, tossed aside like an insentient log?"

24.2 "This body must lose three things before it lies abandoned, tossed aside like an insentient log: vitality, warmth, and consciousness."[985]

25.1 "What's the difference between someone who has passed away and a mendicant who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling?"[986]

25.2 "When someone dies, their physical, verbal, and mental processes have ceased and stilled; their vitality is spent; their warmth is dissi-

983. "Vital force" is *āyusaṅkhāra*. The suttas also use *bhavasaṅkhāra* (DN 16:3.10.5) and *jīvitasaṅkhāra* (DN 16:2.23.5) synonymously.

984. This introduces the most subtle of all meditation states, accessible only to non-returners and arahants who are fully accomplished in all the absorptions.

985. This passage assumes the existence of a distinct vital force that is one of three factors required for life, which is why I have translated *āyu* here as "vitality" rather than "life". Compare Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 8.7.2.11: "he who will live is conscious and warm, and he who will die is cold".

986. This distinction is critical, as it sometimes happens that a person in deep meditation seems as if dead. Indeed, this confused even Ānanda at the Buddha's deathbed (DN 16:6.8.1).

pated; and their faculties have disintegrated.[987] When a mendicant has attained the cessation of perception and feeling, their physical, verbal, and mental processes have ceased and stilled. But their vitality is not spent; their warmth is not dissipated; and their faculties are very clear. That's the difference between someone who has passed away and a mendicant who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling."

26.1 "How many conditions are necessary to attain the neutral release of the heart?"

26.2 "Four conditions are necessary to attain the neutral release of the heart. With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. These four conditions are necessary to attain the neutral release of the heart."

27.1 "How many conditions are necessary to attain the signless release of the heart?"

27.2 "Two conditions are necessary to attain the signless release of the heart: not focusing on any signs, and focusing on the signless. These two conditions are necessary to attain the signless release of the heart."

27.5 "How many conditions are necessary to remain in the signless release of the heart?"

28.1 "Three conditions are necessary to remain in the signless release of the heart: not focusing on any signs, focusing on the signless, and a previous determination.[988] These three conditions are necessary to remain in the signless release of the heart."

29.1 "How many conditions are necessary to emerge from the signless release of the heart?"

987. These processes are defined in the next sutta (MN 44:14.1).

988. Before entering the meditation, one makes an inner resolve to remain there for a certain period of time.

"Two conditions are necessary to emerge from the signless release 29.2
of the heart: focusing on all signs, and not focusing on the signless. These two conditions are necessary to emerge from the signless release of the heart."

"The limitless release of the heart, and the release of the heart 29.5
through nothingness, and the release of the heart through emptiness, and the signless release of the heart: do these things differ in both meaning and phrasing? Or do they mean the same thing, and differ only in the phrasing?"[989]

"There is a way in which these things differ in both meaning and 30.1
phrasing. But there's also a way in which they mean the same thing, and differ only in the phrasing.[990]

And what's the way in which these things differ in both meaning 31.1
and phrasing?

Firstly, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of love to one 31.2
direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion … They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing … They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. This is called the limitless release of the heart.

989. This question was asked by Pañcakaṅga of Anuruddha at MN 127:4.5, and by Godatta of Citta at SN 41.7. It is noteworthy that all of these discussions are among disciples. This process of the students seeking to understand the relationship between different teachings, to reconcile or distinguish, is a hallmark of the Abhidhamma, and here we see its origination.

990. These terms can be used for distinct states of meditation as described below, but they can all be used of arahantship as well.

32.1 And what is the release of the heart through nothingness? It's when a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. This is called the heart's release through nothingness.

33.1 And what is the release of the heart through emptiness? It's when a mendicant has gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, and reflects like this: 'This is empty of a self or what belongs to a self.' This is called the release of the heart through emptiness.

34.1 And what is the signless release of the heart? It's when a mendicant, not focusing on any signs, enters and remains in the signless immersion of the heart. This is called the signless release of the heart.

34.4 This is the way in which these things differ in both meaning and phrasing.

35.1 And what's the way in which they mean the same thing, and differ only in the phrasing?

35.2 Greed, hate, and delusion are makers of limits. A mendicant who has ended the defilements has given these up, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, and obliterated them, so they are unable to arise in the future. The unshakable release of the heart is said to be the best kind of limitless release of the heart. That unshakable release of the heart is empty of greed, hate, and delusion.

36.1 Greed is something, hate is something, and delusion is something. A mendicant who has ended the defilements has given these up, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, and obliterated them, so they are unable to arise in the future. The unshakable release of the heart is said to be the best kind of release of the heart through nothingness. That unshakable release of the heart is empty of greed, hate, and delusion.

37.1 Greed, hate, and delusion are makers of signs. A mendicant who has ended the defilements has given these up, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, and obliterated them, so they are unable to arise in the future. The unshakable release of the heart is said

to be the best kind of signless release of the heart. That unshakable release of the heart is empty of greed, hate, and delusion.

This is the way in which they mean the same thing, and differ only in the phrasing." 37.5

That is what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, Venerable Mahākoṭṭhita approved what Sāriputta said. 37.6

MN 44

The Shorter Elaboration

Cūḷavedallasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

1.3 Then the layman Visākha went to see the nun Dhammadinnā, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to her:[991]

2.1 "Ma'am, they speak of this thing called 'substantial reality'.[992] What is this substantial reality that the Buddha spoke of?"

2.3 "Visākha, the Buddha said that these five grasping aggregates are substantial reality.[993] That is, the grasping aggregates of form, feeling,

991. These two are little-known, in contrast with the previous *vedalla* featuring a dialogue between two mendicants renowned for their wisdom. | Dhammadinnā was recognized as the foremost bhikkhunī in teaching (AN 1.239:1.1), presumably on the basis of this sutta, and has a single verse to her name (Thig 1.12). | Visākha is otherwise unmentioned in the canon. The commentary says this is not the same person as the mendicant known as Visākha, Pañcālī's son (Thag 2.45, AN 4.48, SN 21.7).

992. The normal form of address for nuns is *ayyā* ("ma'am"), from the root *ariya* ("noble"); the masculine form *ayya* is occasionally used for monks as well. | "Substantial reality" is *sakkāya*, from *sat* ("real") and *kāya* ("substance"). The Jain form is *astikāya*, which refers to the five fundamental substances (or ontological categories) comprised of the medium of motion, the medium of rest, space, soul, and matter (Bhagavatīsūtra 1.10). Note that the suttas use *kāya*, in the sense of "substance" or "mass", as a key doctrinal term for ascetic movements associated with Jainism (eg. DN 2:23.3, DN 2:26.2), whereas *kāya* appears to have had no philosophical importance in pre-Buddhist Vedic texts. The commentaries define *sakkāya* as "the three planes of cyclic existence", i.e. all that exists. Thus *sakkāya* is the "substantial reality" that is mistakenly assumed to be a "self".

993. Sāriputta also quotes the Buddha as saying this at SN 38.15:1.3, both sources apparently drawing from SN 22.105:1.5 and SN 22.103:1.6.

perception, choices, and consciousness. The Buddha said that these five grasping aggregates are substantial reality."

Saying "Good, ma'am," Visākha approved and agreed with what Dhammadinnā said. Then he asked another question: 2.6

"Ma'am, they speak of this thing called 'the origin of substantial reality'. What is the origin of substantial reality that the Buddha spoke of?" 3.1

"It's the craving that leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights. That is,[994] craving for sensual pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving for nonexistence. The Buddha said that this is the origin of substantial reality." 3.3

"Ma'am, they speak of this thing called 'the cessation of substantial reality'. What is the cessation of substantial reality that the Buddha spoke of?" 4.1

"It's the fading away and cessation of that very same craving with no residue left behind; giving it away, letting it go, releasing it, and not clinging to it. The Buddha said that this is the cessation of substantial reality." 4.3

"Ma'am, they speak of the practice that leads to the cessation of substantial reality. What is the practice that leads to the cessation of substantial reality that the Buddha spoke of?" 5.1

"The practice that leads to the cessation of substantial reality that the Buddha spoke of is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion." 5.3

"But ma'am, is that grasping the exact same thing as the five grasping aggregates? Or is grasping one thing and the five grasping aggregates another?"[995] 6.1

994. This treats "substantial reality" in terms of the four noble truths, a method also followed in multiple places such as AN 4.33:2.2, SN 22.103:1.4, SN 22.105:1.2, and SN 22.78:4.1.

995. See also MN 109:6.1, SN 22.82:4.4.

6.2 "That grasping is not the exact same thing as the five grasping aggregates. Nor is grasping one thing and the five grasping aggregates another. The desire and greed for the five grasping aggregates is the grasping there."[996]

7.1 "But ma'am, how does substantialist view come about?"

7.2 "It's when an unlearned ordinary person has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons. They regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form.[997] They regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. That's how substantialist view comes about."

8.1 "But ma'am, how does substantialist view not come about?"

8.2 "It's when a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They don't regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They don't regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. That's how substantialist view does not come about."

9.1 "But ma'am, what is the noble eightfold path?"

9.2 "It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion."

10.1 "But ma'am, is the noble eightfold path conditioned or unconditioned?"

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996. The five aggregates are not presented as a catch-all category that encompasses all of reality, but rather five types of phenomena that provoke attachment, forming the basis of what we take to be "self". Desire is what drives the formation of attachment, but it requires all the aggregates to function. Thus the "grasping" aggregates are numbered "five" after the hand that grasps.

997. These are the twenty kinds of substantialist view.

"The noble eightfold path is conditioned." 10.2

"Are the three spectrums of practice included in the noble eightfold path? Or is the noble eightfold path included in the three spectrums of practice?"[998] 11.1

"The three spectrums of practice are not included in the noble eightfold path. Rather, the noble eightfold path is included in the three spectrums of practice.[999] Right speech, right action, and right livelihood: these things are included in the spectrum of ethics. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion: these things are included in the spectrum of immersion. Right view and right purpose: these things are included in the spectrum of wisdom." 11.2

"But ma'am, what is immersion? What things are the bases of immersion? What things are the prerequisites for immersion? What is the development of immersion?" 12.1

"Unification of the mind is immersion.[1000] The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the bases for immersion.[1001] The four 12.2

998. This refers to the "three spectrums" of ethics, immersion, and wisdom (eg. AN 3.143:2.3). The shorthand reference to them as a group of three is characteristic of later strata of Pali, but it is also found at DN 10:1.6.1, and with the addition of *vimutti* at DN 33:1.11.145. | "Spectrum" here is *khandha* (elsewhere "aggregate"), which again has the same basic sense of "mass", "category" as does *kāya* in *sakkāya*.

999. The two teachings cover the same ground, but the more specific factors of the eightfold path are included in the more general categories of the three spectra.

1000. "Unification" (*ekaggatā*), "immersion" (*samādhi*), and "absorption" (*jhāna*) are synonyms, although they may have specialized nuances. This understanding was common to Indic traditions, possibly under Buddhist influence. As just a few examples, Patañjali's Yogasūtra 3.11 defines *samādhi* as unification, as does Śaṅkāra on Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.3 (*aikāgryarūpeṇa samāhito*), and the commentary to Bhagavad Gīta 2.42–44 (*samādhiś cittaikāgryam*) and 17.11 (*samādhāyaikāgraṁ*). The Jain Tattvārthasūtra 9.27 similarly defines *dhyāna*, as does the commentary to Bhagavad Gīta 4.27 (*dhyānaikāgryam*) and 13.24 (*ekāgratayā yac cintanaṁ tad dhyānam*).

1001. The "foundations of immersion" (*samādhinimittā*) are the practices that lead to *jhāna*. Here *nimitta* means "cause" (Commentary: *paccaya*).

right efforts are the prerequisites for immersion.[1002] The cultivation, development, and making much of these very same things is the development of immersion."[1003]

13.1 "How many processes are there?"

13.2 "There are these three processes. The physical process, the verbal process, and the mental process."[1004]

14.1 "But ma'am, what is the physical process? What's the verbal process? What's the mental process?"

14.2 "Breathing is a physical process. Placing the mind and keeping it connected are a verbal process. Perception and feeling are a mental process."

15.1 "But ma'am, why is breathing a physical process? Why are placing the mind and keeping it connected a verbal process? Why are perception and feeling a mental process?"

15.2 "Breathing is physical. It's tied up with the body, that's why breathing is a physical process.[1005] First you place the mind and keep it

1002. Success in mindfulness meditation is the immediate cause of immersion, but to achieve both mindfulness and immersion it is a prerequisite (*parikkhāra*) to make an effort.

1003. "Development" (*bhāvanā*) means "growing", "amplifying".

1004. These three "processes" (*saṅkhāra*) apply, as we shall see, in the development of meditation (SN 41.6:1.5, DN 18:24.1). They must be distinguished from the similarly named three kinds of "choices" (*saṅkhāra*) that define volitional activity determining rebirth (i.e. karma, MN 57:8.2). In the three "processes", the final item is always *cittasaṅkhāra* ("mental process"), whereas in the three "choices" the final item is usually *manosaṅkhāra*. While *mano* and *citta* both mean "mind", *mano* leans to the sense of "volition", while *citta* leans to the sense of "awareness". It is a quirk of the Pali texts that they usually have *cittasaṅkhāra* in the context of dependent origination (but see SN 12.25:13.1), where the Sanskrit has the expected *manaḥsaṁskāraḥ* (SF 165 Ādisūtra, Arv 5.2 Arthaviniścayasūtra, SF 238 Pratītyasamutpādādivibhaṅganirdeśa).

1005. Breathing is referred to as a "physical process" in the context of breath meditation to emphasize the natural stilling that occurs as the meditation settles. | As in MN 43, the questions are laying the groundwork for a discussion of deep meditation. Hence in these definitions what is being discussed is not "processes" in general, but the very last residue of activity or disturbance whose cessation marks the transition to a deeper level of consciousness.

connected, then you break into speech. That's why placing the mind and keeping it connected are a verbal process.[1006] Perception and feeling are mental. They're tied up with the mind, that's why perception and feeling are a mental process."[1007]

"But ma'am, how does someone attain the cessation of perception and feeling?" 16.1

"A mendicant who is entering such an attainment does not think: 'I will enter the cessation of perception and feeling' or 'I am entering the cessation of perception and feeling' or 'I have entered the cessation of perception and feeling.' Rather, their mind has been previously developed so as to lead to such a state."[1008] 16.2

"But ma'am, which process ceases first for a mendicant who is entering the cessation of perception and feeling: physical, verbal, or mental?" 17.1

"The verbal process ceases first, then physical, then mental."[1009] 17.2

"But ma'am, how does someone emerge from the cessation of perception and feeling?" 18.1

"A mendicant who is emerging from such an attainment does not think: 'I will emerge from the cessation of perception and feeling' or 'I am emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling' or 'I have emerged from the cessation of perception and feeling.' Rather, their mind has been previously developed so as to lead to such a state." 18.2

1006. *Vitakka* and *vicāra* have a more basic sense in ordinary states of mind ("thought" and "exploring") and a more refined sense in the elevated consciousness of *jhāna* ("placing the mind" and "keeping it connected"). They act as a condition for breaking into speech, so any hint of such movement, no matter how subtle, must be abandoned.

1007. As with the verbal process, it is the two taken together that constitute a "process".

1008. Compare MN 43:28.2.

1009. The verbal process ceases in the first absorption, the breath in the fourth absorption (SN 36.11:2.19), and feeling and perception in the attainment of cessation.

19.1 "But ma'am, which process arises first for a mendicant who is emerging from the cessation of perception and feeling: physical, verbal, or mental?"

19.2 "The mental process arises first, then physical, then verbal."

20.1 "But ma'am, when a mendicant has emerged from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling, how many kinds of contact do they experience?"

20.2 "They experience three kinds of contact: emptiness, signless, and undirected contacts."[1010]

21.1 "But ma'am, when a mendicant has emerged from the attainment of the cessation of perception and feeling, what does their mind slant, slope, and incline to?"

21.2 "Their mind slants, slopes, and inclines to seclusion."[1011]

22.1 "But ma'am, how many feelings are there?"

22.2 "There are three feelings: pleasant, painful, and neutral feeling."

23.1 "What are these three feelings?"

23.2 "Anything felt physically or mentally as pleasant or enjoyable. This is pleasant feeling. Anything felt physically or mentally as painful or unpleasant. This is painful feeling. Anything felt physically or mentally as neither pleasurable nor painful. This is neutral feeling."

24.1 "What is pleasant and what is painful regarding each of the three feelings?"

24.2 "Pleasant feeling is pleasant when it remains and painful when it perishes. Painful feeling is painful when it remains and pleasant when it perishes. Neutral feeling is pleasant in the presence of knowledge, and painful in the presence of ignorance."[1012]

25.1 "What underlying tendencies underlie each of the three feelings?"

1010. See the discussion on various "releases of the heart" at MN 43:26.1. Here, when emerging from cessation, the higher form of release is meant, as the meditator's mind naturally inclines toward liberating insight.

1011. Again, here the higher sense of "seclusion" is meant, namely Nibbāna. | The expression "slants to seclusion" (*vikekaninna*) was adopted by Patañjali at Yogasūtra 4.26.

1012. Knowledge is what distinguishes equanimity from indifference.

"The underlying tendency for greed underlies pleasant feeling. 25.2
The underlying tendency for aversion underlies painful feeling. The underlying tendency for ignorance underlies neutral feeling."

"Do these underlying tendencies always underlie these feelings?" 26.1

"No, they do not."[1013] 26.2

"What should be given up in regard to each of these three feel- 27.1
ings?"

"The underlying tendency to greed should be given up when it 27.2
comes to pleasant feeling. The underlying tendency to aversion should be given up when it comes to painful feeling. The underlying tendency to ignorance should be given up when it comes to neutral feeling."

"Should these underlying tendencies be given up regarding all 28.1
instances of these feelings?"

"No, not in all instances. Take a mendicant who, quite secluded 28.2
from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. With this they give up greed, and the underlying tendency to greed does not lie within that.[1014] And take a mendicant who reflects: 'Oh, when will I enter and remain in the same dimension that the noble ones enter and remain in today?'[1015] Nursing such a longing for the supreme liberations gives rise to sadness due to longing.[1016] With this they give up aversion, and the underlying tendency to aversion does not lie within that. Take a mendicant who, with the giving

1013. The arahant still experiences feelings, but without any underlying tendencies.

1014. The pleasure of *jhāna* arises from letting go and is not itself a source of attachment.

1015. Also at MN 137:13.3. Sometimes, "that dimension" (*tadāyatana*) is said to be Nibbāna (Ud 8.1:3.1, SN 35.117:8.2), but it is also used of the stages of *samādhi* (AN 9.43:2.2). That must be the case here, since it is identified with (one of) the several "liberations" (*vimokkhā*), which typically refer to various states of *samādhi* (DN 15:35.1, MN 6:10.1, Kd 2:3.7.6).

1016. This is a kind of "suffering not of the flesh" (MN 10:32.8).

up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. With this they give up ignorance, and the underlying tendency to ignorance does not lie within that."

29.1 "But ma'am, what is the counterpart of pleasant feeling?"

29.2 "Painful feeling."

29.3 "What is the counterpart of painful feeling?"

29.4 "Pleasant feeling."

29.5 "What is the counterpart of neutral feeling?"

29.6 "Ignorance."

29.7 "What is the counterpart of ignorance?"

29.8 "Knowledge."

29.9 "What is the counterpart of knowledge?"

29.10 "Freedom."

29.11 "What is the counterpart of freedom?"

29.12 "Extinguishment."

29.13 "What is the counterpart of extinguishment?"

29.14 "Your question goes too far, Visākha. You weren't able to grasp the limit of questioning.[1017] For extinguishment is the objective, destination, and culmination of the spiritual life. If you wish, go to the Buddha and ask him this question. You should remember it in line with his answer."

30.1 And then the layman Visākha approved and agreed with what the nun Dhammadinnā said. He rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled her, keeping her on his right. Then he went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and informed the Buddha of all they had discussed.

30.3 When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him, "The nun Dhammadinnā is astute, Visākha, she has great wisdom. If you came to me and asked this question, I would answer it in exactly the same

1017. Also at SN 23.1:3.10 and SN 48.42:4.8. | At Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.8.5 the inquirer is warned not to overstep the goal of heaven.

way as the nun Dhammadinnā. That is what it means, and that's how you should remember it."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the layman Visākha ap- 30.7
proved what the Buddha said.

MN 45

The Shorter Discourse on Taking Up Practices

Cūḷadhammasamādānasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, there are these four ways of taking up practices. What four? There is a way of taking up practices that is pleasant now but results in future pain. There is a way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain. There is a way of taking up practices that is painful now but results in future pleasure. There is a way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure.

3.1 And what is the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now but results in future pain? There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'There's nothing wrong with sensual pleasures.'[1018] They throw themselves into sensual pleasures,

1018. This view is said to be a cause for lower rebirth at AN 3.113:1.5, an addiction at AN 3.156:1.6, and an extreme at Ud 6.8:5.4.

cavorting with female wanderers with jeweled bands in their hair.[1019] They say, 'What future danger do those ascetics and brahmins see in sensual pleasures that they speak of giving up sensual pleasures, and advocate the complete understanding of sensual pleasures? Pleasant is the touch of this female wanderer's arm, tender, soft, and downy!' And they throw themselves into sensual pleasures. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. And there they feel painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings. They say, 'This is that future danger that those ascetics and brahmins saw. For it is because of sensual pleasures that I'm feeling painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings.'

4.1 Suppose that in the last month of summer a camel's foot creeper pod were to burst open[1020] and a seed were to fall at the root of a sal tree. Then the deity haunting that sal tree would become apprehensive and nervous. But their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin—deities of the parks, forests, trees, and those who haunt the herbs, grass, and big trees—would come together to reassure them, 'Do not fear, sir, do not fear! Hopefully that seed will be swallowed by a peacock, or eaten by a deer, or burnt by a forest fire, or picked up by a lumberjack, or eaten by termites, or it may not even be fertile.'[1021]

1019. *Moḷibaddha* ("head-band") appears as a bejeweled decoration for lay folk at Mil 6.1.3:1.3 and Mil 6.4.2:4.2, and with a list of garbs for ascetics at Mil 5.1.6:12.5. The Sanskrit *maulibandha* appears in a few later texts in the same sense. None of these sources clarify who these fancy wanderer ladies might be. The Chinese parallel at MA 174, however, does not say they are wanderers. It does seem odd to find such a decorative detail being worn by wanderers, so perhaps the Pali text is confused, and the idea of wanderers wearing headbands was later adopted by the Milinda. On the other hand, later texts such as the comedy Mattavilāsaprahasana show that dissolute "renunciates" were not unknown.

1020. The "camel's foot creeper" (*māluvā*) features in a similar simile in the Jain Sūyagaḍa 1.3.2.10.

1021. On "eaten by termites", Bhikkhu Ñāṇatusita, whose expertise in Pali is rivaled only by his knowledge of botany, says in his notes to Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation, "Perhaps even the whole seed was eaten since the Maloo Creeper, a member of the legume family, has a hard woody seed. It is eaten by forest people

But none of these things happened. And the seed was fertile, so that when the monsoon clouds soaked it with rain, it sprouted. And the creeper wound its tender, soft, and downy tendrils around that sal tree. Then the deity thought, 'What future danger did my friends see when they said: "Do not fear, sir, do not fear! Hopefully that seed will be swallowed by a peacock, or eaten by a deer, or burnt by a forest fire, or picked up by a lumberjack, or eaten by termites, or it may not even be fertile." Pleasant is the touch of this creeper's tender, soft, and downy tendrils.' Then the creeper enfolded the sal tree, made a canopy over it, draped a curtain around it, and split apart all the main branches. Then the deity thought, 'This is the future danger that my friends saw! It's because of that camel's foot creeper seed that I'm feeling painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings.'

4.22 In the same way, there are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'There's nothing wrong with sensual pleasures' … This is called the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now but results in future pain.

5.1 And what is the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain? It's when someone goes naked, ignoring conventions. They lick their hands, and don't come or wait when called. They don't consent to food brought to them, or food prepared on their behalf, or an invitation for a meal. They don't receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or who lives with a man; or where there's a hound waiting or flies buzzing. They accept no fish or meat or beer or wine, and drink no fermented gruel. They go to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. They feed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers

in India, supposedly after removing the skin. Termites do not carry away seeds like ants would do, they eat things at the spot. Besides this, the seed is quite large. Thus *udrabheyyuṁ* is probably the right reading. It is supported by the commentary, which glosses it as *khādeyyuṁ*."

a day. They eat once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. They live committed to the practice of eating food at set intervals.

5.7 They eat herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice bran, scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. They survive on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit.

5.8 They wear robes of sunn hemp, mixed hemp, corpse-wrapping cloth, rags, lodh tree bark, antelope hide (whole or in strips), kusa grass, bark, wood-chips, human hair, horse-tail hair, or owls' wings. They tear out their hair and beard, committed to this practice. They constantly stand, turning down seats. They squat, committed to the endeavor of squatting. They lie on a mat of thorns, making a mat of thorns their bed. They're devoted to ritual bathing three times a day, including at dusk. And so they live committed to practicing these various ways of mortifying and tormenting the body. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is called the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain.

6.1 And what is the way of taking up practices that is painful now but results in future pleasure? It's when someone is ordinarily full of acute greed, hate, and delusion. They often feel the pain and sadness that greed, hate, and delusion bring. They lead the full and pure spiritual life in pain and sadness, weeping, with tearful faces.[1022] When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is called the way of taking up practices that is painful now but results in future pleasure.

7.1 And what is the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure? It's when someone is not ordinarily full of acute greed, hate, and delusion. They rarely feel the pain and sadness that greed, hate, and delusion bring. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain

1022. Described as someone who "goes against the stream" at AN 4.5:2.2, and as worthy of praise at AN 5.5:2.4.

in the first absorption … second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is called the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure. These are the four ways of taking up practices."

7.12 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 46

The Great Discourse on Taking Up Practices

Mahādhammasamādānasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[1023] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, sentient beings typically have the wish, desire, and hope: 'Oh, if only unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable things would decrease, and likable, desirable, and agreeable things would increase!' But exactly the opposite happens to them. What do you take to be the reason for this?" 2.1

"Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it." 2.5

"Well then, mendicants, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 2.6

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.7

"Take an unlearned ordinary person who has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons. They don't know what practices they should cultivate and foster, and what practices they shouldn't cultivate and foster. So they cultivate and foster practices they shouldn't, and don't cultivate and foster practices they should. When they do so, unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable things 3.1

1023. The Buddha delves into this topic in more detail in MN 114.

increase, and likable, desirable, and agreeable things decrease. Why is that? Because that's what it's like for the ignorant.

4.1 But a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They know what practices they should cultivate and foster, and what practices they shouldn't cultivate and foster. So they cultivate and foster practices they should, and don't cultivate and foster practices they shouldn't. When they do so, unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable things decrease, and likable, desirable, and agreeable things increase. Why is that? Because that's what it's like for the knowledgable.

5.1 Mendicants, there are these four ways of taking up practices. What four? There is a way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain. There is a way of taking up practices that is pleasant now but results in future pain. There is a way of taking up practices that is painful now but results in future pleasure. There is a way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure.

6.1 When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain, an ignoramus, without knowing this, doesn't truly understand: 'This is the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain.' So instead of avoiding that practice, they cultivate it. When they do so, unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable things increase, and likable, desirable, and agreeable things decrease. Why is that? Because that's what it's like for the ignorant.

7.1 When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pain, an ignoramus … cultivates it … and disagreeable things increase …

8.1 When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pleasure, an ignoramus … doesn't cultivate it … and disagreeable things increase …

When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure, an ignoramus … doesn't cultivate it … and disagreeable things increase … Why is that? Because that's what it's like for the ignorant. 9.1

When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain, a wise person, knowing this, truly understands: 'This is the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain.' So instead of cultivating that practice, they avoid it. When they do so, unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable things decrease, and likable, desirable, and agreeable things increase. Why is that? Because that's what it's like for the knowledgable. 10.1

When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pain, a wise person … doesn't cultivate it … and agreeable things increase … 11.1

When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pleasure, a wise person … cultivates it … and agreeable things increase … 12.1

When it comes to the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure, a wise person, knowing this, truly understands: 'This is the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure.' So instead of avoiding that practice, they cultivate it. When they do so, unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable things decrease, and likable, desirable, and agreeable things increase. Why is that? Because that's what it's like for the knowledgable. 13.1

And what is the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain? It's when someone in pain and sadness kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct. They use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're covetous, malicious, with wrong view. Because of these things they experience pain and sadness. And when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is called the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain. 14.1

15.1 And what is the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now but results in future pain? It's when someone with pleasure and happiness kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct. They use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're covetous, malicious, with wrong view. Because of these things they experience pleasure and happiness. But when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is called the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now but results in future pain.

16.1 And what is the way of taking up practices that is painful now but results in future pleasure? It's when someone in pain and sadness doesn't kill living creatures, steal, or commit sexual misconduct. They don't use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. Because of these things they experience pain and sadness. But when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is called the way of taking up practices that is painful now but results in future pleasure.

17.1 And what is the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure? It's when someone with pleasure and happiness doesn't kill living creatures, steal, or commit sexual misconduct. They don't use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. Because of these things they experience pleasure and happiness. And when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is called the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure. These are the four ways of taking up practices.

18.1 Suppose there was some bitter gourd mixed with poison. Then a man would come along who wants to live and doesn't want to die, who wants to be happy and recoils from pain. They'd say to him: 'Here, my man, this is bitter gourd mixed with poison. Drink it if you like. If you drink it, the color, aroma, and flavor will be unappetizing, and it will result in death or deadly pain.' He wouldn't put it down.

Without appraisal, he'd drink it. The color, aroma, and flavor would be unappetizing, and it would result in death or deadly pain. This is comparable to the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain, I say.

19.1 Suppose there was a bronze goblet of beverage that had a nice color, aroma, and flavor. But it was mixed with poison. Then a man would come along who wants to live and doesn't want to die, who wants to be happy and recoils from pain. They'd say to him: 'Here, my man, this bronze goblet of beverage has a nice color, aroma, and flavor. But it's mixed with poison. Drink it if you like. If you drink it, the color, aroma, and flavor will be appetizing, but it will result in death or deadly pain.' He wouldn't put it down. Without appraisal, he'd drink it. The color, aroma, and flavor would be appetizing, but it would result in death or deadly pain. This is comparable to the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pain, I say.

20.1 Suppose there was some rancid urine mixed with different medicines.[1024] Then a man with jaundice would come along. They'd say to him: 'Here, my man, this is rancid urine mixed with different medicines. Drink it if you like. If you drink it, the color, aroma, and flavor will be unappetizing, but after drinking it you will be happy.' He wouldn't put it down. After appraisal, he'd drink it. The color, aroma, and flavor would be unappetizing, but after drinking it he would be happy. This is comparable to the way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pleasure, I say.

21.1 Suppose there was some curds, honey, ghee, and molasses all mixed together. Then a man with bloody dysentery would come along. They'd say to him: 'Here, my man, this is curds, honey, ghee,

1024. Rancid urine was the worst of medicines, used when nothing better was available. Specifically, the Vinaya allows it as a purgative in the case of snakebite (Kd 6:14.6.4), and gives chebulic myrobalan soaked in cattle urine as a remedy for jaundice (Kd 6:14.7.9). Modern research has shown that urine, far from being a sterile cure-all, contains dangerous levels of bacterial pathogens, and has no medicinal value.

and molasses all mixed together. Drink it if you like. If you drink it, the color, aroma, and flavor will be appetizing, and after drinking it you will be happy.' He wouldn't put it down. After appraisal, he'd drink it. The color, aroma, and flavor would be appetizing, and after drinking it he would be happy. This is comparable to the way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure, I say.

22.1 It's like the last month of the rainy season, in autumn, when the heavens are sunny and cloudless. And as the sun is rising to the firmament, having dispelled all the darkness of space, it shines and glows and radiates. In the same way, this way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure dispels the doctrines of the various other ascetics and brahmins as it shines and glows and radiates."[1025]

22.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

1025. This text as well as MN 45:7.9 answer the question of what practice results in future happiness, and so do not consider awakening. It is surprising to see such bold praise for such a modest teaching. The Chinese parallels to these suttas have the inverse situation, as they describe a practice leading to non-return (MA 174 at T i 712b27) or Nibbāna (MA 175 at T i 712c25, T 83 at T i 902c10), yet do not have this passage of praise.

MN 47

The Inquirer

Vīmaṁsakasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[1026] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, a mendicant who is an inquirer, unable to encompass another's mind, should scrutinize the Realized One to understand whether he is a fully awakened Buddha or not."[1027] 2.1

"Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it." 3.1

"Well then, mendicants, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 3.2

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 3.3

"Mendicants, a mendicant who is an inquirer, unable to encompass another's mind, should scrutinize the Realized One for two things—things that can be seen and heard: 'Can anything corrupt be seen or heard in the Realized One or not?'[1028] Scrutinizing him 4.1

1026. In this sutta, the Buddha shows his commitment to radical accountability and integrity. He does not merely pay lip service to the notion of open inquiry, but lays out a detailed and exacting procedure by which his students should test him. By extension, this approach may be applied to any spiritual teacher.

1027. The ability to comprehend the mind of another was considered an advanced meditative skill, not accessible even to all arahants. It allowed one to read the mind of another to the extent of one's own realization.

1028. This refers to bodily behavior that might be seen or speech that might be heard.

they find that nothing corrupt can be seen or heard in the Realized One.

5.1 They scrutinize further: 'Can anything mixed be seen or heard in the Realized One or not?' Scrutinizing him they find that nothing mixed can be seen or heard in the Realized One.

6.1 They scrutinize further: 'Can anything clean be seen or heard in the Realized One or not?' Scrutinizing him they find that clean things can be seen and heard in the Realized One.

7.1 They scrutinize further: 'Did the venerable attain this skillful state a long time ago, or just recently?'[1029] Scrutinizing him they find that the venerable attained this skillful state a long time ago, not just recently.

8.1 They scrutinize further: 'Are certain dangers found in that venerable mendicant who has achieved fame and renown?' For, mendicants, so long as a mendicant has not achieved fame and renown, certain dangers are not found in them. But when they achieve fame and renown, those dangers appear. Scrutinizing him they find that those dangers are not found in that venerable mendicant who has achieved fame and renown.

9.1 They scrutinize further: 'Is this venerable securely stilled or insecurely stilled?[1030] Is the reason they don't indulge in sensual pleasures that they're free of greed because greed has ended?' Scrutinizing him they find that that venerable is securely stilled, not insecurely stilled. The reason they don't indulge in sensual pleasures is that they're free of greed because greed has ended.

10.1 If others should ask that mendicant, 'But what reason and evidence does the venerable have for saying this?' Answering rightly,

1029. It is easy to maintain a front for while, but defilements tend to reveal themselves over time.

1030. Here *uparata* means "stilled, ceased" rather than "restrained". The commentary explains that one has become stilled (*uparata*) due to the absence of perils (*abhaya*). The test aims to distinguish the arahant from those for whom the perils of defilements and rebirth, though possibly suppressed for a time through the power of *jhāna*, are still present.

the mendicant should say, 'Because, whether that venerable is staying in a community or alone, some people there are in a good state or a sorry state, some instruct a group, and some are seen among pleasures of the flesh while others remain unsullied. Yet that venerable doesn't look down on them for that.[1031] Also, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: "I am securely stilled, not insecurely stilled. The reason I don't indulge in sensual pleasures is that I'm free of greed because greed has ended."'[1032]

Next, they should ask the Realized One himself about this, 'Can 11.1
anything corrupt be seen or heard in the Realized One or not?' The Realized One would answer, 'Nothing corrupt can be seen or heard in the Realized One.'

'Can anything mixed be seen or heard in the Realized One or not?' 12.1
The Realized One would answer, 'Nothing mixed can be seen or heard in the Realized One.'

'Can anything clean be seen or heard in the Realized One or not?' 13.1
The Realized One would answer, 'Clean things can be seen and heard in the Realized One. I am the scope and the range of that, but I am not determined by that.'[1033]

1031. The commentary explains *sugata* and *duggata* here as "well practiced" and "poorly practiced". But the normal sense is one who is in a "good state" or a "sorry state", typically associated with rebirth, but also with, for example, the "sorry state" of poverty or reduced circumstances (Kd 10:2.4.4, Kd 6:15.5.10). Notice that there are people nearby even when he is living alone, so this must include lay folk as well as monastics. The point is that the Buddha does not despise the poor or show favors to the rich.

1032. These exact words are not spoken by the Buddha in suttas. However the early Abhidhamma text Puggalapaññatti explains that "insecurely stilled" includes the seven trainees and ethical ordinary people, while the arahant is "securely stilled" (Pp 2.1:11.1). Since the Puggalapaññatti consists mainly of lightly adapted quotes from the suttas, it is possible that this passage has been lost from the suttas as they stand. This would explain why these terms are invoked here as if they were known.

1033. *Etaṁ* is the accusative of relation, familiar from such phrases as *taṁ gotamaṁ evaṁ kalyāṇo kittisaddo abbhuggato* ("a good word *of that* Gotama has spread"). | *Ahamasmi* ("I am") asserts identity (not possession per the commentary). It is an Upaniṣadic turn of phrase. | *Tammaya* ("determined by

14.1 A disciple ought to approach a teacher who has such a doctrine in order to listen to the teaching. The teacher explains Dhamma with its higher and higher stages, with its better and better stages, with its dark and bright sides.[1034] When they directly know a certain principle of those teachings, in accordance with how they were taught, the mendicant comes to a conclusion about the teachings. They have confidence in the Teacher: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha! The teaching is well explained! The Saṅgha is practicing well!'

15.1 If others should ask that mendicant, 'But what reason and evidence does the venerable have for saying this?' Answering rightly, the mendicant should say, 'Reverends, I approached the Buddha to listen to the teaching. He explained Dhamma with its higher and higher stages, with its better and better stages, with its dark and bright sides. When I directly knew a certain principle of those teachings, in accordance with how I was taught, I came to a conclusion about the teachings. I had confidence in the Teacher: "The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha! The teaching is well explained! The Saṅgha is practicing well!"'

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that", literally "made with that") is found occasionally in the suttas (also MN 137:20.3, MN 113:21.7, AN 3.40:7.4, AN 6.104, Snp 4.9:12.2). The Buddha's usage echoes Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.5, which begins, "This self is indeed divinity, made with consciousness …" (*sa vā ayamātmā brahma vijñānamayo*). It goes on to list many other items of which the self is comprised (*idaṁmayo*), the point being that the self is ultimately created by its actions (*yathākārī yathācārī tathā bhavati*), a detail that emphasizes the causal sense of *-maya*. Thus the term does not simply point to that which is the self, but rather that by which the self is shaped or determined. Yajñavalkya also uses *etanmaya* in the same sense in such passages as Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 10.4.2.30: "that (self) is made with hymns, sacrifices, breaths, and divinities" (*candomaya stomamayaḥ prāṇamayo devatāmayaḥ sa etanmaya*) and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.5.3: "that self is made with this: speech, mind, and breath" (*etanmayo vā ayam ātmā: vāṅmayo manomayaḥ prāṇamayaḥ*). Thus the term emphasizes the Buddha's freedom from conditions. He exemplifies good qualities but is not "determined" by their kammic force.

1034. Cp. AN 5.180.

When someone's faith is settled, rooted, and planted in the Real- 16.1
ized One in this manner, with these words and phrases, it's said to be grounded faith that's based on evidence.[1035] It is strong, and cannot be shifted by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world.[1036] That is how there is legitimate scrutiny of the Realized One, and that is how the Realized One is legitimately well-scrutinized."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 16.5
what the Buddha said.

1035. In this sentence the word *ākāra* is used in two distinct senses. In the stock phrase "in this manner, with these words and phrases" (*imehi ākārehi imehi padehi imehi byañjanehi*) it means "manner" of exposition (MN 18:20.17, SN 35.116:10.14, AN 10.115:21.2). In the phrase "grounded faith" (*ākāravatī saddhā*) it means a "ground" or "reason" on which faith is based.

1036. Various editions (MS, PTS, BJT) followed by translators (Bodhi, Horner) connect *daḷhā* with the foregoing *dassanamūlikā*. But that foregoing text is missing in the parallels for this passage (DN 27:9.3, SN 48.42:6.4, Iti 83:10.1). *Daḷhā* is connected rather with *asaṁhāriyā*, which is in any case semantically closer than *dassanamūlikā*.

MN 48

The Mendicants of Kosambī

Kosambiyasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambī in Ghosita's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time the mendicants of Kosambī were fighting, quarreling, and disputing, continually wounding each other with barbed words.[1037] They couldn't persuade each other or be persuaded, nor could they convince each other or be convinced.

3.1 Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what was happening.

4.1 So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, "Please, monk, in my name tell those mendicants that the Teacher summons them."

4.4 "Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to those monks and said, "Venerables, the Teacher summons you."

4.6 "Yes, reverend," those monks replied. They went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to them,

4.7 "Is it really true, mendicants, that you have been fighting, quarreling, and disputing, continually wounding each other with barbed words? And that you can't persuade each other or be persuaded, nor can you convince each other or be convinced?"

4.9 "Yes, sir," they said.

5.1 "What do you think, mendicants? When you're fighting, quarreling, and disputing, continually wounding each other with barbed words, are you treating your spiritual companions with kindness by way of body, speech, and mind, both in public and in private?"

1037. This is in reference to the notorious quarrel at Kosambī, also referred to at MN 128:2.1. The events are detailed in the Vinaya at Kd 10.

"No, sir." 5.3

"So it seems that when you're arguing you are not treating each 5.4
other with kindness. So what then do you know and see, you futile men, that you behave in such a way? This will be for your lasting harm and suffering."

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: 6.1

"Mendicants, these six warm-hearted qualities make for fondness 6.2
and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.[1038] What six? Firstly, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with bodily kindness, both in public and in private. This warm-hearted quality makes for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.

Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual com- 6.6
panions with verbal kindness …

Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual com- 6.8
panions with mental kindness …

Furthermore, a mendicant shares without reservation any ma- 6.10
terial things they have gained by legitimate means, even the food placed in the alms-bowl, using them in common with their ethical spiritual companions …

Furthermore, a mendicant lives according to the precepts shared 6.12
with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. Those precepts are intact, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion.
…

Furthermore, a mendicant lives according to the view shared with 6.14
their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. That view is noble and emancipating, and delivers one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering. This warm-hearted quality makes for

1038. Also taught at MN 104:21.1, AN 6.11:1.1, and AN 6.12:1.1, and collected at DN 33:2.2.37 and DN 34:1.7.3.

fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.

6.16 These six warm-hearted qualities make for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.

7.1 Of these six warm-hearted qualities, the chief is the view that is noble and emancipating, and delivers one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering. It holds and binds everything together. It's like a bungalow. The roof-peak is the chief point, which holds and binds everything together. In the same way, of these six warm-hearted qualities, the chief is the view that is noble and emancipating, and delivers one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering. It holds and binds everything together.

8.1 And how does the view that is noble and emancipating lead one who practices it to the complete ending of suffering? It's when a mendicant has gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, and reflects like this, 'Is there anything that I'm overcome with internally and haven't given up, because of which I might not accurately know and see?' If a mendicant is overcome with sensual desire, it's their mind that's overcome. If a mendicant is overcome with ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, doubt, pursuing speculation about this world, pursuing speculation about the next world, or fighting, quarreling, and disputing, continually wounding others with barbed words, it's their mind that's overcome. They understand, 'There is nothing that I'm overcome with internally and haven't given up, because of which I might not accurately know and see. My heart is properly disposed for awakening to the truths.' This is the first knowledge they have achieved that is noble and transcendent, and is distinct from that of ordinary people.

9.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects, 'When I develop, cultivate, and make much of this view, do I personally gain serenity and quenching?' They understand, 'When I develop, cultivate, and make much of this view, I personally gain serenity and quenching.' This is their second knowledge …

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects, 'Are there any ascetics or 10.1
brahmins outside of the Buddhist community who have the same kind of view that I have?' They understand, 'There are no ascetics or brahmins outside of the Buddhist community who have the same kind of view that I have.' This is their third knowledge …

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects, 'Do I have the same nature 11.1
as an individual accomplished in view?' And what, mendicants, is the nature of an individual accomplished in view? This is the nature of an individual accomplished in view. Though they may fall into a kind of offense for which rehabilitation is possible, they quickly explain, clarify, and disclose it to the Teacher or a sensible spiritual companion.[1039] And having revealed it they restrain themselves in the future. Suppose there was a little baby boy. If he puts his hand or foot on a burning coal, he quickly pulls it back. In the same way, this is the nature of an individual accomplished in view. Though they may still fall into a kind of offense for which rehabilitation is possible, they quickly disclose it to the Teacher or a sensible spiritual companion. And having revealed it they restrain themselves in the future. They understand, 'I have the same nature as an individual accomplished in view.' This is their fourth knowledge …

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects, 'Do I have the same nature 12.1
as an individual accomplished in view?' And what, mendicants, is the nature of an individual accomplished in view? This is the nature of an individual accomplished in view. Though they might manage a diverse spectrum of duties for their spiritual companions, they still feel a keen regard for the training in higher ethics, higher mind,

1039. Vinaya offenses fall into a number of classes, all of which must be confessed by a guilty monastic to their fellow monastics. Some are resolved upon confession, others by undergoing a procedure of relinquishment or temporary suspension. However, the most serious offenses—sexual intercourse, murder, stealing, and lying about spiritual attainments—entail immediate and permanent expulsion. Offenses are further distinguished by intention, as some offenses may be transgressed without ill intent or even unknowingly (for example, eating at the wrong time). A stream-enterer cannot commit an expulsion offense, but they may commit one of the other offenses without ill intent.

and higher wisdom. Suppose there was a cow with a baby calf. She watches her calf devotedly as she grazes.[1040] In the same way, this is the nature of an individual accomplished in view. Though they might manage a diverse spectrum of duties for their spiritual companions, they still feel a keen regard for the training in higher ethics, higher mind, and higher wisdom. They understand, 'I have the same nature as an individual accomplished in view.' This is their fifth knowledge …

13.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects, 'Do I have the same strength as an individual accomplished in view?' And what, mendicants, is the strength of an individual accomplished in view? The strength of an individual accomplished in view is that, when the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One are being taught, they pay attention, apply the mind, concentrate wholeheartedly, and actively listen to the teaching. They understand, 'I have the same strength as an individual accomplished in view.' This is their sixth knowledge …

14.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects, 'Do I have the same strength as an individual accomplished in view?' And what, mendicants, is the strength of an individual accomplished in view? The strength of an individual accomplished in view is that, when the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One are being taught, they find inspiration in the meaning and the teaching, and find joy connected with the teaching. They understand, 'I have the same strength as an individual accomplished in view.' This is the seventh knowledge they have achieved that is noble and transcendent, and is distinct from that of ordinary people.

15.1 When a noble disciple has these seven factors, they have properly investigated their nature through the realization of the fruit of stream-

1040. The verb *apacinati* is an irregular form of *apacāyati*, to "watch" but also to "revere".

entry.[1041] A noble disciple with these seven factors has the fruit of stream-entry."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 15.3

1041. Normally *sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya* is dative, "*for* the realization of the fruit of stream-entry", but that cannot be the case here as they are already a stream-enterer. The commentary reads it as instrumental.

MN 49

On the Invitation of Divinity

Brahmanimantanikasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[1042] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "This one time, mendicants, I was staying near Ukkaṭṭhā in the Subhaga Forest at the root of a magnificent sal tree.[1043] Now at that time Baka the Divinity had the following harmful misconception:[1044] 'This is permanent, this is everlasting, this is eternal, this is whole, this is not liable to pass away. For this is where there's no being born,

1042. This sutta is a unique fusion of high philosophy and cosmic drama, positing an unthinkable alliance between what in Christian terms would be called God and the Devil. Nonetheless, due to a plethora of textual difficulties and uncertain readings, caution in interpretation would be wise.

1043. SN 6.4, which otherwise opens with the same events, is simply set in Sāvatthī with no mention of Ukkaṭṭhā, which is the same setting as MN 1, with which this sutta shares some themes. Both critique the sophisticated philosophy of the Kosalan brahmins, and hence are set in the town of their leader Pokkharasāti (DN 3:1.2.1).

1044. Baka maintains the same wrong view at SN 6.4, where his past lives are revealed. The word *baka* means "stork" or "crane". To search for a high divinity of this name in Brahmanism is to be disappointed, for instead we find a man-eating demon (*rakṣasa*) in bird form whose fate is to be slain by the hero Bhīma (or Kṛṣṇa). Pali stories tell of how the stork dozes peacefully as if meditating by the water, while in reality he is trying to fool fish into approaching so he can snatch them up (Ja 38, Ja 236). A cunning, large, white, high-flying, predatory bird who fakes meditation is a fitting image for the antagonist of these suttas.

growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And there's no other escape beyond this.'[1045]

Then I knew what Baka the Divinity was thinking. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, I vanished from the Subhaga Forest and reappeared in that realm of divinity. 3.1

Baka saw me coming off in the distance and said, 'Come, good fellow! Welcome, good fellow![1046] It's been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. For this is permanent, this is everlasting, this is eternal, this is whole, this is not liable to pass away. For this is where there's no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And there's no other escape beyond this.' 3.3

When he had spoken, I said to him, 'Oh lord, Baka the Divinity is lost in ignorance! Oh lord, Baka the Divinity is lost in ignorance! Because what is actually impermanent, not lasting, transient, incomplete, and liable to pass away, he says is permanent, everlasting, eternal, whole, and not liable to pass away. And where there is being born, growing old, dying, passing away, and being reborn, he says that there's no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And although there is another escape beyond this, he says that there's no other escape beyond this.' 4.1

Then Māra the Wicked took possession of a member of the retinue of Divinity and said this to me,[1047] 'Mendicant, mendicant! Don't attack this one! Don't attack this one! For this is the Divinity, the 5.1

1045. The use of the impersonal pronoun (*idaṁ*) to refer to the self as divinity is a characteristic Upaniṣadic idiom: "you are that" (*tat tvam asi*, Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7); "that self is divinity" (*ayam ātmā brahma*, Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad 1.2); "I am that" (*so'ham asmi*, Īśa Upaniṣad 16); "this is that self hidden in all" (*eṣa ta ātmā sarvāntaraḥ*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.4.1, etc.); "this, verily, is that" (*etad vai tat*, Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.1.5). | For *idaṁ niccaṁ* see *eṣa nityo* (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.23); for *idaṁ dhuvaṁ* see *etad apramayaṁ dhruvam* (4.4.20).

1046. "Good fellow" (*mārisa*; Sanskrit *mārṣa*, *māriṣa*) is a special term of address used by deities and sometimes by kings. The term harks back to Sanskrit *mādṛśa*, "one like me", in the sense of having a comparable status.

1047. From this point the text diverges from SN 6.4:4.1.

Great Divinity, the Vanquisher, the Unvanquished, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, God Almighty, the Maker, the Creator, the First, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born.[1048]

5.3 There have been ascetics and brahmins before you, mendicant, who criticized and loathed earth, water, fire, air, creatures, gods, the Progenitor, and the Divinity.[1049] When their bodies broke up and their breath was cut off they were established in a lower realm.[1050]

5.5 There have been ascetics and brahmins before you, mendicant, who praised and approved earth, water, fire, air, creatures, gods, the Progenitor, and the Divinity.[1051] When their bodies broke up and their breath was cut off they were established in a higher realm.

5.7 So, mendicant, I tell you this: please, good fellow, do exactly what the Divinity says. Don't go beyond the word of the Divinity. If you do, then you'll end up like a person who, when approached by Lady Luck, would fend her off with a staff; or who, as they are falling over a cliff, would push away the ground with their hands and feet.[1052] Please, good fellow, do exactly what the Divinity says. Don't go

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1048. Māra adopts the boast of Brahmā (DN 1:2.5.2). | It is rare for the Buddha to be addressed as "mendicant" (*bhikkhu*) and it is probably meant in a slighting sense.

1049. This is a summary of the items in MN 1. | The "ascetics and brahmins" referred to here would include the ancient practitioners of movements such as Jainism, whose rejection of Vedism predates the Buddha.

1050. "With breath cut off" (*pāṇupacchedā*) is a unique idiom for death in Pali, but compare Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.5.14: *prāṇaṁ na vicchindyāt*; Atharvaveda 19.58.1c: *prāṇo'chinno*.

1051. This would be the ancient sages revered in the Vedic tradition.

1052. "Lady Luck" is Siri, later famed as goddess of fortune and prosperity. The same idiom recurs at Thag 8.3:2.1. As to why someone would "fend her off" (see note on MN 37:7.3), Siri (Sanskrit *śrī*) is identified with Lakṣmī "the undeparting" (Śrī Sūkta 2, *lakṣmīmanapagāminīm*). Atharva Veda 7.115 opens with, "Fly away wicked Lakṣmī, vanish, fly hence". Apparently 101 Lakṣmīs attach to a man when born, and the spell chases away the wicked (*pāpi*) while keeping the good (*puṇya*). In this case the Pali text does not draw directly from the Veda, as there is no close verbal parallel, and the Pali presents as irrational an action that makes good sense in the context of the Vedic passage. Rather, it

beyond the word of the Divinity. Do you not see the assembly of the Divinity gathered here?'

And so Māra the Wicked presented the assembly of the Divinity 5.12
to me.

When he had spoken, I said to Māra, 'I know you, Wicked One. 6.1
Do not think, "He does not know me." You are Māra the Wicked. And the Divinity, the Divinity's assembly, and the retinue of Divinity have all fallen into your hands; they're under your sway.[1053] And you think, "Maybe this one, too, has fallen into my hands; maybe he's under my sway!" But I haven't fallen into your hands; I'm not under your sway.'

When I had spoken, Baka the Divinity said to me, 'But, good 7.1
fellow, what I say is permanent, everlasting, eternal, whole, and not liable to pass away is in fact permanent, everlasting, eternal, whole, and not liable to pass away. And where I say there's no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn there is in fact[1054] no being born, growing old, dying, passing away, or being reborn. And when I say there's no other escape beyond this there is in fact no other escape beyond this. There have been ascetics and brahmins in the world before you, mendicant, whose deeds of fervent mortification lasted as long as your entire life.[1055] When there was another escape beyond this they knew it, and when there was no other escape beyond this, they knew it. So, mendicant, I tell you this: you will never find another escape beyond this, and you will eventually get weary and frustrated. If you attach to earth, you will lie close to me, in my domain, subject to my will, and expendable. If you attach to

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would seem, the Pali draws from a more general cultural awareness. | For "falling over a cliff" see DN 12:78.2.

1053. Normally Māra is believed to hold sway over all the sensual realms, while the *jhānas* (and their corresponding planes of rebirth) are beyond him (MN 25:12.1). Here his reach goes even further, as even the Brahmā realms, while freed from sensuality, are not freed from the attachment to continued existence.

1054. One of Māra's talents is making people believe that his malign ideas are in fact their own.

1055. Note the use of *kasiṇa* in the sense "entire".

water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the Progenitor … the Divinity, you will lie close to me, in my domain, subject to my will, and expendable.'

8.1 'Divinity, I too know that if I attach to earth, I will lie close to you, in your domain, subject to your will, and expendable. If I attach to water … fire … air … creatures … gods … the Progenitor … the Divinity, I will lie close to you, in your domain, subject to your will, and expendable. And in addition, Divinity, I understand your range and your light:[1056] "That's how powerful is Baka the Divinity, how illustrious and mighty."'

8.11 'But in what way do you understand my range and my light?'

9.1 'A galaxy extends a thousand times as far
as the moon and sun revolve
and the shining ones light up the quarters.
And there you wield your power.

9.5 You know the high and low,
the passionate and dispassionate,
and the coming and going of sentient beings
from this realm to another.

9.9 That's how I understand your range and your light.

10.1 But there are three other realms that you don't know or see,[1057] but which I know and see.[1058] There is the realm named after the gods of streaming radiance. You passed away from there and were reborn here.[1059] You've dwelt here so long that you've forgotten

1056. The measuring of a Brahmā by their "light" (*juti*) shows the close connection between divinity and the stars.

1057. MS reads *aññ̃o kāyo* ("another realm"), but the PTS and BJT reading *aññe tayo kāyā* is supported by the Chinese parallel (MA 78 at T i 548a28). Possibly this change was necessitated by the addition of a fourth realm below.

1058. PTS and BJT have *tyāhaṁ* (= *te ahaṁ*), consistent with their plural reading, as opposed to MS's singular *tamahaṁ*. This shows that this variation, which is not decided by the commentary, was a deliberate editorial choice.

1059. Here *ābhassarā* is masculine plural, hence not an adjective of *kāyo* but a reference to the "gods" of that realm. MS is inconsistent in this point, for below

about that, so you don't know it or see it.[1060] But I know it and see it. So Divinity, I am not your equal in knowledge, let alone your inferior. Rather, I know more than you.

There is the realm named after the gods of universal beauty … 10.8
There is the realm named after the gods of abundant fruit, which you don't know or see.[1061] But I know it and see it. So Divinity, I am not your equal in knowledge, let alone your inferior. Rather, I know more than you.

Since directly knowing earth as earth, and since directly knowing 11.1
that which does not fall within the scope of experience characterized by earth, I have not become earth, I have not become in earth, I have not become as earth, I have not become one who thinks 'earth is mine', I have not affirmed earth.[1062] So Divinity, I am not your equal in knowledge, let alone your inferior. Rather, I know more than you.

Since directly knowing water … fire … air … creatures … gods 12.1
… the Progenitor … the Divinity … the gods of streaming radiance … the gods of universal beauty … the gods of abundant fruit … the Vanquisher … Since directly knowing all as all, and since directly knowing that which does not fall within the scope of experience

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we find *subhakiṇho* and *vehapphalo* as singular adjectives, where PTS and BJT consistently use the plural form.

1060. Brahmā also forgets his origins at DN 1:2.2.1.

1061. MS adds a fourth class here, *abhibhū* ("the Vanquisher"), which is not supported by PTS or BJT, or the Chinese parallel.

1062. This difficult passage directly echoes MN 1:3.3. | *Anubhūta* has its normal sense of "experiences", "undergoes" (Thig 10.1:8.2, more commonly *paccanubhūta*, eg. MN 79:8.1, SN 15.1:1.14). Commentary has *appattaṁ*, "not attained" (i.e. not within the scope of absorption). | That which "falls within the scope of experience characterized by earth" (*yāvatā pathaviyā pathavattena ananubhūtaṁ*) is sense experience and the four absorptions; that which does not fall in such a scope are the formless attainments and especially Nibbāna. | For *nāhosiṁ* (prefer over MS *nāpahosiṁ*) the commentary glosses "grasps". The sense is that he does not identify. | For *abhivadati*, compare Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.14, which says that so long as there is the appearance of duality, one sees, hears, smells, "speaks about" (*abhivadati*), "conceives" (*manute*), and "cognizes" (*vijānāti*) particulars. Notice that this employs *abhivadati* alongside *manute*, just as *abhivadati* in the Pali appears alongside where *maññati* appears in MN 1:3.3.

characterized by all, I have not become all, I have not become in all, I have not become as all, I have not become one who thinks 'all is mine', I have not affirmed all.[1063] So Divinity, I am not your equal in knowledge, let alone your inferior. Rather, I know more than you.'

24.1 'Well, good fellow, if you have directly known that which does not fall within the scope of experience characterized by all, may that not be vacuous and hollow for you![1064]

25.1 Consciousness where no form appears,[1065]
infinite, luminous all-round.

25.3 That is what does not fall within the scope of experience characterized by earth, water, fire, air, creatures, gods, the Progenitor, the Divinity, the gods of streaming radiance, the gods of universal beauty, the gods of abundant fruit, the Vanquisher, and the all.

26.1 Come then, good fellow, see me vanish from you!'

1063. This whole passage seems designed to culminate with "experience characterized by all" (*sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaṁ*) in answer to Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.5.19, which says that "this self that experiences all is divinity" (*ayam ātmā brahma sarvānubhūḥ*). In surpassing even the "experience of all" the Buddha unequivocally asserts his superiority to the Upaniṣadic teaching.

1064. The close *-ti* in MS edition indicates the end of Baka's speech, but this is not found in PTS or BJT editions. If the close *-ti* is accepted here, then the next paragraph is spoken by the Buddha and it should also end with close *-ti*, but no edition has this. We would also expect the Buddha to use a vocative, but there is none. The only reading that is both coherent and attested is that Baka's speech begins here and ends when he says he will vanish. This is supported by the Chinese parallel, which while lacking an exact equivalent, attributes a similar claim to Brahmā (MA 78 at T i 548b11).

1065. These two lines, which appear to be an independent, free-floating expression of the Upaniṣadic view, are quoted at DN 11:85.18. Baka is asserting that what the Buddha has described is none other than the domain of "infinite consciousness", which is one of the highest attainments attributed to Brahmanical sages. | "Where no form appears" (*anidassanaṁ*) here is a synonym for "formless" (see eg. MN 21:14.8, "space is formless and invisible", *ākāso arūpī anidassano*). Normally the colors and images seen in the "form" absorptions are described as "visible" (eg. DN 16:3.29.1), so this indicates the formless attainments.

'Come on then, Divinity, vanish from me—if you can.' 26.2

Then Baka the Divinity said, 'I will vanish from the ascetic Gotama! I will vanish from the ascetic Gotama!' But he was unable to vanish from me.[1066] 26.3

So I said to him, 'Come then, Divinity, see me vanish from you!' 26.5

'Come on then, good fellow, vanish from me—if you can.' 26.7

Then I used my psychic power to will that my voice would extend so that divinity, his assembly, and his retinue would hear me, but they would not see me.[1067] And while vanished I spoke this verse: 26.8

'Seeing the danger in existence—[1068] 27.1
that life in any existence will cease to be—[1069]
I didn't affirm any kind of existence,
and didn't grasp at relishing.'

Then the Divinity, his assembly, and his retinue, their minds full of wonder and amazement, thought, 'Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! The ascetic Gotama has such psychic power and might! We've never before seen or heard of any other ascetic or brahmin with psychic power and might like the ascetic Gotama, who has gone forth from the Sakyan clan. Though people enjoy continued existence, loving it so much, he has extracted it, root and all.' 28.1

Then Māra the Wicked took possession of a member of the retinue of Divinity and said this to me, 'If such is your understanding, good fellow, do not present it to your disciples or those gone forth![1070] 29.1

1066. Since he believes the dimension of infinite consciousness is that which the Buddha speaks of, he mistakenly assumes he has the power.

1067. This is a dramatic expression of the philosophical gulf between the Buddha and Baka. Baka's power manifests as "light", whereas the Buddha demonstrates invisibility.

1068. The Buddha shifts the focus from the attainment of a state of exalted consciousness to the cessation of existence.

1069. Following Bodhi and Critical Pali Dictionary in reading *vibhavesi*. | The *ca* here answers to the last line of the verse.

1070. The verb *upanesi* here is used above at MN 49:5.12 in the opposite case, where Māra "presents" Brahmā's assembly to the Buddha.

Do not teach this Dhamma to your disciples or those gone forth! Do not wish this for your disciples or those gone forth!

29.5 There have been ascetics and brahmins before you, mendicant, who claimed to be perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas. They presented, taught, and wished this for their disciples and those gone forth. When their bodies broke up and their breath was cut off they were established in a lower realm.

29.8 But there have also been other ascetics and brahmins before you, mendicant, who claimed to be perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas. They did not present, teach, or wish this for their disciples and those gone forth. When their bodies broke up and their breath was cut off they were established in a higher realm.

29.11 So, mendicant, I tell you this: please, good fellow, remain passive, dwelling in blissful meditation in this life, for this is better left unsaid. Good fellow, do not instruct others.'

30.1 When he had spoken, I said to Māra, 'I know you, Wicked One. Do not think, "He doesn't know me." You are Māra the Wicked. You don't speak to me like this out of sympathy, but with no sympathy. For you think, "Those who the ascetic Gotama teaches will go beyond my reach."

30.9 Those who formerly claimed to be fully awakened Buddhas were not in fact fully awakened Buddhas. But I am. The Realized One remains such whether or not he teaches disciples. The Realized One remains as such whether or not he presents the teaching to disciples. Why is that? Because the Realized One has given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. He has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them so they are unable to arise in the future. Just as a palm tree with its crown cut off is incapable of further growth, the Realized One has given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. He has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them so they are unable to arise in the future.'"

And so, because of the silencing of Māra, and because of the invita- 31.1
tion of the Divinity, the name of this discussion is "On the Invitation of Divinity".[1071]

1071. There is no record of Baka's conversion.

MN 50

The Warning to Māra

Māratajjanīyasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time Venerable Mahāmoggallāna was staying in the land of the Bhaggas at Crocodile's Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā's Wood.[1072]

2.1 At that time Moggallāna was walking mindfully in the open air.

2.2 Now at that time Māra the Wicked had got inside Moggallāna's belly.[1073] Moggallāna thought, "Why now is my belly so very heavy, like I've just eaten a load of beans?"[1074] Then he stepped down from the walking path, entered his dwelling, sat down on the seat spread out, and investigated inside himself.

3.2 He saw that Māra the Wicked had got inside his belly. So he said to Māra, "Come out, Wicked One, come out! Do not harass the

1072. This sutta serves as a showcase for Moggallāna, who is able to swiftly best Māra and recount a detailed story of past lives.

1073. Māra is sometimes called Namuci, and in fact seems to descend from the Vedic adversary of that name. Vedic Namuci "the wicked" (*pāpmā vai namuciḥ*, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 12.7.3, Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā 4.4.4) was a wily trickster (*māyin*, Rig Veda 1.53.7c) who was nonetheless outsmarted by Indra (Rig Veda 5.30.6c), and possessed ineffectual armies reliant on women (Rig Veda 5.30.9a). Buddhist Māra "the wicked" (*māro pāpimā*) was a wily trickster (*passim*) who was nonetheless outsmarted by the Buddha and his followers (*passim*); he possessed ineffectual armies (DN 20:21.3, AN 4.13:2.3, Snp 3.2), and sent his daughters to do his dirty work (SN 4.25). The decapitated head of Namuci introduced death (*mṛtyu*) in the form of blood to the deathless (*amṛta*) soma (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 12.7.3.4, Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā 4.4.4), establishing his Pali names Maccurāja, "King of Death" and Māra, "Death". He appears in a similar guise in Jainism too (Ācaraṅga 1.3.1.3).

1074. T 66 has 猶若食豆, MA 131 猶如食豆, both of which confirm the sense "full of beans". T 67 on the other hand has 飢人而負重擔, "like a hungry man bearing a heavy load."

Realized One or his disciple. Don't create lasting harm and suffering for yourself!"

Then Māra thought, "This ascetic doesn't really know me or see me when he tells me to come out. Not even the Teacher could recognize me so quickly, so how could a disciple?" 4.1

Then Moggallāna said to Māra, "I know you even when you're like this, Wicked One. Do not think, 'He doesn't know me.' You are Māra the Wicked. And you think, 'This ascetic doesn't really know me or see me when he tells me to come out. Not even the Teacher could recognize me so quickly, so how could a disciple?'" 5.1

Then Māra thought, "This ascetic really does know me and see me when he tells me to come out." 6.1

Then Māra came up out of Moggallāna's mouth and stood against the door. Moggallāna saw him there and said, "I see you even there, Wicked One. Do not think, 'He doesn't see me.' That's you, Wicked One, standing against the door. 6.7

Once upon a time, Wicked One, I was a Māra named Dūsī, and I had a sister named Kāḷī.[1075] You were her son, which made you my nephew. 8.1

At that time Kakusandha, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha arose in the world.[1076] Kakusandha had a fine pair of chief disciples named Vidhura and Sañjīva. Of all the disciples of the Buddha Kakusandha, none were the equal of Venerable Vidhura in teaching Dhamma. And that's how he came to be known as Vidhura.[1077] 9.1

But when Venerable Sañjīva had gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, he easily attained the cessation of perception and feeling. Once upon a time, Sañjīva was sitting at 10.1

1075. Dūsī the "corrupter" and Kāḷī the "dark lady", an early mention of a goddess of that name. | This story is also told at Thag 20.1:48.1.

1076. Kakusandha is also mentioned at SN 12.7:1.1, SN 15.20:2.8, DN 14:1.4.4, DN 32:3.8, and Thag 7.5:4.4.

1077. At AN 3.20:2.1, *vidhura* is the cleverness of a shopkeeper in trade, illustrating the "indefatigable" mendicant in striving.

the root of a certain tree having attained the cessation of perception and feeling. Some cowherds, shepherds, farmers, and passers-by saw him sitting there and said, 'Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! This ascetic passed away while seated. We should cremate him.' They collected grass, wood, and cow-dung, heaped it all on Sañjīva's body, set it on fire, and left.

11.1 Then, when the night had passed, Sañjīva emerged from that attainment, shook out his robes, and, since it was morning, he robed up and entered the village for alms. Those cowherds, shepherds, farmers, and passers-by saw him wandering for alms and said, 'Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! This ascetic passed away while seated, and now he has come back to life!' And that's how he came to be known as Sañjīva.[1078]

12.1 Then it occurred to Māra Dūsī, 'I don't know the course of rebirth of these ethical mendicants of good character.[1079] Why don't I take possession of these brahmins and householders and say, "Come, all of you, abuse, attack, harass, and trouble the ethical mendicants of good character.[1080] Hopefully by doing this we can upset their minds so that Māra Dūsī can find a vulnerability."' And that's exactly what he did.

13.1 Then those brahmins and householders abused, attacked, harassed, and troubled the ethical mendicants of good character: 'These shavelings, fake ascetics, primitives, black spawn from the feet of our kinsman, say, "We practice absorption meditation! We practice absorption meditation!" Shoulders drooping, downcast, and dopey, they meditate and concentrate and contemplate and ruminate.[1081] They're just like an owl on a branch, which medi-

1078. *Sañjīva* means "survivor".

1079. The idiom *āgatiṁ vā gatiṁ vā*, literally "comings and goings", refers to the "course of rebirth".

1080. Māra urges and encourages, but does not control their behavior, so they are still responsible for their deeds.

1081. The phrase "meditate and concentrate and contemplate and ruminate" (*jhāyanti pajjhāyanti nijjhāyanti apajjhāyanti*) uses a series of verbs from the

tates and concentrates and contemplates and ruminates as it hunts a mouse. They're just like a jackal on a river-bank, which meditates and concentrates and contemplates and ruminates as it hunts a fish. They're just like a cat by an alley or a drain or a dustbin, which meditates and concentrates and contemplates and ruminates as it hunts a mouse. They're just like an unladen donkey by an alley or a drain or a dustbin, which meditates and concentrates and contemplates and ruminates. In the same way, these shavelings, fake ascetics, primitives, black spawn from the feet of our kinsman, say, "We practice absorption meditation! We practice absorption meditation!" Shoulders drooping, downcast, and dopey, they meditate and concentrate and contemplate and ruminate.'

13.11 Most of the people who died at that time—when their body broke up, after death—were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

14.1 Then Kakusandha the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, addressed the mendicants: 'Mendicants, the brahmins and householders have been possessed by Māra Dūsī. He told them to abuse you in the hope of upsetting your minds so that he can find a vulnerability. Come, all of you mendicants, meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.[1082] Meditate spreading a heart full of compassion … Meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing … Meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.'

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same root as *jhāna* with different prefixes to satirical effect. See also AN 6.46:2.2, AN 11.9:2.10, and MN 108:26.4.

1082. These meditations counteract the tendency to anger.

15.1 When those mendicants were instructed and advised by the Buddha Kakusandha in this way, they went to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, where they meditated spreading a heart full of love … compassion … rejoicing … equanimity.

16.1 Then it occurred to Māra Dūsī, 'Even when I do this I don't know the course of rebirth of these ethical mendicants of good character. Why don't I take possession of these brahmins and householders and say, "Come, all of you, honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the ethical mendicants of good character. Hopefully by doing this we can upset their minds so that Māra Dūsī can find a vulnerability."'[1083]

17.1 And that's exactly what he did. Then those brahmins and householders honored, respected, esteemed, and venerated the ethical mendicants of good character.

17.5 Most of the people who died at that time—when their body broke up, after death—were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

18.1 Then Kakusandha the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, addressed the mendicants: 'Mendicants, the brahmins and householders have been possessed by Māra Dūsī. He told them to venerate you in the hope of upsetting your minds so that he can find a vulnerability. Come, all you mendicants, meditate observing the ugliness of the body, perceiving the repulsiveness of food, perceiving dissatisfaction with the whole world, and observing the impermanence of all conditions.'[1084]

19.1 When those mendicants were instructed and advised by the Buddha Kakusandha in this way, they went to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, where they meditated observing the ugliness of the body, perceiving the repulsiveness of food, perceiving dissatisfaction with the whole world, and observing the impermanence of all conditions.

1083. Māra did not want to genuinely respect the mendicants, but to corrupt them with adulation.

1084. These meditations counteract attachment.

Then the Buddha Kakusandha robed up in the morning and, 20.1
taking this bowl and robe, entered the village for alms with Venerable Vidhura as his second monk.

Then Māra Dūsī took possession of a certain boy, picked up a 21.1
rock, and hit Vidhura on the head, cracking it open. Then Vidhura, with blood pouring from his cracked skull, still followed behind the Buddha Kakusandha.[1085] Then the Buddha Kakusandha turned to gaze back, the way that elephants do, saying,[1086] 'This Māra Dūsī knows no limit.' And as he was gazing, Māra Dūsī fell from that place and was reborn in the Great Hell.[1087]

Now that Great Hell is known by three names: 'Related to the 22.1
Six Fields of Contact' and also 'The Impaling With Spikes' and also 'Uniquely Painful'.[1088] Then the wardens of hell came to me and said, 'When spike meets spike in your heart, you will know that you've been roasting in hell for a thousand years.'

I roasted for many years, many centuries, many millennia in that 23.1
Great Hell. For ten thousand years I roasted in the annex of that Great Hell, experiencing the pain called 'this is emergence'.[1089] My body was in human form, but I had the head of a fish.

> What kind of hell was that, 24.1
> where Dūsī was roasted
> after attacking the disciple Vidhura

1085. *Yeva* ("still") has an adversative sense here (see AN 3.82:1.4).
1086. *Nāgāpalokitaṁ*, the "elephant look", was famously employed by the Buddha as he made his final departure from Vesālī (DN 16:4.1.2). There is a similar Sanskrit term *siṁhāvalokana*, the "lion look", said to be the slow glance back that a lion makes as he leaves his kill.
1087. The Pali *sahāpalokanāya* makes it clear that Māra fell to hell while the Buddha was looking, not because he looked. | More details on hell are provided in MN 129 and MN 130.
1088. The hell "Related to the Six Fields of Contact" and its corresponding heaven are further discussed at SN 35.135. | The sense of *paccattavedaniya* ("Uniquely Painful") is clarified in the verses (MN 50:24.6).
1089. I think *vuṭṭhānimaṁ* ("this is emergence") simply means the feeling that is experienced on "emergence" from the Great Hell to the annex. The commentary, however, says it means the "feeling that emerges as a result of kamma".

along with the brahmin Kakusandha?

24.5 There were 100 iron spikes,
each one uniquely painful.
That's the kind of hell
where Dūsī was roasted
after attacking the disciple Vidhura
along with the brahmin Kakusandha.

24.11 Dark One, if you attack
a mendicant who directly knows this,
a disciple of the Buddha,
you'll fall into suffering.

25.1 There are mansions that last an eon
standing in the middle of a lake.
Sapphire-colored, brilliant,
they sparkle and shine.
Dancing there are nymphs
shining in all different colors.

25.7 Dark One, if you attack
a mendicant who directly knows this,
a disciple of the Buddha,
you'll fall into suffering.

26.1 I'm the one who, urged by the Buddha,
shook the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother
with his big toe
as the Saṅgha of mendicants watched.[1090]

26.5 Dark One, if you attack
a mendicant who directly knows this,
a disciple of the Buddha,

1090. SN 51.14.

you'll fall into suffering.

I'm the one who shook the Palace of Victory 27.1
with his big toe
owing to psychic power,
inspiring deities to awe.[1091]

Dark One, if you attack 27.5
a mendicant who directly knows this,
a disciple of the Buddha,
you'll fall into suffering.

I'm the one who asked Sakka 28.1
in the Palace of Victory:
'Vāsava, I hope you recall[1092]
the one who is freed through the ending of craving?'[1093]
And I'm the one to whom Sakka
admitted the truth when asked.

Dark One, if you attack 28.7
a mendicant who directly knows this,
a disciple of the Buddha,
you'll fall into suffering.

I'm the one who asked the Divinity 29.1

1091. MN 37:11.4.

1092. In MN 37, Moggallāna calls him Kosiya, but Vāsava is also frequently used as vocative for Sakka.

1093. Moggallāna asked Sakka if he remembered the teaching on this topic that he had received from the Buddha (MN 37:8.1). | The compound *taṇhākkhayavimuttiyo* is translated as a feminine plural by Norman in *Elders' Verses*, but MN 37:2.2 refers to "the mendicant who is freed" in singular. Resolve to *taṇhākkhayavimutti yo*; *vimutti* agrees with *yo* as the nominative singular of the masculine agent noun in *-in*, which occurs in the same phrase at AN 4.38:6.2 and Iti 55:4.2.

in the Hall of Clear Right before the assembly:[1094]
'Respectable sir, do you still have the same view
that you had in the past?
Or do you see the radiance
surpassing the realm of divinity?'

29.7 And I'm the one to whom the Divinity
truthfully admitted his progress:
'Good fellow, I don't have that view
that I had in the past.

29.11 I see the radiance
surpassing the realm of divinity.
So how could I say today
that I am permanent and eternal?'[1095]

29.15 Dark One, if you attack
a mendicant who directly knows this,
a disciple of the Buddha,
you'll fall into suffering.

30.1 I'm the one who touched the peak of Mount Meru
using the power of meditative liberation.
I've visited the forests of the people
who dwell in the land east of Videha.

30.5 Dark One, if you attack
a mendicant who directly knows this,
a disciple of the Buddha,
you'll fall into suffering.

31.1 Though a fire doesn't think,

1094. This retells the events of SN 6.5, but there there is no mention of the Hall of Justice.
1095. SN 6.5.

'I'll burn the fool!'
Still the fool who attacks
the fire gets burnt.

In the same way, Māra, 31.5
in attacking the Realized One,
you'll only burn yourself,
like a fool touching the flames.

Māra's done a bad thing 31.9
in attacking the Realized One.
Wicked One, do you imagine that
your wickedness won't bear fruit?

Your deeds heap up wickedness 31.13
that will last a long time, terminator!
Give up on the Buddha, Māra!
And hold no hope for the mendicants!"

That is how, in the Bhesekaḷā grove,[1096] 31.17
the mendicant warned Māra.
That spirit, downcast,
disappeared right there.

1096. The commentary to Thag 20.1:69.1 says that this verse was added at the Council.

Colophon

The Translator

Bhikkhu Sujato was born as Anthony Aidan Best on 4/11/1966 in Perth, Western Australia. He grew up in the pleasant suburbs of Mt Lawley and Attadale alongside his sister Nicola, who was the good child. His mother, Margaret Lorraine Huntsman née Pinder, said "he'll either be a priest or a poet", while his father, Anthony Thomas Best, advised him to "never do anything for money". He attended Aquinas College, a Catholic school, where he decided to become an atheist. At the University of WA he studied philosophy, aiming to learn what he wanted to do with his life. Finding that what he wanted to do was play guitar, he dropped out. His main band was named Martha's Vineyard, which achieved modest success in the indie circuit.

A seemingly random encounter with a roadside joey took him to Thailand, where he entered his first meditation retreat at Wat Ram Poeng, Chieng Mai in 1992. Feeling the call to the Buddha's path, he took full ordination in Wat Pa Nanachat in 1994, where his teachers were Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Jayasaro. In 1997 he returned to Perth to study with Ajahn Brahm at Bodhinyana Monastery.

He spent several years practicing in seclusion in Malaysia and Thailand before establishing Santi Forest Monastery in Bundanoon, NSW, in 2003. There he was instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Theravada bhikkhuni order in Australia and advocating for women's rights. He continues to teach in Australia and globally,

with a special concern for the moral implications of climate change and other forms of environmental destruction. He has published a series of books of original and groundbreaking research on early Buddhism.

In 2005 he founded SuttaCentral together with Rod Bucknell and John Kelly. In 2015, seeing the need for a complete, accurate, plain English translation of the Pali texts, he undertook the task, spending nearly three years in isolation on the isle of Qi Mei off the coast of the nation of Taiwan. He completed the four main Nikāyas in 2018, and the early books of the Khuddaka Nikāya were complete by 2021. All this work is dedicated to the public domain and is entirely free of copyright encumbrance.

In 2019 he returned to Sydney where he established Lokanta Vihara (The Monastery at the End of the World).

Creation Process

Primary source was the digital Mahāsaṅgīti edition of the Pali Tipiṭaka. Translated from the Pali, with reference to several English translations, especially those of Bhikkhu Bodhi.

The Translation

This translation was part of a project to translate the four Pali Nikāyas with the following aims: plain, approachable English; consistent terminology; accurate rendition of the Pali; free of copyright. It was made during 2016–2018 while Bhikkhu Sujato was staying in Qimei, Taiwan.

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Middle Discourses

Bhikkhu Sujato

MIDDLE DISCOURSES

A lucid translation of the Majjhima Nikāya



translated and introduced by

Bhikkhu Sujato

VOLUME 2

MN 51–100

The Middle Fifty

MAJJHIMAPAṆṆĀSA

SuttaCentral

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Summary of Contents

The Chapter on Householders (*Gahapativagga*) This chapter is addressed to a diverse range of lay people.

MN 51: With Kandaraka (*Kandarakasutta*) The Buddha discusses mindfulness meditation with lay practitioners. Contrasting the openness of animals with the duplicity of humans, he explains how to practice in a way that causes no harm to oneself or others.

MN 52: The Man From the City of Aṭṭhaka (*Aṭṭhakanāgarasutta*) Asked by a householder to teach a path to freedom, Venerable Ānanda explains no less than eleven meditative states that may serve as doors to the deathless.

MN 53: A Trainee (*Sekhasutta*) The Buddha is invited by his family, the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu, to inaugurate a new community hall. He invites Venerable Ānanda to explain in detail the stages of spiritual practice for a lay trainee.

MN 54: With Potaliya the Householder (*Potaliyasutta*) When Potaliya got upset at being referred to as "householder", the Buddha quizzed him as to the true nature of attachment and renunciation.

MN 55: With Jīvaka (*Jīvakasutta*) The Buddha's personal doctor, Jīvaka, hears criticisms of the Buddha's policy regarding eating meat, and asks him about it.

MN 56: With Upāli (*Upālisutta*) The Buddha disagrees with a Jain ascetic on the question of whether physical or mental deeds are more important. When he hears of this, the Jain disciple Upāli

decides to visit the Buddha and refute him, and proceeds despite all warnings.

MN 57: The Ascetic Who Behaved Like a Dog (*Kukkuravatikasutta*) Some ascetics in ancient India undertook extreme practices, such as a vow to behave like an ox or a dog. The Buddha meets two such individuals, and is reluctantly pressed to reveal the kammic outcomes of such practice.

MN 58: With Prince Abhaya (*Abhayarājakumārasutta*) The leader of the Jains, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, gives his disciple Prince Abhaya a dilemma to pose to the Buddha, supposing that this will show his weakness. Things don't go quite as planned.

MN 59: The Many Kinds of Feeling (*Bahuvedanīyasutta*) The Buddha resolves a disagreement on the number of kinds of feelings that he taught, pointing out that different ways of teaching are appropriate in different contexts, and should not be a cause of disputes. He goes on to show the importance of pleasure in developing higher meditation.

MN 60: Unfailing (*Apaṇṇakasutta*) The Buddha teaches a group of uncommitted householders how to use a rational reflection to arrive at practices and principles that are guaranteed to have a good outcome, even if we don't know all the variables.

The Chapter on Mendicants (*Bhikkhuvagga*) Ten discourses to monks, many of them focusing on matters of discipline.

MN 61: Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhika (*Ambalaṭṭhikarāhulovādasutta*) Using the "object lesson" of a cup of water, the Buddha explains to his son, Rāhula, the importance of telling the truth and reflecting on one's motives.

MN 62: The Longer Advice to Rāhula (*Mahārāhulovādasutta*) The Buddha tells Rāhula to meditate on not-self, which he immediately puts into practice. Seeing him, Venerable Sāriputta advises him to develop breath meditation, but the Buddha suggests a wide range of different practices first.

MN 63: The Shorter Discourse With Māluṅkya (*Cūḷamālukyasutta*) A monk demands that the Buddha answer his metaphysical

questions, or else he will disrobe. The Buddha compares him to a man struck by an arrow, who refuses treatment until he can have all his questions about the arrow and the archer answered.

MN 64: The Longer Discourse With Māluṅkya (*Mahāmālukyasutta*) A little baby has no wrong views or intentions, but the underlying tendency for these things is still there. Without practicing, they will inevitably recur.

MN 65: With Bhaddāli (*Bhaddālisutta*) A monk refuses to follow the rule forbidding eating after noon, but is filled with remorse and forgiven.

MN 66: The Simile of the Quail (*Laṭukikopamasutta*) Again raising the rule regarding eating, but this time as a reflection of gratitude for the Buddha in eliminating things that cause complexity and stress. The Buddha emphasizes how attachment even to little things can be dangerous.

MN 67: At Cātumā (*Cātumasutta*) After dismissing some unruly monks, the Buddha is persuaded to relent, and teaches them four dangers for those gone forth.

MN 68: At Naḷakapāna (*Naḷakapānasutta*) Those who practice do so not because they are failures, but because they aspire to higher freedom. When he speaks of the attainments of disciples, the Buddha does so in order to inspire.

MN 69: With Gulissāni (*Goliyānisutta*) A monk comes down to the community from the wilderness, but doesn't behave properly. Venerable Sāriputta explains how a mendicant should behave, whether in forest or town.

MN 70: At Kīṭāgiri (*Kīṭāgirisutta*) A third discourse that presents the health benefits of eating in one part of the day, and the reluctance of some mendicants to follow this.

The Chapter on Wanderers (*Paribbājakavagga*) The Buddha in dialog with ascetics and wanderers.

MN 71: To Vacchagotta on the Three Knowledges (*Tevijjavacchasutta*) The Buddha denies being omniscient, and sets forth

the three higher knowledges that form the core of his awakened insight.

MN 72: With Vacchagotta on Fire (*Aggivacchasutta*) Refusing to take a stance regarding useless metaphysical speculations, the Buddha illustrates the spiritual goal with the simile of a flame going out.

MN 73: The Longer Discourse With Vacchagotta (*Mahāvacchasutta*) In the final installment of the "Vacchagotta trilogy", Vacchagotta lets go his obsession with meaningless speculation, and asks about practice.

MN 74: With Dīghanakha (*Dīghanakhasutta*) Deftly outmaneuvering an extreme skeptic, the Buddha discusses the outcomes of belief and disbelief. Rather than getting stuck in abstractions, he encourages staying close to the feelings one experiences.

MN 75: With Māgaṇḍiya (*Māgaṇḍiyasutta*) Accused by a hedonist of being too negative, the Buddha recounts the luxury of his upbringing, and his realization of how little value there was in such things. Through renunciation he found a far greater pleasure.

MN 76: With Sandaka (*Sandakasutta*) Venerable Ānanda teaches a group of wanderers how there are many different approaches to the spiritual life, many of which lead nowhere.

MN 77: The Longer Discourse with Sakuludāyī (*Mahāsakuludāyisutta*) Unlike many teachers, the Buddha's followers treat him with genuine love and respect, since they see the sincerity of his teaching and practice.

MN 78: With Uggāhamāna Samaṇamaṇḍikāputta (*Samaṇamuṇḍikasutta*) A wanderer teaches that a person has reached the highest attainment when they keep four basic ethical precepts. The Buddha's standards are considerably higher.

MN 79: The Shorter Discourse With Sakuludāyī (*Cūḷasakuludāyisutta*) A wanderer teaches his doctrine of the "highest splendor" but is unable to give a satisfactory account of what that means. The Buddha memorably compares him to someone who is in love with an idealized women who he has never met.

MN 80: With Vekhanasa (*Vekhanasasutta*) Starting off similar to the previous, the Buddha goes on to explain that one is not converted to his teaching just because of clever arguments, but because you see in yourself the results of the practice.

The Chapter on Kings (*Rājavagga*) Various dialogs with kings and princes, many of whom followed the Buddha.

MN 81: With Ghaṭīkāra (*Ghaṭikārasutta*) The Buddha relates an unusual account of a past life in the time of the previous Buddha, Kassapa. At that time he was not interested in Dhamma, and had to be forced to go see the Buddha. This discourse is important in understanding the development of the Bodhisattva doctrine.

MN 82: With Raṭṭhapāla (*Raṭṭhapālasutta*) A wealthy young man, Raṭṭhapāla, has a strong aspiration to go forth, but has to prevail against the reluctance of his parents. Even after he became a monk, his parents tried to persuade him to disrobe. The discourse ends with a moving series of teachings on the fragility of the world.

MN 83: About King Maghadeva (*Maghadevasutta*) A rare extended mythic narrative, telling of an ancient kingly lineage and their eventual downfall.

MN 84: At Madhurā (*Madhurasutta*) In Madhurā, towards the north-western limit of the Buddha's reach during his life, King Avantiputta asks Venerable Mahākaccāna regarding the brahmanical claim to be the highest caste.

MN 85: With Prince Bodhi (*Bodhirājakumārasutta*) Admitting that he used to believe that pleasure was to be gained through pain, the Buddha explains how his practice showed him the fallacy of that idea.

MN 86: With Aṅgulimāla (*Aṅgulimālasutta*) Ignoring warnings, the Buddha ventures into the domain of the notorious killer Aṅgulimāla and succeeds in converting him to the path of non-violence. After becoming a monk Aṅgulimāla still suffered for his past deeds, but only to a small extent. He uses his new commitment to non-violence to help a woman in labor.

MN 87: Born From the Beloved (*Piyajātikasutta*) A rare glimpse into the marital life of King Pasenadi, and how he is led to the Dhamma by his Queen, the incomparable Mallikā. She confirms the Buddha's teaching that our loved ones bring us sorrow; but that's not something a husband, father, and king wants to hear.

MN 88: The Foreign Cloth (*Bāhitikasutta*) King Pasenadi takes a chance to visit Venerable Ānanda, where he asks about skillful and unskillful behavior, and what is praised by the Buddha. He offers Ānanda a valuable cloth in gratitude.

MN 89: Shrines to the Teaching (*Dhammacetiyasutta*) King Pasenadi, near the end of his life, visits the Buddha, and shows moving devotion and love for his teacher.

MN 90: At Kaṇṇakatthala (*Kaṇṇakatthalasutta*) King Pasenadi questions the Buddha on miscellaneous matters: caste, omniscience, and the gods among them.

The Chapter on Brahmins (*Brāhmaṇavagga*) The Buddha engages with the powerful caste of brahmins, contesting their claims to spiritual authority.

MN 91: With Brahmāyu (*Brahmāyusutta*) The oldest and most respected brahmin of the age sends a student to examine the Buddha, and he spends several months following his every move before reporting back. Convinced that the Buddha fulfills an ancient prophecy of the Great Man, the brahmin becomes his disciple.

MN 92: With Sela (*Selasutta*) A brahmanical ascetic named Keṇiya invites the entire Saṅgha for a meal. When the brahmin Sela sees what is happening, he visits the Buddha and expresses his delight in a moving series of devotional verses.

MN 93: With Assalāyana (*Assalāyanasutta*) A precocious brahmin student is encouraged against his wishes to challenge the Buddha on the question of caste. His reluctance turns out to be justified.

MN 94: With Ghoṭamukha (*Ghoṭamukhasutta*) A brahmin denies that there is such a thing as a principled renunciate life, but Venerable Udena persuades him otherwise.

MN 95: With Caṅkī (*Caṅkīsutta*) The reputed brahmin Caṅkī goes with a large group to visit the Buddha, despite the reservations of other brahmins. A precocious student challenges the Buddha, affirming the validity of the Vedic scriptures. The Buddha gives a detailed explanation of how true understanding gradually emerges through spiritual education.

MN 96: With Esukārī (*Esukārīsutta*) A brahmin claims that one deserves service and privilege depending on caste, but the Buddha counters that it is conduct, not caste, that show a person's worth.

MN 97: With Dhanañjāni (*Dhanañjānisutta*) A corrupt tax-collector is redeemed by his encounter with Venerable Sāriputta.

MN 98: With Vāseṭṭha (*Vāseṭṭhasutta*) Two brahmin students ask the Buddha about what makes a brahmin: birth or deeds? The Buddha points out that, while the species of animals are determined by birth, for humans what matters is how you chose to live. This discourse anticipates the modern view that there are no such things as clearly defined racial differences among humans.

MN 99: With Subha (*Subhasutta*) Working hard is not valuable in and of itself; what matters is the outcome. And just as in lay life, spiritual practice may or may not lead to fruitful results.

MN 100: With Saṅgārava (*Saṅgāravasutta*) Angered by the devotion of a brahmin lady, a brahmin visits the Buddha. He positions himself against traditionalists and rationalists, as someone whose teaching is based on direct experience.

The Middle Fifty

THE CHAPTER ON HOUSEHOLDERS

MN 51

With Kandaraka

Kandarakasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Campā 1.1
on the banks of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants.[1]

Then Pessa the elephant marshal's son and Kandaraka the wan- 1.3
derer went to the Buddha. When they had approached, Pessa bowed and sat down to one side.[2] But the wanderer Kandaraka exchanged greetings with the Buddha and stood to one side. He looked around the mendicant Saṅgha, who were so very silent, and said to the Buddha:

"It's incredible, worthy Gotama, it's amazing! How the mendicant 2.1
Saṅgha has been led to practice properly by the worthy Gotama! The perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas in the past or the future who lead the mendicant Saṅgha to practice properly at best do so like the worthy Gotama does in the present."[3]

1. Campā is modern Champapur near Bhagalpur in Bihar state, not far from West Bengal. It is near the eastern-most reach of the Buddha's journeys. Campā was the capital of Aṅga, one of the sixteen "great nations" (*mahājanapadā*). It was a flourishing trade center, and became a sacred city for the Jains. | *Gaggarā*, an onomatopoeic reduplication ("gargle"), is the name of a number of rivers and whirlpools in Sanskrit (cp. the modern Ghaggar River in north-west India).
2. Thag 1.77 is attributed to a certain "elephant driver's son", but according to the commentary this was a different person. Otherwise, neither of these appear elsewhere.
3. Kandaraka's status as a (non-Buddhist) wanderer does not preclude his faith in the Buddha.

3.1 "That's so true, Kandaraka! That's so true![4] The perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas in the past or the future who lead the mendicant Saṅgha to practice properly at best do so like I do in the present.

3.6 For in this mendicant Saṅgha there are perfected mendicants, who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment. And in this mendicant Saṅgha there are trainee mendicants who are consistently ethical, living consistently, alert, living alertly.[5] They meditate with their minds firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. What four?

3.10 It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world."

4.1 When he had spoken, Pessa said to the Buddha:

4.2 "It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! How well described by the Buddha are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation! They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.[6] For we white-clothed laypeople also from time to

4. We do not hear anything about Kandaraka after this exchange.

5. *Nipaka* ("alert") is explained in the Pali tradition as "wise". The root *pāl*, rather, suggests the sense "on guard, alert", which is supported by such phrases as "mindfully alert and on guard" (*ārakkhasatino nipakkasatino*, AN 5.114:3.1), where *nipaka* parallels *ārakkha* ("guarding"). Likewise, the Vedic sense is "one who keeps watch, a protector" (Rig Veda 4.45.6, 10.44.4).

6. *Yāva supaññatta* is also at DN 18:22.3; it is a variation of the standard *yāva subhāsita*.

time meditate with our minds well established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.[7] We meditate observing an aspect of the body … feelings … mind … principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! How the Buddha knows what's 4.9
best for sentient beings, even though humans continue to be so shady, rotten, and tricky. For human beings are shady, sir, while beasts are obvious. For I can drive an elephant in training, and while going back and forth in Campā it'll try all the tricks, bluffs, ruses, and feints that it can. But my bondservants, servants, and workers behave one way by body, another by speech, and their minds another. It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! How the Buddha knows what's best for sentient beings, even though humans continue to be so shady, rotten, and tricky. For human beings are shady, sir, while beasts are obvious."

"That's so true, Pessa! That's so true! For human beings are shady, 5.1
while beasts are obvious. Pessa, these four individuals are found in the world. What four?

1. One individual mortifies themselves, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves.[8]
2. One individual mortifies others, committed to the practice of mortifying others.
3. One individual mortifies themselves and others, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others.
4. One individual doesn't mortify either themselves or others, committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others. They live without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine.[9]

7. The Buddha sometimes taught devotional meditations such as the six recollections for lay people, but passages such as this show there was no fundamental difference between lay and monastic meditations.
8. "Mortifies themselves" is *attantapo*.
9. "With self become divine" (*brahmabhūtena attanā*) deliberately echoes Upaniṣadic language. Pali is sometimes said to lack reference to the cosmic Brahman

5.11 Which one of these four individuals do you like the sound of?"

5.12 "Sir, I don't like the sound of the first three individuals. I only like the sound of the last individual, who doesn't mortify either themselves or others."

6.1 "But why don't you like the sound of those three individuals?"

6.2 "Sir, the individual who mortifies themselves does so even though they want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I don't like the sound of that individual. The individual who mortifies others does so even though others want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I don't like the sound of that individual. The individual who mortifies themselves and others does so even though both themselves and others want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I don't like the sound of that individual. The individual who doesn't mortify either themselves or others—living without wishes, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine—does not torment themselves or others, both of whom want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I like the sound of that individual. Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do."

6.13 "Please, Pessa, go at your convenience." And then Pessa the elephant marshal's son approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.[10]

7.1 Then, not long after he had left, the Buddha addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, Pessa the elephant marshal's son is astute. He has great wisdom. If he had sat here an hour so that I could

(in neuter), having only the personal Brahmā (in masculine). The grammatical case of *brahma-* in the compound here is undetermined, yet no scholar of Sanskrit would hesitate to interpret the common phrase *brahmabhūtātmā* in the sense "self become one with the cosmic divinity Brahman". Surely the Pali draws from the same sense, using it to describe Nibbāna.

10. Presumably Kandaraka left too. This sutta has an odd structure, as the bulk of the teaching occurs after the protagonists leave. This has the ring of a genuinely random encounter.

have analyzed these four individuals in detail, he would have greatly benefited. Still, even with this much he has already greatly benefited."

"Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! May 7.6
the Buddha analyze these four individuals in detail. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

"Well then, mendicants, listen and apply your mind well, I will 7.8
speak."

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 7.9

"And what individual mortifies themselves, committed to the prac- 8.1
tice of mortifying themselves? It's when an individual goes naked, ignoring conventions. They lick their hands, and don't come or wait when called. They don't consent to food brought to them, or food prepared for them, or an invitation for a meal.[11] They don't receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or who lives with a man; or where there's a hound waiting or flies buzzing. They accept no fish or meat or beer or wine, and drink no fermented gruel. They go to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. They feed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers a day. They eat once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. They live committed to the practice of eating food at set intervals.

They eat herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice 8.6
bran, scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. They survive on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit.

They wear robes of sunn hemp, mixed hemp, corpse-wrapping 8.7
cloth, rags, lodh tree bark, antelope hide (whole or in strips), kusa grass, bark, wood-chips, human hair, horse-tail hair, or owls' wings. They tear out their hair and beard, committed to this practice. They

11. For these practices, which were pursued by the Buddha before his awakening, see notes at MN 12:45.1.

constantly stand, turning down seats. They squat, committed to the endeavor of squatting. They lie on a mat of thorns, making a mat of thorns their bed. They're devoted to ritual bathing three times a day, including at dusk. And so they live committed to practicing these various ways of mortifying and tormenting the body. This is called an individual who mortifies themselves, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves.

9.1 And what individual mortifies others, committed to the practice of mortifying others? It's when an individual is a slaughterer of sheep, pigs, or poultry, a hunter or trapper, a fisher, a bandit, an executioner, a butcher, a jailer, or someone with some other kind of cruel livelihood. This is called an individual who mortifies others, being committed to the practice of mortifying others.

10.1 And what individual mortifies themselves and others, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others? It's when an individual is an anointed aristocratic king or a well-to-do brahmin.[12] He has a new ceremonial hall built to the east of the citadel. He shaves off his hair and beard, dresses in a rough antelope hide, and smears his body with ghee and oil. Scratching his back with antlers, he enters the hall with his chief queen and the brahmin high priest.[13]

12. The same vivid description of ritual is found at MN 94:12.2 and AN 4.198:6.2. | The passage features many details close to the sacrifice as described in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, especially chapter 3, to which I refer below. Of course the attitude is the exact opposite.

13. *Santhāgāra* is normally a hall to gather for business, a "town hall". Here, however, the term draws on the idiom *yajñasya saṁsthā*, ("completion/establishment of the sacrifice"), which is so common the term "sacrifice" may be left out as implied (eg. 13.2.4.2). Thus it is "a building for completing the sacrifice" (commentary: *yaññasāla*). | The hall for sacrifice, referred to simply as *śālā* (3.1.1), is oriented to the east, for "the east is the quarter of the gods" (3.1.1.6). | Shaving hair and beard before the sacrifice is described in detail (3.1.2). | The anointing is with *navanīta* ("fresh butter", 3.1.3.7ff.). | The sacrificer wears clean linen (3.1.2.13), but sits on antelope hide (3.2.1.1), scratching himself with the horn (3.2.1.31; cf. Rig Veda 7.18.7). | The wife's fertility cleanses and heals (3.5.3.13, 3.8.2). A king enters the "fire chamber" (*agnyāgāra*) with four wives (13.4.1.8).

There he lies on the bare ground strewn with grass.[14] The king feeds on the milk from one teat of a cow that has a calf of the same color. The chief queen feeds on the milk from the second teat. The brahmin high priest feeds on the milk from the third teat. The milk from the fourth teat is served to the sacred flame. The calf feeds on the leftovers.[15] He says: 'Slaughter this many bulls, bullocks, heifers, goats, rams, and horses for the sacrifice! Fell this many trees and reap this much grass for the sacrificial equipment!'[16] His bondservants, servants, and workers do their jobs under threat of punishment and danger, weeping with tearful faces. This is called an individual who mortifies themselves and others, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others.

And what individual doesn't mortify either themselves or others, 11.1
but lives without wishes, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine?

It's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully 12.1
awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and

14. He lies down to sleep in the evening (3.2.2.22), with his wives, but refraining from sex (13.4.1.9). | The spreading of grass is a regular feature of Vedic ritual (eg. 3.6.3.14).

15. After shaving, the sacrificer consumes milk (3.1.2.1) from all four teats or fewer (9.5.1.6), breaking his fast with milk cooked with rice or barley (3.2.2.10, 14). | Milk is drawn from specific teats (3.4.4.26, 9.5.1; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.8.1). | Milk is cooked from a white cow with white calf (5.3.2.1), or in another rite from a black cow with white calf (9.2.3.30).

16. The slaughter of animal victims is described in detail (3.7.3). | The sacrificer ought not use the worldly term "slaughter" (Pali *haññantu* = Sanskrit *jahi*), rather "make them agree", "persuade" (*saṁjñapaya*, 3.8.1.15) so they look forward to being sacrificed (3.7.3.4). | Trees are felled to make the stake (*yūpa*) to which the animals are tied, while grass (*darbha*) is strewn on the altar (3.6.4).

well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure.

13.1 A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or someone reborn in a good family. They gain faith in the Realized One and reflect: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

14.1 Once they've gone forth, they take up the training and livelihood of the mendicants. They give up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings. They give up stealing. They take only what's given, and expect only what's given. They keep themselves clean by not thieving. They give up unchastity. They are chaste, set apart, refraining from the vulgar act of sex. They give up lying. They speak the truth and stick to the truth. They're honest and dependable, and don't trick the world with their words. They give up backbiting. They don't repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, they reconcile those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people. They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial. They refrain from injuring plants and seeds. They eat in one part of the day, abstaining from eating at night and food at the wrong time. They refrain from seeing shows of dancing, singing, and music. They refrain from attir-

ing and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. They refrain from high and luxurious beds. They refrain from receiving gold and currency, raw grains, raw meat, women and girls, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants, cows, horses, and mares, and fields and land. They refrain from running errands and messages; buying and selling; falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence.

They're content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. They're like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves. 15.1

When they see a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know an idea with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. When they have this noble sense restraint, they experience an unsullied bliss inside themselves. 16.1

They act with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; 17.1

when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.

18.1 When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, this noble contentment, this noble sense restraint, and this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, they frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw.

19.1 After the meal, they return from almsround, sit down cross-legged, set their body straight, and bring mindfulness to the present. Giving up covetousness for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness. Giving up ill will, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will and malevolence. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

20.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.

21.1 As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.

22.1 And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.'

With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. 23.1

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives, that is, one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. They remember: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. 24.1

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right 25.1

view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

26.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'.

27.1 They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'. Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

27.4 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

28.1 This is called an individual who neither mortifies themselves or others, being committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others. They live without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine."

28.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 52

The Wealthy Citizen

Aṭṭhakanāgarasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[17] At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying near Vesālī in the little village of Beluva.[18] 1.1

Now at that time the householder Dasama, a wealthy citizen, had arrived at Pāṭaliputta on some business.[19] He went to the Chicken Monastery, approached a certain mendicant, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him,[20] "Sir, where is Venerable Ānanda now staying? For I want to see him." 1.3

"Householder, Venerable Ānanda is staying near Vesālī in the little village of Beluva." 2.4

17. This discourse is repeated at AN 11.16.

18. The Buddha spent his last rains retreat here (SN 47.9:1.5, DN 16:2.22.3). The fact that the Buddha is not mentioned and the setting at Pāṭaliputta suggest that he had already passed away.

19. *Dasama* means "tenth", explained by the commentary as meaning he was tenth in line in his family. | *Aṭṭhakanāgara* is usually taken to be the name of a city, but neither the city nor the possessive form *nāgara* appear elsewhere. Since all we know of him is that he was very rich; since the Pali is in the habit of naming people after their prominent quality; and since we find elsewhere a man named after his wealth (Dhaniya at Snp 1.2), perhaps we should take *aṭṭhaka* from *artha* in the sense of "wealthy", which agrees with the later Sanskrit sense of *nāgara* as "prominent citizen".

20. With the rise of Pāṭaliputta, the "Chicken Monastery" (*kukkuṭārāma*) became an important center after the Buddha's passing. Malalasekera (*Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*) suggests it was the same monastery later renowned as Aśokārāma. Ānanda stayed there often (SN 45.18–20, SN 47.21–3), which explains why Dasama expected to find him there.

3.1 Then the householder Dasama, having concluded his business there, went to the little village of Beluva in Vesālī to see Ānanda. He bowed, sat down to one side, and said to Ānanda:[21]

3.2 "Honorable Ānanda, is there one thing that has been rightly explained by the Blessed One—who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha—practicing which a diligent, keen, and resolute mendicant's mind is freed, their defilements are ended, and they arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke?"[22]

3.3 "There is, householder."

3.4 "And what is that one thing?"

4.1 "Householder, it's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. Then they reflect: 'Even this first absorption is produced by choices and intentions.'[23] They understand: 'But whatever is produced by choices and intentions is impermanent and liable to cessation.' Abiding in that they attain the ending of defilements.[24] If they don't attain the ending of defilements, with the ending of the five lower fetters they're reborn spontaneously, because of their passion and love for that meditation. They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world.[25] This is one thing that has been rightly explained by the Blessed One—who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully

21. Beluva was immediately north of Vesālī, so about a day's walk from Pāṭaliputta. But Dasama could doubtless afford a carriage.

22. A number of "one things" are taught throughout the suttas. It seems Dasama wanted a simple summary, but Ānanda wished to challenge him.

23. This illustrates the development of insight based on absorption. After emerging from the attainment, the meditator reflects on the nature of that experience, realizing that even the most blissful and peaceful of states is still "chosen and intended" (*abhisaṅkhataṁ abhisañcetayitaṁ*), i.e. constructed by volition.

24. Insight must persist to bear fruit.

25. "Passion and love for that meditation" (*teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā*); here *dhamma* means the state of meditation, i.e. the jhāna. This is the "higher fetter" of *rūparāga*, the desire for birth in the Brahmā realms of luminous form.

awakened Buddha—practicing which a diligent, keen, and resolute mendicant's mind is freed, their defilements are ended, and they arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected 5.1
are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption …

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of 8.1
love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. Then they reflect: 'Even this heart's release by love is produced by choices and intentions.' They understand: 'But whatever is produced by choices and intentions is impermanent and liable to cessation.' …

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of 9.1
compassion … rejoicing … equanimity …

Furthermore, householder, a mendicant, going totally beyond per- 12.1
ceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. Then they reflect: 'Even this attainment of the dimension of infinite space is produced by choices and intentions.' They understand: 'But whatever is produced by choices and intentions is impermanent and liable to cessation.' …

Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension 13.1
of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. …

Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension 14.1
of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. Then they reflect: 'Even this attainment of the dimension of nothingness is produced by choices and intentions.' They understand: 'But whatever is produced by choices and intentions is impermanent and liable to cessation.' Abiding in that they attain the ending of defilements. If they don't

attain the ending of defilements, with the ending of the five lower fetters they're reborn spontaneously because of their passion and love for that meditation. They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world. This too is one thing that has been rightly explained by the Blessed One—who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha—practicing which a diligent, keen, and resolute mendicant's mind is freed, their defilements are ended, and they arrive at the supreme sanctuary from the yoke."[26]

15.1 When he said this, the householder Dasama said to Venerable Ānanda, "Honorable Ānanda, suppose a person was looking for the entrance to a treasure trove. And all at once they'd come across eleven entrances! In the same way, I was searching for the door to freedom from death. And all at once I found eleven doors to freedom from death for cultivation.[27] Suppose a person had a house with eleven doors. If the house caught fire they'd be able to flee to safety through any one of those doors. In the same way, I'm able to flee to safety through any one of these eleven doors to freedom from death.[28] Sir, those of other religions seek a fee for the tutor. Why shouldn't I make an offering to Venerable Ānanda?"[29]

16.1 Then the householder Dasama, having assembled the Saṅgha from Vesālī and Pāṭaliputta, served and satisfied them with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods. He clothed each and every mendicant in a pair of garments, with a set of three robes

26. Ānanda omits the final formless attainment, neither perception nor non-perception, which is not regarded as a basis for insight due to its extreme subtlety. See too MN 64:15.5.

27. "For cultivation": variants include *bhāvanāya*, *savanāya*, and *sevanāya*. The center point of these is *sevanāya*, which is a synonym of *bhāvanāya* and near-homonym of *savanāya*. Also, the sense of *savanāya* should be "for hearing", but he has already heard them, so they are now "for cultivation".

28. Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.1 speaks of "a city with eleven doors of the unborn". Śaṅkara identifies these as the apertures of the body: eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, navel, genitals, anus, and the spiritual opening at the crown of the head.

29. "Fee for the teacher": *ācariyadhana*. | "Other religions" is in reference to the Brahmanical *dakṣiṇā*.

for Ānanda. And he had a dwelling worth five hundred built for Ānanda.[30]

30. This lavish demonstration of Dasama's wealth is an early indication of the largess enjoyed by the Saṅgha in Pāṭaliputta. Over a century later, under Ashoka, so many corrupt individuals entered the Saṅgha seeking profits that a Council had to be held to expel them.

MN 53

A Trainee

Sekhasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.

2.1 Now at that time a new town hall had recently been constructed for the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu. It had not yet been occupied by an ascetic or brahmin or any human at all.[31] Then the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

2.3 "Sir, a new town hall has recently been constructed for the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu. It has not yet been occupied by an ascetic or brahmin or any human at all. May the Buddha be the first to use it, and only then will the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu use it. That would be for the lasting welfare and happiness of the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu." The Buddha consented with silence.

3.2 Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, the Sakyans got up from their seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right. Then they went to the new town hall, where they spread carpets all over, prepared seats, set up a water jar, and placed an oil lamp. Then they went back to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and told him of their preparations, saying, "Please, sir, come at your convenience."

31. The completion of a town hall was celebrated by a talk for the Sakyans at SN 35.243:1.2 and the Mallas at DN 33:1.2.1. Such halls were community meeting places that played a central role in civic society and communal decision-making in democratic republics such as the Mallas and the Sakyans. The Buddha's participation is a sign of his support for their civic and democratic process.

Then the Buddha robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, went to 4.1
the new town hall together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Having
washed his feet, he entered the town hall and sat against the central
column facing east. The Saṅgha of mendicants also washed their
feet, entered the town hall, and sat against the west wall facing east,
with the Buddha right in front of them. The Sakyans of Kapilavatthu
also washed their feet, entered the town hall, and sat against the east
wall facing west, with the Buddha right in front of them.

The Buddha spent much of the night educating, encouraging, 5.1
firing up, and inspiring the Sakyans with a Dhamma talk. Then he
addressed Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, speak about the practicing
trainee to the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu as you feel inspired. My back
is sore, I'll stretch it."

"Yes, sir," Ānanda replied. And then the Buddha spread out his 5.5
outer robe folded in four and laid down in the lion's posture—on
the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and
aware, and focused on the time of getting up.

Then Ānanda addressed Mahānāma the Sakyan:[32] 6.1

"Mahānāma, a noble disciple is accomplished in ethics, guards 6.2
the sense doors, eats in moderation, and is dedicated to wakefulness.
They have seven good qualities, and they get the four absorptions—
blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—
when they want, without trouble or difficulty.[33]

And how is a noble disciple accomplished in ethics? It's when a 7.1
noble disciple is ethical, restrained in the monastic code, conducting
themselves well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing
danger in the slightest fault, they keep the rules they've undertaken.
That's how a noble disciple is ethical.

And how does a noble disciple guard the sense doors? When a no- 8.1
ble disciple sees a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the

32. By convention, speech is addressed to the most senior member of the group.
33. This is a version of the Gradual Training. It is generally oriented toward monastics, as the Gradual Training usually is, but the inclusion of the "seven good qualities" appears to be a nod toward adapting it for a lay audience.

features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know an idea with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. That's how a noble disciple guards the sense doors.

9.1 And how does a noble disciple eat in moderation? It's when a noble disciple reflects rationally on the food that they eat: 'Not for fun, indulgence, adornment, or decoration, but only to sustain this body, to avoid harm, and to support spiritual practice. In this way, I shall put an end to old discomfort and not give rise to new discomfort, and I will have the means to keep going, blamelessness, and a comfortable abiding.' That's how a noble disciple eats in moderation.

10.1 And how is a noble disciple dedicated to wakefulness? It's when a noble disciple practices walking and sitting meditation by day, purifying their mind from obstacles. In the first watch of the night, they continue to practice walking and sitting meditation. In the middle watch, they lie down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware, and focused on the time of getting up. In the last watch, they get up and continue to practice walking and sitting meditation, purifying their mind from obstacles. That's how a noble disciple is dedicated to wakefulness.

11.1 And how does a noble disciple have seven good qualities?[34] It's when a noble disciple has faith in the Realized One's awakening:

34. These are illustrated with a simile of a citadel at AN 7.67. They partly overlap with other factors of the Gradual Training; but then, these things are not meant to be exclusive.

'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'

They have a conscience. They're conscientious about bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and conscientious about having any bad, unskillful qualities. 12.1

They exercise prudence. They're prudent when it comes to bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and prudent when it comes to acquiring any bad, unskillful qualities. 13.1

They're very learned, remembering and keeping what they've learned. These teachings are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased, describing a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. They are very learned in such teachings, remembering them, rehearsing them, mentally scrutinizing them, and penetrating them theoretically. 14.1

They live with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and embracing skillful qualities. They're strong, staunchly vigorous, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. 15.1

They're mindful. They have utmost mindfulness and alertness, and can remember and recall what was said and done long ago.[35] 16.1

35. This agrees with the pre-Buddhist sense of *sati* (Sanskrit *smṛti*, *smara*), "to remember, keep in mind" (Rig Veda 7.104.07, 10.61.4, 10.106.9; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.8.1.2; Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.15.1; Chāndogya Upaniṣad 7.13–14, 8.12.3; Kena Upaniṣad 4.5). Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.3.2.3–4 speaks of one who performs the fire ritual while understanding, "In me those gods reside" and thereby wins and traverses all the worlds (since the gods and their worlds = heavens exist inside them; see SN 2.26:5.2 and note there). When such a one leaves the ritual ground they continue to "attend" (*upasthāna* = Pali *upaṭṭhāna*) the sacred fire through remembering it (*smara*), and thus staying near it in their mind. "Memory" is critical to the practice of "remembering" scripture (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.7). A skilled reciter enters an uninterrupted flow state where the text is vividly present. In this sense, mindfulness can be understood as the element of continuity that knits consciousness together in a coherent stream. Thus when practicing "mindfulness of breathing" one pays continuous attention to the breaths, not "forgetting" what one is doing.

17.1 They're wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. That's how a noble disciple has seven good qualities.

18.1 And how does a noble disciple get the four absorptions—blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—when they want, without trouble or difficulty? It's when a noble disciple, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption … second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. That's how a noble disciple gets the four absorptions—blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—when they want, without trouble or difficulty.

19.1 When a noble disciple is accomplished in ethics, guards the sense doors, eats in moderation, and is dedicated to wakefulness; and they have seven good qualities, and they get the four absorptions—blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—when they want, without trouble or difficulty, they are called a noble disciple who is a practicing trainee. Their eggs are unspoiled, and they are capable of breaking out of their shell, becoming awakened, and achieving the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. Suppose there was a chicken with eight or ten or twelve eggs. And she properly sat on them to keep them warm and incubated. Even if that chicken doesn't wish, 'If only my chicks could break out of the eggshell with their claws and beak and hatch safely!' Still they can break out and hatch safely.

19.5 In the same way, when a noble disciple is practicing all these things they are called a noble disciple who is a practicing trainee. Their eggs are unspoiled, and they are capable of breaking out of their shell, becoming awakened, and achieving the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.

20.1 Relying on this supreme purity of mindfulness and equanimity, that noble disciple recollects their many kinds of past lives.[36] That is:

36. The fourth jhāna.

one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. … And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. This is their first breaking out, like a chick from an eggshell.

Relying on this supreme purity of mindfulness and equanimity, 21.1
that noble disciple, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, sees sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. … They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. This is their second breaking out, like a chick from an eggshell.

Relying on this supreme purity of mindfulness and equanimity, 22.1
that noble disciple realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. This is their third breaking out, like a chick from an eggshell.

A noble disciple's conduct includes the following: being accom- 23.1
plished in ethics, guarding the sense doors, moderation in eating, being dedicated to wakefulness, having seven good qualities, and getting the four absorptions when they want, without trouble or difficulty.

A noble disciple's knowledge includes the following: recollecting 24.1
their past lives, clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, and realizing the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.

This noble disciple is said to be 'accomplished in knowledge', and 25.1
also 'accomplished in conduct', and also 'accomplished in knowledge and conduct'.

And the divinity Sanaṅkumāra also spoke this verse:[37] 25.2

37. Sanaṅkumāra ("Everyoung") became a Hindu deity closely associated with the worship of Krishna. He first appears in the seventh chapter of the Chāndogya

25.3 ‘The aristocrat is best among people
who take clan as the standard.
But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct
is best among gods and humans.’

25.7 And that verse was well sung by the Divinity Sanaṅkumāra, not poorly sung; well spoken, not poorly spoken, beneficial, not harmful, and it was approved by the Buddha.”

26.1 Then the Buddha got up and said to Venerable Ānanda, “Good, good, Ānanda! It’s good that you spoke to the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu about the practicing trainee.”

26.4 That is what Venerable Ānanda said, and the Teacher concurred. Satisfied, the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu approved what Venerable Ānanda said.

Upaniṣad. The occasion he spoke this verse is recorded at SN 6.11, and it is repeated several times in the suttas, for example at DN 3:1.28.2, where it has a better contextual justification.

MN 54

With Potaliya the Householder

Potaliyasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land 1.1
of the Aṅguttarāpans, near the town of theirs named Āpaṇa.[38]

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl 2.1
and robe, entered Āpaṇa for alms. He wandered for alms in Āpaṇa. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to a certain forest grove for the day's meditation. Having plunged deep into it, he sat at the root of a certain tree to meditate.

Potaliya the householder also approached that forest grove while 3.1
going for a walk. He was well dressed in sarong and cloak, with parasol and sandals. Having plunged deep into it, he went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.[39] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood to one side, and the Buddha said to him, "There are seats, householder. Please sit if you wish."

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38. Aṅga was the country to that controlled the Ganges to the east of both Magadha and Vesālī. The region of Aṅga north of both the Ganges and the Mahī was known as Aṅguttarāpa, "Aṅga North of the Water". The market town of Āpaṇa was evidently the chief settlement of the region.

39. A wanderer called Potaliya appears at AN 4.100. | "Sarong" (*nivāsana*) is lay attire at AN 3.39:1.4 and monastic at Kd 1:25.9.1, while "cloak" (*pāvuraṇa*) is lay attire at SN 7.14:1.2 and monastic at Bi NP 11 and Bi NP 12. These are evidently similar to the monastic *antaravāsaka* and *saṅghāṭi*. | Parasols and sandals were considered inappropriate luxuries for monastics (Bi Pc 84, Kd 15:23.2.19, Kd 5:12.1.5), and it was considered disrespectful to teach someone thus attired (Bu Sk 57, Bu Sk 62). There was, however, an exemption in all cases for health reasons, and monastics were allowed sandals outside of a village.

3.4 When he said this, Potaliya was angry and upset. Thinking, "The ascetic Gotama addresses me as 'householder'!" he stayed silent.

3.5 For a second time … and a third time the Buddha said to him, "There are seats, householder. Please sit if you wish."

3.8 When he said this, Potaliya was angry and upset. Thinking, "The ascetic Gotama addresses me as 'householder'!" he said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama, it is neither proper nor appropriate for you to address me as 'householder.'"

3.10 "Well, householder, you have the features, attributes, and signs of a householder."[40]

3.11 "Worthy Gotama, it's because I have turned down all work and cut off all business."

3.12 "Householder, in what way have you turned down all work and cut off all business?"

3.13 "Worthy Gotama, all the money, grain, gold, and silver I used to have has been handed over to my children as their inheritance. And in this matter I do not advise or reprimand them, but live with nothing more than food and clothes.[41] That's how I have turned down all work and cut off all business."

3.15 "The cutting off of business as you describe it is one thing, householder, but the cutting off of business in the Noble One's training is quite different."

3.16 "But what, sir, is cutting off of business in the Noble One's training? Sir, please teach me this."

3.18 "Well then, householder, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."[42]

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40. Monastics were criticized as being "just like householders" for wearing sandals (Kd 5:12.1.3) and sunshades (Kd 15:23.2.8, Bi Pc 8).

41. This explains the cutting off of "business" (*vohāra*) as not getting involved in the family money. | The word "reprimand" (*anupavādī*) is adapted from its worldly sense here to an ethical one below (MN 54:6.4).

42. The Buddha appears to be breaking his own rule against teaching someone with sandals and parasol. The Chinese parallel avoids this awkward situation by saying that Potaliya had set aside his parasol and sandals (MA 203 at T i 773a29).

"Yes, sir," said Potaliya. 3.19

The Buddha said this: 4.1

"Householder, these eight things lead to the cutting off of business 4.2
in the Noble One's training.[43] What eight? Killing living creatures should be given up, relying on not killing living creatures. Stealing should be given up, relying on not stealing. Lying should be given up, relying on speaking the truth. Backbiting should be given up, relying on not backbiting. Greed and lust should be given up, relying on not being greedy and lustful. Blaming and insulting should be given up, relying on not blaming and not insulting. Anger and distress should be given up, relying on not being angry and distressed. Arrogance should be given up, relying on not being arrogant.[44] These are the eight things—stated in brief without being analyzed in detail—that lead to the cutting off of business in the Noble One's training."

"Sir, please teach me these eight things in detail out of sympathy." 5.1

"Well then, householder, listen and apply your mind well, I will 5.2
speak."

"Yes, sir," said Potaliya. The Buddha said this: 5.3

"'Killing living creatures should be given up, relying on not killing 6.1
living creatures.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? It's when a noble disciple reflects:[45] 'I am practicing to give up and cut off the fetters that might cause me to kill living creatures. But if I were to kill living creatures, because of that I would reprimand myself; sensible people, after examination, would criticize me; and when my body breaks up, after death, I could expect to be reborn in a bad place. And killing living creatures is itself a fetter and a hindrance. The distressing and feverish defilements that might arise because of killing living creatures do not occur in someone who does not kill living creatures.' 'Killing living creatures should be given up, relying

43. While all these items are standard, this list of eight does not appear elsewhere. It must have been a personal teaching for Potaliya.

44. The Buddha leaves Potaliya's cardinal sin for last.

45. The practice of ethics arises from reasoned contemplation rather than from commandments or culture.

on not killing living creatures.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

7.1 'Stealing … lying … backbiting … greed and lust … blaming and insulting … anger and distress …

13.1 Arrogance should be given up, relying on not being arrogant.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? It's when a noble disciple reflects: 'I am practicing to give up and cut off the fetters that might cause me to be arrogant. But if I were to be arrogant, because of that I would reprimand myself; sensible people, after examination, would criticize me; and when my body breaks up, after death, I could expect to be reborn in a bad place. And arrogance is itself a fetter and a hindrance. The distressing and feverish defilements that might arise because of arrogance do not occur in someone who is not arrogant.' 'Arrogance should be given up by not being arrogant.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

14.1 These are the eight things—stated in brief and analyzed in detail—that lead to the cutting off of business in the Noble One's training. But just this much does not constitute the cutting off of business in each and every respect in the Noble One's training."

14.3 "But, sir, how is there the cutting off of business in each and every respect in the Noble One's training? Sir, please teach me this."

14.5 "Well then, householder, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

14.6 "Yes, sir," said Potaliya. The Buddha said this:

1. The Dangers of Sensual Pleasures

15.1 "Householder, suppose a dog weak with hunger was hanging around a butcher's shop.[46] A deft butcher or their apprentice would toss

46. This list of similes is also found at MN 22:3.8, AN 5.76:11.2, and Thig 16.1:41.1, as well as in various parallels to these texts. There, the list is expanded from seven to ten (with minor variations in parallels), and it is quoted as a familiar teaching without any need for explanation. Several of the similes require explanation to make sense; for example "fruit on a tree", by itself, hardly evokes suffering. Note too that the explanation below at MN 54:20.2 mentions the

them a skeleton scraped clean of flesh and smeared in blood. What do you think, householder? Gnawing on such a fleshless skeleton, would that dog still get rid of its hunger?"

"No, sir. Why not? Because that skeleton is scraped clean of 15.5
flesh and smeared in blood. That dog will eventually get weary and frustrated."

"In the same way, a noble disciple reflects: 'With the simile of a 15.9
skeleton the Buddha said that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks.' Having truly seen this with right understanding, they shun equanimity based on diversity and develop only the equanimity based on unity, where all kinds of grasping to the worldly pleasures of the flesh cease without remainder.

Suppose a vulture or a crow or a hawk was to grab a scrap of meat 16.1
and fly away.[47] Other vultures, crows, and hawks would keep chasing it, pecking and clawing.[48] What do you think, householder? If that vulture, crow, or hawk doesn't quickly let go of that scrap of meat, wouldn't that result in death or deadly suffering for them?"

"Yes, sir." … 16.5

"Suppose a person carrying a blazing grass torch was to walk 17.1
against the wind. What do you think, householder? If that person doesn't quickly let go of that blazing grass torch, wouldn't they burn their hands or arm or other major or minor limb, resulting in death or deadly suffering for them?"

"Yes, sir." … 17.4

"Suppose there was a pit of glowing coals deeper than a man's 18.1
height, full of glowing coals that neither flamed nor smoked. Then a

town of Āpaṇa where the discourse is set. These considerations suggest that the list of similes, together with their explanations, first appeared here.

47. In similar passages (SN 19.1:3.2, SN 55.21:2.4, Bu Pj 4:9.3.2) we find "crow" (*kāka*) rather than text's "heron" (*kaṅka*). The Chinese parallel at MA 203 does indeed have 烏 ("crow"). Given the behavior described here, I think it's likely the original was, in fact, crow.

48. The verbs here are uncertain and readings vary considerably. Compare Rig Veda 6.46.14 where horse-racers compete "like birds over raw flesh".

person would come along who wants to live and doesn't want to die, who wants to be happy and recoils from pain. Two strong men would grab them by the arms and drag them toward the pit of glowing coals. What do you think, householder? Wouldn't that person writhe and struggle to and fro?"

18.6 "Yes, sir. Why is that? For that person knows: 'If I fall in that pit of glowing coals, that'd result in my death or deadly pain.'" …

19.1 "Suppose a person was to see delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds in a dream. But when they woke they couldn't see them at all. …

20.1 Suppose a man had borrowed some goods—a gentleman's carriage and fine jeweled earrings—and preceded and surrounded by these he proceeded through the middle of Āpaṇa. When people saw him they'd say: 'This must be a wealthy man! For that's how the wealthy enjoy their wealth.' But when the owners saw him, they'd take back what was theirs. What do you think? Would that be enough for that man to get upset?"

20.7 "Yes, sir. Why is that? Because the owners took back what was theirs." …

21.1 "Suppose there was a dense forest grove not far from a town or village. And there was a tree laden with fruit, yet none of the fruit had fallen to the ground. And along came a person in need of fruit, wandering in search of fruit. Having plunged deep into that forest grove, they'd see that tree laden with fruit. They'd think: 'That tree is laden with fruit, yet none of the fruit has fallen to the ground. But I know how to climb a tree. Why don't I climb the tree, eat as much as I like, then fill my pouch?' And that's what they'd do. And along would come a second person in need of fruit, wandering in search of fruit, carrying a sharp axe. Having plunged deep into that forest grove, they'd see that tree laden with fruit. They'd think: 'That tree is laden with fruit, yet none of the fruit has fallen to the ground. But I don't know how to climb a tree. Why don't I chop this tree down at the root, eat as much as I like, then fill my pouch?' And so they'd chop the tree down at the root. What do you think, householder? If

the first person, who climbed the tree, doesn't quickly come down, when that tree fell wouldn't they break their hand or arm or other major or minor limb, resulting in death or deadly suffering for them?"

"Yes, sir." 21.19

"In the same way, a noble disciple reflects: 'With the simile of 21.20
the fruit tree the Buddha said that sensual pleasures give little gratification and much suffering and distress, and they are all the more full of drawbacks.' Having truly seen this with right understanding, they shun equanimity based on diversity and develop only the equanimity based on unity, where all kinds of grasping to the worldly pleasures of the flesh cease without remainder.[49]

Relying on this supreme purity of mindfulness and equanimity, 22.1
that noble disciple recollects their many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. … They recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

Relying on this supreme purity of mindfulness and equanimity, 23.1
that noble disciple, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, sees sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. … They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

Relying on this supreme purity of mindfulness and equanimity, 24.1
that noble disciple realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.

That's how there is the cutting off of business in each and every 25.1
respect in the Noble One's training.

49. "Equanimity based on diversity" (*upekkhā nānattā*) is indifference regarding the senses (MN 137:18.1). Here it also relates to Potaliya's refusal to be involved in family business. | "Equanimity based on unity" refers to the advanced meditations based on the fourth *jhāna* (MN 137:19.1).

25.2 What do you think, householder? Do you regard yourself as having cut off business in a way comparable to the cutting off of business in each and every respect in the Noble One's training?"

25.4 "Who am I compared to one who has cut off business in each and every respect in the Noble One's training? I am far from that. Sir, I used to think that the wanderers following other religions were thoroughbreds, and I fed them and treated them accordingly, but they were not actually thoroughbreds. I thought that the mendicants were not thoroughbreds, and I fed them and treated them accordingly, but they actually were thoroughbreds.[50] But now I shall understand that the wanderers following other religions are not actually thoroughbreds, and I will feed them and treat them accordingly. And I shall understand that the mendicants actually are thoroughbreds, and I will feed them and treat them accordingly. The Buddha has inspired me to have love, confidence, and respect for ascetics!

26.1 Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

50. Notice how *bhikkhū* ("mendicants") specifically indicates Buddhist monastics.

MN 55

With Jīvaka

Jīvakasutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rā- 1.1
jagaha in the Mango Grove of Jīvaka Komārabhacca.[51]

Then Jīvaka went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, 2.1
and said to him:

"Sir, I have heard this: 'They slaughter living creatures specially 3.1
for the ascetic Gotama. The ascetic Gotama knowingly eats meat prepared on his behalf: this is a deed he caused.'[52] I trust those who say this repeat what the Buddha has said, and do not misrepresent him with an untruth? Is their explanation in line with the teaching? Are there any legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism?"

"Jīvaka, those who say this do not repeat what I have said. They 4.1
misrepresent me with what is false and untrue.

In three cases I say that meat may not be eaten: it's seen, heard, or 5.1
suspected.[53] These are three cases in which meat may not be eaten.

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51. Jīvaka was the Buddha's doctor. His story is told in Kd 8, where we learn that he was abandoned on a trash heap by his mother Sālavatī, only to be discovered and raised by Prince Abhaya of Magadha, a Jain (MN 58). He was called "Survivior" (*jīvaka*) and "Raised by a Prince" (*komārabhacca*). In later Ayurveda, *kaumārabhṛtya* means "paediatrics", and a lost treatise on that subject is attributed to Jīvaka (Jīvakatantra).

52. This was an accusation made against the Buddha by Jains (AN 8.12:31.2, Kd 6:31.13.1). They objected only to eating meat "killed on purpose for him", and so by implication not all eating of meat. This is consistent with several Jain scriptural passages indicating that ascetics may, under certain strictures, eat meat (Ācaraṅgasūtra 2.1.10.5–6, Bhagavatīsūtra 557 (p. 1261a), Kalpasūtra (Sāmācārī 17), Dasaveyāliyasutta 5–1.73).

53. The relevant Vinaya rule makes the meaning clear: "When you know it was killed on purpose for you" (Kd 6:31.14.4). To allay suspicion of improper meat,

5.4 In three cases I say that meat may be eaten: it's not seen, heard, or suspected. These are three cases in which meat may be eaten.

6.1 Take the case of a mendicant living supported by a town or village. They meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. A householder or their child approaches and invites them for the next day's meal. The mendicant accepts if they want.

6.5 When the night has passed, they robe up in the morning, take their bowl and robe, and approach that householder's home, where they sit on the seat spread out. That householder or their child serves them with delicious almsfood. It never occurs to them, 'It's so good that this householder serves me with delicious almsfood! I hope they serve me with such delicious almsfood in the future!' They don't think that. They eat that almsfood untied, uninfatuated, unattached, seeing the drawback, and understanding the escape.

6.12 What do you think, Jīvaka? At that time is that mendicant intending to hurt themselves, hurt others, or hurt both?"

6.14 "No, sir."

6.15 "Aren't they eating blameless food at that time?"

7.1 "Yes, sir. Sir, I have heard that The Divinity abides in love. Now, I've seen the Buddha with my own eyes,[54] and it is the Buddha who truly abides in love."

7.6 "Any greed, hate, or delusion that might give rise to ill will has been given up by the Realized One, cut off at the root, made like

mendicants are also required to check the provenance of meat before eating (Kd 6:23.9.9).

54. Reading *taṁ … idaṁ* as the accusative of relation, and *me* as instrumental, for which compare *yena brahmā sakkhidiṭṭho* at DN 13:12.1. The point of the passage is that he has merely *heard* that Brahmā abides in love, but he *witnesses* that the Buddha does so.

a palm stump, obliterated, and is unable to arise in the future.[55] If that's what you were referring to, I grant it."

"That's exactly what I was referring to." 7.8

"Take the case, Jīvaka, of a mendicant living supported by a town or village. They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion … 8-10.1

They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing … 8-10.3

They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. A householder or their child approaches and invites them for the next day's meal. The mendicant accepts if they want. 8-10.4

When the night has passed, they robe up in the morning, take their bowl and robe, and approach that householder's home, where they sit on the seat spread out. That householder or their child serves them with delicious almsfood. It never occurs to them, 'It's so good that this householder serves me with delicious almsfood! I hope they serve me with such delicious almsfood in the future!' They don't think that. They eat that almsfood untied, uninfatuated, unattached, seeing the drawback, and understanding the escape. 8-10.8

What do you think, Jīvaka? At that time is that mendicant intending to hurt themselves, hurt others, or hurt both?" 8-10.15

"No, sir." 8-10.17

"Aren't they eating blameless food at that time?" 8-10.18

"Yes, sir. Sir, I have heard that The Divinity abides in equanimity. Now, I've seen the Buddha with my own eyes, and it is the Buddha who truly abides in equanimity." 11.1

"Any greed, hate, or delusion that might give rise to cruelty, discontent, or aversion has been given up by the Realized One, cut off 11.6

55. Greed, hate, and delusion are the fundamental underlying defilements that give rise to "ill will", the opposite of love.

at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and is unable to arise in the future.[56] If that's what you were referring to, I grant it."

11.8 "That's exactly what I was referring to."

12.1 "Jīvaka, anyone who slaughters a living creature specially for the Realized One or the Realized One's disciple brims with much wickedness for five reasons.

12.2 When they say: 'Go, fetch that living creature,' this is the first reason.

12.4 When that living creature experiences pain and sadness as it's led along by a collar, this is the second reason.

12.5 When they say: 'Go, slaughter that living creature,' this is the third reason.

12.7 When that living creature experiences pain and sadness as it's being slaughtered, this is the fourth reason.

12.8 When they serve the Realized One or the Realized One's disciple with unallowable food, this is the fifth reason.

12.9 Anyone who slaughters a living creature specially for the Realized One or the Realized One's disciple brims with much wickedness for five reasons."

13.1 When he had spoken, Jīvaka said to the Buddha: "It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! The mendicants indeed eat allowable food. The mendicants indeed eat blameless food. Excellent, sir! Excellent! … From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."[57]

56. Just as ill will is the opposite of love, "cruelty" (*vihesā*), "discontent" (*arati*), and "repulsion" (*paṭigha*) are the respective opposites of compassion, rejoicing, and equanimity (MN 62:18.2 ff).

57. This sutta marks the occasion of Jīvaka's conversion. It would seem that he had previously harbored doubts due to his Jain upbringing. Elsewhere he appears as a devotee of the Buddha. AN 1.256:1.1 records that he was the foremost disciple with "confidence in a person", establishing that he was a stream-enterer. The occasion of his stream-entry, however, is not recorded in Pali.

MN 56

With Upāli

Upālisutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Nāḷandā in Pāvārika's Mango Grove.[58] 1.1

At that time the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan was residing at Nāḷandā together with a large assembly of Jain ascetics.[59] Then the Jain ascetic Dīgha Tapassī wandered for alms in Nāḷandā. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to Pāvārika's Mango Grove. There he approached the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.[60] 2.1

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood to one side. The Buddha said to him, "There are seats, Tapassī. Please sit if you wish." 2.3

58. Pāvārika means "blanket-weaver". Places were often named for their primary economic activity. Probably there was a community of blanket weavers and the park was owned by their leading merchant.

59. Jain tradition holds that Mahāvīra passed at a Pāvā near Nāḷandā. Buddhist texts know only the Pāvā of the Mallians to the north. Evidently there has been some confusion, and perhaps "Pāvārika's mango grove", the site of discussions with Jains here and at SN 42.8 and SN 42.9, is the Pāvā known to the Jains. Note, however, that the earliest Jain source for Mahāvīra's passing, the Kalpasutra, does not say where Pāvā is. But it does say the events were commemorated by the rulers of Kāsī and Kosala, and the Mallians and the Licchavīs. The absence of Magadha and the presence of Malla sit better with the location of Pāvā in Malla rather than Magadha.

60. In Sanskrit, Dīrghatapasvin was a common name, or rather epithet, for ascetics, meaning "long fervor" in honor of lengthy dedication to practices such as starvation. It is presumably the Dīgha Tapassī of this sutta who is inscribed in a Buddhist stupa at Bharhut teaching a group of students. At least one of his students appears to be holding a small stick, which may be a pictorial representation of the subject of this discourse.

3.1 When he said this, Dīgha Tapassī took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Tapassī, how many kinds of deed does the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan describe for performing bad deeds?"

3.4 "Reverend Gotama, the Jain Ñātika doesn't usually speak in terms of 'deeds'. He usually speaks in terms of 'rods'."[61]

3.6 "Then how many kinds of rod does the Jain Ñātika describe for performing bad deeds?"

3.7 "The Jain Ñātika describes three kinds of rod for performing bad deeds: the physical rod, the verbal rod, and the mental rod."

3.9 "But are these kinds of rod all distinct from each other?"

3.10 "Yes, each is quite distinct."

3.11 "Of the three rods thus analyzed and differentiated, which rod does the Jain Ñātika describe as being the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds: the physical rod, the verbal rod, or the mental rod?"

3.12 "The Jain Ñātika describes the physical rod as being the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much the verbal rod or the mental rod."[62]

3.13 "Do you say the physical rod, Tapassī?"

3.14 "I say the physical rod, Reverend Gotama."

3.15 "Do you say the physical rod, Tapassī?"

3.16 "I say the physical rod, Reverend Gotama."

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61. The term "rod" implies violence and punishment unlike the more neutral "deed". This usage is found in such Jain texts as Uttarādhyayanasūtra 8.10. It was evidently common enough that it could be referred to obliquely as the "three rods" (20.60; see too Isibhāsiyāiṁ 25.2, 35.0.6). It is also found in Mahābhārata 12.228.034c.

62. In Jainism, all three "rods" create *karma*, which in Jainism is a kind of subtle matter (*pudgala*) that adheres to and obscures the soul (Tattvārthasūtra 6.1–2). Thus all *karma* is material. Nonetheless, according to Dr. Hiralal Jain, *Jainism in Buddhist Literature*, the Jain position is not that physical actions are more important, since all three kinds of action must be intentional. Rather, it is that intentional actions performed through the body have a greater weight than those performed by speech or by thought alone. *Karma* in the Jain system is the result of such intentional action, which clings to the soul as a form of matter.

"Do you say the physical rod, Tapassī?" 3.17

"I say the physical rod, Reverend Gotama." 3.18

Thus the Buddha made Dīgha Tapassī stand by this point up to the third time. 3.19

When this was said, Dīgha Tapassī said to the Buddha, "But Reverend Gotama, how many kinds of rod do you describe for performing bad deeds?" 4.1

"Tapassī, the Realized One doesn't usually speak in terms of 'rods'. He usually speaks in terms of 'deeds'."[63] 4.3

"Then how many kinds of deed do you describe for performing bad deeds?" 4.5

"I describe three kinds of deed for performing bad deeds: physical deeds, verbal deeds, and mental deeds." 4.6

"But are these kinds of deed all distinct from each other?" 4.8

"Yes, each is quite distinct." 4.9

"Of the three deeds thus analyzed and differentiated, which deed do you describe as being the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds: physical deeds, verbal deeds, or mental deeds?" 4.10

"I describe mental deeds as being the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much physical deeds or verbal deeds." 4.11

"Do you say mental deeds, Reverend Gotama?" 4.12

"I say mental deeds, Tapassī." 4.13

"Do you say mental deeds, Reverend Gotama?" 4.14

"I say mental deeds, Tapassī." 4.15

"Do you say mental deeds, Reverend Gotama?" 4.16

"I say mental deeds, Tapassī." 4.17

Thus the Jain ascetic Dīgha Tapassī made the Buddha stand by this point up to the third time, after which he rose from his seat and went to see the Jain Ñātika. 4.18

63. The terms *daṇḍa* ("rod" or "punishment") and *kamma* ("deed") are synonymous in Jainism. The three *daṇḍas* of body, speech, and mind are also found in Manusmṛti 12.8.

5.1 Now at that time the Jain Ñātika was sitting together with a large assembly of Bālaki laypeople headed by Upāli.[64] The Jain Ñātika saw Dīgha Tapassī coming off in the distance and said to him, "So, Tapassī, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?"

5.5 "Just now, sir, I've come from the presence of the ascetic Gotama."

5.6 "But did you have some discussion with him?"

5.7 "I did."

5.8 "And what kind of discussion did you have with him?" Then Dīgha Tapassī informed the Jain Ñātika of all they had discussed. When he had spoken, the Jain Ñātika said to him, "Good, good, Tapassī! The Jain ascetic Dīgha Tapassī has answered the ascetic Gotama like a learned disciple who rightly understands their teacher's instructions. For how significant is the measly mental rod when compared with the solid physical rod? Rather, the physical rod is the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much the verbal rod or the mental rod."

7.1 When he said this, the householder Upāli said to him, "Good, sir! Well done, Dīgha Tapassī! The Honorable Tapassī has answered the ascetic Gotama like a learned disciple who rightly understands their teacher's instructions. For how significant is the measly mental rod when compared with the solid physical rod? Rather, the physical rod is the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much the verbal rod or the mental rod.

7.6 I'd better go and refute the ascetic Gotama's doctrine regarding this point. If he stands by the position that he stated to Dīgha Tapassī, I'll take him on in debate and drag him to and fro and round about, like a strong man would grab a fleecy sheep and drag it to and fro and round about! Taking him on in debate, I'll drag him to and fro and round about, like a strong brewer's worker would toss a large

64. Bālaki is obscure. The commentary says it could mean either "foolish" (which seems harsh) or "from the village of the child salt miners" (which is obscure and distant, MN 128:7.1). A Dṛpta Bālāki of the Gārgya clan features in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.1, so perhaps it was a proper name (from *balāka*, "crane").

brewer's sieve into a deep lake, grab it by the corners, and drag it to and fro and round about! Taking him on in debate, I'll shake him down and about and give him a beating, like a strong brewer's mixer would grab a strainer by the corners and shake it down and about, and give it a beating! I'll play a game of hemp-washing with the ascetic Gotama, like a sixty-year-old elephant would plunge into a deep lotus pond and play a game of hemp-washing! Sir, I'd better go and refute the ascetic Gotama's doctrine on this point."

"Go, householder, refute the ascetic Gotama's doctrine on this point. For either I should do so, or Dīgha Tapassī, or you."[65] 7.12

When he said this, Dīgha Tapassī said to the Jain Ñātika, "Sir, I don't believe it's a good idea for the householder Upāli to rebut the ascetic Gotama's doctrine. For the ascetic Gotama is deceitful. He knows a conversion trick, and uses it to convert the disciples of other religions."[66] 8.1

"It is impossible, Tapassī, it cannot happen that Upāli could become Gotama's disciple.[67] But it is possible that Gotama could become Upāli's disciple. Go, householder, refute the ascetic Gotama's doctrine on this point. For either I should do so, or Dīgha Tapassī, or you." 8.4

For a second time … and a third time, Dīgha Tapassī said to the Jain Ñātika, "Sir, I don't believe it's a good idea for the householder Upāli to rebut the ascetic Gotama's doctrine. For the ascetic Gotama is deceitful. He knows a conversion trick, and uses it to convert the disciples of other religions." 9.1

"It is impossible, Tapassī, it cannot happen that Upāli could become Gotama's disciple. But it is possible that Gotama could become Upāli's disciple. Go, householder, refute the ascetic Gotama's doc- 9.5

65. It is rather a shame that neither in Buddhist nor Jain tradition is there a record of the two actually meeting.

66. It's tempting to translate *āvaṭṭaniṁ māyaṁ* as "conversion magic", but *māyā* doesn't seem to have the sense of literal magic in the Suttas. Rather, the Buddha is accused of some kind of trick or con.

67. This is a setup intended to satirize Mahāvīra's claims to omniscience.

trine on this point. For either I should do so, or Dīgha Tapassī, or you."

9.9 "Yes, sir," replied the householder Upāli to the Jain Ñātika. He rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled him, keeping him on his right. Then he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, did the Jain ascetic Dīgha Tapassī come here?"

9.11 "He did, householder."

9.12 "But did you have some discussion with him?"

9.13 "I did."

9.14 "And what kind of discussion did you have with him?"[68]

9.15 Then the Buddha informed Upāli of all they had discussed.

10.1 When he said this, the householder Upāli said to him, "Good, sir, well done by Tapassī! The Jain ascetic Dīgha Tapassī has answered the ascetic Gotama like a learned disciple who rightly understands their teacher's instructions. For how impressive is the measly mental rod when compared with the solid physical rod? Rather, the physical rod is the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much the verbal rod or the mental rod."

10.6 "Householder, so long as you debate on the basis of truth, we can have some discussion about this."

10.7 "I will debate on the basis of truth, sir. Let us have some discussion about this."

11.1 "What do you think, householder? Take a Jain ascetic who is sick, suffering, gravely ill. They turn down cold water and use only hot water.[69] Not getting cold water, they might die. Now, where does the Jain Ñātika say they would be reborn?"

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68. Upāli makes sure to hear the Buddha's side before proceeding.

69. Jain ascetics could not use cold water on account of the living creatures therein. Ācāraṅgasūtra 2.2.1.8 says a *nigaṇṭha* must not stay at a lay person's house because they may fall ill and be treated with, among other things, cold water (see also 2.6.2.2 and 2.1.7.7). Uttarādhyayanasūtra 1.1.3.7 dismisses the Buddhist claim that mere filtering is sufficient to render water allowable (see also 2.4).

"Sir, there are gods called 'mind-bound'. They would be reborn there. Why is that? Because they died with mental attachment."[70] 11.5

"Think about it, householder! You should think before answering. What you said before and what you said after don't match up. But you said that you would debate on the basis of truth." 11.8

"Even though the Buddha says this, still the physical rod is the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much the verbal rod or the mental rod." 11.13

"What do you think, householder? Take a Jain ascetic who is restrained in the fourfold constraint, is restrained in all that is to be restrained, is bridled in all that is to be restrained, has shaken off evil in all that is to be restrained, and is curbed in all that is to be restrained.[71] When going out and coming back they injure many little creatures.[72] Now, what result does the Jain Ñātika say they would incur?" 12.1

"Sir, the Jain Ñātika says that unintentional acts are not very blameworthy." 12.5

"But if they are intentional?" 12.6

"Then they are very blameworthy." 12.7

"But where does the Jain Ñātika say that intention is classified?" 12.8

"In the mental rod, sir." 12.9

70. It is not clear from the text why they must have attachment.

71. MS has *nigaṇṭho nāṭaputto*, but I follow PTS *nigaṇṭho*, in line with the pattern in this sutta and with the parallel at DN 2:29.4. | At Isibhāsiyāiṁ 29.19, Vardhamāna (Mahāvīra) teaches that a sage is *savva-vārīhiṁ vārie*, "restrained in all restraints", which clearly parallels our current passage. In that passage, "restraint" refers to stopping the influx of defilements through the five senses, neither delighting in the pleasant nor loathing the unpleasant. | Read *vāri* as future passive participle (cf. Sanskrit *vārya*). | *Dhuta* in the sense "shaken off (evil by means of ascetic practices)" is a characteristic Jain term. | For *sabbavāriphuṭo* compare *ophuṭo* at MN 99:15.5. In both cases *phuṭ* appears in a string of terms from the root *var*, and is possibly a corrupted form, or at least has the same meaning.

72. Jain ascetics use a soft broom to sweep the path before them to avoid this.

12.10 "Think about it, householder! You should think before answering. What you said before and what you said after don't match up. But you said that you would debate on the basis of truth."

12.15 "Even though the Buddha says this, still the physical rod is the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much the verbal rod or the mental rod."

13.1 "What do you think, householder? Is this Nāḷandā successful and prosperous, populous and full of people?"

13.3 "Indeed it is, sir."

13.4 "What do you think, householder? Suppose a man were to come along with a drawn sword and say: 'In one hour I will reduce all the living creatures within the bounds of Nāḷandā to one heap and mass of flesh!' What do you think, householder? Could he do that?"

13.10 "Sir, even ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty men couldn't do that. How impressive is one measly man?"

13.12 "What do you think, householder? Suppose an ascetic or brahmin with psychic power, who has achieved mastery of the mind, were to come along and say: 'I will reduce Nāḷandā to ashes with a single malevolent act of will!' What do you think, householder? Could he do that?"

13.18 "Sir, an ascetic or brahmin with psychic power, who has achieved mastery of the mind, could reduce ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty Nāḷandās to ashes with a single malevolent act of will. How significant is one measly Nāḷandā?"

13.20 "Think about it, householder! You should think before answering. What you said before and what you said after don't match up. But you said that you would debate on the basis of truth."

13.25 "Even though the Buddha says this, still the physical rod is the most blameworthy for performing bad deeds, not so much the verbal rod or the mental rod."

"What do you think, householder? Have you heard how the wildernesses of Daṇḍaka, Kaliṅga, Mejjha, and Mātaṅga came to be that way?"[73] 13.26

"I have, sir." 13.28

"What have you heard?" 14.1

"I heard that it was because of a malevolent act of will by seers that the wildernesses of Daṇḍaka, Kaliṅga, Mejjha, and Mātaṅga came to be that way." 14.2

"Think about it, householder! You should think before answering. What you said before and what you said after don't match up. But you said that you would debate on the basis of truth." 14.3

"Sir, I was already delighted and satisfied by the Buddha's very first simile.[74] Nevertheless, I wanted to hear the Buddha's various solutions to the problem, so I thought I'd oppose you in this way. 15.1

Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life." 15.3

73. This passage is referenced at Mil 5.1.6:16.3. | Daṇḍaka was a vast wilderness covering much of the Deccan; it features heavily in the Rāmāyaṇa. Vettam Mani's *Puranic Encyclopedia* informs us that Daṇḍa was a son of Ikṣvāku, founder of the solar dynasty, who gave Daṇḍa the country between the mountains Himālaya and Vindhya. But Daṇḍa raped Arā, the daughter of the hermit Śukra. Śukra destroyed the country of Daṇḍa in a rain of fire. See too Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa 3.5. Buddhist accounts may be found in the Sarabhaṅga Jātaka at Ja 522 and Mahāvastu 99. This sage is possibly noted by name at MN 116:6.13. | Kaliṅga was a coastal realm in modern Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Its downfall is related in Ja 522, although that was a kammic result of vile sin against ascetics rather than by psychic power. | Mejjha's destruction is told in Ja 497. There, Mātaṅga features as a wise sage, and it is not clear to me how this relates to the wilderness of that name. In the suttas, the person Mātaṅga was regarded as an enlightened sage of the past (MN 116:6.17, Snp 1.7:26.1).

74. As at DN 23:30.1.

16.1 "Householder, you should act after careful consideration. It's good for well-known people such as yourself to act after careful consideration."[75]

16.2 "Now I'm even more delighted and satisfied with the Buddha, since he tells me to act after careful consideration. For if the followers of other religions were to gain me as a disciple, they'd carry a banner all over Nāḷandā, saying: 'The householder Upāli has become our disciple!' And yet the Buddha says: 'Householder, you should act after careful consideration. It's good for well-known people such as yourself to act after careful consideration.'

16.7 For a second time, I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

17.1 "For a long time now, householder, your family has been a well-spring of support for the Jain ascetics. You should consider giving to them when they come."

17.2 "Now I'm even more delighted and satisfied with the Buddha, since he tells me to consider giving to the Jain ascetics when they come. I have heard, sir, that the ascetic Gotama says this: 'Gifts should only be given to me, not to others.[76] Gifts should only be given to my disciples, not to the disciples of others. Only what is given to me is very fruitful, not what is given to others. Only what is given to my disciples is very fruitful, not what is given to the disciples of others.' Yet the Buddha encourages me to give to the Jain ascetics. Well, sir, we'll know the proper time for that.

17.10 For a third time, I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

18.1 Then the Buddha taught the householder Upāli step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He revealed the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of

75. As at AN 8.12:26.1.

76. The same calumny is reported at AN 8.12:27.6 and AN 3.57:1.4.

renunciation. And when he knew that Upāli's mind was ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, elated, and confident he revealed the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in Upāli: "Everything that is liable to arise is liable to cease." Then Upāli saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. He went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instructions.

He said to the Buddha, "Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do." 18.9

"Please, householder, go at your convenience." 18.10

And then the householder Upāli approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right. Then he went back to his own home, where he addressed the gatekeeper, "My good gatekeeper, from this day forth close the gate to Jain monks and nuns, and open it for the Buddha's monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. If any Jain ascetics come, say this to them: 'Wait, sir, do not enter.[77] From now on the householder Upāli has become a disciple of the ascetic Gotama. His gate is closed to Jain monks and nuns, and opened for the Buddha's monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. If you require almsfood, wait here, they will bring it to you.'" 19.1

"Yes, sir," replied the gatekeeper. 19.8

Dīgha Tapassī heard that Upāli had become a disciple of the ascetic Gotama. He went to the Jain Ñātika and said to him, "Sir, they say that the householder Upāli has become a disciple of the ascetic Gotama." 20.1

"It is impossible, Tapassī, it cannot happen that Upāli could become Gotama's disciple. But it is possible that Gotama could become Upāli's disciple." 20.5

77. This is even harsher than it appears, for one of the Jains' rules is not to wait when invited for food (*natiṭṭhabhaddantiko*, eg. MN 12:45.1).

20.7 For a second time … and a third time, Dīgha Tapassī said to the Jain Ñātika, "Sir, they say that the householder Upāli has become a disciple of the ascetic Gotama."

20.10 "It is impossible, Tapassī, it cannot happen that Upāli could become Gotama's disciple. But it is possible that Gotama could become Upāli's disciple."

20.12 "Well, sir, I'd better go and find out whether or not Upāli has become Gotama's disciple."

20.13 "Go, Tapassī, and find out whether or not Upāli has become Gotama's disciple."

21.1 Then Dīgha Tapassī went to Upāli's home. The gatekeeper saw him coming off in the distance and said to him, "Wait, sir, do not enter. From now on the householder Upāli has become a disciple of the ascetic Gotama. His gate is closed to Jain monks and nuns, and opened for the Buddha's monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. If you require almsfood, wait here, they will bring it to you."

21.8 Saying, "No, worthy man, I do not require almsfood," he turned back and went to the Jain Ñātika and said to him, "Sir, it's really true that Upāli has become Gotama's disciple. Sir, I couldn't get you to accept that it wasn't a good idea for the householder Upāli to rebut the ascetic Gotama's doctrine. For the ascetic Gotama is deceitful. He knows a conversion trick, and uses it to convert the disciples of other religions. The householder Upāli has been converted by the ascetic Gotama's conversion trick!"

21.13 "It is impossible, Tapassī, it cannot happen that Upāli could become Gotama's disciple. But it is possible that Gotama could become Upāli's disciple."

21.15 For a second time … and a third time, Dīgha Tapassī told the Jain Ñātika that it was really true.

21.20 "It is impossible …

21.22 Well, Tapassī, I'd better go and find out for myself whether or not Upāli has become Gotama's disciple."

22.1 Then the Jain Ñātika went to Upāli's home together with a large following of Jain ascetics. The gatekeeper saw him coming off in the

distance and said to him: "Wait, sir, do not enter. From now on the householder Upāli has become a disciple of the ascetic Gotama. His gate is closed to Jain monks and nuns, and opened for the Buddha's monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. If you require almsfood, wait here, they will bring it to you."

"Well then, my good gatekeeper, go to Upāli and say: 'Sir, the Jain 22.8
Ñātika is waiting outside the gates together with a large following of Jain ascetics. He wishes to see you.'"

"Yes, sir," replied the gatekeeper. He went to Upāli and relayed 22.11
what was said. Upāli said to him, "Well, then, my good gatekeeper, prepare seats in the hall of the middle gate."

"Yes, sir," replied the gatekeeper. He did as he was asked, then 22.15
returned to Upāli and said, "Sir, seats have been prepared in the hall of the middle gate. Please go at your convenience."

Then Upāli went to the hall of the middle gate, where he sat on 23.1
the highest and finest seat. He addressed the gatekeeper, "Well then, my good gatekeeper, go to the Jain Ñātika and say to him: 'Sir, Upāli says you may enter if you wish.'"

"Yes, sir," replied the gatekeeper. He went to the Jain Ñātika and 23.5
relayed what was said.

Then the Jain Ñātika went to the hall of the middle gate together 23.8
with a large following of Jain ascetics. Previously, when Upāli saw the Jain Ñātika coming, he would go out to greet him and, having wiped off the highest and finest seat with his upper robe, he would embrace him and sit him down.[78] But today, having seated himself on the highest and finest seat, he said to the Jain Ñātika, "There are seats, sir. Please sit if you wish."

When he said this, the Jain Ñātika said to him: "You're mad, 25.1
householder! You're a moron! You said: 'I'll go and refute the ascetic Gotama's doctrine.' But you come back caught in the vast net of his doctrine. Suppose a man went to deliver a pair of testicles, but came

78. *Pariggahetvā* ("embrace") is used in only one other passage, where it refers to a nurse cradling a baby's head (AN 5.7:1.9, MN 58:7.6).

back castrated. Or they went to deliver eyes, but came back blinded. In the same way, you said: 'I'll go and refute the ascetic Gotama's doctrine.' But you come back caught in the vast net of his doctrine. You've been converted by the ascetic Gotama's conversion trick!"

26.1 "Sir, this conversion trick is excellent. This conversion trick is lovely! If my loved ones—relatives and kin—were to be converted by this, it would be for their lasting welfare and happiness. If all the aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials were to be converted by this, it would be for their lasting welfare and happiness. If the whole world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—were to be converted by this, it would be for their lasting welfare and happiness. Well then, sir, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said.

27.1 Once upon a time, there was an old brahmin, elderly and senior. His wife was a young brahmin lady who was pregnant and about to give birth.[79] Then she said to the brahmin, 'Go, brahmin, buy a baby monkey from the market and bring it back so it can be a playmate for my child.'[80]

27.4 When she said this, the brahmin said to her, 'Wait, my dear, until you give birth. If your child is a boy, I'll buy you a male monkey, but if it's a girl, I'll buy a female monkey.'

27.8 For a second time … For a third time she said to the brahmin, 'Go, brahmin, buy a baby monkey from the market and bring it back so it can be a playmate for my child.'

27.11 Then that brahmin, because of his love for the brahmin lady, bought a male baby monkey at the market, brought it to her, and said,

79. The age at which girls were considered ready for marriage was sixteen.

80. Though the word is not used, this is the *dohaḷa*, the desire of a (usually pregnant) woman that is as unstoppable as it is irrational. In numerous Jātaka stories as well as across Indian storytelling generally, it serves to send a hero on his journey. For a developed *dohaḷa* story in the canon, see the legend of Dīghāvu (Kd 10:2.3.1).

'I've bought this male baby monkey for you so it can be a playmate for your child.'

When he said this, she said to him, 'Go, brahmin, take this monkey to Rattapāṇi the dyer and say, "Worthy Rattapāṇi, I wish to have this monkey dyed the color of yellow greasepaint, pounded and re-pounded, and pressed on both sides."' 27.13

Then that brahmin, because of his love for the brahmin lady, took the monkey to Rattapāṇi the dyer and said, 'Worthy Rattapāṇi, I wish to have this monkey dyed the color of yellow greasepaint, pounded and re-pounded, and pressed on both sides.' 27.16

When he said this, Rattapāṇi said to him, 'Sir, this monkey can endure a dying, but not a pounding or a pressing.' 27.18

In the same way, the doctrine of the foolish Jains looks fine initially—for fools, not for the astute—but can't endure being scrutinized or pressed. 27.20

Then some time later that brahmin took a new pair of garments to Rattapāṇi the dyer and said, 'Worthy Rattapāṇi, I wish to have this new pair of garments dyed the color of yellow greasepaint, pounded and re-pounded, and pressed on both sides.' 27.21

When he said this, Rattapāṇi said to him, 'Sir, this pair of garments can endure a dying, a pounding, and a pressing.' 27.23

In the same way, the doctrine of the Buddha looks fine initially—for the astute, not for fools—and it can endure being scrutinized and pressed." 27.25

"Householder, the king and his retinue know you as a disciple of the Jain Ñātika. Whose disciple should we remember you as?" 28.1

When he had spoken, the householder Upāli rose from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms in the direction of the Buddha, and said to the Jain Ñātika, "Well then, sir, hear whose disciple I am: 29.1

> The attentive one, free of delusion, 29.3

with hard-heartedness dissolved, victor in battle;[81]
he's untroubled and very even-minded,
with the virtue of an elder and the wisdom of a saint,
immaculate in the midst of it all:[82]
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

29.9 He has no indecision, he's content,
joyful, he has spat out the world's bait;
he has completed the ascetic's task as a man,
a man who bears his final body;
he's beyond compare, he's stainless:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

29.15 He's free of doubt, he's skillful,
he's a trainer, an excellent charioteer;
supreme, with brilliant qualities,
confident, his light shines forth;
he has cut off conceit, he's a hero:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

29.21 The boss bull, immeasurable,
profound, sagacious;
he is the maker of sanctuary, knowledgeable,
firm in principle and restrained;
he has slipped his chains and is liberated:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

29.27 He's a giant, living remotely,
he's ended the fetters and is liberated;
he's skilled in debate and cleansed,

81. Read *khīla* as *khila*, a reference to the five kinds of hard-heartedness. For similar idioms see Snp 4.16:19.2 and SN 8.8:8.2 = Thag 21.1:34.2.
82. "In the midst of it all" is *vessantara*, as in the famous Jātaka of that name (Ja 547). MA 133 here has 安隱, where 隱 represents *antara*, and 安 may be *sama*. *Vessa* in the sense of "all" is rare in Pali.

with banner lowered, desireless;[83]
he's tamed, and doesn't proliferate:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

He is the seventh seer, free of deceit,[84] 29.33
with three knowledges, he has attained to divinity,
he has bathed, he knows philology,[85]
he's tranquil, he understands what is known;
he is Sakka the Able, Purindada the Firstgiver:[86]
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

The Noble One, evolved, 29.39
he has attained the goal and explains it;
he is mindful, discerning,
neither leaning forward nor pulling back,[87]
he's unstirred, attained to mastery:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

Transcendent, he practices absorption,[88] 29.45
no inner thoughts arising, he is pure,[89]

83. "Banner lowered" is explained at MN 22:35.1.
84. The idea of the seven sages, long proverbial in Vedic culture, was adapted for Gotama in DN 14, where he is the seventh recorded Buddha. Readings of this phrase in various texts and commentaries also allow the sense, "best of seers".
85. The terms here are all Brahmanical, so we should take *padaka* in the usual sense of "philology" as in eg. MN 91:2.1.
86. *Sakka* (*śakra*) was originally an epithet of Indra, the "able one". | *Purandara* ("Fortbreaker") is another epithet (eg. Rig Veda 1.102.7). The Buddha reforms it to *Purindada* ("Firstgiver") at SN 11.12:2.1. But Indra's generosity is long renowned, eg. Rig Veda 1.10.6c: "He is the able one, and he will be able for us—Indra who distributes the goods" (*sa śakra uta naḥ śakad indro vasu dayamānaḥ*).
87. These terms refer to *samādhi* at SN 1.38:8.2 and AN 9.37:8.2.
88. At Thig 14.1:14.1 *samuggata* refers to a lily rising above the waters; at SN 10.7:10.2 to rising above suffering.
89. See Ud 4.1:23.2, where *anu(g)gata* refers to thoughts that "arise" in the mind.

independent and fearless;[90]
secluded, he has reached the peak,
crossed over, he helps others across:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

29.51 He's peaceful, his wisdom is vast,
with great wisdom, he's free of greed;
he is the Realized One, the Holy One,
unrivaled, unequaled,
self-assured, and subtle:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple.

29.57 He has cut off craving and is awakened,
free of fuming, unsullied;
a mighty spirit worthy of offerings,[91]
best of men, inestimable,
grand, he has reached the peak of glory:
he is the Buddha, and I am his disciple."

30.1 "But when did you compose these praises of the ascetic Gotama's beautiful qualities, householder?"[92]

30.2 "Sir, suppose there was a large heap of many different flowers. A deft garland-maker or their apprentice could tie them into a colorful garland. In the same way, the Buddha has many beautiful qualities to praise, many hundreds of such qualities.[93] Who, sir, would not praise the praiseworthy?"

90. Readings are unclear; I follow Thai *appabhītassa*.
91. The Chinese here evidently reads *akkha* ("eye"), but in the context of offerings I think *yakkha* ("spirit") fits better. Conversion legends of *yakkhas* tell how the cruel offerings of sacrifice are replaced with the harmless offerings to the Buddha. Perhaps it was later adjusted to *akkha* as the *yakkha* developed a poor reputation in later Buddhism.
92. "When did you compose" is also at DN 21:1.6.4.
93. Upāli is playing on the dual senses of *vaṇṇa* as both "praise" and "beauty". In doing so, he implicitly answers Mahāvīra's question: he is adept at poetic improvisation (*paṭibhāna*).

Unable to bear this honor paid to the Buddha, the Jain Ñātika 31.1
spewed hot blood from his mouth there and then.[94]

94. The Pali commentary says this was the cause of his death in Pāvā soon after, which supports the contention that Pāvā is Pāvārika. The Jain Kalpasūtra, however, tells a very different story, of a triumphant leader who, having lived a long and exemplary life, mindfully departed this world in honor and dignity, to the consternation of the gods.

MN 57

The Ascetic Who Behaved Like a Dog

Kukkuravatikasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Koliyans, where they have a town named Haliddavasana.[95]

2.1 Then Puṇṇa the Koliyan, a cow votary, and the naked ascetic Seniya, a dog votary, went to the Buddha. Puṇṇa bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one side, while Seniya exchanged greetings and polite conversation with him before sitting down to one side curled up like a dog.[96]

2.2 Puṇṇa said to the Buddha, "Sir, this naked ascetic Seniya the dog votary does a hard thing: he eats food placed on the ground. For a long time he has undertaken that observance to behave like a dog. Where will he be reborn in his next life?"

2.6 "Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be. Don't ask me that."[97]

2.7 For a second time … and a third time, Puṇṇa said to the Buddha, "Sir, this naked ascetic Seniya does a hard thing: he eats food placed

95. The Koliyans were south-eastern neighbors of the Sakyans, with whom they had close ties in marriage and customs. | Haliddavasana ("yellow-clothes") is also the scene of SN 46.54, which discusses similarities and differences between Buddhism and wanderers when it comes to meditation.

96. The cow votary (*govatika*) is attested in Sanskrit (eg. Mahābhārata 5.97.13). Elsewhere, non-Buddhist texts mention cat votaries (Manu 4.30), snake votaries, fish votaries, those who live like beasts (*mṛgacaryā*), and others, but not, so far as I am aware, dog votaries. The cow and dog observances are found in later Buddhist texts (Yogācārabhūmi 157.10, Mahākarmavibhaṅga 44.19, Śikṣāsamuccaya 332.3, etc.) evidently drawing from this sutta. Thus, while no parallel of this sutta has survived, it was known in northern Buddhist traditions and must have been lost due to a failure of transmission.

97. Also at SN 42.2 and SN 42.3.

on the ground. For a long time he has undertaken that observance to behave like a dog. Where will he be reborn in his next life?"

"Clearly, Puṇṇa, I'm not getting through to you when I say: 2.12
'Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be. Don't ask me that.' Nevertheless, I will answer you.

Take someone who develops the dog observance fully and un- 3.1
interruptedly. They develop a dog's ethics, a dog's mentality, and a dog's behavior fully and uninterruptedly. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of dogs. But if they have such a view: 'By this precept or observance or fervent austerity or spiritual practice, may I become one of the gods!' This is their wrong view. An individual with wrong view is reborn in one of two places, I say: hell or the animal realm. So if the dog observance succeeds it leads to rebirth in the company of dogs, but if it fails it leads to hell."

When he said this, Seniya cried and burst out in tears. 4.1

The Buddha said to Puṇṇa, "This is what I didn't get through to 4.2
you when I said: 'Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be. Don't ask me that.'"

Seniya said, "Sir, I'm not crying because of what the Buddha said. 4.5
But, sir, for a long time I have undertaken this observance to behave like a dog. Sir, this Puṇṇa is a cow votary. For a long time he has undertaken that observance to behave like a cow.[98] Where will he be reborn in his next life?"

"Enough, Seniya, let it be. Don't ask me that." 4.10

For a second time … and a third time Seniya said to the Buddha, 4.11
"Sir, this Puṇṇa is a cow votary. For a long time he has undertaken

98. From a text of a later date, the cow observance is described thus: "One should bathe in the urine of a cow, maintain himself with milk, and move with the cows, eating after they had eaten. It is known as *govrata*. One would become free from the sins in a month. He would attain the world of cows and reach heaven" (Agni Purāna 292:12–13a, Gangadharan's translation). This is not a penance for burning off sin, but rather a way of elevating oneself through the sacred nature of the cow. It is not clear, however, if this is the same as the observance in the Buddha's day.

that observance to behave like a cow. Where will he be reborn in his next life?"

4.16 "Clearly, Seniya, I'm not getting through to you when I say: 'Enough, Seniya, let it be. Don't ask me that.' Nevertheless, I will answer you.

5.1 Take someone who develops the cow observance fully and uninterruptedly. They develop a cow's ethics, a cow's mentality, and a cow's behavior fully and uninterruptedly. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of cows.[99] But if they have such a view: 'By this precept or observance or fervent austerity or spiritual practice, may I become one of the gods!' This is their wrong view. An individual with wrong view is reborn in one of two places, I say: hell or the animal realm. So if the cow observance succeeds it leads to rebirth in the company of cows, but if it fails it leads to hell."

6.1 When he said this, Puṇṇa cried and burst out in tears.

6.2 The Buddha said to Seniya, "This is what I didn't get through to you when I said: 'Enough, Seniya, let it be. Don't ask me that.'"

6.5 Puṇṇa said, "Sir, I'm not crying because of what the Buddha said. But, sir, for a long time I have undertaken this observance to behave like a cow. I am quite confident that the Buddha is capable of teaching me so that I can give up this cow observance, and the naked ascetic Seniya can give up that dog observance."

6.9 "Well then, Puṇṇa, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

6.10 "Yes, sir," he replied. The Buddha said this:

7.1 "Puṇṇa, I declare these four kinds of deeds, having realized them with my own insight.[100] What four?

1. There are dark deeds with dark results;
2. bright deeds with bright results;

99. This means to be reborn as a cow, rather than in the *goloka*, which in Hinduism is a heaven for cows.

100. See AN 4.233ff.

3. dark and bright deeds with dark and bright results; and[101]
4. neither dark nor bright deeds with neither dark nor bright results, which lead to the ending of deeds.[102]

8.1 And what are dark deeds with dark results? It's when someone makes hurtful choices by way of body, speech, and mind. Having made these choices, they're reborn in a hurtful world, where hurtful contacts strike them. Touched by hurtful contacts, they experience hurtful feelings that are absolutely painful—like the beings in hell. This is how a being is born from a being. For your deeds determine your rebirth, and when you're reborn contacts strike you. This is why I say that sentient beings are heirs to their deeds. These are called dark deeds with dark results.

9.1 And what are bright deeds with bright results? It's when someone makes pleasing choices by way of body, speech, and mind. Having made these choices, they are reborn in a pleasing world, where pleasing contacts strike them. Touched by pleasing contacts, they experience pleasing feelings of absolute happiness—like the gods of universal beauty. This is how a being is born from a being. For your deeds determine your rebirth, and when you're reborn contacts strike you. This is why I say that sentient beings are heirs to their deeds. These are called bright deeds with bright results.

10.1 And what are dark and bright deeds with dark and bright results? It's when someone makes both hurtful and pleasing choices by way of body, speech, and mind. Having made these choices, they are reborn in a world that is both hurtful and pleasing, where hurtful and pleasing contacts strike them. Touched by both hurtful and pleasing contacts, they experience both hurtful and pleasing feelings that are a mixture of pleasure and pain—like humans, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. This is how a being is born from

101. By treating ethical decisions via a tetralemma, the Buddha rejects the "law of the excluded middle" and the consequent belief that acts must be either right or wrong.

102. These are the intentions associated with the noble eightfold path.

a being. For what you do brings about your rebirth, and when you're reborn contacts strike you. This is why I say that sentient beings are heirs to their deeds. These are called dark and bright deeds with dark and bright results.

11.1 And what are neither dark nor bright deeds with neither dark nor bright results, which lead to the ending of deeds? It's the intention to give up dark deeds with dark results, bright deeds with bright results, and both dark and bright deeds with both dark and bright results. These are called neither dark nor bright deeds with neither dark nor bright results, which lead to the ending of deeds.

11.4 These are the four kinds of deeds that I declare, having realized them with my own insight."

12.1 When he had spoken, Puṇṇa the Koliyan said to the Buddha, "Excellent, sir! Excellent! … From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."[103]

13.1 And Seniya the naked ascetic said to the Buddha, "Excellent, sir! Excellent! … I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?"[104]

14.1 "Seniya, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they'll give the going forth,

103. Puṇṇa the layman goes for refuge, while Seniya the ascetic goes forth.

104. In the early period, there was no distinction between "going forth" (*pabbajjā*) and "ordination" (*upasampadā*). They refer to two sides of the same coin: leaving the home life and entering the ascetic life. Ordination was originally granted by the Buddha with the simple call, "Come mendicant!" (Kd 1:6.32.1). As the community grew, the Buddha authorized the Saṅgha to perform the "going forth and ordination" (Kd 1:12.1.1). Later still, the novice (*sāmaṇera*) platform was introduced for teenagers and became known as "going forth" (Kd 1:54.3.2). Finally, the novice ordination was standardized for all ordinands, even if it was a mere preliminary for the "full ordination".

the ordination into monkhood.[105] However, I recognize individual differences in this matter."[106]

"Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I'll 14.3
spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the ordination into monkhood."

And the naked ascetic Seniya received the going forth, the or- 15.1
dination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Seniya, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been 15.3
completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Seniya became one of the perfected.

105. This probation is laid down in the Vinaya at Kd 1:38.1.5. The candidate shaves, dons the robes, takes refuge, and asks for probation. They must show good conduct and restraint, diligence in duties, and enthusiasm for the Buddha's teachings and practice.

106. In addition to individual exceptions, there are general exceptions for dreadlocked fire-worshipping ascetics, since they believe in kamma, and for the Buddha's relatives (Kd 1:38.11.3).

MN 58

With Prince Abhaya

Abhayarājakumārasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.[107]

2.1 Then Prince Abhaya went up to the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Jain Ñātika said to him,[108] "Come, prince, refute the ascetic Gotama's doctrine. Then you will get a good reputation: 'Prince Abhaya refuted the doctrine of the ascetic Gotama, so mighty and powerful!'"

3.4 "But sir, how am I to do this?"

3.5 "Here, prince, go to the ascetic Gotama and say to him: 'Sir, may the Realized One utter speech that is disliked by others?'[109] When

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107. This sutta is framed as a response to a challenge by Mahāvīra, the Jain leader. It shows the Buddha's characteristic dry humor to undermine religious pretensions (see eg. MN 76:21.4, DN 11:82.7). The dialogue slyly shows the Buddha defeating Mahāvīra by using one of Mahāvīra's key methods against him.

108. Prince Abhaya ("fearless") raised Jīvaka after discovering him abandoned Kd 8:1.4.5. In this sutta he appears as an acolyte of Mahāvīra, while in SN 46.56 he asks the Buddha about Pūraṇa Kassapa. Apart from these details he is unknown in the early texts. Commentaries say he was the son of King Bimbisāra by one of his queens, Padumavatī of Ujjenī, making him half-brother to Ajātasattu. They also say that following Bimbisāra's death, Abhaya went forth and spoke the verse at Thag 1.26. | Not to be confused with Abhaya the Licchavī of AN 3.74 and AN 4.196; nor with the author of Thag 1.98; nor is Thig 2.8 addressed to his mother, but that of the nun Abhayā (Thig 2.9).

109. The Jain doctrine *anekantavāda* ("doctrine of many-sidedness", "non-categorical doctrine") posits that in metaphysical propositions, one must conditionally affirm multiple possibilities so as to illuminate the complex, multifacted nature of reality. An aspect of *anekantavāda* is the *syadvada*, which frames all statements with *syā*, "it may be". This uses the optative tense to conditionally

he's asked this, if he answers: 'He may, prince,' say this to him, 'So what then, sir, is the difference between you and an ordinary person?[110] For even an ordinary person may utter speech that is disliked by others.' But if he answers, 'He may not, prince,' say this to him: 'So why then, sir, did you declare of Devadatta: "Devadatta is going to a place of loss, to hell, there to remain for an eon, irredeemable"?[111] Devadatta was angry and upset with what you said.'

When you put this dilemma to him, the Buddha won't be able 3.16
to either spit it out or swallow it down. He'll be like a man with an iron cross stuck in his throat, unable to either spit it out or swallow it down."

"Yes, sir," replied Abhaya. He rose from his seat, bowed, and 4.1
respectfully circled the Jain Ñātika, keeping him on his right. Then he went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side.

Then he looked up at the sun and thought, "It's too late to refute 4.2
the Buddha's doctrine today. I shall refute his doctrine in my own home tomorrow." He said to the Buddha, "Sir, would the Buddha, together with three other monks, please accept tomorrow's meal from me?" The Buddha consented with silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Abhaya rose from 5.1
his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

Then when the night had passed, the Buddha robed up in the 5.2
morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Abhaya's home, and sat down on the seat spread out. Then Abhaya served and satisfied the Buddha with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods.

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affirm or deny without making absolute statements. The same tense is employed here by Mahāvīra in order to trap the Buddha on the horns of a dilemma (*ubhatokoṭika*). Needless to say, this is not how he is presented in Jain texts.

110. When springing the trap, the voice shifts from the respectful third person to the familiar second person.

111. Mahāvīra is quoting from the Buddha at AN 8.7:1.7 = Kd 17:4.7.1. This dates this sutta to the last years of the Buddha's life, after the rebellion of Devadatta and the ascension of Ajātasattu, and shortly before Mahāvīra's passing.

5.4 When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Abhaya took a low seat, sat to one side, and said to him, "Sir, may the Realized One utter speech that is disliked by others?"

6.3 "This matter is not categorical, prince."[112]

6.4 "Then the Jains have lost in this, sir."

6.5 "But prince, why do you say that the Jains have lost in this?"

6.7 Then Abhaya told the Buddha all that had happened.

7.1 Now at that time a little baby boy was sitting in Prince Abhaya's lap. Then the Buddha said to Abhaya, "What do you think, prince? If—because of your negligence or his nursemaid's negligence—your boy were to put a stick or stone in his mouth, what would you do to him?"

7.5 "I'd try to take it out, sir. If that didn't work, I'd cradle his head with my left hand and take it out using a hooked finger of my right hand, even if it drew blood. Why is that? Because I have sympathy for the boy, sir."

8.1 "In the same way, prince, the Realized One does not utter speech that he knows to be untrue, false, and pointless, and which is disliked by others. The Realized One does not utter speech that he knows to be true and correct, but which is harmful and disliked by others. The Realized One knows the right time to speak so as to explain what he knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, but which is disliked by others.[113] The Realized One does not utter speech that he knows to be untrue, false, and pointless, but which is liked by others. The Realized One does not utter speech that he knows to be true and correct, but which is harmful, even if it is liked by others. The Realized One knows the right time to speak so as to explain what

112. The Buddha solves the dilemma by avoiding a categorical statement, thus beating the Jains at their own game. Unlike the Jains, the Buddha did not advocate giving non-categorical answers as a general principle; different questions require different approaches when answering (AN 3.67, MN 136:5.3). Cf. AN 3.78 and AN 3.21:9.1.

113. For the phrase "speak so as to explain" (*vācāya veyyākaraṇāya*) I follow the commentary.

he knows to be true, correct, and beneficial, and which is liked by others. Why is that? Because the Realized One has sympathy for sentient beings."[114]

"Sir, there are astute aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or as- 9.1
cetics who come to see you with a question already planned. Do you think beforehand that if they ask you like this, you'll answer like that, or does the answer just strike you on the spot?"

"Well then, prince, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can 10.1
answer as you like. What do you think, prince? Are you skilled in the various parts of a chariot?"

"I am, sir." 10.4

"What do you think, prince? When they come to you and ask: 10.5
'What's the name of this chariot part?' Do you think beforehand that if they ask you like this, you'll answer like that, or does the answer appear to you on the spot?"

"Sir, I'm well-known as a charioteer skilled in a chariot's parts. All 10.9
the major and minor parts are well-known to me. The answer just appears to me on the spot."

"In the same way, when astute aristocrats, brahmins, household- 11.1
ers, or ascetics come to see me with a question already planned, the answer just strikes me on the spot. Why is that? Because the Realized One has clearly penetrated the principle of the teachings, so that the answer just strikes him on the spot."

When he had spoken, Prince Abhaya said to the Buddha, "Ex- 12.1
cellent, sir! Excellent! … From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

114. Here the optatives are gone and the Buddha states his views directly, showing that just because a question is not "categorical" does not mean that it cannot be given a definitive answer. However, it cannot be answered all-at-once or "categorically", but must be broken into parts by "analysis" before answering.

MN 59

The Many Kinds of Feeling

Bahuvedanīyasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

1.3 Then the chamberlain Pañcakaṅga went up to Venerable Udāyī, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him,[115] "Sir, how many feelings has the Buddha spoken of?"

1.5 "Chamberlain, the Buddha has spoken of three feelings: pleasant, painful, and neutral. The Buddha has spoken of these three feelings."

1.8 When he said this, Pañcakaṅga said to Udāyī, "Sir, Udāyī, the Buddha hasn't spoken of three feelings. He's spoken of two feelings: pleasant and painful. The Buddha said that neutral feeling is included as a peaceful and subtle kind of pleasure."

2.1 For a second time, Udāyī said to Pañcakaṅga, "The Buddha hasn't spoken of two feelings, he's spoken of three." For a second time, Pañcakaṅga said to Udāyī, "The Buddha hasn't spoken of three feelings, he's spoken of two."

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115. Pañcakaṅga features as a prominent devotee of the Buddha in MN 78, MN 127, and in a parallel to the current sutta at SN 36.19. As *thapati* ("chamberlain") he was the ranking official under Pasenadi. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.4.4.17–18 tells us that royal authority goes from the king, to the king's brother, to the *thapati*, to the village head. Similarly, Atharva Veda 2.32.4a and 5.23.11a mention the *thapati* directly after the king. SN 55.6:15.1 shows the *thapati* was trusted with the most intimate and sensitive duties of the court. Elsewhere we learn that they shared the meal and carriage with the king, accompanying him on military campaigns (MN 89:18.1), while SN 55.6:1.4 shows them engaged in governing the provinces. Thus the *thapati* was the highest non-royal official in the court, entrusted with governing, advising, and security of the household. | There are several individuals called Udāyī, and it is not possible to distinguish them all.

And for a third time, Udāyī said to Pañcakaṅga, "The Buddha hasn't spoken of two feelings, he's spoken of three." 3.1

And for a third time, Pañcakaṅga said to Udāyī, "The Buddha hasn't spoken of three feelings, he's spoken of two." 3.6

But neither was able to persuade the other. 3.11

Venerable Ānanda heard this discussion between Udāyī and Pañcakaṅga. Then he went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and informed the Buddha of all they had discussed. When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him, 4.1

"Ānanda, the explanation by the mendicant Udāyī, which the chamberlain Pañcakaṅga didn't agree with, was quite correct. But the explanation by Pañcakaṅga, which Udāyī didn't agree with, was also quite correct.[116] In one explanation I've spoken of two feelings. In another explanation I've spoken of three feelings, or five, six, eighteen, thirty-six, or a hundred and eight feelings.[117] I've explained the teaching in all these different ways. This being so, you can expect that those who don't concede, approve, or agree with what has been well spoken will fight, quarrel, and dispute, continually wounding each other with barbed words. I've explained the teaching in all these different ways. This being so, you can expect that those who do concede, approve, or agree with what has been well spoken will live in harmony, appreciating each other, without quarreling, blending like milk and water, and regarding each other with kindly eyes. 5.1

There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. The 6.1

116. The Buddha's reply here develops the theme of "non-categorical" statements introduced in the previous sutta, showing that the same reality can be spoken of in many different ways.

117. These are all explained in SN 36.22.

pleasure and happiness that arise from these five kinds of sensual stimulation is called sensual pleasure.

7.1 There are those who might say that this is the highest pleasure and happiness that sentient beings experience. But I don't grant them that. Why is that? Because there is another pleasure that is finer than that.[118] And what is that pleasure? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is a pleasure that is finer than that.

8.1 There are those who would say that this is the highest pleasure and happiness that sentient beings experience. But I don't grant them that. Why is that? Because there is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. …

9.1 There is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' …

10.1 There is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. …[119]

118. In discussing the path, the Buddha focuses on pleasure.

119. This validates Pañcakaṅga's view that neutral feeling can be reckoned as a subtle kind of pleasure.

There is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when a mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. … 11.1

There is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. … 12.1

There is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. … 13.1

There is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is a pleasure that is finer than that. 14.1

There are those who would say that this is the highest pleasure and happiness that sentient beings experience. But I don't grant them that. Why is that? Because there is another pleasure that is finer than that. And what is that pleasure? It's when a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is a pleasure that is finer than that.[120] 15.1

It's possible that wanderers of other religions might say, 'The ascetic Gotama spoke of the cessation of perception and feeling, and he includes it in happiness. What's up with that?' 16.1

When wanderers of other religions say this, you should say to them, 'Reverends, when the Buddha describes what's included in happiness, he's not just referring to pleasant feeling. The Realized 16.4

120. Since all feeling is conditioned, and what is conditioned is suffering, the cessation of feeling is reckoned as pleasurable.

One describes pleasure as included in happiness wherever it is found, and in whatever context.'"

16.7 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

MN 60

A Sure Bet

Apaṇṇakasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[121] At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Kosalan brahmins named Sālā.[122] 1.1

The brahmins and householders of Sālā heard: 2.1

"It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—wandering in the land of the Kosalans has arrived at Sālā, together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he 2.2

121. This sutta subverts the imagery of gambling by reasoning toward logical certitude in a world of apparently random chances. Gambling was a major feature of Vedic culture, with the moving confession of Rig Veda 10.34 recounting the thrill and loss of the game. The gods were invoked to ensure success (Atharvaveda 7.109). Even kings bowed to the dice (Rig Veda 10.34.8), so that the Rājasūya consecration ceremony is secured with a (loaded) game of dice (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.4.4.6, 23). Numerous tales of kings losing their realms at dice, most notably Yudhiṣṭhira in the Mahābhārata, show that the power and danger of gambling was not merely symbolic.

122. The same framing narrative recurs at MN 41, where the topic of rebirth is also at stake.

reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. It's good to see such perfected ones."

3.1 Then the brahmins and householders of Sālā went up to the Buddha. Before sitting down to one side, some bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their cupped palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. The Buddha said to them:

4.1 "So, householders, is there any teacher you're happy with, in whom you have acquired grounded faith?"[123]

4.2 "No, sir."

4.3 "Since you haven't found a teacher you're happy with, you should undertake and implement this sure bet teaching.[124] For when the sure bet teaching is undertaken, it will be for your lasting welfare and happiness. And what is the sure bet teaching?

5.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There's no such thing as mother and father, or beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.'[125]

6.1 And there are some ascetics and brahmins whose doctrine directly contradicts this. They say: 'There is meaning in giving, sacrifice, and offerings. There are fruits and results of good and bad deeds. There

123. The Brahmanical community was in a period of questioning and transition, with multiple different perspectives offered by both Brahmins and ascetics.

124. While the contextual sense of the key term *apaṇṇaka* ("sure bet") is clear, the etymology has proven a puzzle. I propose that it is a gambling term, and *paṇṇa* appears as a form of the number five. While a set of four dice was "perfect" (*kaṭa*), the fifth "losing" (*kali*) die was all-powerful, since just one extra die meant you lose everything (Rig Veda 10.34.2, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.4.4.6). *Apaṇṇaka* is therefore literally a "set without a fifth" and metaphorically a "sure bet", a choice that is "without fail".

125. At DN 2:23.2 this is presented as the moral view of Ajita of the Hair Blanket, who justifies it with a materialist theory.

is an afterlife. There are such things as mother and father, and beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there are ascetics and brahmins who are rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describe the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.'[126]

What do you think, householders? Don't these doctrines directly 6.4
contradict each other?"

"Yes, sir." 6.6

"Since this is so, consider those ascetics and brahmins whose 7.1
view is that there's no meaning in giving, etc. You can expect that they will shun good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and undertake and implement bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. Why is that? Because those ascetics and brahmins don't see that unskillful qualities are full of drawbacks, sordidness, and corruption, or that skillful qualities have the benefit and cleansing power of renunciation.

Moreover, since there actually is another world, their view that 8.1
there is no other world is wrong view. Since there actually is another world, their thought that there is no other world is wrong purpose. Since there actually is another world, their speech that there is no other world is wrong speech. Since there actually is another world, in saying that there is no other world they contradict those perfected ones who know the other world. Since there actually is another world, in persuading another that there is no other world they are persuading them to accept an untrue teaching. And on account of that they glorify themselves and put others down. So they give up their former ethical conduct and are established in unethical conduct. And that is how these many bad, unskillful qualities come to be with wrong view as condition—wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, contradicting the noble ones, persuading others to accept untrue teachings, and glorifying oneself and putting others down.

126. The positive side is of course the Buddha's view.

9.1 A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'If there is no other world, when this individual person's body breaks up they will keep themselves safe.[127] And if there is another world, when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. But let us grant that those who say that there is no other world are correct.[128] Regardless, that individual is still criticized by sensible people in this very life as being an immoral individual of wrong view, a nihilist.'[129] But if there really is another world, they hold a losing hand on both counts.[130] For they are criticized by sensible people in this very life, and when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. They have wrongly undertaken this sure bet teaching in such a way that it encompasses the positive outcomes of one side only, leaving out the skillful premise.[131]

10.1 Since this is so, consider those ascetics and brahmins whose view is that there is meaning in giving, etc. You can expect that they will shun bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and undertake

127. Given that they no longer exist, how are they safe? Bodhi's "will have made himself safe" is unlikely, as it is future perfect, a rare sense that requires the past participle. Anyway he hasn't "made himself" anything, he just happens to live in a world without moral consequences. Horner notes the problem without offering a solution, there are no parallels, and commentaries are silent. I think the text is corrupt.

128. The syntax of this sentence is tricky. *Kāmaṁ* is "willingly", which together with *hotu* conveys the sense "let us grant …". *Māhu* resolves to *mā ahu*, a simple negation rather than a prohibition. For *kāmaṁ* with *mā* and imperative, compare SN 11.4:7.1.

129. "Nihilist" is *natthikavāda*, "one whose doctrine is that there is nothing". While this view is discussed many times in the suttas, the word *natthikavāda* is elsewhere only applied to a specific pair of persons, Vassa and Bhañña of Ukkalā (MN 117:38.1, SN 22.62:13.2, AN 4.30:8.2).

130. "Losing hand" is *kaliggāha*.

131. It is difficult to choose between "skillful" and "wholesome" as renderings for *kusala*. "Skillful" sticks closer to the root sense, while "wholesome" is more idiomatic. But the context here well illustrates that the root sense is still alive in the language, as the "skillful" option is that which wisely aligns cause and effect with one's own well-being.

and implement good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. Why is that? Because those ascetics and brahmins see that unskillful qualities are full of drawbacks, sordidness, and corruption, and that skillful qualities have the benefit and cleansing power of renunciation.

Moreover, since there actually is another world, their view that 11.1
there is another world is right view. Since there actually is another world, their thought that there is another world is right purpose. Since there actually is another world, their speech that there is another world is right speech. Since there actually is another world, in saying that there is another world they don't contradict those perfected ones who know the other world. Since there actually is another world, in persuading another that there is another world they are persuading them to accept a true teaching. And on account of that they don't glorify themselves or put others down. So they give up their former unethical conduct and are established in ethical conduct. And that is how these many skillful qualities come to be with right view as condition—right view, right purpose, right speech, not contradicting the noble ones, persuading others to accept true teachings, and not glorifying oneself or putting others down.

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'If there is an- 12.1
other world, when this individual's body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. But let us grant that those who say that there is no other world are correct. Regardless, that individual is still praised by sensible people in this very life as being a moral individual of right view, who affirms a positive teaching.' So if there really is another world, they hold a winning hand on both counts.[132] For they are praised by sensible people in this very life,

132. "Winning hand" (*kaṭaggaha*) is an expression from the classical Vedic game of chance. The details are obscure and would have changed over time, but it seems that a large quantity of *vibhītaka* ("bedda") nuts were cast in a hollow, from which players took a handful. If the number of nuts was divisible by four, it was said to be a "perfect" (*kaṭa*; see Rig Veda 1.132.1, etc.) "hand" (*gāha*). | *Apaṇṇaka* and *kaṭaggāha* are also connected at SN 42.13:23.5; compare the

and when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. They have rightly undertaken this sure bet teaching in such a way that it encompasses the positive outcomes of both sides, leaving out the unskillful premise.

13.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'The one who acts does nothing wrong when they punish, mutilate, torture, aggrieve, oppress, intimidate, or when they encourage others to do the same. They do nothing wrong when they kill, steal, break into houses, plunder wealth, steal from isolated buildings, commit highway robbery, commit adultery, and lie.[133] If you were to reduce all the living creatures of this earth to one heap and mass of flesh with a razor-edged chakram, no evil comes of that, and no outcome of evil. If you were to go along the south bank of the Ganges killing, mutilating, and torturing, and encouraging others to do the same, no evil comes of that, and no outcome of evil. If you were to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving and sacrificing and encouraging others to do the same, no merit comes of that, and no outcome of merit. In giving, self-control, restraint, and truthfulness there is no merit or outcome of merit.'

14.1 And there are some ascetics and brahmins whose doctrine directly contradicts this. They say: 'The one who acts does a bad deed when they punish, mutilate, torture, aggrieve, oppress, intimidate, or when they encourage others to do the same. They do a bad deed when they kill, steal, break into houses, plunder wealth, steal from isolated buildings, commit highway robbery, commit adultery, and lie. If you were to reduce all the living creatures of this earth to one heap and mass of flesh with a razor-edged chakram, evil comes of that, and

"gem" thrown like a loaded die at AN 3.118:4.6 and AN 10.217:17.1. Good rebirth is further compared to a "winning hand" at MN 129:49.1. And at Ja 1:2.4, a wise person would "take up" (*gaṇhe*) a sure bet, namely a winning hand.

133. At DN 2:17.2, this denial of the doctrine of kamma is attributed to Pūraṇa Kassapa. He may have subscribed to hard determinism, so that we have no choice in what we do. He may also have believed that we should keep moral rules as a social contract, but that this had no effect on the afterlife. | In such contexts, *kar-* means "punish, inflict" (MN 129:29.2).

an outcome of evil. If you were to go along the south bank of the Ganges killing, mutilating, and torturing, and encouraging others to do the same, evil comes of that, and an outcome of evil. If you were to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving and sacrificing and encouraging others to do the same, merit comes of that, and an outcome of merit. In giving, self-control, restraint, and truthfulness there is merit and outcome of merit.'

What do you think, householders? Don't these doctrines directly contradict each other?" 14.7

"Yes, sir." 14.9

"Since this is so, consider those ascetics and brahmins whose view is that the one who acts does nothing wrong when they punish, etc. You can expect that they will shun good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and undertake and implement bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. Why is that? Because those ascetics and brahmins don't see that unskillful qualities are full of drawbacks, sordidness, and corruption, or that skillful qualities have the benefit and cleansing power of renunciation. 15.1

Moreover, since action actually does have an effect, their view that action is ineffective is wrong view. Since action actually does have an effect, their thought that action is ineffective is wrong purpose. Since action actually does have an effect, their speech that action is ineffective is wrong speech. Since action actually does have an effect, in saying that action is ineffective they contradict those perfected ones who teach that action is effective. Since action actually does have an effect, in persuading another that action is ineffective they are persuading them to accept an untrue teaching. And on account of that they glorify themselves and put others down. So they give up their former ethical conduct and are established in unethical conduct. And that is how these many bad, unskillful qualities come to be with wrong view as condition—wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, contradicting the noble ones, persuading others to accept untrue teachings, and glorifying oneself and putting others down. 16.1

17.1 A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'If there is no effective action, when this individual's body breaks up they will keep themselves safe. And if there is effective action, when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. But let us grant that those who say that there is no effective action are correct. Regardless, that individual is still criticized by sensible people in this very life as being an immoral individual of wrong view, one who denies the efficacy of action.'[134] But if there really is effective action, they hold a losing hand on both counts. For they are criticized by sensible people in this very life, and when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. They have wrongly undertaken this sure bet teaching in such a way that it encompasses the positive outcomes of one side only, leaving out the skillful premise.

18.1 Since this is so, consider those ascetics and brahmins whose view is that the one who acts does a bad deed when they punish, etc. You can expect that they will shun bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and undertake and implement good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. Why is that? Because those ascetics and brahmins see that unskillful qualities are full of drawbacks, sordidness, and corruption, and that skillful qualities have the benefit and cleansing power of renunciation.

19.1 Moreover, since action actually does have an effect, their view that action is effective is right view. Since action actually does have an effect, their thought that action is effective is right purpose. Since action actually does have an effect, their speech that action is effective is right speech. Since action actually does have an effect, in saying that action is effective they don't contradict those perfected ones who teach that action is effective. Since action actually does have an effect, in persuading another that action is effective they are persuading them to accept a true teaching. And on account of that they don't

134. "One who denies the efficacy of action" is *akiriyavāda*.

glorify themselves or put others down. So they give up their former unethical conduct and are established in ethical conduct. And that is how these many skillful qualities come to be with right view as condition—right view, right purpose, right speech, not contradicting the noble ones, persuading others to accept true teachings, and not glorifying oneself or putting others down.

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'If there is 20.1
effective action, when this individual's body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. But let us grant that those who say that there is no effective action are correct. Regardless, that individual is still praised by sensible people in this very life as being a moral individual of right view, who affirms the efficacy of action.' So if there really is effective action, they hold a winning hand on both counts. For they are praised by sensible people in this very life, and when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. They have rightly undertaken this sure bet teaching in such a way that it encompasses the positive outcomes of both sides, leaving out the unskillful premise.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and 21.1
view: 'There is no cause or reason for the corruption of sentient beings.[135] Sentient beings are corrupted without cause or reason. There's no cause or reason for the purification of sentient beings. Sentient beings are purified without cause or reason. There is no power, no energy, no human strength or vigor. All sentient beings, all living creatures, all beings, all souls lack control, power, and energy. Molded by destiny, circumstance, and nature, they experience pleasure and pain in the six classes of rebirth.'

And there are some ascetics and brahmins whose doctrine di- 22.1
rectly contradicts this. They say: 'There is a cause and reason for the corruption of sentient beings. Sentient beings are corrupted with

135. At DN 2:20.2 this view is attributed to the Bamboo-staffed Ascetic Gosāla, the founder of the Ājīvikas and teacher of fatalism. It is attributed to Pūraṇa Kassapa at SN 22.60:2.2.

cause and reason. There is a cause and reason for the purification of sentient beings. Sentient beings are purified with cause and reason. There is power, energy, human strength and vigor. It is not the case that all sentient beings, all living creatures, all beings, all souls lack control, power, and energy, or that, molded by destiny, circumstance, and nature, they experience pleasure and pain in the six classes of rebirth.'

22.9 What do you think, householders? Don't these doctrines directly contradict each other?"

22.11 "Yes, sir."

23.1 "Since this is so, consider those ascetics and brahmins whose view is that there's no cause or reason for the corruption of sentient beings, etc. You can expect that they will shun good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and undertake and implement bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. Why is that? Because those ascetics and brahmins don't see that unskillful qualities are full of drawbacks, sordidness, and corruption, or that skillful qualities have the benefit and cleansing power of renunciation.

24.1 Moreover, since there actually is causality, their view that there is no causality is wrong view. Since there actually is causality, their thought that there is no causality is wrong purpose. Since there actually is causality, their speech that there is no causality is wrong speech. Since there actually is causality, in saying that there is no causality they contradict those perfected ones who teach that there is causality. Since there actually is causality, in persuading another that there is no causality they are persuading them to accept an untrue teaching. And on account of that they glorify themselves and put others down. So they give up their former ethical conduct and are established in unethical conduct. And that is how these many bad, unskillful qualities come to be with wrong view as condition—wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, contradicting the noble ones, persuading others to accept untrue teachings, and glorifying oneself and putting others down.

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'If there is 25.1
no causality, when this individual's body breaks up they will keep themselves safe. And if there is causality, when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. But let us grant that those who say that there is no causality are correct. Regardless, that individual is still criticized by sensible people in this very life as being an immoral individual of wrong view, one who denies causality.'[136] But if there really is causality, they hold a losing hand on both counts. For they are criticized by sensible people in this very life, and when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. They have wrongly undertaken this sure bet teaching in such a way that it encompasses the positive outcomes of one side only, leaving out the skillful premise.

Since this is so, consider those ascetics and brahmins whose view 26.1
is that there is a cause and reason for the corruption of sentient beings, etc. You can expect that they will shun bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and undertake and implement good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind. Why is that? Because those ascetics and brahmins see that unskillful qualities are full of drawbacks, sordidness, and corruption, and that skillful qualities have the benefit and cleansing power of renunciation.

Moreover, since there actually is causality, their view that there is 27.1
causality is right view. Since there actually is causality, their thought that there is causality is right purpose. Since there actually is causality, their speech that there is causality is right speech. Since there actually is causality, in saying that there is causality they don't contradict those perfected ones who teach that there is causality. Since there actually is causality, in persuading another that there is causality they are persuading them to accept a true teaching. And on account of that they don't glorify themselves or put others down. So they give up their former unethical conduct and are established in ethical

136. "One who denies causality" is *ahetukavāda*.

conduct. And that is how these many skillful qualities come to be with right view as condition—right view, right purpose, right speech, not contradicting the noble ones, persuading others to accept true teachings, and not glorifying oneself or putting others down.

28.1 A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'If there is causality, when this individual's body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. But let us grant that those who say that there is no causality are correct. Regardless, that individual is still praised by sensible people in this very life as being a moral individual of right view, who affirms causality.' So if there really is causality, they hold a winning hand on both counts. For they are praised by sensible people in this very life, and when their body breaks up, after death, they will be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. They have rightly undertaken this sure bet teaching in such a way that it encompasses the positive outcomes of both sides, leaving out the unskillful premise.

29.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'There are no totally formless states of meditation.'[137]

30.1 And there are some ascetics and brahmins whose doctrine directly contradicts this. They say: 'There are totally formless states of meditation.'

30.4 What do you think, householders? Don't these doctrines directly contradict each other?"

30.6 "Yes, sir."

31.1 "A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'Some ascetics and brahmins say that there are no totally formless meditations, but I have not seen that. Some ascetics and brahmins say that

137. The four "formless states" (*āruppā*) are attained with the "total" (*sabbaso*) surmounting of form. While the previous views characterize prominent ascetic movements, the final view relates to the formless meditations, the cardinal teaching of the contemplative movement of the Kosalan brahmins, represented by such figures as Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta (MN 36:14.9) or the sixteen brahmins of the Pārāyanavagga (Snp 5.1ff.). The Buddha elevates his teaching by directly addressing the highest and best of contemporary Brahmanical practices.

there are totally formless meditations, but I have not known that. Without knowing or seeing, it would not be appropriate for me to take one side and declare, 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.' If those ascetics and brahmins who say that there are no totally formless meditations are correct, it is possible that it's a sure bet I will be reborn among the gods who are formed and made of mind. If those ascetics and brahmins who say that there are totally formless meditations are correct, it is possible that it's a sure bet I will be reborn among the gods who are formless and made of perception. Now, owing to form, bad things are seen: taking up the rod and the sword, quarrels, arguments, and disputes, accusations, backbiting, and lies. But those things don't exist where it is totally formless.' Reflecting like this, they simply practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding forms.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'There is no such thing as the total cessation of continued existence.'[138] 32.1

And there are some ascetics and brahmins whose doctrine directly contradicts this. They say: 'There is such a thing as the total cessation of continued existence.' 33.1

What do you think, householders? Don't these doctrines directly contradict each other?" 33.4

"Yes, sir." 33.6

"A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'Some ascetics and brahmins say that there is no such thing as the total cessation of continued existence, but I have not seen that. Some ascetics and brahmins say that there is such a thing as the total cessation of 34.1

138. This denies the basic tenet of dependent origination. *Bhava* means "being", but in the pregnant philosophical sense of "continued existence", which often takes the form of "future lives". It can be broader than that, however, as with the Upaniṣadic doctrine of eternal unity of the contingent personal self with the absolute universal divinity. Since the Brahmins saw the cosmos as an expression of divinity, to them, existence must be inherently good and the cessation of existence abhorrent.

continued existence, but I have not known that. Without knowing or seeing, it would not be appropriate for me to take one side and declare, 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.' If those ascetics and brahmins who say that there is no such thing as the total cessation of continued existence are correct, it is possible that it's a sure bet I will be reborn among the gods who are formless and made of perception. If those ascetics and brahmins who say that there is such a thing as the total cessation of continued existence are correct, it is possible that I will be fully extinguished in this very life. The view of those ascetics and brahmins who say that there is no such thing as the total cessation of continued existence is close to greed, yoking, relishing, attachment, and grasping. The view of those ascetics and brahmins who say that there is such a thing as the total cessation of continued existence is close to non-greed, non-yoking, non-relishing, non-attachment, and non-grasping.' Reflecting like this, they simply practice for disillusionment, dispassion, and cessation regarding future lives.

35.1 Householders, these four individuals are found in the world. What four?

1. One individual mortifies themselves, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves.
2. One individual mortifies others, committed to the practice of mortifying others.[139]
3. One individual mortifies themselves and others, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others.
4. One individual doesn't mortify either themselves or others, committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others. They live without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine.

36.1 And what individual mortifies themselves, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves? It's when a person goes naked, ig-

139. See MN 51:8.1.

noring conventions. … And so they live committed to practicing these various ways of mortifying and tormenting the body. This is called an individual who mortifies themselves, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves.

And what individual mortifies others, committed to the practice 37.1
of mortifying others? It's when an individual is a butcher of sheep, pigs, poultry, or deer, a hunter or fisher, a bandit, an executioner, a butcher of cattle, a jailer, or has some other cruel livelihood. This is called an individual who mortifies others, being committed to the practice of mortifying others.

And what individual mortifies themselves and others, being com- 38.1
mitted to the practice of mortifying themselves and others? It's when an individual is an anointed aristocratic king or a well-to-do brahmin. He has a new ceremonial hall built to the east of the citadel. He shaves off his hair and beard, dresses in a rough antelope hide, and smears his body with ghee and oil. …[140] His bondservants, servants, and workers do their jobs under threat of punishment and danger, weeping, with tearful faces. This is called an individual who mortifies themselves and others, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others.

And what individual doesn't mortify either themselves or others, 39.1
committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others, living without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine?

It's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully 40-54.1
awakened Buddha … A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or someone reborn in some good family. … They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption … second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption.

140. The Pali here is abbreviated, and I have expanded partially for clarity. For the full text, see MN 51:10.8.

55.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. … They recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

55.3 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. … They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

55.5 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'. Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

55.10 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

56.1 This is called an individual who neither mortifies themselves or others, being committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others. They live without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine."

57.1 When he had spoken, the brahmins and householders of Sālā said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were

righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. We go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha.[141] From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life."

141. They are also said to have gone forth at MN 41:44.4.

THE CHAPTER ON MENDICANTS

MN 61

Advice to Rāhula at Ambalaṭṭhika

Ambalaṭṭhikarāhulovādasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[142] At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

Now at that time Venerable Rāhula was staying at Ambala- 2.1
ṭṭhikā.[143] Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and went to Ambalaṭṭhika to see Venerable Rāhula. Rāhula saw the Buddha coming off in the distance. He spread out a seat and placed water for washing the feet. The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out, and washed his feet. Rāhula bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one side.

Then the Buddha, leaving a little water in the pot, addressed Rā- 3.1
hula, "Rāhula, do you see this little bit of water left in the pot?"

"Yes, sir." 3.3

"That's how little of the ascetic's nature is left in those who are not 3.4
ashamed to tell a deliberate lie."

Then the Buddha, discarding what little water was left in the pot, 4.1
said to Rāhula, "Do you see this little bit of water that was discarded?"

"Yes, sir." 4.3

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142. The Buddha teaches his son Rāhula the dangers of lying, using gestures to illustrate his point. The simple subject matter and child-friendly methods support the commentary's claim that this was when Rāhula was still a boy, soon after he ordained (Kd 1:54.1.1). | This sutta is among those recommended for study by the Saṅgha by King Ashoka in Minor Rock Edict No. 3, the Calcutta-Bairāṭ rock inscription from Viratnagar in Rajasthan. There it is described as "the exhortation to Rāhula spoken by the Lord Buddha concerning falsehood" (*laghulo-vāde musā-vādaṁ adhigicya bhagavatā budhena bhāsite*).

143. The commentary says this is a building next to the Bamboo Grove rather than the site of the royal rest-house mentioned at DN 1:1.2.1.

4.4 "That's how the ascetic's nature is discarded in those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie."

5.1 Then the Buddha, turning the pot upside down, said to Rāhula, "Do you see how this pot is turned upside down?"

5.3 "Yes, sir."

5.4 "That's how the ascetic's nature is turned upside down in those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie."

6.1 Then the Buddha, turning the pot right side up, said to Rāhula, "Do you see how this pot is vacant and hollow?"

6.3 "Yes, sir."

6.4 "That's how vacant and hollow the ascetic's nature is in those who are not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie.

7.1 Suppose there was a royal bull elephant with tusks like draft-poles, able to draw a heavy load, pedigree and battle-hardened. In battle it uses its fore-feet and hind-feet, its fore-quarters and hind-quarters, its head, ears, tusks, and tail, but it still protects its trunk.[144] So its rider thinks: 'This royal bull elephant still protects its trunk. It has not yet given its life.' But when that royal bull elephant … in battle uses its fore-feet and hind-feet, its fore-quarters and hind-quarters, its head, ears, tusks, and tail, and its trunk, its rider thinks: 'This royal bull elephant … in battle uses its fore-feet and hind-feet, its fore-quarters and hind-quarters, its head, ears, tusks, and tail, and its trunk. It has given its life. Now there is nothing that royal bull elephant would not do.'

7.9 In the same way, when someone is not ashamed to tell a deliberate lie, there is no bad deed they would not do, I say. So you should train like this: 'I will not tell a lie, even for a joke.'[145]

144. The Buddha shows his mastery of pedagogy. He begins with movement and gestures to illustrate what for a boy could easily have been a dull and abstract teaching. Then he continues to engage the boy's interest by comparing the mendicant life to war-elephants.

145. This does not mean that one cannot tell jokes, or even that the jokes cannot speak of things that are not true. To be guilty of lying, one must try to deliberately create a false belief in the other person. If I say, "A monk, a priest, and a rabbi brought a donkey into a bar", it is obviously not something I expect people to

What do you think, Rāhula? What is the purpose of a mirror?"[146] 8.1

"It's for checking your reflection, sir." 8.3

"In the same way, deeds of body, speech, and mind should be done only after repeated checking.[147] 8.4

When you want to act with the body, you should check on that same deed: 'Does this act with the body that I want to do lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both? Is it unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result?' If, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act with the body that I want to do leads to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result.' To the best of your ability, Rāhula, you should not do such a deed.[148] But if, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act with the body that I want to do doesn't lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's skillful, with happiness as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should do such a deed. 9.1

While you are acting with the body, you should check on that same act: 'Does this act with the body that I am doing lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both? Is it unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result?' If, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act with the body that I am doing leads to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should desist from such a deed. But 10.1

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believe. This point is illustrated in the background story for this sutta in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinayavibhaṅga and Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśaśāstra, which say that Rāhula had been mischievously telling visitors the Buddha was at the Vulture's Peak when in reality he was in the Bamboo Grove. In this case, he deliberately created a false belief in order to send people in the wrong direction.

146. Mirrors of polished bronze were the selfies of the day, a vanity of youth (MN 77:33.18). They were forbidden for monastics except when ill (Kd 15:2.4.1).

147. The Buddha illustrates the abstract concept of introspection with what is perhaps the most fundamental metaphor: the sight of one's own face. See also Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.7.4 and Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.3.5.

148. *Sasakkaṁ* is from *sa* ("own") + *sakka* ("ability").

if, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act with the body that I am doing doesn't lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's skillful, with happiness as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should continue doing such a deed.

11.1 After you have acted with the body, you should check on that same act: 'Does this act with the body that I have done lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both? Is it unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result?' If, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act with the body that I have done leads to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should confess, reveal, and clarify such a deed to the Teacher or a sensible spiritual companion. And having revealed it you should restrain yourself in future. But if, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act with the body that I have done doesn't lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's skillful, with happiness as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should live in rapture and joy because of this, training day and night in skillful qualities.

12.1 When you want to act with speech, you should check on that same deed:[149] 'Does this act of speech that I want to do lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both? …' …

14.1 If, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act of speech that I have done leads to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should confess, reveal, and clarify such a deed to the Teacher or a sensible spiritual companion. And having revealed it you should restrain yourself in future. But if, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act of speech that I have done doesn't lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's skillful, with happiness as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should live in rapture and joy because of this, training day and night in skillful qualities.

149. The threefold awareness of actions before, during, and after is emphasized in the Vinaya analysis of the rule against deliberate lying (Bu Pc 1:2.2.2).

When you want to act with the mind, you should check on that same deed: 'Does this act of mind that I want to do lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both? …' … 15.1

If, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act of mind that I have done leads to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's unskillful, with suffering as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should be horrified, repelled, and disgusted by that deed.[150] And being repelled, you should restrain yourself in future. But if, while checking in this way, you know: 'This act with the mind that I have done doesn't lead to hurting myself, hurting others, or hurting both. It's skillful, with happiness as its outcome and result.' Then, Rāhula, you should live in rapture and joy because of this, training day and night in skillful qualities. 17.1

All the ascetics and brahmins of the past, future, and present who purify their physical, verbal, and mental actions do so after repeatedly checking. So Rāhula, you should train yourself like this: 'I will purify my physical, verbal, and mental actions after repeatedly checking.'" 18.1

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Rāhula approved what the Buddha said. 18.6

150. Acts of mind are not covered under the Vinaya and so need not be confessed, unlike those of body (MN 61:11.6) and speech (MN 61:14.6). They are matters of personal integrity rather than social reinforcement.

MN 62

The Longer Advice to Rāhula

Mahārāhulovādasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[151] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. And Venerable Rāhula also robed up and followed behind the Buddha.[152]

3.1 Then the Buddha looked back at Rāhula and said, "Rāhula, you should truly see any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'"

3.3 "Only form, Blessed One? Only form, Holy One?"[153]

3.4 "Form, Rāhula, as well as feeling and perception and choices and consciousness."

4.1 Then Rāhula thought, "Who would go to the village for alms today after being advised directly by the Buddha?" Turning back, he sat down cross-legged at the root of a certain tree, setting his body straight, and bringing mindfulness to the present.[154]

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151. Compared to MN 61, now the Buddha is assigning advanced practices to Rāhula, recommending a diverse range of different meditations. | The unusual structure raises questions as to its historicity, which I will discuss in my final note, having noted relevant details along the way.

152. According to the commentary, Rāhula was now eighteen years old, situating this sutta several years after MN 61.

153. The commentary says that the Buddha admonished him because he was admiring his father's beauty, thinking that he looked similar. See MN 61:8.2, which similarly implies that vanity was a weakness of Rāhula.

154. He decides to meditate rather than eat for that day.

Venerable Sāriputta saw him sitting there,[155] and addressed him, 5.1
"Rāhula, develop mindfulness of breathing. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it's very fruitful and beneficial."

Then in the late afternoon, Rāhula came out of retreat, went to 6.1
the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

"Sir, how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to 7.1
be very fruitful and beneficial?"[156]

"Rāhula, the interior earth element is anything internal, personal, 8.1
that's hard, solid, and appropriated. This includes:[157] head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces; or anything else internal, personal, that's hard, solid, and appropriated. This is called the interior earth element. The interior earth element and the exterior earth element are just the earth element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the earth element, detaching the mind from the earth element.

155. Rāhula would have still been a novice (*sāmaṇera*) as he was not yet twenty. It was Sāriputta who ordained him (Kd 1:54.2.7).

156. The Pali text has a striking narrative form. The Buddha encourages Rāhula to contemplate form; then Sāriputta urges him in breath meditation; but when Rāhula asks the Buddha about that, the Buddha ignores him (until much later in the sutta) and instead expands on his instructions on form. The Chinese parallel (EA 17.1 at T ii 581c–582c) paints quite a different picture. Sāriputta does not appear at all, and it is the Buddha who instructs Rāhula when he is meditating, teaching him not just mindfulness of breathing but also the meditations on the ugliness of the body and the divine abidings. Then, when Rāhula approaches him later to ask further about mindfulness of breathing, the Buddha teaches him this right away, omitting entirely the long section on the elements. Both suttas agree on teaching Rāhula a range of meditations, but the Pali implies that he needed to mature his mind with a range of other meditations before attempting mindfulness of breathing, a situation of which Sāriputta was not aware.

157. This largely follows MN 140:14.4 and MN 28:4.1, the latter of which was taught by Sāriputta. There the expanded teaching is clearly situated within the contemplation of form, whereas here it is somewhat abrupt.

9.1 And what is the water element? The water element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior water element? Anything internal, personal, that's water, watery, and appropriated. This includes: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine; or anything else internal, personal, that's water, watery, and appropriated. This is called the interior water element. The interior water element and the exterior water element are just the water element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the water element, detaching the mind from the water element.

10.1 And what is the fire element? The fire element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior fire element? Anything internal, personal, that's fire, fiery, and appropriated. This includes: that which warms, that which ages, that which heats you up when feverish, that which properly digests food and drink; or anything else internal, personal, that's fire, fiery, and appropriated. This is called the interior fire element. The interior fire element and the exterior fire element are just the fire element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the fire element, detaching the mind from the fire element.

11.1 And what is the air element? The air element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior air element? Anything internal, personal, that's air, airy, and appropriated. This includes: winds that go up or down, winds in the belly or the bowels, winds that flow through the limbs, in-breaths and out-breaths; or anything else internal, personal, that's air, airy, and appropriated. This is called the interior air element. The interior air element and the exterior air element are just the air element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow

disillusioned with the air element, detaching the mind from the air element.

12.1 And what is the space element? The space element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior space element? Anything internal, personal, that's space, spacious, and appropriated. This includes: the ear canals, nostrils, and mouth; and the space for swallowing what is eaten and drunk, the space where it stays, and the space for excreting it from the nether regions; or anything else internal, personal, that's space, spacious, and appropriated.[158] This is called the interior space element. The interior space element and the exterior space element are just the space element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the space element, detaching the mind from the space element.

13.1 Rāhula, meditate like the earth. For when you meditate like the earth, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind. Suppose they were to toss both clean and unclean things on the earth, like feces, urine, spit, pus, and blood. The earth isn't horrified, repelled, and disgusted because of this.[159] In the same way, meditate like the earth. For when you meditate like the earth, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind.

14.1 Meditate like water. For when you meditate like water, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind. Suppose they were to wash both clean and unclean things in the water, like feces, urine, spit, pus, and blood. The water isn't horrified, repelled, and disgusted because of this. In the same way, meditate like water. For

158. The MS edition has an extended passage here that appears to be imported from the Abhidhamma (eg, Vb 3:10.5). It would translate as: "space, spacious, void, voidness, opening, openness, untouched, and appropriated by flesh and blood."

159. This simile and those that follow on water, fire, and wind are found at AN 9.11:4.1, where they are also spoken by Sāriputta.

when you meditate like water, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind.

15.1 Meditate like fire. For when you meditate like fire, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind. Suppose a fire were to burn both clean and unclean things, like feces, urine, spit, pus, and blood. The fire isn't horrified, repelled, and disgusted because of this. In the same way, meditate like fire. For when you meditate like fire, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind.

16.1 Meditate like wind. For when you meditate like wind, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind. Suppose the wind were to blow on both clean and unclean things, like feces, urine, spit, pus, and blood. The wind isn't horrified, repelled, and disgusted because of this. In the same way, meditate like the wind. For when you meditate like wind, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind.

17.1 Meditate like space. For when you meditate like space, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind. Just as space is not established anywhere,[160] in the same way, meditate like space. For when you meditate like space, pleasant and unpleasant contacts will not occupy your mind.

18.1 Meditate on love. For when you meditate on love any ill will will be given up.

19.1 Meditate on compassion. For when you meditate on compassion any cruelty will be given up.

20.1 Meditate on rejoicing. For when you meditate on rejoicing any discontent will be given up.

21.1 Meditate on equanimity. For when you meditate on equanimity any aversion will be given up.

22.1 Meditate on ugliness. For when you meditate on ugliness any lust will be given up.

160. This phrase is unique in the early texts. It is quoted by name in Mil 7.4.6:5.4.

Meditate on impermanence. For when you meditate on impermanence any conceit 'I am' will be given up. 23.1

Develop mindfulness of breathing. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it's very fruitful and beneficial. And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial? 24.1

It's when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out.[161] 25.1

Breathing in heavily they know: 'I'm breathing in heavily.' Breathing out heavily they know: 'I'm breathing out heavily.' Breathing in lightly they know: 'I'm breathing in lightly.' Breathing out lightly they know: 'I'm breathing out lightly.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the whole body.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the whole body.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in stilling the physical process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out stilling the physical process.' 26.1

They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing rapture.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing rapture.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing bliss.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing bliss.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the mental process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the mental process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in stilling the mental process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out stilling the mental process.' 27.1

They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in gladdening the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out gladdening the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in immersing the mind in samādhi.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out immersing the mind in samādhi.' They 28.1

161. For notes on this practice, see MN 118:17.2.

practice like this: 'I'll breathe in freeing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out freeing the mind.'

29.1 They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing impermanence.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing impermanence.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing fading away.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing fading away.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing cessation.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing cessation.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing letting go.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing letting go.'

30.1 Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated in this way, even as the final breaths cease they are known, not unknown."

30.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Rāhula approved what the Buddha said.[162]

162. The Chinese parallel presents a fuller picture of Rāhula's progress at this point, saying he went away, developed *jhānas*, and became an arahant, before returning to announce this to the Buddha, who praised him as the foremost of those desiring training. In the Pali, Rāhula's awakening occurs differently in MN 147, while he is praised for desiring training at AN 1.209:1.1. | It is not easy to assess the historical authenticity of this sutta. The Chinese version presents a more coherent narrative that may indicate less corruption. Yet it expands the ending, making the sutta a comprehensive account of Rāhula's progress. The collection from which it stems, the Ekottarikāgama, is the latest and least orthodox of extant Āgama collections, and it could be that it has streamlined a knotty narrative. The Pali, with its abrupt narrative transition and its implication that Sāriputta got his meditation instructions wrong, has more of the randomness of natural dialogue. Yet the fact that the portions extra to the Chinese include not only the person of Sāriputta, but also teachings associated with Sāriputta, is hard to explain as a loss of text. Perhaps both texts have been expanded from a simpler original where the Buddha teaches meditation to his son.

MN 63

The Shorter Discourse With Māluṅkyaputta

Cūḷamālukyasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then as Venerable Māluṅkyaputta was in private retreat this 2.1
thought came to his mind:[163]

"There are several convictions that the Buddha has left unde- 2.2
clared; he has set them aside and turned them down. For example: the cosmos is eternal, or not eternal, or finite, or infinite; the soul and the body are one and the same, or the soul is one thing, the body another; after death, a realized one still exists, or no longer exists, or both still exists and no longer exists, or neither still exists nor no longer exists. The Buddha does not explain these points to me. I don't endorse that, and do not accept it. I'll go to him and ask him about this. If he gives me a straight answer on any of these points, I will lead the spiritual life under him. If he does not explain these points to me, I shall resign the training and return to a lesser life."

Then in the late afternoon, Māluṅkyaputta came out of retreat 3.1
and went to the Buddha. He bowed, sat down to one side, and told the Buddha of his thoughts. He then continued:

163. Māluṅkyaputta was, according to Pali commentaries, the son of the lady Māluṅkyā of Kosala. Alternatively, Sanskrit dictionaries give *māluka* as the name of a people or a mixed caste, although I have not been able to trace any further details. His conversion is not recorded as he appears always as a monk in Pali. This discourse and MN 64 depict him as somewhat of a fool, but it seems that he persisted, and late in life sought teachings in meditation and ultimately realized arahantship, of which we have two different accounts (AN 4.257, SN 35.95). The latter contains an extensive set of verses attributed to him, which are repeated at Thag 16.5. A second set of his verses are at Thag 6.5.

3.2 "If the Buddha knows that the cosmos is eternal, please tell me. If you know that the cosmos is not eternal, tell me. If you don't know whether the cosmos is eternal or not, then it is straightforward to simply say: 'I neither know nor see.' If you know that the cosmos is finite, or infinite; that the soul and the body are one and the same, or is the soul one thing, the body another; that after death, a realized one still exists, or no longer exists, or both still exists and no longer exists, or neither still exists nor no longer exists, please tell me. If you don't know any of these things, then it is straightforward to simply say: 'I neither know nor see.'"

4.1 "What, Māluṅkyaputta, did I ever say to you: 'Come, Māluṅkyaputta, lead the spiritual life under me, and I will declare these things to you'?"

4.4 "No, sir."

4.5 "Or did you ever say to me: 'Sir, I will lead the spiritual life under the Buddha, and the Buddha will declare these things to me'?"

4.8 "No, sir."

4.9 "So it seems that I did not say to you: 'Come, Māluṅkyaputta, lead the spiritual life under me, and I will declare these things to you.' And you never said to me: 'Sir, I will lead the spiritual life under the Buddha, and the Buddha will declare these things to me.' In that case, you futile man, who are you and what do you disavow?

5.1 Suppose someone were to say this: 'I will not lead the spiritual life under the Buddha until the Buddha declares to me that the cosmos is eternal, or that the cosmos is not eternal … or that after death a realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists.' That would still remain undeclared by the Realized One, and meanwhile that individual would die.

5.6 Suppose a man was struck by an arrow thickly smeared with poison. His friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat him. But the man would say: 'I won't extract this arrow as long as I don't know whether the man who wounded me was an

aristocrat, a brahmin, a peasant, or a menial.'[164] He'd say: 'I won't extract this arrow as long as I don't know the following things about the man who wounded me: his name and clan; whether he's tall, short, or medium; whether his skin is black, brown, or dingy; and whether he comes from such-and-such village, town, or city. I won't extract this arrow as long as I don't know whether the bow that wounded me was straight or recurved;[165] whether the bow-string is made of swallow-wort fibre, sunn hemp fibre, sinew, sanseveria fibre, or spurge fibre;[166] whether the shaft is made from a bush or a plantation tree; whether the shaft was fitted with feathers from a vulture, a heron, a hawk, a peacock, or a stork; whether the shaft was bound with sinews of a cow, a buffalo, a black lion, or an ape;[167] and whether the arrowhead was spiked, razor-tipped, barbed, made of iron or a calf's tooth, or lancet-shaped.'[168] That man would still not have learned these things, and meanwhile they'd die.

In the same way, suppose someone was to say: 'I will not lead the 5.31
spiritual life under the Buddha until the Buddha declares to me that the cosmos is eternal, or that the cosmos is not eternal … or that after death a realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists.' That

164. "Extract this arrow" (*imaṁ sallaṁ āharissāmi*): in his Ayurvedic text Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṁhitā, Vāgbhaṭa devotes the entirety of chapter 1.28 to this procedure (*śalyāharaṇavidhi*).

165. It would appear that *dhanu* is the general word for "bow", of which *cāpa* and *kodaṇḍa* are specialized varieties. These bows appear with others in a list of weapons at Arthaśāstra 2.18.8. While it is not clear what these were exactly, *kodaṇḍa* is sometimes used for "eyebrows", suggesting that the bow of that name was of the recurve type favored by horsemen, and the *cāpa* by contrast may have been straight.

166. The identifications for these are from Ñāṇatusita's notes to Bodhi's translation.

167. The animals *bherava* ("terrifier", variant *roruva* "roarer") and *semhāra* are otherwise unknown. The commentary explains them as "black lion" and "monkey".

168. Again from Ñāṇatusita. Note that calves lose their teeth, and the roots are evidently quite sharp.

would still remain undeclared by the Realized One, and meanwhile that individual would die.

6.1 It's not true that if there were the view 'the cosmos is eternal' there would be the living of the spiritual life.[169] It's not true that if there were the view 'the cosmos is not eternal' there would be the living of the spiritual life. When there is the view that the cosmos is eternal or that the cosmos is not eternal, there is rebirth, there is old age, there is death, and there is sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. And it is the defeat of these things in this very life that I advocate. It's not true that if there were the view 'the cosmos is finite' … 'the cosmos is infinite' … 'the soul and the body are one and the same' … 'the soul is one thing, the body another' … 'a realized one still exists after death' … 'a realized one no longer exists after death' … 'a realized one both still exists and no longer exists after death' … 'a realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists after death' there would be the living of the spiritual life. When there are any of these views there is rebirth, there is old age, there is death, and there is sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. And it is the defeat of these things in this very life that I advocate.

7.1 So, Māluṅkyaputta, you should remember what I have not declared as undeclared, and what I have declared as declared. And what have I not declared? I have not declared the following: 'the cosmos is eternal,' 'the cosmos is not eternal,' 'the cosmos is finite,' 'the world is infinite,' 'the soul and the body are one and the same,' 'the soul is one thing, the body another,' 'a realized one still exists after death,' 'a realized one no longer exists after death,' 'a realized one both still exists and no longer exists after death,' 'a realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists after death.'

8.1 And why haven't I declared these things? Because they aren't beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They

169. This is a double conditional, the sense being that if the pre-condition is met (locative absolute), the subsequent act would follow (conditional). The form echoes Māluṅkyaputta's conditions, which is why the syntax here is more convoluted than in similar cases elsewhere.

don't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That's why I haven't declared them.

And what have I declared? I have declared the following: 'this 9.1
is suffering,' 'this is the origin of suffering,' 'this is the cessation of suffering,' 'this is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.'

And why have I declared these things? Because they are beneficial 10.1
and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That's why I have declared them. So, Māluṅkyaputta, you should remember what I have not declared as undeclared, and what I have declared as declared."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Māluṅkyaputta 10.6
approved what the Buddha said.

MN 64

The Longer Discourse With Māluṅkya

Mahāmālukyasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, do you remember the five lower fetters taught by me?"

2.2 When he said this, Venerable Māluṅkyaputta said to him, "Sir, I remember them."

2.4 "But how do you remember them?"

2.5 "I remember the lower fetters taught by the Buddha as follows: substantialist view,[170] doubt, misapprehension of precepts and observances, sensual desire, and ill will. That's how I remember the five lower fetters taught by the Buddha."

3.1 "Who on earth do you remember being taught the five lower fetters in that way?[171] Wouldn't the wanderers of other religions fault you using the simile of the infant? For a little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'substantial reality', so how could substantialist view possibly arise in them? Yet the underlying tendency to substantialist

170. As at SN 45.179, AN 10.13, etc. They are "lower fetters" because they bind sentient beings to rebirth in lower planes.

171. Given that Māluṅkyaputta got the answer right, it is not clear why the Buddha adopted the reproving tone that he would normally use in response to a dangerously mistaken view (MN 22:6.1). The commentary explains that he had the view that fetters were only present when active, hence the Buddha's simile to follow. Regardless, as compared to MN 63, Māluṅkyaputta is making progress, as he gives a serious answer to an important question and appears to no longer be on the verge of disrobing.

view still lies within them. A little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'teachings', so how could doubt about the teachings possibly arise in them? Yet the underlying tendency to doubt still lies within them. A little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'precepts', so how could misapprehension of precepts and observances possibly arise in them? Yet the underlying tendency to misapprehension of precepts and observances still lies within them. A little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'sensual pleasures', so how could desire for sensual pleasures possibly arise in them? Yet the underlying tendency to sensual desire still lies within them. A little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'sentient beings', so how could ill will for sentient beings possibly arise in them? Yet the underlying tendency to ill will still lies within them. Wouldn't the wanderers of other religions fault you using the simile of the infant?"[172]

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Now is 4.1
the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! May the Buddha teach the five lower fetters. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

"Well then, Ānanda, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 4.4

"Yes, sir," Ānanda replied. The Buddha said this: 4.5

"Ānanda, take an unlearned ordinary person who has not seen 5.1
the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons. Their heart is overcome and mired in substantialist view, and they don't truly understand the escape from substantialist view that has arisen. That substantialist view is entrenched in them, not eliminated: it is a lower fetter.

Their heart is overcome and mired in doubt, and they don't truly 5.5
understand the escape from doubt that has arisen. That doubt is entrenched in them, not eliminated: it is a lower fetter.

172. For other accounts of infant development in relation to defilements, see AN 10.99:6.2 and MN 38:26.1.

5.8 Their heart is overcome and mired in misapprehension of precepts and observances, and they don't truly understand the escape from misapprehension of precepts and observances that has arisen. That misapprehension of precepts and observances is entrenched in them, not eliminated: it is a lower fetter.

5.11 Their heart is overcome and mired in sensual desire, and they don't truly understand the escape from sensual desire that has arisen. That sensual desire is entrenched in them, not eliminated: it is a lower fetter.

5.14 Their heart is overcome and mired in ill will, and they don't truly understand the escape from ill will that has arisen. That ill will is entrenched in them, not eliminated: it is a lower fetter.

6.1 But a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. Their heart is not overcome and mired in substantialist view, and they truly understand the escape from substantialist view that has arisen. That substantialist view, along with any underlying tendency to it, is given up in them.

6.4 Their heart is not overcome and mired in doubt, and they truly understand the escape from doubt that has arisen. That doubt, along with any underlying tendency to it, is given up in them.

6.7 Their heart is not overcome and mired in misapprehension of precepts and observances, and they truly understand the escape from misapprehension of precepts and observances that has arisen. That misapprehension of precepts and observances, along with any underlying tendency to it, is given up in them.

6.10 Their heart is not overcome and mired in sensual desire, and they truly understand the escape from sensual desire that has arisen. That sensual desire, along with any underlying tendency to it, is given up in them.

6.13 Their heart is not overcome and mired in ill will, and they truly understand the escape from ill will that has arisen. That ill will, along with any underlying tendency to it, is given up in them.

There is a path and a practice for giving up the five lower fetters. 6.16
It's not possible to know or see or give up the five lower fetters without relying on that path and that practice. Suppose there was a large tree standing with heartwood. It's not possible to cut out the heartwood without having cut through the bark and the softwood. In the same way, there is a path and a practice for giving up the five lower fetters. It's not possible to know or see or give up the five lower fetters without relying on that path and that practice.

But it is possible to know and see and give up the five lower fetters 7.1
by relying on that path and that practice.

Suppose there was a large tree standing with heartwood. It is 8.1
possible to cut out the heartwood after having cut through the bark and the softwood. In the same way, there is a path and a practice for giving up the five lower fetters. It is possible to know and see and give up the five lower fetters by relying on that path and that practice. Suppose the Ganges River was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Then along comes a feeble person, who thinks: 'By swimming with my arms I'll safely cross over to the far shore of the Ganges.' But they're not able to do so. In the same way, when the Dhamma is being taught to them for the cessation of substantial reality, those whose mind does not leap forth, gain confidence, settle down, and become decided should be regarded as being like that feeble person. Suppose the Ganges River was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Then along comes a strong person, who thinks: 'By swimming with my arms I'll safely cross over to the far shore of the Ganges.' And they are able to do so.

In the same way, when the Dhamma is being taught to them for the 8.13
cessation of substantial reality, those whose mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided should be regarded as being like that strong person.

And what, Ānanda, is the path and the practice for giving up the 9.1
five lower fetters? It's when a mendicant—due to the seclusion from attachments, the giving up of unskillful qualities, and the complete settling of physical discomforts—quite secluded from sensual plea-

sures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[173] They contemplate the phenomena there—included in form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness—as impermanent, as suffering, as diseased, as a boil, as a dart, as gloom, as an affliction, as alien, as breaking apart, as empty, as not-self.[174] They turn their mind away from those things, and apply it to the element free of death: 'This is peaceful; this is sublime—that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment.' Abiding in that they attain the ending of defilements. If they don't attain the ending of defilements, with the ending of the five lower fetters they're reborn spontaneously, because of their passion and love for that meditation. They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world. This is the path and the practice for giving up the five lower fetters.

10-12.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. They contemplate the phenomena there—included in form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness—as impermanent … They turn their mind away from those things … If they don't attain the ending of defilements, they're reborn spontaneously … and are not liable to return from that world. This too is the path and the practice for giving up the five lower fetters.

13.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite',

173. The opening clause is a unique addition to the standard *jhāna* formula. | In later texts, "seclusion from attachments" (*upadhiviveka*) signified arahantship (Mnd 14:10.1), but here it must have a less exalted sense. Perhaps it refers to leaving behind the material things to which one is attached (SN 1.2). | For "bodily discomfort", see MN 127:16.7.

174. This shows the development of insight based directly on the absorption.

enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. They contemplate the phenomena there—included in feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness—as impermanent … They turn their mind away from those things … If they don't attain the ending of defilements, they're reborn spontaneously … and are not liable to return from that world. This too is the path and the practice for giving up the five lower fetters.

14.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. They contemplate the phenomena there—included in feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness—as impermanent … They turn their mind away from those things … If they don't attain the ending of defilements, they're reborn spontaneously … and are not liable to return from that world. This too is the path and the practice for giving up the five lower fetters.

15.1 Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. They contemplate the phenomena there—included in feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness—as impermanent … They turn their mind away from those things … If they don't attain the ending of defilements, they're reborn spontaneously … and are not liable to return from that world. This too is the path and the practice for giving up the five lower fetters."[175]

16.1 "Sir, if this is the path and the practice for giving up the five lower fetters, how then are some mendicants here released in heart while others are released by wisdom?"[176]

16.2 "In that case, I say it is the disparity of their faculties."[177]

175. The final formless attainment is omitted as at MN 52:14.7.

176. "Released in heart" and "released by wisdom" indicate an emphasis on either immersion or wisdom respectively.

177. The Buddha makes the same point at SN 48.13 and SN 48.16. For more on the "disparity of faculties", see MN 66:14.6.

16.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

MN 65

With Bhaddāli

Bhaddālisutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I eat my food in one sitting per day.[178] Doing so, I find that I'm healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. You too should eat your food in one sitting per day. Doing so, you'll find that you're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably." 2.1

When he said this, Venerable Bhaddāli said to the Buddha,[179] "Sir, I'm not going to attempt to eat my food in one sitting per day. For when eating once a day I might feel remorse and regret."[180] 3.1

"Well then, Bhaddāli, eat one part of the meal in the place where you're invited, and bring the rest back to eat. Eating this way, too, you will sustain yourself."[181] 4.1

178. The practice of eating one meal a day is encouraged but not required by Vinaya. At MN 21:7.4 the Buddha reminisced about the days when he merely needed to mention it and monks would follow suit. | In the related story at MN 70:1.3, the Buddha encouraged not eating at night, to which monks also objected, occasioning the laying down of a Vinaya rule (Bu Pc 37), although at least some of the monks later came to regret their objections, recognizing that the Buddha had acted for their welfare (MN 66:6.4).

179. Bhaddāli does not appear elsewhere in early texts.

180. The commentary says that he feared he would not be able to sustain his monkhood. Chinese parallels at this point indicate that he feared discomfort (EA 49.7 at T ii 800b29, T 1425 at T xxii 359b14).

181. *Ekāsano* here in Mahāsaṅgīti edition appears superfluous, as it is missing in most editions.

4.3 "Sir, I'm not going to attempt to eat that way, either. For when eating that way I might also feel remorse and regret." Then, as this rule was being laid down by the Buddha and the Saṅgha was undertaking it, Bhaddāli announced he would not attempt to keep it. Then for the whole of that three months Bhaddāli would not see the Buddha face to face, as happens when someone doesn't fulfill the training according to the Teacher's instructions.[182]

5.1 At that time several mendicants were making a robe for the Buddha, thinking that when his robe was finished and the three months of the rains residence had passed the Buddha would set out wandering.

6.1 Then Bhaddāli went up to those mendicants, and exchanged greetings with them. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The mendicants said to Bhaddāli, "Reverend Bhaddāli, this robe is being made for the Buddha. When it's finished and the three months of the rains residence have passed the Buddha will set out wandering. Come on, Bhaddāli, learn your lesson. Don't make it hard for yourself later on."

7.1 "Yes, reverends," Bhaddāli replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "I made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of me that, as this rule was being laid down by the Buddha and the Saṅgha was undertaking it, I announced I would not attempt to keep it. Please, sir, accept my mistake for what it is, so I will restrain myself in future."

8.1 "Indeed, Bhaddāli, you made a mistake. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of you that, as this rule was being laid down by the Buddha

182. "Would not see the Buddha face to face" is a loose rendering of *na bhagavato sammukhībhāvaṁ adāsi*. The idiom can be captured more literally at DN 3:2.6.2; when King Pasenadi meets Pokkharasāti, he does not "grant him an audience face to face" (*tassa … sammukhībhāvampi na dadāti*) but only behind a curtain.

and the Saṅgha was undertaking it, you announced you would not attempt to keep it.[183]

And you didn't realize this situation: 'The Buddha is staying in 9.1
Sāvatthī, and he'll know me as the mendicant named Bhaddāli who doesn't fulfill the training according to the Teacher's instructions.'

And you didn't realize this situation: 'Several monks have com- 9.5
menced the rains retreat in Sāvatthī … several nuns have commenced the rains retreat in Sāvatthī … several laymen reside in Sāvatthī … several laywomen reside in Sāvatthī, and they'll know me as the mendicant named Bhaddāli who doesn't fulfill the training according to the Teacher's instructions. …

Several ascetics and brahmins who follow various other religions 9.21
have commenced the rains retreat in Sāvatthī, and they'll know me as the mendicant named Bhaddāli, one of the senior disciples of Gotama, who doesn't fulfill the training according to the Teacher's instructions.' You also didn't realize this situation."

"I made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of 10.1
me that, as this rule was being laid down by the Buddha and the Saṅgha was undertaking it, I announced I would not attempt to keep it. Please, sir, accept my mistake for what it is, so I will restrain myself in future."

"Indeed, Bhaddāli, you made a mistake. It was foolish, stupid, and 10.3
unskillful of you that, as this rule was being laid down by the Buddha and the Saṅgha was undertaking it, you announced you would not attempt to keep it.

What do you think, Bhaddāli? Suppose I was to say this to a 11.1
mendicant who is freed both ways:[184] 'Please, mendicant, be a bridge for me to cross over the mud.' Would they cross over themselves, or struggle to get out of it, or just say no?"

"No, sir." 11.4

183. When someone genuinely confesses, the Buddha makes a point to acknowledge what they had done, without dismissing it and thereby discounting the inner work they had achieved to get to this point.

184. This set of seven noble disciples is detailed at MN 70:14.1.

11.5 "What do you think, Bhaddāli? Suppose I was to say the same thing to a mendicant who is freed by wisdom, or a direct witness, or attained to view, or freed by faith, or a follower of teachings, or a follower by faith: 'Please, mendicant, be a bridge for me to cross over the mud.' Would they cross over themselves, or struggle to get out of it, or just say no?"

11.13 "No, sir."

12.1 "What do you think, Bhaddāli? At that time were you freed both ways, freed by wisdom, a direct witness, attained to view, freed by faith, a follower of teachings, or a follower by faith?"

12.3 "No, sir."

12.4 "Weren't you vacuous, hollow, and mistaken?"

13.1 "Yes, sir.

13.2 I made a mistake … Please, sir, accept my mistake for what it is, so I will restrain myself in future."

13.4 "Indeed, Bhaddāli, you made a mistake. … But since you have recognized your mistake for what it is, and have dealt with it properly, I accept it. For it is growth in the training of the Noble One to recognize a mistake for what it is, deal with it properly, and commit to restraint in the future.

14.1 Bhaddāli, take a mendicant who doesn't fulfill the training according to the Teacher's instructions. They think, 'Why don't I frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. Hopefully I'll realize a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.' So they frequent a secluded lodging. While they're living withdrawn, they're reprimanded by the Teacher, by sensible spiritual companions after examination, by deities, and by themselves. Being reprimanded in this way, they don't realize any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. Why is that? Because that's how it is when someone doesn't fulfill the training according to the Teacher's instructions.

But take a mendicant who does fulfill the training according to 15.1
the Teacher's instructions. They think, 'Why don't I frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. Hopefully I'll realize a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.' They frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. While they're living withdrawn, they're not reprimanded by the Teacher, by sensible spiritual companions after examination, by deities, or by themselves. Not being reprimanded in this way, they realize a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful 16.1
qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. Why is that? Because that's what happens when someone fulfills the training according to the Teacher's instructions.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected 17.1
are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. Why is that? Because that's what happens when someone fulfills the training according to the Teacher's instructions.

Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters 17.4
and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' Why is that? Because that's what happens when someone fulfills the training according to the Teacher's instructions.

Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the 17.7
disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. Why is that? Because that's

what happens when someone fulfills the training according to the Teacher's instructions.

18.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives, that is, one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. … They recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. Why is that? Because that's what happens when someone fulfills the training according to the Teacher's instructions.

19.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. … they're reborn in the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. … they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman … they understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. Why is that? Because that's what happens when someone fulfills the training according to the Teacher's instructions.

20.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of

defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'.

Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the de- 21.1
filements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been 21.3
completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.' Why is that? Because that's what happens when someone fulfills the training according to the Teacher's instructions."

When he said this, Venerable Bhaddāli said to the Buddha, "What 22.1
is the cause, sir, what is the reason why they punish some monk, repeatedly pressuring him?[185] And what is the cause, what is the reason why they don't similarly punish another monk, repeatedly pressuring him?"

"Take a monk who is a frequent offender with many offenses. 23.1
When admonished by the monks, he dodges the issue, distracting the discussion with irrelevant points. He displays annoyance, hate, and bitterness. He doesn't proceed properly, he doesn't fall in line, he doesn't proceed to get past it, and he doesn't say: 'I'll do what pleases the Saṅgha.' In such a case, the monks say: 'Reverends, this monk is a frequent offender, with many offenses. When admonished by the monks, he dodges the issue, distracting the discussion with irrelevant points. He displays annoyance, hate, and bitterness. He doesn't proceed properly, he doesn't fall in line, he doesn't proceed to get past it, and he doesn't say: "I'll do what pleases the Saṅgha." It'd be good for the venerables to examine this monk in such a way that this disciplinary issue is not quickly settled.' And that's what they do.

Take some other monk who is a frequent offender with many 24.1
offenses. When admonished by the monks, he doesn't dodge the

185. Read *pavayha* per MN 122:27.3 for Mahāsaṅgīti's *pasayha* here. | Vinaya matters are dealt with separately by the monks and nuns, hence I use "monk" rather than "mendicant" here.

issue, distracting the discussion with irrelevant points. He doesn't display annoyance, hate, and bitterness. He proceeds properly, he falls in line, he proceeds to get past it, and he says: 'I'll do what pleases the Saṅgha.' In such a case, the monks say: 'Reverends, this monk is a frequent offender, with many offenses. When admonished by the monks, he doesn't dodge the issue, distracting the discussion with irrelevant points. He doesn't display annoyance, hate, and bitterness. He proceeds properly, he falls in line, he proceeds to get past it, and he says: "I'll do what pleases the Saṅgha." It'd be good for the venerables to examine this monk in such a way that this disciplinary issue is quickly settled.' And that's what they do.

25.1 Take some other monk who is an occasional offender without many offenses. When admonished by the monks, he dodges the issue … In such a case, the monks say: 'Reverends, this monk is an occasional offender without many offenses. When admonished by the monks, he dodges the issue … It'd be good for the venerables to examine this monk in such a way that this disciplinary issue is not quickly settled.' And that's what they do.

26.1 Take some other monk who is an occasional offender without many offenses. When admonished by the monks, he doesn't dodge the issue … In such a case, the monks say: 'Reverends, this monk is an occasional offender without many offenses. When admonished by the monks, he doesn't dodge the issue … It'd be good for the venerables to examine this monk in such a way that this disciplinary issue is quickly settled.' And that's what they do.

27.1 Take some other monk who gets by with mere faith and fondness. In such a case, the monks say: 'Reverends, this monk gets by with mere faith and fondness. Suppose we punish him, repeatedly pressuring him—[186] no, let him not lose what little faith and fondness he has!'

186. This reads like a broken sentence; they got half way through, then realized the implications of what they were saying.

Suppose there was a person with one eye. Their friends and col- 28.1
leagues, relatives and kin would protect that one eye: 'Let them not lose the one eye that they have!' In the same way, some monk gets by with mere faith and fondness. In such a case, the monks say: 'Reverends, this monk gets by with mere faith and fondness. Suppose we punish him, repeatedly pressuring him—no, let him not lose what little faith and love he has!' This is the cause, this is the reason why they punish some monk, repeatedly pressuring him. And this is the cause, this is the reason why they don't similarly punish another monk, repeatedly pressuring him."

"What is the cause, sir, what is the reason why there used to be 29.1
fewer training rules but more enlightened mendicants?[187] And what is the cause, what is the reason why these days there are more training rules and fewer enlightened mendicants?"

"That's how it is, Bhaddāli. When sentient beings are in decline 30.1
and the true teaching is disappearing there are more training rules and fewer enlightened mendicants. The Teacher does not lay down training rules for disciples as long as certain defiling influences have not appeared in the Saṅgha.[188] But when such defiling influences appear in the Saṅgha, the Teacher lays down training rules for disciples to protect against them.

And they don't appear until the Saṅgha has attained a great size, 31.1
an abundance of material support and fame, learning, and seniority. But when the Saṅgha has attained these things, then such defiling influences appear in the Saṅgha, and the Teacher lays down training rules for disciples to protect against them.

There were only a few of you there at the time when I taught 32.1
the exposition on the simile of the thoroughbred colt.[189] Do you remember that, Bhaddāli?"

187. This question was also asked by Kassapa at SN 16.13.

188. This echoes the Buddha's words to Sāriputta at Bu Pj 1:3.4.6.

189. While there are many suttas on a thoroughbred, the simile taught here does not appear elsewhere in the Pali canon. Perhaps this is in reference to MN 107:3.2, which, however, only has one line in common.

32.3 "No, sir."

32.4 "What do you believe the reason for that is?"

32.5 "Sir, it's surely because for a long time now I haven't fulfilled the training according to the Teacher's instructions."

32.6 "That's not the only reason, Bhaddāli. Rather, for a long time I have encompassed your mind and known: 'While I'm teaching, this futile man doesn't pay attention, apply the mind, concentrate wholeheartedly, or actively listen to the teaching.' Still, Bhaddāli, I shall teach the exposition on the simile of the thoroughbred colt. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

32.11 "Yes, sir," Bhaddāli replied. The Buddha said this:

33.1 "Suppose a deft horse trainer were to obtain a fine thoroughbred. First of all he'd make it get used to wearing the bit. Because it has not done this before, it still resorts to some twists, ducks, and dodges. But with regular and gradual practice its bad behavior is extinguished.[190]

33.4 When it has done this, the horse trainer next makes it get used to wearing the harness. Because it has not done this before, it still resorts to some twists, ducks, and dodges. But with regular and gradual practice its bad behavior is extinguished.

33.7 When it has done this, the horse trainer next makes it get used to walking in procession, circling, prancing, galloping, charging, the protocols and customs of court, and in the very best speed, fleetness, and camaraderie.[191] Because it has not done this before, it still resorts to some twists, ducks, and dodges. But with regular and gradual practice its bad behavior is extinguished.

190. For the phrase *tasmiṁ ṭhāne parinibbāyati* ("its bad behavior is extinguished", literally "it is extinguished regarding that state") I follow the commentary, which specifies that *tasmiṁ ṭhāne* refers to the twists and dodges that cease rather than the good habits that are developed.

191. *Rājaguṇe* occurs in Mil 5.1.4, where it distinguishes royal officials from ordinary ones. I take it and *rājavaṁse* to refer to "the protocols and traditions of court" rather than "kingly qualities".

When it has done this, the horse trainer next rewards it with a grooming and a rub down. A fine royal thoroughbred with these ten factors is worthy of a king, fit to serve a king, and reckoned as a factor of kingship. 33.10

In the same way, a mendicant with ten qualities is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of veneration with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world. What ten? It's when a mendicant has an adept's right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right immersion, right knowledge, and right freedom. A mendicant with these ten qualities is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of veneration with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world." 34.1

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Bhaddāli approved what the Buddha said. 34.5

MN 66

The Simile of the Quail

Laṭukikopamasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Aṅguttarāpans, near the town of theirs named Āpaṇa.

2.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Āpaṇa for alms. He wandered for alms in Āpaṇa. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to a certain forest grove for the day's meditation. Having plunged deep into it, he sat at the root of a certain tree to meditate.

3.1 Venerable Udāyī also robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Āpaṇa for alms. He wandered for alms in Āpaṇa. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to that forest grove for the day's meditation. Having plunged deep into it, he sat at the root of a certain tree to meditate. Then as Venerable Udāyī was in private retreat this thought came to his mind:

4.1 "The Buddha has rid us of so many things that bring suffering and gifted us so many things that bring happiness! He has rid us of so many unskillful things and gifted us so many skillful things!"

5.1 Then in the late afternoon, Udāyī came out of retreat and went to the Buddha. He bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

6.1 "Just now, sir, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: 'The Buddha has rid us of so many things that bring suffering and gifted us so many things that bring happiness! He has rid us of so many unskillful things and gifted us so many skillful things!'

For we used to eat at dusk, at daybreak, and at the wrong time 6.4
of day.[192] But then there came a time when the Buddha addressed the mendicants, saying, 'Please, mendicants, give up that meal at the wrong time of day.' At that, sir, we became sad and upset, 'But these faithful householders give us delicious fresh and cooked foods at the wrong time of day. And the Blessed One tells us to give it up! The Holy One tells us to let it go!' But when we considered our fondness and respect for the Buddha, and our sense of conscience and prudence, we gave up that meal at the wrong time of day. Then we ate at dusk and daybreak.

But then there came a time when the Buddha addressed the men- 6.11
dicants, saying, 'Please, mendicants, give up that meal at the wrong time of night.'[193] At that, sir, we became sad and upset, 'But that's considered the more delicious of the two meals. And the Blessed One tells us to give it up! The Holy One tells us to let it go!' Once it so happened that a certain person got some soup during the day. He said, 'Come, let's set this aside; we'll enjoy it together this evening.' Nearly all meals are prepared at night, only a few in the day. But when we considered our love and respect for the Buddha, and our sense of conscience and prudence, we gave up that meal at the wrong time of night.

In the past, mendicants went wandering for alms in the dark of 6.19
the night. They walked into a swamp, or fell into a sewer, or collided with a thorn bush, or collided with a sleeping cow, or encountered youths escaping a crime or on their way to commit one, or were invited by a lady to commit a lewd act.[194]

192. This sutta distinguishes the "wrong time of day", i.e. the afternoon, and the "wrong time of night", i.e. any time when it is dark. The common expression "eating at night and at the wrong time" (MN 27:13.9) thus refers to both these periods. The Vinaya rule defines *vikāla* for the purpose of this rule to include both afternoon and nighttime (Bu Pc 37:2.1.5), and it is this understanding that prevails in the tradition.

193. Recorded at MN 70:1.3.

194. "Youths escaping a crime or on their way to commit one" (*katakammehipi akatakammehipi*) follows the commentary. See also AN 5.77:5.3.

6.20 Once it so happened that I was wandering for alms in the dark of the night. A woman washing a pot saw me by a flash of lightning. Startled, she cried out, 'Woe is me! It's a damn goblin!'[195]

6.24 When she said this, I said to her, 'Sister, I am no goblin. I'm a mendicant waiting for alms.'

6.27 'Die, mendicant's father! Die, mendicant's mother![196] Better to have your belly sliced open with a sharp meat cleaver than to wander for alms in the dark of night for the sake of your belly!'

6.29 Recollecting that, I thought, 'The Buddha has rid us of so many things that bring suffering and gifted us so many things that bring happiness! He has rid us of so many unskillful things and gifted us so many skillful things!'"

7.1 "This is exactly what happens when some futile people are told by me to give something up. They say,[197] 'What, such a trivial, trifling thing as this? This ascetic is much too strict!' They don't give it up, and they nurse bitterness toward me; and for the mendicants who want to train, that becomes a strong, firm, stout bond, a tie that has not rotted, and a heavy yoke.[198]

8.1 Suppose a quail was tied with a vine, and was waiting there to be injured, caged, or killed. Would it be right to say that, for that quail, that vine is weak, feeble, rotten, and insubstantial?"

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195. Goblins (*pisāca*) and other fiends roamed freely at night, kept at bay only by means of potent spells (eg. Rig Veda 1.133.5a, Atharva Veda 1.16, 5.29, 6.32, 8.6). | This interjection is found at Ja 525:2.1, Ja 547:62.3, and Kd 15:10.2.4. In all cases read *abhuṁ me*; also accept the Vinaya reading *pisāco vatāyan*. Rig Vedic *abhva* means "formless, void", while in Atharva Veda 4.17.5 and 7.23.1 it describes a fiend who is to be banished.

196. *Mārī* is obscure, but the Chinese parallel is framed as a curse, which makes sense for the Pali too (MA 192 at T i 741b9). Agni Purāna 137 provides a *mahāmārī* spell for bringing death. | *Ātu* is explained in the commentary as "father". The Chinese parallel agrees that both parents are meant. | For the uttering of a curse upon the relatives of the cursed, see Atharva Veda 2.32.4 (*hatamātā*), 5.29.6.

197. The idiom *evameva pana* has an adversarial sense.

198. The "mendicants who want to train" are those who are good-hearted and sincere in their practice, but still struggle to overcome defilements.

"No, sir. For that quail, that vine is a strong, firm, stout bond, a tie 8.5
that has not rotted, and a heavy yoke."

"In the same way, when some futile people are told by me to give 8.7
something up, they say, 'What, such a trivial, trifling thing as this? This ascetic is much too strict!' They don't give it up, and they nurse bitterness toward me; and for the mendicants who want to train, that becomes a strong, firm, stout bond, a tie that has not rotted, and a heavy yoke.

But when some gentlemen are told by me to give something up, 9.1
they say, 'What, we just have to give up such a trivial, trifling thing as this, when the Blessed One tells us to give it up, the Holy One tells us to let it go?' They give it up, and they don't nurse bitterness toward me; and when the mendicants who want to train have given that up, they live relaxed, unruffled, surviving on charity, their hearts free as a wild deer. For them, that bond is weak, feeble, rotten, and insubstantial.

Suppose there was a royal bull elephant with tusks like draft-poles, 10.1
able to draw a heavy load, pedigree and battle-hardened. And it was bound with a strong harness. But just by twisting its body a little, it would break apart its bonds and go wherever it wants. Would it be right to say that, for that bull elephant, that strong harness is a strong, firm, stout bond, a tie that has not rotted, and a heavy yoke?"

"No, sir. For that bull elephant, that strong harness is weak, feeble, 10.5
rotten, and insubstantial."

"In the same way, when some gentlemen are told by me to give 10.7
something up, they say, 'What, we just have to give up such a trivial, trifling thing as this, when the Blessed One tells us to give it up, the Holy One tells us to let it go?' They give it up, and they don't nurse bitterness toward me; and when the mendicants who want to train have given that up, they live relaxed, unruffled, surviving on charity, their hearts free as a wild deer. For them, that bond is weak, feeble, rotten, and insubstantial.

Suppose there was a poor man, with few possessions and little 11.1
wealth. He had a single broken-down hovel open to the crows, not

the best sort; a single broken-down couch, not the best sort; a single pot for storing grain, not the best sort; and a single wifey, not the best sort. He'd see a mendicant sitting in meditation in the cool shade, their hands and feet well washed after eating a satisfying meal.[199] He'd think, 'The ascetic life is so very pleasant! The ascetic life is so very healthy! If only I could shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' But he's not able to give up his broken-down hovel, his broken-down couch, his pot for storing grain, or his wifey—none of which are the best sort—in order to go forth. Would it be right to say that, for that man, those bonds are weak, feeble, rotten, and insubstantial?"

11.12 "No, sir. For that man, they are a strong, firm, stout bond, a tie that has not rotted, and a heavy yoke."

11.15 "In the same way, when some futile people are told by me to give something up, they say, 'What, such a trivial, trifling thing as this? This ascetic is much too strict!' They don't give it up, and they nurse bitterness toward me; and for the mendicants who want to train, that becomes a strong, firm, stout bond, a tie that has not rotted, and a heavy yoke.

12.1 Suppose there was a rich householder or householder's child, affluent, and wealthy. He had a vast amount of gold ingots, grain, fields, lands, wives, and male and female bondservants.[200] He'd see a mendicant sitting in meditation in the cool shade, their hands and feet well washed after eating a satisfying meal. He'd think, 'The ascetic life is so very pleasant! The ascetic life is so very healthy! If only I could shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' And he is able to give up his vast amount of gold ingots, grain, fields, lands, wives, and male and female bondservants in order to go forth. Would it be right to

199. A similar phrase is attributed to Sāriputta in the Jain Isibhāsiyāiṁ 38.2.

200. Several sizes of gold coins were reckoned in ancient India, of which the *nikkha* ("gold ingot") was the largest.

say that, for that householder, they are a strong, firm, stout bond, a tie that has not rotted, and a heavy yoke?"

"No, sir. For that householder, those bonds are weak, feeble, 12.10
rotten, and insubstantial."

"In the same way, when some gentlemen are told by me to give 12.13
something up, they say, 'What, we just have to give up such a trivial, trifling thing as this, when the Blessed One tells us to give it up, the Holy One tells us to let it go?' They give it up, and they don't nurse bitterness toward me; and when the mendicants who want to train have given that up, they live relaxed, unruffled, surviving on charity, their hearts free as a wild deer. For them, that bond is weak, feeble, rotten, and insubstantial.

Udāyī, these four individuals are found in the world. What four? 13.1

Take a certain individual practicing to give up and let go of at- 14.1
tachments. As they do so, memories and thoughts connected with attachments beset them. They tolerate them and don't give them up, dispel them, eliminate them, and obliterate them. I call this individual 'fettered', not 'detached'. Why is that? Because I understand the disparity of faculties as it applies to this individual.[201]

Take another individual practicing to give up and let go of at- 15.1
tachments. As they do so, memories and thoughts connected with attachments beset them. They don't tolerate them, but give them up, dispel them, eliminate them, and obliterate them. I also call this individual 'fettered', not 'detached'. Why is that? Because I understand the disparity of faculties as it applies to this individual.

Take another individual practicing to give up and let go of at- 16.1
tachments. As they do so, memories and thoughts connected with attachments beset them every so often, due to the loss of mindfulness. Slowly mindfulness arises, then they quickly give up, dispel, eliminate, and obliterate those thoughts. Suppose there was an iron cauldron that had been heated all day, and a person let two or three

201. "Disparity of faculties" refers to the differing capabilities of individuals, so *imasmiṁ puggale* must be locative of reference.

drops of water fall onto it. Slowly the drops fall, but then they quickly dry up and evaporate.

16.7 In the same way, take an individual practicing to give up and let go of attachments. As they do so, memories and thoughts connected with attachments beset them every so often, due to the loss of mindfulness. Slowly mindfulness arises, but then they quickly give up, dispel, eliminate, and obliterate those thoughts. I also call this individual 'fettered', not 'detached'. Why is that? Because I understand the disparity of faculties as it applies to this individual.

17.1 Take another individual who, understanding that attachment is the root of suffering, is freed with the ending of attachments.[202] I call this individual 'detached', not 'fettered'. Why is that? Because I understand the disparity of faculties as it applies to this individual. These are the four individuals found in the world.

18.1 Udāyī, these are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

19.1 The pleasure and happiness that arise from these five kinds of sensual stimulation is called sensual pleasure—a filthy, ordinary, ignoble pleasure. Such pleasure should not be cultivated or developed, but should be feared, I say.

20.1 Take a mendicant who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption … second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption.

202. In this idiom, the locative *saṅkhaye* acts as an instrumental or ablative of cause (*saṅkhayā*), that is, "with" or "due to" (rather than "in") the ending of attachments. In similar contexts, *khayā* is usually ablative.

This is called the pleasure of renunciation, the pleasure of seclusion, the pleasure of peace, the pleasure of awakening. Such pleasure should be cultivated and developed, and should not be feared, I say. 21.1

Take a mendicant who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption. This belongs to the perturbable, I say. And what there belongs to the perturbable? Whatever placing of the mind and keeping it connected has not ceased there is what belongs to the perturbable. 22.1

Take a mendicant who, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, enters and remains in the second absorption. This belongs to the perturbable, I say. And what there belongs to the perturbable? Whatever rapture and bliss has not ceased there is what belongs to the perturbable. 23.1

Take a mendicant who, with the fading away of rapture, enters and remains in the third absorption. This belongs to the perturbable. And what there belongs to the perturbable? Whatever bliss with equanimity has not ceased there is what belongs to the perturbable. 24.1

Take a mendicant who, giving up pleasure and pain, enters and remains in the fourth absorption. This belongs to the imperturbable, I say. 25.1

Take a mendicant who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption. But this is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it? 26.1

Take a mendicant who, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, enters and remains in the second absorption. That goes beyond it. But this too is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it? 27.1

Take a mendicant who, with the fading away of rapture, enters and remains in the third absorption. That goes beyond it. But this too is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it? 28.1

Take a mendicant who, giving up pleasure and pain, enters and remains in the fourth absorption. That goes beyond it. But this too 29.1

is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it?

30.1 Take a mendicant who, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. That goes beyond it. But this too is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it?

31.1 Take a mendicant who, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. That goes beyond it. But this too is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it?

32.1 Take a mendicant who, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. That goes beyond it. But this too is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it?

33.1 Take a mendicant who, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, enters and remains in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. That goes beyond it. But this too is not enough, I say: give it up, go beyond it. And what goes beyond it?

34.1 Take a mendicant who, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. That goes beyond it.

34.2 So, Udāyī, I even recommend giving up the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Do you see any fetter, large or small, that I don't recommend giving up?"

34.4 "No, sir."

34.5 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Udāyī approved what the Buddha said.

MN 67

At Cātumā

Cātumasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Cātumā 1.1
in a myrobalan grove.[203]

Now at that time five hundred mendicants headed by Sāriputta 2.1
and Moggallāna arrived at Cātumā to see the Buddha. And the visiting mendicants, while exchanging pleasantries with the resident mendicants, preparing their lodgings, and putting away their bowls and robes, made a colossal racket.

Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, who's mak- 3.1
ing that colossal racket? You'd think it was fishermen hauling in a catch!"

And Ānanda told him what had happened. 3.3

"Well then, Ānanda, in my name tell those mendicants that the 4.1
Teacher summons them."

"Yes, sir," Ānanda replied. He went to those mendicants and said, 4.3
"Venerables, the Teacher summons you."

"Yes, reverend," replied those mendicants. Then they rose from 4.5
their seats and went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to them:

"Mendicants, what's with that colossal racket? You'd think it was 4.6
fishermen hauling in a catch!"

And they told him what had happened. 4.7

"Go away, mendicants, I dismiss you. You are not to stay in my 5.1
presence."

203. Cātumā is a Sakyan town mentioned only here. | The introduction is similar to Ud 3.3.

5.2 "Yes, sir," replied those mendicants. They got up from their seats, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right. They set their lodgings in order and left, taking their bowls and robes.

6.1 Now at that time the Sakyans of Cātumā were sitting together at the town hall on some business. Seeing those mendicants coming off in the distance, they went up to them and said, "Hello venerables, where are you going?"

6.5 "Reverends, the mendicant Saṅgha has been dismissed by the Buddha."

6.6 "Well then, venerables, sit here for an hour. Hopefully we'll be able to restore the Buddha's confidence."

6.7 "Yes, respectable sirs," replied the mendicants.

7.1 Then the Sakyans of Cātumā went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

7.2 "May the Buddha be happy with the mendicant Saṅgha! May the Buddha welcome the mendicant Saṅgha! May the Buddha support the mendicant Saṅgha now as he did in the past! There are mendicants here who are junior, recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training. If they don't get to see the Buddha they may change and fall apart. If young seedlings don't get water they may change and fall apart. In the same way, there are mendicants here who are junior, recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training. If they don't get to see the Buddha they may change and fall apart. If a young calf doesn't see its mother it may change and fall apart. In the same way, there are mendicants here who are junior, recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training. If they don't get to see the Buddha they may change and fall apart. May the Buddha be happy with the mendicant Saṅgha! May the Buddha welcome the mendicant Saṅgha! May the Buddha support the mendicant Saṅgha now as he did in the past!"

8.1 Then the divinity Sahampati knew the Buddha's train of thought. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of the

Buddha. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and said:

"May the Buddha be happy with the mendicant Saṅgha! May the 9.1
Buddha welcome the mendicant Saṅgha! May the Buddha support the mendicant Saṅgha now as he did in the past! There are mendicants here who are junior, recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training. If they don't get to see the Buddha they may change and fall apart. If young seedlings don't get water they may change and fall apart. … If a young calf doesn't see its mother it may change and fall apart. In the same way, there are mendicants here who are junior, recently gone forth, newly come to this teaching and training. If they don't get to see the Buddha they may change and fall apart. May the Buddha be happy with the mendicant Saṅgha! May the Buddha welcome the mendicant Saṅgha! May the Buddha support the mendicant Saṅgha now as he did in the past!"

The Sakyans of Cātumā and the divinity Sahampati were able to 10.1
restore the Buddha's confidence with the similes of the seedlings and the calf.

Then Venerable Mahāmoggallāna addressed the mendicants, "Get 11.1
up, reverends, and pick up your bowls and robes. The Buddha's confidence has been restored by the Sakyans of Cātumā and the divinity Sahampati with the similes of the seedlings and the calf."

"Yes, reverend," replied those mendicants. Then they rose from 12.1
their seats and, taking their bowls and robes, went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to Venerable Sāriputta, "Sāriputta, what did you think when the mendicant Saṅgha was dismissed by me?"

"Sir, I thought this: 'The Buddha has dismissed the mendicant 12.3
Saṅgha. Now he will remain passive, dwelling in blissful meditation in this life, and so will we.'"

12.6 "Hold on, Sāriputta, hold on! Don't you ever think such a thing again!"[204]

13.1 Then the Buddha addressed Venerable Mahāmoggallāna, "Moggallāna, what did you think when the mendicant Saṅgha was dismissed by me?"

13.3 "Sir, I thought this: 'The Buddha has dismissed the mendicant Saṅgha. Now he will remain passive, dwelling in blissful meditation in this life. Meanwhile, Venerable Sāriputta and I shall lead the mendicant Saṅgha.'"

13.6 "Good, good, Moggallāna! For either I should lead the mendicant Saṅgha, or else Sāriputta and Moggallāna."

14.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants:

14.2 "Mendicants, when you go into the water you should anticipate four dangers.[205] What four? The dangers of waves, gharials, whirlpools, and sharks. These are the four dangers that you should anticipate when you go into the water.

15.1 In the same way, an individual gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in this teaching and training should anticipate four dangers. What four? The dangers of waves, gharials, whirlpools, and sharks.

16.1 And what, mendicants, is the danger of waves?[206] It's when a gentleman has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, thinking: 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth, their spiritual companions advise and instruct them: 'You should go out like this, and come back like that. You should look to the front like this, and to the side like that. You should contract your limbs like this, and extend them

204. The PTS reading is preferable: *na kho te Sāriputta puna pi evarūpaṁ cittaṁ uppādetabbanti*.

205. Also at AN 4.122.

206. Indian literature uses the wave as metaphor for a "surge" of disturbing emotion.

like that. This is how you should bear your outer robe, bowl, and robes.'[207] They think: 'Formerly, as laypeople, we advised and instructed others.[208] And now these mendicants—who you'd think were our children or grandchildren—imagine they can advise and instruct us!' They resign the training and return to a lesser life. This is called a mendicant who resigns the training and returns to a lesser life for fear of the danger of waves. 'Danger of waves' is a term for anger and distress.

And what, mendicants, is the danger of gharials?[209] It's when 17.1
a gentleman has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, thinking: 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth, their spiritual companions advise and instruct them: 'You may eat, consume, taste, and drink these things, but not those. You may eat what's allowable, but not what's unallowable. You may eat at the right time, but not at the wrong time.' They think: 'Formerly, as laypeople, we used to eat, consume, taste, and drink what we wanted, not what we didn't want. We ate and drank both allowable and unallowable things, at the right time and the wrong time. And these faithful householders give us delicious fresh and cooked foods at the wrong time of day. But these guys imagine they can gag our mouths!' They resign the training and return to a lesser life. This is called one who resigns the training and

207. These activities are elsewhere framed as the practice of "situational awareness" (MN 10:8.1).

208. When challenged, he uses the plural as a defense mechanism, disguising his personal reaction as an undefined "us", implicating the Saṅgha as a whole.

209. The gharial is a large crocodilian of the Ganges. The adult male has a distinctive "pot" (*ghara*) at the tip of its snout, from which it takes its name. The Pali *kumbhīla* (Sanskrit *kumbhīra*) similarly stems from *kumbha*, "pot". Gharials can be seen breaking water to swallow fish, their long toothy snouts making them an apt symbol for gluttony. | Referenced by the nun Sumedhā in her verses at Thig 16.1:55.3.

returns to a lesser life because they're afraid of the danger of gharials. 'Danger of gharials' is a term for gluttony.

18.1 And what, mendicants, is the danger of whirlpools?[210] It's when a gentleman has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, thinking: 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth, they robe up in the morning and, taking their bowl and robe, enter a village or town for alms without guarding body, speech, and mind, without establishing mindfulness, and without restraining the sense faculties. There they see a householder or their child amusing themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. They think: 'Formerly, as laypeople, we amused ourselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. And it's true that my family is wealthy.[211] I can both enjoy my wealth and make merit.' They resign the training and return to a lesser life. This is called one who resigns the training and returns to a lesser life for fear of the danger of whirlpools. 'Danger of whirlpools' is a term for the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

19.1 And what, mendicants, is the danger of sharks?[212] It's when a gentleman has gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, thinking: 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering.' When they've gone forth, they robe up in the

210. *Āvaṭṭa* means a "whirlpool", but also to "revert". Cf. the "return to a lesser life" (*hīnāyāvattati*).

211. Here he reverts to the singular in his reflections. Obviously not all of his spiritual companions enjoy the same cushion.

212. The *susukā* is said to be a carnivorous fish (*caṇḍamaccha*). The Sanskrit form *śuṣkala* is said to mean both a species of fish and also "flesh". The pun appears to be between *susukā* and *susukāḷakesā*, a stock description of attractive young people with "pristine black hair". The bull shark, which is one of several shark species prowling the Ganges, has black-tipped fins.

morning and, taking their bowl and robe, enter a village or town for alms without guarding body, speech, and mind, without establishing mindfulness, and without restraining the sense faculties. There they see a lady scantily clad, with revealing clothes. Lust infects their mind, so they resign the training and return to a lesser life. This is called one who resigns the training and returns to a lesser life for fear of the danger of sharks. 'Danger of sharks' is a term for ladies.

These are the four dangers that an individual who gone forth 20.1
from the lay life to homelessness in this teaching and training should anticipate."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 20.2
what the Buddha said.

MN 68

At Naḷakapāna

Naḷakapānasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kosalans near Naḷakapāna in the grove of flame-of-the-forest trees.[213]

2.1 Now at that time several very well-known gentlemen had gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness in the Buddha's name—[214] The venerables Anuruddha, Bhaddiya, Kimbila, Bhagu, Koṇḍañña, Revata, Ānanda, and other very well-known gentlemen.[215]

3.1 Now at that time the Buddha was sitting in the open, surrounded by the mendicant Saṅgha. Then the Buddha spoke to the mendicants about those gentlemen: "Mendicants, those gentlemen who have gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness in my name—I trust they're satisfied with the spiritual life?" When this was said, the mendicants kept silent.

3.5 For a second and a third time the Buddha asked the same question. For a third time, the mendicants kept silent.

4.1 Then it occurred to the Buddha, "Why don't I question just those gentlemen?"[216] Then the Buddha said to Venerable Anuruddha,

213. The Buddha is recorded as visiting this grove in two other discourses, which share a common narrative; both deal with the growth of spiritual qualities (AN 10.67, AN 10.68).

214. This makes it sound like they had gone forth recently, which would date this discourse to the early years of the dispensation.

215. Pali editions vary a little in the exact monks mentioned.

216. Reading *te va* as in PTS. Here the Buddha switches from addressing the monks as a whole to addressing just Anuruddha and his friends.

"Anuruddha and friends, I hope you're satisfied with the spiritual life?"

"Indeed, sir, we are satisfied with the spiritual life." 4.5

"Good, good, Anuruddha and friends! It's appropriate for gentlemen like yourselves, who have gone forth out of faith from the lay life to homelessness, to be satisfied with the spiritual life. Since you're blessed with youth, in the prime of life, with pristine black hair, you could have enjoyed sensual pleasures; yet you have gone forth from the lay life to homelessness. But you didn't go forth to escape a summons by a king or a summons for a bandit, or because you were in debt or in fear, or in order to make a living.[217] Rather, didn't you go forth thinking: 'I'm swamped by rebirth, old age, and death; by sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. I'm swamped by suffering, mired in suffering. Hopefully I can make an end to this entire mass of suffering'?" 5.1

"Yes, sir." 5.8

"But, Anuruddha and friends, when a gentleman has gone forth like this, what should he do? Take someone who doesn't achieve the rapture and bliss that are secluded from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, or something even more peaceful than that. Their mind is still occupied by desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, 6.1

217. Also at SN 22.80:6.4 and Iti 91:2.4. The terms here follow the same sequence as in the Vinaya account of ordination. Generally, ordination should not be given in such cases, but if it is given, those performing it incur an offense of wrong-doing. | Soldiers joined the Saṅgha to escape military service, so the Buddha said one should not ordain those in service to a king (Kd 1:40.1.1). | Several rules regarding ordination of criminals were passed, the thrust of which is that wanted outlaws should not be ordained (Kd 1:41.1.1). | Another man ordained to escape debt (Kd 1:46.1.1). | "In fear" (*bhayaṭṭa*) is the only item that does not straightforwardly correspond to the Vinaya sequence, where instead the ordination of slaves appears at this point (Kd 1:47.1.1). But a connection is suggested by the verses of the water-carrier Puṇṇikā, who speaks of living "in fear" of her masters' abuse and beatings. | Seventeen boys ordained as novices to get a nice livelihood (Kd 1:49.1.1).

restlessness and remorse, doubt, discontent, and sloth.[218] That's someone who doesn't achieve the rapture and bliss that are secluded from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, or something even more peaceful than that.

6.4 Take someone who does achieve the rapture and bliss that are secluded from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, or something even more peaceful than that. Their mind is not occupied by desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, doubt, discontent, and sloth. That's someone who does achieve the rapture and bliss that are secluded from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, or something even more peaceful than that.

7.1 Is this what you think of me? 'The Realized One has not given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. That's why, after appraisal, he uses some things, endures some things, avoids some things, and dispels some things.'"[219]

7.4 "No sir, we don't think of you that way. We think of you this way: 'The Realized One has given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. That's why, after appraisal, he uses some

218. This is the first absorption, lacking which the mind is full of hindrances. It appears that here the Buddha is explaining the benefits of absorption to Anuruddha, making this the first of several suttas concerned with Anuruddha's meditative progress (MN 128, AN 3.130, MN 31).

219. Of the seven methods given at MN 2:4.1, this omits "seeing", "restraint", and "developing". The Buddha is asking whether his use of the four remaining methods gives the impression he is secretly acting from defilements. It seems to me that this question is speaking to a common tendency among young, idealistic practitioners to expect the teacher to completely transcend worldly activities. But then they see the teacher eating food (like someone desiring taste) or avoiding dangerous situations (like someone worried about their body). When they do such things, it comes from a place of attachment, so it is only natural to wonder if the same applies to the teacher as well. Someone who has experienced, at minimum, the first absorption has known what it is like for the mind to be temporarily free of such attachments, hence would not have such thoughts.

things, endures some things, avoids some things, and dispels some things.'"

"Good, good, Anuruddha and friends! The Realized One has 7.10
given up the defilements that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. He has cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, obliterated them so they are unable to arise in the future. Just as a palm tree with its crown cut off is incapable of further growth, in the same way, the Realized One has given up the defilements so they are unable to arise in the future. That's why, after appraisal, he uses some things, endures some things, avoids some things, and dispels some things.

What do you think, Anuruddha and friends? What advantage 8.1
does the Realized One see in declaring the rebirth of his disciples who have passed away: 'This one is reborn here, while that one is reborn there'?"[220]

"Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our 8.4
refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

"The Realized One does not declare such things for the sake of 9.1
fawning or flattering people, nor for the benefit of possessions, honor, or popularity, nor thinking, 'So let people know about me!' Rather, there are gentlemen of faith who are full of sublime joy and gladness. When they hear that, they apply their minds to that end. That is for their lasting welfare and happiness.

Take a monk who hears this: 'The monk named so-and-so has 10.1
passed away. The Buddha has declared that he was enlightened.' And he's either seen for himself, or heard from someone else, that that venerable had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such

220. At SN 44.9 the six ascetic teachers are each said to do this, and the Buddha does it at DN 16:2.5.1 = DN 18:1.4. | This can be seen as a preemptive teaching to Anuruddha, who was to master the clairvoyance that makes such insights possible. The Buddha wants him to know that such abilities should only be used for pure reasons.

meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that monk's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, he applies his mind to that end. That's how a monk lives at ease.

11.1 Take a monk who hears this: 'The monk named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of the five lower fetters, he's been reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.' And he's either seen for himself, or heard from someone else, that that venerable had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that monk's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, he applies his mind to that end. That too is how a monk lives at ease.

12.1 Take a monk who hears this: 'The monk named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, he's a once-returner. He'll come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.' And he's either seen for himself, or heard from someone else, that that venerable had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that monk's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, he applies his mind to that end. That too is how a monk lives at ease.

13.1 Take a monk who hears this: 'The monk named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters he's a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.' And he's either seen for himself, or heard from someone else, that that venerable had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that monk's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, he applies his mind to that end. That too is how a monk lives at ease.

14.1 Take a nun who hears this: 'The nun named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that she was enlightened.' And she's either seen for herself, or heard from someone else, that that sister had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or

such freedom. Recollecting that nun's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, she applies her mind to that end. That's how a nun lives at ease.

15.1 Take a nun who hears this: 'The nun named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of the five lower fetters, she's been reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.' And she's either seen for herself, or heard from someone else, that that sister had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that nun's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, she applies her mind to that end. That too is how a nun lives at ease.

16.1 Take a nun who hears this: 'The nun named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, she's a once-returner. She'll come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.' And she's either seen for herself, or heard from someone else, that that sister had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that nun's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, she applies her mind to that end. That too is how a nun lives at ease.

17.1 Take a nun who hears this: 'The nun named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters she's a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.' And she's either seen for herself, or heard from someone else, that that sister had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that nun's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, she applies her mind to that end. That too is how a nun lives at ease.

18.1 Take a layman who hears this: 'The layman named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of the five lower fetters, he's been reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.' And he's either seen for himself, or heard from someone else, that

that venerable had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that layman's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, he applies his mind to that end. That's how a layman lives at ease.

19.1 Take a layman who hears this: 'The layman named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, he's a once-returner. He'll come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.' And he's either seen for himself, or heard from someone else, that that venerable had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that layman's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, he applies his mind to that end. That too is how a layman lives at ease.

20.1 Take a layman who hears this: 'The layman named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters he's a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.' And he's either seen for himself, or heard from someone else, that that venerable had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that layman's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, he applies his mind to that end. That too is how a layman lives at ease.

21.1 Take a laywoman who hears this: 'The laywoman named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of the five lower fetters, she's been reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.' And she's either seen for herself, or heard from someone else, that that sister had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that laywoman's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, she applies her mind to that end. That's how a laywoman lives at ease.

22.1 Take a laywoman who hears this: 'The laywoman named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, she's

a once-returner. She'll come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.' And she's either seen for herself, or heard from someone else, that that sister had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that laywoman's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, she applies her mind to that end. That too is how a laywoman lives at ease.

Take a laywoman who hears this: 'The laywoman named so-and-so has passed away. The Buddha has declared that, with the ending of three fetters she's a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening.' And she's either seen for herself, or heard from someone else, that that sister had such ethics, such qualities, such wisdom, such meditation, or such freedom. Recollecting that laywoman's faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom, she applies her mind to that end. That too is how a laywoman lives at ease. 23.1

So it's not for the sake of fawning or flattering people, nor for the benefit of possessions, honor, or popularity, nor thinking, 'So let people know about me!' that the Realized One declares the rebirth of his disciples who have passed away: 'This one is reborn here, while that one is reborn there.' Rather, there are gentlemen of faith who are full of joy and gladness. When they hear that, they apply their minds to that end. That is for their lasting welfare and happiness." 24.1

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Anuruddha approved what the Buddha said. 24.6

MN 69

With Gulissāni

Goliyānisutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

2.1 Now at that time a wilderness mendicant of boorish behavior named Gulissāni had come down to the midst of the Saṅgha on some business.[221] There Venerable Sāriputta spoke to the mendicants about Gulissāni:

3.1 "Reverends, a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should have respect and reverence for his spiritual companions. If he doesn't, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he has no respect and reverence for his spiritual companions?'[222] That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should have respect and reverence for his spiritual companions.

4.1 A wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should be careful where he sits, thinking:[223] 'I shall sit so that I don't intrude

221. Gulissāni (variant Goliyāni) is only known here. | The term *padasamācaro* (Mahāsaṅgīti editions) or *padarasamācāro* (Buddha Jayanthi, PTS, and Thai editions) is unique and uncertain. The commentary does not gloss it linguistically, but explains, "of weak conduct, of coarse conduct". The reading *padara* is preferred in Cone's *Dictionary of Pali* in the sense "cleft". But I propose we read with Sanskrit *padra*, "village". This explains the confusion in Pali readings, as the Sanskrit is midway between *pada* and *padara*. The point is that he was supposed to be a forest monk, yet he behaved "boorishly" as if he were from the village.

222. "Autonomous" is *seri*, literally "self-moving", i.e. living at one's own pleasure like a deer (Thag 19.1:54.1; see MN 75:13.4).

223. "Careful" is *kusala*, literally "skillful".

on the senior monks and I don't block the junior monks from a seat.' If he doesn't, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he's not careful where he sits?'[224] That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should be careful where he sits.

A wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should 4.7
know even the supplementary regulations.[225] If he doesn't, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he doesn't even know the supplementary regulations?' That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should know even the supplementary regulations.

A wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't 5.1
enter the village too early or return too late in the day.[226] If he does so, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he enters the village too early or returns too late in the day?' That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't enter the village too early or return too late in the day.

A wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't 6.1
have relations with families before or after the meal.[227] If he does so, there'll be some who say: 'This wilderness venerable, staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, must be used to wandering

224. The PTS reading *ābhisamācārika* here is spurious.

225. "Supplementary regulations" (*ābhisamācārika*) is a Vinaya term for minor rules of training as distinguished from those that are fundamental to the spiritual life (Kd 1:36.12.2). In the Mahāsanghika Lokuttaravāda school, these became collected as a treatise named Abhisamācārikadharma.

226. The perils of wandering the village at night are illustrated at MN 66:6.20; see also DN 31:9.1.

227. In the Vinaya rule Bu Pc 46, Upananda the Sakyan was in the habit of visiting several families before and after the meal, upsetting the donors and monastics at the scheduled offering. The rule is not meant to be absolute, as the Vinaya grants many exceptions.

about at the wrong time, since he behaves like this when he's come to the Saṅgha.' That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't have relations with families before or after the meal.

7.1 A wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't be restless and fickle. If he is, there'll be some who say: 'This wilderness venerable, staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, must be used to being restless and fickle, since he behaves like this when he's come to the Saṅgha.' That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't be restless and fickle.

8.1 A wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't be scurrilous and loose-tongued. If he is, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he's scurrilous and loose-tongued?' That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha shouldn't be scurrilous and loose-tongued.

9.1 A wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should be easy to admonish, with good friends. If he's hard to admonish, with bad friends, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he's hard to admonish, with bad friends?' That's why a wilderness monk who has come to stay in the Saṅgha should be easy to admonish, with good friends.

10.1 A wilderness monk should guard the sense doors. If he doesn't, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he doesn't guard the sense doors?' That's why a wilderness monk should guard the sense doors.

11.1 A wilderness monk should eat in moderation. If he doesn't, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he eats too much?' That's why a wilderness monk should eat in moderation.

12.1 A wilderness monk should be committed to wakefulness. If he isn't, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness

venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he's not committed to wakefulness?' That's why a wilderness monk should be committed to wakefulness.

A wilderness monk should be energetic. If he isn't, there'll be 13.1
some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he's not energetic?' That's why a wilderness monk should be energetic.

A wilderness monk should be mindful. If he isn't, there'll be some 14.1
who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he's not mindful?' That's why a wilderness monk should be mindful.

A wilderness monk should have immersion. If he doesn't, there'll 15.1
be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he doesn't have immersion?' That's why a wilderness monk should have immersion.

A wilderness monk should be wise. If he isn't, there'll be some 16.1
who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he's not wise?' That's why a wilderness monk should be wise.

A wilderness monk should make an effort in regards to the teach- 17.1
ing and training.[228] There are those who will question a wilderness monk about the teaching and training. If he is stumped, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he is stumped by a question about the teaching and training?' That's why a wilderness monk should make an effort to learn the teaching and training.

228. In the suttas, *abhivinaya* means "about the training" just as *abhidhamma* means "about the teaching" (eg. AN 3.140:4.4). Over time, such discussions "about" the fundamentals came to be thought of as a separate body of analytical texts called *abhidhamma* and *abhivinaya*. Thus in the late canonical Parivāra, compiled in Sri Lanka, the analysis (*vibhatti*) of a Vinaya rule is called *abhivinaya* (Pvr 1.1:3.33).

18.1 A wilderness monk should practice meditation to realize the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. There are those who will question a wilderness monk about the formless liberations. If he is stumped, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he is stumped by a question about the formless liberations?' That's why a wilderness monk should practice meditation to realize the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form.

19.1 A wilderness monk should practice meditation to realize the superhuman state. There are those who will question a wilderness monk about the superhuman state. If he is stumped, there'll be some who say: 'What's the point of this wilderness venerable's staying alone and autonomous in the wilderness, since he doesn't know the goal for which he went forth?'[229] That's why a wilderness monk should practice meditation to realize the superhuman state."

19.7 When Venerable Sāriputta said this, Venerable Mahāmoggallāna said to him, "Reverend Sāriputta, should these things be undertaken and followed only by wilderness monks, or by those who live within a village as well?"

19.9 "Reverend Moggallāna, these things should be undertaken and followed by wilderness monks, and still more by those who live within a village."[230]

229. Normally the "superhuman states" are in plural as they include absorptions, various advanced meditative abilities, and the stages of realization. Unusually, the form is singular here, denoting the "goal for which one goes forth", namely arahantship. This point is confirmed in the Chinese parallel, which speaks of the ending of defilements (MA 26 at T i 456a3).

230. Those who live in a village are closer to temptations and need to be even more on their guard.

MN 70

At Kīṭāgiri

Kīṭāgirisutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kāsis together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: 1.1

"Mendicants, I abstain from eating at night.[231] Doing so, I find that I'm healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. You too should never eat at night. Doing so, you'll find that you're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably." 2.1

"Yes, sir," they replied. 2.5

Then the Buddha, traveling stage by stage in the land of the Kāsis, arrived at a town of the Kāsis named Kīṭāgiri, and stayed there. 3.1

Now at that time the mendicants who followed Assaji and Punabbasuka were residing at Kīṭāgiri.[232] Then several mendicants went up to them and said, "Reverends, the Buddha never eats at night, and neither does the mendicant Saṅgha. Doing so, they find that 4.1

231. While I have not been able to trace a Jain rule regarding eating in the afternoon, not eating at night (*rattibhojanā*) was a standard practice of Jain ascetics (Uttarādhyayana 19.30, 13.2; Dasaveyāliya 4.6, 6.26; Sūyagaḍa 1.2.3.3). It was adopted early into the Gradual Training (MN 27:13.9). The failure of mendicants to comply led to the laying down of a formal Vinaya rule (Bu Pc 37). But some came to regret their objections, recognizing that the Buddha had acted for their welfare (MN 66:6.4). | The related practice of eating in one sitting is, by contrast, not required in the Vinaya, but was encouraged (MN 21:7.4, MN 65:2.1).

232. Assaji and Punabbasuka were a pair of shameless monks known for corrupting lay folk with their superficial charm (Bu Ss 13:1.1.2, Kd 11:13.1.1) and for misdirecting Saṅgha lodgings (Kd 16:16.1.1), while leading others down the same path. | Assaji is not to be confused with the good monk who was one of the first five mendicants (MN 35:3.1).

they're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. You too should abstain from eating at night. Doing so, you'll find that you're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably."

4.7 When they said this, the mendicants who followed Assaji and Punabbasuka said to them, "Reverends, we eat at dusk, at daybreak, and at the wrong time of day. Doing so, we find that we're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. Why should we give up what is apparent in the present to chase after what takes effect over time?[233] We shall eat at dusk, at daybreak, and at the wrong time of day."

5.1 Since those mendicants were unable to persuade the mendicants who were followers of Assaji and Punabbasuka, they approached the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

6.1 So the Buddha addressed one of the monks, "Please, monk, in my name tell the mendicants who follow Assaji and Punabbasuka that the Teacher summons them."

6.4 "Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to those mendicants and said, "Venerables, the Teacher summons you."

6.6 "Yes, reverend," those mendicants replied. They went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side.

6.7 The Buddha said to them, "Is it really true, mendicants, that several mendicants went to you and said: 'Reverends, the Buddha never eats at night, and neither does the mendicant Saṅgha. Doing so, they find that they're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. You too should never eat at night. Doing so, you'll find that you're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably.' When they said this, did you really say to them: 'Reverends, we eat

233. They are twisting the meaning of well-known properties of the Dhamma, which is "apparent in the present" and "immediately effective" (*sandiṭṭhiko akāliko*, MN 7:6.2). In this they are following the example of Māra, who makes the exact same argument (SN 1.20:4.4, SN 4.21:1.7). The fallacy is that it is sensual pleasures that take time—for they bind you to rebirth—whereas the Dhamma may be realized in this life.

at dusk, at daybreak, and at the wrong time of day. Doing so, we find that we're healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. Why should we give up what is apparent in the present to chase after what takes effect over time? We shall eat at dusk, at daybreak, and at the wrong time of day.'"

"Yes, sir." 6.17

"Mendicants, have you ever known me to teach the Dhamma like this: no matter what this individual experiences—pleasurable, painful, or neutral—their unskillful qualities decline and their skillful qualities grow?"[234] 6.18

"No, sir." 6.19

"Haven't you known me to teach the Dhamma like this: 'When someone feels this kind of pleasant feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline. But when someone feels that kind of pleasant feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow. When someone feels this kind of painful feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline. But when someone feels that kind of painful feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow. When someone feels this kind of neutral feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline. But when someone feels that kind of neutral feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow'?"[235] 7.1

"Yes, sir." 7.2

"Good, mendicants! Now, suppose I hadn't known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom:[236] 'When someone feels this kind of pleasant feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline.' Not knowing this, would it be appropriate for me to say: 'You should give up this kind of pleasant feeling'?" 8.1

"No, sir." 8.5

234. The Buddha, even in the face of such intransigence, begins by establishing common ground and giving encouragement.

235. See MN 137:9.3.

236. Having found an initial common ground, the Buddha takes time to establish that his teaching is grounded on experience.

8.6 "But I have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels this kind of pleasant feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline.' Since this is so, that's why I say: 'You should give up this kind of pleasant feeling.' Now, suppose I hadn't known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels that kind of pleasant feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow.' Not knowing this, would it be appropriate for me to say: 'You should enter and remain in that kind of pleasant feeling'?"

8.11 "No, sir."

8.12 "But I have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels that kind of pleasant feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow.' Since this is so, that's why I say: 'You should enter and remain in that kind of pleasant feeling.'

8.14 Now, suppose I hadn't known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels this kind of painful feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline.' Not knowing this, would it be appropriate for me to say: 'You should give up this kind of painful feeling'?"

8.17 "No, sir."

9.1 "But I have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels this kind of painful feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline.' Since this is so, that's why I say: 'You should give up this kind of painful feeling.' Now, suppose I hadn't known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels that kind of painful feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow.' Not knowing this, would it be appropriate for me to say: 'You should enter and remain in that kind of painful feeling'?"

9.6 "No, sir."

9.7 "But I have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels that kind of painful feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow.' Since this is

so, that's why I say: 'You should enter and remain in that kind of painful feeling.'

Now, suppose I hadn't known, seen, understood, realized, and 10.1
experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels this kind of neutral feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline.' Not knowing this, would it be appropriate for me to say: 'You should give up this kind of neutral feeling'?"

"No, sir." 10.4

"But I have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced 10.5
this with wisdom: 'When someone feels this kind of neutral feeling, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline.' Since this is so, that's why I say: 'You should give up this kind of neutral feeling.' Now, suppose I hadn't known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced this with wisdom: 'When someone feels that kind of neutral feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow.' Not knowing this, would it be appropriate for me to say: 'You should enter and remain in that kind of neutral feeling'?"

"No, sir." 10.10

"But I have known, seen, understood, realized, and experienced 11.1
this with wisdom: 'When someone feels that kind of neutral feeling, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow.' Since this is so, that's why I say: 'You should enter and remain in that kind of neutral feeling.'

Mendicants, I don't say that all these mendicants still have work 12.1
to do with diligence.[237] Nor do I say that all these mendicants have no work to do with diligence. I say that mendicants don't have work to do with diligence if they are perfected, with defilements ended, having completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and become rightly freed through en-

237. Now the Buddha shows that it is not just him, but others also, who have benefited from sincere practice.

lightenment. Why is that? They've done their work with diligence. They're incapable of being negligent.

13.1 I say that mendicants still have work to do with diligence if they are trainees, who haven't achieved their heart's desire, but live aspiring to the supreme sanctuary from the yoke. Why is that? Thinking: 'Hopefully this venerable will frequent appropriate lodgings, associate with good friends, and control their faculties. Then they might realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life, and live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' Seeing this fruit of diligence for those mendicants, I say that they still have work to do with diligence.

14.1 Mendicants, these seven individuals are found in the world. What seven? One freed both ways, one freed by wisdom, a direct witness, one attained to view, one freed by faith, a follower of teachings, and a follower by faith.

15.1 And what individual is freed both ways? It's an individual who has direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. And, having seen with wisdom, their defilements have come to an end.[238] This individual is called freed both ways. And I say that this mendicant has no work to do with diligence. Why is that? They've done their work with diligence. They're incapable of being negligent.

238. The first two of the seven are both fully perfected arahants. The arahant "freed both ways" is defined by their mastery of formless meditations, which they understand with wisdom (DN 15:36.3, AN 9.45). | "Direct meditative experience" is an oblique rendering of *kāyena phusitvā*, since in the "formless" meditations, *kāya* cannot mean "body". Like other meditative terms, the sense of the word gradually grows more subtle as meditation deepens. In preliminary passages it simply means "the body" as contemplated in meditation. As meditation deepens it takes more of a sense of experience as it happens in the body. Finally, as physical perception fades, *kāya* loses any sense of materiality and simply means direct personal experience of meditative states or even of Nibbāna.

And what individual is freed by wisdom? It's an individual who 16.1
does not have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. Nevertheless, having seen with wisdom, their defilements have come to an end.[239] This individual is called freed by wisdom. I say that this mendicant has no work to do with diligence. Why is that? They've done their work with diligence. They're incapable of being negligent.

And what individual is a direct witness?[240] It's an individual who 17.1
has direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. And, having seen with wisdom, some of their defilements have come to an end. This individual is called a direct witness. I say that this mendicant still has work to do with diligence. Why is that? Thinking: 'Hopefully this venerable will frequent appropriate lodgings, associate with good friends, and control their faculties. Then they might realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life, and live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' Seeing this fruit of diligence for this mendicant, I say that they still have work to do with diligence.

And what individual is attained to view? It's an individual who 18.1
doesn't have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. Nevertheless, having seen with wisdom, some of their defilements have come to an end. And they have clearly seen and clearly contemplated with wisdom the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One. This individual is called attained to view. I say that this mendicant also still has work to do with diligence. Why is that? Thinking: 'Hopefully this venerable will frequent appropriate lodgings, associate with good friends, and

239. Of course these arahants have practiced absorption, which is an essential part of the eightfold path. But because of their strong insight, they have not needed to further develop the ultimate refinement of the formless attainments.
240. The next three may be once-returners, non-returners, or on the path to perfection (AN 3.21:9.3). | A "direct witness" (*kāyasakkhi*) is distinguished by their mastery of immersion including formless attainments (AN 9.43).

control their faculties. Then they might realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life, and live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' Seeing this fruit of diligence for this mendicant, I say that they still have work to do with diligence.

19.1 And what individual is freed by faith? It's an individual who doesn't have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. Nevertheless, having seen with wisdom, some of their defilements have come to an end. And their faith is settled, rooted, and planted in the Realized One. This individual is called freed by faith. I say that this mendicant also still has work to do with diligence. Why is that? Thinking: 'Hopefully this venerable will frequent appropriate lodgings, associate with good friends, and control their faculties. Then they might realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life, and live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' Seeing this fruit of diligence for this mendicant, I say that they still have work to do with diligence.

20.1 And what individual is a follower of teachings? It's an individual who doesn't have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. And having seen with wisdom, their defilements have not come to an end. And they accept the teachings proclaimed by the Realized One after deliberating them with a degree of wisdom. And they have the following qualities:[241] the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom. This individual is called a follower of teachings. I say that this mendicant also still has work to do with diligence. Why is that? Thinking: 'Hopefully this venerable will frequent appropriate

241. For "and having seen with wisdom, their defilements have not come to an end", accept the reading of BJT and PTS, (*paññāya cassa disvā āsavā aparikkhīṇā honti*). The Mahāsaṅgīti says that "certain" defilements have ended, but it is stream-entry that marks the initial breaking of fetters, while the follower of teachings (and the follower by faith below) are still on the path to stream-entry.

lodgings, associate with good friends, and control their faculties. Then they might realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life, and live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' Seeing this fruit of diligence for this mendicant, I say that they still have work to do with diligence.

21.1 And what individual is a follower by faith? It's an individual who doesn't have direct meditative experience of the peaceful liberations that are formless, transcending form. And having seen with wisdom, their defilements have not come to an end. And they have a degree of faith and fondness for the Realized One. And they have the following qualities: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.[242] This individual is called a follower by faith. I say that this mendicant also still has work to do with diligence. Why is that? Thinking: 'Hopefully this venerable will frequent appropriate lodgings, associate with good friends, and control their faculties. Then they might realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life, and live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' Seeing this fruit of diligence for this mendicant, I say that they still have work to do with diligence.

22.1 Mendicants, I don't say that enlightenment is achieved right away. Rather, enlightenment is achieved by gradual training, progress, and practice.

23.1 And how is enlightenment achieved by gradual training, progress, and practice? It's when someone in whom faith has arisen approaches a teacher. They pay homage, actively listen, hear the teachings, remember the teachings, examine their meaning, and accept them after deliberation. Then enthusiasm springs up; they make

242. Even the least of the noble ones possesses the five spiritual faculties, which include absorption.

an attempt, weigh up, and strive. Striving, they directly realize the ultimate truth, and see it with penetrating wisdom.[243]

24.1 Mendicants, there has not been that faith,[244] that approaching, that paying homage, that listening, that hearing the teachings, that remembering the teachings, that examining their meaning, that acceptance after deliberation, that enthusiasm, that making an attempt, that weighing up, or that striving. You're on a bad path, mendicants! You're practicing the wrong way![245] How far these futile men have strayed from this teaching and training!

25.1 There is an exposition in four statements, which a sensible person would quickly understand when it is recited.[246] I shall recite it for you, mendicants. Try to understand it."

25.3 "Sir, who are we next to those who understand the teaching?"[247]

26.1 "Even with a teacher who values things of the flesh, is an heir in things of the flesh, who lives caught up in things of the flesh, you wouldn't get into such haggling: 'If we get this, we'll do that. If we don't get this, we won't do it.' What then of the Realized One, who lives utterly detached from things of the flesh?

27.1 For a faithful disciple who is practicing to fathom the Teacher's instructions, this is in line with the teaching: 'The Buddha is my Teacher, I am his disciple. The Buddha knows, I do not know.' For a faithful disciple who is practicing to fathom the Teacher's instructions, the Teacher's instructions are nourishing and nutritious. For a faithful disciple who is practicing to fathom the Teacher's instructions, this is in line with the teaching: 'Gladly, let only skin, sinews,

243. Parallel passages at AN 8.82:2.1 and AN 10.83:4.1 add "ask questions" after "pay homage", which seems preferable.

244. Finally the Buddha admonishes them.

245. The *vi-* in *vippaṭipanna* indicates not separation ("lost your way") but (moral) depravity (eg. Bu Pj 1:9.7.11, SN 3.6:1.4). | The suffix *-attha* is second plural present of *atthi* ("you are"), whereas the same form at DN 9:34.19 is imperative ("you should").

246. This refers to the four injunctions below that begin with "for a faithful disciple".

247. This idiomatic expression is paralleled at MN 95:34.12.

and bones remain! Let the flesh and blood waste away in my body! I will not relax my energy until I have achieved what is possible by human strength, energy, and vigor.' For a faithful disciple who is practicing to fathom the Teacher's instructions, one of two results can be expected: enlightenment in this very life, or if there's residue left behind, non-return."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 27.9
what the Buddha said.

THE CHAPTER ON WANDERERS

MN 71

To Vacchagotta on the Three Knowledges

Tevijjavacchasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[248] At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof. 1.1

Now at that time the wanderer Vacchagotta was residing in the Single Lotus monastery for the wanderers.[249] 2.1

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. Then it occurred to him, "It's too early to wander for alms in Vesālī. Why don't I visit the wanderer Vacchagotta at the Single Lotus Monastery?" So that's what he did. 3.1

Vacchagotta saw the Buddha coming off in the distance, and said to him, "Let the Blessed One come, sir! Welcome to the Blessed One, sir! It's been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please, sir, sit down, here, a seat is ready." 4.1

The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out, while Vacchagotta took a low seat and sat to one side. Then Vacchagotta said to the Buddha: 4.7

248. This begins the "Vacchagotta trilogy", a series of three suttas tracing Vacchagotta's spiritual development. These are supplemented by an entire Saṁyutta of questions (SN 33). In this sutta he shows an attitude of curiosity and respect, and gains a degree of faith in the Buddha. | This is not the same person as the lay brahmin Vacchagotta of Venāgapura at AN 3.63:2.1.

249. Vacchagotta is a clan name; his personal name is not recorded. The Vaccha clan stems from the Vedic seer Vatsa, author of Rig Veda 8.6–11. Several notable figures of this clan are known, including a lineage master in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.3, but there is nothing to identify them with the Vacchagotta of the suttas. Given Vacchagotta's evident interest in the ascetic traditions, it is noteworthy that a certain Śayyambha Vatsagotra, father of Manaka, was said to be a direct disciple of Mahāvīra (Kalpasūtra 10.3).

5.1 "Sir, I have heard this:[250] 'The ascetic Gotama claims to be all-knowing and all-seeing, to know and see everything without exception, thus:[251] "Knowledge and vision are constantly and continually present to me, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking."' I trust those who say this repeat what the Buddha has said, and do not misrepresent him with an untruth? Is their explanation in line with the teaching? Are there any legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism?"

5.5 "Vaccha, those who say this do not repeat what I have said. They misrepresent me with what is false and untrue."[252]

6.1 "So how should we answer so as to repeat what the Buddha has said, and not misrepresent him with an untruth? How should we explain in line with his teaching, with no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism?"

6.2 "'The ascetic Gotama has the three knowledges.' Answering like this you would repeat what I have said, and not misrepresent me

250. At AN 3.57 he similarly asks the Buddha to confirm his teachings on generosity. At SN 44.9, meanwhile, he asks a somewhat related question about the six ascetic teachers and their divining of afterlife destinies.

251. Such extraordinary claims were not unprecedented, as both the Jain leader Mahāvīra (MN 14:17.2, MN 79:6.7) and Pūraṇa Kassapa (AN 9.38:2.1) are said to claim omniscience in the Pali canon. Extant Jain texts have no shortage of such claims (eg. Sūyagaḍa1.6, Kalpasūtra 1, Bhagavatisūtra 4.10, etc.), and it seems likely that this was part of Mahāvīra's teachings. Sources for Pūraṇa Kassapa are slim, but he was regarded as a great teacher of the Ājīvakas, whose founder the bamboo-staffed ascetic Gosāla was said to be omniscient (Basham, *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas*, 275–6).

252. At AN 4.24:2.1 the Buddha claims to know whatever is "seen, heard, thought, known, attained, sought, and explored by the mind", which is a complete knowledge of subjective experience. In the curious dialogue at MN 90:8.5 the Buddha denies that anyone "will know" all things simultaneously. The Milindapañha reversed this to the positive statement that the Buddha could know all things, just not simultaneously (Mil 5.1.2:1.2). The Buddha's omniscience became the standard view of the later books of the Pali canon (Cnd 10:5.2, Bv 2:55.3, Pp 1.6:2.1, Kv 3.1:5.3, etc.).

with an untruth. You would explain in line with my teaching, and there would be no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism.[253]

For, Vaccha, whenever I want, I recollect my many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. I remember: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so I recollect my many kinds of past lives, with features and details. 7.1

And whenever I want, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 8.1

And I have realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. I live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. 9.1

'The ascetic Gotama has the three knowledges.' Answering like this you would repeat what I have said, and not misrepresent me with an untruth. You would explain in line with my teaching, and there would be no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism." 10.1

When he said this, the wanderer Vacchagotta said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama, are there any laypeople who, without giving up 11.1

253. The Buddha's knowledge is specific and functional: it serves the purpose of liberation.

the fetter of lay life, make an end of suffering when the body breaks up?"[254]

11.3 "No, Vaccha."

12.1 "But are there any laypeople who, without giving up the fetter of lay life, go to heaven when the body breaks up?"

12.2 "There's not just one hundred laypeople, Vaccha, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that who, without giving up the fetter of lay life, go to heaven when the body breaks up."

13.1 "Worthy Gotama, are there any Ājīvaka ascetics who make an end of suffering when the body breaks up?"

13.2 "No, Vaccha."

14.1 "But are there any Ājīvaka ascetics who go to heaven when the body breaks up?"

14.2 "Vaccha, when I recollect the past ninety-one eons, I can't find any Ājīvaka ascetics who have gone to heaven, except one;[255] and he taught the efficacy of deeds and action."[256]

15.1 "In that case, worthy Gotama, that sectarian fold is empty even of the chance to go to heaven."[257]

15.2 "Yes, Vaccha, that sectarian fold is empty even of the chance to go to heaven."

15.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the wanderer Vacchagotta approved what the Buddha said.

254. Vacchagotta uses the phrase *gihisaṁyojana* ("fetter of lay life") for the inner attachment to lay life, which is not overcome by the mere act of joining a religious order. Compare the Buddha's term *gehasita*, the thoughts and memories "of the lay life" (MN 21:6.2, MN 119:4.7, MN 125:23.5, MN 137:9.3). See also MN 54, where the external "signs" of a householder are connected with the fetters.

255. This goes back to the time of the Buddha Vipassī (DN 14:1.4.1).

256. Thus denying the basic doctrines of both Gosāla (DN 2:20.2) and Pūraṇa Kassapa (DN 2:17.2).

257. The Buddha is speaking of the Ājīvakas, who denied moral causality, not of non-Buddhist paths generally.

MN 72

With Vacchagotta on Fire

Aggivacchasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[258] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. 1.1

Then the wanderer Vacchagotta went up to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha: 2.1

"Worthy Gotama, is this your view: 'The cosmos is eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?" 3.1

"That's not my view, Vaccha." 3.3

"Then is this your view: 'The cosmos is not eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?" 4.1

"That's not my view, Vaccha." 4.3

"Then is this your view: 'The cosmos is finite. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?" 5.1

"That's not my view, Vaccha." 5.3

"Then is this your view: 'The cosmos is infinite. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?" 6.1

"That's not my view, Vaccha." 6.3

"Then is this your view: 'The soul and the body are one and the same. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?" 7.1

"That's not my view, Vaccha." 7.3

258. This sutta depicts Vacchagotta, having gained a degree of faith as depicted in MN 71, questioning the Buddha regarding the undeclared points. This is just a taste of Vacchagotta's curiosity, as the 55 suttas of SN 33 all deal with the same topic, as do SN 44.7, SN 44.8, and SN 44.11. Underlying all these questions is the assumption of a self, which Vacchagotta asks directly about at SN 44.10.

8.1 "Then is this your view: 'The soul is one thing, the body another. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

8.3 "That's not my view, Vaccha."

9.1 "Then is this your view: 'A realized one still exists after death. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

9.3 "That's not my view, Vaccha."

10.1 "Then is this your view: 'A realized one no longer exists after death. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

10.3 "That's not my view, Vaccha."

11.1 "Then is this your view: 'A realized one both still exists and no longer exists after death. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

11.3 "That's not my view, Vaccha."

12.1 "Then is this your view: 'A realized one neither still exists nor no longer exists after death. This is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

12.3 "That's not my view, Vaccha."

13.1 "Worthy Gotama, when asked these ten questions, you say: 'That's not my view.' Seeing what drawback do you avoid all these convictions?"

14.1 "Each of these ten convictions is the thicket of views, the desert of views, the twist of views, the dodge of views, the fetter of views. They're beset with suffering, distress, anguish, and fever. They don't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. Seeing this drawback I avoid all these convictions."

15.1 "But does the worthy Gotama have any convictions at all?"

15.2 "A realized one has done away with convictions.[259] For a realized one has seen: 'Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling,

259. The Buddha, or indeed any arahant, has no "convictions" (*diṭṭhigata*), i.e. theories to attach to, since his "right view" (*sammādiṭṭhi*) is grounded in what he has "seen" (*diṭṭha*).

such is the disappearance of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the disappearance of perception. Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the disappearance of choices. Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the disappearance of consciousness.' That's why a Realized One is freed by not grasping with the ending, fading away, cessation, giving up, and letting go of all conceiving, all churning, and all I-making, mine-making, or underlying tendency to conceit, I say."[260]

"But worthy Gotama, when a mendicant's mind is freed like this, where are they reborn?" 16.1

"'They're reborn' doesn't apply, Vaccha." 16.2

"Well then, are they not reborn?" 16.3

"'They're not reborn' doesn't apply, Vaccha." 16.4

"Well then, are they both reborn and not reborn?" 16.5

"'They're both reborn and not reborn' doesn't apply, Vaccha." 16.6

"Well then, are they neither reborn nor not reborn?" 16.7

"'They're neither reborn nor not reborn' doesn't apply, Vaccha." 16.8

"Worthy Gotama, when asked all these questions, you say: 'It doesn't apply.' I fail to understand this point, worthy Gotama; I've fallen into confusion. And I've now lost even the degree of clarity I had from previous discussions with the worthy Gotama." 17.1

"No wonder you don't understand, Vaccha, no wonder you're confused.[261] For this principle is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. It's hard for you to understand, since you have a different view, creed, and belief, and another discipline and denomination. 18.1

260. At Thag 14.2, *mathita* means "oppressed, weighed down", and the same sense probably applies at Thag 1.102. At Dhp 349, however, the root sense of "churn" fits the context of "thoughts", while at MN 90:12.14 it refers to starting a fire by "churning" with a fire-drill, a common Vedic usage (Rig Veda 3.23.1a, 3.29.12a, 8.48.6a; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.1.4.8, 3.7.3.3, etc.). Its unique appearance in this context anticipates the simile of fire.

261. Vacchagotta's confusion on this same point is addressed at SN 44.9:5.3.

18.4 Well then, Vaccha, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like.[262]

19.1 What do you think, Vaccha? Suppose a fire was burning in front of you. Would you know: 'This fire is burning in front of me'?"

19.4 "Yes, I would, worthy Gotama."

19.6 "But Vaccha, suppose they were to ask you: 'This fire burning in front of you: what does it depend on to burn?' How would you answer?"[263]

19.9 "I would answer like this: 'This fire burning in front of me burns in dependence on grass and logs as fuel.'"[264]

19.11 "Suppose that fire burning in front of you was extinguished. Would you know:[265] 'This fire in front of me is quenched'?"

19.13 "Yes, I would, worthy Gotama."

19.15 "But Vaccha, suppose they were to ask you: 'This fire in front of you that is quenched: in what direction did it go—east, south, west, or north?' How would you answer?"

19.18 "It doesn't apply, worthy Gotama. The fire depended on grass and logs as fuel. When that runs out, and no more fuel is added, the fire is reckoned to have become quenched due to lack of fuel."

20.1 "In the same way, Vaccha, any form by which a realized one might be described has been given up, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future.[266] A realized one is freed from reckoning in terms of form. They're deep, immea-

262. When Vacchagotta is out of his depth, the Buddha helps him by coming back to a simple, grounded metaphor.

263. The language in this passage echoes key Buddhist doctrinal terms. Here, "depend" is *paṭicca*.

264. "Fuel" is *upādāna*, normally translated as "grasping".

265. "Extinguished" is *nibbāyeyya*, a verbal form of Nibbāna.

266. Here "realized one" (*tathāgata*) pertains to any arahant, as at SN 54.12. The Pali commentary and one of the Chinese parallels here (SA2 196 at T ii 445a18) agree in saying that a "living being" (*satta*) is meant. However, *tathāgata* and *satta* are exact verbal parallels: *tathā* ("real") + *gata* ("come to the state of") and *sa* ("real") + *tta* ("state of"). Thus it seems likely that this was originally intended as a mere verbal gloss to explain the compound.

surable, and hard to fathom, like the ocean. 'They're reborn', 'they're not reborn', 'they're both reborn and not reborn', 'they're neither reborn nor not reborn'—none of these apply.

Any feeling … perception … choices … consciousness by which 20.5
a realized one might be described has been given up, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future. A realized one is freed from reckoning in terms of consciousness. They're deep, immeasurable, and hard to fathom, like the ocean. 'They're reborn', 'they're not reborn', 'they're both reborn and not reborn', 'they're neither reborn nor not reborn'—none of these apply."

When he said this, the wanderer Vacchagotta said to the Buddha: 21.1

"Worthy Gotama, suppose there was a large sal tree not far from 21.2
a town or village. And because it's impermanent, its branches and foliage, bark and shoots, and softwood would fall off. After some time it would be rid of branches and foliage, bark and shoots, and softwood, pure, and consolidated in the core. In the same way, worthy Gotama's dispensation is rid of branches and foliage, bark and shoots, and softwood, pure, and consolidated in the core.

Excellent, worthy Gotama! … From this day forth, may the wor- 22.1
thy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."[267]

267. Vacchagotta had already gone forth as a wanderer, so it is surprising that he calls himself a "lay follower" (*upāsaka*). The Chinese parallels simply say that he left without taking refuge (SA 962 at T ii 246a17 and SA2 196 at T ii 445c8). Given that the Pali tradition repeats him going for refuge in the next sutta (MN 73:15.2), it seems likely that this detail was added by mistake here.

MN 73

The Longer Discourse With Vacchagotta

Mahāvacchasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[268] At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

2.1 Then the wanderer Vacchagotta went up to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha, "For a long time I have had discussions with the worthy Gotama. Please teach me in brief what is skillful and what is unskillful."

3.3 "Vaccha, I can teach you what is skillful and what is unskillful in brief or in detail. Still, let me do so in brief. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

3.6 "Yes, worthy sir," Vaccha replied. The Buddha said this:

4.1 "Greed is unskillful, contentment is skillful.[269] Hate is unskillful, love is skillful. Delusion is unskillful, understanding is skillful. So there are these three unskillful things and three that are skillful.

5.1 Killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; covetousness, ill will, and wrong view: these things are unskillful. Refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; refraining from speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; contentment,

268. The final episode in the Vacchagotta trilogy sees our hero rise above his useless metaphysical quandaries and seek a better way to live. The Buddha's patience is rewarded as Vacchagotta finally achieves his goal.

269. Elsewhere (eg. MN 9:4.1) a distinction is drawn between greed, hate, and delusion as the *root* of the unskillful, while the ten kinds of action are the unskillful (and the same applies to the skillful).

good will, and right view: these things are skillful. So there are these ten unskillful things and ten that are skillful.

When a mendicant has given up craving so it is cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated, and unable to arise in the future, that mendicant is perfected. They've ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment." 6.1

"Leaving aside the worthy Gotama, is there even a single monk disciple of Worthy Gotama who has realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and lives having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements?"[270] 7.1

"There are not just one hundred such monks who are my disciples, Vaccha, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that." 7.3

"Leaving aside the worthy Gotama and the monks, is there even a single nun disciple of Worthy Gotama who has realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and lives having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements?" 8.1

"There are not just one hundred such nuns who are my disciples, Vaccha, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that." 8.3

"Leaving aside the worthy Gotama, the monks, and the nuns, is there even a single layman disciple of Worthy Gotama—white-clothed and chaste—who, with the ending of the five lower fetters, is 9.1

270. Two devas mentally ask Mahāvīra a similar question at Bhagavatisūtra 4.5.59; the answer was seven hundred.

reborn spontaneously, to be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world?"[271]

9.3 "There are not just one hundred such chaste laymen who are my disciples, Vaccha, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that."

10.1 "Leaving aside Worthy Gotama, the monks, the nuns, and the chaste laymen, is there even a single layman disciple of the worthy Gotama—white-clothed, enjoying sensual pleasures, following instructions, and responding to advice—who has gone beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and lives self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instruction?"[272]

10.3 "There are not just one hundred such laymen enjoying sensual pleasures who are my disciples, Vaccha, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that."

11.1 "Leaving aside Worthy Gotama, the monks, the nuns, the chaste laymen, and the laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, is there even a single laywoman disciple of Worthy Gotama—white-clothed and chaste—who, with the ending of the five lower fetters, is reborn spontaneously, to be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world?"

11.3 "There are not just one hundred such chaste laywomen who are my disciples, Vaccha, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that."

12.1 "Leaving aside Worthy Gotama, the monks, the nuns, the chaste laymen, the laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, and the chaste laywomen, is there even a single laywoman disciple of the worthy Go-

271. Devoted layfolk would regularly keep the five precepts, which forbid sexual misconduct, and undertake the eight precepts, including celibacy, on the sabbath. However it seems that then, as today, there is a less formalized class of layfolk who would undertake the eight precepts continuously. White-robed, celibate layfolk are mentioned in DN 29:12.11, where they are a property of a fully-developed and prosperous religion. Celibate laypeople are also referred to at AN 5.180 and AN 10.75:2.2. Such layfolk have the potential to realize non-return, since that requires the complete letting go of all forms of desire.

272. That is, they are stream-enterers.

tama—white-clothed, enjoying sensual pleasures, following instructions, and responding to advice—who has gone beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and lives self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instruction?"

"There are not just one hundred such laywomen enjoying sensual 12.3
pleasures who are my disciples, Vaccha, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that."

"If the worthy Gotama was the only one to succeed in this teach- 13.1
ing, not any monks, then this spiritual path would be incomplete in that respect. But because both the worthy Gotama and monks have succeeded in this teaching, this spiritual path is complete in that respect.

If the worthy Gotama and the monks were the only ones to suc- 13.5
ceed in this teaching, not any nuns … chaste laymen … laymen enjoying sensual pleasures … chaste laywomen …

laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures, then this spiritual path 13.21
would be incomplete in that respect. But because Worthy Gotama, monks, nuns, chaste laymen, laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, chaste laywomen, and laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures have all succeeded in this teaching, this spiritual path is complete in that respect.

Just as the Ganges River slants, slopes, and inclines toward the 14.1
ocean, and keeps pressing into the ocean, in the same way Worthy Gotama's assembly—with both laypeople and renunciates—slants, slopes, and inclines toward extinguishment, and keeps pressing upon extinguishment.

Excellent, worthy Gotama! … I go for refuge to the worthy Go- 15.1
tama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. May I receive the going forth, the ordination in the worthy Gotama's presence?"

"Vaccha, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to 16.1
take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they'll give the going forth,

the ordination into monkhood. However, I recognize individual differences in this matter."

16.3 "Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I'll spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the ordination into monkhood." And the wanderer Vaccha received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence.

17.1 Not long after his ordination, a fortnight later, Venerable Vacchagotta went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, I've reached as far as possible with the knowledge and understanding of a trainee. Please teach me further."

18.1 "Well then, Vaccha, further develop two things: serenity and discernment. When you have further developed these two things, they'll lead to the penetration of many elements.

19.1 As far as you want, you will be capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range: 'May I wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying myself and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the realm of divinity.'

20.1 Whenever you want, you will be capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range: 'With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, may I hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.'

21.1 As far as you want, you will be capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range: 'May I understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with my mind. May I understand mind with greed as "mind with greed", and mind without greed as "mind without greed"; mind with hate as "mind with hate", and mind without hate as "mind without hate"; mind with delusion as "mind with delusion", and mind

without delusion as "mind without delusion"; constricted mind as "constricted mind", and scattered mind as "scattered mind"; expansive mind as "expansive mind", and unexpansive mind as "unexpansive mind"; mind that is not supreme as "mind that is not supreme", and mind that is supreme as "mind that is supreme"; mind immersed in samādhi as "mind immersed in samādhi", and mind not immersed in samādhi as "mind not immersed in samādhi"; freed mind as "freed mind", and unfreed mind as "unfreed mind".'

22.1 As far as you want, you will be capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range: 'May I recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. May I remember: "There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here." May I recollect my many past lives, with features and details.'

23.1 Whenever you want, you will be capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range: 'With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, may I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place—and understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: "These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of

that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm." And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, may I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. And may I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.'

24.1 As far as you want, you will be capable of realizing these things, since each and every one is within range: 'May I realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.'"

25.1 And then Venerable Vacchagotta approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

26.1 Then Vacchagotta, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

26.2 He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Vacchagotta became one of the perfected.

27.1 Now at that time several mendicants were going to see the Buddha. Vacchagotta saw them coming off in the distance, went up to them, and said, "Hello venerables, where are you going?"

27.5 "Reverend, we are going to see the Buddha."

27.6 "Well then, reverends, in my name please bow with your head to the Buddha's feet and say: 'Sir, the mendicant Vacchagotta bows with his head to your feet and says, "I have served the Blessed One! I have served the Holy One!"'"

28.1 "Yes, reverend," they replied. Then those mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, the

mendicant Vacchagotta bows with his head to your feet and says: 'I have served the Blessed One! I have served the Holy One!'"

"I've already encompassed Vacchagotta's mind and understood 28.5
that he has the three knowledges, and is very mighty and powerful. And deities also told me about this."[273]

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 28.9
what the Buddha said.

273. Vacchagotta's attainment is also confirmed in his verse at Thag 1.112.

MN 74

With Dīghanakha

Dīghanakhasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[274] At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain in the Boar's Cave.

2.1 Then the wanderer Dīghanakha went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.[275] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood to one side and said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama, this is my doctrine and view: 'Nothing is acceptable to me.'"[276]

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274. This sutta records the occasion of the full enlightenment of the Buddha's greatest disciple, Sāriputta, as well as the conversion of Dīghanakha. The commentary says this became the occasion for a unique four-factored gathering: it is the full moon in the month of Māgha; 1,250 mendicants spontaneously assemble; all were arahants with the six high knowledges; all were ordained by the "come, mendicant" formula. Today this is celebrated in the Makha Puja festival in Thailand.

275. Dīghanakha means "Long-nails"; it must have been a nickname. Long nails are forbidden in the Vinaya (Kd 15:27.1.21) and also to the one performing a Brahmanical consecration (*dīkṣā*, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.1.2). Further, EA 34.4 says that long nails (爪長), uncut hair, and unwashed robes were disgraceful characteristics of ascetics. Ācārāṅgasūtra 2.8.5 speaks of the ascetic practice of abandoning the care of the hair of the head, beard, and nails. | Dīghanakha was Sāriputta's nephew according to the Pali commentaries (not here, but in MN 111, SN 11.2, etc.) and northern texts such as Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra, Mahāvibhāṣā, and Avadānaśataka.

276. Dīghanakha's view "nothing is acceptable to me" (*sabbaṁ me nakkhamati*) is obscure, which seems to be the point. Sanskrit and Tibetan parallels to this passage are identical to the Pali, so when some Chinese translations say "no view" or "no teaching" is acceptable, this is probably because the translators felt the need to clarify, echoing the common expression, "the acceptance of a view after consideration" (*diṭṭhinijjhānakkhanti*). This reading fits the text, but the sense may be broader than that. The closest phrasing in Pali is at DN 25:10.11, where

"This view of yours, Aggivessana—[277] is that acceptable to you?"[278] 2.5

"If I were to accept this view, worthy Gotama, it would make no difference, it would make no difference!" 2.7

"Well, Aggivessana, there are many more in the world who say, 'It would make no difference! It would make no difference!' But they don't give up that view, and they grasp another view. And there are a scant few in the world who say, 'It would make no difference! It would make no difference!' And they give up that view by not grasping another view. 3.1

There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Everything is acceptable to me.' There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Nothing is acceptable to me.' There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Some things are acceptable to me and some things are not.' Regarding this, the view of the ascetics and brahmins to whom everything is acceptable is close to greed, bondage, approving, attachment, and grasping. The view of the ascetics and brahmins to whom nothing is acceptable is far from greed, bondage, approving, attachment, and grasping." 4.1

When he said this, the wanderer Dīghanakha said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama commends my conviction! He recommends my conviction!" 5.1

"Now, regarding the ascetics and brahmins to whom some things are acceptable and some things are not. Their view of what is accept- 5.3

"this is not acceptable to me" (*idaṁ me nakkhamati*) refers to food that a picky monk rejects. Views about acceptable food are recorded in detail in Jain texts, and we may presume that other orders had similar systems. Strictness in such matters is seen as a sign of virtue, escalating ultimately to the refusal of all food.

277. Aggivessana is his Brahmanical clan name.

278. While this displays the Buddha's ready wit, like much good humor it plays on a deeper anxiety. For it is easy to say that one believes in nothing, but the state of unknowing is psychologically unstable, as minds seek answers. When someone claims to hold no views, their skepticism is how they hide their views from themselves.

able is close to greed, bondage, approving, attachment, and grasping. Their view of what is not acceptable is far from greed, bondage, approving, attachment, and grasping.

6.1 When it comes to the view of the ascetics and brahmins to whom everything is acceptable, a sensible person reflects like this: 'I have the view that everything is acceptable. Suppose I were to obstinately stick to this view and insist, "This is the only truth, anything else is futile." Then I'd argue with two individuals—an ascetic or brahmin to whom nothing is acceptable, and an ascetic or brahmin to whom some things are acceptable and some things are not. And when there's arguing, there's dispute; when there's dispute there's distress; and when there's distress there's harm.' So, considering in themselves the potential for argument, dispute, distress, and harm, they give up that view by not grasping another view. That's how those views are given up and let go.

7.1 When it comes to the view of the ascetics and brahmins to whom nothing is acceptable, a sensible person reflects like this: 'I have the view that nothing is acceptable. Suppose I were to obstinately stick to this view and insist, "This is the only truth, anything else is futile." Then I'd argue with two individuals—an ascetic or brahmin to whom everything is acceptable, and an ascetic or brahmin to whom some things are acceptable and some things are not. And when there's arguing, there's dispute; when there's dispute there's distress; and when there's distress there's harm.' So, considering in themselves the potential for argument, dispute, distress, and harm, they give up that view by not grasping another view. That's how those views are given up and let go.

8.1 When it comes to the view of the ascetics and brahmins to whom some things are acceptable and some things are not, a sensible person reflects like this: 'I have the view that some things are acceptable and some things are not. Suppose I were to obstinately stick to this view and insist, "This is the only truth, anything else is futile." Then I'd argue with two individuals—an ascetic or brahmin to whom everything is acceptable, and an ascetic or brahmin to whom nothing is

acceptable. And when there's arguing, there's dispute; when there's dispute there's distress; and when there's distress there's harm.' So, considering in themselves the potential for argument, dispute, distress, and harm, they give up that view by not grasping another view. That's how those views are given up and let go.

Aggivessana, this body is formed. It's made up of the four prin- 9.1
cipal states, produced by mother and father, built up from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away and erosion, to breaking up and destruction. You should see it as impermanent, as suffering, as diseased, as a boil, as a dart, as gloom, as an affliction, as alien, as breaking apart, as empty, as not-self. Doing so, you'll give up desire, affection, and subservience to the body.[279]

There are these three feelings: pleasant, painful, and neutral. At 10.1
a time when you feel a pleasant feeling, you don't feel a painful or neutral feeling; you only feel a pleasant feeling. At a time when you feel a painful feeling, you don't feel a pleasant or neutral feeling; you only feel a painful feeling. At a time when you feel a neutral feeling, you don't feel a pleasant or painful feeling; you only feel a neutral feeling.

Pleasant, painful, and neutral feelings are impermanent, condi- 11.1
tioned, dependently originated, liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease.

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with pleas- 12.1
ant, painful, and neutral feelings. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 12.3
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

279. For *kāyanvayatā* ("subservience to the body") see MN 36:4.4. The inclusion of this rare phrase here suggests that Jain-like practices such as starvation may be indicated.

13.1 A mendicant whose mind is freed like this doesn't side with anyone or dispute with anyone. They use the language of the world to communicate without getting stuck on it."[280]

14.1 Now at that time Venerable Sāriputta was standing behind the Buddha fanning him. Then he thought, "It seems the Buddha speaks of giving up and letting go of all these things through direct knowledge." Reflecting like this, Venerable Sāriputta's mind was freed from the defilements by not grasping.[281]

15.1 And the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in the wanderer Dīghanakha: "Everything that is liable to arise is liable to cease." Then Dīghanakha saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. He went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instructions. He said to the Buddha:

16.1 "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to

280. See DN 9:53.5.

281. Sāriputta became a stream-enterer on hearing a short teaching from the monk Assaji (Kd 1:23.5.6), whereupon he told his friend Moggallāna. They both promptly left their former teacher Sañjaya, a traumatic loss to Sañjaya and his community. AN 4.172:2.1 says that Sāriputta became enlightened a fortnight after he ordained, a detail confirmed in multiple parallels to this passage; MN 111:2.8 details the practice he undertook in that fortnight. This means that the current discussion must have taken place only a fortnight after leaving Sañjaya. Now, Sañjaya's philosophy was to systematically avoid taking any position (DN 2:32.2), which is similar to Dīghanakha's doctrine. It seems likely, then, that Dīghanakha was a disciple of Sañjaya. This supposition finds support in several parallels, which say Dīghanakha was annoyed to learn that Sāriputta had rejected other teachers and gone over to the Buddha (eg. Avadānaśataka, Vaidya 1958a 256: *sarve tīrthakarā nigṛhītāḥ*; also in Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra and Mahāvibhāṣā). These sources do not specify Sañjaya, but who else could it be?

the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."[282]

282. The Pali is alone in saying Dīghanakha became a lay follower, as all parallels report that he ordained and became an arahant. As with Vacchagotta at MN 72:22.2, it is unlikely that a wanderer would become a lay follower and the Pali is probably in error. | The Mahāprajñāpāramitā-upadeśa-śāstra, Tibetan Mūla-Sarvāstivāda-Vinaya, and Avadānaśataka say that, having cut his long nails before ordination, he was known by his actual name, Koṣṭhila, that is, the monk known in Pali as Mahākoṭṭhita. This contradicts the Pali tradition, but as Anālayo shows, there are several inconsistencies in the Pali accounts, so the northern tradition is credible (*Comparative Study*, vol. 1, p. 406, note 88).

MN 75

With Māgaṇḍiya

Māgaṇḍiyasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[283] At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kurus, near the Kuru town named Kammāsadamma, on a grass mat in the fire chamber of a brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan.

2.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Kammāsadamma for alms. He wandered for alms in Kammāsadamma. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to a certain forest grove for the day's meditation. Having plunged deep into it, he sat at the root of a certain tree to meditate.

3.1 Then as the wanderer Māgaṇḍiya was going for a walk he approached that fire chamber.[284] He saw the grass mat spread out there

283. The wanderer Māgaṇḍiya appears outraged at the presence of the Buddha, who he thinks stands in opposition to life itself since he opposes sensual enjoyment. It soon turns out that he misunderstands the Buddha's teachings on sensuality, as the Buddha's aim is not to prevent people from experiencing pleasure but to elevate them so they can enjoy a higher form of pleasure.

284. A Māgaṇḍiya appears here and in Snp 4.9, where he uses his beautiful daughter to tempt the Buddha (cited and discussed at SN 22.3). As to the protagonist of Snp 4.9, the Pali commentary, Divyāvadāna 36—which calls him Mākandika—and the Chinese parallel in the Arthapada (T iv 180) say he too was from the Kuru country. Now, the Mahābhārata and other Sanskrit sources name Mākandī as a city or province on the banks of the Ganges, in the Pañcāla kingdom south of Hastināpura. This more-or-less agrees with Māgaṇḍiya's home in the Kuru country, and suggests his name means "the man from Mākandī". Divyāvadāna 36 and Sanskrit fragment say the Mākandika of Snp 4.9 was also a wanderer, which does not contradict the position of the Pali commentaries and the Arthapada that he was a brahmin. At AN 5.294–302:1.1, *māgaṇḍika* is listed as a type of ascetic; these could well be students of Māgaṇḍiya. Kathāsaritsāgara 15 tells the comic farce of an ascetic from Mākandikā on the banks of the Ganges, who fell in love with the daughter of a merchant and went to ridiculous lengths

and asked the brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan, "Worthy Bhāradvāja, who has this grass mat been spread out for? It looks like an ascetic's bed."

"There is the ascetic Gotama, a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' This bed has been spread for that worthy Gotama." 4.1

"Well, it's a sad sight, worthy Bhāradvāja, a very sad sight indeed, to see a bed for the worthy Gotama, that baby-killer!"[285] 5.1

"Be careful what you say, Māgaṇḍiya, be careful what you say. Many astute aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and ascetics are devoted to the worthy Gotama. They've been guided by him in the noble system, the skillful teaching." 5.4

"Even if I was to see the worthy Gotama face to face, worthy Bhāradvāja, I would say to his face: 'The ascetic Gotama is a baby-killer.' Why is that? For so it came to me while sleeping."[286] 5.7

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to obtain her, only to end up a laughing-stock. This story could well have begun life as a comic inversion of Snp 4.9. Reading all these sources together, we can posit that there was a brahmin wanderer from Mākandī on the Ganges in Kuru-Pañcāla, who gained a certain fame and following as a teacher, but whose hedonism was his downfall. The Pali commentaries further specify that the Māgaṇḍiya of the current sutta is the nephew of the one at Snp 4.9.

285. *Bhūnahan* is Sanskrit *bhrūṇahan*. The earliest sense is "fetus-killer", found in Rig Veda 10.155.2a—where a grotesque demoness is cursed as one who "slays all fetuses" (*sarvā bhrūṇāny āruṣī*)—and also at Atharvaveda 6.1112.3c (*bhrūṇaghni*). Later it took on the sense "murderer of a brahmin". It is used in Pali for one one who destroys the life of a developed fetus or a child (Ja 358:1.1, Ja 544:105.2). The term is sometimes included in a list of depraved people where the sense "baby-killer" is not explicit (AN 7.64:22.1, Snp 3.10:16.2, Ja 530:21.1, Ja 543:142.2; also at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.22). | The brahmin of Verañja calls the Buddha a variety of names at AN 8.11.

286. *Sutta* can mean "discourse" or "sleeping". I do not know anywhere else in the Pali where non-Buddhist texts are referred to as *sutta*. Further, it would seem unlikely that they had such a prophecy of the Buddha, and no early Brahmanical texts have anything like this. On the other hand, the Upaniṣads feature many

5.11 "If you don't mind, I'll tell the ascetic Gotama about this."

5.12 "Don't worry, worthy Bhāradvāja. You may tell him exactly what I've said."

6.1 With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, the Buddha heard this discussion between the brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan and the wanderer Māgaṇḍiya. Coming out of retreat, he went to the brahmin's fire chamber and sat on the grass mat. Then the brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Bhāradvāja, did you have a discussion with the wanderer Māgaṇḍiya about this grass mat?"

6.6 When he said this, the brahmin, shocked and awestruck, said to the Buddha, "I wanted to mention this very thing to the worthy Gotama, but you brought it up before I had a chance."

7.1 But this conversation between the Buddha and the brahmin was left unfinished. Then as the wanderer Māgaṇḍiya was going for a walk he approached that fire chamber. He went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and the Buddha said to him:

8.1 "Māgaṇḍiya, the eye likes sights, it loves them and enjoys them. That's been tamed, guarded, protected and restrained by the Realized One, and he teaches Dhamma for its restraint. Is that what you were referring to when you called me a baby-killer?"

8.5 "That's exactly what I was referring to. Why is that? For so it came to me while sleeping."

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passages on sleep and dream, and the importance of the visions therein (eg. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.18). Also, *avacarati* is not, so far as I know, used for the "transmission" of scripture, but it is used for the "descent" from heaven (Rig Veda 10.59.9a), a usage fitting well the appearance of a vision in a dream. | The plural *no* ("our") here is not significant, as Māgaṇḍiya refers to himself with the royal "we".

"The ear likes sounds … The nose likes smells … The tongue likes tastes … The body likes touches … The mind likes ideas, it loves them and enjoys them. That's been tamed, guarded, protected and restrained by the Realized One, and he teaches Dhamma for its restraint. Is that what you were referring to when you called me a baby-killer?" 8.9

"That's exactly what I was referring to. Why is that? For so it came to me while sleeping." 8.24

"What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Take someone who used to amuse themselves with sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Some time later—having truly understood the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape of sights, and having given up craving and dispelled passion for sights—they would live rid of thirst, their mind peaceful inside. What would you have to say to them, Māgaṇḍiya?" 9.1

"Nothing, worthy Gotama." 9.4

"What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Take someone who used to amuse themselves with sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Some time later—having truly understood the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape of touches, and having given up craving and dispelled passion for touches—they would live rid of thirst, their mind peaceful inside. What would you have to say to them, Māgaṇḍiya?" 9.5

"Nothing, worthy Gotama." 9.12

"Well, when I was still a layperson I used to amuse myself, supplied and provided with sights known by the eye … sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. I had three stilt longhouses—one for the rainy season, one for the winter, and one for the summer. I stayed in a stilt longhouse without coming downstairs for the four months of the rainy season, where I was entertained by musicians— 10.1

none of them men. Some time later—having truly understood the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape of sensual pleasures, and having given up craving and dispelled passion for sensual pleasures—I live rid of thirst, my mind peaceful inside. I see other sentient beings who are not free from sensual pleasures being consumed by craving for sensual pleasures, burning with passion for sensual pleasures, indulging in sensual pleasures. I don't envy them, nor do I hope to enjoy that. Why is that? Because there is a satisfaction that is apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, which even equals heavenly pleasure.[287] Enjoying that satisfaction, I don't envy what is inferior, nor do I hope to enjoy it.

11.1 Suppose there was a householder or a householder's child who was rich, affluent, and wealthy. And they would amuse themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. That is, sights known by the eye … sounds … smells … tastes … touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Having practiced good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, when their body breaks up, after death, they'd be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the gods of the thirty-three. There they'd amuse themselves in the Garden of Delight, escorted by a band of nymphs, supplied and provided with the five kinds of heavenly sensual stimulation. Then they'd see a householder or a householder's child amusing themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

11.7 What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Would that god—amusing themselves in the Garden of Delight, escorted by a band of nymphs, supplied and provided with the five kinds of heavenly sensual stimulation—envy that householder or householder's child their five kinds of human sensual stimulation, or return to human sensual pleasures?"

287. *Samadhigayha tiṭṭhati* means "stands at the same level", "equals" not "surpasses" (Iti 23:2.1, MN 78:8.8).

"No, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because heavenly sensual 11.8
pleasures are better than human sensual pleasures."

"In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, when I was still a layperson I used 12.1
to amuse myself with sights … sounds … smells … tastes … touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Some time later—having truly understood the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape of sensual pleasures, and having given up craving and dispelled passion for sensual pleasures—I live rid of thirst, my mind peaceful inside. I see other sentient beings who are not free from sensual pleasures being consumed by craving for sensual pleasures, burning with passion for sensual pleasures, indulging in sensual pleasures. I don't envy them, nor do I hope to enjoy that. Why is that? Because there is a satisfaction that is apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, which even equals heavenly pleasure. Enjoying that satisfaction, I don't envy what is inferior, nor do I hope to enjoy it.

Suppose there was a person affected by leprosy, with sores and 13.1
blisters on their limbs. Being devoured by worms, scratching with their nails at the opening of their wounds, they'd cauterize their body over a pit of glowing coals.[288] Their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat them. The surgeon would make medicine for them, and by using that they'd be cured of leprosy. They'd be healthy, happy, autonomous, master of themselves, able to go where they wanted. Then they'd see another person affected by leprosy, with sores and blisters on their limbs, being devoured by worms, scratching with their nails at the opening of their wounds, cauterizing their body over a pit of glowing coals.

What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Would that person envy that 13.6
other person affected by leprosy for their pit of glowing coals or for taking medicine?"

288. "Person affected by leprosy" is *kuṭṭhī puriso*

13.8 "No, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because you need to take medicine only when there's a disease. When there's no disease, there's no need for medicine."

14.1 "In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, when I was still a layperson I used to amuse myself with sights … sounds … smells … tastes … touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Some time later—having truly understood the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape of sensual pleasures, and having given up craving and dispelled passion for sensual pleasures—I live rid of thirst, my mind peaceful inside. I see other sentient beings who are not free from sensual pleasures being consumed by craving for sensual pleasures, burning with passion for sensual pleasures, indulging in sensual pleasures. I don't envy them, nor do I hope to enjoy that. Why is that? Because there is a satisfaction that is apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities, which even equals heavenly pleasure. Enjoying that satisfaction, I don't envy what is inferior, nor do I hope to enjoy it.

15.1 Suppose there was a person affected by leprosy, with sores and blisters on their limbs. Being devoured by worms, scratching with their nails at the opening of their wounds, they'd cauterize their body over a pit of glowing coals. Their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat them. The surgeon would make medicine for them, and by using that they'd be cured of leprosy. They'd be healthy, happy, autonomous, master of themselves, able to go where they wanted. Two strong men would grab them by the arms and drag them toward the pit of glowing coals.

15.6 What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Wouldn't that person writhe and struggle to and fro?"

15.8 "Yes, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because that fire is really painful to touch, fiercely burning and scorching."

15.11 "What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Is it only now that the fire is really painful to touch, fiercely burning and scorching, or was it painful previously as well?"

"That fire is painful now and it was also painful previously. That person was affected by leprosy, with sores and blisters on their limbs. Being devoured by worms, scratching with their nails at the opening of their wounds, their sense faculties were impaired. So even though the fire was actually painful to touch, they had a distorted perception that it was pleasant." 15.13

"In the same way, sensual pleasures of the past, future, and present are painful to touch, fiercely burning and scorching. These sentient beings who are not free from sensual pleasures—being consumed by craving for sensual pleasures, burning with passion for sensual pleasures—have impaired sense faculties. So even though sensual pleasures are actually painful to touch, they have a distorted perception that they are pleasant. 16.1

Suppose there was a person affected by leprosy, with sores and blisters on their limbs. Being devoured by worms, scratching with their nails at the opening of their wounds, they're cauterizing their body over a pit of glowing coals. The more they scratch their wounds and cauterize their body, the more their wounds become foul, stinking, and infected. But still, they derive a degree of pleasure and gratification from the itchiness of their wounds. In the same way, I see other sentient beings who are not free from sensual pleasures being consumed by craving for sensual pleasures, burning with passion for sensual pleasures, indulging in sensual pleasures. The more they indulge in sensual pleasures, the more their craving for sensual pleasures grows, and the more they burn with passion for sensual pleasures. But still, they derive a degree of pleasure and gratification from the five kinds of sensual stimulation. 17.1

What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Have you seen or heard of a king or a royal minister of the past, future, or present, amusing themselves supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, who—without giving up craving for sensual pleasures and dispelling passion for sensual pleasures—lives rid of thirst, their mind peaceful inside?" 18.1

"No, worthy Gotama." 18.3

18.4 "Good, Māgaṇḍiya. Neither have I. On the contrary, all the ascetics or brahmins of the past, future, or present who live rid of thirst, their minds peaceful inside, do so after truly understanding the origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape of sensual pleasures, and after giving up craving and dispelling passion for sensual pleasures."

19.1 Then on that occasion the Buddha expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

19.2 "Health is the ultimate blessing;[289]
extinguishment, the ultimate happiness.
Of paths, the ultimate is eightfold—
it's safe, and leads to freedom from death."

19.6 When he said this, Māgaṇḍiya said to him, "It's incredible, worthy Gotama, it's amazing! How well said this was by the worthy Gotama! 'Health is the ultimate blessing; extinguishment, the ultimate happiness.' I've also heard that wanderers of the past, the tutors of tutors, said: 'Health is the ultimate blessing; extinguishment, the ultimate happiness.'[290] And it agrees, worthy Gotama."

19.13 "But Māgaṇḍiya, when you heard that wanderers of the past said this, what is that health? And what is that extinguishment?" When he said this, Māgaṇḍiya stroked his own limbs with his hands, saying:

19.16 "This is that health, worthy Gotama, this is that extinguishment! For I am now healthy and happy, and have no afflictions."[291]

20.1 "Māgaṇḍiya, suppose a person was blind from birth. They couldn't see sights that are dark or bright, or blue, yellow, red, or magenta. They couldn't see even and uneven ground, or the stars, or the moon and sun. They might hear a sighted person saying: 'White cloth is really nice, it's attractive, stainless, and clean.' They'd

289. The first two lines appear also as the first and last lines of Dhp 204, as well as in many parallels for that verse.

290. I have not been able to trace such a saying. Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.4.2 identifies the supreme divinity as "ultimate happiness".

291. Compare DN 1:3.20.2.

go in search of white cloth. But someone would cheat them with a dirty, soiled garment, saying: 'My man, here is a white cloth for you, it's attractive, stainless, and clean.' They'd take it and put it on, expressing their gladness: 'White cloth is really nice, it's attractive, stainless, and clean.'

What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Did that person blind from birth 20.10
do this knowing and seeing, or out of faith in the sighted person?"

"They did so not knowing or seeing, but out of faith in the sighted 20.13
person."

"In the same way, the wanderers of other religions are blind and 21.1
sightless. Not knowing health and not seeing extinguishment, they still recite this verse: 'Health is the ultimate blessing; extinguishment, the ultimate happiness.' For this verse was recited by the perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas of the past:

> 'Health is the ultimate blessing; 21.4
> extinguishment, the ultimate happiness.
> Of paths, the ultimate is eightfold—
> it's safe, and leads to freedom from death.'

These days it has gradually become a verse used by ordinary peo- 21.8
ple. But Māgaṇḍiya, this body is a disease, a boil, a dart, a gloom, an affliction. Yet you say of this body: 'This is that health, this is that extinguishment!' Māgaṇḍiya, you don't have the noble vision by which you might know health and see extinguishment."

"I am quite confident that the worthy Gotama is capable of teach- 22.1
ing me so that I can know health and see extinguishment."

"Māgaṇḍiya, suppose a person was blind from birth. They 22.3
couldn't see sights that are dark or bright, or blue, yellow, red, or magenta. They couldn't see even and uneven ground, or the stars, or the moon and sun. Their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat them. The surgeon would make medicine for them, but when they used it their eyes were not cured and they still could not see clearly. What do you think, Māgaṇḍiya? Wouldn't that doctor just get weary and frustrated?"

22.10 "Yes, worthy Gotama."

22.11 "In the same way, suppose I were to teach you the Dhamma, saying: 'This is that health, this is that extinguishment.' But you might not know health or see extinguishment, which would be wearying and troublesome for me."

23.1 "I am quite confident that the worthy Gotama is capable of teaching me so that I can know health and see extinguishment."

23.3 "Māgaṇḍiya, suppose a person was blind from birth. They couldn't see sights that are dark or bright, or blue, yellow, red, or magenta. They couldn't see even and uneven ground, or the stars, or the moon and sun. They might hear a sighted person saying: 'White cloth is really nice, it's attractive, stainless, and clean.'

23.7 They'd go in search of white cloth. But someone would cheat them with a dirty, soiled garment, saying: 'My man, here is a white cloth for you, it's attractive, stainless, and clean.' They'd take it and put it on. Their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat them. The surgeon would make medicine for them: emetics, purgatives, ointment, counter-ointment, or nasal treatment. And when they used it their eyes would be cured so that they could see clearly. As soon as their eyes were cured they'd lose all desire for that dirty, soiled garment. Then they would consider that person to be no friend, but an enemy, and might even think of murdering them:[292] 'For such a long time I've been cheated, tricked, and deceived by that person with this dirty, soiled garment when he said, "My man, here is a white cloth for you, it's attractive, stainless, and clean."'

24.1 In the same way, Māgaṇḍiya, suppose I were to teach you the Dhamma, saying: 'This is that health, this is that extinguishment.' You might know health and see extinguishment. And as soon as your vision arises you might give up desire for the five grasping aggregates. And you might even think: 'For such a long time I've been cheated, tricked, and deceived by this mind. For what I have been grasping

292. For "consider (*daheyya*) as a friend", see SN 22.85:14.15.

is only form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. My grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be.[293] That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.'"

"I am quite confident that the worthy Gotama is capable of teaching me so that I can rise from this seat cured of blindness." 25.1

"Well then, Māgaṇḍiya, you should associate with true persons. When you associate with true persons, you will hear the true teaching. When you hear the true teaching, you'll practice in line with the teaching. When you practice in line with the teaching, you'll know and see for yourself: 'These are diseases, boils, and darts. And here is where diseases, boils, and darts cease without remainder.' When my grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases." 25.3

When he said this, Māgaṇḍiya said to him, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. May I receive the going forth, the ordination in the worthy Gotama's presence?" 26.1

"Māgaṇḍiya, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they'll give the going forth, the ordination into monkhood. However, I recognize individual differences in this matter." 27.1

293. The text integrates the aggregates and dependent origination (also at SN 22.80:9.10).

27.3 "Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I'll spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the ordination into monkhood."

28.1 And the wanderer Māgaṇḍiya received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Māgaṇḍiya, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

28.3 He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Māgaṇḍiya became one of the perfected.

MN 76

With Sandaka

Sandakasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambī in Ghosita's monastery. 1.1

Now at that time the wanderer Sandaka was residing at the cave of the wavy leaf fig tree together with a large assembly of around five hundred wanderers.[294] 2.1

Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Ānanda came out of retreat and addressed the mendicants: "Come, reverends, let's go to the Devakata Pool to see the cave."[295] 3.1

"Yes, reverend," they replied. Then Ānanda together with several mendicants went to the Devakata Pool. 3.3

Now at that time, Sandaka and the large assembly of wanderers were sitting together making an uproar, a colossal racket. They engaged in all kinds of low talk, such as talk about kings, bandits, and chief ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that place. 4.1

Sandaka saw Ānanda coming off in the distance, and hushed his own assembly, "Be quiet, good fellows, don't make a sound. The ascetic Ānanda, a disciple of the ascetic Gotama, is coming. He is 4.3

294. Neither Sandaka nor this location appear to be known elsewhere.

295. Evidently an excursion for sightseeing was popular. As well as simply enjoying nature, such trips give the mendicants a chance to check out possible places to stay for meditation.

included among the disciples of the ascetic Gotama, who is residing near Kosambī.[296] Such venerables like the quiet, are educated to be quiet, and praise the quiet. Hopefully if he sees that our assembly is quiet he'll see fit to approach." Then those wanderers fell silent.

5.1 Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the wanderer Sandaka, who said to him, "Come, worthy Ānanda! Welcome, worthy Ānanda! It's been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please sit down, here, a seat is ready." Ānanda sat down on the seat spread out, while Sandaka took a low seat and sat to one side. Ānanda said to Sandaka, "Sandaka, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?"

5.10 "Worthy Ānanda, leave aside what we were sitting talking about just now. It won't be hard for you to hear about that later. It'd be great if Mister Ānanda himself would give a Dhamma talk explaining his own denomination."

5.13 "Well then, Sandaka, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

5.14 "Yes, worthy sir," replied Sandaka. Venerable Ānanda said this:

6.1 "Sandaka, these things have been explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha: four ways that negate the spiritual life, and four kinds of unreliable spiritual life. A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, not practice such spiritual paths, and if they did practice them, they wouldn't succeed in the system of the skillful teaching."

6.2 "But worthy Ānanda, what are the four ways that negate the spiritual life, and the four kinds of unreliable spiritual life?"

7.1 "Sandaka, take a certain teacher who has this doctrine and view: 'There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There's no such thing as mother and father, or beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is rightly comported and

296. This sentence is redundant as it stands. But wherever this idiom occurs elsewhere, it specifies that the person is a lay disciple (DN 25:3.5, MN 78:3.7, AN 10.93:2.7, AN 10.94:3.4). Perhaps the text here has been corrupted and originally specified that Ānanda was a *monastic* disciple.

rightly practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.[297] This person is made up of the four principal states. When they die, the earth in their body progresses and proceeds to the substance of earth. The water in their body progresses and proceeds to the substance of water. The fire in their body progresses and proceeds to the substance of fire. The air in their body progresses and proceeds to the substance of air. The faculties are transferred to space.[298] Four men with a bier carry away the corpse. Their footprints show the way to the cremation ground. The bones become bleached. Offerings dedicated to the gods end in ashes. Giving is a doctrine of morons. When anyone affirms a positive teaching it's just hollow, false nonsense. Both the foolish and the astute are annihilated and destroyed when their body breaks up, and they don't exist after death.'

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher 8.1
has such a doctrine and view. If what that teacher says is true, both I who have not accomplished this and one who has accomplished it have attained exactly the same level. Yet I'm not one who says that both of us are annihilated and destroyed when our body breaks up, and we don't exist after death. But it's superfluous for this teacher to go nude, bald, persisting in squatting, tearing out their hair and beard. For I'm living at home with my children, using sandalwood imported from Kāsi, wearing garlands, fragrance, and makeup, and accepting gold and currency. Yet I'll have exactly the same destiny in the next life as this teacher. What do I know or see that I should lead the spiritual life under this teacher? This negates the spiritual life.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

297. Attributed to Ajita of the hair blanket at DN 2:23.2. | The denial of "mother and father" is usually interpreted as the denial of moral duty toward one's parents. However, I think it is a doctrine of conception which denies that a child is created by the mother and father. Rather, the child is produced by the four elements, with parents as mere instigators and incubators.

298. This is a materialist analysis of the person. | The word *kāya* ("substance") is central to Jainism. Ācārāṅgasūtra 8.1.11 speaks of the "substances" of earth, water, fire, and air as being imbued with life so one should avoid damaging them.

9.1 This is the first way that negates the spiritual life.

10.1 Furthermore, take a certain teacher who has this doctrine and view: 'The one who acts does nothing wrong when they punish, mutilate, torture, aggrieve, oppress, intimidate, or when they encourage others to do the same. Nothing bad is done when they kill, steal, break into houses, plunder wealth, steal from isolated buildings, commit highway robbery, commit adultery, and lie.[299] If you were to reduce all the living creatures of this earth to one heap and mass of flesh with a razor-edged chakram, no evil comes of that, and no outcome of evil. If you were to go along the south bank of the Ganges killing, mutilating, and torturing, and encouraging others to do the same, no evil comes of that, and no outcome of evil. If you were to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving and sacrificing and encouraging others to do the same, no merit comes of that, and no outcome of merit. In giving, self-control, restraint, and truthfulness there is no merit or outcome of merit.'

11.1 A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher has such a doctrine and view. If what that teacher says is true, both I who have not accomplished this and one who has accomplished it have attained exactly the same level. Yet I'm not one who says that when both of us act, nothing wrong is done. But it's superfluous for this teacher to go nude, bald, persisting in squatting, tearing out their hair and beard. For I'm living at home with my children, using sandalwood imported from Kāsi, wearing garlands, fragrance, and makeup, and accepting gold and currency. Yet I'll have exactly the same destiny in the next life as this teacher. What do I know or see

299. Attributed to Pūraṇa Kassapa at DN 2:17.2. | This is a denial of the doctrine of kamma. While his doctrine appears to be morally nihilistic, it seems unlikely this was Pūraṇa Kassapa's full teaching. He may have subscribed to hard determinism, so that we have no choice in what we do. He may also have believed that we should keep moral rules as a social contract, but that this had no effect on the afterlife. | In such contexts, *kar-* means "punish, inflict" (MN 129:29.2).

that I should lead the spiritual life under this teacher? This negates the spiritual life.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

This is the second way that negates the spiritual life. 12.1

Furthermore, take a certain teacher who has this doctrine and 13.1
view: 'There is no cause or reason for the corruption of sentient beings.[300] Sentient beings are corrupted without cause or reason. There's no cause or reason for the purification of sentient beings. Sentient beings are purified without cause or reason. There is no power, no energy, no human strength or vigor.[301] All sentient beings, all living creatures, all beings, all souls lack control, power, and energy. Molded by destiny, circumstance, and nature, they experience pleasure and pain in the six classes of rebirth.'

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher 14.1
has such a doctrine and view. If what that teacher says is true, both I who have not accomplished this and one who has accomplished it have attained exactly the same level. Yet I'm not one who says that both of us are purified without cause or reason. But it's superfluous for this teacher to go nude, bald, persisting in squatting, tearing out their hair and beard. For I'm living at home with my children, using sandalwood imported from Kāsi, wearing garlands, fragrance, and makeup, and accepting gold and currency. Yet I'll have exactly the same destiny in the next life as this teacher. What do I know or see that I should lead the spiritual life under this teacher? This negates the spiritual life.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

This is the third way that negates the spiritual life. 15.1

Furthermore, take a certain teacher who has this doctrine and 16.1
view: 'There are these seven substances that are not made, not derived, not created, without a creator, barren, steady as a mountain

300. This is the first part of the view attributed to the Bamboo-staffed Ascetic Gosāla at DN 2:20.2 and to Pūraṇa Kassapa at SN 22.60:2.2. | This denies the principle of causality and the efficacy of action. The fatalistic teachings of the Ājīvikas led to them becoming popular as prognosticators.

301. The otherwise parallel passage has a different phrasing at DN 2:20.5.

peak, standing firm like a pillar.[302] They don't move or deteriorate or obstruct each other. They're unable to cause pleasure, pain, or both pleasure and pain to each other. What seven? The substances of earth, water, fire, air; pleasure, pain, and the soul is the seventh. These seven substances are not made, not derived, not created, without a creator, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They don't move or deteriorate or obstruct each other. They're unable to cause pleasure, pain, or both pleasure and pain to each other. And here there is no one who kills or who makes others kill; no one who learns or who educates others; no one who understands or who helps others understand.[303] If you chop off someone's head with a sharp sword, you don't take anyone's life. The sword simply passes through the gap between the seven substances. There are 1.4 million main wombs, and 6,000, and 600; 500 deeds, and five, and three; deeds and half-deeds; 62 paths of practice, 62 sub-eons, six classes of rebirth, and eight stages in a person's life; 4,900 Ājīvaka ascetics, 4,900 wanderers, and 4,900 dragon abodes; 2,000 lordships, 3,000 hells, and 36 realms of dusky sky; seven percipient embryos, seven non-percipient embryos, seven knotless embryos, seven gods, seven mental heavens, seven goblins, seven streams, seven castoff incarnations and 700 castoff incarnations, seven downfalls and 700 downfalls, seven dreams and 700 dreams, and 8.4 million great eons—through all of which the foolish and the astute transmigrate before making an end of suffering.[304] And here there is no such thing as this: "By this precept or observance or fervent austerity or spiritual practice I shall force unripened deeds to bear their fruit, or eliminate old deeds by experiencing their results little by little"—for that can-

302. This combines the view attributed to Pakudha Kaccāyana (DN 2:26.2) with the second part of Gosāla's view (DN 2:20.7). There are several inconsistencies in the presentation of these views in Pali, and still more when parallels are considered. These were closely-related teachers, who often practiced together for a time, and it is hardly surprising that they should share some views in common, or that their exact views have become confused.

303. Compare AN 8.16:1.3.

304. For explanations, see my note at DN 2:20.7.

not be. Pleasure and pain are allotted. Transmigration lasts only for a limited period, so there's no increase or decrease, no getting better or worse. It's like how, when you toss a ball of string, it rolls away unraveling. In the same way, after transmigrating the foolish and the astute will make an end of suffering.'

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher 17.1
has such a doctrine and view. If what that teacher says is true, both I who have not accomplished this and one who has accomplished it have attained exactly the same level. Yet I'm not one who says that after transmigrating both of us will make an end of suffering. But it's superfluous for this teacher to go nude, bald, persisting in squatting, tearing out their hair and beard. For I'm living at home with my children, using sandalwood imported from Kāsi, wearing garlands, fragrance, and makeup, and accepting gold and currency. Yet I'll have exactly the same destiny in the next life as this teacher. What do I know or see that I should lead the spiritual life under this teacher? This negates the spiritual life.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

This is the fourth way that negates the spiritual life. 18.1

These are the four ways that negate the spiritual life that have been 19.1
explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, not practice such spiritual paths, and if they did practice them, they wouldn't succeed in the system of the skillful teaching."

"It's incredible, worthy Ānanda, it's amazing, how these four ways 20.1
that negate the spiritual life have been explained by the Buddha. But worthy Ānanda, what are the four kinds of unreliable spiritual life?"[305]

305. This section deals with religious claims to truth, which sound confident but turn out to be unreliable. *Anassāsika* ("unreliable") normally describes "conditions", where it is a synonym of *anicca* and *adhuva* (AN 7.66:2.3, DN 17:2.16.4, SN 15.20:2.12, SN 22.96:4.14). For its opposite *assāsa* as "certainty" see MN 11:3.2 and MN 93:6.7.

21.1 "Sandaka, take a certain teacher who claims to be all-knowing and all-seeing, to know and see everything without exception, thus: 'Knowledge and vision are constantly and continually present to me, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking.' They enter an empty house; they get no almsfood; a dog bites them; they encounter a wild elephant, a wild horse, and a wild cow; they ask the name and clan of a woman or man; they ask the name and path to a village or town. When asked, 'Why is this?' they answer: 'I had to enter an empty house, that's why I entered it. I had to get no almsfood, that's why I got none. I had to get bitten by a dog, that's why I was bitten. I had to encounter a wild elephant, a wild horse, and a wild cow, that's why I encountered them. I had to ask the name and clan of a woman or man, that's why I asked. I had to ask the name and path to a village or town, that's why I asked.'[306]

22.1 A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher makes such a claim, but they answer in such a way. This spiritual life is unreliable.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

23.1 This is the first kind of unreliable spiritual life.

24.1 Furthermore, take another teacher who is an oral transmitter, who takes oral transmission to be the truth.[307] They teach by oral transmission, by the lineage of testament, by canonical authority. But when a teacher takes oral transmission to be the truth, some of that is well learned, some poorly learned, some true, and some otherwise.

25.1 A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher takes oral transmission to be the truth. He teaches by oral transmission, by the lineage of testament, by canonical authority. But when a teacher takes oral transmission to be the truth, some of that is well learned, some poorly learned, some true, and some otherwise. This spiritual life is unreliable.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

306. Not only did the Buddha deny this kind of strong omniscience, he took pains to point out its absurdity.

307. As do some brahmins (MN 95:14.1).

This is the second kind of unreliable spiritual life. 26.1

Furthermore, take another teacher who relies on logic and inquiry. 27.1 They teach what they have worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing their own perspective. But when a teacher relies on logic and inquiry, some of that is well reasoned, some poorly reasoned, some true, and some otherwise.

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher 28.1 relies on logic and inquiry. They teach what they have worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing their own perspective. But when a teacher relies on logic and inquiry, some of that is well reasoned, some poorly reasoned, some true, and some otherwise. This spiritual life is unreliable.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

This is the third kind of unreliable spiritual life. 29.1

Furthermore, take another teacher who is dull and stupid. Be- 30.1 cause of that, whenever they're asked a question, they resort to verbal flip-flops and endless flip-flops:[308] 'I don't say it's like this. I don't say it's like that. I don't say it's otherwise. I don't say it's not so. And I don't deny it's not so.'

A sensible person reflects on this matter in this way: 'This teacher 31.1 is dull and stupid. Because of that, whenever they're asked a question, they resort to verbal flip-flops and endless flip-flops: "I don't say it's like this. I don't say it's like that. I don't say it's otherwise. I don't say it's not so. And I don't deny it's not so." This spiritual life is unreliable.' Realizing this, they leave disappointed.

This is the fourth kind of unreliable spiritual life. 32.1

These are the four kinds of unreliable spiritual life that have been 33.1 explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, not practice such spiritual paths, and if they

308. *Vikkhepa* is "flip-flopping". | *Amarā* is explained in the commentary as either "undying" or "eel-like". However, *amarā* in the sense of "eel" is found only in the commentary to this term so is probably spurious.

did practice them, they wouldn't complete the system of the skillful teaching."

34.1 "It's incredible, worthy Ānanda, it's amazing, how these four kinds of unreliable spiritual life have been explained by the Buddha. But, worthy Ānanda, what would a teacher say and explain so that a sensible person would, to the best of their ability, practice such a spiritual path, and once practicing it, they would complete the system of the skillful teaching?"

35-42.1 "Sandaka, it's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. … He gives up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, he enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, lead the spiritual life with a teacher under whom they achieve such a high distinction, and, once practicing it, they would complete the system of the skillful teaching.

43.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant … enters and remains in the second absorption …[309] third absorption … fourth absorption. A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, lead the spiritual life under a teacher who achieves such a high distinction, and, once practicing it, they would complete the system of the skillful teaching.

47.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons

309. *Bhikkhu* here seems improbable, yet it is attested in the manuscripts.

of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. … They recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, lead the spiritual life with a teacher under whom they achieve such a high distinction, and, once practicing it, they would complete the system of the skillful teaching.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 48.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. … They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, lead the spiritual life with a teacher under whom they achieve such a high distinction, and, once practicing it, they would complete the system of the skillful teaching.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 49.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'.

Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the de- 50.1
filements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 50.3
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.' A sensible person would, to the best of their ability, lead the spiritual life with a teacher under whom they achieve

such a high distinction, and, once practicing it, they would complete the system of the skillful teaching."

51.1 "But worthy Ānanda, when a mendicant is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—could they still enjoy sensual pleasures?"

51.2 "Sandaka, a mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—can't transgress in five respects. A mendicant with defilements ended can't deliberately take the life of a living creature, take something with the intention to steal, have sex, tell a deliberate lie, or store up goods for their own enjoyment like they used to as a layperson. A mendicant who is perfected can't transgress in these five respects."

52.1 "But worthy Ānanda, when a mendicant is perfected, would the knowledge and vision that their defilements are ended be constantly and continually present to them, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking?"

52.3 "Well then, Sandaka, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Suppose there was a person whose hands and feet had been amputated. Would they be aware that their hands and feet had been amputated constantly and continually, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking? Or would they be aware of it only when they checked it?"

52.9 "They wouldn't be aware of it constantly, only when they checked it."

52.13 "In the same way, when a mendicant is perfected, the knowledge and vision that their defilements are ended is not constantly and continually present to them, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking. Rather, they are aware of it only when they checked it."

"But Reverend Ānanda, in this teaching and training, how many are emancipated?"[310] 53.1

"There are not just one hundred who are emancipated, Sandaka, or two or three or four or five hundred, but many more than that in this teaching and training." 53.2

"It's incredible, worthy Ānanda, it's amazing! Namely, that there's no glorifying one's own teaching and putting down the teaching of others. The Dhamma is taught in its own field, and so many emancipated are recognized. But these Ājīvakas, sons of she whose sons are dead, glorify themselves and put others down. And they only recognize three who have been emancipated:[311] Nanda Vaccha, Kisa Saṅkicca, and the bamboo-staffed ascetic Gosāla." 53.3

Then the wanderer Sandaka addressed his own assembly, "Go, good fellows. The spiritual life is lived under the ascetic Gotama. It's not easy for me to forsake possessions, honor, or popularity now." And that's how the wanderer Sandaka sent his own assembly to lead the spiritual life under the Buddha. 54.1

310. "(Those who are) emancipated" is *niyyātāro*, a unique occurrence of an agent noun from *niyyāti*, "to go out". This was probably a technical term in Sandaka's system.

311. The commentary takes *mata* as "dead" and the compound *puttamatāya* as genitive feminine, yielding the sense, "she whose sons are dead", explaining that Sandaka thought, "Those Ājīvakas are surely dead; their mother is she whose sons are dead". Perhaps, however, "she whose sons are dead" is an allusion to a child-killing *yakkhinī* such as Hārītī of Madhurā or Kālī in the commentary to Dhp 5, thus having the force, "sons of a she-devil". Either way this is a curse or slur intruding into a passage whose intent is to highlight the Buddha's fair-minded treatment of others. A near-identical phrase is used of brutal bandits at Ja 79:1.3. The compound is inverted at SN 5.3:2.1, but seems to have the same meaning.

MN 77

The Longer Discourse with Sakuludāyī

Mahāsakuludāyisutta

1.1 So I have heard.[312] At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

2.1 Now at that time several very well-known wanderers were residing in their monastery in the peacocks' feeding ground. They included Annabhāra, Varadhara, Sakuludāyī, and other very well-known wanderers.[313]

3.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. Then it occurred to him, "It's too early to wander for alms in Rājagaha. Why don't I visit the wanderer Sakuludāyī at the monastery for the wanderers in the peacocks' feeding ground?"

4.1 So the Buddha went to the monastery for the wanderers.

4.2 Now at that time, Sakuludāyī was sitting together with a large assembly of wanderers making an uproar, a colossal racket. They engaged in all kinds of low talk, such as talk about kings, bandits,

312. Beginning as a discussion on why certain teachers are given due respect, the Buddha creates one of the most comprehensive accounts of his system of meditation, drawing in almost all the different perspectives and approaches to *samādhi*.

313. The Buddha addresses these wanderers at AN 4.30, where he teaches four fundamental principles of any holy life, and at AN 4.185, where he teaches four "truths of the brahmins". These are all respectful engagements that highlight common ground. | Annabhāra means "food-carrier" and indicates a humble origin (Thag 16.9:19.1). | Varadhara means "bearer of good fortune"; it is probably a name for the earth. | Sakuludāyī also appears in MN 79. His name ("one who rises up with his own family") is ironic, given that his attempt to go forth is frustrated by his followers at MN 79:46.2.

and chief ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that place.

Sakuludāyī saw the Buddha coming off in the distance, and hushed 4.4
his own assembly, "Be quiet, good fellows, don't make a sound. Here comes the ascetic Gotama. The venerable likes quiet and praises quiet. Hopefully if he sees that our assembly is quiet he'll see fit to approach." Then those wanderers fell silent.

Then the Buddha approached Sakuludāyī, who said to him, "Let 5.1
the Blessed One come, sir! Welcome to the Blessed One, sir! It's been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please, sir, sit down, this seat is ready." The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out, while Sakuludāyī took a low seat and sat to one side.

The Buddha said to him, "Udāyī, what were you sitting talking 5.10
about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?"

"Sir, leave aside what we were sitting talking about just now. It 6.1
won't be hard for you to hear about that later.

Sir, a few days ago several ascetics and brahmins who follow vari- 6.3
ous other religions were sitting together at the debating hall, and this discussion came up among them: 'The people of Aṅga and Magadha are so fortunate, so very fortunate! For there are these ascetics and brahmins who lead an order and a community, and tutor a community. They're well-known and famous religious founders, deemed holy by many people. And they have come down for the rainy season residence at Rājagaha. They include Pūraṇa Kassapa, the bamboo-staffed ascetic Gosāla, Ajita of the hair blanket, Pakudha Kaccāyana, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, and the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan. This ascetic Gotama also leads an order and a community, and tutors a community. He's a well-known and famous religious founder, deemed holy by many people. And he too has come down for the

rains residence at Rājagaha. Which of these ascetics and brahmins is honored, respected, revered, and venerated by their disciples? And how do their disciples, honoring and respecting them, remain loyal?'

6.17 Some of them said: 'This Pūraṇa Kassapa leads an order and a community, and tutors a community. He's a well-known and famous religious founder, deemed holy by many people. But he's not honored, respected, revered, and venerated by his disciples. And his disciples, not honoring and respecting him, don't remain loyal to him. Once it so happened that he was teaching an assembly of many hundreds. Then one of his disciples made a noise, "My good fellows, don't ask Pūraṇa Kassapa about that. He doesn't know that. I know it. Ask me about it, and I'll answer you." Once it so happened that Pūraṇa Kassapa didn't get his way, though he called out with raised arms, "Be quiet, good fellows, don't make a sound. They're not asking you, they're asking me! I'll answer you!" Indeed, many of his disciples have left him after refuting his doctrine: "You don't understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You're practicing wrong. I'm practicing right. I stay on topic, you don't. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you've thought so much about has been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You're trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!" That's how Pūraṇa Kassapa is not honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by his disciples. On the contrary, his disciples, not honoring and respecting him, don't remain loyal to him. Rather, he's reviled, and rightly so.'[314]

6.34 Others said: 'This bamboo-staffed ascetic Gosāla … Ajita of the hair blanket … Pakudha Kaccāyana … Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta … This Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan leads an order and a community, and tutors a community. He's a well-known and famous religious

314. Taking *dhamma* here in the sense of "right, legitimate", rather than "teaching", as the example criticizes him not his teaching.

founder, deemed holy by many people. But he's not honored, respected, revered, and venerated by his disciples. And his disciples, not honoring and respecting him, don't remain loyal to him. Once it so happened that he was teaching an assembly of many hundreds. Then one of his disciples made a noise, "My good fellows, don't ask the Jain Ñātika about that. He doesn't know that. I know it. Ask me about it, and I'll answer you." Once it so happened that the Jain Ñātika didn't get his way, though he called out with raised arms, "Be quiet, good fellows, don't make a sound. They're not asking you, they're asking me! I'll answer you!" Indeed, many of his disciples have left him after refuting his doctrine: "You don't understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You're practicing wrong. I'm practicing right. I stay on topic, you don't. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you've thought so much about has been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You're trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!" That's how the Jain Ñātika is not honored, respected, revered, and venerated by his disciples. On the contrary, his disciples, not honoring and respecting him, don't remain loyal to him. Rather, he's reviled, and rightly so.'

Others said: 'This ascetic Gotama leads an order and a commu- 6.55
nity, and tutors a community. He's a well-known and famous religious founder, deemed holy by many people. He's honored, respected, revered, and venerated by his disciples. And his disciples, honoring and respecting him, remain loyal to him. Once it so happened that he was teaching an assembly of many hundreds. Then one of his disciples cleared their throat. And one of their spiritual companions nudged them with their knee, to indicate, "Hush, venerable, don't make sound! Our teacher, the Blessed One, is teaching!" While the ascetic Gotama is teaching an assembly of many hundreds, there is no sound of his disciples coughing or clearing their throats. That large crowd is poised expectantly at the ready, thinking, "Whatever the Buddha teaches, we shall listen to it." It's like when there's a

person at the crossroads pressing out pure dwarf-bee honey,[315] and a large crowd is poised expectantly at the ready. In the same way, while the ascetic Gotama is teaching an assembly of many hundreds, there is no sound of his disciples coughing or clearing their throats. That large crowd is poised expectantly at the ready, thinking, "Whatever the Buddha teaches, we shall listen to it." Even when disciples of the ascetic Gotama, having clashed with their spiritual companions, resign the training and return to a lesser life, they speak only praise of the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. They blame only themselves, not others: "We were unlucky, we had little merit. For even after going forth in such a well explained teaching and training we weren't able to practice for life the perfectly full and pure spiritual life."[316] They become monastery workers or lay followers, and they proceed having undertaken the five precepts. That's how the ascetic Gotama is honored, respected, revered, and venerated by his disciples. And that's how his disciples, honoring and respecting him, remain loyal to him.'"

7.1 "But Udāyī, how many qualities do you see in me, because of which my disciples honor, respect, revere, and venerate me; and honoring and respecting me, they remain loyal to me?"

8.1 "Sir, I see five such qualities in the Buddha.[317] What five?

8.3 The Buddha eats little and praises eating little. This is the first such quality I see in the Buddha.

8.5 Furthermore, the Buddha is content with any kind of robe, and praises such contentment. This is the second such quality I see in the Buddha.

315. *Khuddā* (literally "small one") is said to be a species of small bee, also known in Sanskrit as *kṣudrā*. The "dwarf bee" (*apis florea*) fits the bill, as it is a small wild honeybee found in India.

316. For "having clashed" (*sampayojetvā*), see SN 11.24:1.2.

317. This is an example of what the Buddha says in DN 1:1.7.1, "When an ordinary person speaks praise of the Realized One, they speak only of trivial, insignificant details of mere ethics."

Furthermore, the Buddha is content with any kind of almsfood, 8.7
and praises such contentment. This is the third such quality I see in the Buddha.

Furthermore, the Buddha is content with any kind of lodging, 8.9
and praises such contentment. This is the fourth such quality I see in the Buddha.

Furthermore, the Buddha is secluded, and praises seclusion. This 8.11
is the fifth such quality I see in the Buddha.

These are the five qualities I see in the Buddha, because of which 8.13
his disciples honor, respect, revere, and venerate him; and honoring and respecting him, they remain loyal to him."

"Suppose, Udāyī, my disciples were loyal to me because I eat little. 9.1
Well, there are disciples of mine who eat a tumbler of food, or half a tumbler; they eat a wood-apple, or half a wood-apple. But sometimes I even eat this bowl full to the brim, or even more. So if it were the case that my disciples are loyal to me because I eat little, then those disciples who eat even less would not be loyal to me.

Suppose my disciples were loyal to me because I'm content with 9.4
any kind of robe. Well, there are disciples of mine who have rag robes, wearing shabby robes. They gather scraps from charnel grounds, rubbish dumps, and shops, make them into a patchwork robe and wear it. But sometimes I wear robes offered by householders that are strong, yet next to which bottle-gourd down is coarse.[318] So if it were the case that my disciples are loyal to me because I'm content with any kind of robe, then those disciples who wear rag robes would not be loyal to me.

Suppose my disciples were loyal to me because I'm content with 9.7
any kind of almsfood. Well, there are disciples of mine who eat only almsfood, wander indiscriminately for almsfood, happy to eat whatever they glean. When they've entered an inhabited area, they don't consent when invited to sit down. But sometimes I even eat

318. For Mahāsaṅgīti *satthalūkhāni* accept PTS and BJT reading *yattha lūkhāni*. | *Alābu* is "bottle gourd", which is covered in a fine down.

by invitation boiled fine rice with the dark grains picked out, served with many soups and sauces. So if it were the case that my disciples are loyal to me because I'm content with any kind of almsfood, then those disciples who eat only almsfood would not be loyal to me.

9.10 Suppose my disciples were loyal to me because I'm content with any kind of lodging. Well, there are disciples of mine who stay at the root of a tree, in the open air. For eight months they don't go under a roof. But sometimes I even stay in bungalows, plastered inside and out, draft-free, with doors fastened and windows shuttered. So if it were the case that my disciples are loyal to me because I'm content with any kind of lodging, then those disciples who stay at the root of a tree would not be loyal to me.

9.13 Suppose my disciples were loyal to me because I'm secluded and I praise seclusion. Well, there are disciples of mine who live in the wilderness, in remote lodgings. Having ventured deep into remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest, they live there, coming down to the midst of the Saṅgha each fortnight for the recitation of the monastic code. But sometimes I live crowded by monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen; by rulers and their chief ministers, and monastics of other religions and their disciples. So if it were the case that my disciples are loyal to me because I'm secluded and praise seclusion, then those disciples who live in the wilderness would not be loyal to me.

9.16 So, Udāyī, it's not because of these five qualities that my disciples honor, respect, revere, and venerate me; and honoring and respecting me, they remain loyal to me.

10.1 There are five other qualities because of which my disciples honor, respect, revere, and venerate me; and honoring and respecting me, they remain loyal to me. What five?

10.3 Firstly, my disciples esteem me for the higher ethics: 'The ascetic Gotama is ethical. He possesses the entire spectrum of ethical conduct to the highest degree.' Since this is so, this is the first quality because of which my disciples are loyal to me.

Furthermore, my disciples esteem me for my excellent knowledge 12.1
and vision: 'The ascetic Gotama only claims to know when he does in fact know. He only claims to see when he really does see. He teaches based on direct knowledge, not without direct knowledge. He teaches based on reason, not without reason. He teaches with a demonstrable basis, not without it.'[319] Since this is so, this is the second quality because of which my disciples are loyal to me.

Furthermore, my disciples esteem me for my higher wisdom: 'The 13.1
ascetic Gotama is wise. He possesses the entire spectrum of wisdom to the highest degree. It's not possible that he would fail to foresee grounds for future criticism, or to legitimately and completely refute the doctrines of others that come up.'[320] What do you think, Udāyī? Would my disciples, knowing and seeing this, break in and interrupt me?"

"No, sir." 13.6

"That's because I don't expect to be instructed by my disciples. 13.7
Invariably, my disciples expect instruction from me.

Since this is so, this is the third quality because of which my disci- 13.9
ples are loyal to me.

Furthermore, my disciples come to me and ask how the noble 14.1
truth of suffering applies to the suffering in which they are swamped and mired. And I provide them with a satisfying answer to their question.[321] They ask how the noble truths of the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering apply to the suffering in which they are swamped and mired. And I provide them with satisfying answers to their ques-

319. This is a good example of why *sappāṭihāriya* means "with demonstrable basis", not "with miracles".

320. *Vādapatha* is found here and at AN 4.8:5.1 in the sense of "criticism". Compare *vacanapatha*, which is always used in the sense of "harsh words", "criticism" (eg. AN 4.114:9.2). Compare English "give a talking to", "have words with". At Snp 5.7:8.5, however, *vādapatha* is used in the sense "ways of speech".

321. The Buddha does not merely teach a satisfying theory, he applies it to address the specific suffering with which individuals are afflicted (*yena dukkhena dukkhotiṇṇā*).

tions. Since this is so, this is the fourth quality because of which my disciples are loyal to me.

15.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.[322] It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings … mind … principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.[323]

16.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the four right efforts. It's when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. And many of my

322. The fifth quality as presented here constitutes one of the most comprehensive presentations of meditation in any early Buddhist text. The Chinese parallel (MA 207 at T i 783b16) simply says that the Buddha taught disciples to transcend doubt and reach the far shore, which makes the same point far more economically. It seems likely that the Pali text has been expanded. | From here through to MN 77:21.3 the Buddha presents the seven sets of practices later renowned as the 37 "qualities on the side of awakening" (*bodhipakkhiyadhammā*).

323. "Perfection" is *pāramī*, here a term for arahantship. The concept of "perfections" as a set of qualities developed by a Bodhisattva over many lifetimes is not found in any early text. It was introduced several centuries after the Buddha in the Cariyāpiṭaka (Cp 1) and throughout the latest texts of the Pali canon (Bv 1:78.1, Thi Ap 28:64.2, Kp 8:15.2, Pvr 3:3.2, Mil 5.1.4:13.1). Similar conceptions were meanwhile developing in other schools, eventually becoming a key doctrine of Mahāyāna.

disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

17.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the four bases of psychic power. It's when a mendicant develops the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort. They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to mental development, and active effort. They develop the basis of psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort. And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

18.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the five faculties. It's when a mendicant develops the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which lead to peace and awakening. And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

19.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the five powers. It's when a mendicant develops the powers of faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom, which lead to peace and awakening. And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

20.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the seven awakening factors. It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

21.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the noble eightfold path. It's when a mendicant develops right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. And

many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

22.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the eight liberations.[324]

22.2 Having physical form, they see forms.[325] This is the first liberation.

22.4 Not perceiving form internally, they see forms externally.[326] This is the second liberation.

22.6 They're focused only on beauty.[327] This is the third liberation.

22.8 Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fourth liberation.

22.10 Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth liberation.

22.12 Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth liberation.

22.14 Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh liberation.

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324. The eight liberations (*vimokkhā*) are an alternative way of describing the meditative experiences of *jhāna*. Elsewhere they are listed at DN 15:35.1, DN 16:3.33.1, DN 33:3.1.168, DN 34:2.1.191, AN 8.66, and referred to at AN 4.189:1.8 and Thag 20.1:33.1. At AN 8.120 and MN 137:27.1 they are listed but not called the eight liberations.

325. Someone sees a meditative vision based on the perception of their own body, such as through mindfulness of breathing or one's own body parts. Such "visions" or "forms" (*rūpā*) are the lights or other meditation phenomena that today are sometimes called *nimitta*. | The first three liberations all cover the four *jhānas*.

326. A meditator grounds their practice on some external focus, such as a light, the sight of a corpse, or an external element such as earth.

327. This is a practice based on wholly pure and exalted meditation, such as the meditation on love, or the sight of a pure brilliant color like the sky.

Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth liberation. 22.16

And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight. 22.18

Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the eight dimensions of mastery.[328] 23.1

Perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally, limited, both pretty and ugly.[329] Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the first dimension of mastery. 23.2

Perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the second dimension of mastery. 23.5

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the third dimension of mastery. 23.8

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the fourth dimension of mastery. 23.11

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally, blue, with blue color and blue appearance.[330] They're like a flax flower that's blue, with blue color and blue appearance. Or a cloth from Varanasi that's smoothed on both sides, blue, with blue color and blue appearance. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally, blue, with blue color and blue ap- 23.14

328. These are another way of describing the different experiences of *jhāna*. Also at AN 8.65, AN 10.29:6.1, DN 16:3.24.1, DN 33:3.1.142, and DN 34:2.1.160.
329. An "ugly" form is the mental image that arises in such contemplations as the parts of the body. A "beautiful" image arises from practices such as mindfulness of breathing.
330. This is the meditation where one contemplates an external color, either a prepared disk or a natural phenomena such as the sky or a flower, which eventually gives rise to a "counterpart" image. Today such meditations are called *kasiṇa* following the Visuddhimagga, but for the original sense of *kasiṇa* see below (MN 77:24.1).

pearance. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the fifth dimension of mastery.

23.19 Not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally that are yellow, with yellow color and yellow appearance. They're like a champak flower that's yellow, with yellow color and yellow appearance. Or a cloth from Varanasi that's smoothed on both sides, yellow, with yellow color and yellow appearance. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally that are yellow, with yellow color and yellow appearance. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the sixth dimension of mastery.

23.24 Not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally that are red, with red color and red appearance. They're like a scarlet mallow flower that's red, with red color and red appearance. Or a cloth from Varanasi that's smoothed on both sides, red, with red color and red appearance. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally that are red, with red color and red appearance. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the seventh dimension of mastery.

23.29 Not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally that are white, with white color and white appearance. They're like the morning star that's white, with white color and white appearance. Or a cloth from Varanasi that's smoothed on both sides, white, with white color and white appearance. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees forms externally that are white, with white color and white appearance. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the eighth dimension of mastery.

23.34 And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

24.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the ten universal dimensions of meditation.

24.2 Someone perceives the meditation on universal earth above, below, across, undivided and limitless.

They perceive the meditation on universal water … the meditation on universal fire … the meditation on universal air … the meditation on universal blue … the meditation on universal yellow … the meditation on universal red … the meditation on universal white … the meditation on universal space … the meditation on universal consciousness above, below, across, undivided and limitless.[331] 24.3

And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight. 24.12

Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to develop the four absorptions.[332] 25.1

It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion.[333] It's like when a deft bathroom attendant or their apprentice pours bath powder into a bronze dish, sprinkling it little by little with water. They knead it until the ball of bath powder is soaked and saturated with moisture, spread through inside and 25.2

331. That Pali *kasiṇa* (Sanskrit *kṛtsna*) means "universal", "totality" is shown by this passage where it is "undivided and limitless". It is a name for the state of absorption, not for the meditation disk used in preliminary practice. Yājñavalkya says that, just as salt is "entirely" salty, the Self is an "entire mass of consciousness" (*kṛtsnaḥ prajñānaghana eva*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.13).

332. From here, the text introduces the absorptions and higher knowledges, illustrated as in DN 2 with a few differing similes. The absorptions and three higher knowledges also appear with similes at MN 39.

333. As a meditator proceeds, their subjective experience of the "body" evolves from tactile sense impressions (*phoṭṭhabba*), to the interior mental experience of bliss and light (*manomayakāya*), to the direct personal realization of highest truth (MN 70:23.2: *kāyena ceva paramasaccaṁ sacchikaroti*).

out; yet no moisture oozes out.[334] In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads themselves with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion.

26.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion. It's like a deep lake fed by spring water. There's no inlet to the east, west, north, or south, and the heavens would not properly bestow showers from time to time.[335] But the stream of cool water welling up in the lake drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads throughout the lake. There's no part of the lake that's not spread through with cool water.[336] In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads themselves with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion.

27.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption. They meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture. It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without

334. The kneading is the "placing the mind and keeping it connected", the water is bliss, while the lack of leaking speaks to the contained interiority of the experience.

335. Again the simile emphasizes the water as bliss, while the lack of inflow expresses containment and unification.

336. The water welling up is the rapture, which is the uplifting emotional response to the experience of bliss.

rising above it, thriving underwater. From the tip to the root they're drenched, steeped, filled, and soaked with cool water. There's no part of them that's not soaked with cool water.[337] In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads themselves with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture.

Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the 28.1
disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption. It is without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. They sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind.[338] It's like someone sitting wrapped from head to foot with white cloth. There's no part of the body that's not spread over with white cloth.[339] In the same way, they sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind. And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they 29.1
use to understand this:[340] 'This body of mine is formed. It's made up of the four principal states, produced by mother and father, built up from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away and

337. The meditator is utterly immersed in stillness and bliss.

338. The equanimity of the fourth *jhāna* is not dullness and indifference, but a brilliant and radiant awareness.

339. The white cloth is the purity and brightness of equanimity. The commentary explains this as a person who has just got out of a bath and sits perfectly dry and content.

340. Here these practices are simply listed one after another, but normally the following knowledges are said to be made possible by the fourth absorption (eg. DN 2:83.1). | The first two knowledges—"knowledge and vision" of the mind attached to body, and the mind-made body—are found only here, DN 2:83.1, and DN 10:2.21.3.

erosion, to breaking up and destruction.[341] And this consciousness of mine is attached to it, tied to it.'[342] Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally lustrous, eight-faceted, well-worked, transparent and clear, endowed with all good qualities. And it was strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown. And a person with clear eyes were to take it in their hand and examine it: 'This beryl gem is naturally lustrous, eight-faceted, well-worked, transparent and clear, endowed with all good qualities. And it's strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown.'[343]

29.9 In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to understand this: 'This body of mine is formed. It's made up of the four principal states, produced by mother and father, built up from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away and erosion, to breaking up and destruction. And this consciousness of mine is attached to it, tied to it.'

29.12 And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

30.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to create from this body another body—formed, mind-made, whole in its major and minor limbs, not deficient in any faculty.[344]

341. This is the "coarse" (*olārika*) body. The obvious impermanence of the body invites the tempting but fallacious notion that the mind or soul is permanent, which is dispelled by deeper insight.

342. This distinction should not be mistaken for mind-body dualism. These are not fundamental substances but experiences of a meditator.

343. Strung gems were loved in India from the time in the Harappan civilization, millennia before the Buddha.

344. The "mind-made body" is the interior mental representation of the physical body. In ordinary consciousness it is proprioception, which here is enhanced by the power of meditation. The higher powers in Buddhism are regarded as extensions and evolutions of aspects of ordinary experience, not as metaphysical realities separate from the world of mundane experience. Note that it is still "physical" (*rūpī*) even though it is mind-made. This is the subtle (*sukhuma*) body, which is an energetic experience of physical properties by the mind. | *Sabbaṅga* has the sense "whole and healthy of limb" (Rig Veda 10.161.5c, Atharva Veda 8.2.8c, 11.3.32 ff.). One is reborn with "whole body" (*sarvatanu*, Atharva Veda

Suppose a person was to draw a reed out from its sheath. They'd think: 'This is the reed, this is the sheath. The reed and the sheath are different things. The reed has been drawn out from the sheath.' Or suppose a person was to draw a sword out from its scabbard. They'd think: 'This is the sword, this is the scabbard. The sword and the scabbard are different things. The sword has been drawn out from the scabbard.' Or suppose a person was to draw a snake out from its slough. They'd think: 'This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake and the slough are different things. The snake has been drawn out from the slough.' In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to create from this body another body—formed, mind-made, whole in its major and minor limbs, not deficient in any faculty.

And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained per- 30.12
fection and consummation of insight.

Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they 31.1
use to wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. They control the body as far as the realm of divinity. Suppose a deft potter or their apprentice had some well-prepared clay. They could produce any kind of pot that they like.[345] Or suppose a deft ivory-carver or their apprentice had some well-prepared ivory. They could produce any kind of ivory item that they like. Or suppose a deft goldsmith or their apprentice had some well-prepared gold. They could produce any kind of gold item that

5.6.11c, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.1.8.60, 12.8.3.31). | *Paccaṅga* means "minor limb", for example the fingers or internal organs.

345. These similes hark back to the descriptions of the purified mind as pliable and workable.

they like.[346] In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to wield the many kinds of psychic power …

31.6 And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

32.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use so that, with clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.[347] Suppose there was a powerful horn blower. They'd easily make themselves heard in the four quarters.[348] In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use so that, with clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.

32.4 And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

33.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with their own mind.[349] They understand mind with greed as 'mind with greed', and mind without greed as 'mind without greed'; mind with hate as 'mind with hate', and mind without hate as 'mind without hate'; mind with delusion as 'mind with delusion', and mind without delusion as 'mind without delusion'; constricted mind as 'constricted mind', and scattered mind as 'scattered mind'; expansive mind as 'expansive mind', and unexpansive

346. This simile is extended in detail at AN 3.101.

347. "Clairaudience" is a literal rendition of *dibbasota*. The root sense of *dibba* is to "shine" like the bright sky or a divine being. The senses of clarity and divinity are both present. The Buddha occasionally used this ability for teaching, as at MN 75:6.1.

348. This simile appears misplaced (see eg. MN 99:24.4). At DN 2:90.1 we find the simile of being able to clearly identify sounds along the road, which fits better.

349. Note that the Indic idiom is not the "reading" of minds, which suggests hearing the words spoken in inner dialogue. While this is exhibited by the Buddha (eg. AN 8.30:2.1), the main emphasis is on the comprehension of the overall state of mind.

mind as 'unexpansive mind'; mind that is not supreme as 'mind that is not supreme', and mind that is supreme as 'mind that is supreme'; mind immersed in samādhi as 'mind immersed in samādhi', and mind not immersed in samādhi as 'mind not immersed in samādhi'; freed mind as 'freed mind', and unfreed mind as 'unfreed mind'. Suppose there was a woman or man who was young, youthful, and fond of adornments, and they check their own reflection in a clean bright mirror or a clear bowl of water. If they had a spot they'd know 'I have a spot', and if they had no spots they'd know 'I have no spots'.[350] In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with their own mind …

And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained per- 33.36
fection and consummation of insight.

Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they 34.1
use to recollect the many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.[351] Suppose a per-

350. Again the simile emphasizes how clear and direct the experience is. Without deep meditation, we have some intuitive sense for the minds of others, but it is far from clear.

351. Here begins the "three knowledges" (*tevijjā*), a subset of the six direct knowledges. The first two of these play an important role in deepening understanding of the nature of suffering in *saṁsāra*. | Empowered by the fourth *jhāna*, memory breaks through the veil of birth and death, revealing the vast expanse of time and dispelling the illusion that there is any place of eternal rest

son was to leave their home village and go to another village. From that village they'd go to yet another village. And from that village they'd return to their home village. They'd think: 'I went from my home village to another village. There I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. From that village I went to yet another village. There too I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. And from that village I returned to my home village.'[352] In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use to recollect the many kinds of past lives.

34.4 And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

35.1 Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use so that, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according

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or sanctuary in the cycle of transmigration. The knowledge of these events is not hazy or murky, but clear and precise, illuminated by the brilliance of purified consciousness.

352. The word for "past life" is *pubbanivāsa*, literally "former home", and the imagery of houses is found in the second of the three knowledges as well. Recollection of past lives is as fresh and clear as the memory of a recent journey.

to their deeds.[353] Suppose there were two houses with doors. A person with clear eyes standing in between them would see humans entering and leaving a house and wandering to and fro.[354] In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they use so that, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn …

And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained per- 35.4
fection and consummation of insight.

Furthermore, I have explained to my disciples a practice that they 36.1
use to realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.[355] Suppose that in a mountain glen there was a lake that was transparent, clear, and unclouded. A person with clear eyes standing on the bank would see the clams and mussels, and pebbles and gravel, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still. They'd think: 'This lake is transparent, clear, and unclouded. And here are the clams and mussels, and pebbles and gravel, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still.'[356]

In the same way, I have explained to my disciples a practice that 36.3
they use to realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by

353. Here knowledge extends to the rebirths of others as well as oneself. Even more significant, it brings in the understanding of cause and effect; *why* rebirth happens the way it does. Such knowledge, however, is not infallible, as the Buddha warns in DN 1:2.5.3 and MN 136. The experience is one thing; the inferences drawn from it are another. One should draw conclusions only tentatively, after long experience. | "Clairvoyance" renders *dibbacakkhu* ("celestial eye"), for which see Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.12.5, "the mind is its [the self's] celestial eye" (*mano'sya daivaṁ cakṣuḥ*).

354. This simile is found in Majjhima at MN 39:20.3 and MN 130:2.1. A slightly different simile is found in the Dīgha at DN 2:96.1 and DN 10:2.33.1.

355. This is the experience of awakening that is the true goal of the Buddhist path. The defilements—properties of the mind that create suffering—have been curbed by the practice of ethics and suppressed by the power of *jhāna*. Here they are eliminated forever.

356. Once again the pool of water represents the mind, but now the meditator is not immersed in the experience, but looks back and reviews it objectively.

wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.

36.4 And many of my disciples meditate on that having attained perfection and consummation of insight.

37.1 This is the fifth quality because of which my disciples are loyal to me.

38.1 These are the five qualities because of which my disciples honor, respect, revere, and venerate me; and honoring and respecting me, they remain loyal to me."

38.2 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the wanderer Sakuludāyī approved what the Buddha said.

MN 78

With Uggāhamāna Samaṇamaṇḍikāputta

Samaṇamuṇḍikasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time the wanderer Uggāhamāna Samaṇamaṇḍikāpu- 1.3
tta was residing together with around five hundred wanderers in Mallikā's single-halled monastery for philosophical debates, hedged by pale-moon ebony trees.[357]

Then the chamberlain Pañcakaṅga left Sāvatthī in the middle of 2.1
the day to see the Buddha.[358] It occurred to him, "It's the wrong time to see the Buddha, as he's in retreat. And it's the wrong time to see the esteemed mendicants, as they're in retreat. Why don't I go to Mallikā's monastery to visit the wanderer Uggāhamāna?" So that's what he did.

Now at that time, Uggāhamāna was sitting together with a large 3.1
assembly of wanderers making an uproar, a colossal racket. They engaged in all kinds of low talk, such as talk about kings, bandits, and chief ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances;

357. Uggāhamāna appears to have the sense "argumentative" found in the Sanskrit *udgrāha* but not otherwise attested in Pali. Both sense and reading of Samaṇamaṇḍikā are unclear. He appears nowhere else. | Mallikā was the chief queen of Pasenadi, and her place is mentioned in a similar context at DN 9:1.3. The commentary explains that the brahmins, Jains, and others would assemble there to "debate their beliefs" (*samayaṁ pavadanti*), a rare early usage of *samaya* in this sense. | Read *ācīra* in the sense of "boundary, hedge" (Commentary: *timbarūrukkhapantiyā parikkhittattā*; cf. Sanskrit *prācīra*, "enclosure, hedge, fence, wall").

358. Previously featuring in MN 59:1.3.

talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that place.

3.3 Uggāhamāna saw Pañcakaṅga coming off in the distance, and hushed his own assembly, "Be quiet, good fellows, don't make a sound. Here comes Pañcakaṅga, a disciple of the ascetic Gotama. He is included among the white-clothed lay disciples of the ascetic Gotama, who is residing in Sāvatthī. Such venerables like the quiet, are educated to be quiet, and praise the quiet. Hopefully if he sees that our assembly is quiet he'll see fit to approach." Then those wanderers fell silent.

4.1 Then Pañcakaṅga approached Uggāhamāna, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Uggāhamāna said to him:

5.1 "Householder, when an individual person has four qualities I describe them as an invincible ascetic—accomplished in the skillful, excelling in the skillful, attained to the highest attainment.[359] What four? It's when they do no bad deeds with their body; speak no bad words; think no bad thoughts; and don't earn a living by bad livelihood. When an individual possesses these four qualities I describe them as an invincible ascetic."

6.1 Then Pañcakaṅga neither approved nor rejected the wanderer Uggāhamāna's statement. He rose from his seat, thinking, "I will learn the meaning of this statement from the Buddha himself."

7.1 Then he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and informed the Buddha of all that had been discussed.

8.1 When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him, "Chamberlain, if what Uggāhamāna says is true, a little baby boy is an invincible as-

359. The "invincible ascetic" (*samaṇaṁ ayojjhaṁ*) appears only here. The Sanskrit *ayodhya* occurs in the Atharva Veda as an epithet of Indra (19.13.7) and of the gods' "impregnable" fortress (10.2.31). It seems to be a special term for an enlightened being in Uggāhamāna's system; compare Upaka's "Infinite Victor" (*anantajina*) of MN 26:25.22.

cetic—accomplished in the skillful, excelling in the skillful, attained to the highest attainment. For a little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'a body', so how could they possibly do a bad deed with their body, aside from just wriggling? And a little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'speech', so how could they possibly speak bad words, aside from just crying? And a little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'thought', so how could they possibly think bad thoughts, aside from just whimpering? And a little baby doesn't even have a concept of 'livelihood', so how could they possibly earn a living by bad livelihood, aside from their mother's breast? If what Uggāhamāna says is true, a little baby boy is an invincible ascetic—accomplished in the skillful, excelling in the skillful, attained to the highest attainment.

When an individual person has four qualities I describe them, 8.8
not as an invincible ascetic—accomplished in the skillful, excelling in the skillful, attained to the highest attainment—but as having achieved the same level as a little baby. What four? It's when they do no bad deeds with their body; speak no bad words; think no bad thoughts; and don't earn a living by bad livelihood. When an individual possesses these four qualities I describe them, not as an invincible ascetic, but as having achieved the same level as a little baby.

When an individual person has ten qualities, chamberlain, I de- 9.1
scribe them as an invincible ascetic—accomplished in the skillful, excelling in the skillful, attained to the highest attainment.

The following things must be understood, I say. 'These are unskill- 9.2
ful behaviors.' 'Unskillful behaviors stem from this.' 'Here unskillful behaviors cease without remainder.' 'Someone practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of unskillful behaviors.'

'These are skillful behaviors.' 'Skillful behaviors stem from this.' 9.10
'Here skillful behaviors cease without remainder.' 'Someone practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of skillful behaviors.'

'These are unskillful thoughts.' 'Unskillful thoughts stem from 9.18
this.' 'Here unskillful thoughts cease without remainder.' 'Some-

one practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of unskillful thoughts.'

9.26 'These are skillful thoughts.' 'Skillful thoughts stem from this.' 'Here skillful thoughts cease without remainder.' 'Someone practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of skillful thoughts.'

10.1 And what, chamberlain, are unskillful behaviors? Unskillful deeds by way of body and speech, and bad livelihood. These are called unskillful behaviors.

10.4 And where do these unskillful behaviors stem from? Where they stem from has been stated. You should say that they stem from the mind. What mind? The mind takes many and diverse forms. But unskillful behaviors stem from a mind that has greed, hate, and delusion.

10.10 And where do these unskillful behaviors cease without remainder? Their cessation has also been stated. It's when a mendicant gives up bad conduct by way of body, speech, and mind, and develops good conduct by way of body, speech, and mind; they give up wrong livelihood and earn a living by right livelihood. This is where these unskillful behaviors cease without remainder.

10.14 And how is someone practicing for the cessation of unskillful behaviors? It's when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. Someone practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of unskillful behaviors.

11.1 And what are skillful behaviors? Skillful deeds by way of body and speech, and purified livelihood are included in behavior, I say. These are called skillful behaviors.

And where do these skillful behaviors stem from? Where they 11.4
stem from has been stated. You should say that they stem from the mind. What mind? The mind takes many and diverse forms. But skillful behaviors stem from a mind that is free from greed, hate, and delusion.

And where do these skillful behaviors cease without remainder? 11.10
Their cessation has also been stated. It's when a mendicant behaves ethically, but they are not determined by ethical behavior.[360] And they truly understand the freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom where these skillful behaviors cease without remainder.

And how is someone practicing for the cessation of skillful be- 11.14
haviors? It's when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise … so that unskillful qualities are given up … so that skillful qualities arise … so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. Someone practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of skillful behaviors.

And what are unskillful thoughts? Purposes of sensuality, of mal- 12.1
ice, and of cruelty. These are called unskillful thoughts.

And where do these unskillful thoughts stem from? Where they 12.4
stem from has been stated. You should say that they stem from perception. What perception? Perception takes many and diverse forms. Perceptions of sensuality, malice, and cruelty—unskillful thoughts stem from this.

And where do these unskillful thoughts cease without remainder? 12.11
Their cessation has also been stated. It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it

360. Taking the suffix *-maya* in the same sense as *tammaya*; see my note on MN 47:13.4. The point is that they are not formed by and hence limited by the scope of ethics.

connected. This is where these unskillful thoughts cease without remainder.

12.15 And how is someone practicing for the cessation of unskillful thoughts? It's when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise … so that unskillful qualities are given up … so that skillful qualities arise … so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. Someone practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of unskillful thoughts.

13.1 And what are skillful thoughts? Thoughts of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness. These are called skillful thoughts.

13.4 And where do these skillful thoughts stem from? Where they stem from has been stated. You should say that they stem from perception. What perception? Perception takes many and diverse forms. Perceptions of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness—skillful thoughts stem from this.

13.11 And where do these skillful thoughts cease without remainder? Their cessation has also been stated. It's when, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is where these skillful thoughts cease without remainder.

13.15 And how is someone practicing for the cessation of skillful thoughts? It's when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise … so that unskillful qualities are given up … so that skillful qualities arise … so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. Someone practicing like this is practicing for the cessation of skillful thoughts.

14.1 Chamberlain, when an individual person has what ten qualities do I describe them as an invincible ascetic—accomplished in the skillful, excelling in the skillful, attained to the highest attainment?

It's when a mendicant has an adept's right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right immersion, right knowledge, and right freedom. When an individual possesses these ten qualities, I describe them as an invincible ascetic—accomplished in the skillful, excelling in the skillful, attained to the highest attainment."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Pañcakaṅga the chamberlain approved what the Buddha said. 14.4

MN 79

The Shorter Discourse With Sakuludāyī

Cūḷasakuludāyisutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. Now at that time the wanderer Sakuludāyī was residing together with a large assembly of wanderers in their monastery in the peacocks' feeding ground.

2.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. Then it occurred to him, "It's too early to wander for alms in Rājagaha. Why don't I visit the wanderer Sakuludāyī at the monastery for the wanderers in the peacocks' feeding ground?" Then the Buddha went to the monastery for the wanderers.

3.1 Now at that time, Sakuludāyī was sitting together with a large assembly of wanderers making an uproar, a colossal racket. They engaged in all kinds of low talk, such as talk about kings, bandits, and chief ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that place.

3.3 Sakuludāyī saw the Buddha coming off in the distance, and hushed his own assembly, "Be quiet, good fellows, don't make a sound. Here comes the ascetic Gotama. The venerable likes quiet and praises quiet. Hopefully if he sees that our assembly is quiet he'll see fit to approach." Then those wanderers fell silent.

Then the Buddha approached Sakuludāyī, who said to him, "Let 4.1
the Blessed One come, sir! Welcome to the Blessed One, sir! It's been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please, sir, sit down, this seat is ready." The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out, while Sakuludāyī took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Udāyī, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?"

"Sir, leave aside what we were sitting talking about just now. It 5.1
won't be hard for you to hear about that later. When I don't come to the assembly, they sit and engage in all kinds of low talk. But when I have come to the assembly, they sit gazing up at my face alone, thinking,[361] 'Whatever the ascetic Udāyī teaches, we shall listen to it.'[362] But when the Buddha has come to the assembly, both myself and the assembly sit gazing up at your face, thinking, 'Whatever the Buddha teaches, we shall listen to it.'"

"Well then, Udāyī, suggest something for me to talk about." 6.1

"Sir, a few days ago someone was claiming to be all-knowing and 6.2
all-seeing, to know and see everything without exception, thus: 'Knowledge and vision are constantly and continually present to me, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking.' When I asked them a question about the first beginning, they dodged the issue, distracted the discussion with irrelevant points, and displayed annoyance, hate, and bitterness. That reminded me of the Buddha:[363] 'Surely it must be the Blessed One, the Holy One who is so skilled in such matters.'"

"But Udāyī, who was it that made such a claim and behaved in 6.6
such a way?"

361. Cp. SN 56.39:1.2. At DN 2:35.2 this is the attitude of a servant to the king.

362. The same phrase is used of the Buddha's assembly at MN 77:6.64, but with a different attitude: the Buddha's assembly is poised expectantly, while Udāyī's is gazing up at his face.

363. For the Mahāsaṅgīti *sati* ("reminded"), PTS reads *pīti* here, but the phrase occurs at MN 89:4.2 and DN 9:6.32, both times with *sati*.

6.7 "It was the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan, sir."[364]

7.1 "Udāyī, someone who can recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details, might ask me a question about the first beginning, or I might ask them a question about the first beginning. And they might satisfy me with their answer, or I might satisfy them with my answer.

7.3 Someone who, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, understands how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds might ask me a question about the final end, or I might ask them a question about the final end. And they might satisfy me with their answer, or I might satisfy them with my answer.

7.5 Nevertheless, Udāyī, leave aside the first beginning and the final end.[365] I shall teach you the Dhamma: 'When this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises.[366] When this doesn't exist, that is not; due to the cessation of this, that ceases.'"

8.1 "Well sir, I can't even recall with features and details what I've undergone in this incarnation.[367] How should I possibly recollect my many kinds of past lives with features and details, like the Bud-

364. The same claim is recorded at MN 14:17.2.

365. *Pubbanta* and *aparanta* (literally "prior end" and "posterior end") are technical terms found exclusively in Buddhism, and only used in the context of speculative views. It seems the Buddha had a contextual reason to avoid the generic words for "past" (*atīta*) and "future" (*anāgata*), and I reflect that in my translation. *Pubbanta* is semantically identical with *pubbakoti*, the "first point" of existence or transmigration (SN 48.50:5.3). This is emphasized by Nāgarjuna, who introduces the terms *pubbanta* and *aparanta* immediately after discussing the "first point" of transmigration, and associates them with the "extremes" (*anta*) of eternalism and annihilationism (Mūlamadhyamakakārikā 25.20–23). Thus such talk is not merely about the past as in what happened yesterday, or the future as in what I'll do next week, but unmoored speculations about the "first beginning" and the "final end".

366. The Buddha does not claim to see every fact and detail, but he comprehends the principle that underlies all suffering.

367. *Attabhāva* is literally "the state of the self", and refers to the body in which consciousness has been incarnated. While *attā* usually has a psychological or metaphysical sense, it sometimes means the "body", a usage found also in the Sanskrit *ātman* (eg. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.2.4).

dha? For I can't even see a mud-goblin right now.[368] How should I possibly, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, see sentient beings passing away and being reborn, like the Buddha? But then the Buddha told me, 'Nevertheless, Udāyī, leave aside the first beginning and the final end. I shall teach you the Dhamma:

"When this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises. When this doesn't exist, this doesn't come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases."' But that is even more unclear to me. Perhaps I might satisfy the Buddha by answering a question about my own denomination." 8.8

"But Udāyī, what is your own denomination?" 9.1

"Sir, it's this: 'This is the ultimate splendor, this is the ultimate splendor.'"[369] 9.2

"But what is that ultimate splendor?" 9.4

"Sir, the ultimate splendor is the splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer." 9.6

"But what is that ultimate splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer?" 9.7

"Sir, the ultimate splendor is the splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer." 9.8

"Udāyī, you could draw this out for a long time. You say, 'The ultimate splendor is the splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer.' But you don't describe that splendor. Suppose a man was to say, 'Whoever the finest lady in the land is, it is her that I want, her I desire!' They'd say to him, 'My man, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know whether she's an aristocrat, a brahmin, a peasant, or a menial?' Asked this, he'd say, 'No.' They'd say to him, 'My friend, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know her name or clan? Whether she's tall or short or medium? Whether her skin is black, brown, or dingy? Whether she comes from such- 10.1

368. The curious mud-goblin (*paṁsupisācaka*) is similarly mentioned at Ud 4.4:7.3.

369. For more on this theory see note on MN 80:2.4.

and-such village, town, or city?' Asked this, he'd say, 'No.' They'd say to him, 'My man, do you desire someone who you've never even known or seen?' Asked this, he'd say, 'Yes.'

10.14 What do you think, Udāyī? This being so, doesn't that man's statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?"

10.16 "Clearly that's the case, sir."

10.17 "In the same way, you say, 'The ultimate splendor is the splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer.' But you don't describe that splendor."

11.1 "Worthy sir, suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally lustrous, eight-faceted, well-worked. When placed on a cream rug it would shine and glow and radiate. Such is the splendor of the self that is healthy after death."[370]

12.1 "What do you think, Udāyī? Which of these two has a finer splendor: such a beryl gem, or a firefly in the dark of night?"

12.3 "A firefly in the dark of night, sir."

13.1 "What do you think, Udāyī? Which of these two has a finer splendor: a firefly in the dark of night, or an oil lamp in the dark of night?"

13.3 "An oil lamp in the dark of night, sir."

14.1 "What do you think, Udāyī? Which of these two has a finer splendor: an oil lamp in the dark of night, or a great mass of fire in the dark of night?"

14.3 "A great mass of fire in the dark of night, sir."

15.1 "What do you think, Udāyī? Which of these two has a finer splendor: a great mass of fire in the dark of night, or the morning star in the clear and cloudless heavens at the crack of dawn?"

15.3 "The morning star in the clear and cloudless heavens at the crack of dawn, sir."

16.1 "What do you think, Udāyī? Which of these two has a finer splendor: the morning star in the clear and cloudless heavens at the crack

370. The statement on the "splendor of the self after death" is not found in the parallel at MA 208.

of dawn, or the full moon at midnight in the clear and cloudless heavens on the fifteenth day sabbath?"

"The full moon at midnight in the clear and cloudless heavens on the fifteenth day sabbath, sir." 16.3

"What do you think, Udāyī? Which of these two has a finer splendor: the full moon at midnight in the clear and cloudless heavens on the fifteenth day sabbath, or the sun at midday in the clear and cloudless heavens in the last month of the rainy season, in autumn?" 17.1

"The sun at midday in the clear and cloudless heavens in the last month of the rainy season, in autumn, sir." 17.3

"Beyond this, Udāyī, I know very many gods on whom the luminosity of the sun and moon makes no impression.[371] Nevertheless, I do not say: 'The splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer.' But of the splendor inferior to a firefly you say, 'This is the ultimate splendor.' And you don't describe that splendor." 18.1

"The Blessed One has cut short the discussion! The Holy One has cut short the discussion!" 19.1

"But Udāyī, why do you say this?" 19.2

"Sir, it says this in our own denomination: 'This is the ultimate splendor, this is the ultimate splendor.' But when pursued, pressed, and grilled on our own denomination, we turned out to be vacuous, hollow, and mistaken." 19.4

"But Udāyī, is there a world of absolute happiness? And is there a grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness?" 20.1

"Sir, it says this in our own denomination: 'There is a world of absolute happiness. And there is a grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness.'" 20.2

"Well, what is that grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness?" 21.1

371. *Ābhā nanubhonti* ("luminosity makes no impression") is glossed as *obhāsaṁ na vaḷañjanti*, "does not partake of the light". At AN 4.127:1.4 the same phrase, in regard to the space where the light of the sun does not reach, is glossed *pabhā nappahonti*, i.e. "light is ineffective". Compare *ananubhūtaṁ* at MN 49:11.1.

21.2 "Sir, it's when someone gives up killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying. And they proceed having undertaken some kind of mortification.[372] This is the grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness."

22.1 "What do you think, Udāyī? On an occasion when someone refrains from killing living creatures, is their self absolutely happy at that time, or does it have both pleasure and pain?"

22.3 "It has both pleasure and pain."

22.4 "What do you think, Udāyī? On an occasion when someone refrains from stealing … sexual misconduct … lying, is their self absolutely happy at that time, or does it have both pleasure and pain?"

22.10 "It has both pleasure and pain."

22.11 "What do you think, Udāyī? On an occasion when someone proceeds having undertaken some kind of mortification, is their self absolutely happy at that time, or does it have both pleasure and pain?"

22.13 "It has both pleasure and pain."

22.14 "What do you think, Udāyī? Is an absolutely happy world realized by relying on a practice of mixed pleasure and pain?"

23.1 "The Blessed One has cut short the discussion! The Holy One has cut short the discussion!"

23.2 "But Udāyī, why do you say this?"

23.4 "Sir, it says this in our own denomination: 'There is a world of absolute happiness. And there is a grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness.'[373] But when pursued, pressed, and grilled on our own denomination, we turned out to be vacuous, hollow, and mistaken.

23.7 But sir, is there a world of absolute happiness? And is there a grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness?"

372. *Vā* here is conjunctive.

373. "Grounded practice" is *ākāravatī paṭipadā*, for which compare the "grounded faith" (*ākāravatī saddhā*) of MN 47:16.1 and MN 60:4.1.

"There is a world of absolute happiness, Udāyī. And there is a grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness." 24.1

"Well sir, what is that grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness?" 24.2

"It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption. With the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption. This is the grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness." 25.1

"Sir, that's not the grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness. At that point an absolutely happy world has already been realized." 25.5

"No, Udāyī, at that point an absolutely happy world has not been realized. This is the grounded practice for realizing a world of absolute happiness." 25.6

When he said this, Sakuludāyī's assembly made an uproar, a colossal racket, "In that case, we are lost, together with our denomination! We are lost, together with our denomination! We know nothing higher than this!" 26.1

Then Sakuludāyī, having quieted those wanderers, said to the Buddha, "Well sir, at what point is an absolutely happy world realized?" 26.4

"It's when, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption. There are deities who have been reborn in a absolutely happy world. That mendicant associates with them, converses, and engages in discussion. It's at this point that a absolutely happy world has been realized." 27.2

"Surely the mendicants must lead the spiritual life under the Buddha for the sake of realizing this absolutely happy world?" 28.1

"No, Udāyī, the mendicants don't lead the spiritual life under me for the sake of realizing this absolutely happy world. There are other 28.2

things that are finer, for the sake of which the mendicants lead the spiritual life under me."

28.4 "But what are those finer things?"

29-36.1 "It's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. …

37.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption. This is one of the finer things for the sake of which the mendicants lead the spiritual life under me.

38-40.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. This too is one of the finer things.

41.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. They recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. This too is one of the finer things.

42.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. This too is one of the finer things.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 43.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'.

Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the de- 44.1
filements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 44.3
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.' This too is one of the finer things. These are the finer things for the sake of which the mendicants lead the spiritual life under me."

When he had spoken, Sakuludāyī said to the Buddha, "Excellent, 45.1
sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?"

When he said this, Sakuludāyī's assembly said to him, "Worthy 46.1
Udāyī, don't lead the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama. You have been a tutor; don't live as a pupil. You'll end up like a water jar that turns into a water ladle.[374] Worthy Udāyī, don't lead the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama. You have been a tutor; don't live as

374. "Water ladle" (*udañcanika*, variant *uddekanika*, commentary *udakavāraka*) is a unique term. Read *udañchanika* in the sense "(ladle) for drawing water" (cp. Sanskrit *ākarṣa* for Pali *añchana*). | The terms *udakamaṇika* ("water jar") and *udañchanika* ("water ladle") pun on Udāyī's name.

a pupil." And that's how the wanderer Sakuludāyī's own assembly prevented him from leading the spiritual life under the Buddha.

MN 80

With Vekhanasa

Vekhanasasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then the wanderer Vekhanasa went up to the Buddha, and ex- 2.1
changed greetings with him.[375] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood to one side, and expressed this heartfelt sentiment in the Buddha's presence: "This is the ultimate splendor, this is the ultimate splendor."[376]

"But Kaccāna, why do you say: 'This is the ultimate splendor, this 2.5
is the ultimate splendor.' What is that ultimate splendor?"

"Worthy Gotama, the ultimate splendor is the splendor compared 2.8
to which no other splendor is finer."

375. Vekhanasa, the "descendant of Vikhānasa" was, according to the commentary, the teacher of Sakaludāyī and came to defend his teaching. The Vekhanasas were Vedic poets. They became known in later Sanskrit texts as an order of forest-dwelling ascetics, who evolved into the modern Vaikhānasa Vishnavite tradition. This sutta may be the earliest reference to a tradition of Vekhanasa ascetics, creating a link between the Vedic poets and the later tradition. The Buddha calls him by his personal or clan name Kaccāna.

376. The Rig Veda features two Vaikhānasa poems, one of which describes Soma as "most resplendent" (*śubhraśastamaḥ*, Rig Veda 9.66.26), a phrase notably parallel in meaning to the Pali "ultimate splendor" (*paramo vaṇṇo*). These verses are rich with similar imagery: Soma is a "gleaming light" (24) whose "glittering drops" "flash with radiance" (25), "pervading with rays" (27), a "heaven-bright milk" (30). This poem is ascribed to "a hundred Vaikhānasas", suggesting that an order already existed at the time. Perhaps the Vekhanasa lineage developed their philosophy from these verses, which they had recited over so many centuries that the original referent, Soma, was forgotten.

2.9 "But what is that ultimate splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer?"

2.10 "Worthy Gotama, the ultimate splendor is the splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer."

3.1 "Kaccāna, you could draw this out for a long time. You say, 'The ultimate splendor is the splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer.' But you don't describe that splendor.

3.3 Suppose a man was to say, 'Whoever the finest lady in the land is, it is her that I want, her I desire!'

3.5 They'd say to him, 'My man, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know whether she's an aristocrat, a brahmin, a peasant, or a menial?'

3.7 Asked this, he'd say, 'No.'

3.8 They'd say to him, 'My friend, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know her name or clan? Whether she's tall or short or medium? Whether her skin is black, brown, or dingy? Whether she comes from such-and-such village, town, or city?'

3.10 Asked this, he'd say, 'No.'

3.11 They'd say to him, 'My man, do you desire someone who you've never even known or seen?'

3.13 Asked this, he'd say, 'Yes.'

3.14 What do you think, Kaccāna? This being so, doesn't that man's statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?"

3.16 "Clearly that's the case, worthy Gotama."

3.17 "In the same way, you say, 'The ultimate splendor is the splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer.' But you don't describe that splendor."

4.1 "Worthy Gotama, suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally lustrous, eight-faceted, well-worked. When placed on a cream rug it would shine and glow and radiate. Such is the splendor of the self that is healthy after death."

5.1 "What do you think, Kaccāna? Which of these two has a finer splendor: such a beryl gem, or a firefly in the dark of night?"

5.3 "A firefly in the dark of night."

"What do you think, Kaccāna? Which of these two has a finer splendor: a firefly in the dark of night, or an oil lamp in the dark of night?" 6.1

"An oil lamp in the dark of night." 6.3

"What do you think, Kaccāna? Which of these two has a finer splendor: an oil lamp in the dark of night, or a great mass of fire in the dark of night?" 7.1

"A great mass of fire in the dark of night." 7.3

"What do you think, Kaccāna? Which of these two has a finer splendor: a great mass of fire in the dark of night, or the morning star in the clear and cloudless heavens at the crack of dawn?" 8.1

"The morning star in the clear and cloudless heavens at the crack of dawn." 8.3

"What do you think, Kaccāna? Which of these two has a finer splendor: the morning star in the clear and cloudless heavens at the crack of dawn, or the full moon at midnight in the clear and cloudless heavens on the fifteenth day sabbath?" 9.1

"The full moon at midnight in the clear and cloudless heavens on the fifteenth day sabbath." 9.3

"What do you think, Kaccāna? Which of these two has a finer splendor: the full moon at midnight in the clear and cloudless heavens on the fifteenth day sabbath, or the sun at midday in the clear and cloudless heavens in the last month of the rainy season, in autumn?" 10.1

"The sun at midday in the clear and cloudless heavens in the last month of the rainy season, in autumn." 10.3

"Beyond this, Kaccāna, I know very many gods on whom the luminosity of the sun and moon makes no impression. Nevertheless, I do not say: 'The splendor compared to which no other splendor is finer.' But of the splendor inferior to a firefly you say, 'This is the ultimate splendor.' And you don't describe that splendor. 11.1

Kaccāna, there are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches 12.1

known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

13.1 The pleasure and happiness that arises from these five kinds of sensual stimulation is called sensual pleasure. 'From the senses comes sensual pleasure. Beyond sensual pleasure is the pleasure that surmounts the sensual, which is said to be the best of these.'"[377]

14.1 When he said this, Vekhanasa said to the Buddha, "It's incredible, worthy Gotama, it's amazing! How well said this was by the worthy Gotama! 'From the senses comes sensual pleasure. Beyond sensual pleasure is the pleasure that surmounts the sensual, which is said to be the best of these.' Worthy Gotama, from the senses comes sensual pleasure. Beyond sensual pleasure is the pleasure that surmounts the sensual, which is said to be the best of these."

14.6 "Kaccāna, since you have a different view, creed, and belief, and another discipline and denomination, it's hard for you to understand the senses, sensual pleasure, and the pleasure that surmounts the sensual. There are mendicants who are perfected, who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment. They can understand the senses, sensual pleasure, and the pleasure that surmounts the sensual."

15.1 When he said this, Vekhanasa became angry and upset. He even attacked and badmouthed the Buddha himself, saying, "The ascetic Gotama will be worsted!" He said to the Buddha, "This is exactly what happens with some ascetics and brahmins. Not knowing the first beginning or seeing the final end, they nevertheless claim: 'We understand: "Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been com-

377. The introductory *iti* ("so they say") indicates that the Buddha is quoting a saying, which may not have originated with him. | The "pleasure that surmounts the sensual" (*kāmaggasukha*) is defined by the commentary as Nibbāna, which explains why the Buddha says below that only arahants can truly understand this saying (MN 80:14.8). | Compare with the passage on extracting cream of ghee, which uses parallel syntax (DN 9:52.1, SN 34.1:1.9, AN 4.95:4.1).

pleted, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place."' Their statement turns out to be a joke—mere words, vacuous and hollow."

"Kaccāna, there are some ascetics and brahmins who, not know- 16.1
ing the first beginning or seeing the final end, nevertheless claim: 'We understand: "Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place."' There is a legitimate refutation of them. Nevertheless, Kaccāna, leave aside the first beginning and the final end. Let a sensible person come—neither devious nor deceitful, a person of integrity. I teach and instruct them. Practicing as instructed they will soon know and see for themselves, 'So this is how to be rightly released from the bond, that is, the bond of ignorance.' Suppose there was a little baby bound with swaddling up to the neck. As they grow up and their senses mature, they're accordingly released from those bonds. They'd know 'I'm released,' and there would be no more bonds.

In the same way, let a sensible person come—neither devious nor 16.11
deceitful, a person of integrity. I teach and instruct them. Practicing as instructed they will soon know and see for themselves, 'So this is how to be rightly released from the bond, that is, the bond of ignorance.'"

When he said this, Vekhanasa said to the Buddha, "Excellent, 17.1
worthy Gotama! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

THE CHAPTER ON KINGS

MN 81

With Ghaṭīkāra

Ghaṭikārasutta

So I have heard.[378] At one time the Buddha was wandering in 1.1
the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. Then the Buddha left the road, and at a certain spot he smiled.

Then Venerable Ānanda thought, "What is the cause, what is the 2.2
reason why the Buddha smiled? Realized Ones do not smile for no reason."

So Ānanda arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped 2.5
palms toward the Buddha, and said, "What is the cause, what is the reason why the Buddha smiled? Realized Ones do not smile for no reason."

"Once upon a time, Ānanda, there was a market town in this spot 3.1
named Vebhaliṅga. It was successful and prosperous, populous and full of people.[379] And Kassapa, a blessed one, a perfected one, a fully

378. This lively story is one of the most developed of the early canonical Jātakas. The popularity of the story is attested by the many parallels, which include a retelling of the story by the deity who had been Ghaṭīkāra (SN 1.50). Ghaṭīkāra's virtues as an ideal lay follower are extolled; his kindness, faith, and contentment, and especially his practice of economic harmlessness through rejection of the contractual market economy.

379. Each of the occasions when the Buddha smiled in this way served as an introduction to an uplifting story of the past. In MN 83, the Buddha tells of the fabled king Maghadeva of Mithilā, who went forth and practice the divine meditations. AN 5.180, like the current sutta, tells the story of a virtuous layperson in the time of Kassapa Buddha. Both the Kassapa stories are set in Kosala. | Vebhaliṅga is known only from this context and there are many variant readings. | Here the compound *gāmanigama*, elsewhere "village or town" clearly means "market town". The same idiom is found in Sanskrit versions of this text (*vaibhiḍiṅgī nāma grāmanigamo*, Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya 17.390).

awakened Buddha, lived supported by Vebhaliṅga. It was here, in fact, that he had his monastery, where he advised the mendicant Saṅgha while seated."

4.1 Then Ānanda spread out his outer robe folded in four and said to the Buddha, "Well then, sir, may the Blessed One sit here! Then this piece of land will have been occupied by two perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas." The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out. When he was seated he said to Venerable Ānanda:

5.1 "Once upon a time, Ānanda, there was a market town in this spot named Vebhaliṅga. It was successful and prosperous, populous and full of people. And Kassapa, a blessed one, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, lived supported by Vebhaliṅga. It was here, in fact, that he had his monastery, where he advised the mendicant Saṅgha while seated.

6.1 The Buddha Kassapa had as chief supporter in Vebhaliṅga a potter named Ghaṭīkāra. Ghaṭīkāra had a dear friend named Jotipāla, a student.[380] Then Ghaṭīkāra addressed Jotipāla, 'Come, dear Jotipāla, let's go to see the Blessed One Kassapa, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.[381] For I deem it holy to see that Blessed One.'[382]

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380. Various texts of the northern Sarvāstivāda movement, including the Madhyama-āgama and the Saṅghabhedavastu, speak instead of the potter Nandīpāla and the Brahmin youth Uttara. | Ghaṭīkāra ("potter") Nandīpāla is also referred to by his clan name Bhaggava. | Jotipāla means "guardian of the sacred flame", i.e. someone who maintains the Vedic fire ritual, as attested by another Jotipāla of the past (DN 19:47.26). Yet another Jotipāla was a religious founder of the past (AN 6.54:18.1, AN 7.73:2.5). The name seems to appear only in Buddhist sources. Given that it is always in legendary contexts, it is probably a vocational epithet like Ghaṭīkāra.

381. Kassapa (Sanskrit Kaśyapa) means "tortoise". It is a common Brahmanical clan name, stemming from an ancient figure reckoned as the eldest of the "seven sages", to whom some Vedic verses are attributed. Further details of the Buddha Kassapa's time are found at DN 14:1.4.6, SN 15.20:4.1, and SN 48.57:3.1.

382. *Sādhusammata* is normally an epithet of (real or supposed) saints. Here it is the "sight" (*dassana*) of the saint that is deemed holy. This is an early example of the belief known in Hinduism as *darshana*, that the sight of a holy person, place, or object was auspicious and conveyed blessings on the seer. This topic is also treated at Snp 4.4 and AN 6.30.

When he said this, Jotipāla said to him, 'Enough, dear Ghaṭīkāra. 6.6
What's the use of seeing that shaveling, that fake ascetic?'

For a second time … and a third time, Ghaṭīkāra addressed Joti- 6.9
pāla, 'Come, dear Jotipāla, let's go to see the Blessed One Kassapa, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. For I deem it holy to see that Blessed One.'

For a third time, Jotipāla said to him, 'Enough, dear Ghaṭīkāra. 6.13
What's the use of seeing that shaveling, that fake ascetic?'

'Well then, dear Jotipāla, let's take some bathing cleanser and go 6.16
to the river to bathe.'[383]

'Yes, dear,' replied Jotipāla. So that's what they did. 6.17

Then Ghaṭīkāra addressed Jotipāla, 'Dear Jotipāla, the Buddha 7.1
Kassapa's monastery is not far away. Let's go to see the Blessed One Kassapa, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. For I deem it holy to see that Blessed One.'

When he said this, Jotipāla said to him, 'Enough, dear Ghaṭīkāra. 7.5
What's the use of seeing that shaveling, that fake ascetic?'

For a second time … and a third time, Ghaṭīkāra addressed Joti- 7.8
pāla, 'Dear Jotipāla, the Buddha Kassapa's monastery is not far away. Let's go to see the Blessed One Kassapa, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. For I deem it holy to see that Blessed One.'

For a third time, Jotipāla said to him, 'Enough, dear Ghaṭīkāra. 7.13
What's the use of seeing that shaveling, that fake ascetic?'

383. *Sotti* is uncertain. I take it as from the root *suc* in the sense "cleanser". However, it may be related to Sanskrit *śukti* (from the same root), which is mentioned by Varāhamihira as an ingredient in perfumed bath powders fit for a king (Bṛhat Saṁhitā 77). There, it is probably either powdered or ashen oyster shell, which is included as an exfoliant in some modern soaps, or else perfume from a plant whose leaves or flowers resemble oysters. The commentary, identifying it with the *kuruvindakasutti* that was banned for mendicants at Kd 15:1.3.18, evidently derives it from *sutta* ("string") and explains it as a string of resin-balls compounded with *kuruvindaka* (itself uncertain, possibly a herb). However, these explanations all seem dubious, as Pali texts treat *sotti* as a normal means of washing, and should not require specialized ingredients or methods (AN 3.70:8.2, MN 93:10.5).

8.1 Then Ghaṭīkāra grabbed Jotipāla by the skirt-hem and said,[384] 'Dear Jotipāla, the Buddha Kassapa's monastery is not far away. Let's go to see the Blessed One Kassapa, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. For I deem it holy to see that Blessed One.'

8.5 So Jotipāla undid his skirt-hem and said to Ghaṭīkāra,[385] 'Enough, dear Ghaṭīkāra. What's the use of seeing that shaveling, that fake ascetic?'

9.1 Then Ghaṭīkāra grabbed Jotipāla by the hair of his freshly-washed head and said,[386] 'Dear Jotipāla, the Buddha Kassapa's monastery is not far away. Let's go to see the Blessed One Kassapa, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. For I deem it holy to see that Blessed One.'

9.5 Then Jotipāla thought, 'Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing, how this potter Ghaṭīkāra, though of lowly birth, should presume to grab me by the hair of my freshly-washed head![387] This must be no ordinary matter.' He said to Ghaṭīkāra, 'You'd even milk it to this extent, dear Ghaṭīkāra?'[388]

9.11 'I even milk it to this extent, dear Jotipāla. For that is how holy I deem it to see that Blessed One.'

9.13 'Well then, dear Ghaṭīkāra, release me, we shall go.'

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384. The *ovaṭṭikā* is the turned-over hem of a skirt or sarong that holds it up (see Bu NP 10:1.2.7).

385. Leaving him, apparently, naked standing in the water.

386. Manusmṛti 4.83 forbids grabbing hair (*keśagraha*), which was an act of dominance in wrestling. It is forbidden in anger, notes Medhātithi's commentary, but permitted in sex. Mahābhārata 5.91.11a beautifully explains how such rules are meant to be understood in context: "The learned regard him to be a wretch who does not by his solicitation seek to save a friend who is about to sink in calamity. Striving to the best of his might, even to the extent of seizing him by the hair, one should seek to dissuade a friend from an improper act. In that case, he that acts so, instead of incurring blame, reaps praise" (Kisari Mohan Ganguli's translation, Section 93, Bhagavat-yāna Parva).

387. Pottery is said to be a low craft at Bu Pc 2:2.1.30.

388. *Dohī* is "milking", as in *anavasesadohī* "milk dry", an idiom which is used in the sense of "pushing things too far" (MN 33:13.1, AN 11.17:12.1).

Then Ghaṭīkāra the potter and Jotipāla the student went to the 10.1
Buddha Kassapa. Ghaṭīkāra bowed and sat down to one side, but
Jotipāla exchanged greetings with the Buddha and sat down to one
side.

Ghaṭīkāra said to the Buddha Kassapa, 'Sir, this is the student 10.2
Jotipāla, my dear friend. Please teach him the Dhamma.' Then the
Buddha Kassapa educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired Gha-
ṭīkāra and Jotipāla with a Dhamma talk. Then they got up from their
seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha Kassapa, keeping
him on their right, before leaving.

Then Jotipāla said to Ghatīkāra, 'Dear Ghaṭīkāra, you have heard 11.1
this teaching, so why don't you go forth from the lay life to home-
lessness?'

'Don't you know, dear Jotipāla, that I provide for my blind old 11.3
parents?'

'Well then, dear Ghaṭīkāra, I shall go forth from the lay life to 11.4
homelessness.'

Then Ghaṭīkāra and Jotipāla went to the Buddha Kassapa, bowed 12.1
and sat down to one side. Ghaṭīkāra said to the Buddha Kassapa,
'Sir, this is the student Jotipāla, my dear friend. Please give him the
going forth.' And Jotipāla the student received the going forth, the
ordination in the Buddha's presence.

Not long after Jotipāla's ordination, a fortnight later, the Buddha 13.1
Kassapa—having stayed in Vebhaliṅga as long as he pleased—set
out for Varanasi.[389] Traveling stage by stage, he arrived at Varanasi,
where he stayed near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana. King

389. Varanasi, one of the oldest cities in the world, was the capital of the Kāsī kingdom. It lost its status as an independent kingdom shortly before the Buddha, when it was taken over by Kosala. It appears in countless Buddhist stories of the past as the dominant city of the region in what appears to be a timeless and ageless past. However, despite its great antiquity, it is a historical settlement, of which the discovered remains date back to perhaps 1200 BCE; it was a capital city from perhaps 800 BCE. It would have enjoyed its status as a major city for a period of a few hundred years before the Buddha, during which time all these stories were set.

Kikī of Kāsi heard that he had arrived.[390] He had the finest carriages harnessed. He then mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out in full royal pomp from Varanasi to see the Buddha Kassapa. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha Kassapa on foot. He bowed and sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk.

14.5 Then King Kikī said to the Buddha, 'Sir, would the Buddha together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me?' The Buddha Kassapa consented with silence.

15.1 Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, King Kikī rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. And when the night had passed, King Kikī had delicious fresh and cooked foods prepared in his own home—soft saffron rice with the dark grains picked out, served with many soups and sauces. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying,[391] 'Sir, it's time. The meal is ready.'

17.1 Then Kassapa Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of King Kikī, where he sat down on the seat spread out together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Then King Kikī served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods.

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390. Kikī ("blue jay") is also the king in the time of Kassapa at DN 14:1.12.20. No king of this name appears to be attested in Puranic lineages. By the time of the Buddha, the much-conquered city of Varanasi was subject to first Kosala and then Magadha. This sutta establishes, however, that the true ancient king of the city was in fact a disciple of the past Buddha. | The suttas of this chapter all deal with kings in one way or another. Leaving aside the final five, all of which feature Pasenadi of Kosala, we encounter royalty of of Kuru, Kāsī, Videha, Sūrasena, Bhaggā, and indirectly of Avanti and Kosambī. Thus the chapter serves to show that not just the well-known cases of Pasenadi and Bimbisāra, as well as the republican nations such as Vajjī and Sakya, were devoted to the Buddha, but the overwhelming majority of the kings of the time. Many, perhaps all, of these kings belong to what the Puranas later called the "lunar" dynasty, in contrast with the Buddha's "solar" lineage.

391. For "soft saffron rice" prefer the reading *paṇḍumudikassa*.

When the Buddha Kassapa had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, King Kikī took a low seat and sat to one side. There he said to the Buddha Kassapa, 'Sir, would the Buddha please accept my invitation to reside in Varanasi for the rainy season? The Saṅgha will be looked after in the same style.'[392] 17.3

'Enough, Great King. I have already accepted an invitation for the rains residence.' 17.7

For a second time … and a third time King Kikī said to the Buddha Kassapa, 'Sir, would the Buddha please accept my invitation to reside in Varanasi for the rainy season? The Saṅgha will be looked after in the same style.' 17.9

'Enough, Great King. I have already accepted an invitation for the rains residence.' 17.13

Then King Kikī, thinking, 'The Buddha does not accept my invitation to reside for the rains in Varanasi,' became sad and upset. Then King Kikī said to the Buddha Kassapa, 'Sir, do you have another supporter better than me?'[393] 17.15

'Great king, there is a market town named Vebhaliṅga, where there is a potter named Ghaṭīkāra. He is my chief supporter. Now, Great King, when you thought, "The Buddha does not accept my invitation to reside for the rains in Varanasi," you became sad and upset. But Ghaṭīkāra doesn't get upset, nor will he. 18.1

Ghaṭīkāra has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. He doesn't kill living creatures, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie, or consume intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. He has experiential confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and possesses the ethics loved by the noble ones. He is free of doubt regarding suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.[394] He eats in one part of the day; 18.6

392. The king is promising that the offerings for the whole Saṅgha will be as luxurious as the ones just offered.

393. The Buddha does not take the bait of describing someone as "better"; rather, he describes Ghaṭīkāra's qualities.

394. This shows him to be one of the noble ones.

he's chaste, ethical, and of good character.[395] He has set aside gems and gold, and quit using gold and currency.[396] He has put down the shovel and doesn't dig the earth with his own hands.[397] He takes what has crumbled off by a riverbank or been dug up by mice, and brings it back in a carrier. When he has made a pot, he says, "Anyone may leave bagged sesame, mung beans, or chickpeas here and take what they wish."[398] He provided for his blind old parents. And since he has ended the five lower fetters, Ghaṭīkāra will be reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world.[399]

19.1 This one time, Great King, I was staying near the market town of Vebhaliṅga. Then I robed up in the morning and, taking my bowl and robe, went to the home of Ghaṭīkāra's parents, where I said to them, "Excuse me, where has Bhaggava gone?"[400]

19.4 "Your supporter has gone out, sir. But take rice from the pot and sauce from the pan and eat." So that's what I did. And after eating I rose from my seat and left.[401]

19.6 Then Ghaṭīkāra went up to his parents and said, "Who took rice from the pot and sauce from the pan, ate it, and left?"

19.8 "It was the Buddha Kassapa, my dear."

395. This is equivalent to the eight precepts.

396. The same is said of Buddhist mendicants at SN 42.10:2.4. This parallels the ten precepts of the *sāmaṇera*, which forbid using money (Kd 1:56.1.14).

397. Also said of ancient Brahmanical hermits at DN 27:22.6. Digging the earth is an offense for mendicants (Bu Pc 10).

398. He made a living by purely voluntary exchange rather than contractual obligations.

399. He is a non-returner.

400. The Buddha uses Ghaṭīkāra's clan name, as he does at SN 1.50:11.2.

401. This appears to technically violate Bu Pc 40, which requires that food be given with the hands, not simply by speech. However, not all Buddhas lay down the exact same Vinaya rules. Several parallels explain this by saying that Kassapa was following the customs of the mystical land of Uttarakuru (MA 63 at T i 502a19; T i 502b8; Saṅghabhedavastu 17:391 at Gnoli 1978a:27,14 and D (1) *'dul ba*, *ga* 8a3), where no one had any possessions (DN 32:7.4).

Then Ghaṭīkāra thought, "I'm so fortunate, so very fortunate, in that the Buddha Kassapa trusts me so much!" Then joy and happiness did not leave him for a fortnight, or his parents for a week. 19.9

Another time, Great King, I was staying near that same market town of Vebhaliṅga. Then I robed up in the morning and, taking my bowl and robe, went to the home of Ghaṭīkāra's parents, where I said to them, "Excuse me, where has Bhaggava gone?" 20.1

"Your supporter has gone out, sir. But take porridge from the pot and sauce from the pan and eat." So that's what I did. And after eating I rose from my seat and left. 20.4

Then Ghaṭīkāra went up to his parents and said, "Who took porridge from the pot and sauce from the pan, ate it, and left?" 20.6

"It was the Buddha Kassapa, my dear." 20.8

Then Ghaṭīkāra thought, "I'm so fortunate, so very fortunate, to be trusted so much by the Buddha Kassapa!" Then joy and happiness did not leave him for a fortnight, or his parents for a week. 20.9

Another time, Great King, I was staying near that same market town of Vebhaliṅga. Now at that time my hut leaked. So I addressed the mendicants, 21.1

"Mendicants, go to Ghaṭīkāra's home and find some grass." 21.4

When I said this, those mendicants said to me, "Sir, there's no grass there, but his workshop has a grass roof."[402] 21.5

"Then go to the workshop and strip the grass." So that's what they did. 21.7

Then Ghaṭīkāra's parents said to those mendicants, "Who's stripping the grass from the workshop?" 21.9

"It's the mendicants, sister. The Buddha's hut is leaking." 21.11

"Take it, sirs! Take it, dearest ones!" 21.12

Then Ghaṭīkāra went up to his parents and said, "Who stripped the grass from the workshop?" 21.13

402. *Āvesana* is found here and at MN 140:2.1 of a potter's workshop, at Kd 15:11.5.15 of a sewing hut, and is mentioned at Manu 9.264 as an "artisan's workshop" (*kārukāveśana*).

21.15 "It was the mendicants, dear. It seems the Buddha's hut is leaking."

21.16 Then Ghaṭīkāra thought, "I'm so fortunate, so very fortunate, to be trusted so much by the Buddha Kassapa!" Then joy and happiness did not leave him for a fortnight, or his parents for a week.

21.20 Then the workshop remained with the atmosphere for a roof for the whole three months, but the heavens did not rain on it. And that, Great King, is what Ghaṭīkāra the potter is like.'

21.22 'Ghaṭīkāra the potter is fortunate, very fortunate, to be so trusted by the Buddha Kassapa.'

22.1 Then King Kikī sent around five hundred loads of rice, soft saffron rice, and suitable sauce to Ghaṭīkāra.[403] Then one of the king's men approached Ghaṭīkāra and said, 'Sir, these five hundred loads of rice, soft saffron rice, and suitable sauce have been sent to you by King Kikī of Kāsi. Please accept them.'

22.5 'The king has many duties, and much to do. I have enough.[404] Let this be for the king himself.'

23.1 Ānanda, you might think: 'Surely the student Jotipāla must have been someone else at that time?'[405] But you should not see it like this. I myself was the student Jotipāla at that time."

23.5 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

403. "Suitable sauce" (*tadupiyañca sūpeyyaṁ*) is also at DN 17:2.15.10 and SN 22.96:4.10, where it describes a similarly luxurious meal. | A secondary theme of this parable is to highlight the different attitudes to offering. Kikī is generous, but his offering is extravagant and indulgent, and ultimately serves his desires, whereas Ghaṭīkāra is concerned only to help with what is needed at the time.

404. The two words *alaṁ me* encapsulate the radical basis of a Buddhist economy.

405. This phrase marks canonical Jātaka stories at DN 17:2.14.2, MN 83:21.2, AN 3.15:5.2, and AN 9.20:5.2.

MN 82

With Raṭṭhapāla

Raṭṭhapālasutta

So I have heard.[406] At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kurus together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at a town of the Kurus named Thullakoṭṭhika.[407] 1.1

The brahmins and householders of Thullakoṭṭhika heard: 2.1

"It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Thullakoṭṭhika, together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. It's good to see such perfected ones." 2.2

Then the brahmins and householders of Thullakoṭṭhika went up to the Buddha. Before sitting down to one side, some bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their 3.1

406. The story of Raṭṭhapāla, the "guardian of the nation", has become one of the most famous and beloved parables from early Buddhism. It is a testament to a young man's resolution to go forth out of faith, a quality for which he was later honored (AN 1.210:1.1). But the power of Raṭṭhapāla's determination should not overshadow the moving conversation he has with King Koravya at the end.

407. Thullakoṭṭhika ("place of fat granaries"; Sanskrit *sthūlakoṣṭhaka*) only appears in the story of Raṭṭhapāla.

cupped palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. When they were seated, the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk.

4.1 Now at that time a gentleman named Raṭṭhapāla, the son of the leading clan in Thullakoṭṭhika, was sitting in the assembly. He thought, "As I understand the Buddha's teaching, it's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell.[408] Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from lay life to homelessness?"

5.1 Then, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, the brahmins and householders of Thullakoṭṭhika got up from their seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before leaving.

6.1 Soon after they left, Raṭṭhapāla went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, as I understand the Buddha's teaching, it's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. I wish to shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence? May the Buddha please give me the going forth!"

6.6 "But, Raṭṭhapāla, do you have your parents' permission?"[409]

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408. From this point, the narrative is largely echoed in the story of Sudinna (Bu Pj 1:5.1.7), with, however, a very different outcome. While the exact relationship between these shared narratives is not easy to determine, it seems likely that Sudinna's story adopted elements of Raṭṭhapāla's.

409. This Vinaya rule is not mentioned elsewhere in the suttas, although it was required also of Sudinna (Bu Pj 1:5.1.14). It was instituted on the emotional request of the Buddha's own father, who was distraught when his grandson Rāhula went forth while still a boy (Kd 1:54.4.2). It originally applied to novices, who went forth as young as fifteen or "when old enough to scare crows" (Kd 1:51.1.14). Over time the requirements for ordination tend to become stricter as things required in a particular context are applied generally. If this is the case here, the process must have happened quickly, so that even in the canonical full ordination procedure a candidate, who must be twenty years at least, must have

"No, sir." 6.7

"Raṭṭhapāla, Buddhas don't give the going forth to the child of 6.8
parents who haven't given their permission."

"I'll make sure, sir, to get my parents' permission." 6.9

Then Raṭṭhapāla rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully cir- 7.1
cled the Buddha. Then he went to his parents and said, "Mum and dad, as I understand the Buddha's teachings, it's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. I wish to shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Please give me permission to go forth."

When he said this, Raṭṭhapāla's parents said to him, "But, dear 7.5
Raṭṭhapāla, you're our only child. You're dear to us and we love you. You're pampered and raised in comfort. You know nothing of suffering. Even when you die we will lose you against our wishes. So how can we allow you to go forth while you're still alive?"

For a second time … For a third time, Raṭṭhapāla asked his parents 7.10
for permission, but got the same reply.

Then Raṭṭhapāla thought, "My parents don't allow me to go forth." 7.20
He laid down right there on the bare ground, saying,[410] "I'll either die right here or go forth." And he refused to eat, up to the seventh meal.

Then Raṭṭhapāla's parents said to him, "Dear Raṭṭhapāla, you're 8.1
our only child. You're dear to us and we love you. You're pampered and raised in comfort. You know nothing of suffering. When you die we will lose you against our wishes. So how can we allow you to go

permission of their parents (Kd 1:76.1.12). However, there are many people who cannot get such permission, such as orphans. Thus if one does give the going-forth to someone without permission of the parents, it is a minor offense of wrong-doing for the mendicant performing the ordination, but it does not invalidate it (Kd 1:54.6.5).

410. A similar method was employed by Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā, according to the commentary to Thig 5.9. She lay face down until her parents allowed her to marry the man she desired, who was, unfortunately, a convicted criminal. The marriage did not end well, but she persevered and ultimately triumphed.

forth from lay life to homelessness while you're still living? Get up, Raṭṭhapāla! Eat, drink, and amuse yourself. While enjoying sensual pleasures, delight in making merit. We don't allow you to go forth. When you die we will lose you against our wishes. So how can we allow you to go forth while you're still alive?"

8.11 When they said this, Raṭṭhapāla kept silent.

8.12 For a second time, and a third time, Raṭṭhapāla's parents made the same request.

9.1 And for a third time, Raṭṭhapāla kept silent. Raṭṭhapāla's parents then went to see his friends. They told them of the situation and asked for their help.

10.1 Then Raṭṭhapāla's friends went to him and said, "Our dear Raṭṭhapāla, you are your parents' only child. You're dear to them and they love you. You're pampered and raised in comfort. You know nothing of suffering. When you die your parents will lose you against their wishes. So how can they allow you to go forth while you're still alive? Get up, Raṭṭhapāla! Eat, drink, and amuse yourself. While enjoying sensual pleasures, delight in making merit. Your parents will not allow you to go forth. Even when you die your parents will lose you against their wishes. So how can they allow you to go forth while you're still alive?"

10.11 When they said this, Raṭṭhapāla kept silent.

10.12 For a second time … For a third time, Raṭṭhapāla's friends made the same request. And for a third time, Raṭṭhapāla kept silent.

11.1 Then Raṭṭhapāla's friends went to his parents and said, "Mum and dad, Raṭṭhapāla is lying there on the bare ground saying: 'I'll either die right here or go forth.' If you don't allow him to go forth, he'll die there. But if you do allow him to go forth, you'll see him again afterwards. And if he doesn't enjoy the renunciate life, where else will he have to go? He'll come right back here. Please give Raṭṭhapāla permission to go forth."

11.8 "Then, dears, we give Raṭṭhapāla permission to go forth. But once gone forth he must visit his parents."

Then Raṭṭhapāla's friends went to him and said, "Get up, Raṭṭha- 11.10
pāla! Your parents have given you permission to go forth from lay life to homelessness. But once gone forth you must visit your parents."

Raṭṭhapāla got up and regained his strength. He went to the Bud- 12.1
dha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, I have my parents' permission to go forth from the lay life to homelessness. May the Buddha please give me the going forth."

And Raṭṭhapāla received the going forth, the ordination in the 13.1
Buddha's presence. Not long after Venerable Raṭṭhapāla's ordination, a fortnight later, the Buddha—having stayed in Thullakoṭṭhika as long as he pleased—set out for Sāvatthī. Traveling stage by stage, he arrived at Sāvatthī, where he stayed in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then Venerable Raṭṭhapāla, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, 14.1
keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.[411]

He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been 14.2
completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Raṭṭhapāla became one of the perfected.

Then he went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, 15.1
and said to him, "Sir, I would like to visit my parents, if the Buddha allows it."

Then the Buddha focused on encompassing Raṭṭhapāla's mind. 15.3
When he knew that it was impossible for Raṭṭhapāla to resign the training and return to a lesser life, he said, "Please, Raṭṭhapāla, go at your convenience."

411. While the conventional phrase "soon" (*nacirasseva*) is used, the commentary says it was twelve years, which would explain why his family did not immediately recognize him.

16.1 And then Raṭṭhapāla rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right. Then he set his lodgings in order and, taking his bowl and robe, set out for Thullakoṭṭhika. Traveling stage by stage, he arrived at Thullakoṭṭhika, where he stayed in King Koravya's deer range. Then Raṭṭhapāla robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Thullakoṭṭhika for alms. Wandering indiscriminately for almsfood, he approached his own father's house.

17.1 Now at that time Raṭṭhapāla's father was having his hair dressed in the hall of the middle gate.[412] He saw Raṭṭhapāla coming off in the distance and said,

17.4 "Our dear and beloved only son was made to go forth by these shavelings, these fake ascetics!" And at his own father's home Raṭṭhapāla received neither alms nor a polite refusal, but only abuse.

18.1 Now at that time a family bondservant wanted to throw away the previous night's porridge. So Raṭṭhapāla said to her, "If that's to be thrown away, sister, pour it here in my bowl." As she was pouring the porridge into his bowl, she recognized the features of his hands, feet, and voice.[413]

18.5 She then went to his mother and said, "Please, madam, you should know this. Master Raṭṭhapāla has arrived."

18.8 "If you speak the truth, wench, I'll make you a free woman!"

18.9 Then Raṭṭhapāla's mother went to his father and said, "Please householder, you should know this. It seems our son Raṭṭhapāla has arrived."

19.1 Now at that time Raṭṭhapāla was eating last night's porridge by a wall. Then Raṭṭhapāla's father went up to him and said, "Dear

412. This is a sign of the dandified life expected of Raṭṭhapāla. Hairstyles for upper class men of the time were quite fancy, or at least they are depicted so in the early sculptures at Sanchi.

413. This detail is remarkably similar to the *Odyssey* 19:361–475, where due to the marks on his feet, the maidservant Eurycleia recognizes Odysseus on his return even though his own wife did not.

Raṭṭhapāla! How can you be eating last night's porridge?[414] Why not go to your own home?"[415]

"Householder, how could those of us who have gone forth from the lay life to homelessness have a house? We are homeless, householder. I came to your house, but there I received neither alms nor a polite refusal, but only abuse." 19.5

"Come, dear Raṭṭhapāla, let's go to the house." 19.9

"Enough, householder. My meal is finished for today." 19.10

"Well then, dear Raṭṭhapāla, please accept tomorrow's meal from me." Raṭṭhapāla consented with silence. 19.11

Then, knowing that Raṭṭhapāla had consented, his father went back to his own house. He made a heap of gold, both coined and uncoined, and hid it under mats. Then he addressed Raṭṭhapāla's former wives, "Please, daughters-in-law, adorn yourselves in the way that our son Raṭṭhapāla found you most adorable." 20.1

And when the night had passed Raṭṭhapāla's father had delicious fresh and cooked foods prepared in his own home, and announced the time to the Venerable Raṭṭhapāla, saying, "Sir, it's time. The meal is ready." 21.1

Then Raṭṭhapāla robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to his father's home, and sat down on the seat spread out. Raṭṭhapāla's father, revealing the heap of gold, both coined and uncoined, said to him, "Dear Raṭṭhapāla, this is your maternal fortune. There's another paternal fortune, and an ancestral one. You can both enjoy your wealth and make merit. Come, return to a lesser life, enjoy wealth, and make merit!" 22.1

"If you'd follow my advice, householder, you'd have this heap of gold, both coined and uncoined, loaded on a cart and carried away to be dumped in the middle of the Ganges River. Why is that? Because 22.5

414. The same syntax recurs at AN 5.166:11.2, where it is clear the future tense expresses indignation rather than future time.

415. In the Vinaya, the exchange between Raṭṭhapāla and his father is expressed in verse (Bu Ss 6:1.5.1).

this will bring you nothing but sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress."

23.1 Then Raṭṭhapāla's former wives each clasped his feet and said, "What are they like, master, the nymphs for whom you lead the spiritual life?"

23.3 "Sisters, I don't lead the spiritual life for the sake of nymphs."[416]

23.4 Saying, "Our master Raṭṭhapāla addresses us as sisters!" they fainted right away.

24.1 Then Raṭṭhapāla said to his father, "If there is food to be given, householder, please give it. But don't harass me."

24.4 "Eat, dear Raṭṭhapāla. The meal is ready." Then Raṭṭhapāla's father served and satisfied Venerable Raṭṭhapāla with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods.

24.6 When he had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, he spoke this verse while standing right there:

25.1 "See this fancy puppet,[417]
a body built of sores,
diseased, obsessed over,
in which nothing lasts at all.

25.5 See this fancy figure,
with its gems and earrings;
it is bones swathed in skin,
made pretty by its clothes.

25.9 Rouged feet
and powdered face
may be enough to beguile a fool,

416. Raṭṭhapāla refers to his former wives as sisters, an indication that he sees them in accordance with the advice in SN 35.127:1.6, to regard women of one's one age as a sister. Notably, he has already used the same respectful term when addressing the household maid, whereas his mother uses the disrespectful "wench" (*je*).

417. The following verses are also found in Raṭṭhapāla's verses at Thag 16.4.

but not a seeker of the far shore.

Hair in eight braids 25.13
and eyeshadow
may be enough to beguile a fool,
but not a seeker of the far shore.

A rotting body all adorned 25.17
like a freshly painted makeup box
may be enough to beguile a fool,
but not a seeker of the far shore.

The hunter laid his snare, 25.21
but the deer didn't spring the trap.
I've eaten the bait and now I go,
leaving the trapper to lament."

Then Raṭṭhapāla, having spoke this verse while standing, went to 26.1
King Koravya's deer range and sat at the root of a tree for the day's meditation.

Then King Koravya addressed his gamekeeper,[418] "My good game- 27.1
keeper, tidy up the park of the deer range. We will go to see the scenery."

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied the gamekeeper. While tidying the 27.4
deer range he saw Raṭṭhapāla sitting in meditation. Seeing this, he went to the king, and said, "The deer range is tidy, Your Majesty. And the gentleman named Raṭṭhapāla, the son of the leading clan in Thullakoṭṭhika, of whom you have often spoken highly, is meditating there at the root of a tree."

"Well then, my good gamekeeper, that's enough of the park for 27.8
today. Now I shall pay homage to the worthy Raṭṭhapāla."

And then King Koravya said, "Distribute the fresh and cooked 28.1
foods that have been prepared there." He had the finest carriages

418. Koravya (Sanskrit *kauravya* or *kaurava*) is the conventional name for descendants of the legendary Kuru, founding king of the Kurus.

harnessed. Then he mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out in full royal pomp from Thullakoṭṭhika to see Raṭṭhapāla. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached Raṭṭhapāla on foot, together with a group of eminent officials. They exchanged greetings, and, when the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood to one side and said to Raṭṭhapāla:

28.3 "Here, worthy Raṭṭhapāla, sit on this elephant rug."

28.4 "Enough, Great King, you sit on it. I'm sitting on my own seat."

28.6 So the king sat down on the seat spread out, and said:

29.1 "Worthy Raṭṭhapāla, there are these four kinds of decay. Because of these, some people shave off their hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. What four? Decay due to old age, decay due to sickness, decay of wealth, and decay of relatives.

30.1 And what is decay due to old age? It's when someone is old, elderly, and senior, advanced in years, and has reached the final stage of life. They reflect: 'I'm now old, elderly, and senior. I'm advanced in years and have reached the final stage of life. It's not easy for me to acquire more wealth or to increase the wealth I've already acquired. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' So because of that decay due to old age they go forth. This is called decay due to old age. But worthy Raṭṭhapāla is now a youth, young, with pristine black hair, blessed with youth, in the prime of life.[419] You have no decay due to old age. So what did you know or see or hear that made you go forth?

419. While Raṭṭhapāla's age is not given, he seems quite young when he went forth. He addresses his parents with the familiar "mum and dad"; permission of his parents is required; his friends play a major role influencing his decisions; and he lies on the ground refusing to move until he gets what he wants from his parents. All this sounds like a teenager. True, he was married, but such marriages could be arranged young. And now here, twelve years later according to the commentary, he is still a young man.

And what is decay due to sickness? It's when someone is sick, 31.1
suffering, gravely ill. They reflect: 'I'm now sick, suffering, gravely ill. It's not easy for me to acquire more wealth or to increase the wealth I've already acquired. Why don't I go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' So because of that decay due to sickness they go forth. This is called decay due to sickness. But worthy Raṭṭhapāla is now rarely ill or unwell. Your stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold. You have no decay due to sickness. So what did you know or see or hear that made you go forth?

And what is decay of wealth? It's when someone is rich, affluent, 32.1
and wealthy. But gradually their wealth dwindles away. They reflect: 'I used to be rich, affluent, and wealthy. But gradually my wealth has dwindled away. It's not easy for me to acquire more wealth or to increase the wealth I've already acquired. Why don't I go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' So because of that decay of wealth they go forth. This is called decay of wealth. But worthy Raṭṭhapāla is the son of the leading clan here in Thullakoṭṭhika. You have no decay of wealth. So what did you know or see or hear that made you go forth?

And what is decay of relatives? It's when someone has many 33.1
friends and colleagues, relatives and kin. But gradually their relatives dwindle away. They reflect: 'I used to have many friends and colleagues, relatives and kin. But gradually they've dwindled away. It's not easy for me to acquire more wealth or to increase the wealth I've already acquired. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' So because of that decay of relatives they go forth. This is called decay of relatives. But worthy Raṭṭhapāla has many friends and colleagues, relatives and kin right here in Thullakoṭṭhika. You have no decay of relatives. So what did you know or see or hear that made you go forth?

There are these four kinds of decay. Because of these, some people 34.1
shave off their hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Worthy Raṭṭhapāla has none of these. So what did you know or see or hear that made you go forth?"

35.1 "Great king, the Blessed One who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha has taught these four summaries of the teaching for recitation. It was after knowing and seeing and hearing these that I went forth from the lay life to homelessness.[420]

35.2 What four?

36.1 'The world is unstable and swept away.' This is the first summary.

36.3 'The world has no shelter and no savior.' This is the second summary.

36.5 'The world has no owner—you must leave it all behind and pass on.' This is the third summary.

36.7 'The world is wanting, insatiable, the slave of craving.' This is the fourth summary.

37.1 The Blessed One who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha taught these four summaries of the teaching. It was after knowing and seeing and hearing these that I went forth from the lay life to homelessness."

38.1 "'The world is unstable and swept away.' So the worthy Raṭṭhapāla said. How should I see the meaning of this statement?"

38.4 "What do you think, Great King? When you were twenty or twenty-five years of age, were you well-versed at riding elephants, horses, and chariots, and at archery and swordsmanship? Were you strong in thigh and arm, capable, and battle-hardened?"[421]

38.6 "I was, worthy Raṭṭhapāla. Sometimes it seems as if I had superpowers then. I don't see anyone who could have equaled me in strength."

38.8 "What do you think, Great King? These days are you just as strong in thigh and arm, capable, and battle-hardened?"

38.10 "No, worthy Raṭṭhapāla. For now I am old, elderly, and senior, I'm advanced in years and have reached the final stage of life. I am

420. While these four summaries reflect key teachings of the Buddha, they are not found as such in early texts.

421. For *alamatto* read *alamattho*, "capable".

eighty years old. Sometimes I intend to step in one place, but my foot goes somewhere else."

"This is what the Buddha was referring to when he said: 'The world is unstable and swept away.'" 38.13

"It's incredible, worthy Raṭṭhapāla, it's amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha. For the world is indeed unstable and swept away. 38.16

In this royal court you can find divisions of elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry. They will serve to defend us from any threats. Yet you said: 'The world has no shelter and no savior.' How should I see the meaning of this statement?" 39.1

"What do you think, Great King? Do you have any chronic ailments?" 39.5

"Yes, I do. Sometimes my friends and colleagues, relatives and kin surround me, thinking: 'Now the king will die! Now the king will die!'" 39.7

"What do you think, Great King? Can you get your friends and colleagues, relatives and kin to help: 'Please, my dear friends and colleagues, relatives and kin, all of you here share my pain so that I may feel less pain.' Or must you alone feel that pain?" 39.10

"I can't get my friends to share my pain. Rather, I alone must feel it." 39.14

"This is what the Buddha was referring to when he said: 'The world has no shelter and no savior.'" 39.17

"It's incredible, worthy Raṭṭhapāla, it's amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha. For the world indeed has no shelter and no savior. 39.20

In this royal court you can find abundant gold, both coined and uncoined, stored above and below ground. Yet you said: 'The world has no owner—you must leave it all behind and pass on.' How should I see the meaning of this statement?" 40.1

"What do you think, Great King? These days you amuse yourself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. But is there any way to ensure that in the next life you will continue 40.5

to amuse yourself in the same way, supplied and provided with the same five kinds of sensual stimulation? Or will others make use of this property, while you pass on according to your deeds?"

40.8 "There's no way to ensure that I will continue to amuse myself in the same way. Rather, others will take over this property, while I pass on according to my deeds."

40.11 "This is what the Buddha was referring to when he said: 'The world has no owner—you must leave it all behind and pass on.'"

40.14 "It's incredible, worthy Raṭṭhapāla, it's amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha. For the world indeed has no owner—you must leave it all behind and pass on.

41.1 You also said this: 'The world is wanting, insatiable, the slave of craving.' How should I see the meaning of this statement?"

41.4 "What do you think, Great King? Do you reign over the prosperous land of Kuru?"

41.6 "Indeed I do."

41.7 "What do you think, Great King? Suppose a trustworthy and dependable man were to come from the east. He'd approach you and say: 'Please, Great King, you should know this. I come from the east. There I saw a large country that is successful and prosperous, populous and full of people. They have many divisions of elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry. And there's plenty of money and grain, plenty of gold, coined and uncoined, worked and unworked, and plenty of women for the taking. With your current forces you can conquer it. Conquer it, Great King!' What would you do?"

41.18 "I would conquer it and reign over it."

41.19 "What do you think, Great King? Suppose a trustworthy and dependable man were to come from the west, north, south, or from over the ocean.[422] He'd approach you and say the same thing. What would you do?"

41.33 "I would conquer it and reign over it."

422. This is a rare acknowledgement of the existence of lands over the seas.

"This is what the Buddha was referring to when he said: 'The world is wanting, insatiable, the slave of craving.'[423] And it was after knowing and seeing and hearing this that I went forth from the lay life to homelessness." 41.34

"It's incredible, worthy Raṭṭhapāla, it's amazing, how well said this was by the Buddha. For the world is indeed wanting, insatiable, the slave of craving." 41.37

That is what Venerable Raṭṭhapāla said. Then he went on to say: 42.1

"I see rich humans in the world who, 42.3
because of delusion, give not
the wealth they've earned.
Greedily, they hoard their riches,
yearning for ever more sensual pleasures.

A king who conquered the earth by force, 42.7
ruling the land from sea to sea,
unsatisfied with the near shore of the ocean,
would still yearn for the further shore.

Not just the king, but others too, 42.11
reach death not rid of craving.
They leave the body still wanting,
for in this world sensual pleasures never satisfy.

Relatives lament, their hair disheveled, 42.15
saying 'Ah! Alas! They're not immortal!'
They take out the body wrapped in a shroud,
heap up a pyre, and burn it there.

423. This passage is a counterweight to the ideal of the Wheel-turning Monarch, who "after conquering this land girt by sea, reigns by principle, without rod or sword" (eg. MN 91:5.8). The Wheel-turning Monarch is in turn a Buddhist recasting of the Brahmanical notion of a king who rules by favor of the gods as demonstrated in the horse sacrifice. The idea of a righteous king whom all obey without coercion belongs rightly to legend, while as Raṭṭhapāla so eloquently, not to mention bravely, points out, the very desire to rule is founded on craving.

42.19 It's poked with stakes while being burnt,
in just a single cloth, all wealth gone.
Relatives, friends, and companions
can't help you when you're dying.

42.23 Heirs take your riches,
while beings fare on according to their deeds.
Riches don't follow you when you die;
nor do children, wife, wealth, nor kingdom.

42.27 Longevity isn't gained by riches,
nor does wealth banish old age;
for the attentive say this life is short,
it's perishable and not eternal.

42.31 The rich and the poor feel its touch;
the fool and the attentive one feel it too.
But the fool lies stricken by their own folly,
while the attentive don't tremble at the touch.

42.35 Therefore wisdom's much better than wealth,
since by wisdom
you reach consummation in this life.
But if because of delusion
you don't reach consummation,
you'll do evil deeds in life after life.

42.39 One who enters a womb and the world beyond,
will transmigrate from one life to the next.
While someone of little wisdom,
placing faith in them,
also enters a womb and the world beyond.

42.43 As a bandit caught in a window
is punished for his own bad deeds;

so after departing, in the world beyond,
people are punished for their own bad deeds.

Sensual pleasures are diverse, sweet, delightful; 42.47
appearing in disguise they disturb the mind.[424]
Seeing danger in sensual stimulations,
I went forth, O King.

As fruit falls from a tree, so the sons of Manu fall,[425] 42.51
young and old, when the body breaks up.
Seeing this, too, I went forth, O King;
it's a sure bet that the ascetic life is better."

424. *Virūparūpena* appears at DN 24:1.17.8, Ja 522:18.3, and Ja 526:56.2, where it always has the meaning "in disguise".
425. *Māṇava*, which normally means "Vedic student", is occasionally used in the poetic sense of *manussa* ("humans"). Both words mean "descendant of the first man, Manu".

MN 83

About King Maghadeva

Maghadevasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[426] At one time the Buddha was staying near Mithilā in the Maghadeva Mango Grove.[427] Then the Buddha smiled at a certain spot.

2.2 Then Venerable Ānanda thought, "What is the cause, what is the reason why the Buddha smiled? Realized Ones do not smile for no reason."

2.5 So Ānanda arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and said, "What is the cause, what is the reason why the Buddha smiled? Realized Ones do not smile for no reason."

3.1 "Once upon a time, Ānanda, right here in Mithilā there was a just and principled king named Maghadeva, a great king who stood by his duty.[428] He justly treated brahmins and householders, and

426. Versions of this story are told in the Maghadeva Jātaka (Ja 9) and Nimi Jātaka (Ja 541).

427. Mithilā was the capital of Videha, to the north east of the Vajjian federation, nestled against the Himalayas. Mithilā was a dominant kingdom before the Buddha, its king Janaka featuring prominently in early Upaniṣads. It features rarely in the suttas (MN 91, Thig 6.2, Thig 13.4) and had apparently declined in importance. It is unclear whether Mithilā had been subsumed into the Vajjian federation or remained as a minor independent kingdom until conquered by Magadha some years later. DN 19:36.7 establishes the mythic origins of the land from a Buddhist perspective, whereas Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.4.1.10–19 depicts its origins in terms of the spread of fire-worship from the west by the founding king Māthava Videgha with his priest Gotama Rāhūgaṇa.

428. Maghadeva ("bounteous god") is from the Vedic *magha* ("bounty"; see SN 11.12:1.3). Pali variants are *makhādeva* and *māghadeva*, while Sanskrit sources usually have *mahādeva*; a Bharhut stūpa inscription has *maghādeva*. |

people of town and country. And he observed the sabbath on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight.

Then, after many years, many hundred years, many thousand years had passed, King Maghadeva addressed his barber,[429] 'My dear barber, when you see grey hairs growing on my head, please tell me.' 4.1

'Yes, Your Majesty,' replied the barber. 4.3

When many thousand years had passed, the barber saw grey hairs growing on the king's head. He said to the king, 'The messengers of the gods have shown themselves to you. Grey hairs can be seen growing on your head.'[430] 4.4

'Well then, my dear barber, carefully pull them out with tweezers and place them in my cupped hands.' 4.7

'Yes, Your Majesty,' replied the barber, and he did as the king said.[431] 4.8

The king gave the barber a prize village, then summoned the crown prince and said, 'Dear prince, the messengers of the gods have shown themselves to me. Grey hairs can be seen growing on my head. I have enjoyed human pleasures. Now it is time to seek heavenly pleasures.[432] Come, dear prince, rule the realm.[433] I shall shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.[434] 4.9

For "stood by his duty" (*dhamme ṭhito*) compare "standing by the tree's duty" (*rukkhadhamme ṭhito*) at AN 6.54:12.4. In such instances, *dhamma* anticipates the later Hindu notion of *svadharma*, i.e. the duty appropriate for one's station.

429. Maghadeva's story of renunciation shares much in common with that of Daḷhanemi (DN 26:2.1).

430. Such "messengers of the gods" appear as reminders for the dangers of mortality in MN 130 and AN 3.36.

431. This event is depicted in a Barhut relief.

432. It is an expected virtue of a good ruler to retire when signs of aging appear. | The notion that spiritual practice is for the elderly is expressed at Bi Pc 21:1.4, where sex workers teased nuns, suggesting they enjoy themselves while young and ordain when old. The Buddhist position is that Dhamma can be practiced at any age.

433. *Rajjaṁ* means "realm" rather than "kingship".

434. The signs of the renunciate predate Buddhism.

4.16 For dear prince, you too will one day see grey hairs growing on your head. When this happens, after giving a prize village to the barber and carefully instructing the crown prince in kingship, you should shave off your hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Keep up this good practice that I have founded. Do not be my final man. When a pair of men are living, the one who breaks such good practice is their final man. Therefore I say to you, "Keep up this good practice that I have founded. Do not be my final man."'

5.1 And so, after giving a prize village to the barber and carefully instructing the crown prince in kingship, King Maghadeva shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness here in this mango grove. He meditated spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, he spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. He meditated spreading a heart full of compassion … rejoicing … equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, he spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

6.1 For 84,000 years King Maghadeva played games as a child, for 84,000 years he acted as viceroy, for 84,000 years he ruled the realm, and for 84,000 years he led the spiritual life after going forth here in this mango grove.[435] And having developed the four divine medita-

435. 84,000 is 12 times 7 times 1000, where 12 is the months of the year (a full cycle) and in addition, a multiple of 4, the number of fullness and balance. 7 signifies the entire cycle of birth and death, being the days of the week and the visible "planets" (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn). 1000 is a major multiplier. Thus the overall sense of 84,000 is an abundant fullness (especially of time), in which sense it became a popular mystic number in Buddhism.

tions, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a realm of divinity.[436]

Then, after many years, many hundred years, many thousand years 7.1
had passed, King Maghadeva's son addressed his barber, 'My dear barber, when you see grey hairs growing on my head, please tell me.' And all unfolded as in the case of his father. And having developed the four divine meditations, when his body broke up, after death, Maghadeva's son was reborn in a good place, a realm of divinity.

And a lineage of 84,000 kings, sons of sons of King Maghadeva, 10.1
shaved off their hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness here in this mango grove. They meditated spreading a heart full of love … compassion … rejoicing … equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. For 84,000 years they played games as a child, for 84,000 years they acted as viceroy, for 84,000 years they ruled the realm, and for 84,000 years they led the spiritual life after going forth here in this mango grove.[437] And having developed the four divine meditations,

436. Living the "spiritual (divine) life" (*brahmacariya*), he practiced the "divine meditations" (*brahmavihāra*) and was reborn in the "divine realm of Brahmā" (*brahmaloka*). The Buddha is presenting an idealized vision of the ancient Brahmanical path as a coherent spiritual practice guided by the notion of *brahma* as spiritual or divine excellence (see too MN 99:22.14, DN 13:38.2). | As the exemplar of an ideal Brahmanized king, Maghadeva is perhaps to be identified with Māthava Videgha, the founder and Brahmanizer of Mithilā. His name ought probably be read *mādhava* ("possessor of *madhu*") where *madhu* ("honey") is a common term for Soma. Māthava Videgha was the first king who carried out the Soma rites in the region, bringing Agni to "burn over" (civilize) the newly-brahmanized land.

437. This totals 28.224 billion years, while the current estimate of the age of the Universe is half that at about 13.8 billion years; we are estimated to be less than half way through the current Universe. Thus the Buddhist scope of time falls within the same order of magnitude as modern cosmology. Similar durations emerge from different contexts in the suttas. The lifespan of the lowest Brahma

when their bodies broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a realm of divinity.

12.1 Nimi was the last of those kings, a just and principled king, a great king who stood by his duty.[438] He justly treated brahmins and householders, and people of town and country. And he observed the sabbath on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight.

13.1 Once upon a time, Ānanda, while the gods of the thirty-three were sitting together in the Hall of Clear Right, this discussion came up among them: 'The people of Videha are so fortunate, so very fortunate to have Nimi as their king. He is a just and principled king, a great king who stands by his duty. He justly treats brahmins and householders, and people of town and country. And he observes the sabbath on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight.'

13.6 Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed the gods of the thirty-three, 'Good fellows, would you like to see King Nimi?'

13.8 'We would.'

13.9 Now at that time it was the fifteenth day sabbath, and King Nimi had bathed his head and was sitting upstairs in the royal longhouse to observe the sabbath. Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, Sakka vanished from the thirty-three gods and reappeared in front of King Nimi. He said to the king, 'You're fortunate, Great King, so very fortunate. The gods of the thirty-three were sitting together in the Hall of Clear Right, where they were singing your praises.[439] They would like to see you. I shall send a chariot harnessed with a thousand thoroughbreds for you, Great

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realm is implied to be 37 billion years (AN 3.70:34.4), while the duration in hell is about 25 billion (AN 10.89:15.3 = Snp 3.10:8.1).

438. Nimi is widely known in Sanskrit literature as one of the three main sons of Ikṣvāku (Okkāka), the legendary ancestor of the solar dynasty and the source of the Sakyan royal lineage (Bhāgavata Purāṇa 9.6.4). As the king of Videha, Nimi was the direct ancestor of Mahājanaka (Rāmāyaṇa 1.71.3). While his legends underwent proliferation, it seems the kernel of the story is common, as Mahābhārata says that "Nimi, the ruler of the Videhas, gave away his kingdom" (14.234 of Kisari Mohan Ganguli's translation).

439. For "sing his praises" (*kittayamānarūpā*) see DN 18:4.8.

King. Mount the heavenly chariot, Great King, without wavering!' King Nimi consented with silence.

Then, knowing that the king had consented, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, Sakka vanished from King Nimi and reappeared among the gods of the thirty-three. 13.22

Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed his chariot handler Mātali, 'Come, dear Mātali, harness the chariot with a thousand thoroughbreds. Then go to King Nimi and say, "Great king, this chariot has been sent for you by Sakka, lord of gods. Mount the heavenly chariot, Great King, without wavering!"' 14.1

'Yes, lord,' replied Mātali. He did as Sakka asked, and said to the king, 'Great king, this chariot has been sent for you by Sakka, lord of gods. Mount the heavenly chariot, Great King, without wavering! But which way should we go—the way of those who experience the result of bad deeds, or the way of those who experience the result of good deeds?' 14.5

'Take me both ways, Mātali.'[440] 14.9

Mātali brought King Nimi to the Hall of Clear Right. Sakka saw King Nimi coming off in the distance, and said to him: 'Come, Great King! Welcome, Great King! The gods of the thirty-three who wanted to see you were sitting together in the Hall of Clear Right, where they were singing your praises. The gods of the thirty-three would like to see you. Enjoy heavenly glory among the gods!' 15.1

'Enough, good fellow. Send me back to Mithilā right away. That way I shall justly treat brahmins and householders, and people of town and country. And I shall observe the sabbath on the fourteenth, fifteenth, and eighth of the fortnight.'[441] 15.13

Then Sakka, lord of gods, addressed his chariot handler Mātali, 'Come, dear Mātali, harness the chariot with a thousand thoroughbreds and send King Nimi back to Mithilā right away.' 16.1

440. Despite this, no journey to the lower realms is mentioned here, which perhaps indicates textual loss. It is, however, told in detail in Ja 541.

441. PTS and BJT editions have the expected *upavasissāmi* ("I shall observe") for Mahāsaṅgīti's *upavasāmi* ("I observe").

16.3 'Yes, lord,' replied Mātali, and did as Sakka asked. And there King Nimi justly treated his people, and observed the sabbath.

16.5 Then, after many years, many hundred years, many thousand years had passed, King Nimi addressed his barber, 'My dear barber, when you see grey hairs growing on my head, please tell me.' And all unfolded as before.

17-19.1 And having developed the four divine meditations, when his body broke up, after death, King Nimi was reborn in a good place, a realm of divinity.

20.1 But King Nimi had a son named Kaḷāra Janaka.[442] He didn't go forth from the lay life to homelessness. He broke that good practice. He was their final man.

21.1 Ānanda, you might think, 'Surely King Maghadeva, by whom that good practice was founded, must have been someone else at that time?' But you should not see it like this. I myself was King Maghadeva at that time. I was the one who founded that good practice, which was kept up by those who came after.

21.7 But that good practice doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the realm of divinity.[443] But now I have founded a good practice that does lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

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442. The Janakas were the famed kingly house of Videha, here framed as the source of the kingdom's decline. A King Janaka was Sītā's father in the Rāmāyaṇa, and one discussed philosophy with Yājñavalkya in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. A Janaka is also featured in the Jātakas (Ja 539). It seems impossible to determine which, if any, are the same person.

443. According to the doctrine of the "perfections" (*pāramī*), which emerged around two to four centuries after the Buddha's passing, the practices he undertook in past lives laid the foundation for awakening in this life. Here, however, the Buddha states that his former practices did not lead to awakening. Rather, since they were based on the wrong view of eternal bliss in the Brahmā realm, they only led to a good rebirth so long as that kamma lasted. It is the eightfold path, which the Buddha discovered in his final life, which leads to awakening. The same saying in a similar context is found at DN 19:61.4.

And what is that good practice? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is the good practice I have now founded that leads to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. 21.9

Ānanda, I say to you: 'You all should keep up this good practice that I have founded. Do not be my final men.'[444] When a pair of men are living, the one who breaks such good practice is their final man. Ānanda, I say to you: 'You all should keep up this good practice that I have founded. Do not be my final men.'" 21.13

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said. 21.18

444. The Buddha changes to the plural so as to include the whole Saṅgha.

MN 84

At Madhurā

Madhurasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[445] At one time Venerable Mahākaccāna was staying near Madhurā in the Nut Grass Grove.[446]

2.1 King Avantiputta of Madhurā heard,[447] "It seems the ascetic Kaccāna is staying near Madhurā in the Nut Grass Grove. He has this good reputation: 'He is astute, competent, intelligent, learned, a brilliant speaker, eloquent, mature, a perfected one.' It's good to see such perfected ones."

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445. The fact that the Buddha is not mentioned usually signifies a discourse set after his passing, which is confirmed toward the end of this sutta.

446. Madhurā (Sanskrit Mathurā), located on the north-western trade route, between modern Agra and Delhi, was the capital of Sūrasena. Painted Grey Ware at the site attests to its settlement in the Vedic era, long before the Buddha's day with its characteristic Northen Black Polished Ware, which is also found there. Early suttas place the Buddha on the road to Madhurā (AN 4.43), and attribute one short sutta where he complained about how bad it was (AN 5.220). SA 36 in Chinese translation places him at the Umbrella Mango Tree Park on the bank of the Bhadra River, where he gave a discourse whose Pali parallel is in Sāvatthī (SN 22.43). Despite its minor role in early Buddhism, it soon became a major Buddhist center, and as spiritual home of the great arahants Śaṇavāsin, Upagupta, and Moggaliputtatissa played a major role in spreading Buddhism.

447. Avanti's northern capital Ujjeni lay 600 km south of Madhurā. The commentary explains that the former king of Madhurā (perhaps the Subāhu of Lalitavistara 3.24 = Vaidya 16 who ruled when the Bodhisatta was born) had married the sister of Pajjota, king of Avanti, hence their son was named "Son of Avanti". The unification of their houses was, according to the Purānas, in fact a reunification, as both descended from the lunar Yadava lineage. The Yadavas were said to have settled as far as the key port on the Arabian sea at Dvāraka. Avantiputta, however, is not attested outside of this sutta, for which the Chinese parallel says rather, "the king of Mathurā, a western prince".

And then King Avantiputta had the finest carriages harnessed. 3.1
He mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out in full royal pomp from Madhurā to see Mahākaccāna. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached Mahākaccāna on foot. They exchanged greetings, and when the greetings and polite conversation were over, the king sat down to one side and said to Mahākaccāna:

"Worthy Kaccāna, the brahmins say:[448] 'Only brahmins are the 4.1
best class; other classes are inferior.[449] Only brahmins are the light class; other classes are dark.[450] Only brahmins are purified, not others.[451] Only brahmins are the the Divinity's bosom sons, born from his mouth, born of the Divinity, created by the Divinity, heirs

448. Kaccāna appears in Madhurā also at AN 2.38, where he has a discussion on a similar topic with the brahmin Kandarāyana. Kaccāna often stayed at Avanti, both before and after the Buddha's passing, where he also dealt with the question of the status of the brahmins (SN 35.132). The commentary says he was in fact the son of the chief priest (*purohita*) of Avanti, which would explain his connection with Avanti, his discussions on the topic of brahminhood, and his skill in analyzing scripture. Kaccāna ultimately established Buddhism in the region, from where it was later brought to Sri Lanka by another "son of Avanti", the great monk Mahinda.

449. This verse is also at DN 27:3.6 and MN 93:5.4. | For "best class" (*seṭṭho vaṇṇo*) see *varṇaśreṣṭhaḥ* at Mahābhārata 1.24.4c.

450. Mahābhārata 12.181.5 says that brahmins are the white class, aristocrats red, peasants yellow, and menials black. Underlying this is an assumption of the superiority of the fair-skinned northerners of Indo-Aryan descent over the dark-skinned natives (see DN 3:1.10.3).

451. I cannot trace this statement to Brahmanical texts, and indeed they have a strong tendency to push back against the idea that only brahmins can find purity.

of the Divinity.'[452] What does the worthy Kaccāna have to say about this?"

5.1 "Great king, that's just hearsay in the world. And here's a way to understand that it's just hearsay in the world.

5.9 What do you think, Great King? Suppose an aristocrat prospers in money, grain, silver, or gold. Wouldn't there be aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials who would get up before him and go to bed after him, and be obliging, behaving nicely and speaking politely?"

5.14 "There would, worthy Kaccāna."

5.18 "What do you think, Great King? Suppose a brahmin … a peasant … a menial prospers in money, grain, silver, or gold. Wouldn't there be menials, aristocrats, brahmins, and peasants who would get up before him and go to bed after him, and be obliging, behaving nicely and speaking politely?"[453]

5.39 "There would, worthy Kaccāna."

5.43 "What do you think, Great King? If this is so, are the four classes equal or not? Or how do you see this?"

5.46 "Certainly, worthy Kaccāna, in this case these four classes are equal. I can't see any difference between them."

5.48 "And here's another way to understand that the claims of the brahmins are just hearsay in the world.

6.1 What do you think, Great King? Take an aristocrat who kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct; uses speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; and is covetous, malicious,

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452. An allusion to the famous Puruṣasūkta (Rig Veda 10.90.12): "His (the cosmic Man's) mouth became the brahmin, his arms became the ruler (*rājanya*, an alternate name for the *khattiyas*), his thighs became the peasant (*vaiśya*); the menial (*sūdra*) was born from his feet." This belongs to the latest portion of the Rig Veda, and probably represents a time when the system of four castes was established in the late Vedic period, some centuries before the Buddha. Apart from this, the Rig Veda hardly mentions any of these as castes, let alone all four together. | "Bosom" (*orasa*) indicates a rightful heir; see DN 27:9.4 for more details. | "Born of his mouth" indicates the special role brahmins take in reciting the Vedas; they are the vehicle for God's word in the world.

453. Then as now, it would seem, wealth trumps birth.

and has wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, would they be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell, or not? Or how do you see this?"

"Such an aristocrat would be reborn in a bad place. That's what I think, but I've also heard it from the perfected ones."[454] 6.4

"Good, good, Great King! It's good that you think so, and it's good that you've heard it from the perfected ones. What do you think, Great King? Take a brahmin … a peasant … a menial who kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct; uses speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; and is covetous, malicious, and has wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, would they be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell, or not? Or how do you see this?" 6.6

"Such a brahmin, peasant, or menial would be reborn in a bad place. That's what I think, but I've also heard it from the perfected ones." 6.13

"Good, good, Great King! It's good that you think so, and it's good that you've heard it from the perfected ones. What do you think, Great King? If this is so, are the four classes equal or not? Or how do you see this?" 6.15

"Certainly, worthy Kaccāna, in this case these four classes are equal. I can't see any difference between them." 6.20

"And here's another way to understand that the claims of the brahmins are just hearsay in the world. 6.22

What do you think, Great King? Take an aristocrat who doesn't kill living creatures, steal, or commit sexual misconduct. They don't use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. When their body breaks up, after death, would they be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, or not? Or how do you see this?" 7.1

"Such an aristocrat would be reborn in a good place. That's what I think, but I've also heard it from the perfected ones." 7.4

454. *Arahataṁ* is genitive plural.

7.6 "Good, good, Great King! It's good that you think so, and it's good that you've heard it from the perfected ones. What do you think, Great King? Take a brahmin, peasant, or menial who doesn't kill living creatures, steal, or commit sexual misconduct. They don't use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. When their body breaks up, after death, would they be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, or not? Or how do you see this?"

7.11 "Such a brahmin, peasant, or menial would be reborn in a good place. That's what I think, but I've also heard it from the perfected ones."

7.13 "Good, good, Great King! It's good that you think so, and it's good that you've heard it from the perfected ones. What do you think, Great King? If this is so, are the four classes equal or not? Or how do you see this?"

7.18 "Certainly, worthy Kaccāna, in this case these four classes are equal. I can't see any difference between them."

7.20 "And here's another way to understand that the claims of the brahmins are just hearsay in the world.

8.1 What do you think, Great King? Take an aristocrat who breaks into houses, plunders wealth, steals from isolated buildings, commits highway robbery, and commits adultery. Suppose your men arrest him and present him to you, saying: 'Your Majesty, this man is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.' What would you do to him?"

8.6 "I would have him executed, fined, or banished, or dealt with as befits the crime. Why is that? Because he's lost his former status as an aristocrat, and is just reckoned as a bandit."

8.9 "What do you think, Great King? Take a brahmin, peasant, or menial who breaks into houses, plunders wealth, steals from isolated buildings, commits highway robbery, and commits adultery. Suppose your men arrest him and present him to you, saying: 'Your Majesty, this man is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.' What would you do to him?"

"I would have him executed, fined, or banished, or dealt with as befits the crime. Why is that? Because he's lost his former status as a brahmin, peasant, or menial, and is just reckoned as a bandit." 8.14

"What do you think, Great King? If this is so, are the four classes equal or not? Or how do you see this?" 8.17

"Certainly, worthy Kaccāna, in this case these four classes are equal. I can't see any difference between them." 8.20

"And here's another way to understand that the claims of the brahmins are just hearsay in the world. 8.22

What do you think, Great King? Take an aristocrat who shaves off their hair and beard, dresses in ocher robes, and goes forth from the lay life to homelessness. They abstain from killing living creatures, stealing, and lying. They abstain from eating at night, eat in one part of the day, and are chaste, ethical, and of good character. How would you treat them?" 9.1

"I would bow to them, rise in their presence, or offer them a seat. I'd invite them to accept robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. And I'd organize their lawful guarding and protection. Why is that? Because they've lost their former status as an aristocrat, and are just reckoned as an ascetic." 9.4

"What do you think, Great King? Take a brahmin, peasant, or menial who shaves off their hair and beard, dresses in ocher robes, and goes forth from the lay life to homelessness. They abstain from killing living creatures, stealing, and lying. They abstain from eating at night, eat in one part of the day, and are chaste, ethical, and of good character. How would you treat them?" 9.7

"I would bow to them, rise in their presence, or offer them a seat. I'd invite them to accept robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. And I'd organize their lawful guarding and protection. Why is that? Because they've lost their former status as a brahmin, peasant, or menial, and are just reckoned as an ascetic." 9.10

"What do you think, Great King? If this is so, are the four classes equal or not? Or how do you see this?" 9.13

9.16 "Certainly, worthy Kaccāna, in this case these four classes are equal. I can't see any difference between them."

9.18 "This is another way to understand that this is just hearsay in the world: 'Only brahmins are the best class; other classes are inferior. Only brahmins are the light class; other classes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others. Only brahmins are the Divinity's bosom sons, born from his mouth, born of the Divinity, created by the Divinity, heirs of the Divinity.'"

10.1 When he had spoken, King Avantiputta of Madhurā said to Mahākaccāna, "Excellent, worthy Kaccāna! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, the worthy Kaccāna has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Kaccāna, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Kaccāna remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

10.6 "Great king, don't go for refuge to me. You should go for refuge to that same Blessed One to whom I have gone for refuge."

10.8 "But where is that Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?"

10.9 "Great king, the Buddha has already become fully quenched."

11.1 "Worthy Kaccāna, if I heard that the Buddha was within ten leagues, or twenty, or even up to a hundred leagues away, I'd go a hundred leagues to see him. But since the Buddha has become fully quenched, I go for refuge to that fully quenched Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Kaccāna remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

MN 85

With Prince Bodhi

Bodhirājakumārasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Bhaggas at Crocodile's Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā's Wood. 1.1

Now at that time a new stilt longhouse named Pink Lotus had recently been constructed for Prince Bodhi. It had not yet been occupied by an ascetic or brahmin or any human at all.[455] 2.1

Then Prince Bodhi addressed the student Sañjikāputta, "Please, dear Sañjikāputta, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then ask him whether he would accept tomorrow's meal from me together with the mendicant Saṅgha." 3.1

"Yes, worthy sir," Sañjikāputta replied. He did as Prince Bodhi asked, and the Buddha consented with silence. 4.1

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Sañjikāputta rose from his seat, went to Prince Bodhi, and said, "I gave your message to the worthy Gotama, and he accepted." 4.7

And when the night had passed Prince Bodhi had delicious fresh and cooked foods prepared in his own home. He also had the Pink Lotus longhouse spread with white cloth down to the last step of the 5.1

455. The commentary says that Bodhi's father was Udena, king of Kosambī, while his mother was Vāsuladattā, daughter of King Pajjota of Avanti, whose marriage became one of the great romantic legends of Indian story. Bodhi would then be the first cousin once removed of King Avantiputta of Madhurā (MN 84). It seems that the Bhaggas were vassals of the Vacchas of Kosambī. The ending of our text shows that Bodhi was conceived in Kosambī and raised at Crocodile's Bellow, where he was currently dwelling as suzerain.

staircase. Then he said to Sañjikāputta, "Please, dear Sañjikāputta, go to the Buddha, and announce the time, saying, 'Sir, it's time. The meal is ready.'"

5.4 "Yes, worthy sir," Sañjikāputta replied, and he did as he was asked.

6.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Prince Bodhi's home.

7.1 Now at that time Prince Bodhi was standing outside the gates waiting for the Buddha. Seeing the Buddha coming off in the distance, he went out to greet him. After bowing and inviting the Buddha to go first, he approached the Pink Lotus longhouse. But the Buddha stopped by the last step of the staircase.

7.5 Then Prince Bodhi said to him, "Sir, let the Blessed One ascend on the cloth! Let the Holy One ascend on the cloth! It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness." But when he said this, the Buddha kept silent.

7.9 For a second time … and a third time, Prince Bodhi said to him, "Sir, let the Blessed One ascend on the cloth! Let the Holy One ascend on the cloth! It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness."

7.13 Then the Buddha glanced at Venerable Ānanda.[456] So Ānanda said to Prince Bodhi, "Fold up the cloth, Prince. The Buddha will not step upon white cloth.[457] The Realized One has sympathy for future generations."[458]

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456. With just a glance Ānanda knew what to do.

457. According to the commentary, Bodhi was childless. He thought that if the Buddha stepped on the cloth it would show that he would have a child in the future, whereas if he did not then he would have no child. In the commentary to Dhp 157, the Buddha confirms to Bodhi that he will have no child. Under this explanation, then, by refusing to step on the cloth the Buddha was giving Bodhi an answer. The canonical account, however, reads as if the Buddha is simply refusing to indulge Bodhi's superstition. Nonetheless, the fact that the Vinaya account (see below) concerns a woman who cannot have a child confirms that the blessing concerns fertility.

458. Pali editions vary between "has regard" (*apaloketi*) and "has compassion" (*anukampati*), while the Chinese and Sanskrit fragments agree on "compassion". The reading *apaloketi* (or *oloketi* in the Dhammapada commentary) seems to

So Prince Bodhi had the cloth folded up and the seats spread 8.1
out upstairs in the longhouse. Then the Buddha ascended the longhouse and sat on the seats spread out together with the Saṅgha of mendicants.

Then Prince Bodhi served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha 9.1
headed by the Buddha with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods.[459] When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Prince Bodhi took a low seat, sat to one side, and said to him, "Sir, this is what I think: 'Pleasure is not gained through pleasure; pleasure is gained through pain.'"[460]

"Prince, before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but 10.1
intent on awakening—I too thought, 'Pleasure is not gained through pleasure; pleasure is gained through pain.'[461]

Some time later, while still with pristine black hair, blessed with 11.1
youth, in the prime of life—though my mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces—I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. Once I had gone forth I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached

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have arisen to conform with the idea that the Buddha was looking into the future to see if Bodhi would have a child.

459. The discourse thus far is also found at Kd 15:21.1.1. The Vinaya version omits the following teaching, and instead provides an occasion for the Buddha to make it a minor offense to step on a cloth covering (Kd 15:21.3.6). But when a woman who is either barren or has miscarried (*apagatagabbha*) complains, the Buddha made a compassionate exception for stepping on a cloth for superstitious laypeople (*maṅgalikā*) seeking blessings (Kd 15:21.4.11). The commentary says this only applies for women without child or with a difficult pregnancy.

460. This is a Jain view (MN 14:20.1). This lends support to the Jain tradition that claims Bodhi's grandfather Pajjota as a disciple. | Bodhi's spirituality was inclusive: he is close to the brahmin Sañjikāputta, inquires into Buddhism, asserts a Jain view, and practices superstitions.

461. The Buddha confirms that this Jain view drove his practices before awakening.

Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him,[462] 'Reverend Kālāma, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.'

11.4 Āḷāra Kālāma replied, 'Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.'

11.7 I quickly memorized that teaching. As far as lip-recital and verbal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others. Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Āḷāra Kālāma declares: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it." Surely he meditates knowing and seeing this teaching.'

12.1 So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, 'Reverend Kālāma, to what extent do you say you've realized this teaching with your own insight?' When I said this, he declared the dimension of nothingness.

12.4 Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Āḷāra Kālāma who has faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Āḷāra Kālāma says he has realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

12.12 So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, 'Reverend Kālāma, is it up to this point that you realized this teaching with your own insight, and declare having achieved it?'

12.14 'I have, reverend.'

12.15 'I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.'

12.16 'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that I've realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, I've realized with my own insight, and declare

462. See MN 26:15.1 for notes.

having achieved it. So the teaching that I know, you know, and the teaching you know, I know. I am like you and you are like me. Come now, reverend! We should both lead this community together.' And that is how my tutor Āḷāra Kālāma placed me, his pupil, on the same position as him, and honored me with high praise.

Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusion- 12.24
ment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of nothingness.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state 12.27
of sublime peace. I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.'

Uddaka replied, 'Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensi- 12.29
ble person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.'

I quickly memorized that teaching. As far as lip-recital and ver- 12.32
bal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Rāma 12.34
declared: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it." Surely he meditated knowing and seeing this teaching.'

So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, 13.1
to what extent did Rāma say he'd realized this teaching with his own insight?' When I said this, Uddaka son of Rāma declared the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Rāma who had faith, energy, 13.4
mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Rāma said he had realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, 13.12
had Rāma realized this teaching with his own insight up to this point, and declared having achieved it?'

13.14 'He had, reverend.'

13.15 'I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.'

13.16 'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it. So the teaching that Rāma directly knew, you know, and the teaching you know, Rāma directly knew. Rāma was like you and you are like Rāma. Come now, reverend! You should lead this community.' And that is how my spiritual companion Uddaka son of Rāma placed me in the position of a tutor and honored me with high praise.

13.24 Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

14.1 I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. Traveling stage by stage in the Magadhan lands, I arrived at the town of Senā in Uruvelā. There I saw a delightful park, a lovely grove with a flowing river that was clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby was a village to resort to for alms.

14.3 Then it occurred to me, 'This park is truly delightful, a lovely grove with a flowing river that's clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby there's a village to resort to for alms. This is good enough for striving for a gentleman wanting to strive.' So I sat down right there, thinking, 'This is good enough for striving.'

15.1 And then these three similes, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me.

16.1 Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying in water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire

and produce heat. What do you think, Prince? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log lying in water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

"No, sir. Why is that? Because it's a green, sappy log, and it's lying in the water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated." 16.6

"In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. They haven't internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the first example that occurred to me. 17.1

Then a second example occurred to me. 18.1

Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Prince? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?" 18.2

"No, sir. Why is that? Because it's still a green, sappy log, despite the fact that it's lying on dry land far from water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated." 18.7

"In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. But they haven't internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the second example that occurred to me. 18.11

Then a third example occurred to me. 19.1

Suppose there was a dried up, withered log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Prince? By drilling the stick against that dried up, withered log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?" 19.2

19.7 "Yes, sir. Why is that? Because it's a dried up, withered log, and it's lying on dry land far from water."

19.10 "In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. And they have internally given up and stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are capable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the third example that occurred to me. These are the three similes, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, that occurred to me.

20.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, squeeze, squash, and scorch mind with mind?' So that's what I did, until sweat ran from my armpits. It was like when a strong man grabs a weaker man by the head or throat or shoulder and squeezes, squashes, and crushes them. In the same way, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I squeezed, squashed, and crushed mind with mind until sweat ran from my armpits. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

21.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then winds came out my ears making a loud noise, like the puffing of a blacksmith's bellows. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

22.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then severe winds ground my head, like a strong man was drilling into my head with a sharp point. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid,

but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless 23.1
absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then I got a severe headache, like a strong man was tightening a strong leather strap around my head. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breath- 24.1
less absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then severe winds carved up my belly, like a deft butcher or their apprentice was slicing my belly open with a sharp meat cleaver. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breath- 25.1
less absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then there was a severe burning in my body, like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then some deities saw me and said, 'The ascetic Gotama is dead.' 26.1
Others said, 'He's not dead, but he's dying.' Others said, 'He's not dead or dying. The ascetic Gotama is a perfected one, for that is how the perfected ones live.'

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice completely cutting 27.1
off food?' But deities came to me and said, 'Good fellow, don't practice totally cutting off food. If you do, we'll infuse heavenly nectar into your pores and you will live on that.' Then it occurred to me, 'If I claim to be completely fasting while these deities are infusing

heavenly nectar in my pores, that would be a lie on my part.' So I refused those deities, saying, 'There's no need.'

28.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I just take a little bit of food each time, a handful of broth made from mung beans, horse gram, chickpeas, or green gram?' So that's what I did, until my body became severely emaciated. Due to eating so little, my major and minor limbs became like the joints of an eighty-year-old or a dying man, my bottom became like a camel's hoof, my vertebrae stuck out like beads on a string, and my ribs were as gaunt as the broken-down rafters on an old barn. Due to eating so little, the gleam of my eyes sank deep in their sockets, like the gleam of water sunk deep down a well. Due to eating so little, my scalp shriveled and withered like a green bitter-gourd in the wind and sun. Due to eating so little, the skin of my belly stuck to my backbone, so that when I tried to rub the skin of my belly I grabbed my backbone, and when I tried to rub my backbone I rubbed the skin of my belly. Due to eating so little, when I tried to urinate or defecate I fell face down right there. Due to eating so little, when I tried to relieve my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell out.

29.1 Then some people saw me and said, 'The ascetic Gotama is black.' Some said, 'He's not black, he's brown.' Some said, 'He's neither black nor brown. The ascetic Gotama has dingy skin.' That's how far the pure, bright complexion of my skin had been ruined by taking so little food.

30.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Whatever ascetics and brahmins have experienced painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion—whether in the past, future, or present—this is as far as it goes, no-one has done more than this. But I have not achieved any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones by this severe, grueling work. Could there be another path to awakening?'

31.1 Then it occurred to me, 'I recall sitting in the cool shade of a black plum 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 understanding: '*That* is the path to awakening!'

Then it occurred to me, 'Why am I afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities?' Then it occurred to me, 'I'm not afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities.' 32.1

Then it occurred to me, 'I can't achieve that pleasure with a body so severely emaciated. Why don't I eat some solid food, some rice and porridge?' So I ate some solid food. Now at that time the group of five mendicants were attending on me, thinking, 'The ascetic Gotama will tell us of any truth that he realizes.' But when I ate some solid food, they left disappointed in me, saying, 'The ascetic Gotama has become indulgent; he has strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence.' 33.1

After eating solid food and gathering my strength, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption … second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected many past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. And so I recollected my many kinds of past lives, with features and details. This was the first knowledge, which I achieved in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute. 34-37.1

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the death and 38.1

rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

39.1 This was the second knowledge, which I achieved in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

40.1 When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. I truly understood: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' I truly understood: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements.'

41.1 Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When it was freed, I knew it was freed.

41.3 I understood: 'Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place.'

42.1 This was the third knowledge, which I achieved in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute.

43.1 Then it occurred to me, 'This principle I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. But people like clinging, they love it and enjoy it. It's hard for them to see this topic; that is, specific conditionality, dependent origination. It's also hard for them to see this topic; that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go

of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment. And if I were to teach this principle, others might not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome for me.' And then these verses, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me:

'I've struggled hard to realize this, 43.8
there's no need to reveal it now!
Those mired in greed and hate
can't really understand this teaching.

It goes against the stream, subtle, 43.12
deep, obscure, and very fine.
Those besotted by greed cannot see,
for they're cloaked in a mass of darkness.'

So, as I reflected like this, my mind inclined to remaining passive, 43.16 not to teaching the Dhamma.

Then the divinity Sahampati, knowing my train of thought, 44.1 thought, 'Oh lord! The world will be lost, the world will perish! For the mind of the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, inclines to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.'

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their 44.3 arm, the divinity Sahampati vanished from the realm of divinity and reappeared in front of me. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward me, and said, 'Sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! Let the Holy One teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They're in decline because they haven't heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!'

That is what the divinity Sahampati said. Then he went on to say: 44.8

'Among the Magadhans there appeared in the past 44.10
an impure teaching thought up by the stained.
Fling open the door to freedom from death!

Let them hear the teaching
the immaculate one discovered.

44.14 Standing high on a rocky mountain,
you can see the people all around.
In just the same way, All-seer, so intelligent,
having ascended the Temple of Truth,

44.18 rid of sorrow, look upon the people
swamped with sorrow, overcome by rebirth and old age.
Rise, hero! Victor in battle, caravan leader,
wander the world free of debt.
Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!
There will be those who understand!'

45.1 Then, understanding the Divinity's invitation, I surveyed the world with the eye of a Buddha, because of my compassion for sentient beings. And I saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes; with keen faculties and with weak faculties, with good qualities and with bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach. And some of them lived seeing the danger in the fault to do with the next world, while others did not. It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. Some of them sprout and grow in the water reaching the water's surface. And some of them sprout and grow in the water but rise up above the water and stand with no water clinging to them. In the same way, I saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes. Then I replied in verse to the divinity Sahampati:

45.6 'Flung open are the doors to freedom from death!
Let those with ears to hear commit to faith.
Thinking it would be troublesome, Divinity,
I did not teach

the sophisticated, sublime Dhamma among mankind.'

Then the divinity Sahampati, knowing that his request for me to 45.10
teach the Dhamma had been granted, bowed and respectfully circled me, keeping me on his right, before vanishing right there.

Then it occurred to me, 'Who should I teach first of all? Who 46.1
will quickly understand the teaching?' Then it occurred to me, 'That Āḷāra Kālāma is astute, competent, intelligent, and has long had little dust in his eyes. Why don't I teach him first of all? He'll quickly understand the teaching.' But a deity came to me and said, 'Sir, Āḷāra Kālāma passed away seven days ago.'

And knowledge and vision arose in me, 'Āḷāra Kālāma passed away 46.10
seven days ago.' Then it occurred to me, 'This is a great loss for Āḷāra Kālāma. If he had heard the teaching, he would have understood it quickly.'

Then it occurred to me, 'Who should I teach first of all? Who 47.1
will quickly understand the teaching?' Then it occurred to me, 'That Uddaka son of Rāma is astute, competent, intelligent, and has long had little dust in his eyes. Why don't I teach him first of all? He'll quickly understand the teaching.' But a deity came to me and said, 'Sir, Uddaka son of Rāma, passed away just last night.'

And knowledge and vision arose in me, 'Uddaka son of Rāma, 47.10
passed away just last night.' Then it occurred to me, 'This is a great loss for Uddaka. If he had heard the teaching, he would have understood it quickly.'

Then it occurred to me, 'Who should I teach first of all? Who 48.1
will quickly understand the teaching?' Then it occurred to me, 'The group of five mendicants were very helpful to me. They looked after me during my time of resolute striving. Why don't I teach them first of all?' Then it occurred to me, 'Where are the group of five mendicants staying these days?' With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman I saw that the group of five mendicants were staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana.

49.1 So, when I had stayed in Uruvelā as long as I pleased, I set out for Varanasi.

49.2 While I was traveling along the road between Gayā and Bodhgaya, the Ājīvaka ascetic Upaka saw me and said, 'Reverend, your faculties are so very clear, and your complexion is pure and bright. In whose name have you gone forth, reverend? Who is your Teacher? Whose teaching do you believe in?'

49.6 I replied to Upaka in verse:

49.7 'I am the vanquisher of all, the knower of all,
unsullied in the midst of all things.
I've given up all, freed in the ending of craving.
Since I know for myself, whose follower should I be?

49.11 I have no tutor.
There is no one like me.
In the world with its gods,
I have no rival.

49.15 For in this world, I am the perfected one;
I am the supreme Teacher.
I alone am fully awakened,
cooled, quenched.

49.19 I am going to the city of Kāsi
to roll forth the Wheel of Dhamma.
In this world that is so blind,
I'll beat the drum of freedom from death!'

49.23 'According to what you claim, reverend, you ought to be the Infinite Victor.'

49.24 'The victors are those who, like me,
have reached the ending of defilements.
I have conquered bad qualities, Upaka—
that's why I'm a victor.'

When I had spoken, Upaka said: 'If you say so, reverend.' Shaking his head, he took a wrong turn and left. 49.28

Traveling stage by stage, I arrived at Varanasi, and went to see the group of five mendicants in the deer park at Isipatana. The group of five mendicants saw me coming off in the distance and stopped each other, saying, 'Here comes the ascetic Gotama. He's so indulgent; he strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence. We shouldn't bow to him or rise for him or receive his bowl and robe. But we can set out a seat; he can sit if he likes.' 50.1

Yet as I drew closer, the group of five mendicants were unable to stop themselves per their own agreement. Some came out to greet me and receive my bowl and robe, some spread out a seat, while others set out water for washing my feet. But they still addressed me by name and as 'reverend'. 50.7

So I said to them, 'Mendicants, don't address me by name and as "reverend". The Realized One is Perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved freedom from death! I shall instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. You will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.' 51.1

But they said to me, 'Reverend Gotama, even by that conduct, that practice, that grueling work you did not achieve any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. How could you have achieved such a state now that you've become indulgent, strayed from the struggle and fallen into indulgence?' 51.6

So I said to them, 'The Realized One has not become indulgent, strayed from the struggle and fallen into indulgence. The Realized One is Perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved freedom from death! I shall instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. You 51.8

will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.'

51.13 But for a second time they said to me, 'Reverend Gotama … you've fallen into indulgence.'

51.15 So for a second time I said to them, 'The Realized One has not become indulgent …'

51.20 But for a third time they said to me, 'Reverend Gotama … you've fallen into indulgence.'

52.1 So I said to them, 'Mendicants, have you ever known me to speak like this before?'

52.3 'No, sir.'

52.4 'The Realized One is Perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. Listen up, mendicants: I have achieved freedom from death! I shall instruct you, I will teach you the Dhamma. By practicing as instructed you will soon realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. You will live having achieved with your own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.'

53.1 I was able to persuade the group of five mendicants. Then sometimes I advised two mendicants, while the other three went for alms. Then those three would feed all six of us with what they brought back. Sometimes I advised three mendicants, while the other two went for alms. Then those two would feed all six of us with what they brought back.

54.1 As the group of five mendicants were being advised and instructed by me like this, they soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. They lived having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness."

55.1 When he had spoken, Prince Bodhi said to the Buddha, "Sir, when a mendicant has the Realized One as trainer, how long would it take for them to realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life?"

"Well then, prince, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, prince? Are you skilled in the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant?"[463] 55.3

"Yes, sir." 55.6

"What do you think, prince? Suppose a man were to come along thinking, 'Prince Bodhi knows the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant. I'll train in that art under him.' If he's faithless, he wouldn't achieve what he could with faith. If he's unhealthy, he wouldn't achieve what he could with good health. If he's devious or deceitful, he wouldn't achieve what he could with honesty and integrity. If he's lazy, he wouldn't achieve what he could with energy. If he's stupid, he wouldn't achieve what he could with wisdom. What do you think, prince? Could that man still train under you in the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant?" 56.1

"Sir, if he had even a single one of these factors he couldn't train under me, let alone all five." 56.17

"What do you think, prince? Suppose a man were to come along thinking, 'Prince Bodhi knows the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant. I'll train in that art under him.' If he's faithful, he'd achieve what he could with faith. If he's healthy, he'd achieve what he could with good health. If he's honest and has integrity, he'd achieve what he could with honesty and integrity. If he's energetic, he'd achieve what he could with energy. If he's wise, he'd achieve what he could with wisdom. What do you think, prince? Could that man still train under you in the art of wielding a hooked goad while riding an elephant?" 57.1

"Sir, if he had even a single one of these factors he could train under me, let alone all five." 57.17

463. According to the commentary, it was Pajjota's desire to learn the art of training elephants from Bodhi's father Udena that, after a colorful series of events, ultimately led to the joining of their houses and the birth of Bodhi. While the story is framed as a romantic adventure, it shows the strategic importance of trained elephants for royal power.

58.1 "In the same way, prince, there are these five factors that support meditation.[464] What five? It's when a noble disciple has faith in the Realized One's awakening: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' They are rarely ill or unwell. Their stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. They're not devious or deceitful. They reveal themselves honestly to the Teacher or sensible spiritual companions. They live with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and embracing skillful qualities. They're strong, staunchly vigorous, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. They're wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. These are the five factors that support meditation.

59.1 When a mendicant with these five factors that support meditation has the Realized One as trainer, they could realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in seven years. Let alone seven years, they could realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in six years, or as little as one year. Let alone one year, when a mendicant with these five factors that support meditation has the Realized One as trainer, they could realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in seven months, or as little as one day. Let alone one day, when a mendicant with these five factors that support meditation has the Realized One as trainer, they could be instructed at dusk and achieve distinction at daybreak, or be instructed at daybreak and achieve distinction at dusk."

60.1 When he had spoken, Prince Bodhi said to the Buddha, "Oh, the Buddha! Oh, the teaching! Oh, how well explained is the teaching! For someone could be instructed at dusk and achieve distinction

464. *Padhāna* is literally to "fix" or "place" and hence to "try" or "strive". Its core application is to apply oneself to spiritual practices, and hence in Buddhism it overlaps in meaning with "meditation"; a *padhānasāla* is a "meditation hall". Here the five factors are qualities that are essential foundations for meditation.

at daybreak, or be instructed at daybreak and achieve distinction at dusk."

When he said this, Sañjikāputta said to Prince Bodhi, "Though 61.1
the worthy Bodhi speaks like this, you don't go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha."

"Don't say that, dear Sañjikāputta, don't say that! I have heard 61.5
and learned this in the presence of my lady mother.[465] This one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambī in Ghosita's monastery. Then my pregnant lady mother went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, 'Sir, the prince or princess in my womb goes for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember them as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.'

Another time the Buddha was staying here in the land of the 61.11
Bhaggas at Crocodile's Bellow, in the deer park at Bhesakaḷā's Wood. Then my nursemaid, carrying me on her hip, went to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him, 'Sir, this Prince Bodhi goes for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember him as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.'

Now for a third time I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, 61.15
and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

465. His "lady mother" (*ayyā*), as noted above, was Queen Vāsuladattā, daughter of Pajjota and wife of Udena. | This is the only place in the Pali canon where the idiom "heard and learned this in the presence" is applied to anyone other than the Buddha.

MN 86

With Aṅgulimāla

Aṅgulimālasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time in the realm of King Pasenadi of Kosala there was a bandit named Aṅgulimāla. He was violent, bloody-handed, a hardened killer, merciless to living beings.[466] He laid waste to villages, towns, and countries. He was constantly murdering humans, and he wore their fingers as a necklace.[467]

3.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. Then, after the meal, on his return from almsround, he set his lodgings in order and, taking his bowl and robe, he walked down the road that led to Aṅgulimāla.

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466. This is a rare sutta where the Buddha's words take a back seat to dramatic narrative. The reform of the serial killer Aṅgulimāla became one of the most popular stories in Buddhism, with is its message of redemption even for the most wicked. The narrative with extensive backstory has been elaborated in the Pali commentaries and several parallels, with various overlaps and divergences, where events become inflated to an implausible degree. The tendency to exaggeration is found even here, for example in the claim that Aṅgulimāla laid waste to entire countries.

467. Aṅgulimāla's eponymous grotesquerie of a "finger garland" is explained by the commentary and some parallels as being a count of his victims killed by order of his former Brahmanical teacher, who assigned him this task out of jealousy. This unlikely scenario was rejected by Richard Gombrich (*How Buddhism Began*, pg. 151), who proposed that Aṅgulimāla belonged to a violent cult. The shared core of canonical accounts, however, ascribe no religious motivation to his acts: he is just a killer. He is driven by untrammeled will to power, the need to show he is stronger and better.

The cowherds, shepherds, farmers, and travelers saw him on the road, and said to him, "Don't take this road, ascetic. On this road there is a bandit named Aṅgulimāla. He is violent, bloody-handed, a hardened killer, merciless to living beings. He has laid waste to villages, towns, and countries. He is constantly murdering humans, and he wears their fingers as a necklace. People travel along this road only after banding closely together in groups of ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty. Still they meet their end by Aṅgulimāla's hand."[468] But when they said this, the Buddha went on in silence. 3.3

For a second time … and a third time, they urged the Buddha to turn back. 3.12

But when they said this, the Buddha went on in silence. 4.1

The bandit Aṅgulimāla saw the Buddha coming off in the distance, and thought, "Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! People travel along this road only after banding closely together in groups of ten, twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty. Still they meet their end by my hand. But still this ascetic comes along alone and unaccompanied, like a conqueror.[469] Why don't I take his life?" 4.2

Then Aṅgulimāla donned his sword and shield, fastened his bow and arrows, and followed behind the Buddha. But the Buddha used his psychic power to will that Aṅgulimāla could not catch up with him no matter how hard he tried, even though the Buddha kept walking at a normal speed. 5.1

Then Aṅgulimāla thought, "Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! Previously, even when I've chased a speeding elephant, horse, chariot or deer, I've always caught up with them. But I can't catch up with this ascetic no matter how hard I try, even though he's walking at a normal speed."[470] 5.3

468. *Attha* in *hatthattha* means "death, end" (commentary: *atthaṁ vināsaṁ*).
469. For "like a conqueror" (*pasayha maññe*) compare how the "fierce-fanged lion, king of beasts" wanders as conqueror at Snp 1.3:38.1. Aṅgulimāla sees the Buddha's strength as a challenge; he needs to prove himself the mightiest.
470. The decisive turn comes when Aṅgulimāla must admit he is not the strongest.

5.7 He stood still and said, "Stop, stop, ascetic!"

5.9 "I've stopped, Aṅgulimāla—now you stop."

5.10 Then Aṅgulimāla thought, "These ascetics who follow the Sakyan speak the truth. Yet while walking the ascetic says: 'I've stopped, Aṅgulimāla—now you stop.' Why don't I ask him about this?"

6.1 Then he addressed the Buddha in verse:

6.2 "While walking, ascetic, you say 'I've stopped.'[471]
And I have stopped, but you tell me I've not.
I'm asking you this, ascetic:
how is it you've stopped and I have not?"

6.6 "Aṅgulimāla, I have forever stopped—
I've laid aside violence toward all creatures.[472]
But you can't stop yourself
from harming living creatures;
that's why I've stopped, but you have not."

6.10 "Oh, at long last a renowned great seer,
an ascetic has followed me into this deep wood.[473]
Now that I've heard your verse on Dhamma,
I shall live without evil."

6.14 With these words,
the bandit hurled his sword and weapons
down a cliff into an abyss.
He venerated the Holy One's feet,
and requested the going forth right away.

6.18 Then the Buddha, the compassionate great seer,
the Teacher of the world with its gods,
said to him, "Come, monk!"

471. These verses in this sutta are found in Aṅgulimāla's verses at Thag 16.8.

472. This phrase is shared with the Jains, Sūyagaḍa 14.23: *savvehi pāṇehi nihāya daṇḍaṁ*.

473. Read *samaṇo paccapādi* per Thag 16.8:3.2.

And with that he became a monk.

Then the Buddha set out for Sāvatthī with Venerable Aṅgulimāla 7.1
as his second monk. Traveling stage by stage, he arrived at Sāvatthī, where he stayed in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time a crowd had gathered by the gate of King Pase- 8.1
nadi's royal compound making a colossal racket, "In your realm, Your Majesty, there is a bandit named Aṅgulimāla. He is violent, bloody-handed, a hardened killer, merciless to living beings. He has laid waste to villages, towns, and countries. He is constantly murdering humans, and he wears their fingers as a necklace. Your Majesty must put a stop to him!"

Then King Pasenadi drove out from Sāvatthī in the middle of the 9.1
day with around five hundred horses, heading for the monastery. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha on foot. He bowed and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him,

"What is it, Great King? Is King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha 9.4
angry with you, or the Licchavis of Vesālī, or some other opposing ruler?"

"No, sir. In my realm there is a bandit named Aṅgulimāla. He is 10.1
violent, bloody-handed, a hardened killer, merciless to living beings. … I shall put a stop to him."[474]

"But, Great King, suppose you were to see that Aṅgulimāla had 11.1
shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and gone forth from the lay life to homelessness. And that he was refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and lying; that he was eating in one part of the day, and was chaste, ethical, and of good character. What would you do to him?"

474. It is Pasenadi's duty, not the Buddha's, to defend his citizens. Yet while the Buddha had already identified the problem, taken action, and solved it, Pasenadi is just now coming to the Buddha to announce his intention to do something about it. A certain criticism of Pasanadi's weakness can be discerned here.

11.2 "I would bow to him, rise in his presence, or offer him a seat. I'd invite him to accept robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. And I'd organize his lawful guarding and protection.[475] But sir, how could such an immoral, evil man ever have such virtue and restraint?"

12.1 Now at that time Venerable Aṅgulimāla was sitting not far from the Buddha. Then the Buddha pointed with his right arm and said to the king, "Great king, this is Aṅgulimāla."

12.4 Then the king became frightened, scared, his hair standing on end. Knowing this, the Buddha said to him, "Do not fear, Great King. You have nothing to fear from him."[476] Then the king's fear died down.

12.8 Then the king went over to Aṅgulimāla and said, "Sir, is the master really Aṅgulimāla?"

12.10 "Yes, Great King."

12.11 "What clans were your father and mother from?"

12.12 "My father was a Gagga, and my mother a Mantāṇī."[477]

12.13 "Sir, may Master Gagga son of Mantāṇī be happy. I'll make sure that you're provided with robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick."

13.1 But at that time Venerable Aṅgulimāla lived in the wilderness, ate only almsfood, and owned just three robes. So he said to the king, "Enough, Great King. My robes are complete."

13.4 Then the king went back to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! How the Buddha tames those who are wild, pacifies those who are violent, and extinguishes those who are unquenched! For I was not able to tame him with the rod and the sword, but the Buddha tamed

475. As Ajātasattu would for a runaway slave who ordained at DN 2:36.2.

476. Also per Ajātasattu (DN 2:10.8).

477. Gagga is a clan descended from the Vedic seer Garga Bhāradvāja (Rig Veda 6.47). Clan members feature prominently throughout Brahmanical literature (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1, 3.6, 3.8; Praśna Upaniṣad 4, etc.), none of whom, however, share Aṅgulimāla's depravity. | Mantāṇī, spelled Maitrāyaṇī in Sanskrit (Mahāvastu 3.377, cf. Puṇṇa son of Mantāṇī at MN 24:2.4), is shared with the Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā, the oldest ritual text of the Black Yajurveda.

him without rod or sword.[478] Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do."

"Please, Great King, go at your convenience." Then King Pase- 13.10
nadi rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

Then Venerable Aṅgulimāla robed up in the morning and, taking 14.1
his bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. Then as he was wandering indiscriminately for almsfood he saw a woman undergoing a distressing obstructed labor.[479] Seeing this, it occurred to him, "Oh, beings undergo such travail![480] Oh, beings undergo such travail!"

Then after wandering for alms in Sāvatthī, after the meal, on his 14.6
return from almsround, he went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. The Buddha said to him, "Well then, Aṅgulimāla, go to that woman and say this:

'Ever since I was born, sister, I don't recall having intentionally 15.2
taken the life of a living creature. By this truth, may both you and your baby be safe.'"[481]

"But sir, wouldn't that be telling a deliberate lie? For I have in- 15.3
tentionally killed many living creatures."

"In that case, Aṅgulimāla, go to that woman and say this: 15.5

'Ever since I was born in the noble birth, sister, I don't recall having 15.6
intentionally taken the life of a living creature. By this truth, may both you and your baby be safe.'"[482]

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478. This heads off a potential criticism of Buddhism that it would allow criminals to flourish. Non-violent approaches are not just morally superior but more effective.

479. *Mūḷha* here has the sense of "gone astray" in reference to obstructed labor that prevents birth; see Ud 2.8:1.4.

480. *Kilissanti* here has the sense "undergo distress or travail". Compare *garbhakleśa* in Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 22.45 with the sense, "travails of childbirth".

481. The asseveration of truth—the belief that "by this truth" (*tena saccena*, also at Snp 2.1) effective results could be won—can be traced to Rig Veda 1.21.6 (*tena satyena*).

482. This is still used as a blessing for pregnant women in Theravada. | "Noble birth" is a unique way of referring to ordination. It echoes the *upanayana* initiation, where the teacher is said to become pregnant with the student and give

15.7 "Yes, sir," replied Aṅgulimāla. He went to that woman and said:

15.8 "Ever since I was born in the noble birth, sister, I don't recall having intentionally taken the life of a living creature. By this truth, may both you and your baby be safe."

15.9 Then that woman was safe, and so was her baby.

16.1 Then Aṅgulimāla, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

16.2 He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Aṅgulimāla became one of the perfected.

17.1 Then Venerable Aṅgulimāla robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. Now at that time someone threw a stone that hit Aṅgulimāla, someone else threw a stick, and someone else threw gravel. Then Aṅgulimāla—with cracked head, bleeding, his bowl broken, and his outer robe torn—went to the Buddha.

17.4 The Buddha saw him coming off in the distance, and said to him, "Endure it, brahmin! Endure it, brahmin! You're experiencing in this very life the result of deeds that might have caused you to be tormented in hell for many years, many hundreds or thousands of years."[483]

18.1 Later, Venerable Aṅgulimāla was experiencing the bliss of release while in private retreat. On that occasion he expressed this heartfelt sentiment:

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birth to them as a brahmin (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.4; also see notes to MN 26:15.2ff.).

483. For the residual effects of kamma, compare such suttas as SN 56.49, where for a stream-enterer the suffering that has disappeared is like a great mountain, while that which remains is like seven pebbles. For Aṅgulimāla as an arahant there is even less, but not none at all.

"He who once was heedless, 18.3
but turned to heedfulness,
lights up the world,
like the moon freed from clouds.

Someone whose bad deed 18.7
is supplanted by the good,
lights up the world,
like the moon freed from clouds.

A young mendicant 18.11
devoted to the Buddha's teaching,
lights up the world,
like the moon freed from clouds.

May even my enemies 18.15
hear a Dhamma talk!
May even my enemies
devote themselves to the Buddha's teaching!
May even my enemies associate with those good men
who establish others in the Dhamma!

May even my enemies 18.19
hear Dhamma at the right time,
from those who teach acceptance,
praising acquiescence;
and may they follow that path!

For then they'd never wish harm 18.23
upon myself or others.
Having arrived at ultimate peace,[484]
they'd look after creatures firm and frail.[485]

484. *Pappuyya* is absolutive.
485. Creatures "firm and frail" (*tasathāvare*) is a common Jain idiom. Examples include *tasesu thāvaresu ya* (Uttarādhyayana 5.8); *je keī tasathāvarā* (Sūyagaḍa

18.27 For while irrigators guide water,
fletchers bend arrows straight,
and carpenters bend timber straight,
the astute tame themselves.

18.31 Some tame by using the rod,
some with goads, and some with whips.
But the unaffected one tamed me
without rod or sword.

18.35 My name is 'Harmless',[486]
though I used to be harmful.
The name I bear today is true,
for I do no harm to anyone.

18.39 I used to be a bandit,
the notorious Aṅgulimāla.
Swept away in a great flood,
I went to the Buddha as a refuge.

18.43 I used to have blood on my hands,
the notorious Aṅgulimāla.
See the refuge I've found—
the leash to existence is eradicated.

18.47 I've done many of the sort of deeds
that lead to a bad destination.
The result of my deeds has already struck me,
so I enjoy my food free of debt.

18.51 Fools and simpletons
devote themselves to negligence.

3.4.20); *tasaṁ vā thāvaraṁ vā* (Dasaveyāliya 4.1.42); *tasa-jīvā ya thāvarattāe* (Ācāraṅgasūtra 9.1.14).

486. Aṅgulimāla became known as "Harmless" (Ahiṁsaka) after his awakening.

But the wise protect diligence
as their best treasure.

Don't devote yourself to negligence, 18.55
or delight in erotic intimacy.
For if you're diligent and practice absorption,
you'll attain abundant happiness.

It was welcome, not unwelcome, 18.59
the advice I got was good.
Of the well-explained teachings,
I arrived at the best.

It was welcome, not unwelcome, 18.63
the advice I got was good.
I've attained the three knowledges
and fulfilled the Buddha's instructions."

MN 87

Born From the Beloved

Piyajātikasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[487] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time a certain householder's dear and beloved only child passed away. After their death he didn't feel like working or eating.[488] He would go to the cremation ground and wail, "Where are you, my only child? Where are you, my only child?"

3.1 Then he went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Your faculties, householder, are those of one who is unstable in their own mind; there is a deterioration in your faculties."

3.3 "And how, sir, could there be no deterioration of my faculties? For my dear and beloved only child has passed away. Since their death I haven't felt like working or eating. I go to the cremation ground and wail: 'Where are you, my only child? Where are you, my only child?'"

3.8 "That's so true, householder! That's so true, householder! For our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress."

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487. King Pasenadi had what seems to be his first conversation and conversion with the Buddha in SN 3.1. However, it would seem his faith was still weak, as he is frustrated by the devotion of his chief queen, Mallikā ("Jasmine"). Ultimately, her wise counsel persuades him. Similar conversations with Mallikā on attachment to loved ones are found at SN 3.8 and Ud 5.1. King Pasenadi's committment to non-attachment was sorely tested with the birth of a daughter (SN 3.16), and when Mallikā passed away (AN 5.49).

488. An unusual use of *paṭibhāti* ("feel like"); commentary glosses *ruccati*.

"Sir, who on earth could ever think such a thing! For our loved 3.10
ones are a source of joy and happiness." Disagreeing with the Buddha's statement, rejecting it, he rose from his seat and left.

Now at that time several gamblers were playing dice not far from 4.1
the Buddha. That householder approached them and told them what had happened.

"That's so true, householder! That's so true, householder! For our 4.17
loved ones are a source of joy and happiness."

Thinking, "The gamblers and I are in agreement," the householder 4.19
left.

Eventually that topic of discussion reached the royal com- 5.1
pound.[489] Then King Pasenadi addressed Queen Mallikā,[490] "Mallikā, your ascetic Gotama said this: 'Our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.'"

"If that's what the Buddha said, Great King, then that's how it is." 5.5

"No matter what the ascetic Gotama says, Mallikā agrees with 5.6
him: 'If that's what the Buddha said, Great King, then that's how it is.' You're just like a pupil who agrees with everything their tutor says. Go away, Mallikā, get out of here!"

Then Queen Mallikā addressed the brahmin Nāḷijaṅgha, "Please, 6.1
brahmin, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then say: 'Sir, did the Buddha make this statement: "Our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain,

489. Also a scene for gossip in AN 3.60 and AN 10.45.

490. In addition to the conversations on the theme of attachment to loved ones, unrelated incidents with Mallikā appear at AN 4.197, Bu Pc 53:1.1, and Bu Pc 83:1.2.7. She is listed as an eminent lay disciple (AN 8.91–117:1.1) and maintained a monastery for philosophical debates (MN 78:1.3). This is what we know of her from early texts, while later Jātakas and other scriptures tell many colorful tales about her and her unique marriage. | Śvetāmbara Jains hold that, in the far distant past, the nineteenth founding teacher (*tīrthaṅkara*) was the lady Malli (Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra 6.6). Perhaps the Buddhist stories of the wise lady Mallikā helped inspire this legend.

sadness, and distress"?' Remember well how the Buddha answers and tell it to me. For Realized Ones say nothing that is not so."

6.9 "Yes, ma'am," he replied. He went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama, Queen Mallikā bows with her head to your feet. She asks if you are healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And she asks whether the Buddha made this statement: 'Our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.'"

7.1 "That's right, brahmin, that's right! For our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

8.1 And here's a way to understand how our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. Once upon a time right here in Sāvatthī a certain woman's mother passed away. And because of that she went mad and lost her mind. She went from street to street and from square to square saying, 'Has anyone seen my mother? Has anyone seen my mother?'

9-14.1 And here's another way to understand how our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

9-14.2 Once upon a time right here in Sāvatthī a certain woman's father … brother … sister … son … daughter … husband passed away. And because of that she went mad and lost her mind. She went from street to street and from square to square saying, 'Has anyone seen my husband? Has anyone seen my husband?'

15-21.1 And here's another way to understand how our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

15-21.2 Once upon a time right here in Sāvatthī a certain man's mother … father … brother … sister … son … daughter … wife passed away. And because of that he went mad and lost his mind. He went from street to street and from square to square saying, 'Has anyone seen my wife? Has anyone seen my wife?'

15-21.14 And here's another way to understand how our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.

Once upon a time right here in Sāvatthī a certain woman went to live with her relative's family. But her relatives wanted to divorce her from her husband and give her to another, who she didn't want. So she told her husband about this. But he cut her in two and disemboweled himself, thinking, 'We shall be together after death.' That's another way to understand how our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress." 22.1

Then Nāḷijaṅgha the brahmin, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, rose from his seat, went to Queen Mallikā, and told her of all they had discussed. Then Queen Mallikā approached King Pasenadi and said to him, "What do you think, Great King? Do you love Princess Vajirī?"[491] 23.1

"Indeed I do, Mallikā." 24.3

"What do you think, Great King? If she were to decay and perish, would sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress arise in you?" 24.4

"If she were to decay and perish, my life would fall apart. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress not arise in me?" 24.6

"This is what the Buddha was referring to when he said: 'Our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.' 24.7

What do you think, Great King? Do you love Queen Vāsabhā? 25.1

…

Do you love your son, General Viḍūḍabha? … 26.1

Do you love me?" 27.1

"Indeed I do love you, Mallikā." 27.2

"What do you think, Great King? If I were to decay and perish, would sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress arise in you?" 27.3

"If you were to decay and perish, my life would fall apart. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress not arise in me?" 27.5

491. She was probably the daughter born to Pasenadi and Mallikā in SN 3.16.

27.6 "This is what the Buddha was referring to when he said: 'Our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.'

28.1 What do you think, Great King? Do you love the realms of Kāsi and Kosala?"[492]

28.3 "Indeed I do, Mallikā. It's due to the bounty of Kāsi and Kosala that we use sandalwood imported from Kāsi and wear garlands, fragrance, and makeup."

28.5 "What do you think, Great King? If these realms were to decay and perish, would sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress arise in you?"

28.7 "If they were to decay and perish, my life would fall apart. How could sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress not arise in me?"

28.8 "This is what the Buddha was referring to when he said: 'Our loved ones are a source of sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress.'"

29.1 "It's incredible, Mallikā, it's amazing, how far the Buddha sees with penetrating wisdom, it seems to me. Come, Mallikā, rinse my hands."[493]

29.4 Then King Pasenadi rose from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and expressed this heartfelt sentiment three times:

29.5 "Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

29.6 Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

492. Kosala is the native realm of Pasenadi. Kāsi had formerly been an independent kingdom, but was taken over by Pasenadi's father Mahākosala. Towards the end of the Buddha's life it was contested between Kosala and Magadha (SN 3.14, SN 3.15). Ultimately it became part of the greater Magadhan empire.

493. I think the king held his hands over a bowl and Mallikā poured water over them.

Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!" 29.7

MN 88

The Foreign Cloth

Bāhitikasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. He wandered for alms in Sāvatthī. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Eastern Monastery, the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother, for the day's meditation.

3.1 Now at that time King Pasenadi of Kosala mounted the Single Lotus Elephant and drove out from Sāvatthī in the middle of the day.[494] He saw Ānanda coming off in the distance and said to the chief minister Sirivaḍḍha,[495] "My dear Sirivaḍḍha, isn't that Venerable Ānanda?"

3.5 "Indeed it is, Great King."

4.1 Then King Pasenadi addressed a man, "Please, my man, go to Venerable Ānanda, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him, 'Sir, King Pasenadi of Kosala bows with his head at your feet.' And then say, 'Sir, if you have no urgent business, please wait a while out of sympathy.'"

5.1 "Yes, Your Majesty," that man replied. He did as the king asked.

6.1 Ānanda consented with silence.

6.2 Then King Pasenadi rode on the elephant as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached Ānanda on foot. He bowed, stood to one side, and said to Ānanda, "Sir, if you have no urgent

494. "Single lotus" (*ekapuṇḍarīka*) appears as an auspicious epithet in a prayer for wealth at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.3.6.

495. Different persons of the same name appear in SN 47.29 and Thag 1.41.

business, it would be nice of you to go to the bank of the Aciravatī River out of sympathy."

Ānanda consented with silence. 7.1

He went to the river bank and sat at the root of a certain tree 7.2 on a seat spread out. Then King Pasenadi rode on the elephant as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached Ānanda on foot. He bowed, stood to one side, and said to Ānanda, "Here, Venerable Ānanda, sit on this elephant rug."

"Enough, Great King, you sit on it. I'm sitting on my own seat." 7.5

So the king sat down on the seat spread out, and said, "Honor- 8.1 able Ānanda, would the Buddha engage in the sort of behavior—by way of body, speech, or mind—that is faulted by ascetics and brahmins?"[496]

"No, Great King, the Buddha would not engage in the sort of 8.4 behavior that is faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins."

"It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! For I couldn't fully express the 9.1 question, but Venerable Ānanda's answer completed it for me.[497] I don't believe that praise or criticism of others spoken by incompetent fools, without examining or scrutinizing, is the most important thing. Rather, I believe that praise or criticism of others spoken by competent and intelligent people after examining and scrutinizing is the most important thing.

But Honorable Ānanda, what kind of bodily behavior is faulted 10.1 by sensible ascetics and brahmins?"[498]

496. The commentary says that Pasenadi's actions were occasioned by the brutal murder of the wanderer Sundarī. Unscrupulous ascetics urged her to visit the Jeta Grove, then killed her so that blame would fall on the Buddha and his community (Ud 4.8). However, nothing in this sutta or its parallel at MA 214 supports this connection.

497. Ānanda completed Pasenadi's phrasing by adding "sensible" (*viññūhi*), since the Buddha's conduct was in fact faulted by foolish ascetics and brahmins.

498. This passage describes bad actions from five perspectives, showing that the Buddha's analysis of morality was not based on a single factor.

10.2 "Unskillful behavior."[499]

10.3 "But what kind of bodily behavior is unskillful?"

10.4 "Blameworthy behavior."[500]

10.5 "But what kind of bodily behavior is blameworthy?"

10.6 "Hurtful behavior."[501]

10.7 "But what kind of bodily behavior is hurtful?"

10.8 "Behavior that results in suffering."[502]

10.9 "But what kind of bodily behavior results in suffering?"

10.10 "Bodily behavior that leads to hurting yourself, hurting others, and hurting both,[503] and which makes unskillful qualities grow while skillful qualities decline. That kind of bodily behavior is faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins."

11.1 "But what kind of verbal behavior … mental behavior is faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins?" …

12.4 "Mental behavior that leads to hurting yourself, hurting others, and hurting both, and which makes unskillful qualities grow while skillful qualities decline. That kind of mental behavior is faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins."

13.1 "Sir, does the Buddha praise giving up all these unskillful things?"

13.2 "Great king, the Realized One has given up all unskillful things and possesses skillful things."

14.1 "But sir, what kind of bodily behavior is not faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins?"[504]

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499. "Unskillful" (*akusala*) is an unwholesome quality of the mind, so this is the psychological dimension of immorality. What is unskillful is that which leads to the result opposite to that desired: we want happiness, but it leads to suffering.

500. "Blameworthy" (*sāvajja*) behavior is that which makes one liable to criticism by others. This is the social dimension of immorality.

501. "Hurtful" (*sabyābajjha*) refers to the fact that bad conduct is characterized by hurtful affliction both in its action and its consequences.

502. "Results in suffering" (*dukkhavipāka*) through painful kammic consequences in this life or the future.

503. Bad conduct does not just affect oneself, but reverberates in space, by harming others, and in time, by promoting the growth of even more unskillful qualities.

504. The analysis is inverted for good conduct.

"Skillful behavior." 14.2

"But what kind of bodily behavior is skillful?" 14.3

"Blameless behavior." 14.4

"But what kind of bodily behavior is blameless?" 14.5

"Pleasing behavior." 14.6

"But what kind of bodily behavior is pleasing?" 14.7

"Behavior that results in happiness." 14.8

"But what kind of bodily behavior results in happiness?" 14.9

"Bodily behavior that leads to pleasing yourself, pleasing others, and pleasing both, and which makes unskillful qualities decline while skillful qualities grow. That kind of bodily behavior is not faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins." 14.10

"But what kind of verbal behavior … mental behavior is not faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins?" … 15.1

"Mental behavior that leads to pleasing yourself, pleasing others, and pleasing both, and which makes unskillful qualities decline while skillful qualities grow. That kind of mental behavior is not faulted by sensible ascetics and brahmins." 16.6

"Sir, does the Buddha praise embracing all these skillful things?" 17.1

"Great king, the Realized One has given up all unskillful things and possesses skillful things."[505] 17.2

"It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! How well this was said by Venerable Ānanda! I'm delighted and satisfied with what you've expressed so well. So much so that if an elephant-treasure was suitable for you, I would give you one. If a horse-treasure was suitable for you, I would give you one. If a prize village was suitable for you, I would give you one. But, sir, I know that these things are not suitable for you.[506] This foreign cloth was sent to me by King Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of the princess of Videha, packed in a parasol case. It's exactly 18.1

505. Ānanda emphasizes that the Buddha does not just praise these things, he embodies them fully.

506. See eg. MN 94:16.19.

sixteen measures long and eight wide.[507] May Venerable Ānanda please accept it out of sympathy."

18.12 "Enough, Great King. My three robes are complete."

19.1 "Sir, we have both seen this Aciravatī River when it has rained heavily in the mountains, and the river overflows both its banks. In the same way, Venerable Ānanda can make a set of three robes for himself from this foreign cloth,[508] and you can share your old robes with your fellow monks. In this way my religious donation will come to overflow, it seems to me. Please accept the foreign cloth."

20.1 So Ānanda accepted it.

20.2 Then King Pasenadi said to him, "Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do."

20.5 "Please, Great King, go at your convenience." Then King Pasenadi approved and agreed with what Ānanda said. He rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled Ānanda, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

21.1 Soon after he left, Ānanda went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. He presented the cloth to the Buddha.

22.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants,

22.2 "Mendicants, King Pasenadi is lucky, so very lucky, to get to see Ānanda and pay homage to him."

22.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

507. The Chinese parallel at MA 214 has 繖, which supports the reading *chatta* ("parasol").

508. *Bāhitikā*, which occurs only here, is explained by the commentary as cloth that is "foreign" or "imported". We find Sanskrit *bāhya* in this sense at Arthaśastra 2.22.1.

MN 89

Shrines to the Teaching

Dhammacetiyasutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near the Sakyan town named Medaḷumpa.[509] 1.1

Now at that time King Pasenadi of Kosala had arrived at Townsville on some business.[510] 2.1

Then he addressed Dīgha Kārāyana, "My good Kārāyana, harness the finest chariots. We will go to a park and see the scenery." 2.2

"Yes, Your Majesty," replied Dīgha Kārāyana. He harnessed the chariots and informed the king, "Your Majesty, the finest chariots are harnessed. Please go at your convenience." 2.4

Then King Pasenadi mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out in full royal pomp from Townsville, heading for the park grounds.[511] He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and entered the park on foot. 3.1

As he was going for a walk in the park he saw roots of trees that were impressive and inspiring, quiet and still, far from the madding crowd, remote from human settlements, and fit for retreat. The 4.1

509. This town, the spelling of which is uncertain, is not mentioned elsewhere.

510. "Townsville" is a literal rendering of *nagaraka*. I translate it in homage to the town in northern Queensland where a chance encounter with a roadside joey set me on the path to the Dhamma.

511. The word *ārāma*, from a root meaning "to enjoy", originally referred to a cultivated and pleasant parkland enjoyed for recreation. Such places were favorite dwelling places for ascetics, and became the sites for developed monasteries. In this sutta we see both senses. Here Pasenadi enjoys an *ārāma* ("park") for recreation. Below we see the Buddha staying in an *ārāma* with a community of mendicants, featuring substantial private dwellings (*vihāra*) with lockable doors; in other words, a "monastery" (MN 89:8.1).

sight reminded him right away of the Buddha: "These roots of trees, so impressive and inspiring, are like those where we used to pay homage to the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha."[512]

4.4 He addressed Dīgha Kārāyana, "These roots of trees, so impressive and inspiring, are like those where we used to pay homage to the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. My good Kārāyana, where is that Buddha at present?"

5.1 "Great king, there is a Sakyan town named Medaḷumpa. That's where the Buddha is now staying."

5.3 "But how far away is that town?"

5.4 "Not far, Great King, it's three leagues. We can get there while it's still light."

5.7 "Well then, harness the chariots, and we shall go to see the Buddha."

5.8 "Yes, Your Majesty," replied Dīgha Kārāyana. He harnessed the chariots and informed the king, "Your Majesty, the finest chariots are harnessed. Please go at your convenience."

6.1 Then King Pasenadi mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Townsville to Medaḷumpa. He reached the town while it was still light and headed for the monastery grounds. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and entered the monastery on foot.

7.1 At that time several mendicants were walking mindfully in the open air. King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to them and said, "Sirs, where is the Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha? For I want to see him."

8.1 "Great king, that's his dwelling, with the door closed. Approach it quietly, without hurrying; go onto the porch, clear your throat, and knock on the door-panel. The Buddha will open the door." The king

512. Evidently the Buddha used to meditate on emptiness in these very woods (MN 121:3.1).

right away presented his sword and turban to Dīgha Kārāyana, who thought, "Now the king seeks privacy. I should wait here."[513]

Then the king approached the Buddha's dwelling, cleared his 8.5
throat and knocked on the door-panel, and the Buddha opened the door.

King Pasenadi entered the dwelling, and bowed with his head to 9.1
the Buddha's feet, caressing them and covering them with kisses, and pronounced his name:[514] "Sir, I am Pasenadi, king of Kosala! I am Pasenadi, king of Kosala!"

"But, Great King, for what reason do you demonstrate such ut- 9.4
most deference for this body, conveying your manifest love?"

"Sir, I infer about the Buddha from the teaching:[515] 'The Blessed 10.1
One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'[516] It happens, sir, that I see some ascetics and brahmins leading the spiritual life only for a limited period: ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years. Some time later—nicely bathed and anointed, with hair and beard dressed—they amuse themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation.[517] But here I see the mendicants leading the spiritual life entirely full and pure as long as they live, to their last breath.[518] I don't see any other spiritual life elsewhere so full and pure. That's why I infer this about the Buddha from the teaching: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

513. Kārāyana's response gives no hint of anything other than loyal service.
514. For similar gestures, see Koṇḍañña at SN 8.9:1.2, the brahmin Mānatthaddha ("Stuck-up") at SN 7.15:3.2, the brahmin Brahmāyu at MN 91:34.1, and Pasenadi again at AN 10.30:2.2.
515. See SN 12.33 and notes for discussion.
516. This is an abbreviated form of the full devotions to the Triple Gem.
517. He knows this because they worked for him as spies (SN 3.11:7.3, Ud 6.2:8.3).
518. While Buddhist mendicants may disrobe at any time, their intention is to practice for life.

11.1 Furthermore, kings fight with kings, aristocrats fight with aristocrats, brahmins fight with brahmins, householders fight with householders. A mother fights with her child, child with mother, father with child, and child with father. Brother fights with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, and friend fights with friend.[519] But here I see the mendicants living in harmony, appreciating each other, without dispute, blending like milk and water, and regarding each other with kindly eyes. I don't see any other assembly elsewhere so harmonious. So I infer this about the Buddha from the teaching: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

12.1 Furthermore, I have walked and wandered from monastery to monastery and from park to park. There I've seen some ascetics and brahmins who are thin, haggard, pale, and veiny—hardly a captivating sight for people, you'd think.[520] It occurred to me: 'Clearly these venerables lead the spiritual life dissatisfied, or they're hiding some bad deed they've done. That's why they're thin, haggard, pale, and veiny—hardly a captivating sight for people, you'd think.' I went up to them and said: 'Venerables, why are you so thin, haggard, pale, and veiny—hardly a captivating sight for people, you'd think?' They say: 'We have jaundice, Great King.'[521] But here I see mendicants always smiling and joyful, obviously happy, with cheerful faces, living relaxed, unruffled, surviving on charity, their hearts free as a wild deer. It occurred to me: 'Clearly these venerables have realized a higher distinction in the Buddha's instructions than they had before. That's why these venerables are always smiling and joyful, obviously happy, with cheerful faces, living relaxed, unruffled, surviving on charity, their hearts free as a wild deer.' So I infer this about the

519. PTS text includes brother with brother.

520. This is a standard description of monastics who are unhappy and dissatisfied for whatever reason, eg. Bu Ss 1:1.1.3.

521. The commentary glosses *kularogo* ("family sickness"), showing it must accept the reading *bandhu* ("relative"). However, the parallel at MA 213 has 白病, which supports the variant *paṇḍukarogino* ("jaundice").

Buddha from the teaching: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

13.1 Furthermore, as an anointed aristocratic king I am able to execute, fine, or banish those who are guilty. Yet when I'm sitting in court they interrupt me.[522] And I can't get them to stop interrupting me and wait until I've finished speaking.[523] But here I see the mendicants while the Buddha is teaching an assembly of many hundreds, and there is no sound of his disciples coughing or clearing their throats. Once it so happened that the Buddha was teaching an assembly of many hundreds. Then one of his disciples cleared their throat. And one of their spiritual companions nudged them with their knee, to indicate: 'Hush, venerable, don't make a sound! Our teacher, the Blessed One, is teaching!' It occurred to me: 'Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing, how an assembly can be so well trained without rod or sword!'[524] I don't see any other assembly elsewhere so well trained.[525] So I infer this about the Buddha from the teaching: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

14.1 Furthermore, I've seen some astute aristocrats who are subtle, accomplished in the doctrines of others, hair-splitters. You'd think they live to demolish convictions with their intellect.[526] They hear: 'So, gentlemen, that ascetic Gotama will come down to such-and-such village or town.' They formulate a question, thinking: 'We'll approach the ascetic Gotama and ask him this question. If he answers like this, we'll refute him like that; and if he answers like that,

522. Read *aḍḍa* (variants *attha*, *aṭṭa*) which in Sanskrit has the senses "solve, infer, argue, discern". The commentary interprets *aḍḍakaraṇa* as the "place of judgment" i.e. the court, which is clearly the case at DN 17:1.11.1.

523. Pasenadi speaks of his frustrations in judging at SN 3.7. He was getting old and passing his duties to his son.

524. The future tense *bhavissati* here expresses surprise or wonder, for which compare AN 4.36:1.6.

525. For the poor behavior of other ascetics, see MN 77:6.21.

526. This passage on conversion of disputants is also found at MN 27:4.2.

we'll refute him like this.' When they hear that he has come down they approach him. The Buddha educates, encourages, fires up, and inspires them with a Dhamma talk. They don't even get around to asking their question to the Buddha, so how could they refute his answer? Invariably, they become his disciples. So I infer this about the Buddha from the teaching: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

15.1 Furthermore, I see some astute brahmins … some astute householders … some astute ascetics who are subtle, accomplished in the doctrines of others, hair-splitters. … They don't even get around to asking their question to the Buddha, so how could they refute his answer? Invariably, they ask the Buddha for the chance to go forth. And he gives them the going-forth. Soon after going forth, living withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, they realize the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. They live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. They say: 'We were almost lost! We almost perished! For we used to claim that we were ascetics, brahmins, and perfected ones, but we were none of these things. But now we really are ascetics, brahmins, and perfected ones!' So I infer this about the Buddha from the teaching: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

18.1 Furthermore, these chamberlains Isidatta and Purāṇa share my meals and my carriages. I give them a livelihood and bring them renown. And yet they don't show me the same level of deference that they show to the Buddha. Once it so happened that while I was leading a military campaign and testing Isidatta and Purāṇa I took up residence in a cramped house. They spent much of the night discussing the teaching, then they lay down with their heads toward where the Buddha was and their feet toward me. It occurred to me: 'Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing! These chamberlains Isidatta and Purāṇa share my meals and my carriages. I give them

a livelihood and bring them renown. And yet they don't show me the same level of deference that they show to the Buddha. Clearly these venerables have realized a higher distinction in the Buddha's instructions than they had before.'[527] So I infer this about the Buddha from the teaching: 'The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.'

Furthermore, the Buddha is an aristocrat, and so am I. The Buddha 19.1
is Kosalan, and so am I.[528] The Buddha is eighty years old, and so am I.[529] Since this is so, it's proper for me to act with such utmost deference for the Buddha and convey my manifest love.

Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do." 20.1

"Please, Great King, go at your convenience." Then King Pase- 20.3
nadi rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.[530]

Soon after the king had left, the Buddha addressed the mendi- 21.1
cants: "Mendicants, before he got up and left, King Pasenadi spoke shrines to the teaching. Learn these shrines to the teaching! Memo-

527. They were at least stream-enterers (SN 55.6:18.1, AN 6.120–139:1.12), and died as once-returners (AN 6.44:2.3, AN 10.75:2.2). | The king refers to his subordinates with *āyasmā*, normally reserved for addressing mendicants. When used by lay people of other lay people it indicates deep respect, often, as here, in reference to noble individuals on the path (MN 68:18.5, SN 55.54:2.2), or else used by a criminal beseeching the mercy of the crowd (AN 4.244:2.2).

528. The Sakyans were vassals of Kosala (Snp 3.1:18.4).

529. This sets these events in the last year of the Buddha's life.

530. While the sutta and its parallels do not hint at anything other than a respectful visit to the Buddha, there is a tradition that this event led to Pasenadi's downfall. Apparently, Dīgha Kārāyana blamed Pasenadi for the death of his uncle, Pasenadi's former general Bandhula. Seeking revenge, he took the royal insignia and crowned Pasanadi's dubious son Viḍūḍabha (MN 90:6.1) in his stead. Abandoned and alone, Pasenadi sought shelter in Rājagaha with his nephew Ajātasattu, but arrived too late and died while spending the night outside the walls. The details are improbable—why flee his friends the Sakyans for the untrustworthy Ajātasattu, 500 km distant? And why would a city watch bar a king in need? Nonetheless, the outline of this story is found widely, not just in the Pali commentary (see Ja 465, T 1451 at T xxiv 238c1, T 211 at T iv 583a16, D (6) *'dul ba, tha* 86a7).

rize these shrines to the teaching! Remember these shrines to the teaching! These shrines to the teaching are beneficial and relate to the fundamentals of the spiritual life."

21.7 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 90

At Kaṇṇakatthala

Kaṇṇakatthalasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[531] At one time the Buddha was staying near Ujuññā in the deer park at Kaṇṇakatthala.[532] 1.1

Now at that time King Pasenadi of Kosala had arrived at Ujuññā on some business. Then he addressed a man, "Please, my man, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then say: 'Sir, King Pasenadi of Kosala will come to see you today when he has finished breakfast.'" 2.1

"Yes, Your Majesty," that man replied. He did as the king asked. 2.7

The sisters Somā and Sakulā heard this.[533] While the meal was being served, they approached the king and said, "Great king, since you are going to the Buddha, please bow in our name with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably." 3.1

531. The narrative of this sutta is entertainingly chaotic, with characters appearing and disappearing at random, many of whom are unknown or little-known elsewhere. This is a lifelike impression of how hard it is to maintain a rational dialogue among the comings and goings. Historically it gives a brief but telling character portrait of Viḍūḍabha, the ill-starred prince of Kosala.

532. Ujuññā was a Kosalan town at which the Buddha discussed asceticism with the naked ascetic Kassapa in DN 8. | "Deer parks" were nature reservations where the animals were safe from hunters.

533. These sisters were apparently both married to the King and, like his chief queen Mallikā, were devoted to the Buddha. Somā is perhaps the devout laywoman mentioned at AN 8.91–117:1.1, but is probably not the bhikkhunī of the same name mentioned at SN 5.2 and Thig 3.8. Sakulā likewise is probably not the same person as the bhikkhunī mentioned in Thig 5.7 and AN 1.242:1.1.

4.1 When he had finished breakfast, King Pasenadi went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, the sisters Somā and Sakulā bow with their heads to your feet. They ask if you are healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably."

4.3 "But, Great King, couldn't they get any other messenger?"

4.4 So Pasenadi explained the circumstances of the message. The Buddha said, "May the sisters Somā and Sakulā be happy, Great King."

5.1 Then the king said to the Buddha, "I have heard, sir, that the ascetic Gotama says this: 'There is no ascetic or brahmin who will ever claim to be all-knowing and all-seeing, to know and see everything without exception: that is not possible.'[534] I trust those who say this repeat what the Buddha has said, and do not misrepresent him with an untruth? Is their explanation in line with the teaching? Are there any legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism?"

5.5 "Great king, those who say this do not repeat what I have said. They misrepresent me with what is false and untrue."

6.1 Then King Pasenadi addressed General Viḍūḍabha,[535] "General, who introduced this topic of discussion to the royal compound?"

6.3 "It was Sañjaya, Great King, the brahmin of the Ākāsa clan."[536]

7.1 Then the king addressed a man, "Please, my man, in my name tell Sañjaya that King Pasenadi summons him."

7.4 "Yes, Your Majesty," that man replied. He did as the king asked.

534. The Buddha was well aware of the fact that people did, in fact, make such claims, as he discussed them several times (eg. MN 76:21.1). He just thought the claims were wrong. One unique detail of the phrasing here is that it is in future tense (also used below at MN 90:8.5). The implication seems to be that not only is it the case that no one currently makes such claims, but that no one ever will in the future. | Compare with other statements on omniscience at MN 14:17.3 and MN 71:5.2.

535. The King's son and heir, whose disastrous reign heralded the destruction of the Sakyans and the collapse of the Kosalan empire.

536. *Ākāsa* here is the Pali form of Sanskrit *āgastya*, the clan descending from the Vedic seer Agastya.

Then the king said to the Buddha, "Sir, might the Buddha have spoken in reference to one thing, but that person believed it was something else? How then do you recall making this statement?" 8.1

"Great king, I recall making this statement: 'There is no ascetic or brahmin who will ever know all and see all simultaneously: that is not possible.'"[537] 8.4

"What the Buddha says appears reasonable. 8.6

Sir, there are these four classes: aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials. Is there any difference between them?" 9.1

"Of the four classes, two are said to be preeminent—the aristocrats and the brahmins. That is, when it comes to bowing down, rising up, greeting with cupped palms, and observing proper etiquette."[538] 9.4

"Sir, I am not asking you about this life, but about the life to come." 10.1

"Great king, there are these five factors that support meditation. What five? It's when a mendicant has faith in the Realized One's awakening: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' They are rarely ill or unwell. Their stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. They're not devious or deceitful. They reveal themselves honestly to the Teacher or sensible spiritual companions. They live with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and embracing skillful qualities. They're strong, staunchly vigorous, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. They're wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. These are the five factors that support meditation. There are these four classes: aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials. If they had 10.6

537. Consciousness is conditioned, so any instance of knowing depends on a particular stimulus. At MN 76:52.5 the Buddha discusses the related point of whether knowledge is continuous, illustrating it with a simile of an amputee.
538. The Buddha acknowledges the social distinctions between the classes.

these five factors that support meditation, that would be for their lasting welfare and happiness."

11.1 "Sir, there are these four classes: aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials. If they had these five factors that support meditation, would there be any difference between them?"

11.5 "In that case, I say it is the disparity of their efforts in meditation. Suppose there was a pair of elephants or horses or oxen in training who were well tamed and well trained. And there was a pair who were not tamed or trained. What do you think, Great King? Wouldn't the pair that was well tamed and well trained perform the tasks of the tamed, and reach the level of the tamed?"

11.9 "Yes, sir."

11.10 "But would the pair that was not tamed and trained perform the tasks of the tamed and reach the level of the tamed, just like the tamed pair?"

11.11 "No, sir."

11.12 "In the same way, there are things that must be attained by someone with faith, health, integrity, energy, and wisdom. It's not possible for a faithless, unhealthy, deceitful, lazy, witless person to attain them."

12.1 "What the Buddha says appears reasonable. Sir, there are these four classes: aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and workers. If they had these five factors that support meditation, and if they practiced rightly, would there be any difference between them?"

12.6 "In that case, I say that there is no difference between the freedom of one and the freedom of the other. Suppose a person took dry teak wood and lit a fire and produced heat. Then another person did the same using sāl wood, another used mango wood, while another used wood of the cluster fig. What do you think, Great King? Would there be any difference between the fires produced by these different kinds of wood, that is, in the flame, color, or luminosity?"

12.13 "No, sir."

"In the same way, when fire has been churned by energy and produced by effort, I say that there is no difference between the freedom of one and the freedom of the other."[539] 12.14

"What the Buddha says appears reasonable. But sir, do gods survive?"[540] 13.1

"But what exactly are you asking?"[541] 13.3

"Whether those gods come back to this place or not." 13.5

"Those gods who are afflicted come back to this place, but those who are unafflicted do not come back."[542] 13.6

When he said this, General Viḍūḍabha said to the Buddha, "Sir, will the gods who are afflicted topple or expel from their place the gods who are unafflicted?"[543] 14.1

Then Venerable Ānanda thought, "This General Viḍūḍabha is King Pasenadi's son, and I am the Buddha's son. Now is the time for one son to confer with another." So Ānanda addressed General Viḍūḍabha, "Well then, general, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, general? As far as 14.3

539. *Nimmathita* refers to the process whereby a flame is produced by "churning" with a fire-drill. See Rig Veda 3.23.1a, 3.29.12a, 6.48.5, 8.48.6a, etc.

540. The sense of *atthi devā* ("do gods survive?") is made clear by the following discussion. Compare *atthi attā* ("the self survives") at SN 44.10:1.3 and MN 2:8.2 in the same sense. In such cases the verb *atthi* implies continued existence in a future life. We find a similar usage in Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.20, where Naciketa wonders what happens to a man after he dies, as "some say he survives, while others say he does not survive" (*astīty eke nāyam astīti caike*).

541. Questions with *atthi* ("exists", "survives") about the self and rebirth are routinely met indirectly. Here the Buddha asks for clarification; at SN 44.10:1.3 he avoids answering; at MN 100:42.5 he answers in an oblique fashion. The reason for this seems to be that the verb *atthi* conveys the metaphysical implication of "eternal existence". The king clarifies that he wants to know what happens when a god passes away, showing that he is asking about rebirth rather than eternal existence.

542. This builds on the discussion with Pasenadi in MN 88:10.6, where "hurtful" or "afflicted" (*sabyābajjha*) behavior leads to suffering, elsewhere described as rebirth in a "hurtful" realm (eg. MN 57:8.2).

543. In a few words we learn a lot about how Viḍūḍabha sees himself: he is an afflicted god.

the dominion of King Pasenadi of Kosala extends, where he rules as sovereign lord, can he topple or expel from that place any ascetic or brahmin, regardless of whether they are good or bad, or whether or not they are genuine spiritual practitioners?"

14.11 "He can, worthy."[544]

14.12 "What do you think, general? As far as the dominion of King Pasenadi does not extend, where he does not rule as sovereign lord, can he topple or expel from that place any ascetic or brahmin, regardless of whether they are good or bad, or whether or not they are genuine spiritual practitioners?"

14.14 "He cannot, worthy."

14.15 "What do you think, general? Have you heard of the gods of the thirty-three?"

14.17 "Yes, worthy, I've heard of them, and so has the worthy King Pasenadi."

14.20 "What do you think, general? Can King Pasenadi topple or expel from their place the gods of the thirty-three?"

14.22 "King Pasenadi can't even see the gods of the thirty-three, so how could he possibly topple or expel them from their place?"

14.23 "In the same way, general, the gods who are afflicted can't even see the gods who are unafflicted, so how could they possibly topple or expel them from their place?"[545]

15.1 Then the king said to the Buddha, "Sir, what is this mendicant's name?"[546]

15.3 "Ānanda, Great King."

15.4 "A joy he is, and a joy he seems! What Venerable Ānanda says seems reasonable. But sir, does a divinity survive?"

15.7 "But what exactly are you asking?"

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544. *Bho* ("worthy") is typically used by brahmins; he also uses it in reference to the king below.

545. Compare the discussion in the Jain Viyāhapaṇṇatti 6.9.144, where pure gods are beyond the scope of impure gods.

546. If Pasenadi does not know Ānanda, this must be a very early encounter, perhaps his first.

"Whether that divinity comes back to this place or not." 15.9

"A divinity who is afflicted comes back to this place, but one who is unafflicted does not come back." 15.10

Then a certain man said to the king, "Great king, Sañjaya, the brahmin of the Ākāsa clan, has come." 16.1

Then King Pasenadi asked Sañjaya, "Brahmin, who introduced this topic of discussion to the royal compound?" 16.3

"It was General Viḍūḍabha, Great King." 16.5

But Viḍūḍabha said, "It was Sañjaya, Great King, the brahmin of the Ākāsa clan."[547] 16.6

Then a certain man said to the king, "It's time to go, Great King." 17.1

So the king said to the Buddha, "Sir, I asked you about omniscience, and you answered. I endorse and accept this, and am satisfied with it. I asked you about purification in the four classes, about the gods, and about divinities, and you answered in each case. Whatever I asked the Buddha about, he answered. I endorse and accept this, and am satisfied with it. Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do." 17.3

"Please, Great King, go at your convenience." 17.16

Then King Pasenadi approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. Then he got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. 18.1

547. Not only does Viḍūḍabha exhibit poor leadership by blaming a subordinate, he is evidently lying about it.

THE CHAPTER ON BRAHMINS

MN 91

With Brahmāyu

Brahmāyusutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Videhans together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants.[548] 1.1

Now at that time the brahmin Brahmāyu was residing in Mithilā. He was old, elderly, and senior, advanced in years, having reached the final stage of life; he was a hundred and twenty years old. He had mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies and ritual performance, their phonology and word classification, and the testaments as fifth. He knew them word-by-word, and their grammar. He was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man.[549] 2.1

548. Videha was famous as the site of philosophical conversations in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, especially between Yājñavalkya and King Janaka. In my view, this sutta is constructed to show the Buddha's conversion of a senior brahmin in Yājñavalkya's tradition, possibly even a direct student.

549. This brahmin seems to only be known from this sutta. | A few other people are said to have reached the advanced age of 120: Pasenadi's grandmother (SN 3.22:2.1), some brahmins (AN 3.51, AN 3.52), and Dhammasavapitu who went forth at 120 (Thag 1.108). | "Vocabularies" is *nighaṇḍu* (Sanskrit *nighaṇṭu*), known from the Nirukta of Yāska. | *Keṭubha* lacks an obvious Sanskrit form. The commentary explains, "The study of proper and improper actions for the assistance of poets." This suggests a connection with ritual performance, which is the special area of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. There we often find phrases such as *kṛtam bhavati*, "it is performed", of which *keṭubha* is perhaps a contraction. | *Akkhara* (literally "syllable") is explained by the commentary as *sikkhā* (Sanskrit *śikṣā*), which is the study of pronunciation. This can be traced back to Pāṇinī, and is sometimes referred to as *akṣara-samāmnāya*, "collation of syllables". | *Pabheda* is found in Buddhist Sanskrit texts as *padaprabheda*, "classification of words", such as into the different parts of speech. The commentary identifies it with *nirutti*. | *Padaka* is one skilled in the *padapāṭha* recitation of Vedas, which

3.1 He heard: "It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—is wandering in the land of the Videhans, together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. It's good to see such perfected ones."

4.1 Now at that time the brahmin Brahmāyu had a pupil named Uttara. He too had mastered the Vedic curriculum.[550] Brahmāyu told Uttara of the Buddha's presence in the land of the Videhans, and added: "Please, dear Uttara, go to the ascetic Gotama and find out whether or not he lives up to his reputation.[551] Through you I shall learn about the worthy Gotama."[552]

5.1 "But sir, how shall I find out whether or not the ascetic Gotama lives up to his reputation?"

5.3 "Dear Uttara, the thirty-two marks of a great man have been handed down in our hymns. A great man who possesses these has

separates the individual words. | For "testaments" (*itihāsa*) see *itihāsa-purāṇa* in Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.6.8, explained by the commentator there as legends of creation and olden times. | "Cosmology" (*lokāyata*) here is a branch of Vedic learning, not the heterodox school known by this name in later times (AN 9.38, SN 12.48).

550. Uttara is a common name and it is unclear if this is the same person as any of the other Uttaras.

551. Similar quests were enjoined by Pokkharasāti on Ambaṭṭha (DN 3:1.4.8), and by the elderly brahmin Bāvari on his sixteen students Snp 5.1:22.1.

552. Following PTS and BJT editions, which read *tayā* for *tathā*.

only two possible destinies, no other.[553] If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures.[554] He has the following seven treasures:[555] the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the householder, and the commander as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies.[556] After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who has cast off the world's veil. But, dear Uttara, I am the one who gives the hymns, and you are the one who receives them."

"Yes, worthy sir," replied Uttara. He got up from his seat, bowed, 6.1
and respectfully circled Brahmāyu, keeping him on his right, before setting out for the land of the Videhans where the Buddha was wandering. Traveling stage by stage, he came to the Buddha and

553. In Buddhist texts the marks are presented as the fulfillment of Brahmanical prophecy, but they are not found in any Brahmanical texts of the Buddha's time. However, later astrological texts such as the Gārgīyajyotiṣa (1st century BCE?) and Bṛhatsaṁhitā (6th century CE?) contain references to many of these marks, albeit in a different context, so it seems likely the Buddhist texts are drawing on now-lost Brahmanical scriptures. | The notion of a two-fold course for a great hero—worldly success or spiritual—can be traced back as far as the epic of Gilgamesh.

554. The idea of the wheel-turning monarch draws from the Vedic horse sacrifice, which establishes the authority of a king from sea to sea. The Buddhist telling is divested of all coarse and violent elements. The wheeled chariot gave military supremacy to the ancient Indo-Europeans, allowing them to spread from their ancient homeland north of the Black Sea. In Buddhism, the wheel, which also has solar connotations, symbolizes unstoppable power. For a legendary account of such a king, see the Mahāsudassanasutta (DN 17). Rig Veda 8.63.8 speaks of Indra as the "wheel turner".

555. Various "treasures" (*ratana*) or "gems" of a king are discussed in such texts as Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.3.1. They are described in detail at MN 129:34.1ff.

556. The sacrificial horse on its journey across the land is protected by a hundred sons.

exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and scrutinized his body for the thirty-two marks of a great man. He saw all of them except two, which he had doubts about: whether the private parts are sheathed in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue.

6.8 Then it occurred to the Buddha, "This student Uttara sees all the marks except two, which he has doubts about: whether the private parts are sheathed in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue."

7.1 So the Buddha used his psychic power to will that Uttara would see his private parts sheathed in a foreskin. And he stuck out his tongue and stroked back and forth on his ear holes and nostrils, and covered his entire forehead with his tongue.

8.1 Then Uttara thought, "The ascetic Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks. Why don't I follow him and observe his deportment?" So Uttara followed the Buddha like a shadow for seven months.[557]

8.5 When seven months had passed he set out wandering toward Mithilā. There he approached the brahmin Brahmāyu, bowed, and sat down to one side. Brahmāyu said to him, "Well, dear Uttara, does the worthy Gotama live up to his reputation or not?"

8.9 "He does, sir. The worthy Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks.[558]

9.1 He has well-planted feet.[559]

9.3 On the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail.[560]

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557. In AN 4.192 the Buddha says it is only possible to really know a person's character by living with them for a long time.

558. The marks are also listed at DN 14:1.32.7 and analyzed in kammic terms at DN 30:1.2.4. Here I list the related marks in the Bṛhatsaṁhitā as identified by Nathan McGovern (*On the Origins of the 32 Marks of a Great Man*, Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, 2016, vol. 39, pp. 207–247).

559. This echoes the posture of the newborn bodhisatta, and has the same meaning: that he will become awakened by "standing on his own two feet".

560. These are solar symbols, evoking the sun as the "twelve-spoked wheel of truth" (Rig Veda 1.164.11). They leave marks that were seen by Doṇa (AN 4.36:1.3). They are often depicted in Buddhist art, signifying the perfection and

He has stretched heels.[561] 9.4

He has long fingers.[562] 9.5

His hands and feet are soft and tender.[563] 9.6

He has serried hands and feet.[564] 9.7

The tops of his feet are arched.[565] 9.8

His calves are like those of an antelope.[566] 9.9

When standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees.[567] 9.10

His private parts are sheathed in a foreskin.[568] 9.11

He is golden colored; his skin shines like lustrous gold.[569] 9.12

He has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don't stick to his body.[570] 9.13

His hairs grow one per pore.[571] 9.14

His hairs stand up; they're blue-black and curl clockwise.[572] 9.15

His body is tall and straight-limbed.[573] 9.16

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completeness of the traces that the Buddha leaves behind in his teachings and practice. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 69.17 lists several auspicious marks, including the wheel.

561. Described as "abundantly long" at DN 30:1.12.8.

562. Same at Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.36.

563. Tender feet at Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.2.

564. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.2 has *śliṣṭāṅgulī* ("compact or sticky fingers"). The commentary denies that the Pali *jāla* means a physical web. I think it means that the fingers and toes were usually held together rather than splayed, hence not letting things slip through the fingers.

565. *Ussaṅkha* means "(curved) up like a shell", while Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.2 says "curved up like a tortoise". The descriptive verse at DN 30:1.21.12 shows that it refers to the tops of the feet.

566. These are presumably the long, elegant rear calves of the Indian Blackbuck.

567. This agrees with Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.35.

568. Same at Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.8.

569. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.102 says kings have a shining complexion.

570. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.102 mentions a "clean complexion" (*śuddha*).

571. Same at Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.5.

572. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.26 says those with hairs turning right become kings.

573. Here *brahm-* is an adjective from √*brah* + *ma*, equivalent to the Sanskrit *bṛṁh*, having the sense "grown, extended". The Sanskrit form here is *bṛhadṛjugātra*.

9.17 He has bulging muscles in seven places.[574]

9.18 His chest is like that of a lion.[575]

9.19 He is filled out between the shoulders.[576]

9.20 He has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree: the span of his arms equals the height of his body.[577]

9.21 His torso is cylindrical.

9.22 He has ridged taste buds.[578]

9.23 His jaw is like that of a lion.

9.24 He has forty teeth.

9.25 His teeth are even.[579]

9.26 His teeth have no gaps.

9.27 His teeth are perfectly white.

9.28 He has a large tongue.[580]

9.29 He has the voice of the Divinity, like a cuckoo's call.

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574. Hands, feet, shoulders, and chest (DN 30:1.13.5).

575. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.18 compares not the chest but the hips with a lion.

576. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.27 says the heart is raised and muscular.

577. Bṛhatsaṁhitā 69.13 has the same proportions without the simile. These are the normal human proportions, yet we cannot touch our knees without bending. The only way these marks could be reconciled is if the arms were extra long and the length of the legs below the knees was extra long as well. And this is exactly what we are told: the ankles are stretched and long, and the calves are like those of an antelope, whose rear calves are long proportionate to the thigh. Thus in this regard the marks appear to be internally consistent, though not describing normal human anatomy.

578. "Ridged taste buds" is *rasaggasaggī*. *Rasa* can mean either "taste" or "nutrition", but the use of *ojā* in DN 30:2.9.8 confirms the latter. *Gasa* is "swallow" and per DN 30:2.7.4 it is the "conveyance of savor" (*rasaharaṇīyo*). *Agga* often means "best", but this is derived from the primary sense of "peak". The descriptors *uddhagga* ("raised") at DN 30:2.7.4 and *susaṇṭhitā* ("prominent") at DN 30:2.9.8 confirm that the latter is meant. The mark refers to taste buds raised in noticeable ridges on the tongue that absorb nutrition and aid digestion. It has often been interpreted as "excellent (*aggī*) sense (*gasa*) of taste (*rasa*)", but this, being imperceptible to others, is rather a secondary consequence of the mark.

579. Even, gapless, and white teeth are at Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.52.

580. Same at Bṛhatsaṁhitā 68.53.

His eyes are indigo.[581] 9.30

He has eyelashes like a cow's.[582] 9.31

Between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool. 9.32

The crown of his head is like a turban.[583] 9.33

These are the thirty-two marks of a great man possessed by the worthy Gotama. 9.34

When he's walking he takes the first step with the right foot.[584] He doesn't lift his foot too far or place it too near. He doesn't walk too slow or too fast. He walks without knocking his knees or ankles together.[585] When he's walking he keeps his thighs neither too straight nor too bent, neither too tight nor too loose. When he walks, only the lower half of his body moves, and he walks effortlessly. When he turns to look he does so with the whole body.[586] He doesn't look directly up or down. He doesn't look all around while walking, but focuses a plough's length in front. Beyond that he has unhindered knowledge and vision.[587] 10.1

When entering an inhabited area he keeps his body neither too straight nor too bent, neither too tight nor too loose. 11.1

He turns around neither too far nor too close to the seat. He doesn't lean on his hand when sitting down. And he doesn't just plonk his body down on the seat. When sitting in inhabited areas he doesn't fidget with his hands or feet. He doesn't sit with his knees or ankles crossed. He doesn't sit with his hand holding his chin. When sitting in inhabited areas he doesn't shake, tremble, quake, or get 12.1

581. At Thig 13.1:6.2 Ambapālī describes her eyes as *abhinīla*. While some Indians do indeed have blue eyes, this probably describes a black so deep it appears blue.

582. Cows have long and elegant eyelashes.

583. The *uṇhīsa* is depicted as a bulge on the Buddha's crown.

584. From here Uttara describes the Buddha's conduct, showing his keen observation of details.

585. *Adduva* means "knee" according to the commentary.

586. This is the so-called "elephant look" (DN 16:4.1.2).

587. As at Snp 3.1:6.4.

nervous, and so he is not nervous at all. When sitting in inhabited areas he still practices seclusion.

13.1 When receiving water for rinsing the bowl, he holds the bowl neither too straight nor too bent, neither too tight nor too loose.

14.1 He receives neither too little nor too much water. He rinses the bowl without making a sloshing noise, or spinning it around. He doesn't put the bowl on the ground to rinse his hands; his hands and bowl are rinsed at the same time. He doesn't throw the bowl rinsing water away too far or too near, or splash it about. When receiving rice, he holds the bowl neither too straight nor too bent, neither too close nor too loose. He receives neither too little nor too much rice. He eats sauce in a moderate proportion, and doesn't put too much sauce on his portions. He chews over each portion two or three times before swallowing. But no grain of rice enters his body unchewed, and none remain in his mouth. Only then does he raise another portion to his lips. He eats experiencing the taste, but without experiencing greed for the taste.

14.11 He eats food thinking of eight reasons: 'Not for fun, indulgence, adornment, or decoration, but only to sustain this body, to avoid harm, and to support spiritual practice. In this way, I shall put an end to old discomfort and not give rise to new discomfort, and I will have the means to keep going, blamelessness, and a comfortable abiding.'[588]

15.1 After eating, when receiving water for washing the bowl, he holds the bowl neither too straight nor too bent, neither too tight nor too loose. He receives neither too little nor too much water. He washes the bowl without making a sloshing noise, or spinning it around. He doesn't put the bowl on the ground to wash his hands; his hands and bowl are washed at the same time. He doesn't throw the bowl washing water away too far or too near, or splash it about.

588. This is the traditional reflection on the meal (MN 2:14.2).

After eating he doesn't put the bowl on the ground too far away or too close. He's not careless with his bowl, nor does he spend too much time on it. 16.1

After eating he sits a while in silence, but doesn't wait too long to give the verses of appreciation. After eating he expresses appreciation without criticizing the meal or expecting another one.[589] Invariably, he educates, encourages, fires up, and inspires that assembly with a Dhamma talk. Then he gets up from his seat and leaves. 17.1

He walks neither too fast nor too slow, without wanting to get out of there. 18.1

He wears his robe on his body neither too high nor too low, neither too clinging nor too loose. The wind doesn't blow his robe off his body. And dust and dirt don't stick to his body. 19.1

When he has gone to the monastery he sits on a seat spread out and washes his feet. But he doesn't waste time with pedicures. When he has washed his feet, he sits down cross-legged, sets his body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. He has no intention to hurt himself, hurt others, or hurt both. He only wishes for the welfare of himself, of others, of both, and of the whole world. In the monastery when he teaches Dhamma to an assembly, he neither flatters them nor rebukes them. Invariably, he educates, encourages, fires up, and inspires that assembly with a Dhamma talk. 20.1

The sound of his voice has eight qualities: it is clear, comprehensible, charming, audible, lucid, undistorted, deep, and resonant. He makes sure his voice is intelligible as far as the assembly goes, but the sound doesn't extend outside the assembly. And when they've been inspired with a Dhamma talk by the worthy Gotama they get 21.3

589. This is the *anumodanā* recited for the meal offering. Examples are found at DN 16:1.31.1, Snp 3.7:34.3 = MN 92:25.6, SN 55.26:20.1, Kd 1:15.14.4, and Kd 1:1.5.1. | It is worth noting that no early *anomodanā* uses the imperative verb form *-tu* signifying giving a blessing (eg. *bhavatu sabbamaṅgalaṁ*, "may all blessings be"). They strictly use the indicative *-ti* to teach cause and effect: if you do this, that happens.

up from their seats and leave looking back at him alone, and not forgetting their lesson.

22.1 I have seen the worthy Gotama walking and standing; entering inhabited areas, and sitting and eating there; sitting silently after eating, and expressing appreciation; going to the monastery, sitting silently there, and teaching Dhamma to an assembly there. Such is the worthy Gotama; such he is and more than that."

23.1 When he had spoken, the brahmin Brahmāyu rose from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and uttered this aphorism three times:

23.2 "Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

23.3 Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

23.4 Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

23.5 Hopefully, some time or other I'll get to meet him, and we can have a discussion."

24.1 And then the Buddha, traveling stage by stage in the Videhan lands, arrived at Mithilā, where he stayed in the Maghadeva Mango Grove.[590]

24.3 The brahmins and householders of Mithilā heard: "It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Mithilā, where he is staying in the Maghadeva Mango Grove. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful

590. The story of Maghadeva is told in MN 83.

and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. It's good to see such perfected ones."

Then the brahmins and householders of Mithilā went up to the Buddha. Before sitting down to one side, some bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their cupped palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. 25.1

The brahmin Brahmāyu also heard that the Buddha had arrived. So he went to the Maghadeva Mango Grove together with several disciples. 26.1

Not far from the grove he thought, "It wouldn't be appropriate for me to go to see the ascetic Gotama without letting him know beforehand."[591] 26.3

So he addressed one of his young students: "Here, young student, go to the ascetic Gotama and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then say: 'Worthy Gotama, the brahmin Brahmāyu is old, elderly, and senior, advanced in years, having reached the final stage of life; he is a hundred and twenty years old. He has mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies and ritual performance, their phonology and word classification, and the testaments as fifth. He knows them word-by-word, and their grammar. He is well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. Of all the brahmins and householders residing in Mithilā, Brahmāyu is said to be the foremost in wealth, hymns, lifespan, and fame. He wants to see the worthy Gotama.'" 26.5

"Yes, worthy sir," that young student replied. He did as he was asked, and the Buddha said, "Please, student, let Brahmāyu come at his convience." 26.17

The young student went back to Brahmāyu and said to him, "Your request for an audience with the ascetic Gotama has been granted. Please go at your convenience." 27.1

591. This shows his deep respect and politeness.

28.1 Then the brahmin Brahmāyu went up to the Buddha. The assembly saw him coming off in the distance, and made way for him, as he was well-known and famous.

28.4 Brahmāyu said to that retinue, "Enough, gentlemen. Please sit on your own seats. I shall sit here by the ascetic Gotama."

29.1 Then the brahmin Brahmāyu went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and scrutinized the Buddha's body for the thirty-two marks of a great man. He saw all of them except two, which he had doubts about: whether the private parts are sheathed in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue. Then Brahmāyu addressed the Buddha in verse:

29.8 "I have learned of the thirty-two
marks of a great man.
There are two that I don't see
on the body of the worthy Gotama.

29.12 Are the private parts sheathed in a foreskin,
O supreme man?
Though called by a word of the feminine gender,[592]
perhaps your tongue is a manly one?[593]

29.16 Perhaps your tongue is large,
as we have been informed.
Please stick it out in its full extent,
and so, O seer, dispel my doubt.

29.20 For my welfare and benefit in this life,
and happiness in lives to come.
And I ask you to grant the opportunity
to ask whatever I desire."

592. "Tongue" in Pali is the feminine *jivhā*.
593. Read *narassikā*.

Then it occurred to the Buddha, "Brahmāyu sees all the marks except two, which he has doubts about: whether the private parts are sheathed in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue." 30.1

So the Buddha used his psychic power to will that Brahmāyu would see his private parts sheathed in a foreskin. And he stuck out his tongue and stroked back and forth on his ear holes and nostrils, and covered his entire forehead with his tongue. 30.5

Then the Buddha replied to Brahmāyu in verse: 30.7

"The thirty-two marks of a great man 31.1
that you have learned
are all found on my body:
so do not doubt, brahmin.

I have known what should be known,[594] 31.5
and developed what should be developed,
and given up what should be given up:
and so, brahmin, I am a Buddha.

For your welfare and benefit in this life, 31.9
and happiness in lives to come:
I grant you the opportunity
to ask whatever you desire."

Then Brahmāyu thought: 32.1

"My request has been granted. Should I ask him about what is beneficial in this life or the next?" Then he thought, "I'm well versed in the benefits that apply to this life, and others ask me about this. Why don't I ask the ascetic Gotama about the benefit that specifically applies to lives to come?" 32.2

So Brahmāyu addressed the Buddha in verse: 32.9

594. This four-line verse encompasses the four noble truths with their duties: suffering is to be known; the origin of suffering is to be given up; the path is to be developed. The third noble truth, the witnessing of Nibbāna, is implied in the final line.

32.10 "How do you become a brahmin?[595]
And how do you become a knowledge master?
How a master of the three knowledges?
And how is one called a scholar?

32.14 How do you become a perfected one?
And how a consummate one?
How do you become a sage?
And how is one declared to be awakened?"

33.1 Then the Buddha replied to Brahmāyu in verse:

33.2 "One who knows their past lives,
sees heaven and places of loss,
and has attained the end of rebirth:
such a sage has perfect insight.

33.6 They know their mind is pure,
completely freed from greed;
they've given up birth and death,
and have completed the spiritual journey.
Gone beyond all things,
such a one is declared to be awakened."

34.1 When he said this, Brahmāyu got up from his seat and arranged his robe over one shoulder. He bowed with his head to the Buddha's feet, caressing them and covering them with kisses, and pronounced his name: "I am the brahmin Brahmāyu, worthy Gotama! I am the brahmin Brahmāyu!"

595. For some reason, the Buddha does not actually answer these questions, except the final two on the sage and the awakened one. Most of the others are technical terms in Brahmanism, and they are elsewhere defined by the Buddha in his own terms (eg. MN 39:23.1ff.). The Chinese parallels at MA 161 and T 76 have fewer items than the Pali, but do a better job of matching the answers to the questions.

Then that assembly, their minds full of wonder and amazement, thought, "Oh lord, how incredible, how amazing, that Brahmāyu, who is so well-known and famous, should show the Buddha such utmost deference." Then the Buddha said to Brahmāyu, "Enough, brahmin. Get up, and sit in your own seat, since your mind has such confidence in me." So Brahmāyu got up and sat in his own seat. 35.1

Then the Buddha taught him step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He revealed the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of renunciation. And when the Buddha knew that Brahmāyu's mind was ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, elated, and confident he revealed the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in the brahmin Brahmāyu: "Everything that is liable to arise is liable to cease." 36.1

Then Brahmāyu saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. He went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instructions. He said to the Buddha: 36.9

"Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life. Would you and the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me?" The Buddha consented with silence. Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Brahmāyu rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. 37.1

And when the night had passed Brahmāyu had delicious fresh and cooked foods prepared in his own home. Then he had the Buddha 38.1

informed of the time, saying, "It's time, worthy Gotama, the meal is ready."

38.3 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of the brahmin Brahmāyu, where he sat down on the seat spread out together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. For seven days, Brahmāyu served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods.

39.1 When the seven days had passed, the Buddha left to wander in the Videhan lands. Not long after the Buddha left, Brahmāyu passed away.

39.3 Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, Brahmāyu has passed away. Where has he been reborn in his next life?"

39.6 "Mendicants, the brahmin Brahmāyu was astute. He practiced in line with the teaching, and did not trouble me about the teachings. With the ending of the five lower fetters, he's been reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world."

39.8 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 92

With Sela

Selasutta

So I have heard.[596] At one time the Buddha was wandering 1.1
together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants in the land of the Aṅguttarāpans when he arrived at a town of theirs named Āpaṇa.

The matted-hair ascetic Keṇiya heard: "It seems the ascetic Go- 2.1
tama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Āpaṇa, together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He proclaims a teaching that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. It's good to see such perfected ones."

So Keṇiya approached the Buddha and exchanged greetings with 3.1
him.[597] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk.

596. This entire sutta is repeated at Snp 3.7.

597. Keṇiya features also in the Vinaya, where at this point he offered the Buddha and the Saṅgha a drink in the evening, reasoning that the Brahmanical sages of the past did likewise (Kd 6:35.1.2). As a result, the Buddha allowed fruit juice and other drinks in the evening.

3.4 Then he said to the Buddha, "Would Worthy Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me?"

3.6 When he said this, the Buddha said to him, "The Saṅgha is large, Keṇiya; there are 1,250 mendicants. And you are devoted to the brahmins."

3.8 For a second time, Keṇiya asked the Buddha to accept a meal offering. "Never mind that the Saṅgha is large, with 1,250 mendicants, and that I am devoted to the brahmins. Would Worthy Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me?" And for a second time, the Buddha gave the same reply. For a third time, Keṇiya asked the Buddha to accept a meal offering. "Never mind that the Saṅgha is large, with 1,250 mendicants, and that I am devoted to the brahmins. Would Worthy Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me?" The Buddha consented with silence.

4.1 Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, Keṇiya rose from his seat and went to his own hermitage. There he addressed his friends and colleagues, relatives and kin, "My friends and colleagues, relatives and kin: please listen! The ascetic Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha has been invited by me for tomorrow's meal. Please help me out with the manual preparations."[598]

4.5 "Yes, worthy sir," they replied. Some dug ovens, some chopped wood, some washed dishes, some set up a water jar, and some spread out seats. Meanwhile, Keṇiya set up the pavilion himself.

5.1 Now at that time the brahmin Sela was residing in Āpaṇa. He had mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies and ritual performance, their phonology and word classification, and the testaments as fifth. He knew them word-by-word, and their grammar. He was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. And he was teaching three hundred young students to recite the hymns.

598. "Manual preparations" is *kāyaveyyāvaṭikaṁ*. Ten kinds of service are enumerated in the Jain Tattvārthasūtra 9.24.

And at that time Keṇiya was devoted to Sela. Then Sela, while 6.1
going for a walk escorted by the three hundred young students, approached Keṇiya's hermitage. He saw the preparations going on, and said to Keṇiya, "Worthy Keṇiya, is your son or daughter being married? Or are you setting up a big sacrifice? Or has King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha been invited for tomorrow's meal?"[599]

"There is no marriage, Worthy Sela, and the king is not coming. 8.1
Rather, I am setting up a big sacrifice. The ascetic Gotama has arrived at Āpaṇa, together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has been invited by me for tomorrow's meal together with the mendicant Saṅgha."

"Did you say 'the awakened one'?"[600] 9.1

"I said 'the awakened one.'" 9.2

"Did you say 'the awakened one'?" 9.3

"I said 'the awakened one.'" 9.4

Then Sela thought: "It's hard to even find the word 'awakened one' 10.1
in the world. The thirty-two marks of a great man have been handed down in our hymns. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the householder, and the commander as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay

599. Aṅga was subject to Magadha at that time. | This passage is partially echoed in the account of Anāthapiṇḍika's conversion (Kd 16:4.1.10).

600. Anāthapiṇḍika responded in the same way when hearing of the Buddha (Kd 16:4.2.10). Also compare Bāvari's elation at Snp 5.1:19.1.

life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who casts off the veil from the world."

11.1 He said, "But Keṇiya, where is the Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?"

11.2 When he said this, Keṇiya pointed with his right arm and said, "There, worthy Sela, at that line of blue forest."

12.1 Then Sela, together with his young students, approached the Buddha. He said to his young students, "Come quietly, gentlemen, tread gently. For the Buddhas are intimidating, like a lion living alone.[601] When I'm consulting with the ascetic Gotama, don't interrupt. Wait until I've finished speaking."

13.1 Then Sela went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and scrutinized the Buddha's body for the thirty-two marks of a great man.

13.4 He saw all of them except two, which he had doubts about: whether the private parts were sheathed in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue.

13.7 Then it occurred to the Buddha, "Sela sees all the marks except two, which he has doubts about: whether the private parts are sheathed in a foreskin, and the largeness of the tongue."

14.1 The Buddha used his psychic power to will that Sela would see his private parts sheathed in a foreskin. And he stuck out his tongue and stroked back and forth on his ear holes and nostrils, and covered his entire forehead with his tongue.

15.1 Then Sela thought, "The ascetic Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks completely, lacking none. But I don't know whether or not he is an awakened one.[602] I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the tutors of tutors, said, 'Those who are perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas reveal themselves

601. *Durāsada* ("intimidating") is also at AN 4.42:4.1, which shows that the sense is that they are hard to defeat in debate.

602. As his verses make clear, Sela has not ruled out the possibility that Gotama's destiny is to become a wheel-turning monarch rather than a Buddha.

when praised.'[603] Why don't I extoll him in his presence with fitting verses?"

Then Sela extolled the Buddha in his presence with fitting verses: 15.7

"O Blessed One, your body's perfect,[604] 16.1
you're radiant, handsome, lovely to behold;
golden colored,
with teeth so white; you're strong.

The characteristics 16.5
of a handsome man,
the marks of a great man,
are all found on your body.

Your eyes are clear, your face is fair, 16.9
you're formidable, upright, majestic.
In the midst of the Saṅgha of ascetics,
you shine like the sun.

You're a mendicant fine to see, 16.13
with skin that shines like lustrous gold.
But with such excellent appearance,
what do you want with the ascetic life?

You're fit to be a king, 16.17
a wheel-turning monarch, chief of charioteers,
victorious in the four quarters,
lord of the Black Plum Tree Land.

Aristocrats, nobles, and kings 16.21
ought follow your rule.
Gotama, may you reign
as king of kings, lord of mankind!"

603. This idea is not found elsewhere in the Pali.
604. These are also found in Sela's verses at Thag 16.6.

17.1 "I am a king, Sela,
the supreme king of the teaching.
By the teaching I roll forth the wheel
which cannot be rolled back."[605]

18.1 "You claim to be awakened,
the supreme king of the teaching.
'I roll forth the teaching':
so you say, Gotama.

18.5 Then who is your general,[606]
the disciple who follows the Teacher's way?
Who keeps rolling the wheel
of the teaching you rolled forth?"

19.1 "By me the wheel was rolled forth,"
said the Buddha,
"the supreme wheel of the teaching.
Sāriputta, taking after the Realized One,
keeps it rolling on.[607]

19.6 I have known what should be known,[608]
and developed what should be developed,
and given up what should be given up:
and so, brahmin, I am a Buddha.

19.10 Dispel your doubt in me—
make up your mind, brahmin!
The sight of a Buddha

605. This is of course a reference to the first sermon (SN 56.11).
606. The title "General of the Dhamma" belongs to Sāriputta (Ud 2.8:16.2, Thag 18.1:33.1).
607. *Anujāta* is said at Iti 74:4.1 to be a child who "takes after" the good qualities of their parents.
608. As at MN 91:31.5.

is hard to find again.[609]

I am a Buddha, brahmin, 19.14
the supreme surgeon,
one of those whose appearance in the world
is hard to find again.

A manifestation of divinity, unequaled, 19.18
crusher of Māra's army;
having subdued all my opponents,
I rejoice, fearing nothing from any quarter."

"Pay heed, sirs, to what 20.1
is spoken by the Clear-eyed One.
The surgeon, the great hero,
roars like a lion in the jungle.

A manifestation of divinity, unequaled, 20.5
crusher of Māra's army;
who would not be inspired by him,
even one born in a dark class?[610]

Those who wish may follow me; 20.9
those who don't may go.
Right here, I'll go forth in his presence,
the one of such outstanding wisdom."

"Sir, if you endorse 21.1
the teaching of the Buddha,
we'll also go forth in his presence,
the one of such outstanding wisdom."

609. *Abhiṇhaso* means "repeatedly". Here the force of the saying is, I think, "It is hard enough to encounter a Buddha even once, let alone repeatedly."
610. The "dark class" refers to those born in an unfortunate state (AN 6.57:11.1). Sela is saying that the Buddha's path is for everyone, not just the fortunate.

22.1 "These three hundred brahmins
with cupped palms held up, ask:
'May we lead the spiritual life
in your presence, Blessed One?'"

23.1 "The spiritual life is well explained,"
said the Buddha,
"apparent in the present life, immediately effective.
Here the going forth isn't in vain
for one who trains with diligence."

24.1 And the brahmin Sela together with his assembly received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence.

25.1 And when the night had passed Keṇiya had delicious fresh and cooked foods prepared in his own hermitage. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying, "It's time, worthy Gotama, the meal is ready."

25.3 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Keṇiya's hermitage, where he sat down on the seat spread out together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Then Keṇiya served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Keṇiya took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha expressed his appreciation with these verses:

26.1 "The foremost of sacrifices
is the offering to the sacred flame;[611]

611. *Yaññā* is a truncated genitive plural ("of sacrifices"). | *Mukha* means originally "mouth", hence "opening", "entrance"; but also "face", hence "front", "foremost". The fire is the foremost sacrifice, but fire is also a "mouth", since "however much one may put into a fire, it burns it all up all" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.14.8). This sense of "consume" or "subsume" is alive in these verses as well. For example, the Sāvitrī "subsumes" other hymns, for merely one line is equivalent to all three Vedas (5.14.2).

the Sāvitrī is the foremost of prayer;[612]
of humans, the king is the foremost;
the ocean's the foremost of rivers;

the foremost of stars is the moon; 26.5
the sun is the foremost of blazes;
for those who sacrifice seeking merit,
the Saṅgha is the foremost."

When the Buddha had expressed his appreciation to Keṇiya the 26.9
matted-hair ascetic with these verses, he rose from his seat and left.

Then Venerable Sela and his assembly, living alone, withdrawn, 27.1
diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. They lived having achieved with their own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

They understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has 27.2
been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Sela together with his assembly became perfected.

Then Sela with his assembly went to the Buddha. He arranged his 28.1
robe over one shoulder, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha, and said:

"This is the eighth day since 28.2
we went for refuge, O Clear-eyed One.

612. The Sāvitrī (or Gāyatrī) is a famous verse recited daily by brahmin priests at dawn: "Might we make our own that desirable effulgence of god Savitar, who will rouse forth our insights" (Rig Veda 3.62.10, Jamison/Brereton). It was the "head" of metres (*śiro gāyatryaḥ*, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 8.6.2.3, 8.6.2.6), and was "praised as the foremost of recitations" (*gāyatrāṇy uktha mukhanai śaṁsanti*, Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa 17.7.1). It was the first verse taught a new initiate (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5.4.13). | *Chandas* can be either "meter" or a metrical song of praise, especially a Vedic hymn. The Sāvitrī is a Vedic text, not a meter, so the latter meaning must apply here. Its root is "desire", retaining the sense of "prayer" as a song of praise and supplication.

In these seven days, Blessed One,
we've become tamed in your teaching.

28.6 You are the Buddha, you are the Teacher,[613]
you are the sage who has overcome Māra;
you have cut off the underlying tendencies,
you've crossed over, and you bring humanity across.

28.10 You have transcended attachments,
your defilements are shattered;
like a lion free of grasping,
with fear and dread given up.

28.14 These three hundred mendicants
stand with cupped palms raised.
Stretch out your feet, great hero:
let these giants bow to the Teacher."

613. This verse and the next are also at Snp 3.6:49.1.

MN 93

With Assalāyana

Assalāyanasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[614] At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time around five hundred brahmins from abroad 2.1
were residing in Sāvatthī on some business.[615] Then those brahmins thought, "This ascetic Gotama advocates purification for all four classes. Who is capable of debating with him about this?"

Now at that time the student Assalāyana was residing in Sāvatthī. 3.1
He was young, tonsured, and sixteen years old. He had mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies and ritual performance, their phonology and word classification, and the testaments as fifth. He knew them word-by-word, and their grammar. He was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man.[616]

614. This discourse records how the brahmin student Assalāyana took on the Buddha on the question of the four classes, an attempt that Assalāyana knew was doomed from the start. Like similar contests such as the Ambaṭṭhasutta (DN 3), it is rich in historical connections.

615. Similar gatherings were noted at Campā (DN 4:4.1) and Opāsāda (MN 95:7.1).

616. While this description is similar to that of brahmin students such as Ambaṭṭha (DN 3:1.3.1), it is only here and at MN 95:11.2 that we find the additional details that they are tonsured and sixteen years of age. | "Tonsured" (*vuttasira*) literally means "circlehead" and it refers to the practice of shaving off all but a topknot (cf. *nivṛttacūḍaka* at Manusmṛti 5.67). According to Manusmṛti 2.65, the ceremony of tonsure (there called *keśānta*) is to be given to brahmins at sixteen, so this must be meant here. Contrast the usual brahmanical pejorative of *muṇḍaka* ("shaveling", MN 81:6.8).

3.2 Then those brahmins thought, "This Assalāyana is capable of debating with the ascetic Gotama about this."[617]

4.1 So they approached Assalāyana and said to him, "This ascetic Gotama advocates purification for all four classes. Please, worthy Assalāyana, debate with the ascetic Gotama about this."

4.4 When they said this, Assalāyana said to them, "They say that the ascetic Gotama is a speaker of principle. But speakers of principle are hard to debate. I'm not capable of debating with the ascetic Gotama about this."[618]

4.8 For a second time, those brahmins said to him "This ascetic Gotama advocates purification for all four classes. Please, worthy Assalāyana, debate with the ascetic Gotama about this. For you have lived as a wanderer."[619] And for a second time, Assalāyana refused.

4.16 For a third time, those brahmins said to him, "This ascetic Gotama advocates purification for all four classes. Please, worthy Assalāyana, debate with the ascetic Gotama about this. For you have lived as a wanderer. Don't admit defeat before going into battle!"

4.21 When they said this, Assalāyana said to them, "Clearly, worthy sirs, I'm not getting through to you when I say: 'They say that the ascetic Gotama is a speaker of principle. But speakers of principle are

617. Assalāyana may be identified with Kauśalyaṣcāśvalāyana ("Assalāyana of Kosala") who asked the sage Pippalāda about the nature of *prāṇa* (breath/life energy) in Praśna Upaniṣad 3. He was probably a grandson or further descendant (as indicated by the *naḍādi* formation of his name) of the Aśvala of Videha who debated Yājñavalkya (see note below).

618. This dialogue is modeled after the debate at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.1 between Yājñavalkya and Aśvala. Foreign brahmins had come to Videha from Kuru and Pañcāla, the older-established and more prestigious Brahmanical lands (cf. the "western brahmins" of SN 42.6:2.1 and AN 10.176:1.5). King Janaka offered an extravagant prize of a thousand cows with gold-tipped horns for the greatest brahmin among them. But none dared step forward, so Yājñavalkya started to drive the cows home. Aśvala, the priest in charge of litany (*hotṛ*) for Janaka, challenged him to a debate, but was ultimately silenced.

619. This agrees with Praśna Upaniṣad 1.2, where Assalāyana, along with his fellow-seekers, is asked to live another year in fervor, spiritual practice, and faith (*bhūya eva tapasā brahmacaryeṇa śraddhayā saṁvatsaraṁ*).

hard to debate. I'm not capable of debating with the ascetic Gotama about this.' Nevertheless, I shall go at your bidding."

Then Assalāyana together with a large group of brahmins went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha: 5.1

"Worthy Gotama, the brahmins say: 'Only brahmins are the best class; other classes are inferior.[620] Only brahmins are the light class; other classes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others. Only brahmins are the Divinity's bosom sons, born from his mouth, born of the Divinity, created by the Divinity, heirs of the Divinity.' What do you say about this?" 5.3

"But Assalāyana, brahmin women are seen menstruating, being pregnant, giving birth, and breastfeeding. Yet even though they're born from a brahmin womb they say: 'Only brahmins are the best class; other classes are inferior. Only brahmins are the light class; other classes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others. Only brahmins are the Divinity's bosom sons, born from his mouth, born of the Divinity, created by the Divinity, heirs of the Divinity.'" 5.9

"Even though you say this, still the brahmins maintain their belief." 6.1

"What do you think, Assalāyana? Have you heard that in Greece and Persia and other foreign lands there are only two classes, masters 6.4

620. This verse is also at DN 27:3.6 and MN 84:9.19.

and bonded servants; and that masters may become servants, and servants masters?"[621]

6.6 "Yes, I have heard that."

6.7 "Then what is the source of the brahmins' certainty and forcefulness in this matter that they make this claim?"

7.1 "Even though you say this, still the brahmins maintain their belief."

7.4 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose an aristocrat were to kill living creatures, steal, and commit sexual misconduct; to use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; and to be covetous, malicious, with wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they'd be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. Would this happen only to an aristocrat, and not to a brahmin? Or suppose a peasant, or a menial were to act in the same way. Would that result befall only a peasant or a menial, and not to a brahmin?"

7.8 "No, worthy Gotama. If they acted the same way, the same result would befall an aristocrat, a brahmin, a peasant, or a menial. For if any of the four classes were to kill living creatures, steal, and commit

621. "Greece" (*yona*, from "Ionia") and "Persia" (*kamboja*) are loose exonyms indicating the regions dominated by Greek and Iranian culture. | The Greeks and other foreigners are mentioned in Ashokan edicts, but this is the only reference to Greece in an early Buddhist text. The Sanskrit *yavana* appears shortly after the Buddha in Pāṇini 4.1.49. The Indic terms are derived from the Persian *yauna*, first attested in an inscription of Darius I (522–486 BCE), who conquered three Indian realms: *gandāra* (Gandhāra), *hindush* (Indus valley), and *thataguš* (Sattagydia, around modern Bannu in Pakistan). Soldiers from these realms served under Achaemenid kings from this time. Moreover, several Greek and Achaemenid coins dating back as far as Darius I have been found in the Kabul hoard as well as the Shaikhan Dheri hoard at the site of Puṣkalāvatī, capital of Gandhāra. | "Persia" is one of the sixteen great nations (AN 3.70:28.2). It was the home of horses, lying to the west of Gandhāra (Pakistan) in modern Afghanistan. This was the easternmost extent of Iranian culture, and the passage here shows how different it was considered compared to the other nations. At this date, I think *kamboja* meant not just the specific location in Afghanistan, but more generally the Iranian peoples west of Gandhāra, just as *yona* ("Ionian") is used for all people of Greek culture. | The perceived difference in slave culture mirrors the Greek ambassador Megasthenes who, writing over a century later, said there were no slaves in India.

sexual misconduct; to use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; and to be covetous, malicious, with wrong view, then, when their body breaks up, after death, they'd be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell."

"Then what is the source of the brahmins' certainty and forcefulness in this matter that they make this claim?" 7.14

"Even though you say this, still the brahmins maintain their belief." 8.1

"What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose a brahmin were to refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; from using speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; and from covetousness, malice, and wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they'd be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. Would this happen only to a brahmin, and not to an aristocrat, a peasant, or a menial?" 8.4

"No, worthy Gotama. If they acted the same way, the same result would befall an aristocrat, a brahmin, a peasant, or a menial. For if any of the four classes were to refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; from using speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; and from covetousness, malice, and wrong view, then, when their body breaks up, after death, they'd be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm." 8.6

"Then what is the source of the brahmins' certainty and forcefulness in this matter that they make this claim?" 8.12

"Even though you say this, still the brahmins maintain their belief." 9.1

"What do you think, Assalāyana? Is only a brahmin capable of developing a heart of love, free of enmity and ill will for this region, and not an aristocrat, peasant, or menial?"[622] 9.4

622. The next three examples are (1) meditating on love, (2) bathing, and (3) starting a fire. All of these reflect activities characteristic of brahmins: (1) the "divine meditations" (*brahmavihāra*) that originated as contemplation on the qualities of divinity, (2) ritual bathing to wash away sin, and (3) worship of Agni on the fire altar.

9.6 "No, worthy Gotama. Aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials can all do so. For all four classes are capable of developing a heart of love, free of enmity and ill will for this region."

9.12 "Then what is the source of the brahmins' certainty and forcefulness in this matter that they make this claim?"

10.1 "Even though you say this, still the brahmins maintain their belief."

10.4 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Is only a brahmin capable of taking some bathing cleanser, going to the river, and rinsing off dust and dirt, and not an aristocrat, peasant, or menial?"

10.6 "No, worthy Gotama. All four classes are capable of doing this."

10.11 "Then what is the source of the brahmins' certainty and forcefulness in this matter that they make this claim?"

11.1 "Even though you say this, still the brahmins maintain their belief."

11.4 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose an anointed aristocratic king were to gather a hundred people of various births and say to them:[623] 'Please worthy sirs, let anyone here who was born in a family of aristocrats, brahmins, or chieftains take a drill-stick made of teak, sal, *salaḷa*, sandalwood, or cherry wood, light a fire and produce heat.[624] And let anyone here who was born in a family of corpse-workers, hunters, bamboo-workers, chariot-makers, or scavengers take a drill-stick made from a mutt's drinking trough, a

623. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.5 relates how Purūravas, longing to be reunited with his queen, the nymph Urvaśī, was required by the Gandharvas to make a special fire. It must be generated by wood from a tree that grew from the ashes of celestial fire provided by themselves, the upper drill-stick of *aśvattha* (i.e. Bodhi tree) and the lower stick of *śamī*. In that legend, the essence of the fire is determined by its divine origin, against which the Buddha poses a naturalistic explanation.

624. This seems to be the only mention of the *padumaka* tree in Pali. It may be the Sanskrit *padmaka*, for which one possible identification is *Prunus cerasoides*, the wild Himalayan cherry. | Here we find both *sāka* and *sāla*, so I translate *sāka* as "teak", whereas at DN 3:1.15.10 I have sakhua, an alternate name for the sal tree. | For *salaḷa* see note on SN 52.8:1.1.

pig's trough, a dustbin, or castor-oil wood, light a fire and produce heat.'[625]

What do you think, Assalāyana? Would only the fire produced 11.8
by the high class people with good quality wood have flames, color, and radiance, and be usable as fire, and not the fire produced by the low class people with poor quality wood?"

"No, worthy Gotama. The fire produced by the high class people 11.11
with good quality wood would have flames, color, and radiance, and be usable as fire, and so would the fire produced by the low class people with poor quality wood. For all fire has flames, color, and radiance, and is usable as fire."[626]

"Then what is the source of the brahmins' certainty and forceful- 11.15
ness in this matter that they make this claim?"

"Even though you say this, still the brahmins maintain their belief." 12.1

"What do you think, Assalāyana?[627] Suppose an aristocrat boy 12.4
was to sleep with a brahmin girl, and they had a child.[628] Would that

625. *Caṇḍālas* ("corpse-workers") are frequently depicted as the lowest of untouchables as seen by Brahmins. However, the usual rendering of "outcast" is unsatisfactory, as all the groups here are defined positively by their occupation, and moreover some, such as the scavengers, would also have been untouchable. The Pali commentaries equate the *caṇḍāla* with the *chavaka* (or *chapaka*) of Bu Sk 69:1.12.1, a "corpse disposer" (*chavachaḍḍakacaṇḍālā*; see also *chavakacaṇḍālo* at Mil 5.4.7:2.4). They were known for their "bone-washing" ceremony (DN 1:1.13.2, AN 10.107:1.1). This agrees with Rāmāyana 1.58.10, which describes a *caṇḍāla* as dark-complexioned, dirty, with disheveled hair, his body smeared with graveyard ash. Mahāvaṁsa 10.91–94 tells how King Paṇḍukābhaya employed *caṇḍālas* for cleaning streets and toilets, bearing the dead, and watching over cemeteries, with their village adjoining the cemetery.

626. A similar argument is made regarding consciousness at MN 93:11.5.

627. The complex question of intercaste children is usually governed by the assumption that the father supplies the "seed" which the mother merely incubates. Kauṭilya, however, notes a variety of opinions on this question (Arthaśāstra 3.7.1–3). | Assalāyana's views do not agree with the more developed doctrine found in later texts.

628. Since the brahmins declared their own class the highest, such a union is considered to be *pratiloma* ("contrary to the natural order"). Arthaśāstra 3.7.28 says such a child is a *sūta*; Manusmṛti 10.11 agrees, adding that their livelihood is a charioteer (10.47).

child be called an aristocrat after the father or a brahmin after the mother?"

12.7 "They could be called either."

13.1 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose a brahmin boy was to sleep with an aristocrat girl, and they had a child.[629] Would that child be called an aristocrat after the mother or a brahmin after the father?"

13.4 "They could be called either."

14.1 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose a mare were to couple with a donkey, and she gave birth to a mule. Would that mule be called a horse after the mother or a donkey after the father?"

14.4 "It's a mule, as it is a crossbreed. I see the difference in this case, but not in the previous cases."

15.1 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose there were two young students who were brothers who had shared a womb. One was an educated reciter, while the other was not an educated reciter.[630] Who would the brahmins feed first at an offering of food for ancestors, an offering of a dish of milk-rice, a sacrifice, or a feast for guests?"

15.4 "They'd first feed the young student who was an educated reciter. For how could an offering to someone who is not an educated reciter be very fruitful?"

16.1 "What do you think, Assalāyana? Suppose there were two young students who were brothers who had shared a womb. One was an educated reciter, but was unethical, of bad character, while the other was not an educated reciter, but was ethical and of good character. Who would the brahmins feed first?"

16.4 "They'd first feed the young student who was not an educated reciter, but was ethical and of good character. For how could an

629. Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra 1.9.17 says that the child of a brahmin father and aristocrat mother is a brahmin. Manusmṛti 10.6 admits the same, though due to the "defect" of the mother they are considered "like" a brahmin.

630. "Shared a womb" is *sodariya*, the only occurrence of this term in early Pali. | This thought experiment anticipates the modern method of studying twins to eliminate variables in development.

offering to someone who is unethical and of bad character be very fruitful?"

"Firstly you relied on birth, Assalāyana, then you switched to education, then you switched to abstemious behavior.[631] Now you've come around to believing in purification for the four classes, just as I advocate." When he said this, Assalāyana sat silent, dismayed, shoulders drooping, downcast, depressed, with nothing to say. 17.1

Knowing this, the Buddha said to him: 18.1

"Once upon a time, Assalāyana, seven brahmin seers settled in leaf huts in a wilderness region. They had the following harmful misconception:[632] 'Only brahmins are the best class; other classes are inferior. Only brahmins are the light class; other classes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others.[633] Only brahmins are the Divinity's true-born sons, born from his mouth, born of the Divinity, created by the Divinity, heirs of the Divinity.' 18.2

631. Here *tape* ("fervent austerity") stands for ethical conduct, hence I translate "abstemious behavior". Some manuscripts omit it, but I think it is required by the sense.

632. The "seven brahmin seers" (Sanskrit *saptarṣi*, (eg. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.8.1.9, Atharva Veda 4.11.9c, Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā 13.26b) were renowned sages to whom the Vedic lineages (*gottā*) were attributed As the sutta's conclusion will show, they are introduced here to demonstrate that the fallacy of geneology has been there since the beginning. | A similar practice of living in wilderness is described at MN 25:9.5, SN 11.9, DN 23:21.3, DN 3:2.3.3, and DN 27:22.9. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.10.1–5 compares the forest contemplatives destined for the Brahmā realm with the ritualists who are reborn on the moon before returning to earth.

633. Mahābhārata 12.181.5 says that brahmins are the white class, aristocrats red, peasants yellow, and menials black.

18.6 The seer Devala the Dark heard about this.[634] So he did up his hair and beard, dressed in magenta robes, put on his lined sandals, grasped a golden staff, and appeared in the courtyard of the seven brahmin seers.[635] Then he wandered about the yard saying, 'Where, oh where have those brahmin seers gone? Where, oh where have those brahmin seers gone?'

18.14 Then those brahmin seers said, 'Who's this wandering about our courtyard like a village lout? Let's curse him!'

18.19 So they cursed Devala the Dark, 'Be ashes, lowlife![636] Be ashes, lowlife!' But the more the seers cursed him, the more attractive, good-looking, and lovely Devala the Dark became.[637]

18.23 Then those brahmin seers said, 'Our fervor is in vain! Our spiritual path is fruitless! For when we used to curse someone to become ashes, ashes they became. But the more we curse this one, the more attractive, good-looking, and lovely he becomes.'

18.29 'Worthy sirs, your fervor is not in vain; your spiritual path is not fruitless. Please let go of your malevolence toward me.'

18.31 'We let go of our malevolence toward you. But who are you, worthy sir?'

18.33 'Have you heard of the seer Devala the Dark?'

18.35 'Yes, worthy sir.'

634. Asita Devala is probably meant to be the legendary seer known as Asita or Devala son of Kāśyapa who composed Rig Veda 9.5–24, although they seem to share little but the name. He is an example of the "dark hermit" archetype, irrupting within Brahmanical traditions to subvert from within, relying on his mysterious power of otherness. See also Asita Kaṇhasiri (or Kāladevala, Snp 3.11:1.1), Kaṇha (DN 3:1.23.6), Kaṇhadīpāyana (Cp 31:1.2), and Sāma (Cp 33:1.1). Such encounters show how the contention between Vedic ritualism and native contemplatives challenged and elevated both traditions. In this way they invert the stereotype of Brahmanical colorism, paving the way for the ascension of the dark god Krishna.

635. His behavior is disrespectful, like that of Vepacitti, and unlike that of Sakka at SN 11.9. But the context is different, for there the seers were of good character and deserving of respect, whereas here they embrace wrong views.

636. See Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 6.6.3.10.

637. Compare SN 11.22:1.7.

'I am he, worthy sir.' Then they approached Devala and bowed to him. 18.36

Devala said to them, 'I heard that when the seven brahmin seers had settled in leaf huts in a wilderness region, they had the following harmful misconception:[638] "Only brahmins are the best class; other classes are inferior. Only brahmins are the light class; other classes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others. Only brahmins are the Divinity's bosom sons, born from his mouth, born of the Divinity, created by the Divinity, heirs of the Divinity."' 18.38

'That's right, worthy sir.' 18.44

'But do you know whether your birth mother only had relations with a brahmin and not with a non-brahmin?' 18.45

'We don't know that.' 18.47

'But do you know whether your birth mother's mothers back to the seventh generation only had relations with brahmins and not with non-brahmins?' 18.48

'We don't know that.' 18.50

'But do you know whether your birth father only had relations with a brahmin woman and not with a non-brahmin?' 18.51

'We don't know that.' 18.53

'But do you know whether your birth father's fathers back to the seventh generation only had relations with brahmins and not with non-brahmins?' 18.54

'We don't know that.' 18.56

'But do you know how an embryo is conceived?' 18.57

'We do know that, worthy sir. An embryo is conceived when these three things come together—the mother and father come together, 18.59

638. This passage accurately conveys that caste was not just criticized by Buddhism, it was actively contested within Brahmanical circles. As just one of many examples, Yudhiṣṭhira said, "It is not by reason of family or study or learning that one is of high caste, but because of behavior alone" (Mahābhārata 3.297.61).

the mother is in the fertile phase of her menstrual cycle, and the virile spirit is ready.'[639]

18.62 'But do you know for sure whether that virile spirit is an aristocrat, a brahmin, a peasant, or a menial?'[640]

18.64 'We don't know that.'

18.66 'In that case, worthy sir, don't you know what you are?'

18.68 'In that case, worthy sir, we don't know what we are.'

18.70 Given that even those seven brahmin seers could not prevail when pursued, pressed, and grilled by the seer Devala on their own geneal-

639. The *gandhabba* (normally "centaur", here "virile spirit") is, per the commentary, the being to be reborn. He represents the element of male sexuality in procreation. He is "father, begetter, kinsman", by whose knowledge one becomes the "father's father" (Arthavaveda 2.1.2–3). He is said to guard (Rig Veda 9.83.4) or steal (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.2.4) or actually be (Rig Veda 9.86.36) the vitalizing liquid Soma, who is extracted on an altar as semen is extracted in the vagina (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.3). He thus lies within the waters (Rig Veda 9.86.36, 10.10.4) or within the womb (Rig Veda 10.177.2). It seems that, since semen is "a man's essence" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.1, Aitareya Upaniṣad 2.1), the seed of past lovers—curses against whom are helpfully provided (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.9–12)—remains in the womb. This is why the *gandhabba* possesses women (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.7.1, 3.3.1) and, unless placated with proper worship, might become a "hairy one" who devours embryos (Artharva Veda 8.6.23, see 8.6.18–19). To ward against such risks, in the rites of marriage and procreation, the *gandharva* king Viśvāvasa, a playboy and deadbeat father, is asked to "rise up" out of the woman (Rig Veda 10.85.21–22, Atharva Veda 14.2.33–6, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.19) and find his pleasures with another, so that the husband may father the child. This contrasts with the Pali passage, where the *gandhabba* "is ready" for conception; in other words, a being is driven by their karma to be born there.

640. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.10.3–7 details the "path of the fathers" after death; they follow a winding path to the moon Soma, only to return as rain, grow as plants, be eaten, and ultimately be emitted as semen, thus determining the caste of the child. It seems from this passage, however, that this doctrine, convincing as it may seem, was not sufficient to allay male anxiety over paternity. Indeed, the very baroqueness of these conceptions show the doctrinal and ritual lengths required to fix paternity.

ogy,[641] how could you prevail now being grilled by me on your own genealogy when you and your denomination do not so much as pick up the last spoonful?"[642]

When he had spoken, Assalāyana said to him, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life." 19.1

641. The syntax of this passage mirrors AN 6.18:4.12 and Kd 16:6.4.1. In each case, *te hi nāma* introduces a passage referring to events of the past whose outcome is framed in future tense (from the past point of view).

642. *Puṇṇo dabbigāho* is a highly specific reference to a detail of the Sākamedha ritual that marks the beginning of winter. From the rice offering on the first day, a pot is set aside until the next morning, when the very last "full spoon" (*pūrṇā darvi*) is scraped up, with the invocation, "Full, O spoon, fly off, and fly back to us well filled!" (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.5.3.16–17, Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa 5.6.20; invocation found at Atharva Veda 3.10.7c, Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā 1.10.2, Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā 3.49a). This ensures that present prosperity will be renewed after the barren cold season (just as life is renewed after death, or as last season's grain is sown on the field). The implication is that present-day brahmins don't even fulfill the rites of continuity in their own tradition, so how can they assert the continuity of caste over generations? | *Yesaṁ* refers back to *te* of the previous portion, i.e. the seven brahmin seers, whose tradition modern brahmins are supposed to continue.

MN 94

With Ghoṭamukha

Ghoṭamukhasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[643] At one time Venerable Udena was staying near Varanasi in the Khemiya Mango Grove.[644]

2.1 Now at that time the brahmin Ghoṭamukha had arrived at Varanasi on some business.[645] Then as he was going for a walk he went to the Khemiya Mango Grove. At that time Venerable Udena was walking mindfully in the open air. Ghoṭamukha approached and exchanged greetings with him.

2.5 Walking alongside Udena, he said, "My ascetic, there is no such thing as a principled renunciate life;[646] that's what I think. Yet I have not seen honorable ones such as yourself, or a relevant teaching."

3.1 When he said this, Udena stepped down from the walking path, entered his dwelling, and sat down on the seat spread out.[647] Ghoṭamukha also stepped down from the walking path and entered the

643. As usual, the lack of mention of the Buddha at the start suggests that this sutta is set after his passing away, a detail confirmed at the end. This sutta attests to the continued influence of Buddhism among the wealthy and influential as they adapted to the new realities after the Buddha's passing.

644. Neither monk nor monastery are mentioned elsewhere in early texts.

645. This may be the Ghoṭamukha ("Beard-face") of Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra 5.5.11. On the question of when a courtier should know that his king is displeased with him, a series of expert opinions are cited, each one bewilderingly cryptic. Ghoṭamukha says such a king is like a "wet cloth". The key to these clues is provided in a particular story, which is deliberately unmentioned, presumably because of the delicacy of the subject.

646. *Ambho samaṇa* ("my ascetic") is a unique form of address.

647. Udena takes care to ensure the setting is appropriate for a serious discussion.

dwelling, where he stood to one side. Udena said to him, "There are seats, brahmin. Please sit if you wish."

"I was just waiting for you to sit down. For how on earth could one such as I presume to sit first without being invited?" 3.6

Then he took a low seat and sat to one side, where he said, "My ascetic, there is no such thing as a principled renunciate life; that's what I think. Yet I have not seen worthy ones such as yourself, or a relevant teaching." 4.1

"Brahmin, we can discuss this. But only if you grant what should be granted, and reject what should be rejected. And if you ask me the meaning of anything you don't understand, saying:[648] 'Sir, why is this? What does that mean?'" 4.6

"Let us discuss this. I will do as you say." 4.8

"Brahmin, these four individuals are found in the world. What four? 5.1

1. One individual mortifies themselves, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves.
2. One individual mortifies others, committed to the practice of mortifying others.
3. One individual mortifies themselves and others, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others.
4. One individual doesn't mortify either themselves or others, committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others. They live without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine.

Which one of these four individuals do you like the sound of?" 5.8

648. Ghoṭamukha was unfamiliar with the forms of address, admits he has never seen a mendicant, talks to Udena while he is walking meditation, and does not know when he should sit down. Udena, noticing his awkwardness, makes sure that Ghoṭamukha understands that he can engage in a conversation without impropriety.

5.9 "Worthy Udena, I don't like the sound of the first three individuals. I only like the sound of the last individual, who doesn't mortify either themselves or others."

6.1 "But why don't you like the sound of those three individuals?"

6.2 "Worthy Udena, the individual who mortifies themselves does so even though they want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I don't like the sound of that individual. The individual who mortifies others does so even though others want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I don't like the sound of that individual. The individual who mortifies themselves and others does so even though both themselves and others want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I don't like the sound of that individual. The individual who doesn't mortify either themselves or others—living without wishes, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine—does not torment themselves or others, both of whom want to be happy and recoil from pain. That's why I like the sound of that individual."

7.1 "There are, brahmin, these two groups of people. What two? There's one group of people who, being obsessed with jeweled earrings, seeks partners and children, male and female bondservants, fields and lands, and gold and currency.

7.4 And there's another group of people who, not being obsessed with jeweled earrings, has given up partner and children, male and female bondservants, fields and lands, and gold and currency, and goes forth from the lay life to homelessness.

7.5 Now, brahmin, that individual who doesn't mortify either themselves or others—in which of these two groups of people do you usually find such an individual?"

7.9 "I usually find such an individual in the group that has gone forth from the lay life to homelessness."

8.1 "Just now I understood you to say: 'My ascetic, there is no such thing as a principled renunciate life; that's what I think. Yet I have not seen honorable ones such as yourself, or a relevant teaching.'"

"Well, I obviously had my reasons for saying that, worthy Udena.[649] But there is such a thing as a principled renunciate life. That's what I think, and that's how you should remember me. Now, these four individuals that you've spoken of in a brief summary: please explain them to me in detail, out of sympathy." 8.5

"Well then, brahmin, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 9.1

"Yes, worthy sir," replied Ghoṭamukha. Udena said this: 9.2

"What individual mortifies themselves, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves?[650] It's when an individual goes naked, ignoring conventions. They lick their hands, and don't come or wait when called. They don't consent to food brought to them, or food prepared on their behalf, or an invitation for a meal. They don't receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or who lives with a man; or where there's a hound waiting or flies buzzing. They accept no fish or meat or beer or wine, and drink no fermented gruel. They go to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. They feed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers a day. They eat once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. They live committed to the practice of eating food at set intervals. They eat herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice bran, scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. They survive on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit. They wear robes of sunn hemp, mixed hemp, corpse-wrapping cloth, rags, lodh tree bark, antelope hide (whole or in strips), kusa grass, bark, wood-chips, human hair, horse-tail hair, or owls' wings. They tear out their hair and beard, committed to this practice. They constantly stand, turning down seats. They squat, committed to the 10.1

649. The commentary glosses *sānuggahā* with *sakāraṇā*, "with reason".

650. For details, see notes at MN 12:45.1, MN 27:11.1, and MN 51:8.1.

endeavor of squatting. They lie on a mat of thorns, making a mat of thorns their bed. They're devoted to ritual bathing three times a day, including at dusk. And so they live committed to practicing these various ways of mortifying and tormenting the body. This is called an individual who mortifies themselves, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves.

11.1 And what individual mortifies others, committed to the practice of mortifying others? It's when an individual is a slaughterer of sheep, pigs, poultry, or deer, a hunter or fisher, a bandit, an executioner, a butcher of cattle, a jailer, or has some other cruel livelihood. This is called an individual who mortifies others, being committed to the practice of mortifying others.

12.1 And what individual mortifies themselves and others, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others? It's when an individual is an anointed aristocratic king or a well-to-do brahmin. He has a new ceremonial hall built to the east of the citadel. He shaves off his hair and beard, dresses in a rough antelope hide, and smears his body with ghee and oil. Scratching his back with antlers, he enters the hall with his chief queen and the brahmin high priest. There he lies on the bare ground strewn with grass. The king feeds on the milk from one teat of a cow that has a calf of the same color. The chief queen feeds on the milk from the second teat. The brahmin high priest feeds on the milk from the third teat. The milk from the fourth teat is served to the sacred flame. The calf feeds on the leftovers. He says: 'Slaughter this many bulls, bullocks, heifers, goats, rams, and horses for the sacrifice! Fell this many trees and reap this much grass for the sacrificial equipment!' His bondservants, servants, and workers do their jobs under threat of punishment and danger, weeping with tearful faces. This is called an individual who mortifies themselves and others, being committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others.

13.1 And what individual doesn't mortify either themselves or others, committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others, liv-

ing without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine?

14.1 It's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure.

15.1 A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or someone reborn in a good family. They gain faith in the Realized One, and reflect: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Once they've gone forth, they take up the training and livelihood of the mendicants. They give up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings.

16.1 They give up stealing. They take only what's given, and expect only what's given. They keep themselves clean by not thieving.

16.2 They give up unchastity. They are chaste, set apart, refraining from the vulgar act of sex.

16.3 They give up lying. They speak the truth and stick to the truth. They're honest and dependable, and don't trick the world with their words.

16.4 They give up backbiting. They don't repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead,

they reconcile those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony.

16.5 They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people.

16.6 They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.

16.7 They refrain from injuring plants and seeds. They eat in one part of the day, abstaining from eating at night and food at the wrong time. They refrain from seeing shows of dancing, singing, and music. They refrain from attiring and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. They refrain from high and luxurious beds. They refrain from receiving gold and currency, raw grains, raw meat, women and girls, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants, cows, horses, and mares, and fields and land. They refrain from running errands and messages; buying and selling; falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence.

17.1 They're content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. They're like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves.

18.1 When they see a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a

sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know an idea with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. When they have this noble sense restraint, they experience an unsullied bliss inside themselves.

19.1 They act with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.

20.1 When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, this noble contentment, this noble sense restraint, and this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, they frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw.

21.1 After the meal, they return from almsround, sit down cross-legged, set their body straight, and bring mindfulness to the present. Giving up covetousness for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

22.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.

23.1 As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.

24.1 And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.'

25.1 With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

26.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. They remember: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 27.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 28.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'.

Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the de- 29.1
filements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

29.3 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

30.1 This is called an individual who neither mortifies themselves or others, being committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others. They live without wishes in this very life, quenched, cooled, experiencing bliss, with self become divine."

31.1 When he had spoken, Ghoṭamukha said to him, "Excellent, worthy Udena! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, the worthy Udena has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Udena, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Udena remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

32.1 "Brahmin, don't go for refuge to me.[651] You should go for refuge to that same Blessed One to whom I have gone for refuge."

32.3 "But worthy Udena, where is the Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?"

32.4 "Brahmin, the Buddha has already become fully quenched."

32.5 "Worthy Udena, if I heard that the worthy Gotama was within ten leagues, or twenty, or even up to a hundred leagues away, I'd go a hundred leagues to see him.

32.11 But since the worthy Gotama has become fully quenched, I go for refuge to that worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Udena remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life. Worthy Udena, the king of Aṅga gives me a regular daily allowance. I will give you one portion of that."[652]

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651. As at MN 84:10.6.

652. The mention of the king of Aṅga is unique. Aṅga had been conquered by Bimbisāra long ago and became part of Magadha. There is a faint memory of a time when Rājagaha was a city of Aṅga (Ja 546:36.2), but Aṅga's glory days were long past. Perhaps "king of Aṅga" was a title of the king of Magadha, or

"But brahmin, what does the king of Aṅga give you as a regular daily allowance?" 33.2

"Five hundred dollars."[653] 33.3

"It's not proper for us to receive gold and currency." 33.4

"If that's not proper, I will have a dwelling built for the worthy Udena."[654] 33.5

"If you want to build me a dwelling, then build an assembly hall for the Saṅgha at Pāṭaliputta."[655] 33.6

"Now I'm even more delighted and satisfied with the worthy Udena, since he encourages me to give to the Saṅgha. So with this allowance and another one I will have an assembly hall built for the Saṅgha at Pāṭaliputta." 33.7

And so he had that hall built. And these days it's called the "Ghoṭamukhī". 33.9

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else of a vassal ruler. | *Niccabhikkhā* at Ja 398:4.1 refers to the daily offering of food to a *yakkha*, which must be the early meaning. But here and at SN 3.13:4.4 it refers to money.

653. A *kahāpaṇa* is in the ballpark of a US dollar. At AN 10.46 the wages for an honest day's work start at half a *kahāpaṇa*, which compares with the poverty line in modern India of 38 rupees/day or 48 US cents. The upper level income is a thousand *kahāpaṇas* per day, so Ghoṭamukha's allowance made him a rich man.

654. A *vihāra* was a "dwelling" in a monastery, not, as in later usage, an entire monastery.

655. This reflects the central role of the new capital of Pāṭaliputta after the Buddha died (DN 16:1.28.7). Compare the similar offering at MN 52:16.1.

MN 95

With Caṅkī

Caṅkīsutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Kosalan brahmins named Opāsāda.[656] He stayed in the Godswood of sal trees to the north of Opāsāda.[657]

2.1 Now at that time the brahmin Caṅkī was living in Opāsāda. It was a crown property given by King Pasenadi of Kosala, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal park endowed to a brahmin.[658]

3.1 The brahmins and householders of Opāsāda heard: "It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Opāsāda together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. He is staying in the Godswood to the north. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world,

656. Opāsāda does not appear anywhere else. We later hear of Caṅkī's longhouse (*pāsāda*), a luxurious residence to the north of the town on the way to the Godswood. Perhaps, then, Opāsāda means "below the mansion".

657. A grove in which offerings were made to the gods.

658. Caṅkī is regularly mentioned along with other senior brahmins Tārukkha, Pokkharasāti, Jānussoṇi, and Todeyya (DN 13:2.2, MN 98:2.2, MN 99:13.5, Snp 3.9:1.4). His name is obscure; spelled *caṅgī* in Sanskrit, it is perhaps related to the *gatāgate caṅgimā* of Mahā-subhāṣita-Saṁgraha 7235-1, where it refers to the sensual walk of a young woman; dictionaries record the sense "beautiful" for Kannada *caṁgi* and Sanskrit *caṅgiman*. | "Royal park" is *rājadāya* (cp. *migadāya*, "deer park"). | A *brahmadeyya* is a gift of land by a king to a brahmin, which was an outstanding feature of Indian feudalism. Similar grants are mentioned in the Dīgha Nikāya at DN 3:1.2.1, DN 5:1.4, DN 12:1.3, and DN 23:1.4.

supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. It's good to see such perfected ones."

Then, exiting Opāsāda, they formed into companies and headed 4.1
north to the Godswood.

Now at that time the brahmin Caṅkī had retired to the upper floor 5.1
of his stilt longhouse for his midday nap.[659] He saw the brahmins and householders heading for the Godswood, and addressed his butler,[660] "My butler, why are the brahmins and householders heading north for the Godswood?"

"The ascetic Gotama has arrived at Opāsāda together with a large 6.1
Saṅgha of mendicants. He is staying in the Godswood to the north. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' They're going to see that worthy Gotama."

"Well then, go to the brahmins and householders and say to them: 6.5
'Sirs, the brahmin Caṅkī asks you to wait, as he will also go to see the ascetic Gotama.'"

"Yes, worthy sir," replied the butler, and did as he was asked. 6.8

Now at that time around five hundred brahmins from abroad were 7.1
residing in Opāsāda on some business. They heard that the brahmin Caṅkī was going to see the ascetic Gotama. They approached Caṅkī

659. Also a favored siesta location for Soṇadaṇḍa (DN 5:3.1), Kūṭadanta (DN 4:3.1), and Pāyāsi (DN 23:3.1).

660. The *khatta* ("butler"; Sanskrit *kṣattṛ*) was a senior member of the household staff, responsible for management of activities (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.3.1.7).

and said to him, "Is it really true that you are going to see the ascetic Gotama?"

7.6 "Yes, gentlemen, it is true."

8.1 "Please don't! It's not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama;[661] it's appropriate that he comes to see you.

8.4 You are well born on both your mother's and father's side, stemming from a clean vessel, with irrefutable and impeccable genealogy back to the seventh paternal generation.[662] For this reason it's not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it's appropriate that he comes to see you.

8.7 You're rich, affluent, and wealthy. …

8.8 You recite and remember the hymns, and have mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies and ritual performance, their phonology and word classification, and the testaments as fifth. You know them word-by-word, and their grammar. You are well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. …

8.9 You are attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. You have divine looks and lustre, remarkable to behold. …[663]

8.10 You are ethical, mature in ethical conduct. …

8.11 You're a good speaker who enunciates well, with a polished, clear, and articulate voice that expresses the meaning. …

661. Compare DN 4:5.2 and DN 5:6.2.

662. *Jātivāda* is sometimes translated as "doctrine of birth", but the context here shows this cannot be the case. It refers to the genealogical records of the family lineage.| The *gahaṇī* ("vessel") is elsewhere the organ associated with digestion (MN 90:10.10). Apparently the even warmth of the mother's belly was felt to ripen the embryo like a meal being digested.

663. *Brahmavarcasa* ("divine lustre") commonly describes a spiritual or ethereal beauty due to ritual (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.1.9, 2.3.1, 4.1.1), or simply the healthy glow from time in the sun, which if overdone leads to sunburn (eg. Taittirīya Saṁhita 2.10.2). *Brahmavarṇa* ("divine looks"), on the other hand, seems unknown in the Vedic tradition. | For Mahāsaṅgīti *vacchasī* read *vaccasī* (Sanskrit *varcasin*), "possessing lustre".

You're the tutor of tutors for many, and teach three hundred young students to recite the hymns. …[664] 8.12

You're honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by King Pasenadi of Kosala and the brahmin Pokkharasāti. … 8.13

You live in Opāsāda, a crown property given by King Pasenadi of Kosala, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal park endowed to a brahmin. 8.15

For all these reasons it's not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it's appropriate that he comes to see you." 8.16

When they had spoken, Caṅkī said to those brahmins: 9.1

"Well then, gentlemen, listen to why it's appropriate for me to go to see the ascetic Gotama, and it's not appropriate for him to come to see me. 9.2

He is well born on both his mother's and father's side, stemming from a clean vessel, with irrefutable and impeccable genealogy back to the seventh paternal generation. For this reason it's not appropriate for the ascetic Gotama to come to see me; rather, it's appropriate for me to go to see him. 9.4

When he went forth he abandoned abundant gold, both coined and uncoined, stored above and below ground. … 9.7

He went forth from the lay life to homelessness while still a youth, young, with pristine black hair, blessed with youth, in the prime of life. … 9.8

Though his mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces, he shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. … 9.9

He is attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. He has divine looks and lustre, remarkable to behold. … 9.10

He is ethical, possessing ethical conduct that is noble and skillful. … 9.11

664. Notice that the royal endowment was not just for a luxury residence, it was the site of a major international college. Kings invested in education.

9.12 He's a good speaker who enunciates well, with a polished, clear, and articulate voice that expresses the meaning. …

9.13 He's a tutor of tutors. …

9.14 He has ended sensual desire, and is rid of caprice. …

9.15 He teaches the efficacy of deeds and action. He doesn't wish any harm upon the community of brahmins. …

9.16 He went forth from an eminent family of unbroken aristocratic lineage. …

9.17 He went forth from a rich, affluent, and wealthy family. …

9.18 People come from distant lands and distant countries to question him. …[665]

9.19 Many thousands of deities have gone for refuge for life to him. …

9.20 He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' …

9.22 He has the thirty-two marks of a great man. …

9.23 King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. …[666]

9.24 King Pasenadi of Kosala and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. …[667]

9.25 The brahmin Pokkharasāti and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. …[668]

9.26 The ascetic Gotama has arrived to stay in the Godswood to the north of Opāsāda. Any ascetic or brahmin who comes to stay in our village district is our guest, and should be honored and respected as such. For this reason, too, it's not appropriate for the worthy Gotama to come to see me; rather, it's appropriate for me to go to see him.

665. "Distant land" (*tiroraṭṭha*) is defined at Bi Pc 38:2.6 as "any land other than where one is living".

666. Bimbisāra's refuge is at Kd 1:22.11.4.

667. Pasenadi's refuge is at SN 3.1:14.5.

668. Refuge of Pokkharasāti and family is at DN 3:2.22.4.

This is the extent of the worthy Gotama's praise that I have memorized. But his praises are not confined to this, for the praise of the worthy Gotama is limitless. The possession of even a single one of these factors makes it inappropriate for Worthy Gotama to come to see me; rather, it's appropriate for me to go to see him. Well then, gentlemen, let's all go to see the ascetic Gotama." 9.33

Then Caṅkī together with a large group of brahmins went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. 10.1

Now at that time the Buddha was sitting engaged in some polite conversation together with some very senior brahmins. And the student Kāpaṭika was sitting in that assembly. He was young, tonsured, and sixteen years old. He had mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies and ritual performance, their phonology and word classification, and the testaments as fifth. He knew them word-by-word, and their grammar. He was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man.[669] While the senior brahmins were conversing together with the Buddha, he interrupted. 11.1

669. This student's education is like that of Assalāyana (MN 93:3.1), but his character could not be more different. His name has a variety of spellings in Pali and Sanskrit, but the correct form is *kāpaṭika* from *kapaṭa*, "fraud". Kauṭilya explains that fraudulent students (*chātraḥ kāpaṭikaḥ*) were spies installed by kings to test the loyalty of subjects (Arthaśāstra 1.10.11, 1.11.1–2), for which they were paid handsomely (5.3.22). Note that the Buddha calls him Bhāradvāja; this follows the convention in Pali that brahmins of that name are distinguished by epithets, often unflattering: Bhāradvāja the Farmer (Snp 1.4:1.3), Bhāradvāja the Fire-Worshiper (Snp 1.7:1.4), Bhāradvāja the Alms-Gatherer (SN 35.127:1.1), Bhāradvāja the Builder (SN 7.17:1.2), Bhāradvāja the Rude (SN 7.2:1.2), Bhāradvāja the Fiend (SN 7.3:1.2), Bhāradvāja the Bitter (SN 7.4:1.2), and so on. Thus Kāpaṭika would have been an epithet recognizing that he was the king's spy, a practice to which Pasenadi openly admits (SN 3.11:7.1, Ud 6.2:8.1). This was the downside of building a religious institution on the king's largess. Whether he was recognized as a spy at the time, or the epithet was applied later, is uncertain, but at some point it seems the meaning was forgotten and the epithet was taken to be his proper name.

11.4 Then the Buddha rebuked Kāpaṭika, "Venerable Bhāradvāja, don't interrupt the senior brahmins.[670] Wait until they've finished speaking."

11.7 When he had spoken, Caṅkī said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama, don't rebuke the student Kāpaṭika. He's a gentleman, learned and astute, who enunciates well. He is capable of debating with the worthy Gotama about this."

12.1 Then it occurred to the Buddha,[671] "Clearly the student Kāpaṭika will talk about the scriptural heritage of the three Vedas. That's why the brahmins put him at the front."

12.4 Then Kāpaṭika thought, "When the ascetic Gotama looks at me, I'll ask him a question." Then the Buddha, knowing Kāpaṭika's train of thought, looked at him.

12.7 Then Kāpaṭika thought, "The ascetic Gotama is engaging with me. Why don't I ask him a question?" Then he said, "Worthy Gotama, regarding that which by the lineage of testament and by canonical authority is the ancient hymnal of the brahmins, the brahmins come to the categorical conclusion:[672] 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.' What do you say about this?"

13.1 "Well, Bhāradvāja, is there even a single one of the brahmins who says this:[673] 'I know this, I see this: this is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

13.4 "No, worthy Gotama."

13.5 "Well, is there even a single tutor of the brahmins, or a tutors' tutor, or anyone back to the seventh generation of tutors, who says this:[674] 'I know this, I see this: this is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

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670. It is rare for the Buddha to address a lay person as "venerable" (*āyasmā*). It seems the form is excessively polite to soften the rebuke.

671. This passage is unique to to this sutta.

672. The "lineage of testament" (*itihitihaparamparā*); "canonical authority" (*piṭakasampadā*); "ancient hymnal" (*porāṇaṁ mantapadaṁ*): these refer to the Vedas.

673. Compare MN 99:9.8.

674. Compare DN 13:12.1.

"No, worthy Gotama." 13.8

"Well, what of the ancient seers of the brahmins, namely Aṭṭhaka, 13.9
Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamadaggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu? They were the authors and propagators of the hymns. Their hymnal was sung and propagated and compiled in ancient times; and these days, brahmins continue to sing and chant it, chanting what was chanted and teaching what was taught.[675] Did even they say: 'We know this, we see this: this is the only truth, anything else is futile'?"

"No, worthy Gotama." 13.13

"So, Bhāradvāja, it seems that there is not a single one of the brah- 13.14
mins, not even anyone back to the seventh generation of tutors, nor even the ancient seers of the brahmins who say: 'We know this, we see this: this is the only truth, anything else is futile.'

Suppose there was a queue of blind men, each holding the one in 13.23
front: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see.[676] In the same way, it seems to me that the brahmins' statement turns out to be like a queue of blind men: the

675. The ten names in Pali include the seven authors of the so-called "family books" of the Rig Veda (Maṇḍalas 2–8). As founders of poetic lineages, we often find works by their descendants, which are not always confined to their dedicated family book. Poems by the other three authors are mostly outside the family books. Thus the sages listed here cover most of the Rig Veda, although the Vedic tradition records many other authors as well. | Atri Bhauma (Maṇḍala 5, rather than Aṣṭaka Vaiśvāmitra of 10.104); Vamra(ka) Vaikhānasa (10.99; see 9.66); Vāmadeva Gautama (Maṇḍala 4); Viśvāmitra Gāthina (Maṇḍala 3); Jamadagni Bhārgava was a descendant of Bhṛgu (several hymns mostly in Maṇḍalas 9 and 10); Aṅgirasa is identified with Agni as the founder of a lineage of poet-singers (Maṇḍala 8); Bharadvāja Bārhaspatya (Maṇḍala 6); Vasiṣṭha Maitrāvaruṇi (Maṇḍala 7); Kaśyapa Mārīca (several hymns mostly in Maṇḍalas 9 and 10); Bhṛgu was the bringer of fire from heaven whose adoptive descendant was Gṛtsamada Bhārgava Śaunaka (Maṇḍala 2).

676. The "blind following the blind" is also at MN 95:13.24 and MN 99:9.25. Maitrī Upaniṣad 7.8–9 turns it around, saying that the blind teach false doctrines aimed at destroying the Vedas, "the doctrine of not-self" (*nairātmyavāda*), an obvious reference to Buddhists. We also find it at Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.5, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.8, Mahābhārata 2.38.3, and the Jain Sūyagaḍa 1.1.2.19.

first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. What do you think, Bhāradvāja? This being so, doesn't the brahmins' faith turn out to be baseless?"

14.1 "The brahmins don't just honor this because of faith, but also because of oral transmission."[677]

14.2 "First you relied on faith, now you speak of oral transmission. These five things can be seen to turn out in two different ways in this very life. What five? Faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, and acceptance of a view after deliberation.[678] Even though you have full faith in something, it may be vacuous, hollow, and false. And even if you don't have full faith in something, it may be true and real, not otherwise. Even though you fully endorse something …[679] something may be well transmitted … something may be well thought out … something may be well deliberated, it may be vacuous, hollow, and false. And even if something is not well deliberated, it may be true and real, not otherwise. For a sensible person who is preserving truth this is not sufficient to come to the categorical conclusion:[680] 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.'"

15.1 "But worthy Gotama, how do you define the preservation of truth?"

15.3 "If a person has faith, they preserve truth by saying, 'Such is my faith.' But they don't yet come to the categorical conclusion: 'This

677. "Faith" is *saddhā* (see note on MN 26:15.9) | "Oral transmission" is *anussava*. While the idea of oral tradition was of course central to Vedism, we don't seem to find the term until later (eg. Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.8.29; Śrīdhara's commentary on Bhagavad-Gītā 18.3). | See too MN 76:24.1.

678. *Parivitakka* means "train of thought", as when the Buddha reads Kāpaṭika's thoughts above (MN 95:12.6). *Ākāra* in this context means "reason", as at MN 47:10.2; the current sutta expands on the ideas there. | *Khanti* is usually better rendered "acceptance" than the common "patience".

679. *Ruci* means "liking, preference", and from there takes the sense of "endorsing" an idea or belief, in which case it can be translated as "belief" or "opinion".

680. This sutta introduces the important epistemological distinction between the "preservation of truth" (*saccānurakkhaṇā*), the "awakening to the truth" (*saccānubodha*), and the "attainment of the truth" (*saccānuppatti*).

is the only truth, anything else is futile.' If a person endorses something … or has received an oral transmission … or has a reasoned train of thought about something … or has accepted a view after deliberation, they preserve truth by saying, 'Such is the view I have accepted after deliberation.' But they don't yet come to the categorical conclusion: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.' That's how the preservation of truth is defined, Bhāradvāja. I describe the preservation of truth as defined in this way.[681] But this is not yet the awakening to the truth."

"That's how the preservation of truth is defined, worthy Gotama. 16.1
We regard the preservation of truth as defined in this way. But worthy Gotama, how do you define awakening to the truth?"

"Bhāradvāja, take the case of a mendicant living supported by a 17.1
town or village. A householder or their child approaches and scrutinizes them for three qualities: qualities that arouse greed, things that provoke hate, and things that promote delusion.[682] 'Does this venerable have any qualities that arouse greed? Such qualities that, were their mind to be overwhelmed by them, they might say that they know, even though they don't know, or that they see, even though they don't see; or that they might encourage others to do what is for their lasting harm and suffering?' Scrutinizing them they find: 'This venerable has no such qualities that arouse greed. Rather, that venerable has bodily and verbal behavior like that of someone without greed. And the principle that they teach is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. It's not easy for someone with greed to teach this.'

Scrutinizing them in this way they see that they are purified of 18.1
qualities that arouse greed. Next, they scrutinize them for qualities that provoke hate. 'Does this venerable have any qualities that pro-

681. This is essentially the standard used in references today: one should accurately represent one's sources.
682. For these phrases, compare AN 4.117 and AN 5.144.

voke hate? Such qualities that, were their mind to be overwhelmed by them, they might say that they know, even though they don't know, or that they see, even though they don't see; or that they might encourage others to do what is for their lasting harm and suffering?' Scrutinizing them they find: 'This venerable has no such qualities that provoke hate. Rather, that venerable has bodily and verbal behavior like that of someone without hate. And the principle that they teach is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. It's not easy for someone with hate to teach this.'

19.1 Scrutinizing them in this way they see that they are purified of qualities that provoke hate. Next, they scrutinize them for qualities that promote delusion. 'Does this venerable have any qualities that promote delusion? Such qualities that, were their mind to be overwhelmed by them, they might say that they know, even though they don't know, or that they see, even though they don't see; or that they might encourage others to do what is for their lasting harm and suffering?' Scrutinizing them they find: 'This venerable has no such qualities that promote delusion. Rather, that venerable has bodily and verbal behavior like that of someone without delusion. And the principle that they teach is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of logic, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. It's not easy for someone with delusion to teach this.'

20.1 Scrutinizing them in this way they see that they are purified of qualities that promote delusion. Next, they place faith in them. When faith has arisen they approach the teacher. They pay homage, actively listen, hear the teachings, remember the teachings, examine their meaning, and accept them after deliberation. Then enthusiasm springs up; they make an attempt, weigh up, and strive. Striving, they directly realize the ultimate truth, and see it with penetrating

wisdom.[683] That's how the awakening to truth is defined, Bhāradvāja. I describe the awakening to truth as defined in this way. But this is not yet the attainment of truth."

"That's how the awakening to truth is defined, worthy Gotama. 21.1
I regard the awakening to truth as defined in this way. But worthy Gotama, how do you define the attainment of truth?"

"By the cultivation, development, and making much of these very 21.4
same things there is the attainment of truth.[684] That's how the attainment of truth is defined, Bhāradvāja. I describe the attainment of truth as defined in this way."

"That's how the attainment of truth is defined, worthy Gotama. 22.1
I regard the attainment of truth as defined in this way. But what quality is helpful for arriving at the truth?"

"Striving is helpful for arriving at the truth. If you don't strive, you 22.4
won't arrive at the truth. You arrive at the truth because you strive. That's why striving is helpful for arriving at the truth."

"But what quality is helpful for striving?" 23.1

"Weighing up the teachings is helpful for striving …[685] 23.3

Making an attempt is helpful for weighing up the teachings …[686] 24.1

Enthusiasm is helpful for making an attempt … 25.1

Acceptance of the teachings after deliberation is helpful for en- 26.1
thusiasm …

Examining the meaning of the teachings is helpful for accepting 27.1
them after deliberation …

Remembering the teachings is helpful for examining their mean- 28.1
ing …

683. Here we see the meaning of the Buddhist "grounded faith" (*ākāravatī saddhā*, MN 47:16.1, MN 60:4.1) as opposed to "blind faith". But faith is only the beginning of the long and demanding process described here.

684. Typically this distinction refers to the stream-enterer and the arahant.

685. *Tulanā* is literally "weighing", here in the applied sense of "evaluating".

686. Here, "making an attempt" (*ussāha*) is making an effort to understand the teachings, while "striving" (*padhāna*) is making an effort in meditation.

29.1 Hearing the teachings is helpful for remembering the teachings …

30.1 Active listening is helpful for hearing the teachings …

31.1 Paying homage is helpful for active listening …

32.1 Approaching is helpful for paying homage …

33.1 Faith is helpful for approaching a teacher. If you don't give rise to faith, you won't approach a teacher. You approach a teacher because you have faith. That's why faith is helpful for approaching a teacher."

34.1 "I've asked the worthy Gotama about the preservation of truth, and he has answered me. I endorse and accept this, and am satisfied with it. I've asked the worthy Gotama about awakening to the truth, and he has answered me. I endorse and accept this, and am satisfied with it. I've asked the worthy Gotama about the attainment of truth, and he has answered me. I endorse and accept this, and am satisfied with it. I've asked the worthy Gotama about the things that are helpful for the attainment of truth, and he has answered me. I endorse and accept this, and am satisfied with it. Whatever point I have asked the worthy Gotama about he has answered me. I endorse and accept this, and am satisfied with it.

34.11 Worthy Gotama, I used to think this: 'Who are these shavelings, fake ascetics, primitives, black spawn from the feet of our kinsman next to those who understand the teaching?' The Buddha has inspired me to have fondness, confidence, and respect for ascetics!

35.1 Excellent, worthy Gotama! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."[687]

687. That Kāpaṭika should sincerely go for refuge does not conflict with him being a spy; it is a conversion story. In authoritarian countries today, spies are regularly placed in monasteries for the same reason. There are stories of how, after being placed for many years and seeing not a hotbed of sedition but a place for wisdom and goodness, such spies feel shame and genuinely convert to Buddhism.

MN 96

With Esukārī

Esukārīsutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. 1.1

Then Esukārī the brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.[688] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha: 2.1

"Worthy Gotama, the brahmins prescribe four kinds of service:[689] for a brahmin, an aristocrat, a peasant, and a menial. This is the service they prescribe for a brahmin: 'A brahmin, an aristocrat, a peasant, and a menial may all serve a brahmin.'[690] This is the service they prescribe for an aristocrat: 'An aristocrat, a peasant, and a menial may all serve an aristocrat.' This is the service they prescribe for a peasant: 'A peasant or a menial may serve a peasant.' This is the service they prescribe for a menial: 'Only a menial may serve a menial. For who else will serve a menial?' These are the four kinds of service that the brahmins prescribe. What do you say about this?" 3.1

"But brahmin, did the whole world authorize the brahmins to prescribe these four kinds of service?" 4.1

"No, worthy Gotama." 4.2

688. This brahmin appears only here, and there is little to distinguish him personally. A king of the same name features in a Jātaka (Ja 509). Could *esukārī* be equivalent to *ayaskārī*, "blacksmith"?

689. To "serve" can be to look after, nurse, or care for (AN 5.76:3.5, DN 31:29.2), to offer religious devotions (MN 12:61.2), or even provide sexual favors (Bu Ss 4:1.2.7).

690. Manusmṛti 2.238 ff. allows that in abnormal times a brahmin may receive teachings from lower castes, except menials.

4.3 "It's as if they were to force a chop on a poor, penniless person, telling them, 'Eat this meat and pay for it!' In the same way, the brahmins have prescribed these four kinds of service without the consent of those ascetics and brahmins.[691]

5.1 Brahmin, I don't say that you should serve everyone, nor do I say that you shouldn't serve anyone. I say that you shouldn't serve someone if serving them makes you worse, not better. And I say that you should serve someone if serving them makes you better, not worse.

6.1 If they were to ask an aristocrat this, 'Who should you serve? Someone in whose service you get worse, or someone in whose service you get better?' Answering rightly, an aristocrat would say, 'Someone in whose service I get better.'

7.1 If they were to ask a brahmin … a peasant … or a menial this, 'Who should you serve? Someone in whose service you get worse, or someone in whose service you get better?' Answering rightly, a menial would say, 'Someone in whose service I get better.'

7.7 Brahmin, I don't say that an eminent family makes you a better or worse person. I don't say that exceptional beauty makes you a better or worse person.[692] I don't say that exceptional wealth makes you a better or worse person.

8.1 For some people from eminent families kill living creatures, steal, and commit sexual misconduct. They use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're covetous, malicious, with wrong view. That's why I don't say that an eminent family makes you a better person.

8.3 But some people from eminent families also refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct. They refrain from

691. The reference to "these" ascetics and brahmins intrudes here, since none have been mentioned. In the parallel passage at AN 6.57:9.4 it fits, so it may well have come from there.

692. The commentary explains (*uḷāravaṇṇatā*) as "high class". That may be correct, but normally in Pali it refers to beauty (DN 18:10.1, Ja 458:15.3, Vv 29:1.1).

using speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're content, kind-hearted, with right view. That's why I don't say that an eminent family makes you a worse person.

And some people who are exceptionally beautiful … And some 8.5
people who are exceptionally wealthy kill living creatures … and have wrong view. That's why I don't say that exceptional wealth makes you a better person. But some people who are exceptionally wealthy also refrain from killing living creatures … and have right view. That's why I don't say that any of these things makes you a better or worse person.

Brahmin, I don't say that you should serve everyone, nor do I say 9.1
that you shouldn't serve anyone. And I say that you should serve someone if serving them makes you grow in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. I say that you shouldn't serve someone if serving them doesn't make you grow in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom."

When he had spoken, Esukārī said to him: 10.1

"Worthy Gotama, the brahmins prescribe four kinds of wealth: 10.2
for a brahmin, an aristocrat, a peasant, and a menial.[693] The wealth they prescribe for a brahmin is living on alms.[694] A brahmin who scorns his own wealth, living on alms, fails in his duty like a guard who steals. The wealth they prescribe for an aristocrat is the bow and quiver.[695] An aristocrat who scorns his own wealth, the bow and quiver, fails in his duty like a guard who steals. The wealth

693. Within limits, one from a higher caste may adopt the livelihood of a lower, but not the other way around (Vāsiṣṭha Dharmasūtra 2.22–3).

694. "Living on alms" (*bhikkhācariya*, Sanskrit *bhikṣācarya*) is acknowledged as the best livelihood for the sages of old at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.5.1, 4.4.22. The later Vāsiṣṭha Dharmasūtra 2.13 says there are six occupations for a brahmin: study, recitation, sacrificing for oneself, or for others, giving, and receiving gifts. Manusmṛti 1.88 is similar.

695. Vāsiṣṭha Dharmasūtra 2.16 and 2.18 say aristocrats and peasants share three the same as brahmins—recital, sacrifice, and giving. Their special livelihood is the use of weapons. Manusmṛti 1.89 says more diplomatically "protection of the people" (*prajānāṁ rakṣaṇaṁ*).

they prescribe for a peasant is farming and animal husbandry.[696] A peasant who scorns his own wealth, farming and animal husbandry, fails in his duty like a guard who steals. The wealth they prescribe for a menial is the scythe and flail.[697] A menial who scorns his own wealth, the scythe and flail, fails in his duty like a guard who steals. These are the four kinds of wealth that the brahmins prescribe. What do you say about this?"

11.1 "But brahmin, did the whole world authorize the brahmins to prescribe these four kinds of wealth?"

11.2 "No, worthy Gotama."

11.3 "It's as if they were to force a chop on a poor, penniless person, telling them, 'Eat this meat and pay for it!'

11.4 In the same way, the brahmins have prescribed these four kinds of wealth without the consent of these ascetics and brahmins.

12.1 I assert that a person's own wealth is the noble, transcendent teaching.[698] But they are reckoned by recollecting the traditional family customs of their mother and father wherever they are incarnated. If they incarnate in a family of aristocrats they are reckoned as an aristocrat. If they incarnate in a family of brahmins they are reckoned as a brahmin. If they incarnate in a family of peasants they are reckoned as a peasant. If they incarnate in a family of menials they are reckoned as a menial.

12.7 It's like fire, which is reckoned according to the very same condition dependent upon which it burns. A fire that burns dependent on logs is reckoned as a log fire. A fire that burns dependent on twigs is reckoned as a twig fire. A fire that burns dependent on grass is

696. Vāsiṣṭha Dharmasūtra 2.19 says farming, trade, husbandry, and moneylending. This reflects a more developed economy in this later text. Manusmṛti 1.90 is similar.

697. Vāsiṣṭha Dharmasūtra 2.20 says that the only work of a menial is to serve the other castes (*teṣāṁ paricaryā*). Manusmṛti 1.91 is similar, emphasizing "unbegrudged obedience" (*śuśrūṣāmanasūyayā*).

698. For *lokuttaraṁ dhammaṁ* as "transcendental teaching", see SN 20.7:1.6, AN 2.47:1.5, AN 5.79:5.2.

reckoned as a grass fire. A fire that burns dependent on cow-dung is reckoned as a cow-dung fire.

In the same way, I assert that a person's own wealth is the noble, transcendent teaching. But they are reckoned by recollecting the traditional family customs of their mother and father wherever they are incarnated. 12.12

Suppose someone from a family of aristocrats goes forth from the lay life to homelessness. Relying on the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One they refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and sex. They refrain from using speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're content, kind-hearted, with right view. They succeed in the system of the skillful teaching. 13.1

Suppose someone from a family of brahmins … peasants … menials goes forth from the lay life to homelessness. Relying on the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One … they succeed in the system of the skillful teaching. 13.2

What do you think, brahmin? Is only a brahmin capable of developing a heart of love free of enmity and ill will for this region, and not an aristocrat, peasant, or menial?" 14.1

"No, worthy Gotama. Aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials can all do so. For all four classes are capable of developing a heart of love free of enmity and ill will for this region." 14.3

"In the same way, suppose someone from a family of aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, or menials goes forth from the lay life to homelessness. Relying on the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One … they succeed in the system of the skillful teaching. 14.9

What do you think, brahmin? Is only a brahmin capable of taking some bathing cleanser, going to the river, and rinsing off dust and dirt, and not an aristocrat, peasant, or menial?"[699] 15.1

"No, worthy Gotama. All four classes are capable of doing this." 15.3

699. This is an allusion to the Brahmanical practice of ritual bathing. See MN 7:18.5 and notes there.

15.9 "In the same way, suppose someone from a family of aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, or menials goes forth from the lay life to homelessness. Relying on the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One … they succeed in the system of the skillful teaching.

16.1 What do you think, brahmin? Suppose an anointed aristocratic king were to gather a hundred people born in different classes and say to them: 'Please gentlemen, let anyone here who was born in a family of aristocrats, brahmins, or chieftains take a drill-stick made of teak, sal, *salaḷa*, sandalwood, or cherry wood, light a fire and produce heat. And let anyone here who was born in a family of corpse-workers, hunters, bamboo-workers, chariot-makers, or scavengers take a drill-stick made from a mutt's drinking trough, a pig's trough, a dustbin, or castor-oil wood, light a fire and produce heat.'

16.5 What do you think, brahmin? Would only the fire produced by the high class people with good quality wood have flames, color, and radiance, and be usable as fire, and not the fire produced by the low class people with poor quality wood?"

16.8 "No, worthy Gotama. The fire produced by the high class people with good quality wood would have flames, color, and radiance, and be usable as fire, and so would the fire produced by the low class people with poor quality wood. For all fire has flames, color, and radiance, and is usable as fire."

16.12 "In the same way, suppose someone from a family of aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, or menials goes forth from the lay life to homelessness. Relying on the teaching and training proclaimed by the Realized One they refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and sex. They refrain from using speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're content, kind-hearted, with right view. They succeed in the system of the skillful teaching."

17.1 When he had spoken, Esukārī said to him, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! … From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

MN 97

With Dhanañjāni

Dhanañjānisutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. 1.1

Now at that time Venerable Sāriputta was wandering in the Southern Hills together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants.[700] Then a certain mendicant who had completed the rainy season residence in Rājagaha went to the Southern Hills, where he approached Venerable Sāriputta, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Sāriputta said to him, "Reverend, I hope the Buddha is healthy and strong?" 2.1

"He is, reverend." 2.5

"And I hope that the mendicant Saṅgha is healthy and strong." 2.6

"It is." 2.7

"Reverend, at the rice checkpoint at the city gate there is a brahmin named Dhanañjāni.[701] I hope that he is healthy and strong?" 2.8

700. The Southern Hills (*dakkhiṇāgiri*, "Deccan") is the Vindhya Range that lies on the southern border of Magadha, leading southwest to Avanti. The Buddha and his disciples visited there so rarely that people complained (Kd 1:53.1.3). Nonetheless, the present narrative suggests that Sāriputta had stayed there for an extended period of time, long enough to lose touch with his friends back home.

701. The "rice checkpoint at the city gate" (*taṇḍulapālidvārā*) was a gate of Rājagaha where rice would be inspected and tolls collected. Here *pāli* has the sense "guard" (cp. Sanskrit *pālin*). This was not Dhanañjāni's residence, but where he worked and, it would seem, skimmed off funds for his own benefit. | Kauṭilya discusses corruption among government servants (Arthaśāstra 2.9), sets out the duties of the toll collector (2.21), and lists the various tolls (2.22).

2.10 "He too is well."

2.11 "But is he diligent?"

2.12 "How could he possibly be diligent? Dhanañjāni robs the brahmins and householders in the name of the king, and he robs the king in the name of the brahmins and householders.[702] His wife, a lady of faith who he married from a family of faith, has passed away.[703] And he has taken a new wife who has no faith."

2.16 "Oh, it's bad news to hear that Dhanañjāni is negligent. Hopefully, some time or other I'll get to meet him, and we can have a discussion."

3.1 When Sāriputta had stayed in the Southern Hills as long as he pleased, he set out for Rājagaha. Traveling stage by stage, he arrived at Rājagaha, where he stayed in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

4.1 Then he robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. Now at that time Dhanañjāni was having his cows milked in a cow-shed outside the city. Then Sāriputta wandered for alms in Rājagaha. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he approached Dhanañjāni.

4.4 Seeing Sāriputta coming off in the distance, Dhanañjāni went to him and said, "Here, worthy Sāriputta, drink some fresh milk before the meal time."

4.7 "Enough, brahmin, I've finished eating for today. I shall be at the root of that tree there for the day's meditation. Come see me there."

4.11 "Yes, worthy sir," replied Dhanañjāni.

5.1 When Dhanañjāni had finished breakfast he went to Sāriputta and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Sāriputta said to him, "I hope you're diligent, Dhanañjāni?"

5.4 "How can I possibly be diligent, worthy Sāriputta? I have to provide for my mother and father, my wives and children, and my bond-

702. Dhanañjāni is a Pali variation of the Vedic *dhanañjaya*, "winner of wealth", an apt description of his activities. See too note on SN 7.1:1.3.

703. A faithful laywoman named Dhanañjānī features in MN 100 and SN 7.1, but this was a different person.

servants and workers. And I have to make the proper offerings to friends and colleagues, relatives and kin, guests, ancestors, deities, and king. And then this body must also be fattened and built up."[704]

"What do you think, Dhanañjāni? Suppose someone was to be- 6.1
have in an unprincipled and immoral way for the sake of their parents. Because of this the wardens of hell would drag them to hell. Could they get out of being dragged to hell by pleading that they had acted for the sake of their parents? Or could their parents save them by pleading that the acts had been done for their sake?"

"No, worthy Sāriputta. Rather, even as they were wailing the 6.4
wardens of hell would cast them down into hell."

"What do you think, Dhanañjāni? Suppose someone was to be- 7.1
have in an unprincipled and immoral way for the sake of their wives and children … bondservants and workers … friends and colleagues … relatives and kin … guests … ancestors … deities … king … fattening and building up their body. Because of this the wardens of hell would drag them to hell. Could they get out of being dragged to hell by pleading that they had acted for the sake of fattening and building up their body? Or could anyone else save them by pleading that the acts had been done for that reason?"

"No, worthy Sāriputta. Rather, even as they were wailing the 15.3
wardens of hell would cast them down into hell."

"Who do you think is better, Dhanañjāni? Someone who, for the 16.1
sake of their parents, behaves in an unprincipled and immoral manner, or someone who behaves in a principled and moral manner?"

"Someone who behaves in a principled and moral manner for the 16.3
sake of their parents. For principled and moral conduct is better than unprincipled and immoral conduct."

704. The five "proper offerings" correspond with the five to whom *bali* offerings are made (AN 4.61:15.2, AN 5.41:4.2). | In agreement with *brūhetabbo* ("to be built up"), *pīṇetabbo* is from *pīṇa* in the sense "fatten" rather than "gladden".

16.6 "Dhanañjāni, others have livelihoods that are both profitable and legitimate. By means of these it's possible to provide for your parents, avoid bad deeds, and practice the path of goodness.

17.1 Who do you think is better, Dhanañjāni? Someone who, for the sake of their wives and children … bondservants and workers … friends and colleagues … relatives and kin … guests … ancestors … deities … king … fattening and building up their body, behaves in an unprincipled and immoral manner, or someone who behaves in a principled and moral manner?"

25.3 "Someone who behaves in a principled and moral manner. For principled and moral conduct is better than unprincipled and immoral conduct."

25.6 "Dhanañjāni, others have livelihoods that are both profitable and legitimate. By means of these it's possible to fatten and build up your body, avoid bad deeds, and practice the path of goodness."

26.1 Then Dhanañjāni the brahmin, having approved and agreed with what Venerable Sāriputta said, rose from his seat and left.

27.1 Some time later Dhanañjāni became sick, suffering, gravely ill. Then he addressed a man, "Please, my man, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him: 'Sir, the brahmin Dhanañjāni is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.' Then go to Venerable Sāriputta, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him: 'Sir, the brahmin Dhanañjāni is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.' And then say: 'Sir, please visit Dhanañjāni at his home out of sympathy.'"

27.11 "Yes, sir," that man replied. He did as Dhanañjāni asked. Sāriputta consented with silence.

28.1 He robed up, and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Dhanañjāni's home, where he sat down on the seat spread out and said to Dhanañjāni, "I hope you're keeping well, Dhanañjāni, I hope you're all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing."

"I'm not keeping well, Mister Sāriputta, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading. The winds piercing my head are so severe, it feels like a strong man drilling into my head with a sharp point. I'm not keeping well. The pain in my head is so severe, it feels like a strong man tightening a strong leather strap around my head. I'm not keeping well. The winds slicing my belly are so severe, like a deft butcher or their apprentice were slicing open a cow's belly with a sharp meat cleaver. I'm not keeping well. The burning in my body is so severe, it feels like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. I'm not keeping well, Mister Sāriputta, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading." 29.1

"Dhanañjāni, which do you think is better:[705] hell or the animal realm?" 30.1

"The animal realm is better." 30.3

"Which do you think is better: the animal realm or the ghost realm?" 30.4

"The ghost realm is better." 30.6

"Which do you think is better: the ghost realm or human life?" 30.7

"Human life is better." 30.9

"Which do you think is better: human life or as one of the gods of the four great kings?" 30.10

"The gods of the four great kings."[706] 30.12

"Which do you think is better: the gods of the four great kings or the gods of the thirty-three?" 30.13

705. Compare the Buddha's teaching to Mahānāma at SN 55.54.

706. The "gods of the four great kings" (*cātumahārājikā devā*) are deities born in a realm subject to the overlords known as the Four Great Kings: Kuvera (also called Vessavaṇa) lord of spirits (*yakkha*) in the north; Dhataraṭṭha lord of centaurs (*gandhabba*) in the east; Virūḷha lord of goblins (*kumbhaṇḍa*) in the south; and Virūpakkha lord of dragons (*nāga*) in the west (see DN 32). Sanskrit sources sometimes multiply their number to eight (eg. Śivapurāṇa 2.2.22.43).

30.15 "The gods of the thirty-three."[707]

30.16 "Which do you think is better: the gods of the thirty-three or the gods of Yama?"

30.18 "The gods of Yama."[708]

30.19 "Which do you think is better: the gods of Yama or the joyful gods?"

30.21 "The joyful gods."[709]

30.22 "Which do you think is better: the joyful gods or the gods who love to create?"

30.24 "The gods who love to create."[710]

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707. The "gods of the thirty-three" (*tāvatiṁsā devā*), who are subjects of Sakka (also called Indra), enjoy refined sensual delights. The number is a reduplication of the trinity. In Buddhist texts they are not enumerated, but Yājñavalkya reckons them as eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas, plus Indra and Prajāpati (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.9.2). The final pair are elsewhere said to be Dyaus ("Heaven" = Zeus) and Pṛthivī ("Earth"), or the twin Aśvins.

708. Gods in this realm (spelled *yāma*, "of Yama") are subjects of Yama, the god who guards the paths to the land of the dead (SN 1.33:10.3, MN 130:3.1, Dhp 235). He was the son of Vivasvant (the sun) and brother of Manu, and as the first person to die, Rig Veda 10.4 tells us that he discovered the paths to the lands of the dead that he now guards with his pair of hounds. Yama is a righteous god, but sinners see him as horrifying due to their own guilt (Brahma Purāṇa 106.46).

709. The "joyful gods" (*tusitā devā*) were known to the Jains, who classed them among the gods of the world's end (*lokāntika*; Tattvārthasūtra 4.25; Viyāhapaṇṇatti 5.3.95). Later Hindu tradition says they were the sons of Kaśyapa through Aditi, otherwise known as the twelve Ādityas: Viṣṇu, Śakra, Tvaṣṭṛ, Dhātṛ, Aryaman, Pūṣan, Vivasvat, Savitṛ, Mitra, Varuṇa, Bhaga, and Aṁśu. (Agnipurāṇa 19.1–3, Liṅgapurāṇa 63.22b–26). In Buddhism, this realm is famed as the final home of Bodhisattas before they descend to the human realm to become Buddhas.

710. These deities (*nimmānaratī devā*) are said to create whatever delights they wish and enjoy them, living in a world of their own projection. They seem to be primarily Buddhist, perhaps influenced by such passages as Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.9, which says that in dreams, on the boundary between this world and the next, one creates (*svayaṁ nirmāya*) a new reality that is revealed by one's inner light. They are, however, mentioned in later texts such as Viṣṇu Purāṇa 3.2.30 as one of three groups of thirty, and Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa 44, which adds that they preside over the months, seasons, and days.

"Which do you think is better: the gods who love to create or the gods who control what is created by others?" 30.25

"The gods who control what is created by others."[711] 30.27

"Which do you think is better: the gods who control what is created by others or the realm of divinity?" 31.1

"Worthy Sāriputta speaks of the realm of divinity! Worthy Sāriputta speaks of the realm of divinity!" 31.3

Then Sāriputta thought: 31.5

"These brahmins are devoted to the realm of divinity. Why don't I teach him a path to the company of Divinity?" 31.6

"Dhanañjāni, I shall teach you a path to the company of Divinity. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 31.8

"Yes, worthy sir," replied Dhanañjāni. Venerable Sāriputta said this: 31.10

"And what is a path to company with Divinity?[712] Firstly, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. This is a path to company with Divinity. 32.1

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of compassion … 33-35.1

They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing … 33-35.2

They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, 33-35.3

711. Deities in this, the highest of the sensual realms, control the visions seen by others (*paranimmitavasavattī*). Their most famous member is Māra, who uses this skill for wicked ends. Again they seem primarily Buddhist, although we probably hear an echo of them in Mahābhārata 12,325.004E, which lists the *parinirmita* and *vaśavartin* as two separate groups.

712. While it is possible to be reborn in even the highest of the sensual realms through the power of ordinary goodness, rebirth in the Brahmā and higher realms requires the development of absorption meditation.

limitless, free of enmity and ill will. This is a path to company with Divinity."

36.1 "Well then, Mister Sāriputta, in my name bow with your head to the Buddha's feet. Say to him: 'Sir, the brahmin Dhanañjāni is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.'" Then Sāriputta, after establishing Dhanañjāni in the inferior realm of divinity, rose from his seat and left while there was still more left to do. Not long after Sāriputta had left, Dhanañjāni passed away and was reborn in the realm of divinity.

37.1 Then the Buddha said to the mendicants, "Mendicants, Sāriputta, after establishing Dhanañjāni in the inferior realm of divinity, rose from his seat and left while there was still more left to do."

38.1 Then Sāriputta went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said, "Sir, the brahmin Dhanañjāni is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet."

38.4 "But Sāriputta, after establishing Dhanañjāni in the inferior realm of divinity, why did you get up from your seat and leave while there was still more left to do?"

38.5 "Sir, I thought: 'These brahmins are devoted to the realm of divinity. Why don't I teach him a path to the company of Divinity?'"

38.7 "And Sāriputta, the brahmin Dhanañjāni has passed away and been reborn in the realm of divinity."[713]

713. This is a rare instance of someone taking rebirth due to deathbed kamma. Presumably Dhanañjāni had developed absorption based on the divine meditations, which overpowered the limited bad kamma he had made previously (MN 99:24.3). Another instance of kamma at death influencing rebirth is found at SN 42.3:2.7, where a warrior who dies in battle goes to hell. In Theravada circles today, it is commonly held that one's mental state at death determines one's rebirth. These examples show that this is true only in exceptional cases where one is actively making strong good or bad kamma at that time.

MN 98

With Vāseṭṭha

Vāseṭṭhasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[714] At one time the Buddha was staying in a forest near Icchānaṅgala. 1.1

Now at that time several very well-known well-to-do brahmins were residing in Icchānaṅgala. They included the brahmins Caṅkī, Tārukkha, Pokkharasāti, Jānussoṇi, Todeyya, and others.[715] 2.1

Then as the students Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja were going for a walk they began to discuss the question:[716] "How do you become a brahmin?" 3.1

Bhāradvāja said this: "When you're well born on both your mother's and father's side, stemming from a clean vessel, with irrefutable and impeccable genealogy back to the seventh paternal generation—[717] then you're a brahmin." 3.3

Vāseṭṭha said this: "When you're ethical and accomplished in doing your duties—[718] then you're a brahmin." 3.6

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714. This sutta is repeated verbatim at Snp 3.9.

715. Also at DN 13:2.2 and MN 99:13.5.

716. We meet Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja as the students of Pokkharasāti and Tārukkha respectively in DN 13, at the end of which they went for refuge. Some time later they must have sought the monkhood, as in DN 27:1.3 they are living in the Saṅgha awaiting ordination.

717. The ideal of brahminhood was a long-standing one, and so was the conflict over what exactly made someone a brahmin. Bhāradvāja expresses the most obvious and socially widespread understanding that it is simply a matter of birth.

718. *Vattasampanno* (Sanskrit *vṛttasaṁpanna*) means "one of good conduct¸ one who has fulfilled their duties" rather than having a technical sense of fulfilling religious observances or rites. For example, Manusmṛti 8.179 advises that one should deposit money with someone who is "of good conduct, knows the law, and speaks the truth" (*vṛttasampanne dharmajñe satyavādini*. See also

4.1 But neither was able to persuade the other.

5.1 So Vāseṭṭha said to Bhāradvāja, "Worthy Bhāradvāja, the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—is staying in a forest near Icchānaṅgala. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' Come, let's go to see him and ask him about this matter. As he answers, so we'll remember it."

5.7 "Yes, worthy sir," replied Bhāradvāja.

6.1 So they went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side, and Vāseṭṭha addressed the Buddha in verse:

7.1 "We're both authorized masters
of the three Vedas.
I'm a student of Pokkharasāti,[719]
and he of Tārukkha.[720]

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eg. Mahābhārata 3.188.90b, 13.61.029a, Rāmāyaṇa 1.47.25c). | Compare the discussion at DN 4:21.1, where the Buddha leads Soṇadaṇḍa to agree that the essential qualities of a brahmin were ethical conduct and wisdom.

719. Pokkharasāti's conversion to Buddhism is recorded in DN 3, which marks a turning point in the embracing of Buddhism by leading brahmins. The suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya that follow reverberate with the consequences of this encounter. He was one of the most influential brahmins of his time, although the Buddha elsewhere denied that he had any special knowledge (MN 99:15.5). Brahmanical texts know him as an influential teacher around the time of the Buddha; his name is spelled Pauṣkarasādi in Sanskrit. He is cited on grammar by Kātyāyana and Patañjali, and in the Taittirīya-prātiśākhya; on allowable food and theft in the Āpastamba Dharmasūtra; and on Vedic ritual in the Śāṅkhāyana-Āraṇyaka. MN 99:10.3 clarifies that he is of the Upamañña lineage.

720. In Pali we never meet Tārukkha and he is only mentioned in his absence. Bhāradvāja advocates his path at DN 13:5.2 but without details. There is a Tārukṣya of Aitareya Āraṇyaka 3.1.6.1 whose view was that union (with Brahmā) arose with the conjunction of speech and breath; this was discussed alongside the views of many other brahmins. In Rig Veda 8.46.32 a certain Balbūtha Tarukṣa the Dāsa makes an offering to a sage. Sāyaṇa, the Vedic commentator,

We're fully qualified 7.5
in all the Vedic experts teach.
As philologists and grammarians,
we match our tutors in recitation.
We have a dispute
regarding genealogy.

For Bhāradvāja says that 7.11
one is a brahmin due to birth,
but I declare it's because of one's deeds.
Oh Clear-eyed One, know this as our debate.

Since neither of us was able 7.15
to convince the other,
we've come to ask you, sir,
renowned as the awakened one.

As people honor with cupped palms 7.19
the moon on the cusp of waxing,
bowing, they revere
Gotama in the world.

We ask this of Gotama, 7.23
the Eye arisen in the world:[721]
is one a brahmin due to birth,
or else because of deeds?
We don't know, please tell us,
so we can recognize a brahmin."

says that Balbūtha Tarukṣa was a guardian of cows, evidently alluding to the Aitareya Āraṇyaka, which describes Tārukṣya as a guardian of his teacher's cows, thus locating Tārukṣya in the lineage of Tarukṣa. Hiraṇyakeśīgṛhyasūtra 2.8.19 also mentions him as a teacher, there spelled Tarukṣa.

721. The Buddha as "eye" evokes the common (eg. Rig Veda 1.164.14, 5.40.8, 5.59.5, 10.10.9) Vedic image of the Sun as the "eye of all" (*viśvacakṣāḥ*, 7.63.1), the "eye" for "eyes to see" (10.158.4), moving as an unaging wheel through the sky (1.164.14). See DN 16:5.6.3.

8.1 "I shall explain to you,"
said the Buddha,
"accurately and in sequence,
the taxonomy of living creatures,
for species are indeed diverse.

8.6 Know the grass and trees,
though they lack self-awareness.
They're defined by birth,
for species are indeed diverse.[722]

8.10 Next there are bugs that crawl or fly,[723]
and so on, to ants and termites.
They're defined by birth,
for species are indeed diverse.

8.14 Know the quadrupeds, too,
both small and large.
They're defined by birth,
for species are indeed diverse.

8.18 Know, too, the long-backed snakes,
crawling on their bellies.
They're defined by birth,
for species are indeed diverse.

8.22 Next know the fish,
whose habitat is the water.
They're defined by birth,

722. Notice how the Buddha responds clearly, yet without immediately contradicting either of them. As usual, he begins by identifying common ground, pointing out things that they will all agree on.
723. *Paṭaṅga* is either "cloth-goer" (in reference to an insect's wings) or "flyer" (from *pata*, "fly"). It seems to be a general term for flying insects, including moths, butterflies, grasshoppers, etc. It is often, as here, paired with *kīṭa*, suggesting a contrast between earthbound and airborne bugs.

for species are indeed diverse.

Next know the birds, 8.26
winged chariots in flight.
They're defined by birth,
for species are indeed diverse.

While the differences between these species 9.1
are defined by birth,
the differences between humans
are not defined by birth.[724]

Not by hair nor by head, 9.5
not by ear nor by eye,
not by mouth nor by nose,
not by lips nor by eyebrow,

not by shoulder nor by neck, 9.9
not by belly nor by back,
not by buttocks nor by breast,
not by groin nor by genitals,

not by hands nor by feet, 9.13
not by fingers nor by nails,
not by knees nor by thighs,
not by color nor by voice:
none of these are defined by birth
as it is for other species.

In specific human bodies 9.19
you can't find such distinctions.
The distinctions among humans

724. Having established common ground, the Buddha does not hesitate to disagree with Bhāradvāja.

are spoken of by convention.[725]

10.1 Anyone among humans
who lives off keeping cattle:
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a farmer, not a brahmin.

10.5 Anyone among humans
who lives off various professions:[726]
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a professional, not a brahmin.

10.9 Anyone among humans
who lives off trade:
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a trader, not a brahmin.

10.13 Anyone among humans
who lives off serving others:
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a servant, not a brahmin.

10.17 Anyone among humans
who lives off stealing:
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a bandit, not a brahmin.

10.21 Anyone among humans
who lives off archery:
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a warrior, not a brahmin.

725. The Buddha rejects any essentialist theory of human differentiation.
726. *Sippa* here is usually translated "craft", but this refers primarily to occupations making things by hand. In DN 2 there is a long list of *sippa*, only a few of which are "crafts". "Profession" fits better.

Anyone among humans 10.25
who lives off priesthood:
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a sacrificer, not a brahmin.[727]

Anyone among humans 10.29
who taxes village and nation,[728]
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as a ruler, not a brahmin.

I don't call someone a brahmin 11.1
after the mother's womb they're born from.
If they still have attachments,
they're just someone who says 'worthy'.[729]
Having nothing, taking nothing:
that's who I declare a brahmin.[730]

Having cut off all fetters 11.7
they have no anxiety;
they've slipped their chains and are detached:

727. The Buddha has been carefully leading up to this rhetorical thrust: a true brahmin is not one who performs the traditional rituals revered by the brahmins.
728. Read *bhuñjati* at MN 98:10.30 with *yathābhuttañca bhuñjatha* at DN 17:1.9.4, DN 26:6.7, and MN 129:35.7. Translators have rendered these with "eat", "enjoy", or "govern". But compare the archaic English "use" meaning "the benefit or profit of lands". Thus *yathābhuttañca bhuñjatha* means "use as has been used", i.e. "maintain the current level of taxation".
729. *Bho* ("worthy") is a term of address used by brahmins when speaking to one another or to mendicants.
730. The Buddha categorically rejects Bhāradvāja's genealogical understanding of a brahmin and endorses Vāseṭṭha's understanding in terms of good conduct. Nonetheless, while a brahmin must have good conduct, the true meaning of the word lies in liberation and transcendence. In this, the Buddha's position approaches that of Yājñavalkya, who argued that a brahmin, knowing the Self, gives up desire for sons, wealth, and heaven and wanders seeking alms (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.5.1); ultimately, only one who knows the imperishable is a brahmin (3.8.10).

that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.11 They've cut the strap and harness,
the halter and bridle too;
with cross-bar lifted, they're awakened:[731]
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.15 Abuse, killing, caging:
they endure these without anger.
Patience is their powerful army:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.19 Not irritable or pretentious,
dutiful in precepts and observances,
tamed, bearing their final body:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.23 Like water from a lotus leaf,
like a mustard seed off the point of a pin,
sensual pleasures slip off them:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.27 They understand for themselves
the end of suffering in this life;
with burden put down, detached:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.31 Deep in wisdom, intelligent,
expert in the path and what is not the path;[732]
arrived at the highest goal:

731. For an explanation of the "cross-bar", see MN 22:31.1 and note.

732. The compound *maggāmagga* can be read either as "what is the path and what is not the path", or as "the variety of paths" (compare *phalāphala*, "all sorts of fruit"). However, this was the central topic of conversation between Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja at DN 13:3.1, where they were concerned to distinguish one path as correct.

that's who I declare a brahmin.

Mixing with neither 11.35
householders nor the homeless;
a migrant with no bastion, few in wishes:[733]
that's who I declare a brahmin.

They've laid aside violence 11.39
against creatures firm and frail;
not killing or making others kill:
that's who I declare a brahmin.[734]

Not fighting among those who fight, 11.43
quenched among those who have taken up arms,
not grasping among those who grasp:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

They've discarded greed and hate, 11.47
along with conceit and contempt,
like a mustard seed off the point of a pin:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

The words they utter 11.51
are polished, informative, and true,
and don't offend anyone:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

They don't steal anything in the world, 11.55
long or short,

733. The "migrant with no shelter" (*anokasārī*) is defined at SN 22.3:5.1 as one free of attachments.

734. A brahmin is identified with Mitra, the "friendly" god of alliances (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 4.1.4). The Brahmanical tradition endorses harmlessness except in the sacrifice (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.15.1), which can be read as either sheer hypocrisy or as a sacred and effective limitation on the scope of killing. Either way, the Buddha made no such exception.

tiny or huge, beautiful or ugly:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.59 They have no hope[735]
for this world or the next;
with no need for hope, detached:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.63 They have no clinging,
knowledge has freed them of indecision,
they've arrived at the objective of freedom from death:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.67 They've escaped the chain
of both good and bad deeds;
sorrowless, stainless, pure:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.71 Pure as the spotless moon,
clear and undisturbed,
they've ended relish for rebirth:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.75 They've got past this grueling swamp
of delusion, transmigration.
Meditating in stillness, free of indecision,
they have crossed over to the far shore.
They're quenched by not grasping:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.81 They've given up sensual pleasures,
and have gone forth from lay life;

735. *Āsā* is probably the Pali word that comes closest to "hope" in the sense of longing for a positive destiny in the future. Hope is not a virtue in Buddhism, which is focused on what is visible in the present.

they've ended rebirth in the sensual realm:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

They've given up craving, 11.85
and have gone forth from lay life;
they've ended craving to be reborn:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

They've thrown off the human yoke, 11.89
and slipped out of the heavenly yoke;
unyoked from all yokes:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

Giving up desire and discontent, 11.93
they're cooled and free of attachments;
a hero, master of the whole world:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

They know the passing away 11.97
and rebirth of all beings;
unattached, holy, awakened:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

Gods, centaurs, and humans 11.101
don't know their destiny;
the perfected ones with defilements ended:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

They have nothing before or after, 11.105
or even in between.
Having nothing, taking nothing:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

Captain of the herd, excellent hero, 11.109
great seer and victor;
unstirred, washed, awakened:

that's who I declare a brahmin.

11.113 They who know their past lives,
see heaven and places of loss,
and have attained the end of rebirth:
that's who I declare a brahmin.

12.1 For name and clan are formulated
as mere convention in the world.
Produced by mutual agreement,
they're formulated in each case.

12.5 For a long time this misconception
has prejudiced those who don't understand.
Ignorant, they declare
that one is a brahmin by birth.

12.9 You're not a brahmin by birth,
nor by birth a non-brahmin.
You're a brahmin by your deeds,
and by deeds a non-brahmin.[736]

12.13 You're a farmer by your deeds,
by deeds you're a professional;
you're a trader by your deeds,
by deeds are you a servant;

12.17 you're a bandit by your deeds,
by deeds you're a warrior;
you're a sacrificer by your deeds,
by deeds you're a ruler.

736. The Buddha comes down on Vāseṭṭha's side, as also at Snp 1.7:24.4. Despite this definitive statement, the Buddha goes on to indicate the limits of deeds.

In this way the astute regard deeds 13.1
in accord with truth.
Seeing dependent origination,
they're expert in deeds and their results.

Deeds make the world go on, 13.5
deeds make people go on;
sentient beings are bound by deeds,
like a moving chariot's linchpin.

By fervor and spiritual practice, 13.9
by restraint and by self-control:
that's how to become a brahmin,
this is the supreme brahmin.[737]

Accomplished in the three knowledges, 13.13
peaceful, with rebirth ended,
know them, Vāseṭṭha,
as the Divinity and Sakka to the wise."[738]

When he had spoken, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja said to him, "Ex- 14.1
cellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. We go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life."

737. The text implies that a "supreme brahmin" is one who has transcended all deeds, for they bind one to transmigration.
738. A liberated person is revered in Buddhism like God in theistic religions.

MN 99

With Subha

Subhasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time the student Subha, Todeyya's son, was residing in Sāvatthī at a certain householder's home on some business.[739] Then Subha said to that householder, "Householder, I have heard that[740] Sāvatthī does not lack for perfected ones. What ascetic or brahmin might we pay homage to today?"

2.6 "Sir, the Buddha is staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. You can pay homage to him."

3.1 Acknowledging that householder, Subha went to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

739. The same Subha later met the Buddha in MN 135, where he asked about kamma, and, following the Buddha's passing, met with Ānanda in DN 10. | Subha's father Todeyya was a prominent brahmin, often mentioned alongside Pokkharasāti. The two apparently lived not far from each other, as, according to the commentary, Todeyya was named for his village of Tudi outside of Sāvatthī (see Pāṇini's Aṣṭādhyāyī 4.3.94).

740. This passage suggests this was Subha's first meeting with the Buddha.

"Worthy Gotama, the brahmins say: 'Laypeople succeed in the system of the skillful teaching, not renunciates.'[741] What do you say about this?" 4.1

"On this point, student, I speak after analyzing the question,[742] not one-sidedly. I don't praise wrong practice for either laypeople or renunciates. Because of wrong practice, neither laypeople nor renunciates succeed in the system of the skillful teaching. I praise right practice for both laypeople and renunciates. Because of right practice, both laypeople and renunciates succeed in the system of the skillful teaching." 4.4

"Worthy Gotama, the brahmins say: 'Since the work of the lay life has many obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings it is very fruitful.[743] But since the work of the renunciate has few obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings it is not very fruitful.' What do you say about this?" 5.1

"On this point, too, I speak after analyzing the question, not one-sidedly. Some work has many obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it fails it's not very fruitful. Some work has many obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it succeeds it is very fruitful. Some work has few obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it fails it's not very fruitful. Some work has few obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it succeeds it is very fruitful. 5.5

741. The "the system of the skillful teaching" (or perhaps "principle", *ñāyaṁ dhammaṁ kusalaṁ*), though attributed to the brahmins, is a very Buddhist-sounding phrase; I have not been able to identify anything similar in Brahmanical texts. The sentiment, however, is Brahmanical, since Vedism was for a long time practiced by householders, and the renunciate path advocated by Yājñavalkya was still controversial (see eg. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22).

742. "One who speaks after analyzing the question" is *vibhajjavāda*, a term that in later years characterized the Buddha's teachings as a whole, or else a school or group of schools of whom the Sri Lankan Theravāda was one. The term is also used in Jainism (Sūyagaḍa 14.22).

743. Compare passages such as AN 3.60:4.2, DN 5:23.1, and AN 5.96:1.3.

6.1 And what work has many obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it fails it's not very fruitful? Farming. And what work has many obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it succeeds it is very fruitful? Again, it is farming. And what work has few obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it fails it's not very fruitful? Trade. And what work has few obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and when it succeeds it is very fruitful? Again, it's trade.

7.1 The lay life is like farming in that it's work with many obligations and when it fails it's not very fruitful; but when it succeeds it is very fruitful. The renunciate life is like trade in that it's work with few obligations and when it fails it's not very fruitful; but when it succeeds it is very fruitful."

8.1 "Worthy Gotama, the brahmins prescribe five things for making merit and succeeding in the skillful."

8.3 "If you don't mind, please explain these in this assembly."

8.5 "It's no trouble when good fellows such as yourself are sitting here."

8.6 "Well, speak then, student."

9.1 "Worthy Gotama, truth is the first thing. Fervor is the second thing.[744] Chastity is the third thing. Recitation is the fourth thing. Generosity is the fifth thing. These are the five things that the brahmins prescribe for making merit and succeeding in the skillful. What do you say about this?"

9.8 "Well, student, is there even a single one of the brahmins who says this:[745] 'I declare the result of these five things after realizing it with my own insight'?"

744. Given that this is said to be a practice for householders, it would seem that *tapas* here means "fervor" rather than "mortification". | A somewhat similar list of four things is found at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.22: a brahmin realizes the Self by means of study of Vedas, sacrifice, generosity, and the fervor of fasting (*vedānuvacanena … yajñena dānena tapasānāśakena*). Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.5.3 further identifies fasting with *brahmacariya* and living in the forest.

745. Compare MN 95:13.1.

"No, worthy Gotama." 9.10

"Well, is there even a single tutor of the brahmins, or a tutor's 9.11
tutor, or anyone back to the seventh generation of tutors, who says this: 'I declare the result of these five things after realizing it with my own insight'?"

"No, worthy Gotama." 9.13

"Well, what of the ancient seers of the brahmins, namely Aṭṭhaka, 9.14
Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamadaggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu? They were the authors and propagators of the hymns. Their hymnal was sung and propagated and compiled in ancient times; and these days, brahmins continue to sing and chant it, chanting what was chanted and teaching what was taught. Did even they say: 'We declare the result of these five things after realizing it with our own insight'?"

"No, worthy Gotama." 9.17

"So, student, it seems that there is not a single one of the brahmins, 9.18
not even anyone back to the seventh generation of tutors, nor even the ancient seers of the brahmins who says: 'We declare the result of these five things after realizing it with our own insight.'

Suppose there was a queue of blind men, each holding the one in 9.25
front: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. In the same way, it seems to me that the brahmins' statement turns out to be comparable to a queue of blind men: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see."

When he said this, Subha became angry and upset with the Bud- 10.1
dha because of the simile of the queue of blind men. He even attacked and badmouthed the Buddha himself, saying, "The ascetic Gotama will be worsted!" He said to the Buddha:

"Worthy Gotama, the brahmin Pokkharasāti Upamañña of the 10.3
Subhaga Forest says:[746] 'This is exactly what happens with some as-

746. The Subhaga Forest outside Ukkaṭṭha was the scene of cosmic drama demonstrating the superiority of the Buddha over the brahmins, likely chosen because it was Pokkharasāti's home (MN 1:1.2, MN 49:2.1; see also DN

cetics and brahmins. They claim to have a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. But their statement turns out to be a joke—mere words, vacuous and hollow. For how on earth can a human being know or see or realize a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones? That is not possible.'"[747]

11.1 "But student, does Pokkharasāti understand the minds of all these ascetics and brahmins, having encompassed them with his mind?"

11.2 "Worthy Gotama, Pokkharasāti doesn't even understand the mind of his own bonded maid Puṇṇikā, so how could he know all those ascetics and brahmins?"

12.1 "Suppose there was a person blind from birth. They couldn't see sights that are dark or bright, or blue, yellow, red, or magenta. They couldn't see even and uneven ground, or the stars, or the moon and sun. They'd say: 'There's no such thing as dark and bright sights, and no one who sees them. There's no such thing as blue, yellow, red, magenta, even and uneven ground, stars, moon and sun, and no one who sees these things. I don't know it or see it, therefore it doesn't exist.'[748] Would they be speaking rightly?"

14:3.29). | The Upamañña clan (*gotra*) traces to Upamanyu Vāsiṣṭha, the author of three verses in homage of Indra and Soma (Rig Veda 9.97.13–15). The association with Soma worship continued with Prācīnaśāla son of Upamanyu, who worshiped the Self in the sky only, which, though limited, brings an abundance of Soma libations and food in the family (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.12; cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.3). An Upamanyu descendant hailed from Kamboja (Persia); his teacher Madragāra Śauṅgāyani was from the neighboring Madra (Vaṁśa-Brāhmaṇa 1.17). It is perhaps this Upamanyu who is cited for his linguistic expertise in Yāska's Nirukta (1.1, etc.). Insofar as any conclusions can be drawn from all this, it agrees with the sutta depiction of Pokkharasāti as a family man, devoted to Brahmanical traditions, and learned in the Vedas. Later, the Purāṇas would depict an Upamanyu as a devotee of Śiva.

747. This attitude sharply contrasts with DN 3:1.2.6, where he is inspired to hear of the Buddha's reputation for meditative insight. Presumably this was earlier. He may have grown more interested in the Buddha over time, as his reputation spread.

748. A logic still all too familiar today.

"No, worthy Gotama. There are such things as dark and bright sights, and one who sees them. There is blue, yellow, red, magenta, even and uneven ground, stars, moon and sun, and one who sees these things. So it's not right to say this: 'I don't know it or see it, therefore it doesn't exist.'" 12.14

"In the same way, Pokkharasāti is blind and sightless. It is quite impossible for him to know or see or realize a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. 13.1

What do you think, student? There are well-to-do brahmins of Kosala such as the brahmins Caṅkī, Tārukkha, Pokkharasāti, Jānussoṇi, and your father Todeyya. What's better for them: that their speech agrees or disagrees with the consensus of opinion?" 13.3

"That it agrees, worthy Gotama." 13.6

"What's better for them: that their speech is thoughtful or thoughtless?" 13.7

"That it is thoughtful." 13.8

"What's better for them: that their speech follows reflection or is unreflective?" 13.9

"That it follows reflection." 13.10

"What's better for them: that their speech is beneficial or worthless?" 13.11

"That it's beneficial." 13.12

"What do you think, student? If this is so, does Pokkharasāti's speech agree or disagree with the consensus of opinion?" 14.1

"It disagrees, worthy Gotama." 14.3

"Is it thoughtful or thoughtless?" 14.4

"Thoughtless." 14.5

"Is it reflective or unreflective?" 14.6

"Unreflective." 14.7

"Is it beneficial or worthless?" 14.8

"Worthless." 14.9

"Student, there are these five hindrances. What five? The hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These are the five hindrances. Po- 15.1

kkharasāti is obstructed, hindered, engulfed, and enveloped by these five hindrances.[749] It is quite impossible for him to know or see or realize a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

16.1 There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? There are sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. There are sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

16.9 Pokkharasāti enjoys these five kinds of sensual stimulation, tied, infatuated, attached, blind to the drawbacks, and not understanding the escape. It is quite impossible for him to know or see or realize a superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

17.1 What do you think, student? Which would have better flames, color, and radiance: a fire that depends on grass and logs as fuel, or one that does not?"

17.3 "If it were possible for a fire to burn without depending on grass and logs as fuel, that would have better flames, color, and radiance."

17.4 "But it isn't possible, except by psychic power. Rapture that depends on the five kinds of sensual stimulation is like a fire that depends on grass and logs as fuel. Rapture that's apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities is like a fire that doesn't depend on grass and logs as fuel.

17.7 And what is rapture that's apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion,

749. For *ophuṭo* compare *sabbavāriphuṭo* at MN 56:12.2. In both cases *phuṭ* appears in a string of terms from the root *var*, and is possibly a corrupted form, or at least has the same meaning.

while placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is rapture that's apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected 17.10
are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This too is rapture that's apart from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities.

Of the five things that the brahmins prescribe for making merit 18.1
and succeeding in the skillful, which do they say is the most fruitful?"

"Generosity." 18.2

"What do you think, student? Suppose a brahmin was setting 19.1
up a big sacrifice. Then two brahmins came along, thinking, "We shall participate in the big sacrifice of the brahmin named so-and-so." Then one of those brahmins thought: 'Oh, I hope that I alone get the best seat, the best drink, and the best almsfood in the refectory, not some other brahmin.'[750] But it's possible that some other brahmin gets the best seat, the best drink, and the best almsfood in the refectory. Thinking, 'Some other brahmin has got the best seat, the best drink, the best almsfood,' they get angry and upset. What do the brahmins say is the result of this?"

"Worthy Gotama, brahmins don't give gifts so that others will 19.11
get angry and upset. Rather, they only give gifts that are born from sympathy."

"In that case, isn't this a sixth ground for making merit, namely, 19.14
being born from sympathy?"

"In that case, this is a sixth ground for making merit,[751] namely, 19.16
being born from sympathy."

750. The same thought can occur to mendicants too (MN 5:15.2).

751. Accepting his initial idea of generosity in deed, the Buddha leads Subha to agree on the importance of inner motivation as well.

20.1 "Of the five things that the brahmins prescribe for making merit and succeeding in the skillful, where do you usually find them: among laypeople or renunciates?"

20.3 "Mostly among renunciates, and less so among lay people. For a layperson has many obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and they can't always tell the truth, be fervent, be chaste, rehearse a lot, or be very generous. But a renunciate has few obligations, duties, issues, and undertakings, and they can always tell the truth, be fervent, be chaste, rehearse a lot, and be very generous. Of the five things that the brahmins prescribe for making merit and succeeding in the skillful, I usually find them among renunciates, and less so among laypeople."

21.1 "I say that the five things prescribed by the brahmins for making merit are prerequisites of the mind for developing a mind free of enmity and ill will.

21.3 Take a mendicant who speaks the truth. Thinking, 'I'm truthful,' they find inspiration in the meaning and the teaching, and find joy connected with the teaching. And I say that joy connected with the skillful is a prerequisite of the mind for developing a mind free of enmity and ill will.

21.7 Take a mendicant who is fervent … is chaste … rehearses a lot … and is very generous. Thinking, 'I'm very generous,' they find inspiration in the meaning and the teaching, and find joy connected with the teaching. And I say that joy connected with the skillful is a prerequisite of the mind for developing a mind free of enmity and ill will. I say that these five things prescribed by the brahmins for making merit are prerequisites of the mind for developing a mind free of enmity and ill will."

22.1 When he had spoken, Subha said to him, "Worthy Gotama, I have heard that the ascetic Gotama knows a path to company with divinity."

22.4 "What do you think, student? Is the village of Naḷakāra nearby?"

22.6 "Yes it is, sir."

"What do you think, student? Suppose a person was born and raised in Naḷakāra. And as soon as they left the town some people asked them for the road to Naḷakāra. Would they be slow or hesitant to answer?" 22.7

"No, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because they were born and raised in Naḷakāra. They're well acquainted with all the roads to the village." 22.10

"Still, it's possible they might be slow or hesitant to answer. But the Realized One is never slow or hesitant when questioned about the realm of divinity or the practice that leads to the realm of divinity. I understand the Divinity, the realm of divinity, and the practice that leads to the realm of divinity, practicing in accordance with which one is reborn in the realm of divinity." 22.13

"Worthy Gotama, I have heard that the ascetic Gotama teaches a path to company with divinity. Please teach me that path."[752] 23.1

"Well then, student, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 23.4

"Yes, worthy sir," replied Subha. The Buddha said this: 23.5

"And what is a path to company with divinity? Firstly, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. When the heart's release by love has been developed like this, any limited deeds they've done don't remain or persist there. Suppose there was a powerful horn blower. They'd easily make themselves heard in the four quarters. In the same way, when the heart's release by love has been developed like this, any limited 24.1

752. As at DN 13:39.2. Sāriputta teaches a similar path at MN 97:31.3, but without being asked.

deeds they've done don't remain or persist there.[753] This is a path to company with divinity.

25-27.1 Furthermore, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of compassion …

25-27.2 They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing …

25-27.3 They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. When the heart's release by equanimity has been developed and cultivated like this, any limited deeds they've done don't remain or persist there. Suppose there was a powerful horn blower. They'd easily make themselves heard in the four quarters. In the same way, when the heart's release by equanimity has been developed and cultivated like this, any limited deeds they've done don't remain or persist there. This too is a path to company with divinity."

28.1 When he had spoken, Subha said to him, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha.[754] From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life. Well, now, worthy Gotama, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do."[755]

753. The mind in *jhāna* is so powerful that it effectively overrides any limited kamma, including ordinary good or bad deeds. Unless they have committed serious crimes with a fixed kammic result such as matricide, etc., the meditator will be reborn in a Brahmā realm.

754. He is said to have gone for refuge again in MN 135:21.4 and DN 10:2.37.9.

755. Echoing his earlier acknowledgment of the many duties of lay folk at MN 99:5.2.

"Please, student, go at your convenience." And then Subha approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. 29.1

Now at that time the brahmin Jānussoṇi drove out from Sāvatthī in the middle of the day in an all-white chariot drawn by mares. He saw the student Subha coming off in the distance, and said to him, "So, worthy Bhāradvāja, where are you coming from in the middle of the day?" 30.1

"Just now, good fellow, I've come from the presence of the ascetic Gotama." 30.5

"What do you think of the ascetic Gotama's lucidity of wisdom? Do you think he's astute?" 30.6

"Worthy sir, who am I to judge the ascetic Gotama's lucidity of wisdom? You'd really have to be on the same level to judge his lucidity of wisdom." 30.7

"Worthy Bhāradvāja praises the ascetic Gotama with high praise indeed." 30.9

"Who am I to praise the ascetic Gotama? He is praised by the praised as the best among gods and humans. The five things that the brahmins prescribe for making merit and succeeding in the skillful he says are prerequisites of the mind for developing a mind free of enmity and ill will." 30.10

When he had spoken, Jānussoṇi got down from his chariot, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and expressed this heartfelt sentiment three times, "King Pasenadi of Kosala is lucky, so very lucky that the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha is living in his realm!" 31.1

MN 100

With Saṅgārava

Saṅgāravasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. Now at that time a brahmin lady named Dhanañjānī was residing at Caṇḍalakappa. She was devoted to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. Once, she tripped and expressed this heartfelt sentiment three times:[756]

2.3 "Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

2.4 Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

2.5 Homage to him, the blessed one, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!"

3.1 Now at that time the student Saṅgārava was residing in Caṇḍalakappa. He was young, newly tonsured; he was sixteen years old. He had mastered the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies and ritual performance, their phonology and word classification, and the testaments as fifth. He knew them word-by-word, and their

756. A brahmin lady of the same name also trips and utters praise of the Buddha in SN 7.1. Nonetheless, most other details of the stories are different, including the location and the subsequent teaching. There, her husband gets angry and goes to confront the Buddha, but is converted by his teaching on the harm of anger. The historical relation between these two texts is unclear. Regardless, they do attest to the use of Buddhist invocations from an early date. A similar invocation is expressed for the Great Steward at DN 19:58.5.

grammar. He was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man.[757]

Hearing Dhanañjānī's exclamation, he said to her, "The brahmin 3.2
lady Dhanañjānī is a disgrace! Though brahmins proficient in the three Vedas are found, she will praise that shaveling, that fake ascetic."[758]

"But dearest boy, you don't understand the Buddha's ethics and 3.5
wisdom. If you did, you'd never think of abusing or insulting him."

"Well then, ma'am, let me know when the Buddha arrives in Ca- 3.7
ṇḍalakappa."

"I will, dearest," she replied. 3.8

And then the Buddha, traveling stage by stage in the Kosalan 4.1
lands, arrived at Caṇḍalakappa, where he stayed in the mango grove of the Todeyya brahmins.

Dhanañjānī heard that he had arrived. So she went to Saṅgārava 5.1
and told him, adding, "Please, dearest boy, go at your convenience."

"Yes, ma'am," replied Saṅgārava. He went to the Buddha and 5.5
exchanged greetings with him.[759] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

757. A "brahmin" Saṅgārava of Sāvatthī appears in a number of discourses, and his spiritual progression can be traced. He practiced purification in water (SN 7.21) and (apparently later) asked the Buddha about sacrifice (AN 3.60). He further asked how hymns are remembered (SN 46.55, AN 5.193). In all these discourses he was said to have gone for refuge at the end, as does the Saṅgārava of the current discourse. Finally he asks the more meaningful spiritual question about the near shore and far shore (AN 10.117, AN 10.169). It is possible that the teenage "student" (*māṇava*) Saṅgārava living at Caṇḍalakappa graduated and moved to nearby Sāvatthī where he became known as the "brahmin" Saṅgārava. This would only make sense, however, if we disregard the statements on going for refuge, as he clearly followed the Brahmanical path for quite some time. See too note on SN 46.55:2.2.

758. The relationship between Saṅgārava and Dhanañjānī is not specified in the text, but she was probably the wife of his brahmin teacher.

759. Text drops a *-ti*, apparently by mistake; *evaṁ bhoti* should be *evaṁ bhotīti*.

6.1 "Worthy Gotama, there are some ascetics and brahmins who claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life having attained perfection and consummation of insight in this life.[760] Where do you stand regarding these?"

7.1 "I say there is a disparity among those who claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life having attained perfection and consummation of insight in this life. There are some ascetics and brahmins who are oral transmitters. Through oral transmission they claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life. For example, the brahmins who are proficient in the three Vedas. There are some ascetics and brahmins who solely by mere faith claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life. For example, those who rely on logic and inquiry.[761] There are some ascetics and brahmins who, having directly known for themselves the principle regarding teachings not learned before from another, claim to have mastered the fundamentals of the spiritual life. I am one of those. And here's a way to understand that I am one of them.

9.1 Before my awakening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I thought: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' Some time later, while still with pristine black hair, blessed with youth, in the prime of life—though my mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces—I shaved off my hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.

760. For the phrase "having attained perfection and consummation of insight", see MN 77:15.6.

761. Elsewhere, reason and faith are regarded as two distinct means of knowledge (eg. MN 95:14.5), and their conflation here is probably a redaction error. In the Sanskrit parallel, faith applies to all the means of knowledge, in the sense that they have faith in those means. (Lixiang Zhang, *Das Śaṁkarasūtra*, 2004, cited in Anālayo, *Comparative Study* volume 2.)

Once I had gone forth I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him,[762] 'Reverend Kālāma, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.' 9.6

Āḷāra Kālāma replied, 'Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.' 9.8

I quickly memorized that teaching. As far as lip-recital and verbal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others. 9.11

Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Āḷāra Kālāma declares: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it." Surely he meditates knowing and seeing this teaching.' 9.13

So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him: 'Reverend Kālāma, to what extent do you say you've realized this teaching with your own insight?' When I said this, he declared the dimension of nothingness. 10.1

Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Āḷāra Kālāma who has faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Āḷāra Kālāma says he has realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it. 10.4

So I approached Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him, 'Reverend Kālāma, is it up to this point that you realized this teaching with your own insight, and declare having achieved it?' 10.12

'I have, reverend.' 10.14

'I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.' 10.15

'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that I've realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved 10.16

762. See MN 26:14.1ff. for notes.

it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, I've realized with my own insight, and declare having achieved it. So the teaching that I know, you know, and the teaching you know, I know. I am like you and you are like me. Come now, reverend! We should both lead this community together.'

10.23 And that is how my tutor Āḷāra Kālāma placed me, his pupil, on the same position as him, and honored me with high praise.

10.24 Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of nothingness.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed.

11.1 I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, I wish to lead the spiritual life in this teaching and training.'

11.3 Uddaka replied, 'Stay, venerable. This teaching is such that a sensible person can soon realize their own denomination with their own insight and live having achieved it.'

11.6 I quickly memorized that teaching. As far as lip-recital and verbal repetition went, I spoke the doctrine of knowledge, the elder doctrine. I claimed to know and see, and so did others.

11.8 Then it occurred to me, 'It is not solely by mere faith that Rāma declared: "I realize this teaching with my own insight, and live having achieved it." Surely he meditated knowing and seeing this teaching.'

11.11 So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, to what extent did Rāma say he'd realized this teaching with his own insight?' When I said this, Uddaka son of Rāma declared the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

11.14 Then it occurred to me, 'It's not just Rāma who had faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom; I too have these things. Why don't I make an effort to realize the same teaching that Rāma said he had realized with his own insight?' I quickly realized that teaching with my own insight, and lived having achieved it.

So I approached Uddaka son of Rāma and said to him, 'Reverend, had Rāma realized this teaching with his own insight up to this point, and declared having achieved it?' 12.1

'He had, reverend.' 12.3

'I too have realized this teaching with my own insight up to this point, and live having achieved it.' 12.4

'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions! So the teaching that Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it, you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it. The teaching that you've realized with your own insight, and dwell having achieved it, Rāma had realized with his own insight, and declared having achieved it. So the teaching that Rāma directly knew, you know, and the teaching you know, Rāma directly knew. Rāma was like you and you are like Rāma. Come now, reverend! You should lead this community.' And that is how my spiritual companion Uddaka son of Rāma placed me in the position of a tutor and honored me with high praise. 12.5

Then it occurred to me, 'This teaching doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' Realizing that this teaching was inadequate, I left disappointed. 12.13

I set out to discover what is skillful, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace. Traveling stage by stage in the Magadhan lands, I arrived at the town of Senā in Uruvelā. There I saw a delightful park, a lovely grove with a flowing river that was clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby was a village to resort to for alms. Then it occurred to me, 'This park is truly delightful, a lovely grove with a flowing river that's clean and charming, with smooth banks. And nearby there's a village to resort to for alms. This is good enough for striving for a gentleman wanting to strive.' So I sat down right there, thinking: 'This is good enough for striving.' 13.1

14.1 And then these three similes, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to me.[763] Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying in water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Bhāradvāja? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log lying in water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

14.7 "No, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because it's a green, sappy log, and it's lying in the water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated."

14.11 "In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who don't live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. They haven't internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the first example that occurred to me.

15.1 Then a second example occurred to me. Suppose there was a green, sappy log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Bhāradvāja? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

15.7 "No, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because it's still a green, sappy log, despite the fact that it's lying on dry land far from water. That person will eventually get weary and frustrated." "In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live withdrawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. But they haven't internally given up or stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of

763. See MN 36:17.1ff. for notes.

knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the second example that occurred to me.

Then a third example occurred to me. Suppose there was a dried 16.1
up, withered log, and it was lying on dry land far from the water. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. What do you think, Bhāradvāja? By drilling the stick against that dried up, withered log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

"Yes, worthy Gotama. Why is that? Because it's a dried up, with- 16.7
ered log, and it's lying on dry land far from water."

"In the same way, there are ascetics and brahmins who live with- 16.10
drawn in body and mind from sensual pleasures. And they have internally given up and stilled desire, affection, infatuation, thirst, and passion for sensual pleasures. Regardless of whether or not they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion, they are capable of knowledge and vision, of supreme awakening. This was the third example that occurred to me. These are the three similes, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, that occurred to me.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I, with teeth clenched and 17.1
tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, squeeze, squash, and scorch mind with mind?' So that's what I did, until sweat ran from my armpits. It was like when a strong man grabs a weaker man by the head or throat or shoulder and squeezes, squashes, and crushes them. In the same way, with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against the roof of my mouth, I squeezed, squashed, and crushed mind with mind until sweat ran from my armpits. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice the breathless ab- 18.1
sorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose. But then winds came out my ears making a severe noise, like the puffing of a blacksmith's bellows. My energy was roused up and

unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

19.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then severe winds ground my head, like a strong man was drilling into my head with a sharp point. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

20.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then I got a severe headache, like a strong man was tightening a strong leather strap around my head. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

21.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then severe winds carved up my belly, like a deft butcher or their apprentice was slicing my belly open with a sharp meat cleaver. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

22.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I keep practicing the breathless absorption?' So I cut off my breathing through my mouth and nose and ears. But then there was a severe burning in my body, like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. My energy was roused up and unflagging, and my mindfulness was established and lucid, but my body was disturbed, not tranquil, because I'd pushed too hard with that painful striving.

23.1 Then some deities saw me and said, 'The ascetic Gotama is dead.' Others said, 'He's not dead, but he's dying.' Others said, 'He's not

dead or dying. The ascetic Gotama is a perfected one, for that is how the perfected ones live.'

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I practice completely cutting 24.1
off food?'

But deities came to me and said, 'Good fellow, don't practice 24.3
totally cutting off food. If you do, we'll infuse heavenly nectar into your pores and you will live on that.'

Then it occurred to me, 'If I claim to be completely fasting while 24.7
these deities are infusing heavenly nectar in my pores, that would be a lie on my part.' So I refused those deities, saying, 'There's no need.'

Then it occurred to me, 'Why don't I just take a little bit of food 25.1
each time, a handful of broth made from mung beans, horse gram, chickpeas, or green gram?' So that's what I did, until my body became severely emaciated. Due to eating so little, my major and minor limbs became like the joints of an eighty-year-old or a dying man, my bottom became like a camel's hoof, my vertebrae stuck out like beads on a string, and my ribs were as gaunt as the broken-down rafters on an old barn. Due to eating so little, the gleam of my eyes sank deep in their sockets, like the gleam of water sunk deep down a well. Due to eating so little, my scalp shriveled and withered like a green bitter-gourd in the wind and sun. Due to eating so little, the skin of my belly stuck to my backbone, so that when I tried to rub the skin of my belly I grabbed my backbone, and when I tried to rub my backbone I rubbed the skin of my belly. Due to eating so little, when I tried to urinate or defecate I fell face down right there. Due to eating so little, when I tried to relieve my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hair, rotted at its roots, fell out.

Then some people saw me and said: 'The ascetic Gotama is black.' 26.1
Some said: 'He's not black, he's brown.' Some said: 'He's neither black nor brown. The ascetic Gotama has dingy skin.' That's how far the pure, bright complexion of my skin had been ruined by taking so little food.

Then it occurred to me, 'Whatever ascetics and brahmins have 27.1
experienced painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion—

whether in the past, future, or present—this is as far as it goes, no-one has done more than this. But I have not achieved any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones by this severe, grueling work. Could there be another path to awakening?'

28.1 Then it occurred to me, 'I recall sitting in the cool shade of a black plum 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 understanding: '*That* is the path to awakening!'

29.1 Then it occurred to me, 'Why am I afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities?' Then it occurred to me, 'I'm not afraid of that pleasure, for it has nothing to do with sensual pleasures or unskillful qualities.'

30.1 Then it occurred to me, 'I can't achieve that pleasure with a body so severely emaciated. Why don't I eat some solid food, some rice and porridge?' So I ate some solid food.

30.5 Now at that time the group of five mendicants were attending on me, thinking, 'The ascetic Gotama will tell us of any truth that he realizes.' But when I ate some solid food, they left disappointed in me, saying, 'The ascetic Gotama has become indulgent; he has strayed from the struggle and returned to indulgence.'

31-33.1 After eating solid food and gathering my strength, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, I entered and remained in the first absorption … As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I entered and remained in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption.

34.1 When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward recollection of past lives. I recollected many past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand

rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. And so I recollected my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

This was the first knowledge, which I achieved in the first watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute. 35.1

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understood how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 36-38.1

This was the second knowledge, which I achieved in the middle watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute. 36-38.3

When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. I truly understood: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' I truly understood: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements.' 39.1

Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When it was freed, I knew it was freed. 40.1

I understood: 'Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place.' 40.3

41.1 This was the third knowledge, which I achieved in the last watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and knowledge arose; darkness was banished and light arose, as happens for a meditator who is diligent, keen, and resolute."

42.1 When he had spoken, Saṅgārava said to the Buddha,[764] "The striving of the worthy Gotama was indeed assiduous and that of a true person,[765] since he is a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha. But worthy Gotama, do gods survive?"[766]

42.5 "I've understood about gods in terms of causes."[767]

42.7 "But worthy Gotama, when asked 'Do gods survive?' why did you say that you have understood about gods in terms of causes? That being so, is it not hollow and false?"[768]

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764. This final passage has been widely misunderstood. K.R. Norman ("The Buddha's View of Devas") argued that the passage is corrupt, and Bodhi, while not endorsing Norman's emendations, agrees. However, while there are difficulties in readings and interpretations, for the most part the Pali makes good sense. The opening showed Saṅgārava being overreactive and dogmatic, an impression reinforced here by his sudden changes of topic and misunderstandings. Note too that the Saṅgārava of AN 3.60 is evasive and a little rude, reminiscent of the prickly and unpredictable personality on display in the current sutta. I think the bulk of the difficulties simply represent a lively but somewhat chaotic exchange, although textual corruption cannot be ruled out. However, note that Sanskrit fragments indicate that in that version this discussion happened before the bulk of the sutta teachings. I agree with Anālayo that the Sanskrit form makes better sense (*Comparative Study*, volume ii, page 583).

765. Read *aṭṭhita* as *ā+ṭhita*, "assiduous"; see Ja 242:2.1 in the same sense, and compare Sanskrit *āsthita*. | I follow the variant *vata* rather than *vataṁ*, as exclamations with repeated *vata* are idiomatic.

766. The sense of *atthi devā* is established from such passages as MN 90:13.2.

767. *Ṭhānaso* here means "in terms of cause" or "by way of cause". It typically appears in the context of kamma and rebirth, followed by a verb of knowing, eg. *ṭhānaso hetuso vipākaṁ yathābhūtaṁ pajānāti*, "understands results (of kamma) in terms of grounds and causes" (MN 12:11.2). The Buddha's point is that the survival of gods is not a metaphysical absolute but depends on their kamma. | As usual, the Buddha answers such questions framed with *atthi* indirectly; see note on MN 90:13.2. | That *adhideva* means "about the gods" is established at MN 90:17.8.

768. Normally such a phrase would include a reference to the Buddha's speech (as eg. MN 80:3.15). But this is lacking in the Pali so I omit it.

"When asked 'Do gods survive', whether you reply 'Gods survive' or 'I've understood in terms of causes' a sensible person would come to the categorical conclusion in this matter that gods survive."[769] 42.9

"But why didn't you say that in the first place?"[770] 42.12

"It is agreed by the eminent in the world that gods survive."[771] 42.13

When he had spoken, Saṅgārava said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the Teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life." 43.1

769. This should be read in light of SN 12.15:2.2, where "survival" or "existence" (*atthita*) is understood by seeing "origin" (*samudaya*), while non-existence is understood by seeing "cessation". Here too the survival of gods is understood in terms of cause.

770. The Buddha's answer relied on the implication that since gods depend on causes they "survive" in the sense of being reborn, but not in the sense of eternal existence. Saṅgārava didn't follow the argument.

771. I think the Buddha felt that since it is agreed "by the eminent" (*uccena*)—which would include the brahmanical teachers of Saṅgārava—that gods are real, this could be assumed. So the Buddha's response was aimed at clarifying the *kind* of existence that gods have, namely, a conditioned and impermanent existence determined by the kamma. When faced with the same question at MN 90:13.2, the Buddha's immediate response was to ask for a clarification, so the confusion did not arise.

Colophon

The Translator

Bhikkhu Sujato was born as Anthony Aidan Best on 4/11/1966 in Perth, Western Australia. He grew up in the pleasant suburbs of Mt Lawley and Attadale alongside his sister Nicola, who was the good child. His mother, Margaret Lorraine Huntsman née Pinder, said "he'll either be a priest or a poet", while his father, Anthony Thomas Best, advised him to "never do anything for money". He attended Aquinas College, a Catholic school, where he decided to become an atheist. At the University of WA he studied philosophy, aiming to learn what he wanted to do with his life. Finding that what he wanted to do was play guitar, he dropped out. His main band was named Martha's Vineyard, which achieved modest success in the indie circuit.

A seemingly random encounter with a roadside joey took him to Thailand, where he entered his first meditation retreat at Wat Ram Poeng, Chieng Mai in 1992. Feeling the call to the Buddha's path, he took full ordination in Wat Pa Nanachat in 1994, where his teachers were Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Jayasaro. In 1997 he returned to Perth to study with Ajahn Brahm at Bodhinyana Monastery.

He spent several years practicing in seclusion in Malaysia and Thailand before establishing Santi Forest Monastery in Bundanoon, NSW, in 2003. There he was instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Theravada bhikkhuni order in Australia and advocating for women's rights. He continues to teach in Australia and globally,

with a special concern for the moral implications of climate change and other forms of environmental destruction. He has published a series of books of original and groundbreaking research on early Buddhism.

In 2005 he founded SuttaCentral together with Rod Bucknell and John Kelly. In 2015, seeing the need for a complete, accurate, plain English translation of the Pali texts, he undertook the task, spending nearly three years in isolation on the isle of Qi Mei off the coast of the nation of Taiwan. He completed the four main Nikāyas in 2018, and the early books of the Khuddaka Nikāya were complete by 2021. All this work is dedicated to the public domain and is entirely free of copyright encumbrance.

In 2019 he returned to Sydney where he established Lokanta Vihara (The Monastery at the End of the World).

Creation Process

Primary source was the digital Mahāsaṅgīti edition of the Pali Tipiṭaka. Translated from the Pali, with reference to several English translations, especially those of Bhikkhu Bodhi.

The Translation

This translation was part of a project to translate the four Pali Nikāyas with the following aims: plain, approachable English; consistent terminology; accurate rendition of the Pali; free of copyright. It was made during 2016–2018 while Bhikkhu Sujato was staying in Qimei, Taiwan.

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Middle Discourses

Bhikkhu Sujato

MIDDLE DISCOURSES

A lucid translation of the Majjhima Nikāya



translated and introduced by

Bhikkhu Sujato

VOLUME 3

MN 101–152

The Final Fifty

UPARIPAṆṆĀSA

SuttaCentral

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Summary of Contents

The Chapter Beginning With Devadaha (*Devadahavagga*) Diverse teachings.

MN 101: At Devadaha (*Devadahasutta*) The Buddha tackles a group of Jain ascetics, pressing them on their claim to be practicing to end all suffering by self-mortification. He points out a series of fallacies in their logic, and explains his own middle way.

MN 102: The Five and Three (*Pañcattayasutta*) A middle length version of the more famous Brahmajāla Sutta (DN1), this surveys a range of speculative views and dismisses them all.

MN 103: Is This What You Think Of Me? (*Kintisutta*) The Buddha teaches the monks to not dispute about the fundamental teachings, but to always strive for harmony.

MN 104: At Sāmagāma (*Sāmagāmasutta*) Hearing of the death of the Jain leader Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the Buddha encourages the Saṅgha to swiftly resolve any disputes. He lays down a series of seven methods for resolving disputes. These form the foundation for the monastic code.

MN 105: With Sunakkhatta (*Sunakkhattasutta*) Not all of those who claim to be awakened are genuine. The Buddha teaches how true spiritual progress depends on an irreversible letting go of the forces that lead to suffering.

MN 106: Conducive to the Imperturbable (*Āneñjasappāyasutta*) Beginning with profound meditation absorption, the Buddha goes on to deeper and deeper levels, showing how insight on

this basis leads to the detaching of consciousness from any form of rebirth.

MN 107: With Moggallāna the Accountant (*Gaṇakamoggallānasutta*) The Buddha compares the training of an accountant with the step by step spiritual path of his followers. But even with such a well explained path, the Buddha can only show the way, and it is up to us to walk it.

MN 108: With Moggallāna the Guardian (*Gopakamoggallānasutta*) Amid rising military tensions after the Buddha's death, Venerable Ānanda is questioned about how the Saṅgha planned to continue in their teacher's absence. As the Buddha refused to appoint a successor, the teaching and practice that he laid down become the teacher, and the Saṅgha resolves issues by consensus.

MN 109: The Longer Discourse on the Full-Moon Night (*Mahāpuṇṇamasutta*) On a lovely full moon night, one of the mendicants presents the Buddha with a series of questions that go to the heart of the teaching. But when he hears of the doctrine of not-self, another mendicant is unable to grasp the meaning.

MN 110: The Shorter Discourse on the Full-Moon Night (*Cūḷapuṇṇamasutta*) A good person is able to understand a bad person, but not vice versa.

The Chapter Beginning with One By One (*Anupadavagga*) Many of the discourses in this chapter delve into complex and analytical presentations of core teachings. It includes important discourses on meditation.

MN 111: One by One (*Anupadasutta*) The Buddha describes in technical detail the process of insight of Venerable Sāriputta. Many ideas and terms in this text anticipate the Abhidhamma.

MN 112: The Sixfold Purification (*Chabbisodhanasutta*) If someone claims to be awakened, their claim should be interrogated with a detailed series of detailed questions. Only if they can answer them clearly should the claim be accepted.

MN 113: A True Person (*Sappurisasutta*) The Buddha explains that a truly good person does not disparage others or feel superior because of their attainment.

MN 114: What Should and Should Not Be Cultivated (*Sevitabbāsevitabbasutta*) The Buddha sets up a framework on things to be cultivated or avoided, and Venerable Sāriputta volunteers to elaborate.

MN 115: Many Elements (*Bahudhātukasutta*) Beginning by praising a wise person, the Buddha goes on to explain that one becomes wise by inquiring into the elements, sense fields, dependent origination, and what is possible and impossible.

MN 116: At Isigili (*Isigilisutta*) Reflecting on the changes that even geographical features undergo, the Buddha then recounts the names of sages of the past who have lived in Mount Isigili near Rājagaha.

MN 117: The Great Forty (*Mahācattārīsakasutta*) A discourse on the prerequisites of right samādhi that emphasizes the interrelationship and mutual support of all the factors of the eightfold path.

MN 118: Mindfulness of Breathing (*Ānāpānassatisutta*) Surrounded by many well-practiced mendicants, the Buddha teaches mindfulness of breathing in detail, showing how it relates to the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

MN 119: Mindfulness of the Body (*Kāyagatāsatisutta*) This focuses on the first aspect of mindfulness meditation, the observation of the body. This set of practices, simple as they seem, have far-reaching benefits.

MN 120: Rebirth by Choice (*Saṅkhārupapattisutta*) The Buddha explains how one can make a wish to be reborn in different realms.

The Chapter Beginning with Emptiness (*Suññatavagga*) Named after the first discourses, which deal with emptiness, this chapter presents less analytical and more narrative texts.

MN 121: The Shorter Discourse on Emptiness (*Cūḷasuññatasutta*) The Buddha describes his own practice of the meditation on emptiness.

MN 122: The Longer Discourse on Emptiness (*Mahāsuññatasutta*) A group of mendicants have taken to socializing too much, so the Buddha teaches on the importance of seclusion in order to enter fully into emptiness.

MN 123: Incredible and Amazing (*Acchariyaabbhutasutta*) Venerable Ānanda is invited by the Buddha to speak on the Buddha's amazing qualities, and proceeds to list a series of apparently miraculous events accompanying his birth. The Buddha caps it off by explaining what he thinks is really amazing about himself.

MN 124: With Bakkula (*Bākulasutta*) Venerable Bakkula, regarded as the healthiest of the mendicants, explains to an old friend his strict and austere practice. The unusual form of this discourse suggests it was added to the canon some time after the Buddha's death.

MN 125: The Level of the Tamed (*Dantabhūmisutta*) A young monk is unable to persuade a prince of the blessings of peace of mind. The Buddha offers similes based on training an elephant that would have been successful, as this was a field the prince was familiar with.

MN 126: With Bhūmija (*Bhūmijasutta*) Success in the spiritual life does not depend on any vows you may or may not make, but on whether you practice well.

MN 127: With Anuruddha (*Anuruddhasutta*) A lay person becomes confused when encouraged to develop the "limitless" and "expansive" liberations, and asks Venerable Anuruddha to explain whether they are the same or different.

MN 128: Corruptions (*Upakkilesasutta*) A second discourse set at the quarrel of Kosambī, this depicts the Buddha, having failed to achieve reconciliation between the disputing mendicants, leaving the monastery. He spends time in the wilderness before encountering an inspiring community of practicing monks. There

he discusses in detail obstacles to meditation that he encountered before awakening.

MN 129: The Foolish and the Astute (*Bālapaṇḍitasutta*) A fool suffers both in this life and the next, while the astute benefits in both respects.

MN 130: Messengers of the Gods (*Devadūtasutta*) Expanding on the previous, this discourse contains the most detailed descriptions of the horrors of hell.

The Chapter on Analysis (*Vibhaṅgavagga*) A series of discourses presented as technical analyses of shorter teachings.

MN 131: One Fine Night (*Bhaddekarattasutta*) This discourse opens with a short but powerful set of verses extolling the benefits of insight into the here and now, followed by an explanation.

MN 132: Ānanda and One Fine Night (*Ānandabhaddekarattasutta*) The same discourse as MN 131, but spoken by Venerable Ānanda.

MN 133: Mahākaccāna and One Fine Night (*Mahākaccānabhaddekarattasutta*) The verses from MN 131 are explained in a different way by Venerable Mahakaccāna.

MN 134: Lomasakaṅgiya and One Fine Night (*Lomasakaṅgiyabhaddekarattasutta*) A monk who does not know the verses from MN 131 is encouraged by a deity to learn them.

MN 135: The Shorter Analysis of Deeds (*Cūḷakammavibhaṅgasutta*) The Buddha explains to a brahmin how your deeds in past lives affect you in this life.

MN 136: The Longer Analysis of Deeds (*Mahākammavibhaṅgasutta*) Confronted with an overly simplistic version of his own teachings, the Buddha emphasizes the often overlooked nuances and qualifications in how karma plays out.

MN 137: The Analysis of the Six Sense Fields (*Saḷāyatanavibhaṅgasutta*) A detailed analysis of the six senses and the relation to emotional and cognitive processes.

MN 138: A Summary Recital and its Analysis (*Uddesavibhaṅgasutta*) The Buddha gives a brief and enigmatic statement on the

ways consciousness may become attached. Venerable Mahākaccāna is invited by the mendicants to draw out the implications.

MN 139: The Analysis of No Strife (*Araṇavibhaṅgasutta*) Achieving peace is no simple matter. The Buddha explains how to avoid conflict through contentment, right speech, understanding pleasure, and not insisting on local conventions.

MN 140: The Analysis of the Elements (*Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta*) While staying overnight in a potter's workshop, the Buddha has a chance encounter with a monk who does not recognize him. They have a long and profound discussion based on the four elements. This is one of the most insightful and moving discourses in the canon.

MN 141: The Analysis of the Truths (*Saccavibhaṅgasutta*) Expanding on the Buddha's first sermon, Venerable Sāriputta gives a detailed explanation of the four noble truths.

MN 142: The Analysis of Religious Donations (*Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta*) When his step-mother Mahāpajāpatī wishes to offer him a robe for his personal use, the Buddha encourages her to offer it to the entire Saṅgha instead. He goes on to explain that the best kind of offering to the Saṅgha is one given to the dual community of monks and nuns, headed by the Buddha.

The Chapter on the Six Senses(*Saḷāyatanavagga*) Most discourses in this chapter deal with the six sense fields.

MN 143: Advice to Anāthapiṇḍika (*Anāthapiṇḍikovādasutta*) As the great lay disciple Anāthapiṇḍika lies dying, Venerable Sāriputta visits him and gives a powerful teaching on non-attachment.

MN 144: Advice to Channa (*Channovādasutta*) The monk Channa is suffering a painful terminal illness and wishes to take his own life.

MN 145: Advice to Puṇṇa (*Puṇṇovādasutta*) On the eve of his departure to a distant country, full of wild and unpredictable people, Venerable Puṇṇa is asked by the Buddha how he would respond if attacked there.

MN 146: Advice from Nandaka (*Nandakovādasutta*) When asked to teach the nuns, Venerable Nandaka proceeds by inviting them to engage with his discourse and ask if there is anything that needs further explanation.

MN 147: The Shorter Advice to Rāhula (*Cūḷarāhulovādasutta*) The Buddha takes Rāhula with him to a secluded spot in order to lead him on to liberation.

MN 148: Six By Six (*Chachakkasutta*) The Buddha analyzes the six senses from six perspectives, and demonstrates the emptiness of all of them.

MN 149: The Great Discourse on What Relates to the Six Sense Fields (*Mahāsaḷāyatanikasutta*) Explains how insight into the six senses is integrated with the eightfold path and leads to liberation.

MN 150: With the People of Nagaravinda (*Nagaravindeyyasutta*) In discussion with a group of householders, the Buddha helps them to distinguish those spiritual practitioners who are truly worthy of respect.

MN 151: The Purification of Alms (*Piṇḍapātapārisuddhisutta*) The Buddha notices Venerable Sāriputta's glowing complexion, which is the result of his deep meditation. He then presents a series of reflections by which a mendicant can be sure that they are worthy of their alms-food.

MN 152: The Development of the Faculties (*Indriyabhāvanāsutta*) A brahmin teacher advocates that purification of the senses consists in simply avoiding seeing and hearing things. The Buddha explains that it is not about avoiding sense experience, but understanding it and learning to not be affected by sense experience.

The Final Fifty

THE CHAPTER BEGINNING WITH DEVADAHA

MN 101

At Devadaha

Devadahasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near the Sakyan town named Devadaha.[1] There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.2

"Mendicants, there are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'Everything this individual person experiences—pleasurable, painful, or neutral—is because of past deeds.[2] So, due 2.4

1. Devadaha also appears in SN 22.2 and SN 35.134. The name is explained in the commentary as "royal lake", taking *deva-* as a term for kings, and *-daha* as equivalent to the Sanskrit *hrada*, "lake". However it is spelled *devadṛśa* in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya (San Mu Kd 17:16). *Dṛśa* means "sight, appearance", thus occupying a completely different semantic space than "lake". It is a Vedic term that commonly describes Agni's fiery gleam (Rig Veda 3.17.4, 6.10.4, 7.1.1, etc.). This suggests a Pali derivation from √*ḍah*, "to burn". This in turn recalls Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.4.1.14, which allegorically depicts the spread of Aryan culture eastward as Agni "burning" (*dadāha*) the lands, i.e. introducing the civilized practice of Vedic fire worship. I think the meaning of *devadaha* is, therefore, "burned by the god", or "place of the god's flame". It became famous in later Buddhism as the birthplace of the sisters Māyā and Mahāpajāpatī of the Koliyan clan, the Buddha's birth mother and foster mother. These details are not mentioned in early texts, however, where the town is said to be Sakyan rather than Koliyan. It is identified with Devdaha in the Rupandehi District of Nepal.

2. The view that all experiences are caused by past kamma is consistently rejected in the suttas (eg. AN 3.61:2.1, SN 36.21). This is reflected in the later Theravada commentaries, which describe five interacting *niyāmas*, or systems of natural law: seasons (*utu*), genetics (*bīja*), moral or immoral deeds (*kamma*), mind (*citta*), and principles of the teaching (*dhamma*). Nonetheless, the view that all experiences are caused by kamma is extremely common among modern Buddhists, and is often heard even from learned scholars. This is a harmful misunderstanding, as it has led to discrimination against the poor and disabled

to eliminating past deeds by fervent mortification, and not doing any new deeds, there's nothing to come up in the future.[3] With no future consequence, deeds end. With the ending of deeds, suffering ends. With the ending of suffering, feeling ends. And with the ending of feeling, all suffering will have been worn away.'[4] Such is the doctrine of the Jain ascetics.[5]

3.1 I've gone up to the Jain ascetics who say this and said, 'Is it really true that this is the venerables' view?' They admitted that it is.

4.1 I said to them, 'But reverends, do you know for sure that you existed in the past, and it is not the case that you did not exist?'

4.4 'No we don't, reverend.'

4.5 'But reverends, do you know for sure that you did bad deeds in the past?'

4.7 'No we don't, reverend.'

4.8 'But reverends, do you know that you did bad deeds of this type or that?'

4.10 'No we don't, reverend.'

4.11 'But reverends, do you know that so much suffering has already been worn away? Or that so much suffering still remains to be worn away? Or that when so much suffering is worn away all suffering will have been worn away?'

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in Buddhist countries. One point of confusion is that rebirth into a particular life is caused by kamma, so in that general sense, kamma is a necessary condition for having a life in which one can experience anything. But the feelings experienced in that life are caused by a variety of things, not necessarily by kamma. | Note the use of *purisapuggala* ("individual person") as a Jain idiom. See MN 35:10.7 and note, and SN 22.22 and notes.

3. Jains believed that karma was material, made up of particles. The practice of *tapas* ("fervent mortification") creates an intense bodily heat which burns off these karmic particles, freeing the soul (*jīva*) to shine in its intrinsic purity. | This passage also at MN 14:17.7.

4. The mention of "feeling" after "suffering" here is found consistently in Pali sources, but not in their parallels. | *Nijiṇṇa* ("worn away") is a characteristic Jain term that is sometimes applied to kamma in the suttas as well.

5. The idea that the elimination of karma leads to freedom from suffering is indeed a fundamental tenet of Jain thought.

'No we don't, reverend.' 4.13

'But reverends, do you know about giving up unskillful qualities 4.14
in this very life and embracing skillful qualities?'

'No we don't, reverend.' 4.16

'So it seems that you don't know any of these things. In that case, 5.1
it's not appropriate for the Jain venerables to declare this.

Now, supposing you did know these things. In that case, it would 6.1
be appropriate for the Jain venerables to declare this.

Suppose a man was struck by an arrow thickly smeared with poi- 7.1
son, causing painful feelings, sharp and severe. Their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat them. The surgeon would cut open the wound with a scalpel, causing painful feelings, sharp and severe. They'd probe for the arrow, causing painful feelings, sharp and severe. They'd extract the arrow, causing painful feelings, sharp and severe. They'd apply cauterizing medicine to the wound, causing painful feelings, sharp and severe. After some time that wound would be healed and the skin regrown. They'd be healthy, happy, autonomous, master of themselves, able to go where they wanted.

They'd think, "Earlier I was struck by an arrow thickly smeared 7.13
with poison, causing painful feelings, sharp and severe. My friends and colleagues, relatives and kin got a surgeon to treat me. At each step, the treatment was painful. But these days that wound is healed and the skin regrown. I'm healthy, happy, autonomous, my own master, able to go where I want."

In the same way, reverends, if you knew about these things, it 8.1
would be appropriate for the Jain venerables to declare this.

But since you don't know any of these things, it's not appropriate 9.1
for the Jain venerables to declare this.'

When I said this, those Jain ascetics said to me, 'Reverend, the Jain 10.1
ascetic of the Ñātika clan claims to be all-knowing and all-seeing, to know and see everything without exception, thus: "Knowledge and vision are constantly and continually present to me, while walking, standing, sleeping, and waking."

10.4 He says: "O reverend Jain ascetics, you have done bad deeds in a past life. Wear them away with these severe and grueling austerities. And when in the present you are restrained in body, speech, and mind, you're not doing any bad deeds for the future. So, due to eliminating past deeds by fervent mortification, and not doing any new deeds, there's nothing to come up in the future. With no future consequence, deeds end. With the ending of deeds, suffering ends. With the ending of suffering, feeling ends. And with the ending of feeling, all suffering will have been worn away." We endorse and accept this, and we are satisfied with it.'

11.1 When they said this, I said to them, 'These five things can be seen to turn out in two different ways in this very life.[6] What five? Faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, and acceptance of a view after deliberation. These are the five things that can be seen to turn out in two different ways in this very life. In this case, what faith in your teacher do you have when it comes to the past? What endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation?' When I said this, I did not see any legitimate defense of their doctrine from the Jains.

12.1 Furthermore, I said to those Jain ascetics, 'What do you think, reverends? At a time of intense exertion and striving do you suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion? Whereas at a time without intense exertion and striving do you not suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings due to exertion?'

12.5 'Reverend Gotama, at a time of intense exertion we suffer painful, sharp feelings due to exertion, not without intense exertion.'

13.1 'So it seems that only at a time of intense exertion do you suffer painful, sharp feelings due to exertion, not without intense exertion. In that case, it's not appropriate for the Jain venerables to declare: "Everything this individual person experiences—pleasurable, painful, or neutral—is because of past deeds. …"

6. Also at MN 95:14.3.

If at a time of intense exertion you did not suffer painful, sharp feelings due to exertion, and if without intense exertion you did experience such feelings, it would be appropriate for the Jain venerables to declare this. 14.1

But since this is not the case, aren't you experiencing painful, sharp feelings due only to your own exertion, which out of ignorance, unknowing, and confusion you misconstrue to imply:[7] "Everything this individual person experiences—pleasurable, painful, or neutral—is because of past deeds. …"?' When I said this, I did not see any legitimate defense of their doctrine from the Jains. 15.1

Furthermore, I said to those Jain ascetics, 'What do you think, reverends? If a deed is to be experienced in this life, can exertion make it be experienced in lives to come?'[8] 16.1

'No, reverend.' 16.3

'But if a deed is to be experienced in lives to come, can exertion make it be experienced in this life?' 16.4

'No, reverend.' 16.5

'What do you think, reverends? If a deed is to be experienced as pleasant, can exertion make it be experienced as painful?' 17.1

'No, reverend.' 17.2

'But if a deed is to be experienced as painful, can exertion make it be experienced as pleasant?' 17.3

'No, reverend.' 17.4

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7. This is a difficult sentence, and different translators handle it in quite different ways. I take *vipaccetha* as second plural optative, intended as a rhetorical question. The sense, I think, plays on the common meaning of "ripen", but in the sense "make something out of it that it isn't", i.e. (mis)construe.

8. Just as different deeds have differing characteristics, the results of those deeds also have different characteristics, which constrain the result in certain ways. This does not mean that they are fully deterministic, however. Compare the sprouting of a seed. A mango seed cannot give rise to an orange tree. And it has certain conditions under which it cannot sprout—if it is out of season, or the soil is inadequate, or there is no water, etc. Still, there are many different ways that it *can* sprout, and the tree and its fruit that result will vary according to conditions.

18.1 'What do you think, reverends? If a deed is to be experienced when ripe, can exertion make it be experienced when unripe?'

18.2 'No, reverend.'

18.3 'But if a deed is to be experienced when unripe, can exertion make it be experienced when ripe?'

18.4 'No, reverend.'

19.1 'What do you think, reverends? If a deed is to be experienced a lot, can exertion make it be experienced a little?'

19.2 'No, reverend.'

19.3 'But if a deed is to be experienced a little, can exertion make it be experienced a lot?'

19.4 'No, reverend.'

20.1 'What do you think, reverends? If a deed is to be experienced, can exertion make it not be experienced?'

20.2 'No, reverend.'

20.3 'But if a deed is not to be experienced, can exertion make it be experienced?'[9]

20.4 'No, reverend.'

21.1 'So it seems that exertion cannot change the way deeds are experienced in any of these ways. This being so, your exertion and striving are fruitless.'

22.1 Such is the doctrine of the Jain ascetics. Saying this, the Jain ascetics deserve rebuttal and criticism on ten legitimate grounds.[10]

22.3 If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of past deeds, clearly the Jains have done bad deeds in the past, since they now experience such intense pain. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of God Almighty's creation,[11] clearly the Jains were created by a bad God, since they now experience such intense pain. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because

9. This is a deed that has no opportunity to bear fruit, like a good seed on barren soil.

10. The "ten legitimate grounds" are, as explained below, the five grounds and their inversions. Whether or not the ground is true, the Jains deserve censure.

11. "God Almighty" is *issara*, the creator deity. See also AN 3.61.

of circumstance and nature,[12] clearly the Jains arise from bad circumstances, since they now experience such intense pain. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of the class of rebirth,[13] clearly the Jains have been reborn in a bad class, since they now experience such intense pain. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of exertion in this life, clearly the Jains exert themselves badly in this life, since they now experience such intense pain.[14]

The Jains deserve criticism whether or not sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of past deeds, or God Almighty's creation, or circumstance and nature, or class of rebirth, or exertion in this life. Such is the doctrine of the Jain ascetics. The Jain ascetics who say this deserve rebuttal and criticism on these ten legitimate grounds. That's how exertion and striving is fruitless. 22.13

And how is exertion and striving fruitful? It's when a mendicant does not bring suffering upon themselves; and they don't forsake legitimate pleasure, but they're not besotted with that pleasure.[15] They understand: 'When I actively strive I become dispassionate toward this source of suffering. But when I develop equanimity I become dispassionate toward this other source of suffering.' So they either actively strive or develop equanimity as appropriate. Through active striving they become dispassionate toward that specific source of suffering, and so that suffering is worn away. Through developing equanimity they become dispassionate toward that other source of suffering, and so that suffering is worn away. 23.1

Suppose a man is in love with a woman, full of intense desire and lust. Then he sees her standing together with another man, chatting, giggling, and laughing. 24.1

12. This is the Ājīvika doctrine of the Bamboo-staffed Ascetic Gosāla, for which see DN 2:20.6, MN 60:21.7, and AN 3.61. The mention of Ājīvika doctrines here and in the next section reflect their closeness with the Jains.

13. See AN 6.57 for a fuller discussion of this Ājīvika doctrine.

14. PTS and BJT editions have the expected *pāpadiṭṭhadhammūpakkamā*.

15. Literally, a mendicant "does not oppress the unoppressed self with suffering". For *addhabhūta* see SN 35.29.

24.3 What do you think, mendicants? Would that give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress for him?"

24.5 "Yes, sir. Why is that? Because that man is in love with that woman, full of intense desire and lust."

25.1 "Then that man might think: 'I'm in love with that woman, full of intense desire and lust. When I saw her standing together with another man, chatting, giggling, and laughing, it gave rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress for me. Why don't I give up that desire and lust for that woman?' So that's what he did. Some time later he sees her again standing together with another man, chatting, giggling, and laughing.

25.7 What do you think, mendicants? Would that give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress for him?"

25.9 "No, sir. Why is that? Because he no longer desires that woman."

26.1 "In the same way, a mendicant does not bring suffering upon themselves; and they don't forsake legitimate pleasure, but they're not besotted with that pleasure. They understand: 'When I actively strive I become dispassionate toward this source of suffering. But when I develop equanimity I become dispassionate toward this other source of suffering.' So they either actively strive or develop equanimity as appropriate. Through active striving they become dispassionate toward that specific source of suffering, and so that suffering is worn away. Through developing equanimity they become dispassionate toward that other source of suffering, and so that suffering is worn away. That's how exertion and striving is fruitful.

27.1 Furthermore, a mendicant reflects: 'When I live as I please, unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline. But when I strive painfully, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow. Why don't I strive painfully?' So that's what they do, and as they do so unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow. After some time, they no longer strive painfully. Why is that? Because they have accomplished the goal for which they strived painfully.

28.1 Suppose a fletcher was heating an arrow shaft between two firebrands, making it straight and fit for use. After it's been made straight

and fit for use, they'd no longer heat it to make it straight and fit for use. Why is that? Because they have accomplished the goal for which they heated it.

In the same way, a mendicant reflects: 'When I live as I please, 29.5
unskillful qualities grow and skillful qualities decline. But when I strive painfully, unskillful qualities decline and skillful qualities grow. Why don't I strive painfully?' … After some time, they no longer strive painfully. That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful.

Furthermore, a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully 30.1
awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure.

A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or 31.1
someone reborn in a good family. They gain faith in the Realized One, and reflect: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?' After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

Once they've gone forth, they take up the training and livelihood 32.1
of the mendicants. They give up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings. They give up stealing. They take only what's given, and expect only what's given. They keep themselves clean by not thieving. They give up unchastity. They are chaste,

set apart, refraining from the vulgar act of sex. They give up lying. They speak the truth and stick to the truth. They're honest and dependable, and don't trick the world with their words. They give up backbiting. They don't repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, they reconcile those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people. They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial. They refrain from injuring plants and seeds. They eat in one part of the day, abstaining from eating at night and food at the wrong time. They refrain from seeing shows of dancing, singing, and music. They refrain from attiring and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. They refrain from high and luxurious beds. They refrain from receiving gold and currency, raw grains, raw meat, women and girls, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants, cows, horses, and mares, and fields and land. They refrain from running errands and messages; buying and selling; falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence.

33.1 They're content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. They're like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves.

34.1 When they see a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would be-

come overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know an idea with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. When they have this noble sense restraint, they experience an unsullied bliss inside themselves.

They act with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent. 35.1

When they have this spectrum of noble ethics, this noble contentment, this noble sense restraint, and this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, they frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. After the meal, they return from almsround, sit down cross-legged, set their body straight, and bring mindfulness to the present. 36.1

Giving up covetousness for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. 37.1

Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

38.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful.

39.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful.

40.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful.

41.1 Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful.

42.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives, that is, one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. They remember: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was

named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 43.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understood how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: 'These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this— 44.1
purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.' They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of

defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'.

45.1 Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

45.3 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.' That too is how exertion and striving is fruitful. Such is the doctrine of the Realized One. Saying this, the Realized One deserves praise on ten legitimate grounds.

46.3 If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of past deeds, clearly the Realized One has done good deeds in the past, since he now experiences such undefiled pleasure. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of God Almighty's creation, clearly the Realized One was created by a good God, since he now experiences such undefiled pleasure. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of circumstance and nature, clearly the Realized One arises from good circumstances, since he now experiences such undefiled pleasure. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of the class of rebirth, clearly the Realized One was reborn in a good class, since he now experiences such undefiled pleasure. If sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of exertion in this life, clearly the Realized One exerts himself well in this life, since he now experiences such undefiled pleasure.

46.13 The Realized One deserves praise whether or not sentient beings experience pleasure and pain because of past deeds, or God Almighty's creation, or circumstance and nature, or class of rebirth, or exertion in this life. Such is the doctrine of the Realized One. Saying this, the Realized One deserves praise on these ten legitimate grounds."

46.25 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 102

The Five and Three

Pañcattayasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[16] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sā- 1.1
vatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, there are some ascetics and brahmins who speculate 2.1
and theorize about the final end, and propose various hypotheses concerning the final end. Some propose this: 'The self is percipient and healthy after death.'[17] Some propose this: 'The self is non-percipient and healthy after death.' Some propose this: 'The self is neither percipient nor non-percipient and healthy after death.' But some assert the annihilation, eradication, and nonexistence of an

16. This sutta is something of a "middle length" version of the better-known Brahmajālasutta (DN 1). Both these texts emphasize the importance of understanding the views of others. This is important, because we live and communicate in a cultural context, and our views are shared with those of others. Some of the views defined here are still current today, while others have disappeared in history. But we can still learn from the Buddha's method to learn how to approach different views today. | A Tibetan translation of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Pañcatraya Sūtra is discussed by Peter Skilling in *Mahāsūtras II*, pp. 469–511.

17. The first three are varieties of eternalism. | *Aroga* ("healthy") is explained by the commentary as "permanent" (*nicca*), drawing on the root sense of the word, "unbroken". However, *aroga* is always used in the sense "free of disease, well, healthy" (eg. MN 97:2.4), and this applies to the Brahmanical tradition as well as the Buddhist. Chandogya Upaniṣad 7.26.2 says that one who sees (the self) does not see death, they have no disease or pain. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.12 similarly says that one who sees the self will not suffer in the wake of the body, which Śaṅkāra explains, "Struggling with desires for himself, for his son, for his wife, and so on, he is born and dies again and again, and is diseased when his body is diseased."

existing being, while others propose extinguishment in this life.[18] Thus they assert an existent self that is healthy after death; or they assert the annihilation of an existing being; while some propose extinguishment in this life. In this way five become three, and three become five.[19] This is the summary recital of the five and three.

3.1 Now, the ascetics and brahmins who propose a self that is percipient and healthy after death describe it as formed, or formless, or both formed and formless, or neither formed nor formless. Or they propose a self of unified perception, or of diverse perception, or of limited perception, or of limitless perception. Or some among those who go beyond this propose universal consciousness, limitless and imperturbable.[20]

4.1 The Realized One understands this as follows. There are ascetics and brahmins who assert a self that is percipient and healthy after

18. "Extinguishment in the present life" sounds like the Buddhist view, but since it is collected here with wrong views, it refers to misapprehension of absorption as being Nibbāna (MN 102:24.1). This is similar to the five views of DN 1:3.19.1. DN 1 adds sensual pleasures as a kind of false Nibbāna; it also makes it explicit that it is the extinguishment of "an existing being". | In both suttas "extinguishment in the present life" is included with the views about the future, for unclear reasons. Skilling notes, however, that in the Pañcatraya Sūtra, "extinguishment in the present life" constitutes a separate category.

19. That is, there are five total propositions, of which the first three are varieties of eternalism, which if treated as a group, gives three kinds of views.

20. The Buddha subdivides the first kind of eternalist according to the kind of self that is envisaged. | The "form" of the self may be either "coarse" form such as a human body, or "subtle form" like the heaven realms. | A formless self is associated with formless attainments. | "Having form and being formless" is not meant as a paradox. It could mean that the self evolves or transitions through different states, sometimes having form, sometimes not. Or it could refer to something like different layers of sheaths of the self, where everything is the self, but may be lesser attributes of self. | Unified perception results from *jhāna*, diverse perception from sense experience. | Limited perception is associated with sense consciousness or a limited attainment of absorption, while limitless perception is associated with a limitless absorption. This seems to refer to the first formless attainment. | "Universal consciousness" (*viññāṇakasiṇa*) is equivalent to the second formless attainment, which is mentioned by both the Pali commentary and the Pañcatraya Sūtra.

death, describing it as formed, or formless, or both formed and formless, or neither formed nor formless. Or they describe it as of unified perception, or of diverse perception, or of limited perception, or of limitless perception. Or some, aware that 'there is nothing at all', propose the dimension of nothingness, limitless and imperturbable. They declare that this is the purest, highest, best, and supreme of all those perceptions, whether of form or of formlessness or of unity or of diversity.[21] 'That much is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.'[22] Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

Now, the ascetics and brahmins who assert a self that is non- 5.1
percipient and healthy after death describe it as formed, or formless, or both formed and formless, or neither formed nor formless.[23]

So they reject those who assert a self that is percipient and healthy 6.1
after death. Why is that? Because they believe that perception is a disease, a boil, a dart, and that the state of non-perception is peaceful and sublime.

The Realized One understands this as follows. There are ascetics 7.1
and brahmins who assert a self that is non-percipient and healthy after death, describing it as formed, or formless, or both formed and formless, or neither formed nor formless. But if any ascetic or brahmin should say this: 'Apart from form, feeling, perception, and choices, I will describe the coming and going of consciousness, its

21. This is the third formless attainment. | The fourth formless attainment, "neither perception nor non-perception" is so subtle that it cannot be considered an attainment with perception.

22. This describes the development of insight based on deep absorption. Even the most refined states are still conditioned and therefore "coarse" compared to Nibbāna.

23. The suttas occasionally mention the "non-percipient beings" (DN 1:2.31.1). The commentaries explain this as a realm of pure form, where consciousness is suspended for a long time. This is tricky to interpret in line with the Buddhist classes of existence, since such a state could not be considered "formless". A similar problem comes when the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception is considered to have form (MN 102:8.1). Such cases must refer to sectarian views that do not fit within the Buddhist system.

passing away and reappearing, its growth, increase, and maturity.'[24] That is not possible. 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

8.1 Now, the ascetics and brahmins who assert a self that is neither percipient nor non-percipient and healthy after death describe it as formed, or formless, or both formed and formless, or neither formed nor formless.

9.1 So they reject those who assert a self that is percipient and healthy after death, as well as those who assert a self that is non-percipient and healthy after death. Why is that? Because they believe that perception is a disease, a boil, a dart; that non-perception is a stupor; and that the state of neither perception nor non-perception is peaceful and sublime.[25]

10.1 The Realized One understands this as follows. There are ascetics and brahmins who assert a self that is neither percipient nor non-percipient and healthy after death, describing it as formed, or formless, or both formed and formless, or neither formed nor formless. Some ascetics or brahmins assert the embracing of that dimension merely through the conditioned phenomena of what ought be seen, heard, thought, and known. But that is said to be a disastrous approach.[26] For that dimension is said to be not attainable by means of

24. Also at SN 22.53:2.2, etc. | The process of rebirth is often described in terms of consciousness, as in dependent origination or, say, the "stream of consciousness" (DN 28:7.13). However, consciousness never exists by itself, but only in relation to the other aggregates. The case of the formless realm might seem an exception, yet even formless rebirth is dependent on form of the past, since the four "form" absorptions are the basis for the formless attainments. Thus while the formless realms can be described without reference to *present* form they cannot be described without reference to form at all.

25. This is the highest of the formless attainments. | "Stupor" is *sammoha*.

26. The commentary resolves the compound *diṭṭhasutamutaviññātabba* by applying the future passive participle *viññātabba* to the preceding items: *diṭṭhaviññātabbamattena sutaviññātabbamattena mutaviññātabbamattena*. However the same phrase occurs at SN 35.95:10.1 and AN 4.24:7.5, and in both cases the future passive sense is clearly meant to be distributed to each item. This grammat-

conditioned phenomena,[27] but only with a residue of conditioned phenomena.[28] 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

Now, the ascetics and brahmins who assert the annihilation, eradi- 11.1
cation, and nonexistence of an existing being reject those who assert a self that is healthy after death, whether percipient or non-percipient or neither percipient nor non-percipient. Why is that? Because they think: 'All of those ascetics and brahmins only propose their attachment to heading upstream:[29] "After death we shall be like this! After death we shall be like that!"

Suppose a trader was going to market, thinking: "With this, that 12.1
shall be mine! This way, I shall get that!" In the same way, those ascetics and brahmins seem to be like traders when they say:[30] "After death we shall be like this! After death we shall be like that!"' The Realized One understands this as follows. The ascetics and brahmins who assert the annihilation, eradication, and nonexistence of an existing being; from fear and disgust with substantial reality, they just keep running and circling around substantial reality.[31] Suppose a mutt on a leash was tethered to a strong post or pillar. It would

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ical form is characteristic of the epistemic tetrad from its origins (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.5, 4.5.6).

27. Cp. SN 14.11.

28. This "residue" is the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception itself.

29. For *uddhaṁ saraṁ* ("heading upstream") in the sense "heading for rebirth in a higher realm", compare *uddhaṁsoto* ("one who heads upstream"), a term for a non-returner.

30. This is a pointed criticism of those who approach spiritual life with a materialist mindset.

31. "Fear and disgust" is what in the second Noble Truth is called "craving for non-existence" (*vibhavataṇhā*). | "Substantial reality" (*sakkāya*) is the five aggregates that make up the three realms of existence, and which are grasped at as an "existing being" (*sato sattassa*).

just keeping running and circling around that post or pillar.[32] In the same way, those ascetics and brahmins, from fear and disgust with substantial reality, just keep running and circling around substantial reality. 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

13.1 Whatever ascetics and brahmins speculate and theorize about the final end, and propose various hypotheses concerning the final end, all of them propose one or other of these five topics.[33]

14.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who speculate and theorize about the first beginning, and propose various hypotheses concerning the first beginning. They propose the following, each insisting that theirs is the only truth and that everything else is wrong.[34] 'The self and the cosmos are eternal.'[35] 'The self and the cosmos are not

32. *Sā* (Sanskrit *śvan*) is a short form for "dog" from the same root as *soṇa*, *suvāna*, and *sunakha*, all of which are distantly related to English "hound". We also find the unrelated term *kukkura*, "dog". | This simile is also at SN 22.99:2.1.

33. This statement seems misplaced here, as the introduction included "extinguishment in the present life" which has not yet been discussed. Probably it should occur further down, perhaps at MN 102:25.1. | The use of *āyatana* here is unusual. It seems the commentary understood it to mean the full scope of the topics treated, including the introduction, detailed analysis, and conclusion.

34. "Theories of the past" are not mentioned in the introduction. In the Brahmajālasutta (DN 1), such theories are logically described *before* theories of the future. The theories of the past are similar to those of the Brahmajālasutta, but not identical, so they cannot have been simply copied over. These theories may have originally been mentioned in the introduction and listed at the start of the sutta, but displaced due to textual corruption. We have already seen in the preceding segment that corruption is likely at this point. Analayo discusses this issue in detail (*Comparative Study*, vol. ii, p. 597ff.).

35. See the four kinds of eternalism at DN 1:1.30.1. | The phrase "self and cosmos" (*attā ca loko ca*) refers to the Upaniṣadic view, where the Self is ultimately a contingent aspect of the divinity that is the cosmos. That is why they occur together, as their nature and fate is inseparable. This is not true of other philosophies, as for example where a "soul" is created in a pre-existing universe, or when the universe is felt to be impermanent but the soul is eternal.

eternal.'[36] 'The self and the cosmos are both eternal and not eternal.'[37] 'The self and the cosmos are neither eternal nor not eternal.'[38] 'The self and the cosmos are finite.'[39] 'The self and the cosmos are infinite.' 'The self and the cosmos are both finite and infinite.' 'The self and the cosmos are neither finite nor infinite.' 'The self and the cosmos are unified in perception.' 'The self and the cosmos are diverse in perception.' 'The self and the cosmos have limited perception.' 'The self and the cosmos have limitless perception.' 'The self and the cosmos experience nothing but happiness.' 'The self and the cosmos experience absolute suffering.' 'The self and the cosmos experience both happiness and suffering.' 'The self and the cosmos experience neither happiness nor suffering.'

15.1 Now, consider the ascetics and brahmins whose view is as follows. 'The self and the cosmos are eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is futile.' It's simply not possible for them to have personal knowledge of this that is pure and bright, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation. But in the absence of personal knowledge that is pure and bright, even the portion of knowledge they illuminate is

36. This implies that at some point in the past, the self and the world appeared, which the commentary equates with the two kinds of "origination by chance" of DN 1:2.30.1.

37. Compare the four kinds of "partial eternalism" (DN 1:2.1.1).

38. The commentary suggests that these are the "endless flip-floppers" of DN 1:2.23.1. That may be so, but they are characterized by the refusal to make a statement, whereas here we have a definite statement, even if the exact sense is unclear. As a rule, constructions of the "neither … nor" type point to a subtle state that does not fit a dualistic description. Perhaps it refers to a philosophy that words such as "eternal" are inadequate, because "eternal" means "live for an infinite time" whereas they believed in a destiny that transcends time.

39. These four views correspond to the same four "theories of the past" at DN 1:2.16.1. In addition, all the following items in this list are "theories of the future" at DN 1:2.38.7. Clearly it is possible to have similar views in relation to both the past and future. The classification of the finitude of the cosmos in relation to time seems puzzling, although in a relativistic universe time and distance are inextricably linked by the speed of light.

said to be grasping on their part.[40] 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

16.1 Now, consider the ascetics and brahmins whose view is as follows. The self and the cosmos are not eternal, or both eternal and not eternal, or neither eternal nor not-eternal, or finite, or infinite, or both finite and infinite, or neither finite nor infinite, or of unified perception, or of diverse perception, or of limited perception, or of limitless perception, or experience nothing but happiness, or experience absolute suffering, or experience both happiness and suffering, or experience neither happiness nor suffering. It's simply not possible for them to have personal knowledge of this that is pure and bright, apart from faith, endorsement, oral transmission, reasoned train of thought, or acceptance of a view after deliberation. But in the absence of personal knowledge that is pure and bright, even the portion of knowledge they illuminate is said to be grasping on their part. 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

17.1 Now, some ascetics and brahmins, letting go of theories about the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, enter and remain in the rapture of seclusion:[41] 'This is

40. The phrase "pure and bright" (*parisuddhe pariyodāte*) normally describes the fourth absorption. The argument here may be parsed as follows. Even in the highest form of consciousness it is not possible to directly know such things as whether the cosmos is infinite. Any such doctrine, therefore, must be inferred from experience through the five forms of unreliable knowledge starting with faith. They are therefore confidently asserting things of which they have no direct knowledge. Because of this, even the portion of genuine knowledge and insight their meditation has brought them is corrupted by attachment. | *Pariyodāta* ("bright") is glossed by the commentary as *pabhassara* ("radiant"). But "brighten" doesn't quite work here for the verbal form *pariyodapenti*, so I use "illuminate".

41. The following section illustrates how genuine experiences of deep meditation become misapprehended as "extinguishment in the present life". It begins

peaceful, this is sublime, that is, entering and remaining in the rapture of seclusion.' But that rapture of seclusion of theirs ceases. When the rapture of seclusion ceases, sadness arises; and when sadness ceases, the rapture of seclusion arises.[42]

It's like how the sunlight fills the space when the shadow leaves, 18.1
or the shadow fills the space when the sunshine leaves. In the same way, when the rapture of seclusion ceases, sadness arises; and when sadness ceases, the rapture of seclusion arises. The Realized One understands this as follows. This good ascetic or brahmin, letting go of theories about the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, enters and remains in the rapture of seclusion: 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, entering and remaining in the rapture of seclusion.' But that rapture of seclusion of theirs ceases. When the rapture of seclusion ceases, sadness arises; and when sadness ceases, the rapture of seclusion arises. 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

Now, some ascetics and brahmins, letting go of theories about 19.1
the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, going beyond the rapture of seclusion, enter and remain in pleasure not of the flesh.[43] 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, entering and remaining in pleasure not of the flesh.' But that pleasure not of the flesh of theirs ceases. When pleasure not of the

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with a lengthy and unique description of the absorptions, before specifying how grasping intervenes. | The "rapture of seclusion" includes the first two absorptions, which are characterized by rapture (*pīti*).

42. Upon emerging from the bliss of absorption, the mind experiences anew all the flavors of life, including sadness. Typically a meditator is happy and refreshed for a long time after a deep meditation. Still, there can be a sense of loss of the blissful state, and a melancholy reflection that that too is impermanent.

43. The "pleasure not of the flesh" (*nirāmisaṁ sukhaṁ*) is the third absorption, characterized by the ending of rapture and the persistence of pleasure (*sukha*). At SN 36.31:5.1 it is described as all the *jhānas* leading up to the third. The same sense is also at AN 6.45:24.3.

flesh ceases, the rapture of seclusion arises; and when the rapture of seclusion ceases, pleasure not of the flesh arises.

20.1 It's like how the sunlight fills the space when the shadow leaves, or the shadow fills the space when the sunshine leaves. … The Realized One understands this as follows. This good ascetic or brahmin, letting go of theories about the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, going beyond the rapture of seclusion, enters and remains in pleasure not of the flesh. 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, entering and remaining in pleasure not of the flesh.' But that pleasure not of the flesh of theirs ceases. When pleasure not of the flesh ceases, the rapture of seclusion arises; and when the rapture of seclusion ceases, pleasure not of the flesh arises. 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

21.1 Now, some ascetics and brahmins, letting go of theories about the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, going beyond the rapture of seclusion and pleasure not of the flesh, enter and remain in neutral feeling.[44] 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, entering and remaining in neutral feeling.' Then that neutral feeling ceases. When neutral feeling ceases, pleasure not of the flesh arises; and when pleasure not of the flesh ceases, neutral feelings arises.

22.1 It's like how the sunlight fills the space when the shadow leaves, or the shadow fills the space when the sunshine leaves. … The Realized One understands this as follows. This good ascetic or brahmin, letting go of theories about the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, going beyond the rapture of seclusion and pleasure not of the flesh, enters and remains in neutral feeling. 'This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, entering and remaining in neutral feeling.' Then that neutral feeling ceases. When neutral feeling ceases, pleasure not of the flesh arises; and

44. This is the fourth absorption.

when pleasure not of the flesh ceases, neutral feelings arises. 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

Now, some ascetics and brahmins, letting go of theories about 23.1
the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, go beyond the rapture of seclusion, pleasure not of the flesh, and neutral feeling. They regard themselves like this: 'I am at peace; I am quenched; I am free of grasping.'[45]

The Realized One understands this as follows. This good ascetic 24.1
or brahmin, letting go of theories about the first beginning and the final end, not fixating on the fetters of sensuality, goes beyond the rapture of seclusion, pleasure not of the flesh, and neutral feeling. They regard themselves like this: 'I am at peace; I am quenched; I am free of grasping.' Clearly this venerable speaks of a practice that's conducive to extinguishment.[46] Nevertheless, they still grasp at theories about the first beginning or the final end, or the fetters of sensuality, or the rapture of seclusion, or pleasure not of the flesh, or neutral feeling.[47] And when they regard themselves like this: 'I am at peace; I am quenched; I am free of grasping,' that's also said to be grasping on their part. 'All that is conditioned and crude. But there is the cessation of conditions—*that* is real.' Understanding this and seeing the escape from it, the Realized One has gone beyond all that.

But the Realized One has awakened to the supreme state of sub- 25.1
lime peace, that is, liberation by not grasping after truly understand-

45. The repeated "I am" (*ahamasmi*) emphasizes the conceit that reinforces the sense of self.

46. The practice of absorption leads to Nibbāna, but if the state of absorption itself is misapprehended as being Nibbāna, the misapprehension is a form of attachment.

47. This contrasts with the earlier statement that they had let go of views of the past and future before entering absorption. Perhaps they had had temporarily let them go, only for them to re-arise later. Or perhaps there is an editorial issue.

ing the six fields of contact's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape."[48]

25.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

48. The Brahmajālasutta also emphasizes how liberation from the "sixty-two" wrong views is achieved through insight into the "six fields of contact" (DN 1:3.72.1).

MN 103

Is This What You Think Of Me?

Kintisutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Kusinārā in the Forest of Offerings. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, is this what you think of me? 'The ascetic Gotama teaches the Dhamma for the sake of robes, almsfood, lodgings, or rebirth in this or that state.'"[49] 2.1

"No sir, we don't think of you that way." 2.3

"If you don't think of me that way, what then do you think of me?" 2.5

"We think of you this way: 'The Buddha is sympathetic and wants what's best for us. He teaches out of sympathy.'" 2.9

"So it seems you think that I teach out of sympathy. 2.12

In that case, each and every one of you should train in the things I have taught from my direct knowledge, that is: the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, the four right efforts, the four bases of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path. You should train in these things in harmony, appreciating each other, without dispute.[50] 3.1

49. *Bhavābhava* does not mean "existence and non-existence" but is a distributive compound, "this or that state of existence". Indian religious texts are full of discussions about different heavens and hells. The Buddha's goal is liberation, not rebirth in heaven.

50. These are the sets of practices later called the 37 *bodhiyapakkhiyā dhammā*, the "wings to awakening". Here they are presented as an essential summary of the Buddha's teachings. They form the backbone of the final book of the Saṁyuttanikāya, the Maggavagga (or Mahāvagga). It is likely that the Buddha was referring to the earliest recension of this text. They are found as a summary

4.1 As you do so, it may happen that two mendicants disagree about the teaching.

5.1 Now, you might think, 'These two venerables disagree on both the meaning and the phrasing.' So you should approach whichever mendicant you think is most amenable and say to them:[51] 'The venerables disagree on the meaning and the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how such disagreement on the meaning and the phrasing comes to be. Please don't get into a dispute about this.' Then you should approach whichever mendicant they think is most amenable among those who side with the other party and say to them: 'The venerables disagree on the meaning and the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how such disagreement on the meaning and the phrasing comes to be. Please don't get into a dispute about this.' So you should remember what has been incorrectly memorized as incorrectly memorized and what has been correctly memorized as correctly memorized.[52] Remembering this, you should speak on the teaching and the training.

6.1 Now, you might think, 'These two venerables disagree on the meaning but agree on the phrasing.' So you should approach whichever mendicant you think is most amenable and say to them:[53] 'The venerables disagree on the meaning but agree on the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how such disagree-

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of the Buddha's teachings at DN 16:3.50.5, DN 29:17.3, MN 104:5.3, and AN 8.19:17.2 = Ud 5.5:25.2.

51. "Meaning" is *attha*, the "purpose", "goal", or "benefit" of the teaching. "Phrasing" is *byañjana* (also spelled *vyañjana*), the "letter", "syllable", or "expression", with the root sense of "differentiating". Such passages show that concern for both aspects were present from the earliest times. | "Most amenable" is *suvacatara*, literally, "more easy to speak to".

52. When the source of the problem has been identified, it should be remembered so that it does not recur.

53. At AN 6.61:10.5 we see a group of monks discussing a verse of the Dhamma, with different interpretations, and the Buddha praises them as having all spoken well. Thus it is not that *any* different interpretation is wrong, but that *some* different interpretations conflict with the fundamental purpose of the teaching, the *attha*.

ment on the meaning and agreement on the phrasing comes to be. Please don't get into a dispute about this.' Then you should approach whichever mendicant they think is most amenable among those who side with the other party and say to them: 'The venerables disagree on the meaning but agree on the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how such disagreement on the meaning and agreement on the phrasing comes to be. Please don't get into a dispute about this.' So you should remember what has been incorrectly memorized as incorrectly memorized and what has been correctly memorized as correctly memorized. Remembering this, you should speak on the teaching and the training.

Now, you might think, 'These two venerables agree on the mean- 7.1
ing but disagree on the phrasing.' So you should approach whichever mendicant you think is most amenable and say to them: 'The venerables agree on the meaning but disagree on the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how such agreement on the meaning and disagreement on the phrasing comes to be. But the phrasing is a minor matter.[54] Please don't get into a dispute about something so minor.' Then you should approach whichever mendicant they think is most amenable among those who side with the other party and say to them: 'The venerables agree on the meaning but disagree on the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how such agreement on the meaning and disagreement on the phrasing comes to be. But the phrasing is a minor matter. Please don't get into a dispute about something so minor.' So you should remember what has been correctly memorized as correctly memorized and what has been incorrectly memorized as incorrectly memorized. Remembering this, you should speak on the teaching and the training.

54. One of the reasons why the phrasing is considered less important is that the Buddhist texts are constructed with a massive amount of redundancy. In any question of significance, a variation in a phrase or a word in one place is almost always clarified with reference to another passage.

8.1 Now, you might think, 'These two venerables agree on both the meaning and the phrasing.' So you should approach whichever mendicant you think is most amenable and say to them: 'The venerables agree on both the meaning and the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how they come to agree on the meaning and the phrasing. Please don't get into a dispute about this.' Then you should approach whichever mendicant they think is most amenable among those who side with the other party and say to them: 'The venerables agree on both the meaning and the phrasing. But the venerables should know that this is how they come to agree on the meaning and the phrasing. Please don't get into a dispute about this.' So you should remember what has been correctly memorized as correctly memorized. Remembering this, you should speak on the teaching and the training.

9.1 As you train in harmony, appreciating each other, without dispute, one of the mendicants might commit an offense or transgression.[55] In such a case, you should not be in a hurry to accuse them. The individual should be examined like this:[56] 'I won't be troubled and the other individual won't be hurt, for they're not irritable and acrimonious. They don't hold fast to their views, but let them go easily. I can draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful.' If that's what you think, then it's appropriate to speak to them.[57]

11.1 But suppose you think this: 'I will be troubled and the other individual will be hurt, for they're irritable and acrimonious. However, they don't hold fast to their views, but let them go easily. I can draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful. But

55. Namely, a transgression against the Monastic Code, the Vinaya. Such offenses are a collective ethical standard that require other monastics to resolve, at least by hearing a confession.

56. Vinaya is not meant to be applied legalistically or cruelly, but to uplift and reform. | Punctuation in Mahāsaṅgīti is incorrect. The following *iti* belongs on this line, as shown in the repetition below.

57. If the problem can be resolved without resorting to legal proceedings, it should.

for the other individual to get hurt is a minor matter. It's more important that I can draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful.' If that's what you think, then it's appropriate to speak to them.

But suppose you think this: 'I will be troubled but the other in- 12.1
dividual won't be hurt, for they're not irritable and acrimonious. However, they hold fast to their views, refusing to let go. Nevertheless, I can draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful. But for me to be troubled is a minor matter. It's more important that I can draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful.' If that's what you think, then it's appropriate to speak to them.

But suppose you think this: 'I will be troubled and the other 13.1
individual will be hurt, for they're irritable and acrimonious. And they hold fast to their views, refusing to let go. Nevertheless, I can draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful. But for me to be troubled and the other individual to get hurt is a minor matter. It's more important that I can draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful.' If that's what you think, then it's appropriate to speak to them.

But suppose you think this: 'I will be troubled and the other indi- 14.1
vidual will be hurt, for they're irritable and acrimonious. And they hold fast to their views, refusing to let go. I cannot draw them away from the unskillful and establish them in the skillful.' Don't underestimate the value of equanimity regarding such an individual.[58]

As you train in harmony, appreciating each other, without quar- 15.1
reling, the sides might continue to bring up settled issues with each other, with contempt for each other's views, resentful, bitter, and exasperated.[59] In this case you should approach whichever mendicant

58. Wisdom knows that sometimes there is nothing to be done. That doesn't mean one gives up, but rather, that sometimes patience is the best way. Note that this is the last option, however, and gentle intervention is always preferred.
59. Readings include *vacīsaṁsāro*, *vacīsaṁhāro*, and *vacīsaṅkhāro*. *Vacīsaṁsāro* is found, without recorded variants, in the parallel passage at AN 2.63:1.1. The

you think is most amenable among those who side with one party and say to them: 'Reverend, as we were training, the sides continued to bring up settled issues with each other. If the Ascetic knew about this, would he criticize it?' Answering rightly, the mendicant should say: 'Yes, reverend, he would.' 'But without giving that up, reverend, can one realize extinguishment?' Answering rightly, the mendicant should say: 'No, reverend, one cannot.'

16.1 Then you should approach whichever mendicant they think is most amenable among those who side with the other party and say to them: 'Reverend, as we were training, the sides continued to bring up settled issues with each other. If the Ascetic knew about this, would he criticize it?' Answering rightly, the mendicant should say: 'Yes, reverend, he would.' 'But without giving that up, reverend, can one realize extinguishment?' Answering rightly, the mendicant should say: 'No, reverend, one cannot.'

17.1 If others should ask that mendicant: 'Were you the venerable who drew those mendicants away from the unskillful and established them in the skillful?' Answering rightly, the mendicant should say: 'Well, reverends, I approached the Buddha. He taught me the Dhamma. After hearing that teaching I explained it to those mendicants. When those mendicants heard that teaching they were drawn away from the unskillful and established in the skillful.' Answering in this way, that mendicant doesn't glorify themselves or put others down. They answer in line with the teaching, with no legitimate grounds for rebuttal and criticism."

17.7 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

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commentary here glosses with *vacanasañcāro*, while the subcommentary to AN 2.63 has *pavattamānā*, both of which support the dominant reading *vacīsaṁsāro*. Their explanations differ, however as the commentary here explains as spreading rumors from one place to another, while at AN 2.63 it is said to be ongoing arguing. Since the normal meaning of *saṁsāra* is "endless ongoing", and since, in both MN and AN, this follows a passage where disputes were supposed to have been settled, perhaps the sense is "continuing to bring up matters that have been settled".

MN 104

At Sāmagāma

Sāmagāmasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans near the village of Sāma. 1.1

Now at that time the Jain ascetic of the Ñātika clan had recently passed away at Pāvā.[60] With his passing the Jain ascetics split, dividing into two factions, fighting, quarreling, and disputing, continually wounding each other with barbed words:[61] "You don't understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You're practicing wrong. I'm practicing right. I stay on topic, you don't. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you've thought so much about has been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You're trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!" You'd think there was nothing 2.1

60. When this event is mentioned at DN 29:1.3 the Buddha is also in the Sakyan lands, but in a mango grove belonging to a group of Sakyans named Vedhaññā. Both texts tell the story of Cunda conveying the news via Ānanda at Sāma, which was presumably near the mango grove. It does seem strange that two distinct discourses are recorded from the same prompt, but then, why shouldn't the Buddha give more than one teaching on such an important topic? At DN 33:1.6.1 the Buddha is at Pāvā in the Mallian lands, and the discourse is spoken by Sāriputta there. Given the evident lateness of DN 33, this is a less convincing framework. A parallel to MN 104 (MA 196 at T i 752c12) says he was in the Vajjian lands at the time; both Sakya and Vajji border on Mallā.

61. While this description of the Jains might seem like sheer sectarian calumny, it is a fact that the Jain tradition is split into two sects, the "sky-clad" Digambara, whose male ascetics went naked, and the "white-clad" Śvetāmbara who wear an unstitched cloth. Jain tradition holds that the split occurred about a century later, in the reign of Candragupta Maurya.

but slaughter going on among the Jain ascetics.[62] And the Jain Ñātika's white-clothed lay disciples were disillusioned, dismayed, and disappointed in the Jain ascetics. They were equally disappointed with a teaching and training so poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha, with broken monument and without a refuge.[63]

3.1 And then, after completing the rainy season residence near Pāvā, the novice Cunda went to see Venerable Ānanda at Sāma village. He bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.[64]

4.1 Ānanda said to him, "Reverend Cunda, we should see the Buddha about this matter. Come, let's go to the Buddha and inform him about this."

4.4 "Yes, sir," replied Cunda.

4.5 Then Ānanda and Cunda went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and Ānanda informed him of what Cunda had said. He went on to say, "Sir, it occurs to me: 'When the Buddha has passed away, let no dispute arise in the Saṅgha. For such a dispute would be for the detriment and unhappiness of the people, against the people, for the harm, detriment, and suffering of gods and humans.'"

5.1 "What do you think, Ānanda? Do you see even two mendicants whose opinion differs regarding the things I have taught from my direct knowledge, that is,[65] the four kinds of mindfulness medita-

62. A slight on the movement whose signature virtue was non-violence.

63. "With broken monument" (*bhinnathupe*) is used only in this context. When a great teacher or leader died, a "monument" was built to keep their memory alive. The breaking of a monument—whether physical or symbolic—was, in a way, truly killing them.

64. Cunda took the time to complete his rains residence before conveying the news, reminding us of the speed with which news traveled in those days—slowly. For Cunda's identity, see the note to MN 8:2.1 | Apart from the events described here, we hear of Sāma only once (AN 6.21). The topic there is the decline of the Saṅgha, hinting at a connection with these events.

65. Two brahmins have a "difference of opinion" (*nānāvāda*) regarding their path at DN 13:8.8.

tion, the four right efforts, the four bases of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path?"

"No, sir, I do not. Nevertheless, there are some individuals who 5.4
appear to live obedient to the Buddha, but when the Buddha has passed away they might create a dispute in the Saṅgha regarding livelihood or the monastic code.[66] Such a dispute would be for the detriment and unhappiness of the people, against the people, for the harm, detriment, and suffering of gods and humans."

"Ānanda, dispute about livelihood or the monastic code is a minor 5.8
matter.[67] But should a dispute arise in the Saṅgha concerning the path or the practice, that would be for the detriment and unhappiness of the people, against the people, for the harm, detriment, and suffering of gods and humans.[68]

Ānanda, there are these six roots of dispute.[69] What six? Firstly, 6.1
a mendicant is irritable and acrimonious. Such a mendicant lacks respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and they don't fulfill the training. They create a dispute in the Saṅgha, which is for the detriment and unhappiness of the people, against the people, for the harm, detriment, and suffering of gods and humans. If you see such a root of dispute in yourselves or others, you should try to give up this bad thing. If you don't see it, you should practice so that it doesn't come up in the future. That's how to give up this bad root of dispute, so it doesn't come up in the future.

Furthermore, a mendicant is offensive and contemptuous … 7-11.1
They're jealous and stingy … They're devious and deceitful … They have corrupt wishes and wrong view … They're attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go. Such a mendi-

66. As in the quarrel at Kosambī (MN 48, Kd 10).
67. Just as the "phrasing" of the text is a minor matter at MN 103:7.12.
68. This refers back to the teachings the Buddha has summarized above.
69. The Buddha is more concerned with the unskillful roots of division than with the surface details. The first four pairs of "roots" are also found as "corruptions of mind" at MN 7:3.1.

cant lacks respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and they don't fulfill the training. They create a dispute in the Saṅgha, which is for the detriment and unhappiness of the people, against the people, for the harm, detriment, and suffering of gods and humans. If you see such a root of dispute in yourselves or others, you should try to give up this bad thing. If you don't see it, you should practice so that it doesn't come up in the future. That's how to give up this bad root of dispute, so it doesn't come up in the future. These are the six roots of dispute.

12.1 There are four kinds of disciplinary issues. What four? Disciplinary issues due to disputes, accusations, offenses, or business.[70] These are the four kinds of disciplinary issues. There are these seven means of settling any disciplinary issues that might arise.[71] Resolution face-to-face to be applied. Resolution through recollection to be granted. Resolution because of past insanity to be granted. Acting according to what has been admitted. Majority decision. Further penalty. Covering over as if with grass.

14.1 And how is there resolution face-to-face? It's when mendicants are disputing: 'This is the teaching,' 'This is not the teaching,' 'This is the monastic law,' 'This is not the monastic law.' Those mendicants should all sit together in harmony and thoroughly go over the guidelines of the teaching.[72] They should settle that disciplinary issue in agreement with the guidelines. That's how there is resolution face-to-face. And that's how certain disciplinary issues are settled, that is, by resolution face-to-face.

70. These are formal legal proceedings in the Vinaya, explained at Kd 14:14.2.1. | Here and below I follow the renderings of Brahmali for legal terms.

71. Explained in more detail in the Vinaya (Kd 14:14.16.1).

72. *Samanumajjati* occurs only here. The root *majj* has the general sense "stroke, massage". Here it means that they should go over and over until it is settled. | *Dhammanetti* ("the guidelines of the teaching") is another rare term, occurring elsewhere only in the late canonical Mil 6.3.12:7.5.

And how is there majority decision?[73] If those mendicants are 15.1
not able to settle that issue in that monastery,[74] they should go to another monastery with more mendicants. There they should all sit together in harmony and thoroughly go over the guidelines of the teaching. They should settle that disciplinary issue in agreement with the guidelines. That's how there is majority decision. And that's how certain disciplinary issues are settled, that is, by majority decision.

And how is there resolution through recollection? It's when a 16.1
mendicant accuses a mendicant of a serious offense; one entailing expulsion, or close to it:[75] 'Venerable, do you recall committing the kind of serious offense that entails expulsion or close to it?' They say: 'No, reverend, I don't recall committing such an offense.'[76] The resolution through recollection should be granted to them. That's how there is the resolution through recollection. And that's how certain disciplinary issues are settled, that is, by resolution through recollection.

And how is there resolution because of past insanity? It's when a 17.1
mendicant accuses a mendicant of the kind of serious offense that entails expulsion, or close to it:[77] 'Venerable, do you recall committing the kind of serious offense that entails expulsion or close to it?' They say: 'No, reverend, I don't recall committing such an offense.' But though they try to get out of it, the mendicant pursues

73. This explanation is out of order, as it is listed as the second item here, but it is normally the fifth item, as in the summary above.

74. Normally issues are settled by consensus, so this applies in cases where consensus cannot be reached.

75. Pali editions vary as to whether the accuser is singular or plural. However, even those editions that use the plural here (Mahāsaṅgīti, PTS) shift to singular below (MN 104:17.6, MN 104:19.2), while in the Vinaya it is also singular (Kd 14:14.29.7).

76. The Vinaya operates on good faith, so that the testimony of a clear-headed mendicant is sufficient to clear them from offenses in most cases.

77. The offenses entailing expulsion for a mendicant are: willingly engaging in sexual intercourse; intentional killing of a human being; theft of something of value; and deliberately making a false claim to exalted spiritual attainments such as awakening or absorption.

the issue: 'Surely the venerable must know perfectly well if you recall committing an offense that entails expulsion or close to it!' They say: 'Reverend, I had gone mad, I was out of my mind. And while I was mad I did and said many things that are not proper for an ascetic. I don't remember any of that, I was mad when I did it.'[78] The resolution because of past insanity should be granted to them. That's how there is resolution because of past insanity. And that's how certain disciplinary issues are settled, that is, by resolution because of past insanity.

18.1 And how is there acting according to what has been admitted? It's when a mendicant, whether accused or not, recalls an offense and clarifies it and reveals it. After approaching a more senior mendicant, that mendicant should arrange his robe over one shoulder, bow to that mendicant's feet, squat on their heels, raise their cupped palms, and say:[79] 'Sir, I have fallen into such-and-such an offense. I confess it.' The senior mendicant says: 'Do you see it?' 'Yes, I see it.' 'Then restrain yourself in future.' 'I shall restrain myself.' That's how there is acting according to what has been admitted. And that's how certain disciplinary issues are settled, that is, by acting according to what has been admitted.

19.1 And how is there a verdict of further penalty?[80] It's when a mendicant accuses a mendicant of the kind of serious offense that entails expulsion, or close to it: 'Venerable, do you recall committing the kind of serious offense that entails expulsion or close to it?' They say:

78. This evidently refers to an episode of psychosis, during which time a person is subject to hallucinations and delusions, and may exhibit bizarre behavior. There is a blanket exemption in Vinaya for all acts committed in such a state.

79. This is the standard way of clearing offenses by confessing them as soon as they are recalled and recognized. Mendicants still confess with this formula today. Most offenses can be cleared in this way, but others require the relinquishment of a certain object (such as money), or undergoing a period of probation, while expulsion offenses cannot be cleared.

80. "Further penalty" renders *tassapāpiyasikā*, more literally "what is worse for him". In this case, a mendicant tries to deny the accusation but ends up just making it worse.

'No, reverend, I don't recall committing such an offense.' But though they try to get out of it, the mendicant pursues the issue:[81] 'Surely the venerable must know perfectly well if you recall committing an offense that entails expulsion or close to it!' They say: 'Reverend, I don't recall committing a serious offense of that nature. But I do recall committing a light offense.' But though they try to get out of it, the mendicant pursues the issue: 'Surely the venerable must know perfectly well if you recall committing an offense that entails expulsion or close to it!' They say: 'Reverend, I'll go so far as to admit this light offense even when not asked. Why wouldn't I admit a serious offense when asked?' They say: 'You wouldn't have admitted that light offense without being asked, so why would you admit a serious offense? Surely the venerable must know perfectly well if you recall committing an offense that entails expulsion or close to it!' They say: 'Reverend, I do recall committing the kind of serious offense that entails expulsion or close to it. I spoke too hastily when I said that I didn't recall it.' That's how there is further penalty. And that's how certain disciplinary issues are settled, that is, by further penalty.

And how is there the covering over as if with grass? It's when the 20.1
mendicants continually fight, quarrel, and dispute, doing and saying many things that are not proper for an ascetic. Those mendicants should all sit together in harmony. A competent mendicant of one party, having risen from their seat, arranged their robe over one shoulder, and raised their cupped palms, should inform the Saṅgha:

'Sir, let the Saṅgha listen to me. We have been continually fighting, 20.5
quarreling, and disputing, doing and saying many things that are not proper for an ascetic. If it seems appropriate to the Saṅgha, then—for the benefit of these venerables and myself—I disclose in the middle of the Saṅgha by means of covering over as if with grass any offenses committed by these venerables and by myself, excepting

81. Normally the mendicant's denial is sufficient, but the case might be pressed if there is substantial evidence.

only those that are gravely blameworthy and those connected with laypeople.'

20.8 Then a competent mendicant of the other party, having risen from their seat, arranged their robe over one shoulder, and raising their cupped palms, should inform the Saṅgha:

20.9 'Sir, let the Saṅgha listen to me. We have been continually fighting, quarreling, and disputing, doing and saying many things that are not proper for an ascetic. If it seems appropriate to the Saṅgha, then—for the benefit of these venerables and myself—I disclose in the middle of the Saṅgha by means of covering over as if with grass any offenses committed by these venerables and by myself, excepting only those that are gravely blameworthy and those connected with laypeople.'[82]

20.12 That's how there is the covering over as if with grass. And that's how certain disciplinary issues are settled, that is,[83] by covering over as if with grass.

21.1 Ānanda, these six warm-hearted qualities make for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.[84] What six? Firstly, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with bodily kindness, both in public and in private. This warm-hearted quality makes for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without dispute.

21.5 Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with verbal kindness … This too is a warm-hearted quality.

21.7 Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with mental kindness … This too is a warm-hearted quality.

82. Those that are "gravely blameworthy" include offenses of expulsion (*pārājika*) and suspension (*saṅghādisesa*), while those "connected with laypeople" include cases where the mendicant abuses the laity.

83. This final method is a reminder that it is not always necessary to dig down to the bottom of every dispute, especially when blame accrues to both sides. Sometimes the most important thing is to move forward.

84. Also taught at MN 48:6.2, AN 6.11:1.1, and AN 6.12:1.1, and collected at DN 33:2.2.37 and DN 34:1.7.3.

Furthermore, a mendicant shares without reservation any material things they have gained by legitimate means, even the food placed in the alms-bowl, using them in common with their ethical spiritual companions. This too is a warm-hearted quality. 21.9

Furthermore, a mendicant lives according to the precepts shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. Those precepts are intact, impeccable, spotless, and unmarred, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion. This too is a warm-hearted quality. 21.11

Furthermore, a mendicant lives according to the view shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. That view is noble and emancipating, and delivers one who applies it to the complete ending of suffering. This too is a warm-hearted quality. 21.13

These six warm-hearted qualities make for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without dispute. 21.15

If you should proceed having undertaken these six warm-hearted qualities, do you see any criticism, large or small, that you could not endure?" 22.1

"No, sir." 22.2

"That's why, Ānanda, you should proceed having undertaken these six warm-hearted qualities. That will be for your lasting welfare and happiness." 22.3

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said. 22.5

MN 105

With Sunakkhatta

Sunakkhattasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

2.1 Now at that time several mendicants had declared their enlightenment in the Buddha's presence:[85]

2.2 "We understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"

2.3 Sunakkhatta the Licchavi heard about this.[86]

3.1 He went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, I have heard that several mendicants have declared their enlightenment in the Buddha's presence. I trust they did so rightly—

85. Also at SN 12.70:4.1, which concerns the dubious ordination of the wanderer Susīma. | "Enlightenment" is *aññā*, a technical term that refers to the knowledge of perfection (*arahattā*). | A Buddhist mendicant incurs a penalty of expulsion if they deliberately lay false claim to awakening (Bu Pj 4), and a penalty of confession if they truthfully claim awakening to someone who is not ordained (Bu Pc 8). These rules directly concern laying claim regarding oneself, but the background stories apply when making claims with regards to another. Mendicants may declare their attainments among the community of monks and nuns who are fully ordained. Typically such a solemn matter is spoken of in a formal and respectful manner with one's teacher.

86. This is apparently Sunakkhatta's first meeting with the Buddha. In DN 6:5.3 we learn that, after being ordained three years, he spoke of his limited success in meditation. MN 12 and DN 24 deal with his bitter criticisms of the Buddha shortly after his disrobal.

or are there some who declared enlightenment out of overestimation?"[87]

"Some of them did so rightly, Sunakkhatta, while others did so out of overestimation. Now, when mendicants declare enlightenment rightly, that is their truth. But when mendicants declare enlightenment out of overestimation, the Realized One thinks: 'I should teach them the Dhamma.' If the Realized One thinks he should teach them the Dhamma, but then certain futile men, having carefully planned a question, approach the Realized One and ask it, then the Realized One changes his mind."[88] 5.1

"Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha teach the Dhamma. The mendicants will listen and remember it." 6.1

"Well then, Sunakkhatta, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 6.3

"Yes, sir," replied Sunakkhatta. The Buddha said this: 6.4

"Sunakkhatta, there are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. 7.1

It's possible that a certain individual person may be intent on worldly pleasures of the flesh. Such an individual engages in pertinent conversation, thinking and considering in line with that. They associate with that kind of person, and they find it rewarding. But when talk connected with the imperturbable is going on they don't 8.1

87. By a loophole in the wording of the Vinaya, it is not an offense to tell anyone of your attainments if you are genuinely deluded and falsely believe that you have an attainment that you do not have. The Buddha dismissed such "overestimation" (*adhimāna*) as "negligible" (Bu Pj 4:2.1).

88. That is, if they plan to trap the Buddha with sophistry, he realizes that they are not ready to be taught.

want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They don't associate with that kind of person, and they don't find it rewarding.[89]

9.1 Suppose a person had left their own village or town long ago, and they saw another person who had only recently left there. They would ask about whether their village was safe, with plenty of food and little disease, and the other person would tell them the news. What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Would that person want to listen to that other person? Would they actively listen and try to understand? Would they associate with that person, and find it rewarding?"

9.7 "Yes, sir."

9.8 "In the same way, it's possible that a certain individual may be intent on worldly pleasures of the flesh. Such an individual engages in pertinent conversation, thinking and considering in line with that. They associate with that kind of person, and they find it rewarding. But when talk connected with the imperturbable is going on they don't want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They don't associate with that kind of person, and they don't find it rewarding. You should know of them: 'That individual is intent on pleasures of the flesh, for they're detached from things connected with the imperturbable.'[90]

10.1 It's possible that a certain individual person may be intent on the imperturbable. Such an individual engages in pertinent conversation, thinking and considering in line with that. They associate with that kind of person, and they find it rewarding. But when talk connected with worldly pleasures of the flesh is going on they don't

89. The "imperturbable" refers to high meditative attainments, typically the fourth absorption and above.

90. The reading *āneñjasaṁyojanena hi kho visaṁyutto* is problematic, as it suggests they are free of the fetter of the imperturbable, which would mean they are an arahant. Several manuscripts omit this phrase, but it is glossed in the commentary. I think it harks back to the immediately prior *āneñjapaṭisaṁyuttāya*; possibly the *paṭi* dropped out in an old misreading. They're not detached from the "fetter" of the imperturbable, but from "what is connected with" the imperturbable, i.e. they are disinterested in the talk about it.

want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They don't associate with that kind of person, and they don't find it rewarding.

11.1 Suppose there was a fallen, withered leaf. It's incapable of becoming green again. In the same way, an individual intent on the imperturbable has dropped the connection with worldly pleasures of the flesh.[91] You should know of them: 'That individual is intent on the imperturbable, for they're detached from things connected with pleasures of the flesh.'

12.1 It's possible that a certain individual person may be intent on the dimension of nothingness. Such an individual engages in pertinent conversation, thinking and considering in line with that. They associate with that kind of person, and they find it rewarding.[92] But when talk connected with the imperturbable is going on they don't want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They don't associate with that kind of person, and they don't find it rewarding.[93]

13.1 Suppose there was a broad rock that had been broken in half, so that it could not be put back together again. In the same way, an individual intent on the dimension of nothingness has broken the connection with the imperturbable. You should know of them: 'That individual is intent on the dimension of nothingness, for they're detached from things connected with the imperturbable.'

14.1 It's possible that a certain individual person may be intent on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Such an individual engages in pertinent conversation, thinking and considering in line with that. They associate with that kind of person, and they find it rewarding. But when talk connected with the dimension of

91. Here and in the following examples, the verb in the explanation follows the metaphor: a leaf is "dropped", a stone is "broken", etc.

92. This case and the next would apply to the Buddha's former teachers, who taught the dimensions of nothingness and neither perception nor non-perception respectively (MN 26:15.1).

93. In this case, the "imperturbable" must refer to the fourth absorption and the first two formless attainments.

nothingness is going on they don't want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They don't associate with that kind of person, and they don't find it rewarding.

15.1 Suppose someone had eaten some satisfying food and thrown it up. What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Would that person want to eat that food again?"

15.4 "No, sir. Why is that? Because that food is deemed repulsive."

15.7 "In the same way, an individual intent on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception has vomited the connection with the dimension of nothingness. You should know of them: 'That individual is intent on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, for they're detached from things connected with the dimension of nothingness.'

16.1 It's possible that a certain individual person may be rightly intent on extinguishment. Such an individual engages in pertinent conversation, thinking and considering in line with that. They associate with that kind of person, and they find it rewarding. But when talk connected with the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception is going on they don't want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They don't associate with that kind of person, and they don't find it rewarding.

17.1 Suppose there was a palm tree with its crown cut off. It's incapable of further growth. In the same way, an individual rightly intent on extinguishment has cut off the connection with the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception at the root, made it like a palm stump, obliterated it, so it's unable to arise in the future. You should know of them: 'That individual is rightly intent on extinguishment, for they're detached from things connected with the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.'

18.1 It's possible that a certain mendicant might think:[94] 'The Ascetic has said that craving is a dart; and that the poison of ignorance is in-

94. The Buddha goes on to discuss a case of overestimation.

flicted by desire and ill will.[95] I have given up the dart of craving and expelled the poison of ignorance; I am rightly intent on extinguishment.' Having such conceit, though it's not based in fact, they would engage in things unconducive to extinguishment: unsuitable sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. Doing so, lust infects their mind, resulting in death or deadly pain.

19.1 Suppose a man was struck by an arrow thickly smeared with poison. Their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat them. The surgeon would cut open the wound with a scalpel, probe for the arrow, extract it, and expel the poison, leaving some residue behind.[96] Imagining that no residue remained, the surgeon would say:[97] 'My man, the dart has been extracted and the poison expelled without residue. It is still capable of harming you.[98] Eat only suitable food. Don't eat unsuitable food, or else the wound may get infected. Regularly wash the wound and anoint the opening, or else it'll get covered with pus and blood. Don't walk too much in

95. Here, the "Ascetic" (*samaṇa*) is the Buddha.

96. The term *saupādisesa* is better known as a description of those who have attained Nibbāna "with residue", namely the five aggregates that persist so long as life lasts. The prefix *upādi* is from the same root as *upādāna*, normally "grasping", but here in its secondary sense of "material cause, fuel". The "residue" of poison is the material cause of potential harm, just as the five aggregates still entail a residue of physical suffering for a perfected one.

97. For "imagining that no residue remained", I follow PTS and Siamese editions, which have *anupādiseso ti maññamāno*. Bodhi's note 1003 to his *Middle Length Discourses* points out that earlier manuscripts support this reading, which seems to have been "corrected" to *saupādisesoti jānamāno* in the Burmese Sixth Council edition on which SuttaCentral's Mahāsaṅgīti edition is based. A Sanskrit fragment also supports the PTS/Siamese reading: *(sā)va(ś)eṣaṁ nira(vaśe)ṣaṁ (iti manyamānaḥ)* (SHT IV 500 folio 3V3, cited in Analayo, *Comparative Study*, p. 611, note 136).

98. Most editions have "not capable" of harming here, which seems odd given that the doctor immediately goes on to describe how to mitigate possible harm. I follow the PTS edition, which is alone in reading *alañ ca te antarāyāya*. This is supported by a Sanskrit fragment, which reads *ala(ṁ)te-t(r)-ānta(rā)yāya* (SHT IV 500 folio 3V4, cited in Analayo, ibid.).

the wind and sun, or else dust and dirt will infect the wound. Take care of the wound, my man, heal it.'

20.1 They'd think: 'The dart has been extracted and the poison expelled with no residue. It's not capable of harming me.'[99] They'd eat unsuitable food, and the wound would get infected. And they wouldn't regularly wash and anoint the opening, so it would get covered in pus and blood. And they'd walk too much in the wind and sun, so dust and dirt infected the wound. And they wouldn't take care of the wound or heal it. Then both because they did what was unsuitable, and because of the residue of unclean poison, the wound would expand, resulting in death or deadly pain.

21.1 In the same way, it's possible that a certain mendicant might think: 'The Ascetic has said that craving is a dart; and that the poison of ignorance is inflicted by desire and ill will. I have given up the dart of craving and expelled the poison of ignorance; I am rightly intent on extinguishment.' Having such conceit, though it's not based in fact, they would engage in things unconducive to extinguishment: unsuitable sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. Doing so, lust infects their mind, resulting in death or deadly pain.

22.1 For it is death in the training of the Noble One to resign the training and return to a lesser life. And it is deadly pain to commit one of the corrupt offenses.

23.1 It's possible that a certain mendicant might think: 'The Ascetic has said that craving is a dart; and that the poison of ignorance is inflicted by desire and ill will. I have given up the dart of craving and expelled the poison of ignorance; I am rightly intent on extinguishment.' Being rightly intent on extinguishment, they wouldn't engage

99. Pali editions all agree that the patient thinks it cannot cause harm, which, if we adopt the PTS reading as I have above, implies that the patient misunderstood the doctor's instructions. A Sanskrit fragment says that he did understand that it could cause harm, suggesting that he did what was unsuitable despite knowing this: *niravaśeṣaḥ a(panīto) viṣa-doṣaḥ alaṁ (me-tr)-ān(ta)rā(yāya)* (SHT IV 500 folio 3R3, cited in Analayo, ibid.). I don't follow this as it is not found in any Pali edition.

in things unconducive to extinguishment: unsuitable sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. Doing so, lust wouldn't infect their mind, so no death or deadly pain would result.

24.1 Suppose a man was struck by an arrow thickly smeared with poison. Their friends and colleagues, relatives and kin would get a surgeon to treat them. The surgeon would cut open the wound with a scalpel, probe for the arrow, extract it, and expel the poison, leaving no residue behind. Knowing that no residue remained, the surgeon would say: 'My man, the dart has been extracted and the poison expelled with no residue. It's not capable of harming you. Eat only suitable food. Don't eat unsuitable food, or else the wound may get infected. Regularly wash the wound and anoint the opening, or else it'll get covered with pus and blood. Don't walk too much in the wind and sun, or else dust and dirt will infect the wound. Take care of the wound, my man, heal it.'

25.1 They'd think: 'The dart has been extracted and the poison expelled with no residue. It's not capable of harming me.' They'd eat suitable food, and the wound wouldn't get infected. And they'd regularly wash and anoint the opening, so it wouldn't get covered in pus and blood. And they wouldn't walk too much in the wind and sun, so dust and dirt wouldn't infect the wound. And they'd take care of the wound and heal it. Then both because they did what was suitable, and the unclean poison had left no residue, the wound would heal, and no death or deadly pain would result.

26.1 In the same way, it's possible that a certain mendicant might think: 'The Ascetic has said that craving is a dart; and that the poison of ignorance is inflicted by desire and ill will. I have given up the dart of craving and expelled the poison of ignorance; I am rightly intent on extinguishment.' Being rightly intent on extinguishment, they wouldn't engage in things unconducive to extinguishment: unsuitable sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. Doing so, lust wouldn't infect their mind, so no death or deadly pain would result.

27.1 I've made up this simile to make a point. And this is the point: 'Wound' is a term for the six interior sense fields. 'Poison' is a term

for ignorance. 'Dart' is a term for craving. 'Probing' is a term for mindfulness. 'Scalpel' is a term for noble wisdom. 'Surgeon' is a term for the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.

28.1 Truly, Sunakkhatta, that mendicant practices restraint regarding the six fields of contact. Understanding that attachment is the root of suffering, they are freed with the ending of attachments. It's not possible that they would apply their body or interest their mind in any attachment.[100]

29.1 Suppose there was a bronze goblet of beverage that had a nice color, aroma, and flavor. But it was mixed with poison. Then a person would come along who wants to live and doesn't want to die, who wants to be happy and recoils from pain. What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Would that person drink that beverage if they knew that it would result in death or deadly suffering?"

29.7 "No, sir."

29.8 "In the same way, Sunakkhatta, that mendicant practices restraint regarding the six fields of contact. Understanding that attachment is the root of suffering, they are freed with the ending of attachments. It's not possible that they would apply their body or interest their mind in any attachment.

30.1 Suppose there was a lethal viper. Then a person would come along who wants to live and doesn't want to die, who wants to be happy and recoils from pain. What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Would that person give that lethal viper their hand or finger if they knew that it would result in death or deadly suffering?"

30.6 "No, sir."

30.7 "In the same way, Sunakkhatta, that mendicant practices restraint regarding the six fields of contact. Understanding that attachment is the root of suffering, they are freed with the ending of attachments.

100. "Attachment" here is *upadhi*, which is both the things of the world to which we cling, and the inner clinging. The Jains defined *upadhi* similarly (Tattvārthasūtra 9.26). The dominant meaning in Sanskrit is "fraud", which perhaps informs the Buddhist sense.

It's not possible that they would apply their body or interest their mind in any attachment."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Sunakkhatta of the Lic- 30.10
chavi clan approved what the Buddha said.

MN 106

Conducive to the Imperturbable

Āneñjasappāyasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[101] At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kurus, near the Kuru town named Kammāsadamma. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, sensual pleasures are impermanent, hollow, false, and deceptive. This is made by illusion, mendicants, lamented by fools.[102] Sensual pleasures in this life and in lives to come, sensual perceptions in this life and in lives to come; both of these are Māra's dominion, Māra's domain, Māra's lair, and Māra's range. They conduce to bad, unskillful notions such as desire, ill will, and aggression. And they create an obstacle for a noble disciple training here.

3.1 A noble disciple reflects on this: 'Sensual pleasures in this life and in lives to come, sensual perceptions in this life and in lives to

101. This sutta describes practices that lead to attaining the formless meditations: three ways to attain the "imperturbable", three ways to continue to the dimension of nothingness, and finally a way to attain neither perception nor non-perception. One theme of the text is that deep states of absorption are supported by reflective wisdom. The sutta concludes by teaching what is beyond all these, namely not grasping.

102. This phrase is sometimes translated as if it was joined to the previous. However, the repeated use of *bhikkhave*, the shift from plural to singular, and the independent occurrence of the former portion (AN 10.46:6.5) all suggest it is a distinct sentence. | As for *bālalāpana*, at SN 22.95:13.2 we find *bālalāpinī* in a similar context, which there follows right after the death of the physical body. This suggests that *lāpinī* there has the sense "lament" which is attested in Sanskrit. *Bālalāpana* is found at Thig 5.2:2.2 of a beautiful body; see too Ja 421:5.3. In later Sanskrit, *bālalapitaṁ* is used by Jayarāśi Bhaṭṭa in his Tattvopaplavasiṁha in the sense "prattle of fools".

come; both of these are Māra's dominion, Māra's domain, Māra's lair, and Māra's range. They conduce to bad, unskillful notions such as desire, ill will, and aggression. And they create an obstacle for a noble disciple training here. Why don't I meditate with an abundant, expansive heart, having mastered the world and stabilized the mind? Then I will have no more bad, unskillful notions such as desire, ill will, and aggression. And by giving them up my mind, no longer limited, will become limitless and well developed.'

Practicing in this way and meditating on it often their mind be- 3.10
comes confident in this dimension. Being confident, they either attain the imperturbable now, or are freed by wisdom.[103] When their body breaks up, after death, it's possible that that conducive consciousness will be reborn in the imperturbable.[104] This is said to be the first way of practice suitable for attaining the imperturbable.

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: 'Sensual pleasures in this 4.1
life and in lives to come, sensual perceptions in this life and in lives to come; whatever form there is, all form is the four principal states, or form derived from the four principal states.' Practicing in this way and meditating on it often their mind becomes confident in this

103. The Pali has *paññāya vā adhimuccati* ("they resolve with wisdom"). This appears to be an old confusion between *adhimuccati* ("resolves") and *vimuccati* ("is freed"). Elsewhere in Pali we find one who is "freed by wisdom" (eg. SN 22.45:1.6) but we don't find *adhimuccati* used in this way. The commentary accepts the reading *adhimuccati*, but explains it as referring to either the realization of arahantship or the development of the path to arahantship, which agrees with the idea of "freedom". Finally, the Chinese parallel (MA 75 at T i 542b23) has 解, while the Tibetan parallel in Śamathadeva's commentary on the Abhidharmakośabhāṣya (D (4094) mngon pa, ju 228a2) has *rnam par grol ba*, both of which appear to translate *vimuccati*. If this reading is accepted, it also adds greater coherence to the sutta as a whole, for after discussing the various ways to the imperturbable, the final section is devoted to the "noble liberation", where *vimokkha* is a synonym of *vimutti* (MN 106:13.3).

104. *Saṁvattanika* means "conducive, leading to". The state of consciousness developed in meditation leads to a rebirth in a plane where the normal level of consciousness is that of the corresponding meditation attainment. Thus if they have developed the fourth absorption, they will be reborn in a corresponding Brahmā realm.

dimension. Being confident, they either attain the imperturbable now, or are freed by wisdom. When their body breaks up, after death, it's possible that that conducive consciousness will be reborn in the imperturbable. This is said to be the second way of practice suitable for attaining the imperturbable.

5.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: 'Sensual pleasures in this life and in lives to come, sensual perceptions in this life and in lives to come, visions in this life and in lives to come,[105] perceptions of visions in this life and in lives to come; all of these are impermanent. And what's impermanent is not worth approving, welcoming, or clinging to.' Practicing in this way and meditating on it often their mind becomes confident in this dimension. Being confident, they either attain the imperturbable now, or are freed by wisdom. When their body breaks up, after death, it's possible that that conducive consciousness will be reborn in the imperturbable. This is said to be the third way of practice suitable for attaining the imperturbable.

6.1 Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: 'Sensual pleasures in this life and in lives to come, sensual perceptions in this life and in lives to come, visions in this life and in lives to come, perceptions of visions in this life and in lives to come, and perceptions of the imperturbable; all are perceptions. Where they cease without remainder, that is peaceful, that is sublime, namely the dimension of nothingness.'[106] Practicing in this way and meditating on it often their mind becomes confident in this dimension. Being confident, they either attain the dimension of nothingness now, or are freed by wisdom. When their body breaks up, after death, it's possible that that conducive consciousness will be reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is said to be the first way of practice suitable for attaining the dimension of nothingness.

105. Here *rūpa* is neither "matter" nor "sights" but "visions" seen in meditation.
106. As in MN 105:12.3, the "imperturbable" here appears to refer to the fourth absorption and first two formless attainments.

Furthermore, a noble disciple has gone to a wilderness, or to 7.1
the root of a tree, or to an empty hut, and reflects like this: 'This is empty of a self or what belongs to a self.' Practicing in this way and meditating on it often their mind becomes confident in this dimension. Being confident, they either attain the dimension of nothingness now, or are freed by wisdom. When their body breaks up, after death, it's possible that that conducive consciousness will be reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is said to be the second way of practice suitable for attaining the dimension of nothingness.

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: 'I don't belong to anyone 8.1
anywhere! And nothing belongs to me anywhere!'[107] Practicing in this way and meditating on it often their mind becomes confident in this dimension. Being confident, they either attain the dimension of nothingness now, or are freed by wisdom. When their body breaks up, after death, it's possible that that conducive consciousness will be reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is said to be the third way of practice suitable for attaining the dimension of nothingness.

Furthermore, a noble disciple reflects: 'Sensual pleasures in this 9.1
life and in lives to come, sensual perceptions in this life and in lives to come, visions in this life and in lives to come, perceptions of visions in this life and in lives to come, perceptions of the imperturbable, and perceptions of the dimension of nothingness; all are perceptions. Where they cease without remainder, that is peaceful, that is sublime, namely the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' Practicing in this way and meditating on it often their mind becomes confident in this dimension. Being confident, they either attain the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception now, or are freed by wisdom. When their body breaks up, after death, it's possible that that conducive consciousness will be reborn in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is said to

107. This reflection occurs three times in the Pali. At AN 4.185:7.2 it leads to the dimension of nothingness for a brahmin. It leads to the same attainment in a Buddhist context here (compare AN 5.144:7.2). At AN 3.70:3.11 it is said to be a Jain practice.

be the way of practice suitable for attaining the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception."

10.1 When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: "Sir, take a mendicant who practices like this: 'It might not be, and it might not be mine. It will not be, and it will not be mine. I am giving up what exists, what has come to be.'[108] In this way they gain equanimity. Would that mendicant become extinguished or not?"

10.6 "One such mendicant might become extinguished, Ānanda, while another might not."

10.7 "What is the cause, sir, what is the reason for this?"

10.8 "Ānanda, take a mendicant who practices like this: 'It might not be, and it might not be mine. It will not be, and it will not be mine. I am giving up what exists, what has come to be.' In this way they gain equanimity. They approve, welcome, and keep clinging to that equanimity. Their consciousness has that as support and fuel for grasping. A mendicant with fuel for grasping does not become extinguished."

11.1 "But sir, what is that mendicant grasping?"

11.2 "The dimension of neither perception nor non-perception."

11.3 "Sir, it seems that mendicant is grasping the best thing to grasp!"

11.4 "Indeed, Ānanda. For the best thing to grasp is the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

12.1 Take a mendicant who practices like this: 'It might not be, and it might not be mine. It will not be, and it will not be mine. I am giving up what exists, what has come to be.' In this way they gain equanimity. They don't approve, welcome, or keep clinging to that equanimity. So their consciousness doesn't have that as support

108. See Bodhi's extensive discussion in his translation of SN 22.55:1.3 (*Connected Discourses*, vol. iii, note 75). This formula appears several times throughout the suttas, in two forms: the personal form used by non-Buddhists ("I might not be …", eg. SN 22.81:12.8, AN 10.29:19.1), and the impersonal form as adapted by the Buddha here ("It might not be …"). The formula seems to have been shared among different sectarian groups, like the similar reflection above (MN 106:8.2). But whereas that reflection is associated with Brahmans and Jains—both classified as "eternalists"—this view is said to be that of the "annihilationists" (SN 22.81:11.10).

and fuel for grasping. A mendicant free of grasping becomes extinguished."

"It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! It seems the Buddha has explained 13.1
to us how to cross over the flood by relying on one support or another.[109] But sir, what is noble liberation?"

"Ānanda, it's when a noble disciple reflects like this: 'Sensual plea- 13.4
sures in this life and in lives to come, sensual perceptions in this life and in lives to come, visions in this life and in lives to come, perceptions of visions in this life and in lives to come, perceptions of the imperturbable, perceptions of the dimension of nothingness, perceptions of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception; that is substantial reality as far as substantial reality extends. But this is freedom from death, namely the liberation of the mind by not grasping.'

So, Ānanda, I have taught the ways of practice suitable for attaining 14.1
the imperturbable, the dimension of nothingness, and the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. I have taught how to cross the flood by relying on one support or another, and I have taught noble liberation.

Out of sympathy, I've done what a teacher should do who wants 15.1
what's best for their disciples. Here are these roots of trees, and here are these empty huts. Practice absorption, Ānanda! Don't be negligent! Don't regret it later! This is my instruction to you."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda ap- 15.3
proved what the Buddha said.

109. This passage shows how the method of attaining such states is secondary, as one might practice it well and yet still have clinging. Any of these "supports", i.e. the various methods taught above, suffices to develop the mind, but what matters is letting go. | "One support or another" (*nissāya nissāya*) appears at DN 16:4.27.2, where it means "right beside". For the sense "support" in this context, compare Iti 107:2.3: "supporting each other … in order to cross over the flood" (*aññamaññaṁ nissāya … oghassa nittharaṇatthāya*).

MN 107

With Moggallāna the Accountant

Gaṇakamoggallānasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery. Then the brahmin Moggallāna the Accountant went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

2.1 "Worthy Gotama, in this stilt longhouse we can see gradual training, gradual progress, and gradual practice down to the last step of the staircase.[110] Among the brahmins we can see gradual training, gradual progress, and gradual practice in recitation.[111] Among archers we can see gradual training, gradual progress, and gradual practice in archery.[112] Among us accountants, who earn a living by accounting, we can see gradual training, gradual progress, and gradual practice in mathematics.[113] For when we get an apprentice we first make them count: 'One one, two twos, three threes, four

110. The Buddha stops on the last step at MN 85:7.4.

111. Memorizing the Vedic texts, a key skill of the brahmins, was so difficult that they sometimes asked the Buddha for advice (AN 5.193:8.4). Details on the gradual memorization of texts are found at Bu Pc 4:2.1.7. Texts were learned by line (teacher and student start and finish together), by going after the line (one starts, they finish together), by going after the syllable (the teacher prompts with the first syllable of the line), and by phrase (the teacher says the first phrase, the student the second).

112. Archery (*issattha*) is regularly listed as a craft or livelihood (MN 14:7.3), which took skill in training (SN 56.45:1.3), and to which a mendicant is compared (AN 4.196:10.3).

113. The complexities of accounting are detailed in Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra 2.7. There, the "accounts" are called *gāṇanikya* (2.7.16).

fours, five fives, six sixes, seven sevens, eight eights, nine nines, ten tens.'[114] We even make them count up to a hundred. Is it possible to similarly describe a gradual training, gradual progress, and gradual practice in this teaching and training?"

"It is possible, brahmin. Suppose a deft horse trainer were to ob- 3.1
tain a fine thoroughbred. First of all he'd make it get used to wearing the bit.[115] In the same way, when the Realized One gets a person fit for training they first guide them like this: 'Come, mendicant, be ethical and restrained in the monastic code, conducting yourself well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, keep the rules you've undertaken.'

When they have ethical conduct, the Realized One guides them 4.1
further: 'Come, mendicant, guard your sense doors. When you see a sight with your eyes, don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, practice restraint, protect the faculty of sight, and achieve its restraint. When you hear a sound with your ears … When you smell an odor with your nose … When you taste a flavor with your tongue … When you feel a touch with your body … When you know an idea with your mind, don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, practice restraint, protect the faculty of mind, and achieve its restraint.'

When they guard their sense doors, the Realized One guides them 5.1
further: 'Come, mendicant, eat in moderation. Reflect rationally on the food that you eat: "Not for fun, indulgence, adornment, or decoration, but only to sustain this body, to avoid harm, and to support spiritual practice. In this way, I shall put an end to old

114. The method of listing things up to tens is the framework of the Dasuttara-sutta (DN 34). More generally, it seems to underlie the "*aṅguttara* principle" of organizing teachings by number.
115. See MN 65:33.1.

discomfort and not give rise to new discomfort, and I will have the means to keep going, blamelessness, and a comfortable abiding."'

6.1 When they eat in moderation, the Realized One guides them further: 'Come, mendicant, be committed to wakefulness. Practice walking and sitting meditation by day, purifying your mind from obstacles. In the first watch of the night, continue to practice walking and sitting meditation. In the middle watch, lie down in the lion's posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware, and focused on the time of getting up. In the last watch, get up and continue to practice walking and sitting meditation, purifying your mind from obstacles.'

7.1 When they are committed to wakefulness, the Realized One guides them further: 'Come, mendicant, have mindfulness and situational awareness. Act with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.'

8.1 When they have mindfulness and situational awareness, the Realized One guides them further: 'Come, mendicant, frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw.' And they do so.

9.2 After the meal, they return from almsround, sit down cross-legged, set their body straight, and bring mindfulness to the present. Giving up covetousness for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful

inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that 10.1
weaken wisdom. Then, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

That's how I instruct the mendicants who are trainees—who 11.1
haven't achieved their heart's desire, but live aspiring to the supreme sanctuary from the yoke.[116] But for those mendicants who are perfected—who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual

116. The "trainee" (*sekha*) in the strict sense is restricted to those who have entered the ranks of the Noble Ones (*ariyapuggala*) through the realization of the four noble truths (eg. SN 48.53:3.1); that is to say, the seven Noble Ones excluding the arahant, who is an "adept" beyond training (*asekha*). However, in cases such as this it would be over-strict to insist that the teaching applies only to Noble Ones, as the Gradual Training is the recommended practice for all new monastics. Indeed, the burden of the text is to show how practice is taken up gradually, so above it says that this is how the Buddha "first guides them" (*paṭhamaṁ evaṁ vineti*, MN 107:3.3). This agrees with the Chinese parallel, which here mentions a "young monk" (MA 144 at T i 652a29). Late canonical Pali texts introduce the idea of the "ordinary person of good character" (*puthujjanakalyāṇaka*, eg. Cnd 8:81.2, Ps 1.1:206.2), who is said to "train" like the trainees (Pvr 1.1:3.46). The commentaries say they may be counted along with

journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment—these things lead to blissful meditation in this life, and to mindfulness and awareness."

12.1 When he had spoken, Moggallāna the Accountant said to the Buddha, "When his disciples are instructed and advised like this by the worthy Gotama, do all of them achieve the ultimate goal, extinguishment, or do some of them fail?"

12.3 "Some succeed, while others fail."

13.1 "What is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why, though extinguishment is present, the path leading to extinguishment is present, and the worthy Gotama is present to encourage them, still some succeed while others fail?"

14.1 "Well then, brahmin, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, brahmin? Are you skilled in the road to Rājagaha?"[117]

14.4 "Yes, I am."

14.5 "What do you think, brahmin? Suppose a person was to come along who wanted to go to Rājagaha. He'd approach you and say: 'Sir, I wish to go to Rājagaha. Please point out the road to Rājagaha.' You'd say to them: 'Here, my man, this road goes to Rājagaha. Go along it for an hour, and you'll see a certain village. Go along an hour further, and you'll see a certain town. Go along an hour further and you'll see Rājagaha with its delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds.' Instructed like this by you, they might still take the wrong road, heading west.[118] But a second person might come with

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the seven Noble Ones as a "trainee" (*sekkhoti puthujjanakalyāṇakena saddhiṁ satta ariyā*, commentaries to Pārājika 1 and Jhānavibhaṅga).

117. Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.14.1–2 illustrates the role of a teacher with the story of a man kidnapped, blindfolded, and abandoned in a wilderness. A kind person looses his bandage and shows him the way to Gandhāra. See too Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 13.2.2–3, where the horse knows the way to heaven that humans do not, like one who knows the country.

118. *Pacchāmukha* means "heading west". The present sutta is set in Sāvatthī, so for someone wanting to get to Rājagaha in the south-east, west is the wrong

the same question and receive the same instructions. Instructed by you, they might safely arrive at Rājagaha. What is the cause, brahmin, what is the reason why, though Rājagaha is present, the path leading to Rājagaha is present, and you are there to encourage them, one person takes the wrong path and heads west, while another arrives safely at Rājagaha?"

"What can I do about that, worthy Gotama? I am the one who shows the way."[119] 14.27

"In the same way, though extinguishment is present, the path leading to extinguishment is present, and I am present to encourage them, still some of my disciples, instructed and advised like this, achieve the ultimate goal, extinguishment, while some of them fail. What can I do about that, brahmin? The Realized One is the one who shows the way." 14.29

When he had spoken, Moggallāna the Accountant said to the Buddha, "Worthy Gotama, there are those faithless individuals who went forth from the lay life to homelessness not out of faith but to earn a livelihood. They're devious, deceitful, and sneaky. They're haughty, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, and loose-tongued. They do not guard their sense doors or eat in moderation, and they are not committed to wakefulness. They don't care about the ascetic life, and don't keenly respect the training. They're indulgent and slack, leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion, lazy, and lacking energy. They're unmindful, lacking situational awareness and immersion, with straying minds, witless and idiotic. The worthy Gotama does not live together with these.[120] 15.1

way. The word also appears at Thag 10.1:3.4 of the Buddha crossing the Rohiṇī river, which runs north to south; the background story says he was coming from Rājagaha, which again implies he was heading west from Koliya to Sakya.

119. The one who "shows (or explains) the way" is also discussed at Snp 1.5:3.3, along with other good and bad ascetics. See too Dhp 276:2, "the Realized Ones show the way" (*akkhātāro tathāgatā*).

120. Also at MN 5:32.1.

15.3 But there are those gentlemen who went forth from the lay life to homelessness out of faith. They're not devious, deceitful, and sneaky. They're not haughty, insolent, fickle, scurrilous, and loose-tongued. They guard their sense doors and eat in moderation, and they are committed to wakefulness. They care about the ascetic life, and keenly respect the training. They're not indulgent or slack, nor are they leaders in backsliding, neglecting seclusion. They're energetic and determined. They're mindful, with situational awareness, immersion, and unified minds; wise and clever. The worthy Gotama does live together with these.

16.1 Of all kinds of fragrant root, spikenard is said to be the best. Of all kinds of fragrant heartwood, red sandalwood is said to be the best. Of all kinds of fragrant flower, jasmine is said to be the best. In the same way, worthy Gotama's advice is the best of contemporary teachings.

17.1 Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the Teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life."

MN 108

With Moggallāna the Guardian

Gopakamoggallānasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. It was not long after the Buddha had become fully quenched. 1.1

Now at that time King Ajātasattu of Magadha, son of the princess of Videha, being suspicious of King Pajjota, was having Rājagaha fortified.[121] 2.1

Then Venerable Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. 3.1

121. As to the politics of the situation, Pajjota had established a formidable set of alliances by marriage. He had taken to wife Śivā, daughter of Ceṭaka of the Licchavīs. Prince Bodhi of the Bhaggas was Pajjota's grandson via his mother Vāsuladattā, queen of the powerful King Udena of Kosambī (MN 85:2.1). Meanwhile, Subāhu of Madhurā had married Pajjota's sister (MN 84:2.1). Pajjota therefore had allies in Avanti, Bhagga, Vaccha, and Sūrasena, all nations to the west of Magadha, as well as Vajjī, against which Magadha was preparing war to the north. He was also friendly enough with Ajātasattu's father Bimbisāra to ask him for help in a time of illness (Kd 8:1.23.4). The Vinaya relates how Pajjota's illness was treated by Jīvaka, the doctor of the Buddha and of Bimbisāra. Jīvaka, knowing Pajjota would dislike the medicine, escaped his wrath by fleeing after administering the cure. But when the cure worked, Pajjota favored Jīvaka with a gift of fine cloth. Ajātasattu subsequently murdered Bimbisāra and threatened Pajjota's allies in Vajjī. Racked by guilt, Ajātasattu saw enemies on all sides; he was even afraid of mendicants meditating in a hall (DN 2:10.8). His fear of Pajjota was not idle, for Pajjota was known for the power of his elephants as much as for his temperamental character. However, we do not hear that any direct conflict flared up at that time. Roughly half a century later, the matter was settled when the Licchavī Śiśunāga, having usurped the throne of Magadha from the Haryaṅka dynasty founded by Bimbisāra, conquered Avanti, Kosala, and Vaccha.

3.2 Then it occurred to him, "It's too early to wander for alms in Rājagaha. Why don't I go to see the brahmin Moggallāna the Guardian at his place of work?"

4.1 So that's what he did. Moggallāna the Guardian saw Ānanda coming off in the distance and said to him, "Come, worthy Ānanda! Welcome, worthy Ānanda! It's been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please, sir, sit down, here, a seat is ready."

4.8 Ānanda sat down on the seat spread out, while Moggallāna took a low seat and sat to one side. Then he said to Ānanda, "Worthy Ānanda, is there even a single mendicant who has all the same qualities in each and every way as possessed by the worthy Gotama, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?"

5.2 "No, brahmin, there is not. For the Blessed One gave rise to the unarisen path, gave birth to the unborn path, and explained the unexplained path. He is the knower of the path, the discoverer of the path, the expert on the path.[122] And now the disciples live following the path; they acquire it later."

6.1 But this conversation between Ānanda and Moggallāna the Guardian was left unfinished.

6.2 For just then the brahmin Vassakāra, a chief minister of Magadha, while supervising the work at Rājagaha, approached Ānanda at Moggallāna's place of work and exchanged greetings with him.[123] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Ānanda, "Worthy Ānanda, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?"

6.5 So Ānanda told him of the conversation that they were having when Vassakāra arrived. Vassakāra said:

122. This links back to the Buddha's claim in the previous sutta that he is the one who shows the way (MN 107:14.28).

123. Vassakāra must have returned from building Pāṭaliputta to the north on the Ganges, which would eventually become the capital of the expanded Magadhan empire (DN 16:1.26.1). | Rājagaha is surrounded by hills, on which remnants of ancient fortifications can be seen.

"Worthy Ānanda, is there even a single mendicant who was appointed by the worthy Gotama, saying: 'This one will be your refuge when I have passed away,' to whom you would now turn?"[124] 7.1

"No, there is not."[125] 7.3

"But is there even a single mendicant who has been elected to such a position by the Saṅgha and appointed by several senior mendicants?"[126] 8.1

"No, there is not." 8.3

"But since you lack a refuge, worthy Ānanda, what's the reason for your harmony?"[127] 9.1

"We don't lack a refuge, brahmin, we have a refuge. The teaching is our refuge."[128] 9.2

124. Accept reading *paṭidhāveyyāthāti* (BJT, PTS, Siamese and Khmer editions) against Mahāsaṅgīti's *paṭipādeyyāthāti*. For this term, see MN 38:23.4 and note there, and SN 12.20:5.1.

125. The Buddha made this clear to Ānanda shortly before his death (DN 16:2.24.4).

126. The Vinaya sets up procedures whereby the Saṅgha can appoint officials to carry out necessary duties. For example, a monk might be in charge of assigning dwellings (Bu Ss 8:1.1.1) or teaching the novices (Kd 16:21.3.30). Such officials have authority within the roles prescribed to them under the Vinaya as implemented by the Saṅgha. However, they have no special authority outside of that role, and there is no provision for a general role of authority over the Saṅgha as a whole. The Saṅgha followed this precedent at the First Council, where Ānanda was appointed to recite the suttas, and Upāli to recite the Vinaya. Mahākassapa led the proceedings, but decisions were made by the Saṅgha in consensus.

127. The Buddha had, not long before, taught Vassakāra the eight principles of non-decline by which the Vajjis—as well as the Saṅgha—remained strong due to harmony. There, Vassakāra pointedly said that the Vajjis could only be defeated "by bribery or by sowing dissension" (DN 16:1.5.8). Here he returns to the question of how harmony creates strength. We can imagine that this question was equally relevant in both weakening their enemies as well as strengthening the Magadhans, who cannot have been happy to live under their brutal and patricidal king.

128. As explained to Ānanda at DN 16:4.7.3. As will become clear, the "teaching" here includes the Dhamma and Vinaya.

10.1 "But Worthy Ānanda, when asked whether there was even a single mendicant—either appointed by the worthy Gotama, or elected by the Saṅgha and appointed by several senior mendicants—who serves as your refuge after the Buddha passed away, to whom you now turn, you replied, 'No, there is not.' But you say that the reason for your harmony is that you have the teaching as a refuge. How should I see the meaning of this statement?"

10.14 "The Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha laid down training rules and recited the monastic code for the mendicants.[129] On the day of the sabbath all of us who live in dependence on one village district gather together as one.[130] We invite one who transmits the code to recite it.[131] If anyone remembers an offense or transgression while they're reciting, we make them act in line with the teaching and in line with the

129. This is the *pātimokkha*, which in early days had "over a hundred and fifty rules" and today, in the Pali, has 227 for monks (AN 3.84:1.3). The story of how the Buddha came to lay down the first rule is related in the Vinaya (Bu Pj 1). Before this, however, the joint recitation consisted of the verses known as Ovāda Pātimokkha (DN 14:3.28.1). See too DN 2:42.1 and note there. The primary purpose of the recitation was to create a unified community through shared allegiance to a particular code of ethics.

130. The "sabbath" (*uposatha*) falls on the eighth and fourteenth or fifteenth days of the lunar cycle, that is, roughly each week. However the *pātimokkha* is recited only twice a month, leaving aside the eighth days. See the detailed account in the Vinaya (Kd 2). | A "village district" (*gāmakhetta*) is the village and surrounding farmlands. The Vinaya account specifies how to create a "boundary" (*sīmā*) within which all resident mendicants must attend. This may or may not correspond with the village district. But it seems reasonable to suppose that the common practice was, in fact, for mendicants from the same village district to join together.

131. The choice of the verb *pavattati* ("transmits, rolls forth") is deliberate. It echoes the first sermon, where the Buddha "rolled forth" the wheel of the Dhamma. All mendicants are supposed to memorize the rules and be ready to recite them when called upon. The commentary explains the phrase as "arrives having rehearsed".

instructions.[132] It's not the good fellows who make us act, it's the teaching that makes us act."[133]

"Worthy Ānanda, is there even a single mendicant who you honor, 11.1
respect, revere, venerate, and rely on?"

"There is not, brahmin."[134] 11.2

"Worthy Ānanda, when asked whether there was even a single 11.3
mendicant—either appointed by the worthy Gotama, or elected by the Saṅgha and appointed by several senior mendicants—who serves as your refuge after the Buddha passed away, to whom you now turn, you replied, 'No, there is not.' And when asked whether there is even a single mendicant who you honor, respect, revere, venerate, and rely on, you replied, 'There is not.' How should I see the meaning of this statement?"

"There are ten inspiring things explained by the Blessed One, who 13.1
knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.[135] We honor anyone in whom these things are found. What ten?

It's when a mendicant is ethical, restrained in the monastic code, 14.1
conducting themselves well and resorting for alms in suitable places.

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132. Offenses should be confessed as soon as practicable, but if they have not been previously confessed due to lapse of memory and the like, the recitation may be interrupted to confess them. These days, mendicants normally confess before the recitation to avoid interruptions.

133. The Saṅgha proceeds according to the guidelines of the Dhamma and Vinaya, rather than the authority of any individuals. This is again in accordance with some of the Buddha's final words to Ānanda: "The teaching and training that I have taught and pointed out for you shall be your Teacher after my passing" (DN 16:6.1.1).

134. The Mahāsaṅgīti and BJT editions read *natthi* here ("there is not"). The PTS edition reads *atthi* ("there is"). The commentary is silent, and none of these editions record any variants. I suspect the PTS edition has amended the text to create a contrast between the "single mendicant" who is respected and the one who is taken as refuge. But the contrast per the MS and BJT editions, rather, is between respecting a "single mendicant", and respecting "whoever" has the qualities that make them worthy of respect.

135. The ten things are ethics, learning, contentment, absorption, and the six direct knowledges. While all of these are taught often in the suttas, I do not think we find this exact set elsewhere.

Seeing danger in the slightest fault, they keep the rules they've undertaken.

15.1 They're very learned, remembering and keeping what they've learned. These teachings are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased, describing a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. They are very learned in such teachings, remembering them, rehearsing them, mentally scrutinizing them, and penetrating them theoretically.

16.1 They're content with robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.

17.1 They get the four absorptions—blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—when they want, without trouble or difficulty.

18.1 They wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again; materializing and dematerializing; going unobstructed through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. They control the body as far as the realm of divinity.

19.1 With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far.

20.1 They understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with their own mind. They understand mind with greed as 'mind with greed', and mind without greed as 'mind without greed'. They understand mind with hate … mind without hate … mind with delusion … mind without delusion … constricted mind … scattered mind … expansive mind … unexpansive mind … mind that is not supreme … mind that is supreme … mind immersed in samādhi … mind not immersed in samādhi … freed mind … They understand unfreed mind as 'unfreed mind'.

21.1 They recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hun-

dred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. They remember: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds. 22.1

They realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements. 23.1

These are the ten inspiring things explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. We honor anyone in whom these things are found, and rely on them."[136] 23.2

When he had spoken, Vassakāra addressed General Upananda,[137] "What do you think, general?[138] Do these venerables honor, respect, revere, and venerate those who are worthy?" 24.1

"Indeed they do. For if these venerables were not to honor, respect, revere, and venerate them, who then would they honor?" 24.4

Then Vassakāra said to Ānanda, "Where are you staying at present?" 25.1

"In the Bamboo Grove, brahmin." 25.3

136. The suttas record many monks and nuns of such qualities.
137. This Upananda does not appear elsewhere and the commentary is silent.
138. Accept the punctuation in Mahāsaṅgīti rather than PTS.

25.4 "I hope the Bamboo Grove is delightful, quiet and still, far from the madding crowd, remote from human settlements, and fit for retreat?"

25.5 "Indeed it is, brahmin. And it is like that owing to such protectors and guardians as yourself."[139]

25.6 "Surely, worthy Ānanda, it is owing to the good fellows who meditate, making a habit of meditating.[140] For the good fellows do in fact meditate and make a habit of meditating.

25.8 This one time, worthy Ānanda, worthy Gotama was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof. So I went there to see him. And there he spoke about meditation in many ways. He meditated, and made a habit of meditating. And he praised all kinds of meditation."

26.1 "No, brahmin, the Buddha did not praise all kinds of meditation, nor did he dispraise all kinds of meditation. And what kind of meditation did he not praise? It's when someone's heart is overcome and mired in sensual desire, and they don't truly understand the escape from sensual desire that has arisen. Hiding sensual desire within, they meditate and concentrate and contemplate and ruminate. Their heart is overcome and mired in ill will … dullness and drowsiness … restlessness and remorse … doubt, and they don't truly know and see the escape from doubt that has arisen. Hiding doubt within, they meditate and concentrate and contemplate and ruminate. The Buddha didn't praise this kind of meditation.

27.1 And what kind of meditation did he praise? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture

139. Ānanda graciously recognizes the protection offered by the Magadhan state. Even a morally compromised king such as Ajātasattu honored his duty to protect religious seekers (DN 2:36.2).

140. "Habit of meditating" is *jhānasīlī*. Throughout this passage, "meditation" renders *jhāna*. This is the only sutta that speaks of a kind of *jhāna* with hindrances. My choice to render the term differently in this passage was prefigured by the translator of the Chinese parallel, which here uses the character that normally renders *vicāra* (MA 145 at T i 655b23).

and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. The Buddha praised this kind of meditation."

"Well, worthy Ānanda, it seems that worthy Gotama criticized the kind of meditation that deserves criticism and praised that deserving of praise.[141] Well, now, worthy Ānanda, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do." 28.1

"Please, brahmin, go at your convenience." 28.4

Then Vassakāra the brahmin, having approved and agreed with what Venerable Ānanda said, rose from his seat and left. 28.5

Soon after he had left, Moggallāna the Guardian said to Ānanda, "Worthy Ānanda, you still haven't answered my question." 29.1

"But brahmin, didn't I say: 'There is no single mendicant who has all the same qualities in each and every way as possessed by the worthy Gotama, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.[142] For the Blessed One gave rise to the unarisen path, gave birth to the unborn path, and explained the unexplained path. He is the knower 29.3

141. Normally, of course, when the Buddha teaches "meditation" he means the kind of meditation he praises, namely the four *jhānas*, or "absorptions".

142. The Chinese parallel differs here, emphasizing instead that there is no difference between the liberation of the Buddha and his arahant disciples (MA 145 at T i 655c27).

of the path, the discoverer of the path, the expert on the path. And now the disciples live following the path; they acquire it later.'"[143]

143. Ānanda is clarifying that his original statement was complete, namely, this is the quality that distinguishes the Buddha from his followers. | The Pali lacks the normal ending, whereas the Chinese ends with Moggallāna inviting Ānanda for a meal.

MN 109

The Longer Discourse on the Full-Moon Night

Mahāpuṇṇamasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[144] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery. 1.1

Now, at that time it was the sabbath—the full moon on the fifteenth day—and the Buddha was sitting in the open surrounded by the Saṅgha of monks. 2.1

Then one of the monks rose from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, raised his cupped palms toward the Buddha, and said, "Sir, I'd like to ask the Buddha about a certain point, if you'd take the time to answer."[145] 3.1

"Well then, monk, take your own seat and ask what you wish." 3.3

That monk took his seat and said to the Buddha: 3.4

"Sir, are these the five grasping aggregates: form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness?" 4.1

"Yes, they are," replied the Buddha. 4.3

Saying "Good, sir", that monk approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. Then he asked another question:[146] 4.5

"But sir, what is the root of these five grasping aggregates?" 5.1

144. This discourse is also found at SN 22.82, with only minor differences in readings.

145. The commentary says that he asked these questions in order to educate his students. This seems probable in view of the fact that the sequence of questions is structured in a way that is clearly purposeful.

146. The remainder of the discourse omits these responses, but they are mostly included in the parallel (see note on SN 22.82:4.2).

5.2 "These five grasping aggregates are rooted in desire."[147]

6.1 "But sir, is that grasping the exact same thing as the five grasping aggregates? Or is grasping one thing and the five grasping aggregates another?"

6.2 "Neither. The desire and greed for the five grasping aggregates is the grasping there."[148]

7.1 "But sir, can there be disparity in desire and greed for the five grasping aggregates?"

7.2 "There can," said the Buddha. "It's when someone thinks: 'In the future, may I be of such form, such feeling, such perception, such choices, and such consciousness!'[149] That's how there can be disparity in desire and greed for the five grasping aggregates."

8.1 "Sir, what is the scope of the term 'aggregates' as applied to the aggregates?"[150]

8.2 "Any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: this is called the aggregate of form. Any kind of feeling at all … Any kind of perception at all … Any kind of choices at all … Any kind of consciousness at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: this is called the aggregate of consciousness. That's the scope of the term 'aggregates' as applied to the aggregates."[151]

9.1 "What is the cause, sir, what is the reason why the aggregate of form is found?[152] What is the cause, what is the reason why the aggregate of feeling … perception … choices … consciousness is found?"

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147. "Desire" (*chanda*) is the fundamental driving force underlying all manifestations of the aggregates. It is the same as "craving" (*taṇhā*).

148. See MN 44:6.3 and note there.

149. This assumes the persistence of a "self" through time.

150. The question is whether there is anything outside the aggregates.

151. That is to say, the term "aggregate" (*khandha*) is a collective term for all instances of this kind of phenomenon.

152. While the "root" of all aggregates is desire, the question now is the immediate basis of each particular aggregate.

"The four principal states are the reason why the aggregate of form is found. Contact is the reason why the aggregates of feeling,[153] perception,[154] and choices are found.[155] Name and form are the reasons why the aggregate of consciousness is found."[156] 9.6

"But sir, how does substantialist view come about?"[157] 10.1

"It's when an unlearned ordinary person has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons. They regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They regard feeling as self, self as having feeling, feeling in self, or self in feeling. They regard perception as self, self as having perception, perception in self, or self in perception. They regard choices as self, self as having choices, choices in self, or self in choices. They regard consciousness 10.2

153. In dependent origination, "contact" (*phassa*) is the immediate condition for "feeling" (*vedanā*). But contact can also be regarded as the immediate condition for all three: feeling, perception, and choices (eg. SN 35.93:1.14). These things are always active in consciousness, so they can be treated as simultaneous, as arising in sequence, or as mutually conditioning.

154. Feeling and "perception" (*saññā*) are closely connected, since how we feel conditions how we recognize and interpret. While contact directly underlies feeling, perception works so quickly that is can be included as a direct consequence as well.

155. Likewise with "choices" (*saṅkhārā*), which are also part of the complex of reactivity that normally take effect immediately. For example, suppose we try eating a berry in the forest. "Contact" with its bitter taste "feels" unpleasant, so we "perceive" it as poisonous, and "choose" to spit it out.

156. Normally in dependent origination, it is consciousness that is a condition for name and form. The presentation here assumes their mutual conditioning, as spelled out at DN 15:22.1. Name and form are the embryo that supports consciousness in the process of rebirth, while the physical body with its senses, and the psychological functions included under "name" continue to evolve and grow with consciousness through life.

157. As at MN 44:7.1.

as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. That's how substantialist view comes about."[158]

11.1 "But sir, how does substantialist view not come about?"

11.2 "It's when a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They don't regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They don't regard feeling as self, self as having feeling, feeling in self, or self in feeling. They don't regard perception as self, self as having perception, perception in self, or self in perception. They don't regard choices as self, self as having choices, choices in self, or self in choices. They don't regard consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. That's how substantialist view does not come about."[159]

12.1 "Sir, what's the gratification, the drawback, and the escape when it comes to form,[160] feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness?"

12.6 "The pleasure and happiness that arise from form: this is its gratification. That form is impermanent, suffering, and perishable: this is its drawback. Removing and giving up desire and greed for form: this is its escape. The pleasure and happiness that arise from feeling … perception … choices … consciousness: this is its gratification. That consciousness is impermanent, suffering, and perishable: this is its drawback. Removing and giving up desire and greed for consciousness: this is its escape."

158. That is to say, the "substantialist" view takes the aggregates, or one of them, to be a "substantial reality" that is identified with the self. Such views are created each time we think or attach to the aggregates as a self.

159. Since substantialist view is itself a conditioned phenomenon, it can only continue to exist if it is continually reinforced. Without it, like a fire without a constant supply of fuel, it falters and goes out.

160. We have met these questions before at MN 13:6.2. Here they build on the previous section by showing a strategy for how to stop identifying them as the substantial reality underlying the self. This can be used as the basis for a contemplative insight meditation.

"Sir, how does one know and see so that there's no I-making, mine-making, or underlying tendency to conceit for this conscious body and externally for all signs?"[161] 13.1

"One truly sees any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' One truly sees any kind of feeling … perception … choices … consciousness at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' That's how to know and see so that there's no I-making, mine-making, or underlying tendency to conceit for this conscious body and externally for all signs." 13.2

Now at that time one of the monks had the thought, "So it seems, worthy sir, that form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are not-self.[162] Then how will the deeds done by not-self affect the self?"[163] 14.1

161. From meditative contemplation, the question now turns to realization. The Buddha's response makes it clear he is now speaking of the penetrative understanding of the aggregates that arises at stream-entry at least. The "underlying tendency to conceit", however, is only fully overcome by the arahant. | "I-making" (*ahaṅkāra*) emphasizes the active role of the mind in creating a sense of self through its thoughts, habits, and desires. This is in contrast with the English notion of "ego", which presents self as a given construct. | "Mine-making" (*mamaṅkāra*) is the propensity of the mind to appropriate things as possessions. | "All signs" (*sabbanimitta*) are the "features" (also *nimitta*) that characterize sensory stimulation (eg. MN 112:15.1).

162. In his mind, the monk addresses the Buddha with "worthy sir" (*bho*), which is a signature of the brahmins (MN 98:11.3). Small wonder he still assumes a self.

163. This monk, missing the point, thinks not-self means he can escape moral responsibility. A theory of self assumes a continuous entity, so that deeds done at one time will affect the same entity at another time. The Buddhist concept, on the other hand, is of a flow, so that, for example, pollution dumped in a stream will affect the river and the sea below, even though they are not materially the "same".

14.4 But the Buddha, knowing that monk's train of thought, addressed the monks: "It's possible that some futile person here—unknowing and ignorant, his mind dominated by craving—thinks he can overstep the Teacher's instructions. He thinks: 'So it seems, worthy sir, that form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are not-self. Then how will the deeds done by not-self affect the self?' Now, monks, you have been educated by me in questioning with regard to all these things in all such cases.[164]

15.1 What do you think, monks? Is form permanent or impermanent?"

15.3 "Impermanent, sir."

15.4 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

15.5 "Suffering, sir."

15.6 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

15.8 "No, sir."

16.1 "What do you think, monks? Is feeling … perception … choices … consciousness permanent or impermanent?"

16.6 "Impermanent, sir."

16.7 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

16.8 "Suffering, sir."

16.9 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

16.11 "No, sir."

16.12 "So you should truly see any kind of form at all—past, future, or present; internal or external; solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* form—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'

17.1 You should truly see any kind of feeling … perception … choices … consciousness at all—past, future, or present; internal or external;

164. Read *paṭipucchāvinītā* with SN 22.82:13.4. It is the name for the method of questioning the Buddha is about to use. The Buddha does not just state doctrine for his students, he has "educated" (*vinīta*) them in the methods for learning. Active questioning breaks up long discourses and encourages reflection and articulation.

solid or subtle; inferior or superior; far or near: *all* consciousness—with right understanding: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'

Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. 17.5

Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When they're freed, they know they're freed. 18.1

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'" 18.2

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the monks approved what the Buddha said.[165] And while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of sixty monks were freed from defilements by not grasping. 18.3

165. The parallel at SN 22.82:15.1 has a completely different closing passage. Generally speaking, such passages were added at a later date to wrap up the teaching portion, and there is considerable variation within the Pali texts, let alone Chinese and other parallels.

MN 110

The Shorter Discourse on the Full-Moon Night

Cūḷapuṇṇamasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery.

2.1 Now, at that time it was the sabbath—the full moon on the fifteenth day—and the Buddha was sitting in the open surrounded by the Saṅgha of monks. Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were so very silent. He addressed them, "Monks, could an untrue person know of an untrue person:[166] 'This worthy one is an untrue person'?"

3.3 "No, sir."

3.4 "Good, monks! It's impossible, it can't happen, that an untrue person could know of an untrue person: 'This worthy one is an untrue person.' But could an untrue person know of a true person: 'This worthy one is a true person'?"

3.9 "No, sir."

3.10 "Good, monks! That too is impossible. An untrue person has bad qualities, is devoted to untrue persons, and has the intentions, counsel, speech, actions, views, and giving of an untrue person.[167]

166. Vassakāra asks the Buddha the same questions at AN 4.187:2.1, with an interesting example given from the court gossip.

167. *Bhatti* is given in the Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga as a synonym of *sevanā*, "association" (Vb 17:93.2). While this is correct, the early Pali contexts are more warmly emotional than the rather austere "association", connecting it with words such as "faith" (*saddhā*) and "fondness" (*pema*) (Thag 5.12:1.3, Thig 15.1:14.1, AN 5.141:5.2). This anticipates the later use of *bhakti* as "(ecstatic religious) devotion". | "Devotion to untrue persons" is said to be a quality of the Jains (AN 10.78:1.7).

And how does an untrue person have bad qualities? It's when an untrue person is faithless, shameless, imprudent, unlearned, lazy, unmindful, and witless. That's how an untrue person has bad qualities. 5.1

And how is an untrue person devoted to untrue persons? It's when an untrue person is a friend and companion of ascetics and brahmins who are faithless, shameless, imprudent, unlearned, lazy, unmindful, and witless.[168] That's how an untrue person is devoted to untrue persons. 6.1

And how does an untrue person have the intentions of an untrue person? It's when an untrue person intends to hurt themselves, hurt others, and hurt both. That's how an untrue person has the intentions of an untrue person. 7.1

And how does an untrue person offer the counsel of an untrue person? It's when an untrue person offers counsel that hurts themselves, hurts others, and hurts both. That's how an untrue person offers the counsel of an untrue person. 8.1

And how does an untrue person have the speech of an untrue person? It's when an untrue person uses speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, and nonsensical. That's how an untrue person has the speech of an untrue person. 9.1

And how does an untrue person have the action of an untrue person? It's when an untrue person kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct. That's how an untrue person has the actions of an untrue person. 10.1

And how does an untrue person have the view of an untrue person? It's when an untrue person has such a view: 'There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There's no such thing as mother and father, or beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is rightly comported and rightly practiced, and 11.1

168. Where *assaddhamma* appears in AN 10.62:3.1, it means listening to "untrue teachings", whereas here it means "bad qualities".

who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' That's how an untrue person has the view of an untrue person.

12.1 And how does an untrue person give the gifts of an untrue person?[169] It's when an untrue person gives a gift carelessly, not with their own hand, and thoughtlessly. They give the dregs, and they give without consideration for consequences. That's how an untrue person gives the gifts of an untrue person.

13.1 That untrue person—who has such bad qualities, is devoted to untrue persons, and has the intentions, counsel, speech, actions, views, and giving of an untrue person—when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in the place where untrue persons are reborn. And what is the place where untrue persons are reborn? Hell or the animal realm.[170]

14.1 Monks, could a true person know of a true person: 'This worthy one is a true person'?"

14.3 "Yes, sir."

14.4 "Good, monks! It is possible that a true person could know of a true person: 'This worthy one is a true person.' But could a true person know of an untrue person: 'This worthy one is an untrue person'?"

14.9 "Yes, sir."

15.1 "Good, monks! That too is possible. A true person has good qualities, is devoted to true persons, and has the intentions, counsel, speech, actions, views, and giving of a true person.

16.1 And how does a true person have good qualities? It's when a true person is faithful, conscientious, prudent, learned, energetic, mindful, and wise. That's how a true person has good qualities.

17.1 And how is a true person devoted to true persons? It's when a true person is a friend and companion of ascetics and brahmins who

169. Also at AN 5.147; see too AN 9.20.

170. At AN 2.26–29 these destinies are said to await one who hides misdeeds, who has wrong view, and who is unethical. At MN 97:30.3 it is said that, of the two, the animal realm is better.

are faithful, conscientious, prudent, learned, energetic, mindful, and wise. That's how a true person is devoted to true persons.

And how does a true person have the intentions of a true person? 18.1
It's when a true person doesn't intend to hurt themselves, hurt others, and hurt both. That's how a true person has the intentions of a true person.

And how does a true person offer the counsel of a true person? It's 19.1
when a true person offers counsel that doesn't hurt themselves, hurt others, and hurt both. That's how a true person offers the counsel of a true person.

And how does a true person have the speech of a true person? 20.1
It's when a true person refrains from speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. That's how a true person has the speech of a true person.

And how does a true person have the action of a true person? It's 21.1
when a true person refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct. That's how a true person has the action of a true person.

And how does a true person have the view of a true person? It's 22.1
when a true person has such a view: 'There is meaning in giving, sacrifice, and offerings. There are fruits and results of good and bad deeds. There is an afterlife. There are such things as mother and father, and beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there are ascetics and brahmins who are rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describe the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' That's how a true person has the view of a true person.

And how does a true person give the gifts of a true person? It's 23.1
when a true person gives a gift carefully, with their own hand, and thoughtfully. They don't give the dregs, and they give with consideration for consequences. That's how a true person gives the gifts of a true person.

That true person—who has such good qualities, is devoted to true 24.1
persons, and has the intentions, counsel, speech, actions, views, and giving of a true person—when their body breaks up, after death, is

reborn in the place where true persons are reborn. And what is the place where true persons are reborn? A state of greatness among gods or humans."

25.1 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the monks approved what the Buddha said.

THE CHAPTER BEGINNING WITH ONE BY ONE

MN 111

One by One

Anupadasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[171] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Sāriputta is astute, mendicants. He has great wisdom,[172] widespread wisdom,[173] laughing wisdom, swift wisdom, sharp wisdom, and penetrating wisdom. For a fortnight he practiced discernment of phenomena one by one.[174] And this is how he did it.

3.1 Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, he entered and remained in the first absorption, which has

171. This discourse describes Sāriputta's practice of discernment leading to awakening. It fills in the blanks between realizing stream entry and arahantship, reminding us that when a narrative depicts a person realizing the truth while listening to a teaching—as Sāriputta does—there is usually an extensive background of practice behind that. A number of indications suggest that this is among the later discourses: there are no parallels; the exposition is unusually elaborate; there is editorial clumsiness; and a number of terms are unique or characteristic of later texts.

172. These are qualities of the Buddha at DN 30:1.26.6 and of Sāriputta again at SN 8.7:3.2.

173. "Widespread wisdom" is defined at AN 3.30:3.1 as one who often listens to teachings, applies their mind while listening, and continues to do so afterwards.

174. The fortnight between realizing stream-entry while still a student of Sañjaya (Kd 1:23.5.6) and arahantship while overhearing the Buddha teach Dīghanakha (MN 74:5.1). | *Anupada* elsewhere means a "following statement" (Bu Pc 4:2.1.11, Vv 35:7.4, Vv 53:9.4). Here it refers to the "discernment" (*vipassanā*) of each individual phenomena one by one as they occur. This methodical style of contemplation is reflected in the similarly detailed and thorough teachings characteristic of Sāriputta.

the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. And he distinguished the phenomena of the first absorption one by one: placing and keeping and rapture and bliss and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind.[175] He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away.[176] He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.'[177] Regarding those phenomena,

175. *Vavatthita* ("distinguished") occurs elsewhere in the suttas in only one late verse (DN 20:6.10). The Vinaya gives it as an antonym to *sambhinna*, "mixed" (Kd 13:33.1.7). | The first five items here are the five so-called "jhāna factors", which in the suttas appear here and at MN 43:19.3. The list summarizes the normal depiction of the first absorption, as the first four factors are all part of the standard first absorption formula, and all absorption or *samādhi* is characterized by unification of mind (eg. MN 20:3.3). | There is a striking syntactic break between the first five factors and the remainder of the list starting with "contact". The five factors are articulated in the colloquial Pali fashion connected with *ca*, while the remainder are simply listed without *ca*. This, together with the fact that the first five appear elsewhere as a set and the remainder do not, as well as the fact that the second list is partly redundant (eg. "feeling" is already covered in the five factors), makes it certain that the latter items were appended to the first five. Indeed, the appended items appear elaborated even compared with similar lists in the Abhidhamma (eg. Dt 1.2:16.1, Kv 15.10:2.3; see too Mil 3.3.6:7.2).

176. He was mindfully aware as the attainment characterized by these qualities arose, persisted, and fell away. As Anālayo points out, this cannot refer to observing the cessation of phenomena *inside* the absorption, as the absorption itself is defined by their persistence (*Early Buddhist Meditation Studies*, p. 117ff.). In other words, he was aware of the impermanence *of* absorption, not of impermanence *in* absorption. | Compare the "development of immersion" that contemplates feelings, perceptions, and thoughts in the same way (AN 4.41:4.3). According to the suttas, for all conditioned phenomena, "arising is evident, vanishing is evident, and change while persisting is evident" (AN 3.47:1.3).

177. In the previous passage he *observed* them, whereas now he *reflects* on what he has seen. This course of practice anticipates the Niddesa's notion of three kinds of full knowledge (Cnd 11:51.4). First comes "full knowledge of the known" (*ñātapariññā*), where the meditator clearly observes each phenomena

he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries.[178] He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.'[179] Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.[180]

5.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, he entered and remained in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.

6.1 And he distinguished the phenomena of the second absorption one by one: internal confidence and rapture and bliss and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind.[181] He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached,

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in experience. Then they reflect and scrutinize the "known" in light of the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and not-self, as Sāriputta is doing here (*tīraṇapariññā*). Finally they let go all attachments (*pahānapariññā*), as Sāriputta does below. | "Flit away" (*paṭiventi*) is unique.

178. "Without getting involved or shying away" (*anupāyo anapāyo*) is explained by the commentary as not being swayed by the power of lust or aversion. It means having a poised and unreactive attitude. It is a rare phrase that also occurs, with the same syntactic context, in the next sutta, creating a link between the two (MN 112:4.2).

179. The "escape beyond" (*uttari nissaraṇaṁ*) normally refers to full awakening (MN 7:17.1, MN 49:2.3, AN 3.66:46.6, AN 7.56:6.1, AN 10.93:14.4), but the commentary says that here it refers to the next higher attainment.

180. The compound *atthitvevassa* resolves to: *atthi iti* ("that it is real") *eva* ("indeed") *assa* ("for him"). The commentary glosses, "That it is real is reinforced for that monk."

181. The initial list representing the absorption factors is adjusted according to the level of absorption, while the remainder of the list stays the same.

with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

7.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, he entered and remained in the third absorption, where he meditated with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.'

8.1 And he distinguished the phenomena of the third absorption one by one: bliss and mindfulness and awareness and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

9.1 Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, he entered and remained in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

10.1 And he distinguished the phenomena of the fourth absorption one by one: equanimity and neutral feeling and mental unconcern due to tranquility and pure mindfulness and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind.[182] He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.'

182. "Unconcern" (*anābhoga*) is a unique term in the suttas. In the Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga, it is said to be a characteristic of the five kinds of sense consciousness, which according to that system do not feel pleasure or pain (Vb 16:13.1).

Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, his mind without boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

11.1 Furthermore, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', he entered and remained in the dimension of infinite space.

12.1 And he distinguished the phenomena of the dimension of infinite space one by one: the perception of the dimension of infinite space and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

13.1 Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', he entered and remained in the dimension of infinite consciousness.

14.1 And he distinguished the phenomena of the dimension of infinite consciousness one by one: the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, his mind free of limits. He understood:

'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

15.1 Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', he entered and remained in the dimension of nothingness.

16.1 And he distinguished the phenomena of the dimension of nothingness one by one: the perception of the dimension of nothingness and unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, intention, mind, enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and application of mind. He knew those phenomena as they arose, as they remained, and as they went away. He understood: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.' Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

17.1 Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, he entered and remained in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

18.1 And he emerged from that attainment with mindfulness. Then he contemplated the phenomena of that attainment that had passed, ceased, and perished: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.'[183] Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, his mind without

183. In this, the highest of the eight attainments, there is no individual discernment of mental factors, as the function of "perception" is liminal; compare MN 52:14.7, MN 64:15.5, and MN 102:4.4. And rather than observing the arising, persisting, and ceasing of the absorption phenomena, as he had done previously, he reflects on the fact of their come and gone. As Anālayo (*ibid.*, 122) puts it, "there is no continuity of perceptual awareness from before the time one entered these attainments to emergence from them … practitioners could only know that at some time in the past they entered and that by now they have emerged".

boundaries. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond.' Repeated practice of that confirmed this for him.

19.1 Furthermore, going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, he entered and remained in the cessation of perception and feeling. And, having seen with wisdom, his defilements came to an end.

20.1 And he emerged from that attainment with mindfulness. Then he contemplated the phenomena of that attainment that had passed, ceased, and perished: 'So it seems that these phenomena, not having been, come to be; and having come to be, they flit away.'[184] Regarding those phenomena, he meditated without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. He understood: 'There is no escape beyond.'[185] By cultivating that he confirmed that there is not.

21.1 And if there's anyone of whom it may be rightly said that they have attained mastery and perfection in noble ethics, immersion, wisdom, and freedom, it's Sāriputta.[186]

22.1 And if there's anyone of whom it may be rightly said that they're the Buddha's bosom son, born from his mouth, born of the teaching, created by the teaching, heir in the teaching, not in things of the flesh, it's Sāriputta.[187]

23.1 Sāriputta rightly keeps rolling the supreme Wheel of Dhamma that was rolled forth by the Realized One."[188]

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184. It is not clear what this refers to, as there are no mental states arising or ceasing in the state of cessation. The commentary says it refers to either the material states present (i.e. the body originated by kamma) or the states of the previous attainment. Perhaps it is simply an editorial slip.

185. He has fully realized Nibbāna, beyond which there is nothing higher.

186. Compare MN 77:15.6 and MN 100:6.1.

187. Also said of Sāriputta at SN 8.7:3.2 and of Mahākassapa at SN 16.11:15.2. The phrase was adopted from the Brahmins' claim to be born from the mouth of Brahmā (MN 84:4.5, DN 27:3.9).

188. Also at AN 1.187:1.2, AN 5.132:4.3, and SN 8.7:3.4. This is a reference to the Buddha's first teaching (SN 56.11).

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 23.2
what the Buddha said.

MN 112

The Sixfold Purification

Chabbisodhanasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[189] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Take a mendicant who declares enlightenment: 'I understand: "Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place."'

3.1 You should neither approve nor reject that mendicant's statement.[190] Rather, you should question them: 'Reverend, these four kinds of expression have been rightly explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. What four? Saying you've seen, heard, thought, or known something, and you have.[191] These are the four kinds of expression rightly explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. How does the venerable know and see regarding these four kinds of expression so that your mind is freed from defilements by not grasping?'

4.1 For a mendicant with defilements ended—who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the bur-

189. This sutta lays out a method for assessing a mendicant's claim to realize perfection (*arahatta*). They are taken through a series of questions of increasing complexity, culminating in the entire practice of the Gradual Training.

190. As at DN 29:18.4 and DN 16:4.11.5 = AN 4.180:2.5.

191. As usual, this group of four is not meant to stand for the six senses—which are discussed later—but for the ways in which one learns spiritual truths. That is why one "speaks of" what one has learned. See MN 1:19.1 and note there.

den, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—it is in line with the teaching to answer: 'Regarding what is seen, reverends, I live without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries.[192] Regarding what is heard … thought … or known, I live without getting involved or shying away, independent, untied, liberated, detached, with mind free of boundaries. That is how I know and see regarding these four kinds of expression so that my mind is freed from defilements by not grasping.'

Saying 'Good!' you should applaud and cheer that mendicant's statement, then ask a further question: 5.1

'Reverend, these five grasping aggregates have been rightly explained by the Buddha. What five? That is: the grasping aggregates of form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. These are the five grasping aggregates that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. How does the venerable know and see regarding these five grasping aggregates so that your mind is freed from defilements by not grasping?' 5.3

For a mendicant with defilements ended it is in line with the teaching to answer: 'Reverends, knowing that form is powerless, faded, and unreliable, I understand that my mind is freed through the ending, fading away, cessation, giving away, and letting go of attraction, grasping, mental fixation, insistence, and underlying tendency for form.[193] Knowing that feeling … perception … choices 6.1

192. Also at MN 111:4.5.

193. *Virāgunaṁ* is a secondary derivation from *virāga* with the *-una* suffix. Also found at Iti 77:3.2. | *Rāga* can mean "color" or "desire", so its opposite *virāga* has the dual connotations of "dispassion" and "colorless" or metaphorically "fading away". Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra 2.10.58 gives an example in the context of writing. In those days, the letters would be etched in a palm leaf with a stylus, then "colored" by applying dye or ink. The surface would then be wiped clean, leaving just the ink staining the etched letters. An example of poorly done writing is *virāga*, "colorless", i.e. the ink does not take hold, leaving only the near-invisible etching.

… consciousness is powerless, faded, and unreliable, I understand that my mind is freed through the ending, fading away, cessation, giving away, and letting go of attraction, grasping, mental fixation, insistence, and underlying tendency for consciousness. That is how I know and see regarding these five grasping aggregates so that my mind is freed from defilements by not grasping.'

7.1 Saying 'Good!' you should applaud and cheer that mendicant's statement, then ask a further question:

7.3 'Reverend, these six elements have been rightly explained by the Buddha. What six? The elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness. These are the six elements that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. How does the venerable know and see regarding these six elements so that your mind is freed from defilements by not grasping?'

8.1 For a mendicant with defilements ended it is in line with the teaching to answer: 'Reverends, I've not taken the earth element as self, nor is there a self based on the earth element.[194] And I understand that my mind is freed through the ending, fading away, cessation, giving away, and letting go of attraction, grasping, mental fixation, insistence, and underlying tendency based on the earth element. I've not taken the water element … fire element … air element … space element … consciousness element as self, nor is there a self based on the consciousness element. And I understand that my mind is freed through the ending of attraction based on the consciousness element. That is how I know and see regarding these six elements so that my mind is freed from defilements by not grasping.'

9.1 Saying 'Good!' you should applaud and cheer that mendicant's statement, then ask a further question:

194. To take (*upagacchi*) the earth element as self is to identify the self with the earth element. A self "based on" (*nissita*) the earth element is one that is not itself the earth element, but which is dependent upon it, like a river on its bed. This would include identifying the self with other physical or mental properties. The logic is that, since the earth element is impermanent, etc., any self dependent on it must also be impermanent, etc.

'Reverend, these six interior and exterior sense fields have been 9.3
rightly explained by the Buddha. What six? The eye and sights, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and touches, and the mind and ideas. These are the six interior and exterior sense fields that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. How does the venerable know and see regarding these six interior and exterior sense fields so that your mind is freed from defilements by not grasping?'

For a mendicant with defilements ended it is in line with the 10.1
teaching to answer: 'I understand that my mind is freed through the ending, fading away, cessation, giving away, and letting go of desire and greed and relishing and craving; attraction, grasping, mental fixation, insistence, and underlying tendency for the eye, sights, eye consciousness, and things knowable by eye consciousness.[195] I understand that my mind is freed through the ending of desire for the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, ideas, mind consciousness, and things knowable by mind consciousness. That is how I know and see regarding these six interior and exterior sense fields so that my mind is freed from defilements by not grasping.'

Saying 'Good!' you should applaud and cheer that mendicant's 11.1
statement, then ask a further question:

'Sir, how does the venerable know and see so that he has eradicated 11.3
I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit for this conscious body and externally for all signs?'

For a mendicant with defilements ended it is in line with the teach- 12.1
ing to answer: 'Formerly, reverends, when I was still a layperson, I

195. The phrase "eye, sights, eye consciousness, and things knowable by eye consciousness" appears redundant, as "sights" (*rūpa*) are precisely what is "knowable by eye consciousness". Where the phrase occurs elsewhere, *rūpa* may appear (SN 35.27:1.3, SN 35.65:2.1, SN 35.68:1.3) or it may not (MN 144:9.1, SN 35.87:7.1). Bodhi summarizes the commentary's explanations, which he describes as "contrived" (*Middle Length Discourses*, note 1080, and *Connected Discourses* note 12 on book 4). The Chinese parallel omits *rūpa* here, thus avoiding the redundancy (MA 187 at T i 732c19). It is likely the original passage did not include *rūpa* and it was added in an old editorial oversight.

was ignorant. Then the Realized One or one of his disciples taught me the Dhamma. I gained faith in the Realized One, and reflected:

12.6 "Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from lay life to homelessness?"

13.1 After some time I gave up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. I shaved off hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. Once I had gone forth, I took up the training and livelihood of the mendicants. I gave up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. I was scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings. I gave up stealing. I took only what's given, and expected only what's given. I kept myself clean by not thieving. I gave up unchastity. I became chaste, set apart, refraining from the vulgar act of sex. I gave up lying. I spoke the truth and stuck to the truth. I was honest and dependable, not tricking the world with my words. I gave up backbiting. I didn't repeat in one place what I heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, I reconciled those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. I gave up harsh speech. I spoke in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people. I gave up talking nonsense. My words were timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. I said things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.

14.1 I refrained from injuring plants and seeds. I ate in one part of the day, abstaining from eating at night and food at the wrong time. I refrained from seeing shows of dancing, singing, and music. I refrained from attiring and adorning myself with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. I refrained from high and luxurious beds. I refrained from receiving gold and currency, raw grains, raw meat, women

and girls, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chicken and pigs, elephants, cows, horses, and mares, and fields and land. I refrained from running errands and messages; buying and selling; falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence.

I became content with robes to look after the body and almsfood 14.19
to look after the belly. Wherever I went, I set out taking only these things. Like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, I became content with robes to look after the body and almsfood to look after the belly. Wherever I went, I set out taking only these things. When I had this spectrum of noble ethics, I experienced a blameless happiness inside myself.

When I saw a sight with my eyes, I didn't get caught up in the 15.1
features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, I practiced restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When I heard a sound with my ears … When I smelled an odor with my nose … When I tasted a flavor with my tongue … When I felt a touch with my body … When I knew an idea with my mind, I didn't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of the mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure would become overwhelming. For this reason, I practiced restraint, protecting the faculty of the mind, and achieving its restraint. When I had this noble sense restraint, I experienced an unsullied bliss inside myself.

I acted with situational awareness when going out and coming 16.1
back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.

16.2 When I had this spectrum of noble ethics, this noble contentment, this noble sense restraint, and this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, I frequented a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. After the meal, I returned from almsround, sat down cross-legged, set my body straight, and brought mindfulness to the present.

17.1 Giving up covetousness for the world, I meditated with a heart rid of covetousness, cleansing the mind of covetousness. Giving up ill will and malevolence, I meditated with a mind rid of ill will, full of sympathy for all living beings, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, I meditated with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, I meditated without restlessness, my mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, I meditated having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

18.1 I gave up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then, 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. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, I entered and remained in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption.

19.1 When my mind had immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—I extended it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements.[196] I truly understood: "This is suffering" … "This is the origin of suffering" … "This is the cessation of suffering" … "This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering". I truly under-

196. The text omits the usual description of the recollection of past lives and of clairvoyance here.

stood: "These are defilements" … "This is the origin of defilements" … "This is the cessation of defilements" … "This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements".

Knowing and seeing like this, my mind was freed from the de- 20.1
filements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When it was freed, I knew it was freed. I understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." That is how I know and see so that I have eradicated I-making, mine-making, and the underlying tendency to conceit for this conscious body and externally for all signs.'

Saying 'Good!' you should applaud and cheer that mendicant's 21.1
statement, and then say to them: 'We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself as one of our spiritual companions!'"

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 21.5
what the Buddha said.[197]

197. The title of the discourse refers to a "sixfold purity", whereas the Pali text only has five items. The commentary offers a couple of explanations, one of which, attributed to "overseas Elders", says the text should include a passage on the four nutriments. As it happens, the Chinese parallel does indeed include the four nutriments (MA 187 at T i 732b18), confirming the suggestion of the "overseas Elders" (Anālayo, *Comparative Study*, vol. ii, p. 638). Thus an accurate memory of the text persisted in the commentarial tradition, even when the text itself suffered loss. As to the identity of these Elders, the commentary to the Ghaṭikārasutta (MN 81:10.5) says they taught the ten perfections (*pāramī*). These are a characteristic doctrine of the Mahāvihāra (or Theravāda) school, as other sectarian accounts of the perfections rarely number ten. So we can assume the Elders were not of a different school. Inscriptions at Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa reveal that there was a Mahāvihāra branch monastery in Andhra, so they may have lived there.

MN 113

A True Person

Sappurisasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, I will teach you the qualities of a true person and the qualities of an untrue person. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.3 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "And what is a quality of an untrue person? Take an untrue person who has gone forth from an eminent family. They reflect: 'I have gone forth from an eminent family, unlike these other mendicants.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'It's not because of one's eminent family that thoughts of greed, hate, or delusion come to an end. Even if someone has not gone forth from an eminent family, if they practice in line with the teaching, practice properly, and live in line with the teaching, they are worthy of honor and praise for that.' Keeping the practice to themselves, they don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of their eminent family.[198] This is a quality of a true person.

4-6.1 Furthermore, take an untrue person who has gone forth from a great family … from a wealthy family … from an exceptionally wealthy family. They reflect: 'I have gone forth from an exceptionally

198. By rejecting social measures of worth and focusing on inner purity, they are the opposite of the meditator at MN 108:26.4, who hides defilements within.

wealthy family, unlike these other mendicants.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'It's not because of one's exceptionally wealthy family that thoughts of greed, hate, or delusion come to an end. Even if someone has not gone forth from an exceptionally wealthy family, if they practice in line with the teaching, practice properly, and live in line with the teaching, they are worthy of honor and praise for that.' Keeping the practice to themselves, they don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of their exceptionally wealthy family. This too is a quality of a true person.

7.1 Furthermore, take an untrue person who is well-known and famous. They reflect: 'I'm well-known and famous. These other mendicants are obscure and insignificant.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'It's not because of one's fame that thoughts of greed, hate, or delusion come to an end. Even if someone is not well-known and famous, if they practice in line with the teaching, practice properly, and live in line with the teaching, they are worthy of honor and praise for that.' Keeping the practice to themselves, they don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of their fame. This too is a quality of a true person.

8.1 Furthermore, take an untrue person who receives robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. They reflect: 'I receive robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, unlike these other mendicants.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'It's not because of one's material things that thoughts of greed, hate, or delusion come to an end. Even if someone doesn't receive robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick, if they practice in line with the teaching, practice properly, and live in line with the teaching, they are worthy of honor and praise for that.' Keeping the practice to

themselves, they don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of their material things. This too is a quality of a true person.

9.1 Furthermore, take an untrue person who is very learned … who is an expert in the monastic law … who is a Dhamma teacher … who dwells in the wilderness … who is a rag robe wearer … who eats only almsfood … who stays at the root of a tree … who stays in a charnel ground … who stays in the open air … who never lies down … who sleeps wherever they lay their mat … who eats in one sitting per day. They reflect: 'I eat in one sitting per day, unlike these other mendicants.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'It's not because of eating in one sitting per day that thoughts of greed, hate, or delusion come to an end. Even if someone eats in more than one sitting per day, if they practice in line with the teaching, practice properly, and live in line with the teaching, they are worthy of honor and praise for that.' Keeping the practice to themselves, they don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of their eating in one sitting per day. This too is a quality of a true person.

21.1 Furthermore, take an untrue person who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. They reflect: 'I have attained the first absorption, unlike these other mendicants.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'The Buddha has spoken of not being determined even by the attainment of the first absorption.[199] For however they imagine it, it turns out to be something else.'[200] Keeping to themselves the fact that they are not determined by that, they don't glorify themselves and put

199. For *atammayatā* see MN 47:13.4 and my note there. Here it means that one's spiritual goal is not limited to this attainment.

200. This saying also appears at Snp 3.8:15.1 and Snp 3.12:52.1, where it is not connected with absorption practice.

others down on account of their attainment of the first absorption. This too is a quality of a true person.

Furthermore, take an untrue person who, as the placing of the 22-24.1
mind and keeping it connected are stilled, enters and remains in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. They reflect: 'I have attained the fourth absorption, unlike these other mendicants.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'The Buddha has spoken of not being determined even by the attainment of the fourth absorption. For however they imagine it, it turns out to be something else.' Keeping to themselves the fact that they are not determined by that, they don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of their attainment of the fourth absorption. This too is a quality of a true person.

Furthermore, take an untrue person who, going totally beyond 25.1
perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. They reflect: 'I have attained the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, unlike these other mendicants.' And they glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a quality of an untrue person. A true person reflects: 'The Buddha has spoken of not being determined even by the attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. For however they imagine it, it turns out to be something else.' Keeping to themselves the fact that they are not determined by that, they don't glorify themselves and put others down on account of their attainment of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This too is a quality of a true person.

Furthermore, take a true person who, going totally beyond the 29.1
dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, enters and remains in the cessation of perception and feeling. And, having seen

with wisdom, their defilements come to an end. This is a mendicant who does not conceive with anything, does not conceive regarding anything, does not conceive through anything."

29.3 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 114

What Should and Should Not Be Cultivated

Sevitabbāsevitabbasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[201] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I will teach you an exposition of the teaching on what should and should not be cultivated.[202] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 2.1

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.3

"I say that there are two kinds of bodily behavior:[203] that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of bodily behavior. 3.1

I say that there are two kinds of verbal behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of verbal behavior. 3.4

I say that there are two kinds of mental behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of mental behavior. 3.7

201. The Buddha begins by speaking of what should and should not be cultivated. Then he goes on to offer three distinct analyses of this, each laid out in a series of dichotomies. After each one, Sāriputta offers a lengthy elaboration, which the Buddha then approves and recapitulates.

202. To "cultivate" is to foster or nurture through repeated association or practice.

203. The first analysis consists of seven items: bodily, verbal, and mental conduct; arising of thought; and acquisition of perception, views, and reincarnation.

3.10 I say that there are two arisings of thought: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an arising of thought.

3.13 I say that there are two acquisitions of perception: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an acquisition of perception.

3.16 I say that there are two acquisitions of views: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an acquisition of views.

3.19 I say that there are two kinds of incarnation:[204] that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And these are equally incarnation."

4.1 When he said this, Venerable Sāriputta said to the Buddha,[205] "Sir, this is how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement.

5.1 'I say that there are two kinds of bodily behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of bodily behavior.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the kind of bodily behavior which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of bodily behavior which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

204. "Incarnation" is *attabhāva*, literally the "state of the self", where the "self" comes close in meaning to "body"—whether material or immaterial—which is a secondary sense of *ātman* in the Upaniṣads. Accordingly, the commentary to AN 5.100 glosses as *sarīrapaṭilābha*. | "Reincarnation" is *paṭilābha*. In the 20th century, Buddhist writers shied away from using "reincarnation", which they associated with the Hindu idea of a transmigrating soul. But there is nothing in the word "reincarnation" that implies a soul. Rather, it simply refers to going into another body, which is precisely what is meant by *attabhāva*. It is unwise to hang a heavy philosophical cloak upon the feeble hook of a single word.

205. Sāriputta proceeds to elaborate each of the seven items in turn.

And what kind of bodily behavior causes unskillful qualities to 5.8
grow while skillful qualities decline?[206] It's when someone kills living creatures. They're violent, bloody-handed, a hardened killer, merciless to living beings. They steal. With the intention to commit theft, they take the wealth or belongings of others from village or wilderness. They commit sexual misconduct. They have relations with women who have their mother, father, both mother and father, brother, sister, relatives, or clan as guardian. They have relations with a woman who is protected on principle, or who has a husband, or whose violation is punishable by law, or even one who has been garlanded as a token of betrothal. That kind of bodily behavior causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline.

And what kind of bodily behavior causes unskillful qualities to 5.13
decline while skillful qualities grow? It's when someone gives up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings. They give up stealing. They don't, with the intention to commit theft, take the wealth or belongings of others from village or wilderness. They give up sexual misconduct. They don't have relations with women who have their mother, father, both mother and father, brother, sister, relatives, or clan as guardian. They don't have relations with a woman who is protected on principle, or who has a husband, or whose violation is punishable by law, or even one who has been garlanded as a token of betrothal. That kind of bodily behavior causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.
'I say that there are two kinds of bodily behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of bodily behavior.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

'I say that there are two kinds of verbal behavior: that which you 6.1
should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each

206. This includes the first three precepts, or else the first three of the ten ways of skillful deeds.

of these is a kind of verbal behavior.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the kind of verbal behavior which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of verbal behavior which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

6.8 And what kind of verbal behavior causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline?[207] It's when someone lies. They're summoned to a council, an assembly, a family meeting, a guild, or to the royal court, and asked to bear witness: 'Please, my man, say what you know.' Not knowing, they say 'I know.' Knowing, they say 'I don't know.' Not seeing, they say 'I see.' And seeing, they say 'I don't see.' So they deliberately lie for the sake of themselves or another, or for some trivial worldly reason. They backbite. They repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. And so they divide those who are harmonious, supporting division, delighting in division, loving division, speaking words that promote division. They speak harshly. They use the kinds of words that are cruel, nasty, hurtful, offensive, bordering on anger, not leading to immersion. They talk nonsense. Their speech is untimely, and is neither factual nor beneficial. It has nothing to do with the teaching or the training. Their words have no value, and are untimely, unreasonable, rambling, and pointless. That kind of verbal behavior causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline.

6.14 And what kind of verbal behavior causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow? It's when someone gives up lying. They're summoned to a council, an assembly, a family meeting, a guild, or to the royal court, and asked to bear witness: 'Please, my friend, say what you know.' Not knowing, they say 'I don't know.' Knowing, they say 'I know.' Not seeing, they say 'I don't see.' And seeing, they say 'I see.' So they don't deliberately lie for the sake

207. This is the four verbal ways of skillful deeds.

of themselves or another, or for some trivial worldly reason. They give up backbiting. They don't repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, they reconcile those who are divided and support those who are united, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people. They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial. That kind of verbal behavior causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two kinds of verbal behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of verbal behavior.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

7.1 'I say that there are two kinds of mental behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of mental behavior.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the kind of mental behavior which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of mental behavior which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

7.8 And what kind of mental behavior causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline?[208] It's when someone is covetous. They covet the wealth and belongings of others: 'Oh, if only their belongings were mine!' They have ill will and malicious intentions: 'May these sentient beings be killed, slaughtered, slain, destroyed, or annihilated!' That kind of mental behavior causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline.

208. This is the final three ways of skillful deeds.

7.12 And what kind of mental behavior causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow? It's when someone is content. They don't covet the wealth and belongings of others: 'Oh, if only their belongings were mine!' They have a kind heart and loving intentions: 'May these sentient beings live free of enmity and ill will, untroubled and happy!' That kind of mental behavior causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two kinds of mental behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is a kind of mental behavior.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

8.1 'I say that there are two arisings of thought: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an arising of thought.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the arising of thought which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the arising of thought which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

8.8 And what arising of thought causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline?[209] It's when someone is covetous, and lives with their heart full of covetousness. They are malicious, and live with their heart full of ill will. They're hurtful, and live with their heart intent on harm. That arising of thought causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline.

8.13 And what arising of thought causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow? It's when someone is content, and lives with their heart full of contentment. They have good will, and live with their heart full of good will. They're kind, and live with their heart full of kindness. That arising of thought causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two arisings of thought: that which you should cultivate, and that

209. The discussions at MN 8:13.1 and AN 7.53 show that this refers to the initial thought that precedes action.

which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an arising of thought.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

'I say that there are two acquisitions of perception: that which 9.1
you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an acquisition of perception.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the acquisition of perception which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the acquisition of perception which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

And what acquisition of perception causes unskillful qualities to 9.8
grow while skillful qualities decline?[210] It's when someone is covetous, and lives with their perception full of covetousness. They are malicious, and live with their perception full of ill will. They're hurtful, and live with their perception intent on harm. That acquisition of perception causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline.

And what acquisition of perception causes unskillful qualities to 9.13
decline while skillful qualities grow? It's when someone is content, and lives with their perception full of contentment. They have good will, and live with their perception full of good will. They're kind, and live with their perception full of kindness. That acquisition of perception causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two acquisitions of perception: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an acquisition of perception.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

'I say that there are two acquisitions of views: that which you 10.1
should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an acquisition of views.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the acquisition of views which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities

210. Perception precedes even thought.

decline. And you should cultivate the acquisition of views which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

10.8 And what acquisition of views causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline?[211] It's when someone has such a view: 'There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There's no such thing as mother and father, or beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' That acquisition of views causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline.

10.12 And what acquisition of views causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow? It's when someone has such a view: 'There is meaning in giving, sacrifice, and offerings. There are fruits and results of good and bad deeds. There is an afterlife. There are such things as mother and father, and beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there are ascetics and brahmins who are rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describe the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' That acquisition of views causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two acquisitions of views: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And each of these is an acquisition of views.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

11.1 'I say that there are two kinds of incarnation: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And these are equally incarnation.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the kind of incarnation that causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. You should

211. A view is a perception solidified into a persistent pattern of thought, which becomes a way of seeing the world. Views offer explanatory power, provide us with a convenient template for understanding, and often dismissing, what we encounter. Once a view has set in, it tends to reinforce itself, and hence is very slow to change.

cultivate the kind of incarnation that causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

And what kind of incarnation causes unskillful qualities to grow 11.10
while skillful qualities decline?[212] For one who generates a hurtful incarnation not for the sake of the state of perfection, unskillful qualities grow while skillful qualities decline.[213] And what kind of incarnation causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow? For one who generates a pleasing incarnation for the sake of the state of perfection, unskillful qualities decline while skillful qualities grow.[214] 'I say that there are two kinds of incarnation: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. And these are equally incarnation.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

Sir, that's how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's 12.1
brief statement."[215]

"Good, good, Sāriputta! It's good that you understand the detailed 13.1
meaning of my brief statement in this way."

And the Buddha went on to repeat and endorse Venerable Sāri- 14.1
putta's explanation in full. Then he went on to explain further:

"I say that there are two kinds of sight known by the eye:[216] that 22.1
which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. I say that there are two kinds of sound known by the ear … two kinds of smell known by the nose … two kinds of taste known by the tongue … two kinds of touch known by the body … two kinds of idea known by the mind: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate."

212. As the examples will show, this refers to a kind of rebirth that is not conducive to developing wholesome qualities.
213. *Apariniṭṭhitabhāvāya* ("not for the sake of the state of perfection") is found only here. The commentary explains it in terms of individuals who are reborn in a painful state where they are unable to realize the accomplishment of liberation.
214. The question is absent in the Mahāsaṅgīti edition, but present in the PTS and BJT editions.
215. This completes the elaboration of the seven items.
216. Now the Buddha introduces the second analysis, in terms of the six senses.

23.1 When he said this, Venerable Sāriputta said to the Buddha:

23.2 "Sir, this is how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement.[217]

24.1 'I say that there are two kinds of sight known by the eye: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the kind of sight known by the eye which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of sight known by the eye which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two kinds of sight known by the eye: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it.

25.1 'I say that there are two kinds of sound known by the ear … two kinds of smell known by the nose … two kinds of taste known by the tongue … two kinds of touch known by the body … two kinds of idea known by the mind: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it?

30.1 You should not cultivate the kind of idea known by the mind which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of idea known by the mind which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two kinds of idea known by the mind: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it. Sir, that's how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement."

31.1 "Good, good, Sāriputta! It's good that you understand the detailed meaning of my brief statement in this way."

32-36.1 And the Buddha went on to repeat and endorse Venerable Sāriputta's explanation in full. Then he went on to explain further:

217. Sāriputta proceeds to elaborate these six items in terms of what gives rise to the skillful and unskillful.

"I say that there are two kinds of robes:[218] that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. I say that there are two kinds of almsfood … lodging … village … town … city … country … individual: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate." 39.1

When he said this, Venerable Sāriputta said to the Buddha: 40.1

"Sir, this is how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement.[219] 'I say that there are two kinds of robes … almsfood … lodging … village … town … city … country … individual: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate.' That's what the Buddha said, but why did he say it? You should not cultivate the kind of individual who causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of individual who causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. 'I say that there are two kinds of individual: those who you should cultivate, and those who you should not cultivate.' That's what the Buddha said, and this is why he said it. 40.2

Sir, that's how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement." 49.1

"Good, good, Sāriputta! It's good that you understand the detailed meaning of my brief statement in this way." 50.1

And the Buddha went on to repeat and endorse Venerable Sāriputta's explanation in full. Then he added: 51-58.1

"If all the aristocrats, brahmins, peasants, and menials were to understand the detailed meaning of my brief statement in this way, it would be for their lasting welfare and happiness. If the whole world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—was to understand the 60.1

218. The Buddha introduces the third and final analysis, which shifts to the requisites and residence of a monastic.

219. Once again Sāriputta elaborates.

detailed meaning of my brief statement in this way, it would be for the whole world's lasting welfare and happiness."

61.1 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Sāriputta approved what the Buddha said.

MN 115

Many Elements

Bahudhātukasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Whatever dangers there are, all come from the foolish, not from the astute.[220] Whatever perils there are, all come from the foolish, not from the astute. Whatever hazards there are, all come from the foolish, not from the astute. It's like a fire that spreads from a hut made of reeds or grass, and burns down even a bungalow, plastered inside and out, draft-free, with doors fastened and windows shuttered. In the same way, whatever dangers there are, all come from the foolish, not from the astute. Whatever perils there are, all come from the foolish, not from the astute. Whatever hazards there are, all come from the foolish, not from the astute. So, the fool is dangerous, but the astute person is safe. The fool is perilous, but the astute person is not. The fool is hazardous, but the astute person is not. There's no danger, peril, or hazard that comes from the astute. So you should train like this: 'We shall be astute, we shall be inquirers.'" 2.1

220. *Paṇḍita* is normally used for a learned scholar, rather than a contemplative "sage". Pali has many more terms for "a wise person" than does English, and it is not easy to distinguish the senses. "Astute" is meant to convey the sense of one who is observant and of sound judgment.

3.1 When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Sir, how is a mendicant qualified to be called 'astute, an inquirer'?"[221]

3.3 "Ānanda, it's when a mendicant is skilled in the elements, in the sense fields, in dependent origination, and in the possible and the impossible. That's how a mendicant is qualified to be called 'astute, an inquirer'."

4.1 "But sir, how is a mendicant qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'?"[222]

4.2 "There are, Ānanda, these eighteen elements.[223] The eye element, sight element, and eye consciousness element. The ear element, sound element, and ear consciousness element. The nose element, smell element, and nose consciousness element. The tongue element, taste element, and tongue consciousness element. The body element, touch element, and body consciousness element. The mind element, ideas element, and mind consciousness element.[224] When a mendicant knows and sees these eighteen elements, they're qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'."

5.1 "But sir, could there be another way in which a mendicant is qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'?"[225]

5.2 "There could, Ānanda. There are these six elements: the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness. When a mendicant

221. Notice the different approaches used by Ānanda and Sāriputta in the previous discourse. Sāriputta took up the Buddha's teaching and elaborated it, whereas Ānanda uses inquiry to prompt the Buddha himself to speak further.
222. As emphasized in this sutta, the notion of an "element" (*dhātu*) is a flexible one, including a range of different properties, qualities, or aspects of existence.
223. These eighteen elements are mentioned only twice elsewhere in the Suttas (SN 14.1:2.2, SN 41.2:3.10), and hundreds of times in the Abhidhamma, where they are classified specifically as an Abhidhamma teaching (Vb 3:32.1).
224. The "mind element" (*manodhātu*) is not defined in the Suttas. See MN 28:37.1 and note there. The Abhidhamma Vibhaṅga says that the mind element arises immediately after a sense impression or engagement with mental phenomena or "ideas" (Vb 3:48.2), and the mind consciousness element arises immediately after the corresponding mind element (Vb 3:55.2).
225. The method of building a lengthy discourse by asking for "another way" of exposition is also used at MN 9, SN 44.6, AN 5.106, and Snp 3.12.

knows and sees these six elements, they're qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'."

"But sir, could there be another way in which a mendicant is qual- 6.1
ified to be called 'skilled in the elements'?"

"There could, Ānanda. There are these six elements: the elements 6.2
of pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, equanimity, and ignorance. When a mendicant knows and sees these six elements, they're qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'."

"But sir, could there be another way in which a mendicant is qual- 7.1
ified to be called 'skilled in the elements'?"

"There could, Ānanda. There are these six elements: the elements 7.2
of sensuality and renunciation, malice and good will, and cruelty and harmlessness. When a mendicant knows and sees these six elements, they're qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'."

"But sir, could there be another way in which a mendicant is qual- 8.1
ified to be called 'skilled in the elements'?"

"There could, Ānanda. There are these three elements: the sensual 8.2
realm, the realm of luminous form, and the formless realm. When a mendicant knows and sees these three elements, they're qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'."

"But sir, could there be another way in which a mendicant is qual- 9.1
ified to be called 'skilled in the elements'?"

"There could, Ānanda. There are these two elements: the condi- 9.2
tioned element and the unconditioned element. When a mendicant knows and sees these two elements, they're qualified to be called 'skilled in the elements'."

"But sir, how is a mendicant qualified to be called 'skilled in the 10.1
sense fields'?"[226]

"There are these six interior and exterior sense fields: the eye and 10.2
sights, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes,

226. Ānanda moves on to the next topic, the six senses. Perhaps this move was prompted by the mention of the "unconditioned element" of Nibbāna, signifying that that method of analysis had reached its culmination.

the body and touches, and the mind and ideas. When a mendicant knows and sees these six interior and exterior sense fields, they're qualified to be called 'skilled in the sense fields.'"

11.1 "But sir, how is a mendicant qualified to be called 'skilled in dependent origination'?"

11.2 "It's when a mendicant understands: 'When this exists, this comes to be; due to the arising of this, this arises. When this doesn't exist, this doesn't come to be; due to the cessation of this, this ceases. That is: ignorance is a requirement for choices. Choices are a condition for consciousness. Consciousness is a requirement for name and form. Name and form are requirements for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are requirements for contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. Craving is a requirement for grasping. Grasping is a requirement for continued existence. Continued existence is a requirement for rebirth. Rebirth is a requirement for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates. When ignorance fades away and ceases no residue left behind, choices cease. When choices cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.' That's how a mendicant is qualified to be called 'skilled in dependent origination.'"

12.1 "But sir, how is a mendicant qualified to be called 'skilled in the possible and impossible'?"[227]

227. Said to be one of the ten powers of a Realized One (MN 12:10.1, AN 10.22:3.3), and to be restricted to those with meditative immersion (*samādhi*, AN 6.64:13.1). Each item here, split into separate suttas, is found at AN 1.168–295. Briefer examples of this trope are found at MN 122:3.2, SN 12.30,

"It's when a mendicant understands: 'It's impossible for an indi- 12.2
vidual accomplished in view to take any condition as permanent. That is not possible.[228] But it's possible for an ordinary person to take some condition as permanent. That is possible.' They understand: 'It's impossible for an individual accomplished in view to take any condition as pleasant. But it's possible for an ordinary person to take some condition as pleasant.' They understand: 'It's impossible for an individual accomplished in view to take anything as self. But it's possible for an ordinary person to take something as self.'

They understand: 'It's impossible for an individual accomplished 13.1
in view to murder their mother.[229] But it's possible for an ordinary person to murder their mother.' They understand: 'It's impossible for an individual accomplished in view to murder their father … or murder a perfected one. But it's possible for an ordinary person to murder their father … or murder a perfected one.' They understand: 'It's impossible for an individual accomplished in view to injure a Realized One with malicious intent. But it's possible for an ordinary person to injure a Realized One with malicious intent.' They understand: 'It's impossible for an individual accomplished in view to cause a schism in the Saṅgha. But it's possible for an ordinary person to cause a schism in the Saṅgha.' They understand: 'It's impossible for an individual accomplished in view to dedicate themselves to another teacher.[230] But it's possible for an ordinary person to dedicate themselves to another teacher.'

AN 6.70, and AN 6.93. These all focus on cause and effect as it pertains to development of the path.

228. A stream-enterer (or above) might unthinkingly act as if something were permanent (etc.), but on reflection they would know right away that this is not the case.

229. Murder of mother, father, or an arahant, injuring a Buddha, and causing schism are said to be specially heinous deeds that result in rebirth in hell.

230. This does not mean that they cannot learn from another teacher; rather, they know that the Buddha's path leads to liberation because they have realized it for themselves.

14.1 They understand: 'It's impossible for two perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas to arise in the same solar system at the same time.[231] But it is possible for just one perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, to arise in one solar system.' They understand: 'It's impossible for two wheel-turning monarchs to arise in the same solar system at the same time.[232] But it is possible for just one wheel-turning monarch to arise in one solar system.'

15.1 They understand: 'It's impossible for a woman to be a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha.[233] But it is possible for a man to be a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha.' They understand: 'It's impossible for a woman to be a wheel-turning monarch. But it is possible for a man to be a wheel-turning monarch.' They understand: 'It's impossible for a woman to perform the role of Sakka, Māra, or the Divinity.[234] But it is possible for a man to perform the role of Sakka, Māra, or the Divinity.'

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231. A *lokadhātu* is a single system with an earth, a sun and moon, planets, and a set of heavenly realms. Thus with due allowance for the different context, it is similar to a "solar system". While many Buddhas may arise in the same solar system, they may not arise in the same region at the same time. There may, however, be many Buddhas simultaneously throughout the galaxy, an idea developed in later texts (eg. Mahāvastu 1.122).

232. A wheel-turning monarch was conceived as establishing dominion over the entire land from ocean to ocean, which apparently was believed to be the civilized world at the time the myth was created.

233. It is unclear why this is mentioned, and since the Chinese parallel MA 181 lacks this passage entirely, it may be a later addition. It is of no apparent spiritual relevance, since in early Buddhist texts there is no concept of aspiring to become a Buddha in future lives. A woman may, of course, realize full liberation as an arahant, so the issue is not spiritual prowess. As to the reasoning underlying the claim, in this passage the Buddha is followed by a wheel-turning monarch, Sakka, Māra, and Brahmā. What they all have in common is that they are leaders. Since leaders of the time were men, perhaps it was assumed that people would not follow a woman in that role. This reasoning would also seem to be behind the idea that the Buddha was born either an aristocrat or a brahmin, whichever was the leading class of the time (DN 14:1.5.1).

234. While we encounter these divinities as individuals, they are understood as being stations or offices in the leading role of their particular realms. Thus, for example, Moggallāna said that he used to be Māra in a past life (MN 50:8.1).

They understand: 'It's impossible for a likable, desirable, agreeable result to come from bad conduct of body, speech, and mind. But it is possible for an unlikable, undesirable, disagreeable result to come from bad conduct of body, speech, and mind.' 16.1

They understand: 'It's impossible for an unlikable, undesirable, disagreeable result to come from good conduct of body, speech, and mind. But it is possible for a likable, desirable, agreeable result to come from good conduct of body, speech, and mind.' 17.1

They understand: 'It's impossible that someone who has engaged in bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, could for that reason alone, when their body breaks up, after death, be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.[235] But it is possible that someone who has engaged in bad conduct of body, speech, and mind could, for that reason alone, when their body breaks up, after death, be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.' 18.1

They understand: 'It's impossible that someone who has engaged in good conduct of body, speech, and mind could, for that reason alone, when their body breaks up, after death, be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. But it is possible that someone who has engaged in good conduct of body, speech, and mind could, for that reason alone, when their body breaks up, after death, be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.' That's how a mendicant is qualified to be called 'skilled in the possible and impossible.'" 19.1

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, "It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! What is the name of this exposition of the teaching?" 20.1

"Well then, Ānanda, you may remember this exposition of the teaching as 'The Many Elements', or else 'The Four Rounds', or else 20.4

235. The qualification "for that reason" (*taṁnidānā tappaccayā*) is essential, as it is quite possible for someone to engage in bad conduct and later take a good rebirth due to other deeds. This case is discussed in MN 136:18.1.

'The Mirror of the Teaching', or else 'The Drum of Freedom From Death', or else 'The Supreme Victory in Battle.'"[236]

20.5 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

236. The "four rounds" are the four main topics (elements, sense fields, dependent origination, the possible and the impossible); elsewhere it is said to be the four noble truths (SN 22.56:2.1). | The "mirror of the teaching" is the ability of a noble one to see the truth of the Dhamma in themselves (SN 55.8:5.1, DN 16:2.8.3). | The "drum of freedom from death" was sounded by the Buddha after his awakening (MN 26:25.21). | The "supreme victory in battle" was also suggested as a title for the Brahmajālasutta (DN 1:3.74.3), while elsewhere it is said to be a name for the noble eightfold path (SN 45.4:4.3).

MN 116

At Isigili

Isigilisutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[237] At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Isigili Mountain.[238] There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, do you see that Mount Vebhāra?" 2.1

"Yes, sir." 2.2

"It used to have a different label and description. Do you see that Mount Paṇḍava?" 2.3

"Yes, sir." 2.5

"It too used to have a different label and description. Do you see that Mount Vepulla?" 2.6

"Yes, sir." 2.8

"It too used to have a different label and description.[239] Do you see that Mount Vulture's Peak?" 2.9

"Yes, sir." 2.11

237. This is a devotional sutta that lists the names of sages of the past. It is recited as a protection chant in Sri Lanka. The Chinese parallel shares only the opening passages, after which it is quite different. Moreover, only three of the names are clearly the same: Ariṭṭha, Upariṭṭha, and Sudassana (EA 38.7 at T ii 723a–c). | Ñāṇamoḷī and Bodhi both rightly note that it is difficult to distinguish names from attributes without the commentary. Yet the commentary leaves many problems unsolved, as it omits many names.

238. Rājagaha is surrounded by an extensive range of hills, upon which ascetics of various kinds could be found striving.

239. These names are given in SN 15.20.

2.12 "It too used to have a different label and description. Do you see that Mount Isigili?"[240]

2.14 "Yes, sir."

3.1 "It used to have exactly the same label and description.

3.2 Once upon a time, five hundred independent Buddhas dwelt for a long time on this Isigili.[241] They were seen entering the mountain, but after entering were seen no more. When people noticed this they said: 'That mountain swallows these seers!' That's how it came to be known as Isigili, the "seer-swallower".[242]

3.7 I shall declare the names of the independent Buddhas;[243] I shall extol the names of the independent Buddhas; I shall teach the names of the independent Buddhas. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."[244]

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240. The modern name is Soṇagiri.

241. The concept of the *paccekabuddha* allows that there were awakened sages in the long periods of time when there is no *sambuddha* such as Gotama. Both are Buddhas in the sense of being awakened, but they differ in their relation to others. It is sometimes said that they do not teach, but the tradition attributes to them a number of sayings (notably Snp 1.3). They are sometimes said to be "solitary", but here 500 dwell on the same hill, while *pacceka* Brahmās appear in pairs (SN 6.6:1.3). Compare Bu NP 9:1.36.1, where "independent" funds are set up for "independent" robes (rather than combining them); the same idea occurs at AN 11.16:11.2. Likewise, SN 1.37:1.7 speaks of "independent" verses. Thus the burden of sense in the Pali is that *pacceka* means "independent", which here has the sense of not forming a fourfold community, but simply living and practicing independently.

242. This etymology is a deliberate pun, since the obvious explanation would be that *gili* is simply *giri* ("mountain"), as Pali *r* becomes *l* in the Magadhan dialect. This passage is not found in the Chinese parallel.

243. Mahāvastu 21 lists many past *sambuddhas*, among whom we find names recorded here as *paccekabuddhas*, including Aparājita, Supatiṭṭhita, Bandhumā, Ariṭṭha, Tagarasikhī, Tissa, Sikhin, Accutagāma, Asayha, Uppala, Sudassana, Ketu, Jayanta, and Uttara.

244. I give the probable meaning of each name, and attempt, perhaps unwisely, to locate other sages of the past with similar names. In almost every case it is impossible to establish such links with any confidence, due to the lack of contextual details, the prevalence of common names used by many people, the use of names based on places or doctrinal concepts, and so on. Nonetheless,

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 3.11

"The independent Buddhas who dwelt for a long time on this Isigili were named Ariṭṭha,[245] Upariṭṭha,[246] Tagarasikhī,[247] Yasassin,[248] Sudassana,[249] Piyadassin,[250] Gandhāra,[251] Piṇḍola,[252] Upāsabha,[253] Nīta, Tatha, Sutavā, and Bhāvitatta. 4.1

Those saintly beings, untroubled, 5.1
with no need for hope,[254]

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certain patterns emerge, especially the fact that several of the names seem to be shared with Jain *tīrthaṅkaras*. These are the twenty-four founding fathers of Jainism through the ages, like the Buddhist concept of past Buddhas. As many as eight names might be shared with *tīrthaṅkaras*, while several others might be other Jain sages. Even the name of the sutta itself is the name of a sage Isigiri in Isibhāsiyāiṁ 34. It could be that both Buddhism and Jainism drew on shared traditions of ancient sages, but again, these similarities are all tentative at best.

245. An agent of Kuvera has this name (meaning "indestructible") at DN 32:7.47, where it is next to Nemi (below at MN 116:6.7). Ariṭṭha and Nemi often appear compounded in Sanskrit as Ariṣṭanemi. This was the name of a past Buddha (Mahāvastu 1.140), the 22nd Jain *tīrthaṅkara* (Kalpasūtra 170–183), and a Brahmanical sage of remarkable power (Mahābhārata 3.182.8c). Ariṣṭanemi Tārkṣya, although a mythical being, was said to have composed Rig Veda 10.178.

246. This was the name of Anuruddha in a past life as an ascetic (Thag 16.9:19.4), although it couldn't be the same person, since Independent Buddhas are not reborn. It means "son of Ariṭṭha".

247. Also named in SN 3.20, Ud 5.3, and Ja 390, which makes him somewhat of a celebrity by *paccekabuddha* standards. His name means "jasmine-crested".

248. "Renowned".

249. "Good-looking".

250. Meaning "one who looks kindly", this was the favored epithet of King Ashoka.

251. Elsewhere known as a nation famed for horses, located around modern Afghanistan ("Kandahar", AN 3.70:28.2) and its capital (DN 16:6.28.6). It was named after its founder, but he is otherwise not known as a sage. This could be any sage from Gandhāra (eg. Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra 10.11.9; see Ja 406). Below we find several place names, which likewise probably refer to sages from those places.

252. Meaning "alms-gatherer", a Bhāradvāja of this name was a famous monk.

253. *Āsabha* or *usabha* ("bull") is a common name; this is "son of Bull".

254. The verses that follow are not found in the Chinese parallel. | "Saintly beings" renders *sattasāra*, a rare term otherwise only found in the late Apadānas

who each achieved awakening independently;
hear me extol their names,
the supreme men, free of thorns.

5.5 Ariṭṭha, Upariṭṭha, Tagarasikhī, Yasassin,
Sudassana, and Piyadassin the awakened;
Gandhāra, Piṇḍola, and Upāsabha,
Nīta, Tatha, Sutavā, and Bhāvitatta.[255]

6.1 Sumbha, Subha, Methula, and Aṭṭhama,[256]
then Assumegha, Anīgha, and Sudāṭha,[257]
Independent Buddhas, enders of the leash to existence;
and Hiṅgū and Hiṅga the mighty.[258]

6.5 Two sages named Jāli, and Aṭṭhaka;[259]
then the awakened one Kosala, then Subāhu;[260]

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where, moreover, it is usually a variant reading (Tha Ap 532:24.1, Tha Ap 539:7.3, Tha Ap 551:15.1, Thi Ap 32:23.1).

255. The names of these four occupy a similar semantic space: "Educated", "True", "Learned", "Developed".

256. Sumbha is the name of a country, and this might be a sage from there. There is also a powerful *asura* named Śumbha. | Subha ("beautiful"), Methula ("pair"; variant *matula*), and Aṭṭhama ("eighth") are otherwise unknown. | This verse is omitted in the commentary.

257. Assumegha ("tear-cloud") should perhaps be read *sumegha*, "lovely cloud", the name of a mountain. | Anīgha ("untroubled") is otherwise unknown. | Sudāṭha ("strong-tooth") and Subāhu (below, "strong-arm") are unknown as sages, but a lion and tiger of these names are identified with Sāriputta and Moggallāna in a past life (Ja 361).

258. Hiṅgū ("asafoetida", Hindi "hing") and Hiṅga (the name of a people in Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa 58) are otherwise unknown.

259. Jāli ("one who has a net", sometimes "fisherman") is the name of one of Vessantara's children (Ja 547). | Aṭṭhaka was the name of a Vedic sage (see MN 95:13.9 and note there).

260. Kosala is another place name. | Subāhu is a common name for warriors or princes.

Upanemi, Nemi, and Santacitta,[261]
right and true, stainless and astute.[262]

Kāḷa and Upakāḷa, Vijita and Jita,[263] 6.9
Aṅga and Paṅga, and Guttijita too;[264]
Passin gave up attachment, suffering's root,[265]
while Aparājita defeated Māra's power.[266]

Satthar, Pavattar, Sarabhaṅga, Lomahaṁsa,[267] 6.13
Uccaṅgamāya, Asita, Anāsava,[268]
Manomaya, and Bandhumā the cutter of conceit,

261. Nemi ("rim") was the name of the 22nd Jain *tīrthaṅkara*, where it is an abbreviation of *ariṣṭanemi* ("indestructible rim"). | Take *so* here as connective pronoun.
262. This line is not commented on, so each of these might be taken as a name rather than as attributes.
263. Kāḷa ("dark/time") is a common name; Upakāḷa is his son. | We might read *vijito jito* as *vijito (a)jito* ("one who has conquered", "one who is unconquered"), in which case the name Ajita would be shared with the second Jain *tīrthaṅkara*.
264. Aṅga ("limb") is a kingdom, and is sometimes found as a personal name. | Paṅga may be a variant spelling of Vaṅga, i.e. Bengal. | Guttijita means "guard and conqueror (of the senses)".
265. Passi most obviously means "seer". But perhaps it could be from the root *passa* ("side"), making this the 23rd Jain *tīrthaṅkara* Pārśva, who immediately preceded Mahāvīra.
266. Aparājita ("unconquered by another") is a common name. It was the name of Śāntinātha, the 16th Jain *tīrthaṅkara*, in a past life.
267. Satthar ("teacher") is used in both Buddhism (usually for the Buddha) and Jainism. Pavattar ("roller-forth", "proclaimer") has a similar sense. | Sarabhaṅga ("arrow-breaker") was a forest hermit in Daṇḍaka. See note at MN 56:13.27. | Lomahaṁsa means "hair raising".
268. Asita ("dark one") was the name of the sage who attended Siddhattha after his birth (Snp 3.11), while an Asita Devala also features in MN 93. The Rig Veda attributes several hymns to Asita or Devala (sometimes said to be his son) of the Kāśyapa clan. Asita Devala also appears in the Jain Isibhāsiyāiṁ chapter 3. | Anāsava means "undefiled". Freedom from "defilement" is a key concept in Jainism.

then Adhimutta, and Ketumā the immaculate.[269]

6.17 Ketumbharāga, Mātaṅga, and Ariya,[270]
then Accuta, Accutagāma, and Byāmaka,[271]
Sumaṅgala, Dabbila, Supatiṭṭhita,[272]
Asayha, Khemābhirata, and Sorata.[273]

269. The commentary says *tadādhimutto* is the only name in this line, but I take *tad(ā)* as a connective pronoun, leaving *adhimutta* ("faithful") as the name. Moreover, since the syntax echoes the previous line, I construe it the same way, making *ketumā* a proper name, meaning one who is "adorned with banners" (like the sun). There are several people and places of this name in Sanskrit, among them at least one sage; it corresponds to Ketu in Mahāvastu 21. See also *ketumatī*, said to be an old name of Varanasi (DN 26:23.8). On the other hand, I follow the commentary in taking *vimalo* as an attribute ("immaculate"), but it could be a proper name, in which case it would be shared with Vimala, the 13th Jain *tīrthaṅkara*.

270. Ketumbharāga is "cloud-colored". | Mātaṅga ("one who goes where they wish", i.e. "elephant") is the name of an outcast who became a sage (Skandapurāṇa 5.2.60). In other Buddhist versions of this story, he ascends to the Brahmā realm (Snp 1.7:26.1), in which case he is identified with the Bodhisatta (Ja 497). This contradicts the present sutta, for a *paccekabuddha* is not reborn anywhere. Either there were several sages of this name, or else the memory of a past sage was rather vaguely specified. In the Jain Isibhāsiyāiṁ chapter 26, he criticizes so-called Brahmins who practice violence. See too note on MN 56:13.27. | A sage named Ariya is found in Isibhāsiyāiṁ 19, where he teaches a doctrine of "civility".

271. Accuta ("unfallen") is a name of Agni (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.6.1.6) and later Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa. | If Accuta is Viṣṇu/Kṛṣṇa, perhaps Accutagāma is a garbled form of his elder brother Balarāma's name Acyutāgraja ("firstborn of the unfallen"). | Byāmaka means "fathom-long".

272. Sumaṅgala ("good fortune") is a common name. A Jain text tells of a king of that name who became an ascetic in later life (Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra 10.6.2). Ja 420 tells of how a park-keeper named Sumaṅgala accidentally killed a *paccekabuddha*. | Dabbila probably refers to one who uses the sacrificial "ladle" (*darvi*, see MN 93:18.71 and note). | Supatiṭṭhita ("well-established") might be an attribute; commentary is silent, but Mahāvastu 21 takes it as a name.

273. "Unbeatable", "lover of sanctuary", and "gentle".

Durannaya, Saṅgha, and also Ujjaya,[274] 6.21
another sage, Sayha of peerless effort.[275]
There are twelve Ānandas, Nandas, and Upanandas,[276]
and Bhāradvāja, bearing his final body.[277]

Bodhi, Mahānāma, and also Uttara,[278] 6.25
Kesī, Sikhī, Sundara, and Bhāradvāja,[279]
Tissa and Upatissa,
who've both cut the bonds to rebirth,[280]
Upasīdarī and Sīdarī, who've both cut off craving.[281]

274. Durannaya means "hard to follow". | Saṅgha ("community") is a fairly common name in Pali. | Ujjaya ("victory") in Pali is the name of a brahmin (AN 4.39, AN 8.55) and a mendicant (Thag 1.47). The city of Ujjeni in Avantī is sometimes spelled *ujjaya*, so this is perhaps someone from there.

275. Sayha is the name of a mountain district in which the Godāvarī arises (Trimbakeshwar Range). It is south of Ujjeni, so perhaps both of these are places.

276. The commentary says there were four of each, making twelve in total. All are common names meaning "joy".

277. Bhāradvāja, one of the seven great Vedic sages, founded a storied lineage (DN 32:10.3, MN 95:11.2).

278. "Awakening", "great name", and "north/supreme" are all common names.

279. In Jainism, Keśi is a noted ascetic disciple of Pārśva (Uttarādhyayanasūtra 23.2). | Sikhī was a former Buddha (SN 6.14), whose name is solar in connotation (DN 14:1.12.4): the streaming radiance of the sun. The sun is also said to be *kesi* ("hairy") for the same reason (eg. Rig Veda 10.136.1), so these two names go together. | Sundara ("beautiful") is a common name. | The presence of a second Bhāradvāja creates tension, since duplicates are mostly avoided. The Mahāsaṅgīti resolves it by reading *dvārabhāja* here, which is otherwise unattested. In her translation, Horner took *athopi uttaro* in the previous line as "also another" Bhāradvāja, with the other items as attributes. However, I leave the tension unresolved, as there were many Bhāradvājas.

280. Tissa is a common name, meaning "born under the star Sirius". Notably, Tissa follows Bhāradvāja; both were names of the chief disciples of Kassapa Buddha, and were associated with Mount Vepulla of Rājagaha in a former age (SN 15.20:4.6).

281. Sīdarī perhaps means "dweller by the *Sīdā*", which in Pali tradition is a river in the Himalayas beside which ascetics flourish (Ja 541:16.1). It is probably a variant spelling of *sītā* ("cold"), a common name for rivers. The tenth Jain *tīrthaṅkara* has the similar name Śītala.

6.29 Maṅgala was awakened, free of greed,[282]
Usabha cut the net, the root of suffering,[283]
Upanīta who attained the state of peace,[284]
Uposatha, Sundara, and Saccanāma.[285]

6.33 Jeta, Jayanta, Paduma, and Uppala;[286]
Padumuttara, Rakkhita, and Pabbata,[287]
Mānatthaddha, beautiful and free of greed,[288]
and the Buddha Kaṇha, his mind well freed.[289]

282. Maṅgala ("(good) omen") is a common name.
283. Usabha ("bull") is *ṛṣabha* in Sanskrit. It was the name of several Brahmanical sages, as well as the first Jain *tīrthaṅkara*.
284. Upanīta means "one who has been initiated" in the *upanayana* ritual, by which a boy undertakes Vedic studies.
285. Uposatha ("sabbath") is the name of King Sudassana's royal elephant (DN 17:2.5.5). | This is the second Sundara; one or both might be an attribute. | Saccanāma ("one whose name is true") recalls the famous sage Satyakāma Jābāla of Chāndogya Upaniṣad 4.4.
286. All these are common names. Jeta and Jayanta both mean "victor", while Paduma and Uppala both mean "lotus". In Jainism, Paduma recalls the name of the sixth *tīrthaṅkara*, Padmaprabha ("lotus-shine"), while a sage named Jayanta practiced in the mountains during a previous incarnation of the *tīrthaṅkara* Śanti (Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra 5.1.9).
287. Padumuttara ("supreme lotus") is well known in Theravāda as the name of the thirteenth of the twenty-eight Buddhas. Jains recognize two sages of this name, as incarnations of the *tīrthaṅkaras* Śītala and Vāsupūjya (Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacaritra 3.8.1, 4.2.1). | Rakkhita ("protected") is common name. Here it is followed by another place name, Pabbata ("mountain"). A sage Rakkhita of the mountains features in the related Jātaka stories told at Mahāvastu 28a and Ja 505. Parvata is also the name of a Vedic poet, who legend says was a nephew of Nārada.
288. Mānatthaddha means "stiff with pride"; a brahmin of that name appears in SN 7.15. Presumably it was an old nickname that stuck.
289. Kaṇha ("dark") is better known by his Sanskrit name Krishna. While the god of that name is not prominent in the suttas, it does seem as if elements of his story were known (DN 3:1.23.8).

These and other mighty ones 7.1
awakened independently,[290]
enders of the leash to existence—
honor these great seers
who have slipped all chains,
fully quenched, limitless."

290. I count 103 named *paccekabuddhas* in total. However, the number is not certain, given the ambiguity between names and attributes.

MN 117

The Great Forty

Mahācattārīsakasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[291] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, I will teach you noble right immersion with its vital conditions and its prerequisites.[292] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.3 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "And what is noble right immersion with its vital conditions and its prerequisites? They are: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness. Unification of mind with these seven factors as prerequisites is called noble right immersion 'with its vital conditions' and also 'with its prerequisites'.[293]

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291. This is one of the two major treatments of the noble eightfold path in the Middle Discourses, the other being MN 141, where each factor is defined in detail. This discourse emphasizes the interrelationships between the factors, especially as they support right immersion. The meaning of the title is explained in the final passage.

292. The first portion of this sutta is also at SN 45.28:1.2, to which the current sutta can be seen as a commentary. | "Vital condition" is *upanisa*; this is a condition for something that is both necessary and strongly conducive. | "Prerequiste" is *parikkhāra*, the "equipment" or "requirement".

293. While it is possible to obtain immersion outside the context of the noble eightfold path, without all the factors of the path working together it does not result in liberation and hence is not "right" immersion. | This became known in the Abhidhamma as *lokuttara jhāna*, where it is used in the same sense as the sutta: a meditative absorption which, empowered by all the path factors in

In this context, right view comes first.[294] And how does right view come first? When you understand wrong view as wrong view and right view as right view, that's your right view.[295] 4.1

And what is wrong view? 'There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There's no such thing as mother and father, or beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' This is wrong view. 5.1

And what is right view? Right view is twofold, I say. There is right view that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments.[296] And there is right view that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path.[297] 6.1

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concert, leads to the realization of the Dhamma. This is contrasted with the *lokiya jhāna* that leads only to rebirth in the Brahmā realm; see comment on MN 7:19.6. Later, the commentarial tradition analyzed it further as a series of mind moments that occur at the occasion of realization.

294. In the Gradual Training, it is hearing the Dhamma that sets you on the path (MN 101:31.1).

295. It is not just learning by rote, but the ability to make critical distinctions.

296. This unique phrase refers to the kind of right view that results in a good rebirth but not liberation. This kind of right view is not specifically Buddhist. Compare *sāsavaṁ upādāniyaṁ* (the five grasping aggregates "accompanied by defilements and prone to being grasped", SN 22.48:2.2) and *iddhi sāsavā saupadhikā, 'no ariyā'ti* ("psychic powers that are accompanied by defilements and attachments, and are said to be ignoble", DN 28:18.3). | For "partakes of good deeds" (*puññabhāgiyā*), see AN 6.63, where it refers to a rebirth that results from "defilement".

297. This is the right view of one on the noble path. The suttas do not elsewhere distinguish these two kinds of path factors, and the "transcendent" analysis is not found in the parallels in Chinese (MA 189 at T i 735b) or Tibetan (Up 6.080 at D 4094 mngon pa, nyu 43b7). A similar distinction, however, is made in the Chinese translation of the Saṁyukta Āgama of the (Mūla)-Sarvāstivāda at SA 785 and SA 789, which contains analyses of the transcendent factors that are similar to those in Pali. | "Transcendent" (*lokuttara*) means "leading beyond the world (of transmigration)". Elsewhere in early texts it is used of discourses (SN

7.1 And what is right view that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments? 'There is meaning in giving, sacrifice, and offerings. There are fruits and results of good and bad deeds. There is an afterlife. There are such things as mother and father, and beings that are reborn spontaneously. And there are ascetics and brahmins who are rightly comported and rightly practiced, and who describe the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' This is right view that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments.

8.1 And what is right view that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path? It's the wisdom—the faculty of wisdom, the power of wisdom, the awakening factor of investigation of principles, and right view as a factor of the path—in one intent on the noble, intent on the undefiled, who possesses the noble path and develops the noble path.[298] This is called right view that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path.

9.1 They make an effort to give up wrong view and embrace right view: that's their right effort. Mindfully they give up wrong view and embrace right view: that's their right mindfulness. So these three things keep running and circling around right view, namely: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.[299]

20.7:1.6, SN 55.53:2.2, AN 2.47:1.5, AN 5.79:5.2; see too MN 96:12.12), and of certain reflective realizations of a noble one (MN 48:14.7, MN 122:18.1).

298. Whereas elsewhere right view is explained in terms of *what* you understand (the four noble truths MN 141:24.1), this analysis shifts focus to *how* you understand: wisdom functions in the context of the path as a whole. Later texts expand on this (eg. Mnd 2:82.4, Ne 17:17.3, Ds 2.1.1:28.2). | As to the phrase "intent on the noble, intent on the undefiled", the expressions *ariyacitta* and *anāsavacitta* are unique. It is tempting to translate *anāsavacitta* as "undefiled mind", but that would pertain only to the arahant who has completed the path, whereas this is talking about one still in the process of developing the path. Here *citta* must mean "intention" (eg. MN 120:3.4; cf. the later term *bodhicitta*). Commentary is silent.

299. The path is linear in that each factor depends on the previous (MN 117:34.3, see too eg. SN 45.1). But it is not *just* linear, as the factors are always

In this context, right view comes first.[300] And how does right view come first? When you understand wrong purpose as wrong purpose and right purpose as right purpose, that's your right view.[301] 10.1

And what is wrong purpose? Purposes of sensuality, of malice, and of cruelty. This is wrong purpose. 11.1

And what is right purpose? Right purpose is twofold, I say. There is right purpose that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments. And there is right purpose that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path. 12.1

And what is right purpose that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments? Purposes of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness. This is right purpose that is accompanied by defilements. 13.1

And what is right purpose that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path? It's the thinking—the placing of the mind, thought, planting, implanting, embedding of the mind, verbal process—in one intent on the noble, intent on the undefiled, who possesses the noble path and develops the noble path.[302] This is right purpose that is noble. 14.1

They make an effort to give up wrong purpose and embrace right purpose: that's their right effort. Mindfully they give up wrong purpose and take up right purpose: that's their right mindfulness. So 15.1

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interacting. Right view understands what to do; right effort does the work; and right mindfulness monitors and checks.

300. Right view is the anterior condition for all the path factors.

301. See MN 19 for how the bodhisatta developed this practice.

302. This passage shows that the scope of *saṅkappa* or *vitakka* is wider than discursive "thought", especially in deep meditation. This definition is similar to that in the Abhidhamma (eg. Vb 3:23.2) | *Takka* ("thinking") is normally "logic" but here is a synonym of *vitakka*. | *Appanā* ("planting") is where a movement enters its goal, as a river the ocean (SN 15.8:2.3), or a peg the wood (Mil 3.3.13, for which see also MN 20.3.4). | *Byappanā* is an intensive form that appears only in this definition. | *Abhiniropana* is likewise a unique term, with the sense of "sinking into" or "embedding". Compare Sanskrit *āropaṇa*, "placing or fixing in or upon". | For "verbal process" see MN 44:15.3 = SN 41.6:2.4.

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

16.1 In this context, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? When you understand wrong speech as wrong speech and right speech as right speech, that's your right view.

17.1 And what is wrong speech? Speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. This is wrong speech.

18.1 And what is right speech? Right speech is twofold, I say. There is right speech that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments. And there is right speech that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path.

19.1 And what is right speech that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments? Refraining from lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and talking nonsense.[303] This is right speech that is accompanied by defilements.

20.1 And what is right speech that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path? It's the desisting, abstaining, abstinence, and refraining from the four kinds of bad verbal conduct in one intent on the noble, intent on the undefiled, who possesses the noble path and develops the noble path.[304] This is right speech that is noble.

21.1 They make an effort to give up wrong speech and embrace right speech: that's their right effort. Mindfully they give up wrong speech and take up right speech: that's their right mindfulness. So these three things keep running and circling around right speech, namely: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

22.1 In this context, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? When you understand wrong action as wrong action and right action as right action, that's your right view.

303. Right speech is defined solely as abstinence here, whereas elsewhere it also includes actually speaking in a constructive way (eg. MN 114:6.18). The negative mode of definition is more technically precise, as it includes times when one is silent or in deep meditation.

304. This sequence of synonyms (*ārati virati paṭivirati veramaṇī*) is otherwise found only in late canonical texts (eg. Cnd 6:11.6, Vb 4:61.2, Pvr 4:5.2).

And what is wrong action? Killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct. This is wrong action. 23.1

And what is right action? Right action is twofold, I say. There is right action that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments. And there is right action that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path. 24.1

And what is right action that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments? Refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct. This is right action that is accompanied by defilements. 25.1

And what is right action that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path? It's the desisting, abstaining, abstinence, and refraining from the three kinds of bad bodily conduct in one intent on the noble, intent on the undefiled, who possesses the noble path and develops the noble path. This is right action that is noble. 26.1

They make an effort to give up wrong action and embrace right action: that's their right effort. Mindfully they give up wrong action and take up right action: that's their right mindfulness. So these three things keep running and circling around right action, namely: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness. 27.1

In this context, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? When you understand wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood and right livelihood as right livelihood, that's your right view. 28.1

And what is wrong livelihood? Fawning, flattery, hinting, and belittling, and using material things to chase after other material things.[305] This is wrong livelihood. 29.1

And what is right livelihood? Right livelihood is twofold, I say. There is right livelihood that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments. And there is right livelihood that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path. 30.1

305. This applies to everyone, but especially to monastics, in reference to unwholesome ways of seeking requisites and material profits (expanded at (DN 2:56.1)). For laypeople, five kinds of wrong livelihood are specified: trade in weapons, living creatures, meat, intoxicants, and poison (AN 5.177:1.3).

31.1 And what is right livelihood that is accompanied by defilements, partakes of good deeds, and ripens in attachments? It's when a noble disciple gives up wrong livelihood and earns a living by right livelihood. This is right livelihood that is accompanied by defilements.

32.1 And what is right livelihood that is noble, undefiled, transcendent, a factor of the path? It's the desisting, abstaining, abstinence, and refraining from wrong livelihood in one intent on the noble, intent on the undefiled, who possesses the noble path and develops the noble path. This is right livelihood that is noble.

33.1 They make an effort to give up wrong livelihood and embrace right livelihood: that's their right effort. Mindfully they give up wrong livelihood and take up right livelihood: that's their right mindfulness. So these three things keep running and circling around right livelihood, namely: right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.[306]

34.1 In this context, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? Right view produces right purpose. Right purpose produces right speech. Right speech produces right action. Right action produces right livelihood. Right livelihood produces right effort. Right effort produces right mindfulness. Right mindfulness produces right immersion. Right immersion produces right knowledge. Right knowledge produces right freedom.[307] So the trainee has eight factors, while the perfected one has ten factors.[308] And here too, the eradication of many bad, unskillful qualities is fully developed due to right knowledge.

306. This, the fifth factor of the path, is the last factor described as encompassed by right view, effort, and mindfulness. I think a purpose of this discourse is to make it clear that they *also* apply to the first five factors, the final three being taken as self-evident.

307. This extends the linear arising to two additional factors: right knowledge and right freedom (see also DN 18:27.8, AN 10.103:2.3). These are not divided into two kinds, as they apply solely to the perfected ones.

308. Right knowledge is the wisdom perfected by the ending of defilements, while right freedom is the liberation from rebirth.

In this context, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? For one of right view, wrong view is worn away.[309] And the many bad, unskillful qualities that arise because of wrong view are worn away. And because of right view, many skillful qualities are fully developed. For one of right purpose, wrong purpose is worn away. … For one of right speech, wrong speech is worn away. … For one of right action, wrong action is worn away. … For one of right livelihood, wrong livelihood is worn away. … For one of right effort, wrong effort is worn away. … For one of right mindfulness, wrong mindfulness is worn away. … For one of right immersion, wrong immersion is worn away. … For one of right knowledge, wrong knowledge is worn away. … For one of right freedom, wrong freedom is worn away. And the many bad, unskillful qualities that arise because of wrong freedom are worn away. And because of right freedom, many skillful qualities are fully developed. 35.1

So there are twenty on the side of the skillful, and twenty on the side of the unskillful.[310] This exposition of the teaching on the Great Forty has been rolled forth. And it cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world. 36.1

If any ascetic or brahmin imagines they can criticize and reject the exposition of the teaching on the Great Forty, they deserve rebuttal and criticism on ten legitimate grounds in this very life. If such a gentleman criticizes right view, they praise and honor the ascetics and brahmins who have wrong view. If they criticize right purpose … right speech … right action … right livelihood … right effort … right mindfulness … right immersion … right knowledge … right freedom, they praise and honor the ascetics and brahmins who have wrong freedom. If any ascetic or brahmin imagines they can criticize and reject the exposition of the teaching on the Great Forty, they 37.1

309. The term *nijjiṇṇa* ("worn away") is associated with the Jains (eg. MN 14:17.8, MN 101:10.8).

310. The twenty are the ten factors, plus ten for the relevant qualities they promote.

deserve rebuttal and criticism on these ten legitimate grounds in this very life.

38.1 Even those who were loud and bold advocates of the doctrines of no-cause, inaction, and nihilism, didn't imagine that the Great Forty should be criticized or rejected.[311] Why is that? For fear of being blamed, provoked, and faulted."

38.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

311. For discussion of this obscure passage, see note on SN 22.62:13.2.

MN 118

Mindfulness of Breathing

Ānāpānassatisutta

So I have heard.[312] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery, together with several well-known senior disciples, such as the venerables Sāriputta, Mahāmoggallāna, Mahākassapa, Mahākaccāna, Mahākoṭṭhita, Mahākappina, Mahācunda, Anuruddha, Revata, Ānanda, and others.[313] 1.1

Now at that time the senior monks were advising and instructing the junior monks.[314] Some senior monks instructed ten monks, while some instructed twenty, thirty, or forty. Being instructed by the senior monks, the junior monks realized a higher distinction than they had before.[315] 2.1

Now, at that time it was the sabbath—the full moon on the fifteenth day—and the Buddha was sitting surrounded by the Saṅgha 3.1

312. Mindfulness of breathing is taught partially in the Satipaṭṭhānasutta (MN 10:4.3 = DN 22:2.3) and the Kāyagatāsatisutta (MN 119:4.2), and fully in the Rāhulovādasutta (MN 62:24.3), the Girimānandasutta (AN 10.60), and throughout the relevant Saṁyutta (SN 54.1ff.); it is also in the Vinaya (Bu Pj 3:1.3.6) and in the quasi-Abhidhamma text Paṭisambhidāmagga (Ps 1.3:60.3). It is regarded in the tradition as the method practiced by the Buddha himself, and has remained the most popular and universal meditation to this day, both in Buddhism and generally.

313. The similar list of great disciples is found at Ud 1.5:1.3, where the Buddha described them as true brahmins.

314. This reminds us that what is recorded in the suttas is not the totality of what was taught. There are several instances where more personal meditation instructions are given (eg. AN 9.3), and this must have been ongoing.

315. Similar progress is reported of the nuns at SN 47.10:2.1.

of monks for the invitation to admonish.[316] Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were so very silent. He addressed them:

4.1 "I am satisfied, monks, with this practice. My heart is satisfied with this practice. So you should rouse up even more energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. I will wait here in Sāvatthī for the Komudī full moon of the fourth month."[317]

5.1 Mendicants from around the country heard about this, and came down to Sāvatthī to see the Buddha.

6.1 And those senior monks instructed the junior monks even more. Some senior monks instructed ten monks, while some instructed twenty, thirty, or forty. Being instructed by the senior monks, the junior monks realized a higher distinction than they had before.

7.1 Now, at that time it was the sabbath—the Komudī full moon on the fifteenth day of the fourth month—and the Buddha was sitting in the open surrounded by the Saṅgha of monks. Then the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were so very silent. He addressed them:[318]

316. This was the end of the rains retreat, during which mendicants stayed in one place. To conclude the retreat, the mendicants gather to invite admonition from each other, clearing the air of any conflicts or tensions that might have arisen during the retreat. This is done instead of the regular recitation of the Pātimokkha rules. Discussed in detail at Kd 4.

317. The "fourth month" of the rainy season (*vassa*), of which the rains retreat (*vassāvāsa*) is normally the first three. When the retreat is finished, mendicants usually stay in the monastery for a while to complete the *kaṭhina* (Kd 7), repair their robes, and otherwise make preparations for wandering. During this time, it was customary for mendicants who had spent the rains elsewhere to visit Sāvatthī to see the Buddha (Kd 4:1.8.1, Bu Pj 4:1.2.1, Bu Pc 8:1.2.1). This month, which falls between the full moons of October and November, is called Kattikā after the constellation Pleiades. The final day of Kattikā is the full moon of Komudī, named after the white lotuses said to bloom at that time, and after the brilliance of the moon in the clear skies following the rains (see eg. MN 79:17.2).

318. A similar passage is found at AN 4.190.

"This assembly has no chaff, monks, it is free of chaff, pure, and consolidated in the core. Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly! An assembly such as this is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of greeting with cupped palms, and is the supreme field of merit for the world. Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly! For an assembly such as this, giving little becomes much, while giving much becomes even more. Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly! An assembly such as this is rarely seen in the world. Such is this Saṅgha of monks, such is this assembly! An assembly such as this is worth traveling many leagues to see, even if you have to carry your own provisions in a knapsack.[319] 8.1

For in this Saṅgha there are perfected mendicants who have ended the defilements, completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their heart's goal, utterly ended the fetter of continued existence, and are rightly freed through enlightenment. There are such mendicants in this Saṅgha. 9.1

In this Saṅgha there are mendicants who, with the ending of the five lower fetters are reborn spontaneously. They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world. There are such mendicants in this Saṅgha. 10.1

In this Saṅgha there are mendicants who, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, are once-returners. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. There are such mendicants in this Saṅgha. 11.1

In this Saṅgha there are mendicants who, with the ending of three fetters are stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening. There are such mendicants in this Saṅgha. 12.1

319. "Knapsack" is *puṭosa*, where *puṭa* is "bag" and *osa* is "food" (Sanskrit *avasa*). The compound is a dative-dependent *tappurisa* with reversal of the usual order, yielding the sense "bag for food".

13.1 In this Saṅgha there are mendicants who are committed to developing the four kinds of mindfulness meditation … the four right efforts … the four bases of psychic power … the five faculties … the five powers … the seven awakening factors … the noble eightfold path. There are such mendicants in this Saṅgha. In this Saṅgha there are mendicants who are committed to developing the meditation on love … compassion … rejoicing … equanimity … ugliness … impermanence. There are such mendicants in this Saṅgha. In this Saṅgha there are mendicants who are committed to developing the meditation on mindfulness of breathing.

15.1 Mendicants, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated it is very fruitful and beneficial.[320] Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. The four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven awakening factors. And the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, fulfill knowledge and freedom.

16.1 And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial?

17.1 It's when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present.[321] Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out.[322]

320. The main contents of the discourse are summarized in these four statements, each of which is expanded in the four sections that follow.

321. The situation here—a mendicant gone to the forest—establishes that this practice takes place in the wider context of the Gradual Training. Indeed, this whole sutta can be understood as an expansion of this phrase, mentioned briefly at DN 2:67.3.

322. The most fundamental meditation instruction. Notice how the Buddha phrases it: not "concentrate on the breath" as an object, but rather "breathing" as an activity to which one brings mindfulness. The stages of breath meditation are not meant to be done deliberately, but to be observed and understood as the natural process of deepening meditation.

Breathing in heavily they know: 'I'm breathing in heavily.' Breathing out heavily they know: 'I'm breathing out heavily.'[323] Breathing in lightly they know: 'I'm breathing in lightly.' Breathing out lightly they know: 'I'm breathing out lightly.'[324] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the whole body.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the whole body.'[325] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in stilling the physical process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out stilling the physical process.'[326] 18.1

They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing rapture.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing rapture.'[327] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing bliss.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing bliss.'[328] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the mental process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the mental process.'[329] They 19.1

323. In the beginning, the breath is somewhat rough and coarse. The Pali idiom is "long" and "short" breath, but in English we usually say one breathes "heavily" or "lightly".

324. Over time, the breath becomes more subtle and soft.

325. The "whole body" (*sabbakāya*) here refers to the breath, marking the fuller and more continuous awareness that arises with tranquility. Some, however, interpret it as the "whole physical body", broadening awareness to encompass the movement and settling of energies throughout the body.

326. The "physical process" (*kāyasaṅkhāra*) is the breath itself (SN 41.6:1.8). This can become so soft as to be imperceptible.

327. "Rapture" (*pīti*) is a joyous emotional response to pleasure, usually a spiritual sense of elevation or uplift in meditation. Normally rapture is said to arise before tranquility as part of the process leading toward absorption (see below, MN 118:34.1). In mindfulness of breathing, however, the body typically becomes quite tranquil before rapture arises.

328. The uplifting quality of rapture becomes sublimated to a more subtle, pervasive pleasure or bliss. The meditator refines and stabilizes these positive emotions in their journey toward absorption, which occurs when all necessary factors are fully developed and perfectly balanced in a subtle union.

329. "Mental processes" are said to be "perception and feeling" (MN 44:14.1, SN 41.6:1.7). The "feelings" include rapture and bliss. "Perception" in meditation includes the "light" (MN 128:28.2) or "forms" (MN 77:23.14) often experienced by meditators at this point. Later texts call this a *nimitta*, a "sign"

practice like this: 'I'll breathe in stilling the mental process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out stilling the mental process.'[330]

20.1 They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the mind.'[331] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in gladdening the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out gladdening the mind.'[332] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in immersing the mind in samādhi.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out immersing the mind in samādhi.'[333] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in freeing the mind.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out freeing the mind.'[334]

21.1 They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing impermanence.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing impermanence.'[335]

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that the mind is becoming subtle and the hindrances quiet as the meditator nears absorption.

330. A paradox of meditation is that the stronger things are, the more subtle they become. In the initial stages of practice, it is common to have overwhelming experiences of rapture, with tears of joy, or dramatic and striking "visions". Inexperienced meditators often take this to signify a profound realization. With patient mindfulness, however, the feelings and perceptions settle down and become unified, so they are no longer experienced as separate things. Just as the physical breath virtually disappeared, here too the feelings and perceptions can become so subtle as to feel like the simple, normal state of the mind.

331. With the stilling of "mental processes", the mind itself becomes clear, the center of awareness that knows all of this. These four factors focus on the experience of absorption.

332. This applies especially to the first two absorptions.

333. "Immersion" (*samādhi*) is deep meditative stillness. The word conveys the sense of "gathered", "collected", with a secondary sense of "ignited", "illuminated". It emphasizes both the stability of the mind as well as the unification of all the mental factors present (see MN 44:12.2 and note there).

334. The mind is liberated from hindrances in absorption. This is a state so very refined it is called the "bliss of awakening" (MN 139:9.18), albeit temporarily (AN 5.149).

335. The first twelve steps focused on serenity (*samatha*), and now the final four steps shift focus to discernment (or "insight", *vipassanā*). This exemplifies the most common course of practice, where serenity precedes discernment (AN 4.170:3.2). Here, impermanence is contemplated in the context of mindfulness of breathing itself. The entire course of practice has seen the physical energies of the breath become subtle and fade, then the mental processes, then the mind

They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing fading away.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing fading away.'[336] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing cessation.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing cessation.'[337] They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in observing letting go.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out observing letting go.'[338]

Mindfulness of breathing, when developed and cultivated in this way, is very fruitful and beneficial. 22.1

And how is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated so as to fulfill the four kinds of mindfulness meditation? 23.1

Whenever a mendicant knows that they breathe heavily, or lightly, or experiencing the whole body, or stilling the physical process—at that time they're meditating by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. For I say that the in-breaths and out-breaths are an aspect of the body.[339] That's why at that time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. 24.1

Whenever a mendicant practices breathing while experiencing rapture, or experiencing bliss, or experiencing the mental process, 25.1

itself is transformed. The meditator reflects on these changes and sees not simply that change happens, but how changes happen due to causes.

336. *Virāga* means both "dispassion" in the sense of letting go desire, and "fading away" in the sense of its gradual disappearance.

337. This refers to the permanent ending of the fetters or underlying tendencies.

338. This is the full renunciation of all worldly desires that occurs with arahantship ("perfection"). These final four stages illustrating the progress of insight can even be mapped on to the four stages of awakening: the stream-enterer sees that "whatever has a beginning also has an end"; for the once-returner, greed and hate are fading away; for the non-returner, greed and hate have ceased; and for the arahant, all defilements are relinquished.

339. The Pali here is *kāyesu kāyaññataraṁ*, literally, "a certain body among the bodies". What it means is that the breath, as one of the four material elements, is a certain aspect of our physical embodiment which is selected here for contemplation, rather than, say, the parts of the body or the postures as we find in the full presentation of *satipaṭṭhāna* at MN 10 or MN 119.

or stilling the mental process—at that time they meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. For I say that careful application of mind to the in-breaths and out-breaths is an aspect of feelings.[340] That's why at that time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

26.1 Whenever a mendicant practices breathing while experiencing the mind, or gladdening the mind, or immersing the mind in samādhi, or freeing the mind—at that time they meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. There is no development of mindfulness of breathing for someone who is unmindful and lacks awareness, I say.[341] That's why at that time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

27.1 Whenever a mendicant practices breathing while observing impermanence, or observing fading away, or observing cessation, or observing letting go—at that time they meditate observing an as-

340. Likewise, the sense here is that the pleasant feelings of breath meditation are part of the full spectrum of feelings contemplated in *satipaṭṭhāna*, which include painful feelings (MN 10:32.1). The meditator "carefully" (*sādhukaṁ*) focuses on these feelings as they manifest in the breath. The point is that "breath" is not purely a physical phenomenon. The material property of "air" is its most obvious dimension, but we experience breath as a complex that includes emotional and cognitive dimensions. As the physical process becomes subtle, feeling becomes apparent as an aspect of the breath that has always been there, but not clearly perceived.

341. Here the manner of explanation is changed, but the sense is not dissimilar. At MN 10:34.1 the contemplation of mind includes states of mind characterized by greed, hate, and delusion, which are experienced by one lacking mindfulness and awareness. Mindfulness of breathing, however, focuses on the purified mind states of deep meditation. It is also perhaps noteworthy that the third absorption is said to be characterized by mindfulness and awareness, while the fourth absorption is characterized by equanimity, which is highlighted in the next step.

pect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. Having seen with wisdom the giving up of covetousness and displeasure, they watch over closely with equanimity.[342] That's why at that time a mendicant is meditating by observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

That's how mindfulness of breathing, when developed and culti- 28.1
vated, fulfills the four kinds of mindfulness meditation.

And how are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation developed 29.1
and cultivated so as to fulfill the seven awakening factors?[343]

Whenever a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the 30.1
body, at that time their mindfulness is established and lucid. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of mindfulness; they develop it and perfect it.[344]

As they live mindfully in this way they investigate, explore, and 31.1
inquire into that principle with wisdom. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of investigation of principles; they develop it and perfect it.[345]

As they investigate principles with wisdom in this way their energy 32.1
is roused up and unflagging. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of energy; they develop it and perfect it.

342. "Covetousness and displeasure" are the defilements relinquished in *satipaṭṭhāna* itself (MN 10:3.2). This passage refers to reviewing or reflective knowledge, looking back over the course of meditation, seeing how the defilements are abandoned, and understanding how this happens according to the "principles" (*dhammā*) of cause and effect. With understanding comes equanimity, as one is no longer attached.

343. The seven awakening factors are included in the fourth *satipaṭṭhāna* under contemplation of principles (MN 10:42.1). There, their primary function is to eliminate the five hindrances, the causal contemplation of which is a prominent feature of suttas on this topic (SN 46.2). Thus this expands on the details of the "observation of principles".

344. The "awakening factor of mindfulness" may, as here, refer to meditation, or else to the recollection of the teachings (SN 46.3:1.9).

345. Likewise, *dhamma* can refer as here to the "principles" of cause and effect, or else the "teachings" that are recollected (SN 46.3:2.4).

33.1 When they're energetic, rapture not of the flesh arises. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of rapture; they develop it and perfect it.

34.1 When the mind is full of rapture, the body and mind become tranquil. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of tranquility; they develop it and perfect it.

35.1 When the body is tranquil and they feel bliss, the mind becomes immersed in samādhi. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of immersion; they develop it and perfect it.

36.1 They closely watch over that mind immersed in samādhi. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of equanimity; they develop it and perfect it.

37.1 Whenever a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of feelings … mind … principles, at that time their mindfulness is established and lucid. At such a time, a mendicant has initiated the awakening factor of mindfulness … investigation of principles … energy … rapture … tranquility … immersion … equanimity.

40.1 That's how the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, when developed and cultivated, fulfill the seven awakening factors.

41.1 And how are the seven awakening factors developed and cultivated so as to fulfill knowledge and freedom?

42.1 It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion,

42.7 and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go.[346]

43.1 That's how the seven awakening factors, when developed and cultivated, fulfill knowledge and freedom."

43.2 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the monks approved what the Buddha said.

346. The final three terms here are almost identical to the final three stages of mindfulness of breathing: fading away, cessation, and letting go. One of the purposes of this sutta has been to show the deep interconnectedness of all these practices.

MN 119

Mindfulness of the Body

Kāyagatāsatisutta

So I have heard.[347] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. 1.1

Then after the meal, on return from almsround, several mendicants sat together in the assembly hall and this discussion came up among them. 2.1

"It's incredible, reverends, it's amazing, how the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha has said that mindfulness of the body, when developed and cultivated, is very fruitful and beneficial." 2.2

But their conversation was left unfinished. Then the Buddha came out of retreat and went to the assembly hall. He sat down on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?" 2.4

So the mendicants told him what they had been talking about. The Buddha said: 2.7

"And how, mendicants, is mindfulness of the body developed and cultivated to be very fruitful and beneficial? 3.1

It's when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, sets their body straight, and brings mindfulness to the present. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out. Breathing in heavily they know: 'I'm breathing in heavily.' Breathing out heavily they know: 4.1

347. This discourse features the same meditation practices found under the "observation of the body" in the Satipaṭṭhānasutta (MN 10).

'I'm breathing out heavily.' Breathing in lightly they know: 'I'm breathing in lightly.' Breathing out lightly they know: 'I'm breathing out lightly.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in experiencing the whole body.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out experiencing the whole body.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe in stilling the physical process.' They practice like this: 'I'll breathe out stilling the physical process.' As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to domestic life are given up.[348] Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi.[349] That's how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

5.1 Furthermore, when a mendicant is walking they know: 'I am walking.' When standing they know: 'I am standing.' When sitting they know: 'I am sitting.' And when lying down they know: 'I am lying down.' Whatever posture their body is in, they know it. As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to domestic life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

6.1 Furthermore, a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleep-

348. For "memories and thoughts tied to lay life" (*gehasitā sarasaṅkappā*) see MN 125:23.5 and SN 54.8:5.2. | *Sarasaṅkappā* may be translated in two ways. Bodhi reads it as a *dvanda* compound ("memories and thoughts"), which takes *sara* as "memory" (Sanskrit *smara* or *smṛti*). The commentary, followed by Ānandajoti, explains it as *dhāvanasaṅkappā* ("rushing thoughts"), which assumes the sense "flow" (Sanskrit *saras*). Support for the *dvanda* interpretation comes from Sanskrit texts, where we frequently find *smṛtisaṁkalpa* as either two words (eg. Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.2) or a compound (Nyāyasūtra 4.2.34).

349. Each practice leads directly to immersion, reminding us that mindfulness meditation is "the basis of immersion" (*samādhinimitta*, MN 44:12.3).

ing, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.[350] As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to domestic life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

7.1 Furthermore, a mendicant examines their own body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the tips of the hairs, wrapped in skin and full of many kinds of filth. 'In this body there is head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.'

7.3 It's as if there were a bag with openings at both ends, filled with various kinds of grains, such as fine rice, wheat, mung beans, peas, sesame, and ordinary rice. And a person with clear eyes were to open it and examine the contents: 'These grains are fine rice, these are wheat, these are mung beans, these are peas, these are sesame, and these are ordinary rice.' In the same way, a mendicant examines their own body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the tips of the hairs, wrapped in skin and full of many kinds of filth. …[351] As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to domestic life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

8.1 Furthermore, a mendicant examines their own body, whatever its placement or posture, according to the elements: 'In this body there

350. Obviously this passage is not suggesting that one enters deep meditation while going to the toilet. As per the Gradual Training, such practices form a foundation that prepares the mind for meditation.

351. Such meditations, as also the contemplation on death that follow, lead to immersion by ridding the mind of desire. While the subject of meditation is perceived as unpleasant, when the mind is free of desire it gives rise to a pleasure imbued with lightness and freedom, and it is that pleasure that leads to immersion.

is the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.'

8.3 It's as if a deft butcher or butcher's apprentice were to kill a cow and sit down at the crossroads with the meat cut into chops. In the same way, a mendicant examines their own body, whatever its placement or posture, according to the elements: 'In this body there is the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.' As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to domestic life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

9.1 Furthermore, suppose a mendicant were to see a corpse discarded in a charnel ground. And it had been dead for one, two, or three days, bloated, livid, and festering. They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to domestic life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

10.1 Or suppose they were to see a corpse discarded in a charnel ground being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, herons, hounds, tigers, leopards, jackals, and many kinds of little creatures. They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

11-14.1 Furthermore, suppose they were to see a corpse discarded in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together by sinews … A skeleton without flesh but smeared with blood, and held together by sinews … A skeleton rid of flesh and blood, held together by sinews … Bones rid of sinews scattered in every direction. Here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here an ankle bone, there a shin-bone, here a thigh-bone, there a hip-bone, here a rib-bone, there a back-

bone, here an arm-bone, there a neck-bone, here a jaw-bone, there a tooth, here the skull. …

White bones, the color of shells … Decrepit bones, heaped in 15-17.1
a pile … Bones rotted and crumbled to powder. They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to lay life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

Furthermore, a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, 18.1
secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[352] They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion.[353] It's like when a deft bathroom attendant or their apprentice pours bath powder into a bronze dish, sprinkling it little by little with water. They knead it until the ball of bath powder is soaked and saturated with moisture, spread through inside and out; yet no moisture oozes out.[354] In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with

352. In the Satipaṭṭhānasutta, the practice of absorption is implicit in the contemplation of feelings (as spiritual pleasure), mind (as immersed mind, etc.), and principles (as the awakening factor of immersion), while the four absorptions are mentioned explicitly in the expanded version (DN 22:21.32). Here they take an even more central role.

353. As a meditator proceeds, their subjective experience of the "body" evolves from tactile sense impressions (*phoṭṭhabba*), to the interior mental experience of bliss and light (*manomayakāya*), to the direct personal realization of highest truth (MN 70:23.2: *kāyena ceva paramasaccaṁ sacchikaroti*).

354. The kneading is the "placing the mind and keeping it connected", the water is bliss, while the lack of leaking speaks to the contained interiority of the experience.

rapture and bliss born of seclusion. As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to lay life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

19.1 Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion. It's like a deep lake fed by spring water. There's no inlet to the east, west, north, or south, and the heavens would not properly bestow showers from time to time. But the stream of cool water welling up in the lake drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads throughout the lake. There's no part of the lake that's not spread through with cool water.[355] In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads themselves with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

20.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption. They meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' They drench, steep, fill, and spread themselves with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture. It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. From the tip to the root they're

355. The simile emphasizes the water as bliss, while the lack of inflow expresses containment and unification. The water welling up is the rapture, which is the uplifting emotional response to the experience of bliss. These similes are also at DN 2:78.1, DN 10:2.16.1, MN 39.16, MN 77:26.3, and AN 5.28:3.4.

drenched, steeped, filled, and soaked with cool water. There's no part of them that's not soaked with cool water.[356] In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads themselves with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

Furthermore, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former 21.1
happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. They sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind. It's like someone sitting wrapped from head to foot with white cloth. There's no part of the body that's not spread over with white cloth.[357] In the same way, they sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind. As they meditate like this—diligent, keen, and resolute—memories and thoughts tied to domestic life are given up. Their mind becomes stilled internally; it settles, unifies, and becomes immersed in samādhi. That too is how a mendicant develops mindfulness of the body.

Anyone who has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the 22.1
body includes all of the skillful qualities that play a part in realization.[358] Anyone who brings into their mind the great ocean includes

356. The meditator is utterly immersed in stillness and bliss.

357. The white cloth is the purity and brightness of equanimity. The commentary explains this as a person who has just got out of a bath and sits perfectly dry and content.

358. By this, the Buddha is asserting that mindfulness of the body is not just the first of the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, but encompasses all of them. The body is the arena within which feelings, mind, and principles become apparent. (Also at AN 1.575.) | The things that "play a part in realization" are enumerated as two at AN 2.31: serenity and discernment. Another group of six at SN 55.3:4.1 and AN 6.35 focus on the discernment side (observing impermanence, suffering in impermanence, not-self in suffering, giving up, fading away, and cessation).

all of the streams that run down into it.[359] In the same way, anyone who has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body includes all of the skillful qualities that play a part in realization.

23.1 When a mendicant has not developed or cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra finds a vulnerability and gets an opportunity. Suppose a person were to throw a heavy stone ball at a mound of wet clay.

23.3 What do you think, mendicants? Would that heavy stone ball find an entry into that mound of wet clay?"

23.5 "Yes, sir."

23.6 "In the same way, when a mendicant has not developed or cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra finds a vulnerability and gets an opportunity.

24.1 Suppose there was a dried up, withered log.[360] Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat.

24.4 What do you think, mendicants? By drilling the stick against that dried up, withered log, could they light a fire and produce heat?"

24.6 "Yes, sir."

24.7 "In the same way, when a mendicant has not developed or cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra finds a vulnerability and gets an opportunity.

25.1 Suppose a water jar was placed on a stand, empty and hollow. Then a person comes along with a load of water.

25.3 What do you think, mendicants? Could that person pour water into the jar?"

25.5 "Yes, sir."

25.6 "In the same way, when a mendicant has not developed or cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra finds a vulnerability and gets an opportunity.

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359. A simile of the rivers becoming united in the ocean is also found at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.11, Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.2.8, and Praśna Upaniṣad 6.5.

360. Compare MN 36:19.2 = MN 85:19.2 = MN 100:16.2.

When a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra cannot find a vulnerability and doesn't get an opportunity. 26.1

Suppose a person were to throw a light ball of string at a door-panel made entirely of hardwood.[361] 26.2

What do you think, mendicants? Would that light ball of string find an entry into that door-panel made entirely of hardwood?" 26.3

"No, sir." 26.5

"In the same way, when a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra cannot find a vulnerability and doesn't get an opportunity. 26.6

Suppose there was a green, sappy log. Then a person comes along with a drill-stick, thinking to light a fire and produce heat. 27.1

What do you think, mendicants? By drilling the stick against that green, sappy log on dry land far from water, could they light a fire and produce heat?" 27.4

"No, sir." 27.6

"In the same way, when a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra cannot find a vulnerability and doesn't get an opportunity. Suppose a water jar was placed on a stand, full to the brim so a crow could drink from it.[362] Then a person comes along with a load of water. 27.7

What do you think, mendicants? Could that person pour water into the jar?" 28.3

"No, sir." 28.5

"In the same way, when a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, Māra cannot find a vulnerability and doesn't get an opportunity. 28.6

When a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, they extend the mind to realize by insight each and every 29.1

361. Compare the simile at Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1.2.7 and Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.3.7, where the titans (or forces of evil) meet their end in the breath, just like a clod of earth thrown against solid rock.

362. These similes recall the absorption similes above.

thing that can be realized by insight; and they are capable of realizing those things, since each and every one is within range.

29.2 Suppose a water jar was placed on a stand, full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. If a strong man was to pour it on any side, would water pour out?"

29.4 "Yes, sir."

29.5 "In the same way, when a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, they extend the mind to realize by insight each and every thing that can be realized by insight; and they are capable of realizing those things, since each and every one is within range.[363]

30.1 Suppose there was a square, walled lotus pond on level ground, full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. If a strong man was to open the wall on any side, would water pour out?"

30.3 "Yes, sir."

30.4 "In the same way, when a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, they extend the mind to realize by insight each and every thing that can be realized by insight; and they are capable of realizing those things, since each and every one is within

363. The phrase *sati sati āyatane* is tricky. Syntactically, it is a locative absolute construction, which Bodhi treats as conditional: "there being a suitable basis". However this does not readily account for the repeated *sati*, which he takes as the locative present participle from the verb *atthi* ("being"). Ānandajoti, by contrast, takes the first *sati* as "being" and the second as "mindfulness", and treats the absolute construction as temporal: "while there is a basis for mindfulness". Further, both accept the commentary's gloss of *āyatana* as *kāraṇa* ("reason, basis"), although this sense of *āyatana* is rare in the suttas (but see SN 12.25:14.3 = AN 4.171:5.3). These readings of the absolute construction give it a limiting sense; the benefits apply only insofar as there is a "suitable basis" or a "basis for mindfulness". But the expression is used by the Buddha of himself (AN 5.68:1.9), so it seems odd that it would be limiting. Indeed, the tenor of the whole sentence is not limiting but expansive, as emphasized by the repeated reduplications: *yassa yassa … tatra tatreva … sati sati*, which have a distributive sense. I therefore take *sati* as "being" in both cases; the reduplication of *sati* as aligned with the preceding pronouns, emphasizing universality; the locative absolute as causal; and *āyatana* in its normal sense of "scope, range".

range. Suppose a chariot stood harnessed to thoroughbreds at a level crossroads, with a goad ready.[364] A deft horse trainer, a master charioteer, might mount the chariot, taking the reins in his right hand and goad in the left. He'd drive out and back wherever he wishes, whenever he wishes. In the same way, when a mendicant has developed and cultivated mindfulness of the body, they extend the mind to realize by insight each and every thing that can be realized by insight; and they are capable of realizing those things, since each and every one is within range.

You can expect ten benefits when mindfulness of the body has been cultivated, developed, and practiced, made a vehicle and a basis, kept up, consolidated, and properly implemented. 32.1

They prevail over desire and discontent, and live having mastered desire and discontent whenever they arose. 33.1

They prevail over fear and dread, and live having mastered fear and dread whenever they arose. 34.1

They endure cold, heat, hunger, and thirst; the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles; rude and unwelcome criticism; and put up with physical pain—sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, disagreeable, and life-threatening. 35.1

They get the four absorptions—blissful meditations in this life that belong to the higher mind—when they want, without trouble or difficulty. 36.1

They wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again … They control the body as far as the realm of divinity. 37.1

With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and heavenly, whether near or far. … 38.1

They understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having encompassed them with their own mind. … 39.1

They recollect many kinds of past lives, with features and details. 40.1

364. Similar imagery is found at Kaṭha Upaniṣad 3.3–9.

41.1 With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

42.1 They realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.

43.1 You can expect these ten benefits when mindfulness of the body has been cultivated, developed, and practiced, made a vehicle and a basis, kept up, consolidated, and properly implemented."

43.2 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 120

Rebirth by Choice

Saṅkhārupapattisutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[365] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"I shall teach you rebirth by choice.[366] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 2.1

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.3

"Take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom.[367] They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after 3.1

365. This sutta describes a practice by which a mendicant may choose their place of rebirth. This stands in contrast with the normal approach, where a mendicant aims to be free of all rebirth. At MN 16:12.1, a mendicant who practices out of desire for rebirth is said to be bound by an "emotional shackle" (*cetasovinibandha*). At AN 3.18, the mendicants are said to be horrified by the suggestion that they practice for rebirth as a god, while AN 7.50:9.1 suggests that such aspirations stem from unresolved sexual desire. The present sutta takes a more conciliatory stance, moving from desire for progressively more refined kinds of rebirth to ultimately letting go of rebirth altogether.

366. Here *saṅkhāra* has the same sense "choice" that it has in dependent origination or the five aggregates. In each case, it is the mental volition that is motivated by morally meaningful forces, either greed, hate, and delusion or their opposites, and which creates results according to that moral force. Often this works unconsciously, as the effects of our choices and deeds manifest with or without our comprehension. Here, someone who understands *kamma* turns it to their advantage by consciously developing an aspiration for a particular desired result. | *Upapatti* is one of several terms in Pali that regularly mean "rebirth", such as *jāti*, *(abhi)-nibbatti*, *okkanti*, and *punabbhava*.

367. The aspiration alone is not enough. It only works if the person already has the kammic potential to realize their aims. | In this discourse it is a mendicant

death, I would be reborn in the company of well-to-do aristocrats!'[368] They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there.[369] This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

4-5.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of well-to-do brahmins … well-to-do householders!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there. This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

6.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. And they've heard: 'The gods of the four great kings are long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the gods of the four great kings!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there. This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

7-11.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. And they've heard: 'The gods of the thirty-three … the gods of Yama … the joyful gods … the gods who love to create … the gods who control what is created by others are long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the gods who control what is created by others!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there. This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

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who is making the aspiration. The related passages at DN 33:3.1.98 and AN 8.35 focus on "rebirth by giving", implying the aspirant is a lay person.

368. See DN 33:3.1.102, MN 41:15.2, and AN 8.35:1.8.

369. "Meditations" here is *vihārā*, literally "abidings".

12.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. And they've heard: 'The Divinity of a thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' Now the Divinity of a thousand meditates focused on pervading a thousandfold galaxy,[370] as well as the sentient beings reborn there. As a person with clear eyes might pick up a gallnut in their hand and examine it, so too the Divinity of a thousand meditates focused on pervading a thousandfold galaxy, as well as the sentient beings reborn there. They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the Divinity of a thousand!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there.[371] This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

370. The text does not say what "pervading" (*pharitvā*) means, but presumably it is the "divine meditations" (*brahmavihāra*), which are said to be "spread" or "pervaded" (eg. MN 7:13.1). See also MN 127:8.2.

371. This passage raises the question as to how such a reflection leads to rebirth in the Brahmā realms, which requires the development of absorption (eg. AN 4.123). Similar passages take care to specify that in order to be reborn in the Brahmā realm, one must not only be ethical, but "free of desire", by which they imply the practice of absorption (DN 33:3.1.136 = AN 8.35:4.11). Related passages in Chinese translation relate the development of different levels of absorption to rebirth in the various realms (MA 168 at T i 700c7; Dharmaskandha, T 1537 at T xxvi 506b14), as does the commentary to this sutta. Now, while the current sutta does not mention absorption, it may be considered in light of the meditation practice of the six recollections. One of these is the recollection that the deities, including Brahmās, were reborn due to their faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom—exactly the same qualities mentioned in the present sutta (AN 6.25:6.3). Thus when the present sutta says to "settle on that thought, concentrate on it, and develop it", the phrase *cittaṁ bhāveti* implies more than simply "developing the thought" of the aspiration, but means "developing the mind". In the suttas this implies deep meditation, as for example the case of a teacher of the past, Sunetta, who was "free of desire"; after "developing the mind of love" (*mettaṁ cittaṁ bhāvetvā*) he was reborn in the Brahmā realm (AN 7.66:13.1). Thus we can interpret the present passage as a way of practicing recollection of the deities, recalling that one's virtuous qualities are shared with the deities, and developing deep meditation based on the joy that brings.

13-16.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. And they've heard: 'The Divinity of two thousand … the Divinity of three thousand … the Divinity of four thousand … the Divinity of five thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' Now the Divinity of five thousand meditates focused on pervading a five-thousandfold galaxy, as well as the sentient beings reborn there. As a person with clear eyes might pick up five gallnuts in their hand and examine them, so too the Divinity of five thousand meditates focused on pervading a five-thousandfold galaxy, as well as the sentient beings reborn there. They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the Divinity of five thousand!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there. This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

17.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. And they've heard: 'The Divinity of ten thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' Now the Divinity of ten thousand meditates focused on pervading a ten-thousandfold galaxy, as well as the sentient beings reborn there. Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally lustrous, eight-faceted, well-worked. When placed on a cream rug it would shine and glow and radiate. In the same way the Divinity of ten thousand meditates focused on pervading a ten-thousandfold galaxy, as well as the sentient beings reborn there. They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the Divinity of ten thousand!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there. This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

18.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. And they've heard: 'The Divinity of a hundred thousand is long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' Now the Divinity of a hundred thousand meditates focused on pervading a

hundred-thousandfold galaxy, as well as the sentient beings reborn there. Suppose there was a pendant of Black Plum River gold, fashioned by a deft smith, well wrought in the forge. When placed on a cream rug it would shine and glow and radiate.[372] In the same way the Divinity of a hundred thousand meditates focused on pervading a hundred-thousandfold galaxy, as well as the sentient beings reborn there. They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the Divinity of a hundred thousand!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there. This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

19.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. And they've heard: 'The radiant gods … the gods of limited radiance … the gods of limitless radiance … the gods of streaming radiance … the gods of limited beauty … the gods of limitless beauty … the gods of universal beauty … the gods of abundant fruit … the gods of Aviha … the gods of Atappa … the gods fair to see … the fair seeing gods … the gods of Akaniṭṭha … the gods of the dimension of infinite space … the gods of the dimension of infinite consciousness … the gods of the dimension of nothingness … the gods of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception are long-lived, long-lasting, and very happy.' They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the gods of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it, and develop it. Those choices and meditations of theirs, developed

372. Legend has it that on the slopes of Mount Meru grows the vast Jambu tree that gives the continent of India her name, "the land of the black plum tree". The fruits of that tree are as big as elephants, and when they fall, their juice flows forth as a river named Jambu. The dried mud of that river yields gold nuggets whose unparalleled lustre is highly sought-after among the gods. This is that gold (Śiva Purāṇa 17.16–19).

and cultivated like this, lead to rebirth there. This is the path and the practice that leads to rebirth there.

37.1 Furthermore, take a mendicant who has faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. They think: 'If only I might realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom, and live having realized it with my own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements!' They realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.[373] And, mendicants, that mendicant is not reborn anywhere."

37.9 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

373. Just as rebirth in the realms of higher divinity implies the corresponding level of absorption, freedom from rebirth implies the whole eightfold path.

THE CHAPTER BEGINNING WITH EMPTINESS

MN 121

The Shorter Discourse on Emptiness

Cūḷasuññatasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[374] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in the stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Monastery.

2.1 Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Ānanda came out of retreat and went to the Buddha. He bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him:

3.1 "Sir, this one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans where they have a town named Townsville. There I heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha:[375] 'Ānanda, these days I usually practice the meditation on emptiness.'[376] I trust I prop-

374. This sutta gives a unique approach to meditation on emptiness, using the perception of relative emptiness as a foundation for absorption. | The topic of emptiness does not play the central role in Pali texts that it did in later Buddhism. This is perhaps at least partly due to different doctrinal developments in the early Buddhist schools. Passages that in the Pali mention impermanence, suffering, and not-self, in parallels of the (Mūla)-Sarvāstivāda often include emptiness as well. This does not indicate any doctrinal contradiction, as emptiness is explained as meaning not-self. But it does suggest that the presentation in terms of emptiness was more popular in that group of schools.

375. "I heard and learned this in the presence" (*sammukhā sutaṁ, sammukhā paṭiggahitaṁ*) is the phrase used in the suttas when reporting a teaching heard directly from the Buddha, eg. SN 55.52:5.1, SN 22.90:9.1, MN 47:10.7, etc.

376. The same thing is said by Sāriputta at MN 151:2.3, upon which the Buddha encourages him to reflect on the purity of his almsfood. Before the Second Council, the elder monk Sabbakāmī revealed that emptiness was his main practice too (Kd 22:2.5.9), while at Thig 3.3:2.1, the bhikkhunī Uttamā also claims to practice emptiness meditation. The release through emptiness is classified along with absorption as a superhuman attainment (Bu Pj 4:4.1.6). At MN 43:33.1

erly heard, learned, applied the mind, and remembered that from the Buddha?"[377]

"Indeed, Ānanda, you properly heard, learned, applied the mind, 3.5
and remembered that. Now, as before, I usually practice the meditation on emptiness.

Consider this stilt longhouse of Migāra's mother. It's empty of 4.1
elephants, cows, horses, and mares; of gold and silver; and of gatherings of men and women.[378] There is only this that is not emptiness, namely, the oneness dependent on the mendicant Saṅgha.[379] In the same way, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of the village and the perception of people—focuses on the oneness dependent on the perception of wilderness. Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that perception of wilderness. They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the perception of village or the perception of people.[380] There is only this modicum of stress, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of wilderness.' They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of the village. It is empty of the perception of people. There is only this that is not emptiness, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of wilderness.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present.[381] That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, and pure.

= SN 41.7:4.1, the "release of the heart through emptiness" is a reflection on not-self (see too SN 35.85:1.4, AN 9.36:2.4, Snp 5.16:4.1, Thag 19.1:27.2).

377. Notice the process of learning teachings through active engagement. Simply "hearing" it is just the beginning.

378. Emptiness is not a metaphysical property, but a relative state: something is empty of something.

379. Oneness, like emptiness, is a relative concept. Those things that are more distracting and tempting are absent, leaving only that which is more peaceful.

380. "Stress" is *darathā*.

381. That is to say, the "purity" of the emptiness is not because everything is empty, but because what is empty is accurately recognized as empty.

5.1 Furthermore, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of people and the perception of wilderness—focuses on the oneness dependent on the perception of earth. Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that perception of earth. As a bull's hide is rid of folds when fully stretched out by a hundred pegs, so too, ignoring the hilly terrain, inaccessible riverlands, stumps and thorns, and rugged mountains, they focus on the oneness dependent on the perception of earth.[382] Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that perception of earth. They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the perception of people or the perception of wilderness. There is only this modicum of stress, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of earth.' They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of people. It is empty of the perception of wilderness. There is only this that is not emptiness, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of earth.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present. That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, and pure.

6.1 Furthermore, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of wilderness and the perception of earth—focuses on the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of infinite space.[383] Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that perception of the dimension of infinite space. They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the perception of wilderness or the perception of earth. There is only this modicum of stress, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of infinite space.' They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the

382. The perception of earth is an idealized inner conceptual image. This is the "form" (*rūpa*) that is the basis for "absorption on luminous form" (*rūpajjhāna*). The commentaries call this the *nimitta* ("sign").

383. The meditator moves from a practice dependent on an aspect of "form" (*rūpa*), namely the idealized image of earth as the basis for the four absorptions, to the formless meditations.

perception of wilderness. It is empty of the perception of earth. There is only this that is not emptiness, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of infinite space.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present. That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, and pure.

7.1 Furthermore, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of earth and the perception of the dimension of infinite space—focuses on the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness. Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness. They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the perception of earth or the perception of the dimension of infinite space. There is only this modicum of stress, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness.' They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of earth. It is empty of the perception of the dimension of infinite space. There is only this modicum of stress, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present. That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, and pure.

8.1 Furthermore, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of the dimension of infinite space and the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness—focuses on the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of nothingness. Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that perception of the dimension of nothingness. They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the perception of the dimension of infinite space or the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness. There is only this modicum of stress, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of nothingness.' They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of the dimension of infinite space. It is empty of the perception of the dimension

of infinite consciousness. There is only this that is not emptiness, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of nothingness.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present. That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, and pure.

9.1 Furthermore, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness and the perception of the dimension of nothingness—focuses on the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness or the perception of the dimension of nothingness. There is only this modicum of stress, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness. It is empty of the perception of the dimension of nothingness. There is only this that is not emptiness, namely the oneness dependent on the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present. That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, and pure.

10.1 Furthermore, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of the dimension of nothingness and the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—focuses on the oneness dependent on the signless immersion of the heart.[384] Their mind

384. The defining characteristic of the "signless immersion of the heart" is that consciousness does not "follow after signs" (*nimittānusāri viññāṇaṁ*, eg. AN 6.13:5.3). This is explained in MN 138:10.2 as not being distracted or affected by the features of sense impressions, as the "signs" are created by greed, hate, and delusion (MN 43:37.1). By itself, however, it does not necessarily indicate that one is awakened (AN 6.60:8.2), as good conduct is still required for progress

leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that signless immersion of the heart. They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the perception of the dimension of nothingness or the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. There is only this modicum of stress, namely that related to the six sense fields dependent on this body and conditioned by life.'[385] They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of the dimension of nothingness. It is empty of the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. There is only this that is not emptiness, namely that related to the six sense fields dependent on this body and conditioned by life.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present. That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, and pure.

11.1 Furthermore, a mendicant—ignoring the perception of the dimension of nothingness and the perception of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception—focuses on the oneness dependent on the signless immersion of the heart. Their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided in that signless immersion of the heart. They understand: 'Even this signless immersion of the heart is produced by choices and intentions.'[386] They understand: 'But whatever is produced by choices and intentions is impermanent and liable to cessation.' Knowing and seeing like this,

(AN 7.56:13.1). It was practiced by Moggallāna before awakening, who had to be urged to "not follow any signs" (SN 40.9). It may also be used to describe the meditation of an arahant (SN 41.7:6.12).

385. Unlike with deep absorption, where there is no experience of the physical body, the signless meditation is a state of advanced discernment or insight where the six senses are seen as they truly are. This explains why it was a way for the Buddha to ease the pains of old age (DN 16:2.25.13). It seems that in such a state, the Buddha was able to function normally while seeing through the pain in his body.

386. Liberating insight comes from insight into the state of signless meditation, that is to say, it is the insight into insight itself.

their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

11.8 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

12.1 They understand: 'Here there is no stress due to the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, or ignorance. There is only this modicum of stress, namely that related to the six sense fields dependent on this body and conditioned by life.' They understand: 'This field of perception is empty of the perception of the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.[387] There is only this that is not emptiness, namely that related to the six sense fields dependent on this body and conditioned by life.' And so they regard it as empty of what is not there, but as to what remains they understand that it is present. That's how emptiness manifests in them—genuine, undistorted, pure, and supreme.

13.1 Whatever ascetics and brahmins enter and remain in the pure, ultimate, supreme emptiness—whether in the past, future, or present—all of them enter and remain in this same pure, ultimate, supreme emptiness.[388] So, Ānanda, you should train like this: 'We will enter and remain in the pure, ultimate, supreme emptiness.' That's how you should train."

13.6 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

387. The "field of perception" (*saññāgataṁ*) is the scope of awareness.

388. Here the emptiness is distinguished as "supreme" (*anuttara*). In early Pali, Nibbāna is not described as either empty or as not-self, as these are properties of the path. This passage is probably the closest we get to that, but even this is relative, since the body and life persist.

MN 122

The Longer Discourse on Emptiness

Mahāsuññatasutta

So I have heard.[389] At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery. 1.1

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Kapilavatthu for alms. He wandered for alms in Kapilavatthu. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the lodge of the Sakyan Khemaka the Dark for the day's meditation.[390] 2.1

Now at that time many resting places had been spread out at the lodge of Khemaka the Dark.[391] The Buddha saw this, and wondered, "Many resting places have been spread out; are there many mendicants living here?" 2.3

Now at that time Venerable Ānanda, together with many other mendicants, was making robes at the lodge of the Sakyan Ghaṭā.[392] 2.8

389. In the discourse, as with the previous, emptiness is associated with physical seclusion and the development of serenity meditation leading to insight.

390. The Sakyans Khemaka, known for his dark skin, and Ghaṭā are otherwise unknown. Their "lodges" (*vihāra*) were, according to the commentary, buildings offered by them for the use of the Saṅgha inside the Banyan Tree Monastery, rather than being their personal homes.

391. The fact that they were readily noticeable suggests that the beds were in the open, a detail confirmed by the Tibetan parallel. Bedding and furniture were typically property of the Saṅgha, rather than individuals, so it is an offense to leave them exposed to the elements (Bu Pc 14, Bu Pc 15).

392. Some translators (Chalmers, Horner, Siam Rath), as well as the Dictionary of Pali Proper Names, take this name as the masculine form *ghaṭāya*, assuming it is compounded with *sakkassa*; but names are not usually compounded in this way (cf. *kāḷakhemakassa sakkassa* above), and *ghaṭāya* does not seem to be attested elsewhere. In his hand-written manuscript, Ñāṇamoḷī had *ghāṭā*,

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and went to Ghaṭā's lodge, where he sat down on the seat spread out and said to Venerable Ānanda, "Many resting places have been spread out at the lodge of Khemaka the Dark; are many mendicants living there?"

2.14 "Indeed there are, sir. It's currently the time for making robes."[393]

3.1 "Ānanda, a mendicant doesn't shine who enjoys company and groups, who loves them and likes to enjoy them. It is quite impossible that such a mendicant will get the pleasure of renunciation, the pleasure of seclusion, the pleasure of peace, the pleasure of awakening when they want, without trouble or difficulty.[394] But you should expect that a mendicant who lives alone, withdrawn from the group, will get the pleasure of renunciation, the pleasure of seclusion, the pleasure of peace, the pleasure of awakening when they want, without trouble or difficulty. That is possible.

4.1 Indeed, Ānanda, it is quite impossible that a mendicant who enjoys company will enter and remain in the freedom of heart—either that which is temporary and pleasant, or that which is irreversible and unshakable.[395] But it is possible that a mendicant who lives alone, withdrawn from the group will enter and remain in the freedom of heart—either that which is temporary and pleasant, or that which is irreversible and unshakable.

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which was followed by Bodhi and Thanissaro. This reads the masculine agent noun "slayer"; but the genitive form would be *ghātassa*, while PTS, BJT, MS, and commentary all have *ghaṭāya* with no variants. Rather, read per text as the feminine genitive of *ghaṭā*, suggesting that it was a woman who donated the building. She was perhaps born under the astrological sign known in India as *kumbha* or *ghaṭa* ("water-pot"), and in the west as Aquarius ("water-bearer").

393. This the period after the Rains Retreat, when cloth is offered by the lay community at the *kaṭhiṇa* ceremony, and monastics busy themselves with sewing and repairs before setting out wandering. To this day, it is a time when the pent-up energies of the retreat are relaxed and the Saṅgha gathers for socializing in large numbers.

394. This is defined at MN 139:9.18 as the four absorptions.

395. The "temporary and pleasant" liberation is the absorptions, while the "irreversible and unshakable" liberation is arahantship.

Ānanda, I do not see even a single sight which, with its decay and perishing, would not give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress in someone who has desire and lust for it.[396] 5.1

But this meditation has been understood by the Realized One, namely to enter and remain in emptiness internally by not focusing on any signs.[397] Now, suppose that while the Realized One is practicing this meditation, monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, rulers and their chief ministers, monastics of other religions and their disciples go to visit him.[398] In that case, with a mind slanting, sloping, and inclining to seclusion, withdrawn, and loving renunciation, having totally eliminated defiling influences, he invariably gives a talk concerned only with sending them away.[399] 6.1

Therefore, if a mendicant should wish, 'May I enter and remain in emptiness internally!' then they should still, settle, unify, and immerse their mind in samādhi internally. 7.1

And how does a mendicant still, settle, unify, and immerse their mind in samādhi internally? 7.3

It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption … second absorption … third absorption … fourth ab- 8.1

396. Taken in isolation, *rūpa* here might be "physical form" (i.e. "body"), but in passages with similar phrasing it is "visible form" (i.e. "sight"; AN 1.1:2.1, AN 5.55:3.3).

397. Normally the meditations on emptiness and on signlessness are presented as separate meditation practices (SN 41.7:4.1). But in the previous sutta, the meditation on signlessness was presented as one of the stages in the manifestation of emptiness (MN 121:10.1). The outcome of the signless meditation is a heart that is "empty" of greed, hate, and delusion (MN 43:37.1).

398. *Tittha*, literally "ford", is a path to salvation, used as a term for a non-Buddhist "religion". *Titthakara* is a "religious founder" (literally "ford-maker"); *titthiya* is a "monastic of (another) religion" (for example at Bu NP 22:1.2.5); *titthiyasāvaka* is a "disciple of a monastic of (another) religion".

399. Compare Sanskrit *udyuyuje* at Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 4.1.5.7, which likewise concerns withdrawing from a hermit to avoid annoyance. Here, *uyyojanika* is the causative form, to "send away" or "dispatch".

sorption. That's how a mendicant stills, settles, unifies, and immerses their mind in samādhi internally.

9.1 They focus on emptiness internally, but their mind does not leap forth, gain confidence, settle down, and become decided. In that case, they understand: 'I am focusing on emptiness internally, but my mind does not leap forth, gain confidence, settle down, and become decided.' In this way they are aware of the situation.[400] They focus on emptiness externally … They focus on emptiness internally and externally … They focus on the imperturbable,[401] but their mind does not leap forth, gain confidence, settle down, and become decided. In that case, they understand: 'I am focusing on the imperturbable internally, but my mind does not leap forth, gain confidence, settle down, and become decided.' In this way they are aware of the situation.

10.1 Then that mendicant should still, settle, unify, and immerse their mind in samādhi internally in the same meditation subject as a basis of immersion as before.[402] They focus on emptiness internally,[403] and their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided. In that case, they understand: 'I am focusing on emptiness internally, and my mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided.' In this way they are aware of the situation. They focus on emptiness externally … They focus on emptiness internally and externally … They focus on the imper-

400. This phrase indicates that they have "situational awareness" (*sampajañña*), namely a contextual overview of how their meditation is progressing, understood in terms of cause and effect. The phrase also occurs in the same sense at AN 7.49:3.3.

401. For imperturbable, see MN 105:12.3. In this mode of practice, they wanted to develop emptiness before the formless attainments. Contrast with MN 121:10.1, where they develop the signless meditation only after the formless attainments.

402. Even though they had previously attained up to the fourth absorption, their practice is not yet fully stabilized. | For this phrase, see MN 36:45.6 and AN 6.28:4.3.

403. In this context, it seems that "emptiness" is a way of deepening absorption.

turbable, and their mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided. In that case, they understand: 'I am focusing on the imperturbable, and my mind leaps forth, gains confidence, settles down, and becomes decided.' In this way they are aware of the situation.

11.1 While a mendicant is practicing such a meditation, if their mind inclines to walking, they walk, thinking:[404] 'While I'm walking, bad, unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure will not overwhelm me.' In this way they are aware of the situation. While a mendicant is practicing such a meditation, if their mind inclines to standing, they stand, thinking: 'While I'm standing, bad, unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure will not overwhelm me.' In this way they are aware of the situation. While a mendicant is practicing such a meditation, if their mind inclines to sitting, they sit, thinking: 'While I'm sitting, bad, unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure will not overwhelm me.' In this way they are aware of the situation. While a mendicant is practicing such a meditation, if their mind inclines to lying down, they lie down, thinking: 'While I'm lying down, bad, unskillful qualities of covetousness and displeasure will not overwhelm me.' In this way they are aware of the situation.

12.1 While a mendicant is practicing such a meditation, if their mind inclines to talking, they think: 'I will not engage in the kind of speech that is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. Such speech doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. Namely: talk about kings, bandits, and chief ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances;

404. The Buddha goes on to explain how one with such advanced meditation is able to maintain their practice. | The phrase *tassa … bhikkhuno iminā vihārena viharato* ("While a mendicant is practicing such a meditation") sounds like it means they are actually in the meditation state itself, but this passage shows that this is not necessarily the case, as they are able to walk about and hold conversations.

talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that state of existence.' In this way they are aware of the situation. 'But I will take part in talk about self-effacement that helps open the heart and leads solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That is, talk about fewness of wishes, contentment, seclusion, aloofness, arousing energy, ethics, immersion, wisdom, freedom, and the knowledge and vision of freedom.' In this way they are aware of the situation.

13.1 While a mendicant is practicing such a meditation, if their mind inclines to thinking, they think: 'I will not think the kind of thought that is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. Such thoughts don't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That is, sensual, malicious, or cruel thoughts.' In this way they are aware of the situation. 'But I will think the kind of thought that is noble and emancipating, and brings one who practices it to the complete ending of suffering. That is, thoughts of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness.' In this way they are aware of the situation.

14.1 There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

15.1 So a mendicant should regularly check their own mind: 'Does my mind take an interest in any of these five kinds of sensual stimulation?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows this: 'My mind does take an interest.' In that case, they understand: 'I have not given up desire and greed for the five kinds of sensual stimulation.'

In this way they are aware of the situation.[405] But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows this: 'My mind does not take an interest.' In that case, they understand: 'I have given up desire and greed for the five kinds of sensual stimulation.' In this way they are aware of the situation.

A mendicant should meditate observing rise and fall in these five grasping aggregates: 'Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the disappearance of form. Such is feeling … Such is perception … Such are choices … Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the disappearance of consciousness.' 16.1

As they do so, they give up the conceit 'I am' regarding the five grasping aggregates.[406] In that case, they understand: 'I have given up the conceit "I am" regarding the five grasping aggregates.' In this way they are aware of the situation. 17.1

These principles are entirely skillful, with skillful outcomes; they are noble, transcendent, and inaccessible to the Wicked One. 18.1

What do you think, Ānanda? For what reason would a disciple deem it worthwhile to follow the Teacher, even if driven away?" 19.1

"Our teachings are rooted in the Buddha. He is our guide and our refuge. Sir, may the Buddha himself please clarify the meaning of this. The mendicants will listen and remember it." 19.3

"A disciple would not deem it worthwhile to follow the Teacher for the sake of this, namely statements, mixed prose & verse, or discussions.[407] Why is that? Because for a long time you have learned 20.1

405. Even such an advanced meditator might still have baser desires beneath the surface. However, so long as they are aware of this they do not stray from the path.

406. Finally the meditator undertakes discernment (*vipassanā*).

407. Here we find mentioned only the first three of the normal nine categories (*aṅga*) of the teaching (MN 22:10.2). This may be an earlier list or perhaps simply an abbreviation. Note that the PTS edition reads *yadidaṁ suttaṁ geyyaṁ veyyākaraṇassa hetu*, which would imply only two categories: "for the sake of explanations, namely statements and mixed prose & verse". A passage at AN 5.194:3.3 mentions four categories, with the addition of "amazing stories", but this too might be simply an artifact of abbreviation.

the teachings, remembering them, rehearsing them, mentally scrutinizing them, and penetrating them theoretically.[408] But a disciple would deem it worthwhile to follow the Teacher, even if driven away, for the sake of talk about self-effacement that helps open the heart and leads solely to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That is, talk about fewness of wishes, contentment, seclusion, aloofness, arousing energy, ethics, immersion, wisdom, freedom, and the knowledge and vision of freedom.[409]

21.1 This being so, Ānanda, there is a peril for the tutor, a peril for the pupil, and a peril for a spiritual practitioner.

22.1 And how is there a peril for the tutor?[410] It's when some teacher frequents a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. While meditating withdrawn, they're visited by a stream of brahmins and householders, and people of town and country.[411] When this happens, they enjoy infatuation, fall into greed, and return to indulgence. This is said to be the tutor's peril.[412] They're ruined by bad, unskillful qualities that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. That's how there is a peril for the tutor.

23.1 And how is there a peril for the pupil? It's when the disciple of a teacher, emulating their teacher's fostering of seclusion, frequents a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of

408. The Buddha shifts to address Ānanda directly. This is in reference to the fact that Ānanda was renowned as the greatest master of scriptural memorization.
409. That is, rather than simply memorizing more texts, one such as Ānanda should seek encouragement that supports practice.
410. As is made clear by the example of the spiritual practitioner below, who is said to follow the Buddha, the "tutor" (*ācariya*, or *satthā* "teacher" in the next line) and the "pupil" (*antevāsī*) here are outside of Buddhism.
411. The more a monastic has a reputation for seclusion, the more people seek them out.
412. Compare the similar phrase at SN 16.8:7.7.

straw. While meditating withdrawn, they're visited by a stream of brahmins and householders, and people of town and country. When this happens, they enjoy infatuation, fall into greed, and return to indulgence. This is said to be the pupil's peril. They're ruined by bad, unskillful qualities that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. That's how there is a peril for the pupil.

And how is there a peril for a spiritual practitioner? It's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He frequents a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. While meditating withdrawn, he's visited by a stream of brahmins and householders, and people of town and country. When this happens, he doesn't enjoy infatuation, fall into greed, and return to indulgence. But a disciple of this teacher, emulating their teacher's fostering of seclusion, frequents a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. While meditating withdrawn, they're visited by a stream of brahmins and householders, and people of town and country. When this happens, they enjoy infatuation, fall into greed, and return to indulgence. This is said to be the spiritual practitioner's peril. They're ruined by bad, unskillful qualities that are corrupting, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. That's how there is a peril for the spiritual practitioner. 24.1

And in this context, Ānanda, as compared to the peril of the tutor or the pupil, the peril of the spiritual practitioner has more painful, bitter results, and even leads to the underworld. 24.13

So, Ānanda, treat me as a friend, not as an enemy. That will be for your lasting welfare and happiness. 25.1

And how do disciples treat their Teacher as an enemy, not a friend? It's when the Teacher teaches Dhamma to his disciples out of kind- 25.3

ness and sympathy: 'This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.' But their disciples don't want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They proceed having turned away from the Teacher's instruction. That's how the disciples treat their Teacher as an enemy, not a friend.

26.1 And how do disciples treat their Teacher as a friend, not an enemy? It's when the Teacher teaches Dhamma to his disciples out of kindness and sympathy: 'This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.' And their disciples want to listen. They actively listen and try to understand. They don't proceed having turned away from the Teacher's instruction. That's how the disciples treat their Teacher as a friend, not an enemy.

26.6 So, Ānanda, treat me as a friend, not as an enemy. That will be for your lasting welfare and happiness. I shall not mollycoddle you like a potter with their damp, unfired pots.[413] I shall speak, curbing you again and again, pressing you again and again. The core will stand the test."

27.5 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

413. This passage seems to mean, "I shall not work you …", which is the exact opposite of the sense required by the next sentence. A Sanskrit parallel yields the required sense with the verb *dhanayiṣye*, "to treasure, to mollycoddle" (Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, Kd 17:493). Perhaps an initial negatory *a-* has been elided in the Pali *parakkamissāmi*, which would yield a similar sense, "I shall not stop working you …". | The same Sanskrit passage has *bhājanānā* ("pots") where the Pali has *āmake āmakamatte*, literally "uncooked, a bit damp".

MN 123

Incredible and Amazing

Acchariyaabbhutasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then after the meal, on return from almsround, several mendi- 2.1
cants sat together in the assembly hall and this discussion came up among them:

"It's incredible, reverends, it's amazing! The Realized One has 2.2
such psychic power and might! For he is able to know the Buddhas of the past who have become completely quenched, cut off proliferation, cut off the course, finished off the cycle, and passed beyond all suffering: 'Such is the birth, names, clans, conduct, teachings, wisdom, meditation, and freedom of those Blessed Ones.'[414]

When they said this, Venerable Ānanda said, "The Realized Ones 2.5
are incredible, reverends, and they have incredible qualities. They're amazing, and they have amazing qualities."[415] But this conversation among those mendicants was left unfinished.

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414. This is in reference to the Mahāpadānasutta, which is where we learn the Buddha's mother was named Māyā (DN 14). But whereas that sutta emphasizes the "normalcy" (*dhammatā*) of Buddhahood as a recurring cycle down through the eons, this sutta is devotional, emphasizing Gotama's personal qualities.

415. This is a key example of the genre of "amazing stories" (*abbhutadhamma*), one of the nine categories (eg. MN 22:10.2), linking this sutta with the previous (MN 122:20.1). This genre is closely connected to Ānanda, so much so that he may be regarded as its originator (eg. DN 1:3.74.2, DN 15:1.4, DN 16:3.11.2, SN 51.22:2.2, AN 4.76:5.5, etc.). When Ānanda was at a low point, the Buddha turned it around to speak of Ānanda's amazing qualities (DN 16:5.16.15 = AN 4.129).

2.9 Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat, went to the assembly hall, sat down on the seat spread out, and addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was left unfinished?"

2.12 So the mendicants told him what they had been talking about. The Buddha said, "Well then, Ānanda, say some more about the incredible and amazing qualities of the Realized One."

3.1 "Sir, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'Mindful and aware, the being intent on awakening was reborn in the host of joyful gods.'[416] This I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

4.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'Mindful and aware, the being intent on awakening remained in the host of joyful gods.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

5.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'For the whole of that life, the being intent on awakening remained in the host of joyful gods.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

6.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'Mindful and aware, the being intent on awakening passed away from the host of joyful gods and was conceived in his mother's womb.'[417] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

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416. The first three items are unique to this sutta. | Normally in early Pali, the word *bodhisatta* is reserved for the Buddha-to-be once he has left home and is practicing "intent on awakening" (eg. MN 26:13.1). DN 14:1.17.1 and AN 4.127:1.3 extend the usage back as far as the end of the immediate past life. Here, he is called *bodhisatta* from the beginning of the immediate past life. The Chinese parallel at MA 32 goes back even further, depicting the *bodhisatta* making his initial vow to become a Buddha in the time of the Buddha Kassapa. Compare MN 81 and its parallel MA 63, where no such vow is mentioned. Only then does he take rebirth in the Joyful heaven. These differences indicate a development of the *bodhisatta* doctrine even in early texts.

417. From here on, the details are the same as DN 14:1.17.1. Additionally, the details of passing away from heaven and emerging from the womb are also found in AN 4.127:1.3.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the 7.1
being intent on awakening passes away from the host of joyful gods, he is conceived in his mother's womb. And then—in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless gloom of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the luminosity of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods.[418] And even the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: "So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!"[419] And this ten-thousandfold galaxy shakes and rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the 8.1
being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's womb, four godlings approach to guard the four quarters, so that no human or non-human or anyone at all shall harm the being intent on awakening

418. The commentary identifies this realm of "utter darkness" (*andhakāratimisā*) with a cold hell realm. There is a corresponding Purāṇic hell called *andhatāmisra*. | *Agha* ("void") is a synonym of *ākāsa* ("space", MN 62:12.5). | *Asaṁvuta* was translated by Ñāṇamoḷī as "abysmal", but this relies on a commentarial cosmology that is not found in the suttas. The sense, rather, is "boundless". The root harks back to the Vedic serpent Vṛtra who wraps the world in darkness. | *Nānubhonti* ("makes no impression") is glossed in the commentary to AN 4.127 as *nappahonti* ("ineffective").

419. The light is a physical one, not just a metaphor. From this, it appears that sentient beings may be spontaneously reborn in interstellar space. Compare the problem of the "Boltzmann brain" in physics.

or his mother.'[420] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

9.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's womb, she becomes naturally ethical. She refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and beer, wine, and liquor intoxicants.'[421] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

10.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's womb, she no longer thinks of men in a sexual way, and she cannot be violated by a man of lustful intent.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

11.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's womb, she obtains the five kinds of sensual stimulation and amuses herself, supplied and provided with them.'[422] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

12.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's womb, no afflictions beset her. She's happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, whole in his major and minor limbs, not deficient in any faculty. Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally lustrous, eight-faceted, well-worked. And it was strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown. And a person with clear eyes were to take it in their hand and examine it: "This beryl gem is naturally lustrous, eight-faceted,

420. These are the Four Great Kings, regarded as protector deities. | Eight items, from here until the detail of giving birth standing, are absent from the parallel at MA 32. Notably, these items mostly emphasize the amazing qualities of the mother rather than the child, so they fit uneasily in a discourse whose subject is the amazing qualities of the Buddha.

421. The five precepts.

422. While sensual pleasures provoke attachment, they are nonetheless a kind of pleasure and therefore a sign of virtue and good past kamma.

well-worked. And it's strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown."

In the same way, when the being intent on awakening is conceived 12.5
in his mother's womb, no afflictions beset her. She's happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, whole in his major and minor limbs, not deficient in any faculty.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'Seven days 13.1
after the being intent on awakening is born, his mother passes away and is reborn in the host of joyful gods.'[423] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'Other women 14.1
carry the infant in the womb for nine or ten months before giving birth. Not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She gives birth after exactly ten months.'[424] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'Other women 15.1
give birth while sitting or lying down. Not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She only gives birth standing up.'[425] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the 16.1
being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, gods receive him first, then humans.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

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423. This tragic detail is also mentioned in Ud 5.2. The Buddha was raised by his step-mother, Māyā's sister Mahāpajāpatī (AN 8.51:9.8, MN 142:3.3).

424. Ten signifies fullness and completion, as for example the "ten directions". | The notion that the term of pregnancy was "nine or ten months" is also found at Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.9.1. In the Rig Veda it is typically "in the tenth month" (5.78.7, 10.84.3), as also at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.22. For this and several other details, compare the account of Indra's birth at Rig Veda 4.18, where the mother is said to bear him for a thousand months.

425. In illustrations she is depicted standing while holding a tree in the pose known as *sālabhañjikā*, a common motif in Indian art representing the abundance of springtime.

17.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, before he reaches the ground, four godlings receive him and place him before his mother, saying: "Rejoice, O Queen! An illustrious son is born to you."' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

18.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, he emerges already clean, unsoiled by waters, mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean. Suppose a jewel-treasure was placed on a cloth from Kāsi. The jewel would not soil the cloth, nor would the cloth soil the jewel.[426] Why is that? Because of the cleanliness of them both.

18.6 In the same way, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, he emerges already clean, unsoiled by waters, mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

19.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, two showers of water appear from the sky, one cool, one warm, for bathing the being intent on awakening and his mother.' This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

20.1 I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'As soon as he's born, the being intent on awakening stands firm with his own feet on the ground. Facing north, he takes seven strides with a white parasol held above him, surveys all quarters, and makes this dramatic proclamation: "I am the foremost in the world! I am the eldest in the world! I am the first in the world! This is my last rebirth; now there'll

426. Kāsi is the nation of which Varanasi is the capital. Their cloth was of exceptional quality.

be no more future lives.'"[427] This too I remember as an incredible quality of the Buddha.

I have learned this in the presence of the Buddha: 'When the being 21.1
intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, then—in this world with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless gloom of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the luminosity of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: "So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!" And this ten-thousandfold galaxy shakes and rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods.' This too I remember as an incredible and amazing quality of the Buddha."[428]

"Well then, Ānanda, you should also remember this as an incred- 22.1
ible and amazing quality of the Realized One. It's that the Realized One knows feelings as they arise, as they remain, and as they go

427. This passage implies that Buddhahood was destined from the time of birth, which stands in contrast to the rest of the suttas, where Buddhahood was hard-won by the Bodhisatta's efforts while striving for awakening. | "Stands firm on his own feet" signifies that he will be awakened by his own efforts. | "North" is *uttara*, which is also "the beyond"; this predicts his attaining Nibbāna. | "Seven strides" signifies crossing over the vast cycles of birth and death, especially by developing the seven awakening factors. | The "white parasol" signifies purity and royalty (DN 14:1.34.3, Snp 3.11:11.3, Cp 26:3.3; Viṣṇu Purāṇa 5.35.14), and a white canopy at SN 41.5:5.2 is said to symbolize freedom. | "Surveying all quarters" signifies his universal knowledge. | The "dramatic proclamation" is *āsabhiṁ vācaṁ*, literally the "voice of a bull". Other contexts show that this is is an expression emphasizing speech that is dramatic and imposing (SN 52.9:3.2, DN 28:1.5 = SN 47.12:5.2). | At Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.1.1 and Chāndogya Upaniṣad 5.1.1 the "vital breath" (*prāṇa*) is said to be "eldest and first" (*jyeṣṭhaśca śreṣṭhaśca*).

428. Here the Chinese parallel at MA 32 adds a series of ten extra items, mostly details of Siddhattha's life before awakening.

away.[429] He knows perceptions as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. He knows thoughts as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. This too you should remember as an incredible and amazing quality of the Realized One."

23.1 "Sir, the Buddha knows feelings as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. He knows perceptions as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. He knows thoughts as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. This too I remember as an incredible and amazing quality of the Buddha."

23.5 That is what Venerable Ānanda said, and the Teacher concurred. Satisfied, those mendicants approved what Venerable Ānanda said.

429. This practice is said to be the "awareness" part of "mindfulness and awareness" (*satisampajañña*) at SN 47.35:3.1, while at DN 33:1.11.37 = AN 4.41:4.1 it is a further development of immersion leading to awareness. | The Buddha is gently reframing Ānanda's devotionalism, pointing back to the practice of meditation, a quality that he shares with disciples (eg. Sāriputta at AN 7.39:1.6 and Nanda at AN 8.9:5.1). Subtly, he is also completing the circle of the sutta, as the first items speak of how the *bodhisatta* was "mindful and aware" when reborn (MN 123:3.2). Thus while Ānanda spoke of results, the Buddha pointed to the cause of awakening, a rhetorical twist he also employed at MN 32:17.5.

MN 124

With Bakkula

Bākulasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[430] At one time Venerable Bakkula was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. 1.1

Then the naked ascetic Kassapa, an old friend of Bakkula in the lay life, approached him, and exchanged greetings with him.[431] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Venerable Bakkula, "Reverend Bakkula, how long has it been since you went forth?" 2.1

"It has been eighty years, reverend."[432] 3.2

"But in these eighty years, how many times have you had sex?" 3.3

430. Bakkula is depicted as an exponent of austerity who goes significantly beyond the norm in the early texts. According to the commentary, this sutta was added by the Elders at the Second Council, a century after the Buddha's passing. This late date is supported by multiple textual indications, such as the lack of mention of where the Buddha is staying and the advanced age of Bakkula. Bakkula apparently represents an ideal among a certain wing of the Saṅgha at that time. His verses in the Theragāthā, however, are simple and free from this severity (Thag 3.3).

431. The phrase *purāṇagihisahāya* ("old friend from the lay life") appears only here and at SN 41.9:1.1. There it is also said of a naked ascetic (*acela*) called Kassapa, which cannot be a coincidence. In that case he, as the former friend of the householder Citta, is the one interrogated. The events of the present discourse happened many decades after the Buddha's death, so it seems likely Kassapa was introduced as a conventional foil for Bakkula. Several such individuals named Kassapa are found in Pali, and their stories are conflated (DN 8, SN 12.17, SN 41.9).

432. One may "go forth" at fifteen or "when old enough to scare crows" (Kd 1:51.1.14), so he is probably over ninety here.

3.4 "You shouldn't ask me such a question. Rather, you should ask me this: 'But in these eighty years, how many times have sensual perceptions ever arisen in you?'"

3.8 "But in these eighty years, how many times have sensual perceptions ever arisen in you?"[433]

3.9 "In these eighty years, I don't recall that any sensual perception has ever arisen in me."

3.10 *This we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula.*[434]

4-5.1 "In these eighty years, I don't recall that any perception of ill will … or cruelty has ever arisen in me."

4-5.3 *This too we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula.*

6.1 "In these eighty years, I don't recall that any thought of sensuality … ill will … or cruelty has ever arisen in me."

7-8.3 *This too we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula.*

433. This repetition is found in the PTS and BJT editions, but missing from MS and King of Siam editions.

434. According to the commentary, these responses were added by the Elders, representing praise of Bakkula's austerities by the successful rigorist party at the Second Council. This is supported by several considerations. First, the commentators would rather claim something is early, so when they say it was added later it likely comes from a genuine tradition. Second, the refrains are in plural. Third, the refrains, and the statements of Bakkula that they answer, lack the close *-ti* indicating a direct quote. Fourthly, they continue after the conversation with Kassapa has concluded. The refrains are also found in the Chinese parallel. This shows how comparing different versions of a sutta can take us back only to the point where the texts diverge, which was some time after the Second Council. Thus a shared feature might have been added a century or more after the Buddha.

"In these eighty years, I don't recall accepting a robe from a house- 9.1
holder …[435] cutting a robe with a knife …[436] sewing a robe with a needle … dying a robe … sewing a robe during the robe-making ceremony … wandering to look for robe material for my companions in the spiritual life when they are making robes …[437] accepting an invitation …[438] having such a thought: 'If only someone would invite me!' … sitting down inside a house …[439] eating inside a house … getting caught up in the features by way of the details of a lady's appearance …[440] teaching a lady, even so much as a four line verse

435. From a discussion of mental purity, Bakkula proceeds to list a series of details of conduct, which are not morally reprehensible, but which illustrate his extreme commitment to austerity. | Accepting a robe from a householder implies enjoying the spoils of wealthy donors. Austere monks wore robes made of cast-off rags. Compare the story of Ānanda at MN 52:16.2 = AN 11.16:11.2, or at Kd 21:1.13.1, where he explained that after accepting quality robes, they were shared and reused. | This sutta can be seen as representing one of the disputing factions at the Second Council (Kd 22). The Saṅgha was divided between "rigorists" who advocated a more austere monastic life, and "laxists" who wanted to take a more relaxed attitude to discipline. The Second Council decided ten points of Vinaya in the rigorists' favor, the most important of which was whether monastics could use money. Bakkula represents a rigorist position so extreme that if it were followed generally it would undermine the very existence of the Saṅgha. His severity, which even exceeds that of Mahākassapa, is implicitly contrasted with the gentle and accommodating spirit of Ānanda.

436. The following items echo the Buddha's concern at MN 122:2.8, where many monastics, including Ānanda, had gathered for making robes. | Note that most of these items are missing from the Chinese parallel at MA 34.

437. This case is discussed in Bu Pc 46. It is normally forbidden to visit other families on the way to a meal invitation, but a special exemption is granted for the times of giving and making robes.

438. Bakkula would eat only food collected on alms-round, refusing to eat a meal by invitation in a lay person's home.

439. This is allowed, but might sometimes get a monastic unwillingly involved in lay affairs (Bu Pc 43).

440. This refers to the practice of sense restraint (MN 27:15.1). | For the grammar, see note on SN 35.235:1.4.

…[441] going to the nuns' quarters …[442] teaching the nuns …[443] teaching the trainee nuns … teaching the novice nuns … giving the going forth …[444] giving the ordination … giving dependence … being attended by a novice … bathing in the sauna …[445] bathing with bath powder …[446] looking for a massage from my spiritual companions …[447] being ill, even for as long as it takes to pull a cow's udder …[448] being presented with medicine, even as much as a bit of yellow myrobalan …[449] leaning on a leaning-board …[450] preparing a cot …"[451]

441. Bu Pc 7 forbids teaching up to five or six lines to someone of the opposite sex, unless there is a chaperone present.

442. This is stricter than Bu Pc 23, which forbids going to the nuns's quarters for the purpose of giving the fortnightly instruction, with several exceptions noted.

443. At MN 146:3.3, the Buddha encourages Nandaka to teach the nuns; indeed the Vinaya says that a monk should agree to teach the nuns (Kd 20:9.5.3), and in addition should go to the assistance of nuns (Kd 3:6.12.1). Compare Bu Pc 24, which forbids teaching nuns for the sake of material profits.

444. Presumably Bakkula wished to avoid the responsibility of taking on students. If this practice was universally adopted, the Saṅgha could not survive.

445. Allowed for health at Kd 15:14.1.1.

446. "Bath powder" (*cuṇṇa*) was in regular use (Kd 1:25.12.4), but was sometimes considered sensual (Kd 20:27.4.1).

447. Massaging was done for health and by respect (Kd 12:1.1.27), but was often problematic, as it could be sexually arousing (Bu Ss 1:5.8.17) or even dangerous (Bu Pj 3:5.16.2). At one point the Buddha forbade massages for monks (Kd 15:1.4.1) and nuns (Bi Pc 90), although he allowed monks a "broad-handed" massage (Kd 15:1.5.6).

448. Bakkula was said to be the foremost monk in good health (AN 1.226:1.1), an accolade that must have been added after his passing away. In later texts, he is often remembered for this (Tha Ap 398, Mil 5.5.3; Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra 8.2.3.3, Divyāvadāna 253.020). It would seem he mentions it here because many of the other items are allowed for the sake of health. It may happen that something such as a massage, which has a genuine health purpose, can become an indulgence.

449. Allowed as medicine at Kd 6:6.1.4.

450. Allowed at Kd 16:20.2.15. This was a wooden plank that was leaned against the wall as a simple backrest.

451. A simple bed was allowed (Bu Pc 16), but Bakkula slept on the ground.

This too we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula. 30-36.8

"In these eighty years, I don't recall commencing the rainy season residence within a village." 37.1

This too we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula. 37.2

"Reverend, for seven days I ate the nation's almsfood as a debtor.[452] Then on the eighth day I became enlightened." 38.1

This too we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula. 38.3

"Reverend Bakkula, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training?" And the naked ascetic Kassapa received the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training. 39.1

Not long after his ordination, Venerable Kassapa, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. 39.3

He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Kassapa became one of the perfected. 39.4

Then some time later Venerable Bakkula, taking a latchkey, went from dwelling to dwelling, saying,[453] "Come forth, venerables, come forth! Today will be my full extinguishment." 40.1

This too we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula. 40.3

And Venerable Bakkula became fully extinguished while seated right in the middle of the Saṅgha. 41.1

452. Said by Mahākassapa at SN 16.11:13.2. See MN 26:20.21 and note.

453. The "latchkey" (*avāpuraṇa*) was a universal key inserted into outside doors to lift the bolt within (SN 22.90:1.2, AN 9.11:2.1). He took it to access the inner dwellings in the monastery to make his announcement.

41.2 *This too we remember as an incredible and amazing quality of Venerable Bakkula.*

MN 125

The Level of the Tamed

Dantabhūmisutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[454] At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. 1.1

Now at that time the novice Aciravata was staying in a wilderness hut. Then as Prince Jayasena was going for a walk he approached Aciravata, and exchanged greetings with him.[455] 2.1

When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Aciravata, "Worthy Aggivessana, I have heard that[456] a mendicant who meditates diligently, keenly, and resolutely can experience unification of mind." 2.3

"That's so true, Prince! That's so true! A mendicant who meditates diligently, keenly, and resolutely can experience unification of mind." 2.6

"Worthy Aggivessana, please teach me the Dhamma as you have learned and memorized it." 3.1

"I'm not competent to do so, Prince.[457] For if I were to teach you the Dhamma as I have learned and memorized it, you might not understand the meaning, which would be wearying and troublesome for me." 3.2

454. This discourse uses the training of an elephant as an allegory for the Gradual Training. The Buddha contrasts the sensual lifestyle of Prince Jayasena, which clouds his vision of the truth, with the path of renunciation. Throughout, he lends support to the young novice Aciravata.

455. Jayasena features in this discourse and the next. The commentary says he was Bimbisāra's son. | Aciravata is otherwise unknown.

456. Saccaka is also called Aggivessana (MN 35:4.2).

457. Aciravati's lack of confidence is understandable. Novices were under twenty, so here we have a rather intimidating situation where a Prince is questioning a teenager.

4.1 "Worthy Aggivessana, please teach me the Dhamma as you have learned and memorized it. Hopefully I will understand the meaning of what you say."

4.3 "I shall teach you. If you understand the meaning of what I say, that's good. If not, then leave each to his own, and do not question me about it further."

4.6 "Worthy Aggivessana, please teach me the Dhamma as you have learned and memorized it. If I understand the meaning of what you say, that's good. If not, then I will leave each to his own, and not question you about it further."

5.1 Then the novice Aciravata taught Prince Jayasena the Dhamma as he had learned and memorized it. When he had spoken, Jayasena said to him, "It is impossible, worthy Aggivessana, it cannot happen that a mendicant who meditates diligently, keenly, and resolutely can experience unification of mind." Having declared that this was impossible, Jayasena rose from his seat and left.

6.1 Not long after he had left, Aciravata went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and informed the Buddha of all they had discussed.

7.1 When he had spoken, the Buddha said to him,

7.2 "How could it possibly be otherwise, Aggivessana?[458] Prince Jayasena dwells in the midst of sensual pleasures, enjoying them, consumed by thoughts of them, burning with fever for them, and eagerly seeking more. It's simply impossible for him to know or see or realize what can only be known, seen, and realized by renunciation.[459]

458. Knowing his student lacks confidence, the Buddha has encouraging words for him, not letting him blame himself for Jayasena's rejection.

459. A parallel passage occurs at MN 125:7.3, where the phrases "dwells in the midst of sensual pleasures, enjoying them" are reversed. The sequence there makes better sense: it starts with where they are, then what they enjoy, and gradually moves up to being consumed and seeking more. I take this as the correct sense and translate both passages accordingly.

Suppose there was a pair of elephants or horse or oxen in training who were well tamed and well trained. And there was a pair who were not tamed or trained. What do you think, Aggivessana? Wouldn't the pair that was well tamed and well trained perform the tasks of the tamed and reach the level of the tamed?" 8.1

"Yes, sir." 8.4

"But would the pair that was not tamed and trained perform the tasks of the tamed and reach the level of the tamed, just like the tamed pair?" 8.5

"No, sir." 8.6

"In the same way, Prince Jayasena dwells in the midst of sensual pleasures, enjoying them, consumed by thoughts of them, burning with fever for them, and eagerly seeking more. It's simply impossible for him to know or see or realize what can only be known, seen, and realized by renunciation. 8.7

Suppose there was a big mountain not far from a town or village.[460] And two friends set out from that village or town, lending each other a hand up to the mountain. Once there, one friend would remain at the foot of the mountain, while the other would climb to the peak.[461] The one standing at the foot would say to the one at the peak, 'My dear, what do you see, standing there at the peak?' They'd reply, 'Standing at the peak, I see delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds!' 9.1

But the other would say, 'It's impossible, it cannot happen that, standing at the peak, you can see delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds.' So their friend would come down from the peak, take their friend by the arm, and make them climb to the peak. After giving them a while to catch their breath, they'd say, 'My dear, what do you see, standing here at the peak?' They'd reply, 'Standing at the peak, I see delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds!' 9.7

460. This simile is contextual, as Rājagaha is indeed surrounded by mountains.
461. For *hatthavilaṅghaka* ("lending a hand up") see MN 31:9.7 = MN 128:14.7.

9.13 They'd say, 'Just now I understood you to say: "It's impossible, it cannot happen that, standing at the peak, you can see delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds." But now you say: "Standing at the peak, I see delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds!"' They'd say, 'But my dear, it was because I was obstructed by this big mountain that I didn't see what could be seen.'

10.1 But bigger than that is the mass of ignorance by which Prince Jayasena is obstructed, hindered, engulfed, and enveloped. Prince Jayasena dwells in the midst of sensual pleasures, enjoying them, consumed by thoughts of them, burning with fever for them, and eagerly seeking more. It is quite impossible for him to know or see or realize what can only be known, seen, and realized by renunciation. It would be no wonder if, had these two similes occurred to you, Prince Jayasena would have gained confidence in you and shown his confidence."

11.2 "But sir, how could these two similes have occurred to me as they did to the Buddha, since they were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past?"

12.1 "Suppose, Aggivessana, an anointed aristocratic king was to address his elephant tracker, 'Please, my good elephant tracker, mount the royal bull elephant and enter the elephant wood. When you see a wild bull elephant, tether it by the neck to the royal elephant.' 'Yes, Your Majesty,' replied the elephant tracker, and did as he was asked. The royal elephant leads the wild elephant out into the open; and it's only then that it comes out into the open, for a wild bull elephant clings to the elephant wood. The elephant tracker informs the king, 'Your Majesty, the wild elephant has come out into the open.' Then the king addresses his elephant trainer, 'Please, dear elephant trainer, tame the wild bull elephant. Subdue its wild behaviors, its wild memories and thoughts, and its wild stress, weariness, and fever. Make it happy to be within a village, and instill behaviors congenial to humans.'

12.11 'Yes, Your Majesty,' replied the elephant trainer. He dug a large post into the earth and tethered the elephant to it by the neck, so as

to subdue its wild behaviors, its wild memories and thoughts, and its wild stress, weariness, and fever, and to make it happy to be within a village, and instill behaviors congenial to humans. He spoke in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, endearing, going to the heart, polite, and likable and agreeable to the people. Spoken to in such a way by the elephant trainer, the wild elephant wanted to listen. It actively listened and tried to understand. So the elephant trainer rewards it with grass, fodder, and water.

When the wild elephant accepts the grass, fodder, and water, the 12.15
trainer knows, 'Now the wild elephant will survive!' He sets it a further task: 'Pick it up, worthy sir! Put it down, worthy sir!' When the wild elephant picks up and puts down when the trainer says, following instructions, the trainer sets it a further task: 'Forward, worthy sir! Back, worthy sir!' When the wild elephant goes forward and back when the trainer says, following instructions, the trainer sets it a further task: 'Stand, worthy sir! Sit, worthy sir!'

When the wild elephant stands and sits when the trainer says, fol- 12.23
lowing instructions, the trainer sets the task called imperturbability. He fastens a large plank to its trunk; a lancer sits on its neck; other lancers surround it on all sides; and the trainer himself stands in front with a long lance. While practicing this task, it doesn't budge its fore-feet or hind-feet, its fore-quarters or hind-quarters, its head, ears, tusks, tail, or trunk. The wild bull elephant endures being struck by spears, swords, arrows, and axes; it endures the thunder of the drums, kettledrums, pipes, horns, and tom-toms. Rid of all crooks and flaws, and purged of defects, it is worthy of a king, fit to serve a king, and reckoned a factor of kingship.

In the same way, Aggivessana, a Realized One arises in the world, 13.1
perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit

for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.[462] He realizes with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure.

14.1 A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or someone reborn in a good family. They gain faith in the Realized One and reflect: 'Life at home is cramped and dirty, life gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?'

14.7 After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And it's only then that a noble disciple comes out into the open, for gods and humans cling to the five kinds of sensual stimulation.

15.1 The Realized One guides them further: 'Come, mendicant, be ethical and restrained in the monastic code, conducting yourself well and resorting for alms in suitable places. Seeing danger in the slightest fault, keep the rules you've undertaken.'

16.1 When they have ethical conduct, the Realized One guides them further: 'Come, mendicant, guard your sense doors. When you see a sight with your eyes, don't get caught up in the features and details. …

(Tell in full as in MN 107, the Discourse with Moggallāna the Accountant.)

22.1 They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then they meditate observing an aspect of the

462. The parallel at MA 198 is more straightforward, mentioning only purity of body, speech, and mind; undertaking mindfulness meditation; and entering the four absorptions.

body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world.

They meditate observing an aspect of feelings … mind … princi- 23.1
ples—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. It's like when the elephant trainer dug a large post into the earth and tethered the elephant to it by the neck, so as to subdue its wild behaviors, its wild memories and thoughts, and its wild stress, weariness, and fever, and to make it happy to be within a village, and instill behaviors congenial to humans. In the same way, a noble disciple has these four kinds of mindfulness meditation as tethers for the mind so as to subdue behaviors tied to domestic life, memories and thoughts tied to domestic life, stress, weariness, and fever tied to domestic life, to discover the system, and to realize extinguishment.

The Realized One guides them further: 'Come, mendicant, medi- 24.1
tate observing an aspect of the body, but don't think thoughts connected with sensual pleasures.[463] Meditate observing an aspect of feelings … mind … principles, but don't think thoughts connected with sensual pleasures.'

463. Editions vary and it is not easy to decide between them. MS and BJT editions have *kāmūpasaṁhita* ("connected with sensual pleasures"), while PTS has *kāyūpasaṁhita* ("connected with the body"), followed by "connected with feelings, mind, and principles" respectively. The Chinese parallel has "sensuality" in first place, abbreviates the next two, then "against the dhamma" for the final *satipaṭṭhāna* (MA 198 at T i 758b15). Sanskrit texts Pañcaviṁśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā and Pratyutpannabuddhasaṁmukhāvasthitasamādhi-sūtra have *kāya*. So the balance of the non-Pali texts supports the reading *kāyūpasaṁhita*. On the other hand, *kāmūpasaṁhita* is a common term, while *kāyūpasaṁhita* (etc.) appear only here; but the passage is passed over in the commentary and subcommentary, which suggests that they thought it was self-evident, making it unlikely that unique terms were used. Finally, the overall topic of the discourse is overcoming sensuality through meditation, and it would seem odd for the Buddha to be teaching specialized meditation instructions, found nowhere else, to a novice. Overall, then, I accept the reading *kāmūpasaṁhita*; see too the next note.

25.1 As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption …[464] third absorption … fourth absorption.

26.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world expanding, many eons of the world contracting and expanding. And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

27-28.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds.

29.1 When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, flawless, rid of corruptions, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it toward knowledge of the ending

464. The Pali version, in a unique presentation, has the four *satipaṭṭhānas* in place of the first absorption, which offers further light on the problem discussed in the previous note. The first absorption is characterized by seclusion from sensual pleasures, while *vitakka* is still present. Clearly one is not "thinking of sensual pleasures" at this point, so the reading *kāmūpasaṁhita* is unproblematic. But it is not clear that one is not having *vitakka* for the body (and feeling, mind, and principles). For example, in mindfulness of breathing one is applying the mind or "thinking of" the breath, in other words "thinking of the body". Thus the reading *kāyūpasaṁhita* would be difficult to fully explain. Any conclusions on this passage, however, are tenuous, and it seems likely there has been some textual corruption. Indeed, the Chinese parallel here has all four absorptions as usual.

of defilements. They truly understand: 'This is suffering' … 'This is the origin of suffering' … 'This is the cessation of suffering' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering'. They truly understand: 'These are defilements' … 'This is the origin of defilements' … 'This is the cessation of defilements' … 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements'. Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 29.6
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

Such a mendicant endures cold, heat, hunger, and thirst; the touch 30.1
of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles; rude and unwelcome criticism; and puts up with physical pain—sharp, severe, acute, unpleasant, disagreeable, and life-threatening. Rid of all greed, hate, and delusion, and purged of defects, they are worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a religious donation, worthy of greeting with cupped palms, and are the supreme field of merit for the world.

If a royal bull elephant—whether elderly, middle aged, or youth- 31.1
ful—passes away untamed and untrained, they're reckoned a royal bull elephant who passed away untamed. In the same way, if a mendicant—whether senior, middle, or junior—passes away without having ended the defilements, they're reckoned a mendicant who passed away untamed.

If a royal bull elephant—whether elderly, middle aged, or youth- 32.1
ful—passes away tamed and trained, they're reckoned a royal bull elephant who passed away tamed. In the same way, if a mendicant—whether senior, middle, or junior—passes away having ended the defilements, they're reckoned a mendicant who passed away tamed."[465]

465. The Buddha is giving gentle encouragement to Aciravata, reminding him that his junior status does not limit his spiritual growth.

32.7 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the novice Aciravata approved what the Buddha said.

MN 126

With Bhūmija

Bhūmijasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. 1.1

Then Venerable Bhūmija robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Prince Jayasena, where he sat down on the seat spread out.[466] 2.1

Then Jayasena approached and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Bhūmija: 3.1

"Worthy Bhūmija, there are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'If you make a wish and lead the spiritual life, you can't win the fruit.[467] If you don't make a wish and lead the spiritual life, you can't win the fruit. If you both make a wish and don't make a wish and lead the spiritual life, you can't win the fruit. If you neither make a wish nor don't make a wish and lead the spiritual life, you can't win the fruit.' What does the worthy Bhūmija's Teacher say about this? How does he explain it?" 3.3

"Prince, I haven't heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha.[468] But it's possible that he might explain it like this: 'If you lead the spiritual life irrationally, you can't win the fruit, regardless of 4.1

466. We know Bhūmija from SN 12.25, where he asks Sāriputta about the efficacy of deeds. | This is the second discourse featuring Jayasena (after MN 125), but despite his evident interest in the Dhamma, and his support for mendicants expressed by offering the meal here, we do not hear of his conversion or spiritual development.

467. "Wish" is *āsa*.

468. Like Aciravata in MN 125:3.2, he is cautious in responding.

whether you make a wish,[469] you don't make a wish, you both do and do not make a wish, or you neither do nor don't make a wish. But if you lead the spiritual life rationally, you can win the fruit, regardless of whether you make a wish, you don't make a wish, you both do and do not make a wish, or you neither do nor don't make a wish.' I haven't heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha. But it's possible that he might explain it like that."

5.1 "If that's what your teacher says, worthy Bhūmija, he clearly stands head and shoulders above all the various other ascetics and brahmins." Then Prince Jayasena served Venerable Bhūmija from his own dish.

7.1 Then after the meal, on his return from almsround, Bhūmija went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him all that had happened, adding: "Answering this way, I trust that I repeated what the Buddha has said, and didn't misrepresent him with an untruth. I trust my explanation was in line with the teaching, and that there are no legitimate grounds for rebuttal or criticism."

8.1 "Indeed, Bhūmija, in answering this way you repeated what I've said, and didn't misrepresent me with an untruth. Your explanation was in line with the teaching, and there are no legitimate grounds for rebuttal or criticism.

9.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have wrong view, wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. If they lead the spiritual life, they can't win the fruit, regardless of whether they make a wish, they don't make a wish, they both do and do not make a wish, or they neither do nor don't make a wish. Why is that? Because that's an irrational way to win the fruit.

10.1 Suppose there was a person in need of oil. While wandering in search of oil, they tried heaping sand in a bucket, sprinkling it little by little with water, and pressing it out. But by doing this, they couldn't

469. "Irrationally" (*ayoniso*) here means, as the sutta will make clear, that the practices one does are not "rationally" (*yoniso*) or causally connected to the results one expects. This sutta illuminates the meaning of the key term *yoniso* through a series of similes.

extract any oil, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's an irrational way to extract oil.

And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have wrong view, 10.8
wrong purpose, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. If they lead the spiritual life, they can't win the fruit, regardless of whether or not they make a wish. Why is that? Because that's an irrational way to win the fruit.

Suppose there was a person in need of milk. While wandering 11.1
in search of milk, they tried pulling the horn of a newly-calved cow. But by doing this, they couldn't get any milk, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's an irrational way to get milk.

And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have wrong view 11.8
… Because that's an irrational way to win the fruit.

Suppose there was a person in need of butter. While wandering 12.1
in search of butter, they tried pouring water into a pot and churning it with a stick. But by doing this, they couldn't produce any butter, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's an irrational way to produce butter.

And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have wrong view 12.8
… Because that's an irrational way to win the fruit.

Suppose there was a person in need of fire. While wandering in 13.1
search of fire, they tried drilling a green, sappy log with a drill-stick. But by doing this, they couldn't start a fire, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's an irrational way to start a fire.

And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have wrong view 13.8
… Because that's an irrational way to win the fruit.

14.1 There are some ascetics and brahmins who have right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. If they lead the spiritual life, they can win the fruit, regardless of whether they make a wish, they don't make a wish, they both do and do not make a wish, or they neither do nor do not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's a rational way to win the fruit.

15.1 Suppose there was a person in need of oil. While wandering in search of oil, they tried heaping sesame flour in a bucket, sprinkling it little by little with water, and pressing it out. By doing this, they could extract oil, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's a rational way to extract oil.

15.8 And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have right view … Because that's a rational way to win the fruit.

16.1 Suppose there was a person in need of milk. While wandering in search of milk, they tried pulling the udder of a newly-calved cow. By doing this, they could get milk, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's a rational way to get milk.

16.8 And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have right view … Because that's a rational way to win the fruit.

17.1 Suppose there was a person in need of butter. While wandering in search of butter, they tried pouring curds into a pot and churning them with a stick. By doing this, they could produce butter, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's a rational way to produce butter.

17.8 And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have right view … Because that's a rational way to win the fruit.

18.1 Suppose there was a person in need of fire. While wandering in search of fire, they tried drilling a dried up, withered log with a

drill-stick. By doing this, they could start a fire, regardless of whether they made a wish, didn't make a wish, both did and did not make a wish, or neither did nor did not make a wish. Why is that? Because that's a rational way to start a fire.

And so it is for any ascetics and brahmins who have right view … 18.8
Because that's a rational way to win the fruit.

Bhūmija, it would be no wonder if, had these four similes occurred 19.1
to you, Prince Jayasena would have gained confidence in you and shown his confidence."[470]

"But sir, how could these four similes have occurred to me as they 19.2
did to the Buddha, since they were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past?"[471]

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Bhūmija ap- 19.3
proved what the Buddha said.

470. Above, Jayasena expresses his confidence in the Buddha, but not in Bhūmija (MN 126:5.1).
471. As at MN 125:11.2.

MN 127

With Anuruddha

Anuruddhasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 And then the chamberlain Pañcakaṅga addressed a man,[472] "Please, my man, go to Venerable Anuruddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him, 'Sir, the chamberlain Pañcakaṅga bows with his head to your feet.' And then ask him whether he would please accept tomorrow's meal from Pañcakaṅga together with the mendicant Saṅgha. And ask whether he might please come earlier than usual, for Pañcakaṅga has many duties, and much work to do for the king."

2.8 "Yes, sir," that man replied. He did as Pañcakaṅga asked, and Venerable Anuruddha consented with silence.

3.1 Then when the night had passed, Anuruddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Pañcakaṅga's home, where he sat down on the seat spread out. Then Pañcakaṅga served and satisfied Anuruddha with his own hands with delicious fresh and cooked foods. When Anuruddha had eaten and washed his hands and bowl, Pañcakaṅga took a low seat, sat to one side, and said to him:

4.1 "Sir, some senior mendicants have come to me and said, 'Householder, develop the limitless release of the heart.' Others have said, 'Householder, develop the expansive release of the heart.' Now, the limitless release of the heart and the expansive release of the heart:

472. For Pañcakaṅga and his role as chamberlain, see note on MN 59:1.3.

do these things differ in both meaning and phrasing? Or do they mean the same thing, and differ only in the phrasing?"[473]

"Well then, householder, let me know what you think about this. 5.1
Afterwards, it's a sure bet that you'll get it."[474]

"Sir, this is what I think. The limitless release of the heart and the 5.2
expansive release of the heart mean the same thing, and differ only in the phrasing."

"The limitless release of the heart and the expansive release of the 6.1
heart differ in both meaning and phrasing. This is a way to understand how these things differ in both meaning and phrasing.

And what is the limitless release of the heart?[475] It's when a men- 7.1
dicant meditates spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion … They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing … They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. This is called the limitless release of the heart.

473. At MN 43:29.5, Mahākoṭṭhita asks Sāriputta a similar question about different meditative liberations, while the same dialogue is at SN 41.7 between Godatta and Citta.

474. "Sure bet" renders *apaṇṇaka*, for which see note on MN 60:4.3. It's an unusual response. As *apaṇṇaka* means a "set without a fifth", Anuruddha might be punning on Pañcakaṅga's name, which means, "a set of five items".

475. "Limitless" is *appamāṇa*. This set of four meditations is known in later traditions as either the "divine meditations" (*brahmavihārā*) or the "immeasurables" (*appamaññā*).

8.1 And what is the expansive release of the heart?[476] It's when a mendicant meditates focused on pervading the extent of a single tree root as expansive.[477] This is called the expansive release of the heart. Also, a mendicant meditates focused on pervading the extent of two or three tree roots … a single village district … two or three village districts … a single kingdom … two or three kingdoms … this land surrounded by ocean. This too is called the expansive release of the heart. This is a way to understand how these things differ in both meaning and phrasing.

9.1 Householder, there are these four kinds of rebirth in a future life.[478] What four? Take someone who meditates focused on pervading 'limited radiance'. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of the gods of limited radiance.[479] Next, take someone who meditates focused on pervading 'limitless radiance'. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of the gods of limitless radiance. Next, take someone

476. "Expansive" renders *mahaggata*, literally "grown great". This features as a state of mind that is developed in *satipaṭṭhāna* (MN 10:34.10), and which is known with psychic powers (MN 6:16.10). It also appears just above next to "limitless" in the description of the divine meditations, a detail that perhaps prompted Pañcakaṅga's question.

477. This meditation practice is unique to this passage. It might be compared with the practice of emptiness at MN 121:4.1, which likewise moves from a perception of one's limited surroundings toward something more universal. The meaning of "pervading" (*pharitvā*) might be understood in the same sense as it is found in the divine meditations, where I have translated it as "spread". The sutta below, however, treats it as the spreading of light. In this interpretation, the "expansive" practice is a method of spreading love (etc.) by gradually expanding the perception of the field of love. The final extent is the land bordered by ocean, beyond which the mind become "limitless like the great ocean" (MN 72:20.2). In other words, the "expansive" liberation leads to the "limitless" liberation.

478. "Rebirth in a future life" renders *bhavūpapatti*. This section explains how the meditation one develops can shape one's rebirth.

479. The gods of limited radiance are mentioned at MN 41:18–42.22, where they are reborn due to a limited practice of the second absorption.

who meditates focused on pervading 'corrupted radiance'.[480] When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of the gods of corrupted radiance. Next, take someone who meditates focused on pervading 'pure radiance'. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of the gods of pure radiance. These are the four kinds of rebirth in a future life.

There comes a time, householder, when the deities gather together 10.1
as one. When they do so, a difference in their color is evident, but not in their radiance. It's like when a person brings several oil lamps into one house. You can detect a difference in their flames, but not in their radiance. In the same way, when the deities gather together as one, a difference in their color is evident, but not in their radiance.

There comes a time when those deities go their separate ways. 11.1
When they do so, a difference both in their color and also in their radiance is evident. It's like when a person takes those several oil lamps out of that house. You can detect a difference both in their flames and also in their radiance. In the same way, when the deities go their separate ways, a difference both in their color and also in their radiance is evident.

It's not that those deities think, 'What we have is permanent, last- 12.1
ing, and eternal.' Rather, wherever those deities cling, that's where they take pleasure. It's like when flies are being carried along on a carrying-pole or basket. It's not that they think, 'What we have is permanent, lasting, and eternal.' Rather, wherever those flies cling, that's where they take pleasure. In the same way, it's not that those deities think, 'What we have is permanent, lasting, and eternal.' Rather, wherever those deities cling, that's where they take pleasure."[481]

480. Normally the suttas maintain a clear distinction between the "corrupted" (*saṅkiliṭṭha*) mind that is purified before attaining the radiance of absorption. This passage, however, suggests that things might not always be so clear-cut.
481. This example shows that "craving for rebirth" need not be conscious.

13.1 When he had spoken, Venerable Sabhiya Kaccāna said to Venerable Anuruddha:[482]

13.2 "Good, Honorable Anuruddha! I have a further question about this. Do all the radiant deities have limited radiance, or do some there have limitless radiance?"

13.5 "In that respect, Reverend Kaccāna, some deities there have limited radiance, while some have limitless radiance."[483]

14.1 "What is the cause, Honorable Anuruddha, what is the reason why, when those deities have been reborn in a single order of gods, some deities there have limited radiance, while some have limitless radiance?"

14.2 "Well then, Reverend Kaccāna, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, Reverend Kaccāna? Which of these two kinds of mental development is more expansive: when a mendicant meditates focused on pervading as expansive the extent of a single tree root, or two or three tree roots?"

14.6 "When a mendicant meditates on two or three tree roots."

14.8 "What do you think, Reverend Kaccāna? Which of these two kinds of mental development is more expansive: when a mendicant meditates focused on pervading as expansive the extent of two or three tree roots, or a single village district … two or three village districts … a single kingdom … two or three kingdoms … this land surrounded by ocean?"

14.27 "When a mendicant meditates on this land surrounded by ocean."

14.29 "This is the cause, Reverend Kaccāna, this is the reason why, when those deities have been reborn in a single order of gods, some deities there have limited radiance, while some have limitless radiance."

15.1 "Good, Honorable Anuruddha! I have a further question about this. Do all the radiant deities have corrupted radiance, or do some there have pure radiance?"

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482. We meet Sabhiya Kaccāna also at SN 44.1, where he is questioned by Vacchagotta. His verses are at Thag 4.3. The conversion of a wanderer named Sabhiya is recorded in Snp 3.6; this might be the same person.

483. For *tadaṅgena* in the sense "in that respect", see AN 9.33:1.3.

"In that respect, Reverend Kaccāna, some deities there have corrupted radiance, while some have pure radiance." 15.4

"What is the cause, Honorable Anuruddha, what is the reason why, when those deities have been reborn in a single order of gods, some deities there have corrupted radiance, while some have pure radiance?" 16.1

"Well then, Reverend Kaccāna, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Suppose an oil lamp was burning with impure oil and impure wick. Because of the impurity of the oil and the wick it burns dimly, as it were. 16.2

In the same way, take some mendicant who meditates focused on pervading 'corrupted radiance'. Their physical discomfort is not completely settled, their dullness and drowsiness is not completely eradicated, and their restlessness and remorse are not completely eliminated. Because of this they practice absorption dimly, as it were. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of the gods of corrupted radiance. 16.6

Suppose an oil lamp was burning with pure oil and pure wick. Because of the purity of the oil and the wick it doesn't burn dimly, as it were. 16.10

In the same way, take some mendicant who meditates focused on pervading 'pure radiance'. Their physical discomfort is completely settled, their dullness and drowsiness is completely eradicated, and their restlessness and remorse is completely eliminated. Because of this they don't practice absorption dimly, as it were. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in the company of the gods of pure radiance. 16.12

This is the cause, Reverend Kaccāna, this is the reason why, when those deities have been reborn in a single order of gods, some deities there have corrupted radiance, while some have pure radiance." 16.16

When he had spoken, Venerable Sabhiya Kaccāna said to Venerable Anuruddha, "Good, Honorable Anuruddha! 17.1

17.3 Venerable Anuruddha, you don't say, 'So I have heard' or 'It ought to be like this.'[484] Rather, you say: 'These deities are like this, those deities are like that.' Sir, it occurs to me, 'Clearly, Venerable Anuruddha has previously lived together with those deities, conversed, and engaged in discussion.'"

17.8 "Your words are clearly invasive and intrusive, Reverend Kaccāna.[485] Nevertheless, I will answer you. For a long time I have previously lived together with those deities, conversed, and engaged in discussion."

18.1 When he had spoken, Venerable Sabhiya Kaccāna said to Pañcakaṅga the chamberlain, "You're fortunate, householder, so very fortunate, to have given up your state of uncertainty, and to have got the chance to listen to this exposition of the teaching."

484. The phrase cited by Sabhiya here, "so I have heard" (*evaṁ me sutaṁ*), is the standard opening for Buddhist suttas. This passage illustrates that this tag was used in order to indicate that the speaker was not present at the events, but "heard" about them. This is in contrast with the phrase "I heard and learned this in the presence" (*sammukhā sutaṁ, sammukhā paṭiggahitaṁ*), which is used when reporting a teaching heard directly from the Buddha, eg. SN 55.52:5.1, SN 22.90:9.1, MN 47:10.7, etc.

485. Sabhiya is bluntly asking about Anuruddha's personal meditation attainments. It is a minor offense to declare these to lay people, but they may be discussed among monastics (Bu Pc 8). In this case, Anuruddha is speaking to a monastic while at least one lay person can overhear, a situation not addressed in the Vinaya.

MN 128

Corruptions

Upakkilesasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[486] At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambī in Ghosita's monastery. 1.1

Now at that time the mendicants of Kosambī were fighting, quarreling, and disputing, continually wounding each other with barbed words.[487] 2.1

Then a mendicant went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and told him what was happening, adding: "Please, sir go to those mendicants out of sympathy." The Buddha consented with silence.[488] 3.1

Then the Buddha went up to those mendicants and said, "Enough, mendicants! Stop fighting, quarreling, and disputing." 4.1

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, "Wait, sir! Let the Buddha, the Lord of the Dhamma, remain passive, dwelling in blissful meditation in this life. We will be known for this fighting, quarreling, arguing, and disputing." 4.3

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486. This discourse offers a unique insight into the Buddha's own meditative development. The "corruptions" of the title are the subtle mental flaws that undermine meditation when it is on the brink of absorption. | This discourse and MN 31 appear to be influenced by Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3, a famous dialogue where an unusually reluctant Yājñavalkya is repeatedly pressed by King Janaka to reveal the true nature of a person's light.

487. This is in reference to the notorious quarrel at Kosambī, also referred to at MN 48:2.1. The events are detailed in the Vinaya at Kd 10.

488. While both here and at MN 48 we see the Buddha intervening to settle the conflict, here he goes to them, while there he summons them to him; and the ensuing course of the sutta is quite different.

4.8 For a second time … and a third time the Buddha said to those mendicants, "Enough, mendicants! Stop fighting, quarreling, and disputing."

4.17 For a third time, that mendicant said to the Buddha, "Wait, sir! Let the Buddha, the Lord of the Dhamma, remain passive, dwelling in blissful meditation in this life. We will be known for this fighting, quarreling, arguing, and disputing."

5.1 Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Kosambī for alms. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he set his lodgings in order. Taking his bowl and robe, he recited these verses while standing right there:

6.1 "Many voices shout at once,[489]
yet no one thinks that they're the fool.
Even as the Saṅgha splits,
they think no better of the other.

6.5 Dolts pretending to be astute,
they talk, their words out of bounds.[490]
They blab at will, their mouths agape,
and not one knows what leads them on.

6.9 'They abused me, they hit me![491]
They beat me, they robbed me!'
For those bearing such a grudge,
hatred is never laid to rest.

6.13 'They abused me, they hit me!
They beat me, they robbed me!'
For those who bear no such grudge,
hatred is laid to rest.

489. These verses are also found in the Vinaya account at Kd 10:3.1.3 and the Kosambiya Jātaka at Ja 428:1.1.
490. Read *agocara* ("out of bounds").
491. These four verses are shared with Dhp 3–6.

For never is hatred 6.17
laid to rest by hate,
it's laid to rest by love:
this is an ancient teaching.

When others do not understand,[492] 6.21
let us, who do understand this,[493]
restrain ourselves in this regard;
for that is how conflicts are laid to rest.

Breakers of bones and takers of life, 6.25
thieves of cattle, horses, wealth,
those who plunder the nation:
even they can come together,
so why can't you?

If you find an alert companion, 6.30
an attentive friend to live happily together,
then, overcoming all adversities,
wander with them, joyful and mindful.

If you find no alert companion, 6.34
no attentive friend to live happily together,
then, like a king who flees his conquered realm,
wander alone like a tusker in the wilds.

It's better to wander alone, 6.38
there's no fellowship with fools.
Wander alone and do no wrong,
at ease like a tusker in the wilds."

492. This verse is found in the same context at Dhp 6, and in different contexts in Thag 4.3:1.1 and Thag 8.1:5.1.
493. *Yamāmese* is reflexive first person plural imperative of *yamati*, "let us restrain ourselves", cf. SN 10.6:3.1: *pāṇesu ca saṁyamāmase* ("Let us restrain ourselves regarding living creatures").

7.1 After speaking these verses while standing, the Buddha went to the village of the child salt-miners,[494] where Venerable Bhagu was staying at the time.[495] Bhagu saw the Buddha coming off in the distance, so he spread out a seat and placed water for washing the feet. The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out, and washed his feet. Bhagu bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one side.

7.8 The Buddha said to him, "I hope you're keeping well, mendicant, I hope you're all right. And I hope you're having no trouble getting almsfood."

7.10 "I'm keeping well, Blessed One, I'm all right. And I'm having no trouble getting almsfood."

7.11 Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired Bhagu with a Dhamma talk, after which he rose from his seat and set out for the Park of the East-Raftered Hall.

8.1 Now at that time the venerables Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila were staying in the Park of the East-Raftered Hall.[496] The park keeper saw the Buddha coming off in the distance[497] and said to

494. "Child salt-miners" is *bālakaloṇakāra* (cf. *loṇakāradārako* at AN 4.188:5.3). Children are used to mine salt in India to this day.

495. Bhagu was a leading Sakyan who went forth along with Bhaddiya, Anuruddha, Ānanda, Kimbila, Devadatta, and Upāli (Kd 17:1.4.1). He is known from his ardent striving described in his verses at Thag 4.2, and is listed with other renowned mendicants at MN 68:2.2. | After the conflict at Kosambī, the Buddha sought the company of his fellow Sakyans; first Bhagu, then the three Sakyans below. | Another Bhagu was one of the ancient Vedic seers, while yet another was a contemporary of Sāṇavāsī around the time of the Second Council (Kd 8:24.6.6).

496. This park was in Ceti, not far from Kosambī. A Prācīnavaṁśa was a hall or shed built for the ritual, with bamboo (*vaṁśa*) rafters running easterly (*prācīna*; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 3.1.1.6 and Eggeling's note). | Apart from the setting, the following passage is identical with MN 31:2.1ff., down as far as the discussion on meditation; see that sutta for notes. The current sutta is the original narrative context (see note on MN 31:6.1).

497. The park keeper was evidently not Buddhist, as he was responsible for a Vedic ritual site.

the Buddha, "Don't come into this park, ascetic.[498] There are three gentlemen staying here whose nature is to desire self-knowledge. Do not disturb them."

Anuruddha heard the park keeper conversing with the Buddha, 9.1
and said to him, "Don't keep the Buddha out, good park keeper! Our Teacher, the Blessed One, has arrived."

Then Anuruddha went to Nandiya and Kimbila, and said to them, 10.1
"Come forth, venerables, come forth! Our Teacher, the Blessed One, has arrived!"

Then Anuruddha, Nandiya, and Kimbila came out to greet the 10.3
Buddha. One received his bowl and robe, one spread out a seat, and one set out water for washing his feet. The Buddha sat down on the seat spread out, and washed his feet. Those venerables bowed and sat down to one side.

The Buddha said to Anuruddha, "I hope you're keeping well, 10.8
Anuruddha and friends, I hope you're all right. And I hope you're having no trouble getting almsfood."

"We're keeping well, Blessed One, we're getting by. And we have 10.10
no trouble getting almsfood."

"I hope you're living in harmony, appreciating each other, without 11.1
quarreling, blending like milk and water, and regarding each other with kindly eyes?"

"Indeed, sir, we live in harmony as you say." 11.2

"But how do you live this way?" 11.3

"In this case, sir, I think: 'I'm fortunate, so very fortunate, to live 12.1
together with spiritual companions such as these.' I consistently treat these venerables with kindness by way of body, speech, and mind, both in public and in private. I think: 'Why don't I set aside my own ideas and just go along with these venerables' ideas?' And that's what

498. MS and BJT read *mahāsamaṇa* here, whereas PTS and parallel passages at MN 31:3.4 and Kd 10:4.2.3 have simply *samaṇa*. *Mahāsamaṇa* ("great ascetic") is a rare epithet of the Buddha found mainly in the Vinaya. It is unlikely the park keeper would have kept him out knowing who he really was.

I do. Though we're different in body, sir, we're one in mind, it seems to me."

12.11 And the venerables Nandiya and Kimbila spoke likewise, and they added: "That's how we live in harmony, appreciating each other, without dispute, blending like milk and water, and regarding each other with kindly eyes."

13.1 "Good, good, Anuruddha and friends! But I hope you're living diligently, keen, and resolute?"

14.1 "Indeed, sir, we live diligently."

14.2 "But how do you live this way?"

14.3 "In this case, sir, whoever returns first from almsround prepares the seats, and puts out the drinking water and the rubbish bin. If there's remainder, whoever returns last eats it if they like. Otherwise they throw it out where there is little that grows, or drop it into water that has no living creatures. Then they put away the seats, drinking water, and rubbish bin, and sweep the refectory. If someone sees that the pot of water for washing, drinking, or the toilet is empty they set it up. If he can't do it, he summons another with a wave of the hand, and they set it up by lending each other a hand to lift. But we don't break into speech for that reason.[499] And every five days we sit together for the whole night and discuss the teachings. That's how we live diligently, keen, and resolute."

15.1 "Good, good, Anuruddha and friends! But as you live diligently like this, have you achieved any superhuman distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones, a comfortable meditation?"[500]

499. For *hatthavilaṅghaka* ("lending a hand up") see MN 125:9.2.

500. As at MN 31:10.3ff., Anuruddha must be prodded to reveal the full extent of his meditation prowess. The form of both suttas parallels Yājñavalkya's reticence to answer Janaka. In addition, the theme also echoes the Upaniṣad, for Janaka asks what is a person's light (*kiṁjyotirayaṁ puruṣa*, Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.2). Yājñavalkya answers that it is simply the sun. When pressed further, he admits it might be the moon, then fire, or even speech, for you can make it home in the dark when someone is calling. All these things—sun, moon, fire, speech—are worshiped in the Vedic tradition as external manifestations of

"Well, sir, while meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, we per- 15.3
ceive both light and vision of forms.[501] But before long the light and the vision of forms vanish. We haven't worked out the basis of that."[502]

"Well, you should work out the basis of that. Before my awak- 16.1
ening—when I was still unawakened but intent on awakening—I too perceived light and vision of forms. But before long my light and vision of forms vanished.[503] It occurred to me: 'What's the cause, what's the reason why my light and vision of forms vanish?' It occurred to me: 'Doubt arose in me, and because of that my immer-

divinity. He only reluctantly admits that a person's true light is their Self, made of consciousness, the light in the heart. This is the same Self referred to above in the phrase, "whose nature is to desire only the self". | The Vedantic commentator Śaṅkara, on a verse of the same chapter (4.3.7), discusses at length Buddhist objections to his doctrine. Thus the Buddhist text looks back to the Upaniṣad, while the commentary to that same Upaniṣad looks to Buddhism.

501. The key terms here are "perceive" (*sañjānāma*), "light" (*obhāsa*), and "vision of forms" (*dassanañca rūpānaṁ*). Variations of these are common terms for the visions seen in meditation (eg. DN 9:14.2, MN 77:22.2, MN 121:5.4). The "light" is the radiance that indicates freedom from defilements, while the "forms" may be the various phenomena that one in such a meditation might see. In particular this refers to the power of clairvoyance (*dibbacakkhu*), in which Anuruddha was later declared foremost (AN 1.192:1.1). See the discussion in the previous sutta (MN 127:10.1) and also eg. MN 32:6.6, SN 9.6:1.2 AN 3.130:1.3, and AN 8.46:1.3.

502. Below, the Buddha investigates by way of "cause and reason" (MN 128:16.5), hence the commentary explains *nimitta* here as "basis" (*kāraṇa*; for similar senses see MN 12:23.1, SN 48.40:1.6, AN 3.102:1.2). | Confusingly, in the previous sentence we have "light and vision of forms", but this is not *nimitta*, which does not have this meaning in early texts. For related contexts, see DN 11:80.12, DN 33:1.9.27, MN 5:6.1, MN 20:2.1, MN 36:45.6, MN 44:12.3, AN 3.19:2.3, AN 4.14:4.2, AN 6.27:7.1, and AN 9.35:1.11. | Anuruddha learned his lesson, for at MN 68:6.2 he explains how hindrances prevent absorption.

503. This refers to a stage in the development of meditation when immersion is not properly consolidated. It is a delicate phase, where familiar hindrances appear in subtle ways, which can nonetheless be an obstacle for absorption. Below I give my understanding of these meditation issues and how to deal with them.

sion fell away.[504] When immersion falls away, the light and vision of forms vanish. I'll make sure that doubt will not arise in me again.'

17.1 While meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, I perceived light and vision of forms. But before long my light and vision of forms vanished. It occurred to me: 'What's the cause, what's the reason why my light and vision of forms vanish?' It occurred to me: 'Loss of focus arose in me, and because of that my immersion fell away.[505] When immersion falls away, the light and vision of forms vanish. I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus will arise in me again.'

18.1 While meditating … 'Dullness and drowsiness arose in me …[506] I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness will arise in me again.'

19.1 While meditating … 'Terror arose in me, and because of that my immersion fell away. When immersion falls away, the light and vision of forms vanish. Suppose a person was traveling along a road, and killers were to spring out at them from both sides. They'd feel terrified because of that.[507] In the same way, terror arose in me … I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror will arise in me again.'

504. When immersion is not consolidated, even the slightest uncertainty as to how to proceed can disturb the meditation. Doubt can also arise regarding whether the visions seen in meditation are real. This can be counteracted by determining one's meditation at the beginning. | These three sentences use grammatical tense very precisely: an event is recalled (in past tense); a timeless principle is inferred (in present tense); and a resolution is made (in future tense).

505. The mind drifts from the meditation. At this subtle level, the mind may not be wandering or lost, but merely focusing imprecisely.

506. Practicing to this level takes time, and any meditator will experience drowsiness at some point, even if it is merely a lack of fully clear energy. It is counteracted by rapture (*pīti*), which uplifts and inspires the mind.

507. While "terror" might feel like an overly-strong rendering for *chambhitatta* in this context, this example shows what it means. At this point the mind is amplified, so that even small reactions can quickly get out of hand. The Buddha explains more about this point in his meditation at MN 4:20.1.

While meditating … 'Elation arose in me, and because of that 20.1
my immersion fell away.[508] When immersion falls away, the light and vision of forms vanish. Suppose a person was looking for the entrance to a treasure trove. And all at once they'd come across five entrances! They'd feel excited because of that.[509] In the same way, elation arose in me … I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror nor elation will arise in me again.'

While meditating … 'Discomfort arose in me …[510] I'll make sure 21.1
that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror nor elation nor discomfort will arise in me again.'

While meditating … 'Excessive energy arose in me, and because 22.1
of that my immersion fell away.[511] When immersion falls away, the light and vision of forms vanish. Suppose a person was to grip a quail too tightly in their hands—it would die right there. I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror nor elation nor discomfort nor excessive energy will arise in me again.'

While meditating … 'Overly lax energy arose in me, and because 23.1
of that my immersion fell away.[512] When immersion falls away, the

508. This can happen when the mind is starting to coalesce, and one is excited that absorption is near. To address this, a meditator might reflect on the importance of patience, and focus more on developing tranquility in the fundamental stages of meditation.

509. For "treasure trove" in meditation, compare MN 52 = AN 11.16.

510. All meditators experience discomfort when sitting for long periods of time. To deal with this, a meditator should first get as comfortable as they reasonably can, then develop pleasure in the body. Anuruddha overcame pain in the body through the four kinds of mindfulness meditation (SN 52.10:2.1).

511. Pushing too hard at the meditation, the body and mind can become overwired with energy. To find balance, a meditator needs to relax and draw back from the meditation just a little.

512. The opposite of the previous, here the mind subtly falls back from the meditation too far. They are not exactly drowsy, but the mind lacks the keenness to go deeper. In response, a meditator needs to apply the mind a little more strongly to the meditation.

light and vision of forms vanish. Suppose a person was to grip a quail too loosely—it would fly out of their hands. I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror nor elation nor discomfort nor excessive energy nor overly lax energy will arise in me again.'

24.1 While meditating … 'Longing arose in me …[513] I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror nor elation nor discomfort nor excessive energy nor overly lax energy nor longing will arise in me again.'

25.1 While meditating … 'Perceptions of diversity arose in me …[514] I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror nor elation nor discomfort nor excessive energy nor overly lax energy nor longing nor perception of diversity will arise in me again.'

26.1 While meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, I perceived light and vision of forms. But before long my light and vision of forms vanished. It occurred to me: 'What's the cause, what's the reason why my light and vision of forms vanish?' It occurred to me: 'Excessive concentration on forms arose in me, and because of that my immersion fell away.[515] When immersion falls away, the light and vision of forms vanish. I'll make sure that neither doubt nor loss of focus nor dullness and drowsiness nor terror nor elation nor discomfort nor excessive energy nor overly lax energy nor longing nor perception of diversity nor excessive concentration on forms will arise in me again.'

513. The meditator yearns for higher spiritual realizations, as at Thag 19.1:16.1 or AN 4.159:6.7. This is a wholesome motivation, but at this point it can disturb the meditation.

514. Diversity can arise through the activity of the senses, or through the variety of "forms" seen by the meditator. Either way, the mind must be settled to find true oneness.

515. The "forms" seen in meditation can be enticing and fascinating, appearing as glimpses of other realms, impressions of the presence of beings, or images of past lives. If the meditator pays too much attention to them, they lose focus on the meditation itself.

When I understood that doubt is a corruption of the mind, I gave it up. When I understood that loss of focus, dullness and drowsiness, terror, elation, discomfort, excessive energy, overly lax energy, longing, perception of diversity, and excessive concentration on forms are corruptions of the mind, I gave them up. 27.1

While meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, I perceived light but did not see forms, or I saw forms, but did not see light. And this went on for a whole night, a whole day, even a whole night and day. I thought: 'What is the cause, what is the reason for this?' It occurred to me: 'When I don't focus on the basis of the forms, but focus on the basis of the light, then I perceive light and do not see forms.[516] But when I don't focus on the basis of the light, but focus on the basis of the forms, then I see forms and do not perceive light. And this goes on for a whole night, a whole day, even a whole night and day.' 28.1

While meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, I perceived limited light and saw limited forms, or I perceived limitless light and saw limitless forms. And this went on for a whole night, a whole day, even a whole night and day. I thought: 'What is the cause, what is the reason for this?' It occurred to me: 'When my immersion is limited, then my vision is limited, and with limited vision I perceive limited light and see limited forms. But when my immersion is limitless, then my vision is limitless, and with limitless vision I perceive limitless light and see limitless forms. And this goes on for a whole night, a whole day, even a whole night and day.' 29.1

After understanding that doubt, loss of focus, dullness and drowsiness, terror, excitement, discomfort, excessive energy, overly lax energy, longing, perception of diversity, and excessive concentration on forms are corruptions of the mind, I had given them up. 30.1

I thought: 'I've given up my mental corruptions. Now let me develop immersion in three ways.' I developed immersion while 31.1

516. This shows how *nimitta* has a causal sense. *Manasikāra* ("focus") is typically used of paying attention to causes.

placing the mind and keeping it connected; without placing the mind, merely keeping it connected; without placing the mind or keeping it connected; with rapture; without rapture; with pleasure; with equanimity.[517]

32.1 When I had developed immersion in these ways, the knowledge and vision arose in me: 'My freedom is unshakable; this is my last rebirth; now there'll be no more future lives.'"

32.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Anuruddha approved what the Buddha said.

517. This threefold presentation of the process of absorption focuses on *vitakka* ("placing the mind") and *vicāra* ("keeping it connected"), looking closely at how they cease (see also DN 33:1.10.121, DN 34:1.4.7, SN 43.3:1.2, and AN 8.63:3.1). The standard *jhāna* formula focuses more on the refinement of feelings, from which perspective the first two stages of immersion here fall under the "rapture and bliss born of seclusion", while only the third qualifies as "rapture and bliss born of immersion". Thus Analayo describes the two descriptions as "complementary perspectives on the same process of deepening concentration" (*Comparative Study*, vol. ii, pg. 739, note 263).

MN 129

The Foolish and the Astute

Bālapaṇḍitasutta

So I have heard.[518] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"These are the three characteristics, signs, and manifestations of a fool.[519] What three? A fool thinks poorly, speaks poorly, and acts poorly. If a fool didn't think poorly, speak poorly, and act poorly, then how would the astute know of them, 'This worthy one is a fool, an untrue person'? But since a fool does think poorly, speak poorly, and act poorly, then the astute do know of them, 'This worthy one is a fool, an untrue person.' 2.1

A fool experiences three kinds of suffering and sadness in this very life. 3.1

Suppose a fool is sitting in a council hall, a street, or a crossroad, where people are discussing what is proper and fitting. And suppose that fool is someone who kills living creatures, steals, commits sexual misconduct, lies, and consumes intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. Then that fool thinks, 'These people are discussing what is proper and fitting. But those bad things are found in me and I exhibit them!' 3.2

518. This discourse is a fundamental statement on the role of kamma. It identifies a fool with one who acts badly, and describes the suffering that awaits them in this life and the next. An astute person who acts well, by contrast, will experience countless joys.

519. "Fool" is *bāla*, originally "infant". | A much simplified exposition of this theme is found at AN 3.3.

This is the first kind of suffering and sadness that a fool experiences in this very life.

4.1 Furthermore, a fool sees that the kings have arrested a bandit, a criminal, and subjected them to various punishments—whipping, caning, and clubbing; cutting off hands or feet, or both; cutting off ears or nose, or both; the 'porridge pot', the 'shell-shave', the 'Rāhu's mouth', the 'garland of fire', the 'burning hand', the 'bulrush twist', the 'bark dress', the 'antelope', the 'meat hook', the 'coins', the 'caustic pickle', the 'twisting bar', the 'straw mat'; being splashed with hot oil, being fed to the hounds, being impaled alive, and being beheaded.[520] Then that fool thinks, 'The kinds of deeds for which the kings inflict such punishments—those things are found in me and I exhibit them! If the kings find out about me, they will inflict the same kinds of punishments on me!' This is the second kind of suffering and sadness that a fool experiences in this very life.

5.1 Furthermore, when a fool is resting on a chair or a bed or on the ground, their past bad deeds—misconduct of body, speech, and mind—settle down upon them, rest down upon them, and lay down upon them. It is like the shadow of a great mountain peak in the evening as it settles down, rests down, and lays down upon the earth. In the same way, when a fool is resting on a chair or a bed or on the ground, their past bad deeds—misconduct of body, speech, and mind—settle down upon them, rest down upon them, and lay down upon them. Then that fool thinks, 'Alas, I haven't done good and skillful things that keep me safe. And I have done bad things, violence and sin. When I depart, I'll go to the place where people who've done such things go.' They sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breasts and falling into confusion. This is the third kind of suffering and sadness that a fool experiences in this very life.

6.1 Having done bad things by way of body, speech, and mind, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

520. See note on MN 13:14.3 for explanations of these.

And if there's anything of which it may be rightly said that it is 7.1
utterly unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable, it is of hell that this should be said.[521] So much so that it's not easy to give a simile for how painful hell is."

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, 7.5
"But sir, is it possible to give a simile?"

"It's possible," said the Buddha. 8.1

"Suppose they arrest a bandit, a criminal and present him to the 8.2
king, saying,[522] 'Your Majesty, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.' The king would say, 'Go, my men, and strike this man in the morning with a hundred spears!' The king's men did as they were told. Then at midday the king would say, 'Look here, how is that man?' 'He's still alive, Your Majesty.' The king would say, 'Go, my men, and strike this man in the midday with a hundred spears!' The king's men did as they were told. Then late in the afternoon the king would say, 'Look here, how is that man?' 'He's still alive, Your Majesty.' The king would say, 'Go, my men, and strike this man in the late afternoon with a hundred spears!' The king's men did as they were told.

What do you think, mendicants? Would that man experience 8.19
pain and distress from being struck with three hundred spears?"

"Sir, that man would experience pain and distress from being 8.21
struck with one spear, let alone three hundred spears!"

Then the Buddha, picking up a stone the size of his palm, ad- 9.1
dressed the mendicants,[523] "What do you think, mendicants? Which is bigger: the stone the size of my palm that I've picked up, or the Himalayas, the king of mountains?"

521. "Hell" is *niraya*, "bereft of good things".

522. At SN 12.63:6.5 this simile is applied to consciousness as a fuel or nutriment, and in SN 56.35 to the suffering of transmigration.

523. Related similes are collected in SN 13.1ff. and SN 56.49ff., but this particular one is unique.

9.4 "Sir, the stone you've picked up is tiny. Compared to the Himalayas, it doesn't count, it's not worth a fraction, there's no comparison."

9.5 "In the same way, compared to the suffering in hell, the pain and distress experienced by that man due to being struck with three hundred spears doesn't count, it's not worth a fraction, there's no comparison.

10.1 The wardens of hell punish them with the five-fold crucifixion.[524] They drive red-hot stakes through the hands and feet, and another in the middle of the chest. And there they feel painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

11.1 The wardens of hell throw them down and hack them with axes. …

12.1 They hang them upside-down and hack them with hatchets. …

13.1 They harness them to a chariot, and drive them back and forth across burning ground, blazing and glowing. …

14.1 They make them climb up and down a big mountain of burning coals, blazing and glowing. …

15.1 The wardens of hell turn them upside down and throw them into a red-hot copper pot, burning, blazing, and glowing. There they're seared in boiling scum, and they're swept up and down and

524. The Buddhist traditions were uncomfortable with the idea that the "wardens of hell" (*nirayapāla*) are sentient beings, since this would imply that they are not merely working off the results of their own bad deeds, but actively creating new bad kamma by tormenting others. The commentary cites "certain elders" who argue that there are no wardens of hell because kamma works "like a machine" (*yantarūpaṁ viya*). These elders are probably the Mahāsaṅghikas of Andhra who, according to the commentary on Kv 20.3, say the torments are inflicted by the deeds themselves in the form of wardens of hell. The Theravadin commentator responds by analogy, since there are those who inflict punishment in the human realm. The situation was comparable in northern Indian Buddhism, for Vasubandhu at Abhidharmakośabhāṣya 3.59a–c cites a number of opinions on both sides. In his Viṁśikā vv. 4–7 and commentary he makes his own position clear, arguing that the wardens are mental projections, not sentient beings.

round and round. And there they feel painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

The wardens of hell toss them in the Great Hell.[525] Now, about 16.1
that Great Hell:[526]

> 'Four are its corners, four its doors, 16.3
> neatly divided section by section.
> Surrounded by an iron wall,
> of iron is its roof.
>
> The ground is even made of iron, 16.7
> it burns with fierce fire.
> The heat forever radiates
> a hundred leagues around.'

I could tell you many different things about hell.[527] So much so 17.1
that it's not easy to completely describe the suffering in hell.

There are, mendicants, animals that feed on grass. They eat by 18.1
cropping fresh or dried grass with their teeth. And what animals feed on grass? Elephants, horses, cattle, donkeys, goats, deer, and various others. A fool who used to be a glutton here and did bad deeds here, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in the company of those sentient beings who feed on grass.

There are animals that feed on dung. When they catch a whiff of 19.1
dung they run to it, thinking, 'There we'll eat! There we'll eat!' It's like when brahmins smell a burnt offering, they run to it, thinking, 'There we'll eat! There we'll eat!'[528] In the same way, there are animals that feed on dung. When they catch a whiff of dung they run to it,

525. Identified by the commentary with Avīci hell; cf. the reference to Avīci with its four doors at Iti 89:5.3.

526. Here the text appears to quote a saying.

527. From the "five-fold crucifixion" up to here is also found at AN 3.36:13.2. In MN 130:10.1ff., the Buddha makes good on his claim here, and extends the description of the hells. See there for notes.

528. Compare Chāndogya Upaniṣad 1:12.5, where white dogs sing hymns for food. The Brahmanical tradition does not treat that story as derogatory; rather,

thinking, 'There we'll eat! There we'll eat!' And what animals feed on dung? Chickens, pigs, hounds, jackals, and various others. A fool who used to be a glutton here and did bad deeds here, after death is reborn in the company of those sentient beings who feed on dung.

20.1 There are animals who are born, live, and die in darkness. And what animals are born, live, and die in darkness? Moths, maggots, earthworms, and various others. A fool who used to be a glutton here and did bad deeds here, after death is reborn in the company of those sentient beings who are born, live, and die in darkness.

21.1 There are animals who are born, live, and die in water. And what animals are born, live, and die in water? Fish, turtles, dolphins, and various others.[529] A fool who used to be a glutton here and did bad deeds here, after death is reborn in the company of those sentient beings who are born, live, and die in water.

22.1 There are animals who are born, live, and die in filth. And what animals are born, live, and die in filth? Those animals that are born, live, and die in a rotten fish, a rotten carcass, rotten porridge, a cesspool, or a sump. A fool who used to be a glutton here and did bad deeds here, after death is reborn in the company of those sentient beings who are born, live, and die in filth.

23.1 I could tell you many different things about the animal realm. So much so that it's not easy to completely describe the suffering in the animal realm.

24.1 Mendicants, suppose a person were to throw a yoke with a single hole into the ocean.[530] The east wind wafts it west; the west wind wafts it east; the north wind wafts it south; and the south wind wafts it north. And there was a one-eyed turtle who popped up once every hundred years.

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the dogs are sages in disguise, and the story illustrates how even dogs would avoid eating unclean food.

529. *Susumāra* (literally "child-killer") may be either the Gangetic dolphin or the crocodile (as at Cp 27:1.3). Since crocodiles lay eggs on dry land, it seems the dolphin must be meant here.

530. See SN 56.47 and SN 56.48.

What do you think, mendicants? Would that one-eyed turtle still poke its neck through the hole in that yoke?" 24.4

"No, sir. Only after a very long time, sir, if ever." 24.6

"That one-eyed turtle would poke its neck through the hole in that yoke sooner than a fool who has fallen to the underworld would be reborn as a human being, I say. Why is that? Because in that place there's no principled or moral conduct, and no doing what is good and skillful. There they just prey on each other, preying on the weak. 24.8

And suppose that fool, after a very long time, returned to the human realm. They'd be reborn in a low class family—a family of corpse-workers, hunters, bamboo-workers, chariot-makers, or scavengers. Such families are poor, with little to eat or drink, where life is tough, and food and shelter are hard to find. And they'd be ugly, unsightly, deformed, sickly—one-eyed, crippled, lame, or half-paralyzed. They don't get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; or bed, house, and lighting. And they do bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. 25.1

Suppose a gambler were to lose his wife and child, all his property, and then get thrown in jail with his first losing hand. Such a losing hand is trivial compared to the losing hand whereby a fool, having done bad things by way of body, speech, and mind, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is the total fulfillment of the fool's level. 26.1

There are these three characteristics, signs, and manifestations of an astute person.[531] What three? An astute person thinks well, speaks well, and acts well. If an astute person didn't think well, speak well, and act well, then how would the astute know of them, 'This worthy one is astute, a true person'? 27.1

But since an astute person does think well, speak well, and act well, then the astute do know of them, 'This worthy one is astute, a 28.1

531. An "astute person" is *paṇḍita*, used for a scholar.

true person'. An astute person experiences three kinds of pleasure and happiness in this very life. Suppose an astute person is sitting in a council hall, a street, or a crossroad, where people are discussing about what is proper and fitting. And suppose that astute person is someone who refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. Then that astute person thinks, 'These people are discussing what is proper and fitting. And those good things are found in me and I exhibit them.' This is the first kind of pleasure and happiness that an astute person experiences in this very life.

29.1 Furthermore, an astute person sees that the kings have arrested a bandit, a criminal, and subjected them to various punishments—whipping, caning, and clubbing; cutting off hands or feet, or both; cutting off ears or nose, or both; the 'porridge pot', the 'shell-shave', the 'Rāhu's mouth', the 'garland of fire', the 'burning hand', the 'bulrush twist', the 'bark dress', the 'antelope', the 'meat hook', the 'coins', the 'caustic pickle', the 'twisting bar', the 'straw mat'; being splashed with hot oil, being fed to the hounds, being impaled alive, and being beheaded. Then that astute person thinks, 'The kinds of deeds for which the kings inflict such punishments—those things are not found in me and I do not exhibit them!' This is the second kind of pleasure and happiness that an astute person experiences in this very life.

30.1 Furthermore, when an astute person is resting on a chair or a bed or on the ground, their past good deeds—good conduct of body, speech, and mind—settle down upon them, rest down upon them, and lay down upon them. It is like the shadow of a great mountain peak in the evening as it settles down, rests down, and lays down upon the earth. In the same way, when an astute person is resting on a chair or a bed or on the ground, their past good deeds—good conduct of body, speech, and mind—settle down upon them, rest down upon them, and lay down upon them. Then that astute person thinks, 'Well, I haven't done bad things, violence and sin. And I have done good and skillful deeds that keep me safe. When I pass away,

I'll go to the place where people who've done such things go.' So they don't sorrow and wail and lament, beating their breast and falling into confusion. This is the third kind of pleasure and happiness that an astute person experiences in this very life.

When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good 31.1
place, a heavenly realm.

And if there's anything of which it may be rightly said that it is ut- 32.1
terly likable, desirable, and agreeable, it is of heaven that this should be said. So much so that it's not easy to give a simile for how pleasurable heaven is."

When he said this, one of the mendicants said to the Buddha, 32.5
"But sir, is it possible to give a simile?"

"It's possible," said the Buddha. 33.1

"Suppose there was a king, a wheel-turning monarch who pos- 33.2
sessed seven treasures and four blessings, and experienced pleasure and happiness because of them.

What seven? It's when, on the fifteenth day sabbath, an anointed 34.1
aristocratic king has bathed his head and gone upstairs in the royal longhouse to observe the sabbath. And the heavenly wheel-treasure appears to him, with a thousand spokes, with rim and hub, complete in every detail.[532] Seeing this, the king thinks, 'I have heard that when the heavenly wheel-treasure appears to a king in this way, he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. Am I then a wheel-turning monarch?'

Then the anointed aristocratic king, taking a ceremonial vase in 35.1
his left hand, besprinkled the wheel-treasure with his right hand, saying,[533] 'Roll forth, O wheel-treasure! Triumph, O wheel-treasure!'

532. The wheel is firstly the sun and secondly the wheel of the chariots that drove the Indo-Europeans in their conquests. It is the manifestation of unstoppable power. The whole story reflects the Indo-European dream of universal domination. | Compare DN 17:1.7.3 and DN 26.

533. Many of the details in this myth echo the Brahmanical horse sacrifice. Since the horse was the primary source of Indo-European dominion, its sacrifice served to authorize the power of a king. It was a costly and dangerous rite that was attempted only by the greatest of sovereigns. | *Bhiṅkāra* ("ceremonial vase") and *abbhukkirati* ("besprinkled") are elevated terms.

Then the wheel-treasure rolls toward the east. And the king follows it together with his army of four divisions. In whatever place the wheel-treasure stands still, there the king comes to stay together with his army.[534] And any opposing rulers of the eastern quarter come to the wheel-turning monarch and say, 'Come, Great King! Welcome, Great King! We are yours, Great King, instruct us.' The wheel-turning monarch says, 'Do not kill living creatures. Do not steal. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not lie. Do not drink liquor. Maintain the current level of taxation.'[535] And so the opposing rulers of the eastern quarter become his vassals.

35.9 Then the wheel-treasure, having plunged into the eastern ocean and emerged again, rolls toward the south. …[536] Having plunged into the southern ocean and emerged again, it rolls toward the west. … Having plunged into the western ocean and emerged again, it rolls toward the north, followed by the king together with his army of four divisions. In whatever place the wheel-treasure stands still, there the king comes to stay together with his army.

35.12 And any opposing rulers of the northern quarter come to the wheel-turning monarch and say, 'Come, Great King! Welcome, Great King! We are yours, Great King, instruct us.' The wheel-turning monarch says, 'Do not kill living creatures. Do not steal. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not lie. Do not drink liquor. Maintain the current level of taxation.' And so the opposing rulers of the eastern quarter become his vassals.[537]

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534. In the horse sacrifice, the horse is released for a year, while the king follows it with his army, claiming any land that it wanders on as his.

535. Read *bhuñjati* at MN 98:10.30 with *yathābhuttañca bhuñjatha* at DN 17:1.9.4, DN 26:6.7, and MN 129:35.7. These have sometimes been rendered "eat", "enjoy", or "govern". But compare the archaic English "use" meaning "the benefit or profit of lands". Thus *yathābhuttañca bhuñjatha* means "use as has been used", i.e. "maintain the current level of taxation".

536. The Wheel plunges into the seas, while the sacrificial horse is born in the western and eastern seas.

537. Historically, India has usually been divided into squabbling realms, but from an early age there was a dream of a unified and peaceful continent.

And then the wheel-treasure, having triumphed over this land 35.17
surrounded by ocean, returns to the royal capital. There it stands still at the gate to the royal compound as if fixed to an axle, illuminating the royal compound.[538] Such is the wheel-treasure that appears to the wheel-turning monarch.

Next, the elephant-treasure appears to the wheel-turning 36.1
monarch. It was an all-white sky-walker with psychic power, touching the ground in seven places, a king of elephants named Sabbath.[539] Seeing him, the king was impressed, 'This would truly be a fine elephant vehicle, if he would submit to taming.' Then the elephant-treasure submitted to taming, as if he were a fine thoroughbred elephant that had been tamed for a long time. Once it so happened that the wheel-turning monarch, testing that same elephant-treasure, mounted him in the morning and traversed the land surrounded by ocean before returning to the royal capital in time for breakfast. Such is the elephant-treasure that appears to the wheel-turning monarch.

Next, the horse-treasure appears to the wheel-turning monarch. 37.1
It was an all-white sky-walker with psychic power, with head of black and mane like woven reeds, a royal steed named Thundercloud.[540] Seeing him, the king was impressed, 'This would truly be a fine horse

538. The phrase "fixed to an axle" is used of an ordinary wheel at AN 3.15:3.4. | This passage is also found at DN 17:1.11.1 and DN 26:7.16 with the additional mention of the "High Court".

539. The white elephant is a symbol of royalty to this day. The description anticipates the elephant Indra acquired in later legends, Airāvata the "cloudy", white and huge and moving through the sky. | For *sattappatiṭṭho*, the commentary has *susaṇṭhitaaṅgapaccaṅga* ("well-grounded on each and every limb"), a sense confirmed by the Mūlasarvāstivāda Bhaiṣajyavastu which has *saptāṅgaḥ supratiṣṭhito* ("well-established on seven limbs"). The subcommentary lists the four feet, trunk, tail, and penis (*varaṅga*).

540. The sacrificial horse is likewise white with black head or forequarters. It is identified with the sun, thus being a "sky-walker". "Thundercloud" (*valāhaka*; Sanskrit *balāhaka*) is the name of one of the four horses of Kṛṣṇa's chariot in the Mahābharata. The description here also recalls the Vedic sacred horse *uccaiḥśravas*.

vehicle, if he would submit to taming.' Then the horse-treasure submitted to taming, as if he were a fine thoroughbred horse that had been tamed for a long time. Once it so happened that the wheel-turning monarch, testing that same horse-treasure, mounted him in the morning and traversed the land surrounded by ocean before returning to the royal capital in time for breakfast. Such is the horse-treasure that appears to the wheel-turning monarch.

38.1 Next, the jewel-treasure appears to the wheel-turning monarch. It is a beryl gem that's naturally lustrous, eight-faceted, well-worked. And the radiance of that jewel spreads all-round for a league. Once it so happened that the wheel-turning monarch, testing that same jewel-treasure, mobilized his army of four divisions and, with the jewel hoisted on his banner, set out in the dark of the night. Then the villagers around them set off to work, thinking that it was day. Such is the jewel-treasure that appears to the wheel-turning monarch.

39.1 Next, the woman-treasure appears to the wheel-turning monarch. She is attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. She's neither too tall nor too short; neither too thin nor too fat; neither too dark nor too light. She outdoes human beauty without reaching heavenly beauty. And her touch is like a tuft of cotton-wool or kapok. When it's cool her limbs are warm, and when it's warm her limbs are cool. The fragrance of sandal floats from her body, and lotus from her mouth. She gets up before the king and goes to bed after him, and is obliging, behaving nicely and speaking politely. The woman-treasure does not betray the wheel-turning monarch even in thought, still less in deed. Such is the woman-treasure who appears to the wheel-turning monarch.

40.1 Next, the householder-treasure appears to the wheel-turning monarch. The power of clairvoyance manifests in him as a result of past deeds, by which he sees treasure troves, both owned and ownerless. He approaches the wheel-turning monarch and says, 'Relax, Your Majesty. I will take care of the treasury.' Once it so happened that the wheel-turning monarch, testing that same householder-treasure, boarded a boat and sailed to the middle of the Ganges River.

Then he said to the householder-treasure, 'Householder, I need gold, both coined and uncoined.' 'Well then, Great King, draw the boat up to one shore.' 'It's right here, householder, that I need gold, both coined and uncoined.' Then that householder-treasure, immersing both hands in the water, pulled up a pot full of gold, both coined and uncoined, and said to the king, 'Is this sufficient, Great King? Has enough been done, Great King, enough offered?' The wheel-turning monarch said, 'That is sufficient, householder. Enough has been done, enough offered.' Such is the householder-treasure that appears to the wheel-turning monarch.

Next, the commander-treasure appears to the wheel-turning 41.1
monarch. He is astute, competent, intelligent, and capable regarding who should be ushered in to the king's presence, who should be ushered out, and who should be kept by his side. He approaches the wheel-turning monarch and says, 'Relax, Your Majesty. I shall issue instructions.' Such is the commander-treasure that appears to the wheel-turning monarch. These are the seven treasures possessed by a wheel-turning monarch.

And what are the four blessings?[541] 42.1

A wheel-turning monarch is attractive, good-looking, lovely, of 42.2
surpassing beauty, more so than other humans. This is the first blessing.

Furthermore, he is long-lived, more so than other humans. This 43.1
is the second blessing.

Furthermore, he is rarely ill or unwell, and his stomach digests 44.1
well, being neither too hot nor too cold, more so than other humans. This is the third blessing.

Furthermore, a wheel-turning monarch is as dear and beloved 45.1
to the brahmins and householders[542] as a father is to his children.

541. "Blessing" is *iddhi*, which normally means "psychic power".
542. "Householders" (*gahapati*) is literal; it means land owners. Thus the "brahmins and householders" (not "brahmin householders") were the wealthy class.

And the brahmins and householders are as dear to the wheel-turning monarch as children are to their father.

45.7 Once it so happened that a wheel-turning monarch went with his army of four divisions to visit a park. Then the brahmins and householders went up to him and said, 'Slow down, Your Majesty, so we may see you longer!' And the king addressed his charioteer, 'Drive slowly, charioteer, so I can see the brahmins and householders longer!' This is the fourth blessing.

45.13 These are the four blessings possessed by a wheel-turning monarch.

46.1 What do you think, mendicants? Would a wheel-turning monarch who possessed these seven treasures and these four blessings experience pleasure and happiness because of them?"

46.3 "Sir, a wheel-turning monarch who possessed even a single one of these treasures would experience pleasure and happiness because of that, let alone all seven treasures and four blessings!"

47.1 Then the Buddha, picking up a stone the size of his palm, addressed the mendicants, "What do you think, mendicants? Which is bigger: the stone the size of my palm that I've picked up, or the Himalayas, the king of mountains?"

47.4 "Sir, the stone you've picked up is tiny. Compared to the Himalayas, it doesn't count, it's not worth a fraction, there's no comparison."

47.5 "In the same way, compared to the happiness of heaven, the pleasure and happiness experienced by a wheel-turning monarch due to those seven treasures and those four blessings doesn't even count, it's not even a fraction, there's no comparison.

48.1 And suppose that astute person, after a very long time, returned to the human realm. They'd be reborn in a well-to-do family of aristocrats, brahmins, or householders—rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, and lots of money and grain. And they'd be attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. They'd get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; and a bed, house, and

lighting. And they do good things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

Suppose a gambler was to win a big pile of money with the first 49.1
winning hand. Such a winning hand is trivial compared to the winning hand whereby an astute person, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is the total fulfillment of the astute person's level."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 49.5
what the Buddha said.

MN 130

Messengers of the Gods

Devadūtasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD.[543] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, suppose there were two houses with doors. A person with clear eyes standing in between them would see humans entering and leaving a house and wandering to and fro.

2.2 In the same way, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. I understand how sentient beings pass on according to their deeds: 'These dear beings did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never denounced the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, or among humans. These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They denounced the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body

543. Framed with the parable of the "messengers of the gods", which are portents of mortality, this discourse expands the description of the power of clairvoyance or "divine eye" (*dibbacakkhu*), with a special emphasis on the descriptions of the torments of hell (*niraya*). This was a very popular discourse, with no fewer than six Chinese parallels and multiple references in Sanskrit literature. The Sinhala chronicle says it was taught as a primary text in Mahisamaṇḍala by Mahādeva, and in Sri Lanka by Mahinda, each time resulting in mass conversions (Mahāvaṁsa 12:29, 14:63).

broke up, after death, they were reborn in the ghost realm, the animal realm, or in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.'

The wardens of hell take them by the arms and present them to 3.1
King Yama, saying,[544] 'Your Majesty, this person did not pay due respect to their mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, or honor the elders in the family. May Your Majesty punish them!'

King Yama pursues, presses, and grills them about the first mes- 3.4
senger of the gods: 'My man, did you not see the first messenger of the gods that appeared among human beings?'[545]

He says, 'I saw nothing, sir.' 3.6

King Yama says to them, 'My man, did you not see among human 4.1
beings a little baby collapsed in their own urine and feces?'

He says, 'I saw that, sir.' 4.3

King Yama says to them, 'My man, did it not occur to you—being 4.5
sensible and mature—"I, too, am liable to be born. I'm not exempt from rebirth. I'd better do good by way of body, speech, and mind"?'

He says, 'I couldn't, sir. I was negligent.' 4.8

King Yama says to them, 'My man, because you were negligent, 4.10
you didn't do good by way of body, speech, and mind. Well, they'll definitely punish you to fit your negligence. That bad deed wasn't done by your mother, father, brother, or sister. It wasn't done by friends and colleagues, by relatives and kin, by ascetics and brahmins,

544. There is a set of beliefs about hell that is common to Buddhists, Hindus, and Jains. This "hell complex" includes such beliefs as: hell is long-lasting but impermanent; there are many named hells; punishments are terrible and varied; the punishment is determined by kamma; and tortures are inflicted by hell wardens. This sutta appears to be the earliest full account of this hell complex in Indian literature. Below I briefly outline the development of the hell complex in Brahmanical literature (MN 130:10.1).

545. Such "messengers of the gods" appear as reminders for the dangers of mortality. Five appear here—birth, old age, sickness, punishment, and death—while AN 3.36 has three, namely old age, sickness, and death. At MN 83:4.6 we meet just one, the grey hairs of old age. In non-Buddhist texts, such messengers can also be celestial interlocutors in a more literal sense (eg. Mahābhārata 1.2.232b, 1.9.005d). | Compare the four signs that prompted Vipassī's going forth (DN 14:2.1.1).

or by the deities. That bad deed was done by you alone, and you alone will experience the result.'

5.1 Then King Yama grills them about the second messenger of the gods: 'My man, did you not see the second messenger of the gods that appeared among human beings?'

5.3 He says, 'I saw nothing, sir.'

5.5 King Yama says to them, 'My man, did you not see among human beings an elderly woman or a man—eighty, ninety, or a hundred years old—bent double, crooked, leaning on a staff, trembling as they walk, ailing, past their prime, with teeth broken, hair grey and scanty or bald, skin wrinkled, and limbs blotchy?'

5.7 He says, 'I saw that, sir.'

5.9 King Yama says to them, 'My man, did it not occur to you—being sensible and mature—"I, too, am liable to grow old. I'm not exempt from old age. I'd better do good by way of body, speech, and mind"?'

5.12 He says, 'I couldn't, sir. I was negligent.'

5.14 King Yama says to them, 'My man, because you were negligent, you didn't do good by way of body, speech, and mind. Well, they'll definitely punish you to fit your negligence. That bad deed wasn't done by your mother, father, brother, or sister. It wasn't done by friends and colleagues, by relatives and kin, by ascetics and brahmins, or by the deities. That bad deed was done by you alone, and you alone will experience the result.'

6.1 Then King Yama grills them about the third messenger of the gods: 'My man, did you not see the third messenger of the gods that appeared among human beings?'

6.3 He says, 'I saw nothing, sir.'

6.5 King Yama says to them, 'My man, did you not see among human beings a woman or a man, sick, suffering, gravely ill, collapsed in their own urine and feces, being picked up by some and put down by others?'

6.7 He says, 'I saw that, sir.'

6.9 King Yama says to them, 'My man, did it not occur to you—being sensible and mature—"I, too, am liable to become sick. I'm not

exempt from sickness. I'd better do good by way of body, speech, and mind"?' He says, 'I couldn't, sir. I was negligent.'

King Yama says to them, 'My man, because you were negligent, 6.14
you didn't do good by way of body, speech, and mind. Well, they'll definitely punish you to fit your negligence. That bad deed wasn't done by your mother, father, brother, or sister. It wasn't done by friends and colleagues, by relatives and kin, by ascetics and brahmins, or by the deities. That bad deed was done by you alone, and you alone will experience the result.'

Then King Yama grills them about the fourth messenger of the 7.1
gods: 'My man, did you not see the fourth messenger of the gods that appeared among human beings?'

He says, 'I saw nothing, sir.' 7.3

King Yama says to them, 'My man, did you not see among human 7.5
beings when the rulers arrested a bandit, a criminal, and subjected them to various punishments—whipping, caning, and clubbing; cutting off hands or feet, or both; cutting off ears or nose, or both; the 'porridge pot', the 'shell-shave', the 'Rāhu's mouth', the 'garland of fire', the 'burning hand', the 'bulrush twist', the 'bark dress', the 'antelope', the 'meat hook', the 'coins', the 'caustic pickle', the 'twisting bar', the 'straw mat'; being splashed with hot oil, being fed to the hounds, being impaled alive, and being beheaded?'

He says, 'I saw that, sir.' 7.8

King Yama says to them, 'My man, did it not occur to you— 7.10
being sensible and mature—"It seems that one who does bad deeds receives such punishment in this very life. What must happen to them in the next? I'd better do good by way of body, speech, and mind"?'

He says, 'I couldn't, sir. I was negligent.' 7.13

King Yama says to them, 'My man, because you were negligent, 7.15
you didn't do good by way of body, speech, and mind. Well, they'll definitely punish you to fit your negligence. That bad deed wasn't done by your mother, father, brother, or sister. It wasn't done by friends and colleagues, by relatives and kin, by ascetics and brahmins,

or by the deities. That bad deed was done by you alone, and you alone will experience the result.'

8.1 Then King Yama grills them about the fifth messenger of the gods: 'My man, did you not see the fifth messenger of the gods that appeared among human beings?'

8.3 He says, 'I saw nothing, sir.'

8.5 King Yama says to them, 'My man, did you not see among human beings a woman or a man, dead for one, two, or three days, bloated, livid, and festering?'

8.7 He says, 'I saw that, sir.'

8.9 King Yama says to them, 'My man, did it not occur to you—being sensible and mature—"I, too, am liable to die. I'm not exempt from death. I'd better do good by way of body, speech, and mind"?'

8.12 He says, 'I couldn't, sir. I was negligent.'

8.14 King Yama says to them, 'My man, because you were negligent, you didn't do good by way of body, speech, and mind. Well, they'll definitely punish you to fit your negligence. That bad deed wasn't done by your mother, father, brother, or sister. It wasn't done by friends and colleagues, by relatives and kin, by ascetics and brahmins, or by the deities. That bad deed was done by you alone, and you alone will experience the result.'

9.1 After grilling them about the fifth messenger of the gods, King Yama falls silent.

The wardens of hell punish them with the five-fold crucifixion.[546] 10.1
They drive red-hot stakes through the hands and feet, and another in the middle of the chest. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.[547]

The wardens of hell throw them down and hack them with axes. 11.1
…[548]

They hang them upside-down and hack them with hatchets. …[549] 12.1

They harness them to a chariot, and drive them back and forth 13.1
across burning ground, blazing and glowing. …

They make them climb up and down a big mountain of burning 14.1
coals, blazing and glowing. …

546. The history of hell in India begins with the Rig Veda, which speaks of evildoers facing the "erasure of the wolf", the "downfall" (2.29.6c), the "bottomless darkness" (7.104.3) "beneath all three earths" (7.104.11), the "endless abyss" (7.104.17), the "darkness below" (10.152.4). Atharva Veda similarly speaks of the "house below" (2.14.3a), the "deepest dark" (8.2.24). It also consigns a man stingy with cattle to the *nārakaṁ lokaṁ*, which seems to mean "the world of the hell beings" (12.4.36c); there is an equally vague reference to a "hell being" at Śukla Yajur Veda 30.5. These seem to be the earliest uses of the word *naraka* in the sense of "hell"; this sense is not found in early Pali (see note on DN 12:78.2). Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa 1.42 describes the "other world" in both hellish and heavenly terms (see too Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 11.6.1). It depicts the hellish torments taking place in regions of the "other world" rather than as a distinct hell realm; and it does not share many details in common with later accounts. Thus far the texts are pre-Buddhist. It is not until the much later Purāṇic literature that lurid descriptions of hells, usually numbered 21 or 28, become a standard feature, along with the rest of the hell complex. Several of the places mentioned here correspond with the Purāṇic hells.

547. I give a few examples of similar descriptions in the Purāṇas (and the Jain Sūtrakṛtāṅga), without any attempt to be comprehensive. | The notion that one does not die despite the suffering is also found at Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.28 and Sūtrakṛtāṅga 1.5.1.16. | The lifespan of one in hell is illustrated in the story of Kokālika (SN 6.10 = AN 10.89), which is repeated at Snp 3.10 with an expanded description of the hells that bears much in common with the present discourse.

548. Brahma Purāṇa 106.40–41.

549. Śiva Purāṇa 5.9.26; Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa 8.23. There is a special "Upside-down hell" in Viṣṇu Purāṇa 2.63.

15.1 The wardens of hell turn them upside down and throw them in a red-hot copper pot, burning, blazing, and glowing.[550] There they're seared in boiling scum, and they're swept up and down and round and round. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

16.1 The wardens of hell toss them into the Great Hell. Now, about that Great Hell:

16.3 'Four are its corners, four its doors,
neatly divided section by section.
Surrounded by an iron wall,
of iron is its roof.

16.7 The ground is even made of iron,
it burns with fierce fire.[551]
The heat forever radiates
a hundred leagues around.'

17.1 Now in the Great Hell, flames surge out of the walls and crash into the opposite wall: from east to west, from west to east, from north to south, from south to north, from bottom to top, from top to bottom. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

18.1 There comes a time when, after a very long period has passed, the eastern gate of the Great Hell is opened. So they run there as fast as they can.[552] And as they run, their outer skin, inner skin, flesh, and sinews burn and even their bones smoke. Such is their escape;[553] but when they've managed to make it most of the way, the gate is slammed shut. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

550. Agni Purāṇa 307.25; Śiva Purāṇa 5.9.9, 34, 44.
551. The Kālasūtra hell is made of burning copper (Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.14).
552. Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.15 describes how the sinner runs about in pain trying to escape.
553. Śiva Purāṇa 5.9.37.

There comes a time when, after a very long period has passed, the 18.6
western gate … northern gate … southern gate of the Great Hell is opened. So they run there as fast as they can. And as they run, their outer skin, inner skin, flesh, and sinews burn and even their bones smoke. Such is their escape; but when they've managed to make it most of the way, the gate is slammed shut. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

There comes a time when, after a very long period has passed, the 19.1
eastern gate of the Great Hell is opened. So they run there as fast as they can. And as they run, their outer skin, inner skin, flesh, and sinews burn and even their bones smoke. Such is their escape; and they make it out that door.

Immediately adjacent to the Great Hell is the vast Dung Hell. And 20.1
that's where they fall. In that Dung Hell there are needle-mouthed creatures that bore through the outer skin, the inner skin, the flesh, sinews, and bones, until they reach the marrow and devour it.[554] And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

Immediately adjacent to the Dung Hell is the vast Hell of Burning 21.1
Chaff.[555] And that's where they fall. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

Immediately adjacent to the Hell of Burning Chaff is the vast Red 22.1
Silk-Cotton Forest. It's a league high, full of sixteen-inch thorns, burning, blazing, and glowing.[556] And there they make them climb

554. "Needle-mouth" (*sūcimukha*) is one of the 28 Purāṇic hells, the destiny of scrooges, where one is stitched as cloth by a tailor (Bhāgavata Purāṇa 526.36; Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa 8.23). Śiva Purāṇa 5.9.42–3 describes how sinners are devoured by sharp-toothed worms while rotting in mounds of flesh; Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.17 says one is devoured by the same creatures one killed while alive.
555. Burning of remnant stubble is still a widespread practice in India, and it does indeed create hellish conditions.
556. The "Red Silk-Cotton Forest" (*simbalivana*) is one of the 28 hells (Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.7; Devī Bhāgavatapurāṇa 10.21.11–28; Śiva Purāṇa 5.9.20).

up and down. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

23.1 Immediately adjacent to the Red Silk-Cotton Forest is the vast Sword-Leaf Forest.[557] They enter that. There the fallen leaves blown by the wind cut their hands, feet, both hands and feet; they cut their ears, nose, both ears and nose. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

24.1 Immediately adjacent to the Sword-Leaf Forest is the vast Acid River.[558] And that's where they fall. There they are swept upstream, swept downstream, and swept both up and down stream. And there they suffer painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

25.1 The wardens of hell pull them out with a hook and place them on solid ground, and say, 'My man, what do you want?'[559]

25.3 They say, 'I'm hungry, sir.'

25.5 The wardens of hell force open their mouth with a hot iron spike—burning, blazing, and glowing—and shove in a red-hot copper ball, burning, blazing, and glowing.[560] It burns their lips, mouth, tongue, throat, and stomach before coming out below dragging their entrails. And there they feel painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

26.1 The wardens of hell say, 'My man, what do you want?'

The red silk cotton tree (*simbali*, Sanskrit *śālmalī*, *bombax ceiba*) has a spiky trunk. Treading on the spikes could cause infections (Rig Veda 7.50.3). | This hell and the next reflect the miseries of struggling through thick, prickly jungles.

557. The "Sword-Leaf Forest" (*asipattavana*; also at Snp 3.10:25.1) is another of the 28 hells. This befalls those who destroy forests (Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa 4.2.173; Viṣṇu Purāṇa 6.2), while Agni Purāṇa 203.10 says it is for one who killed their mother, and Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.15 says it is for one who strays from the Vedas.

558. The "Acid River" (*khārodakā nadī*) is yet another of the 28 hells (*kṣārakardama*, Śiva Purāṇa 5.9.8; Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.30; Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa 8.21; Skanda Purāṇa 6.1.226.54).

559. Brahma Purāṇa 106.25–32.

560. Śiva Purāṇa 5.9.45.

They say, 'I'm thirsty, sir.' 26.3

The wardens of hell force open their mouth with a hot iron spike— 26.5
burning, blazing, and glowing—and pour in molten copper, burning, blazing, and glowing.[561] It burns their lips, mouth, tongue, throat, and stomach before coming out below dragging their entrails. And there they feel painful, sharp, severe, acute feelings—but they don't die until that bad deed is eliminated.

The wardens of hell toss them back in the Great Hell. 27.1

Once upon a time, King Yama thought: 'Those who do such bad 28.1
deeds in the world receive these many different punishments. Oh, I hope I may be reborn as a human being! And that a Realized One—a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha—arises in the world! And that I may pay homage to the Buddha! Let that Buddha teach me Dhamma, so that I may understand his teaching!'

Now, I don't say this because I've heard it from some other ascetic 29.1
or brahmin. I only say it because I've known, seen, and realized it for myself."[562]

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, 30.1
went on to say:

"When warned by the gods' messengers, 30.3
those sons of Manu who are negligent
sorrow for a long time
when they go to that wretched place.

When warned by the gods' messengers, 30.7
the good and true persons here
never neglect
the teaching of the Noble One.

Seeing the danger in grasping, 30.11

561. The "iron drink" (*ayaḥpāna*) is another Purāṇic hell (Agni Purāṇa 307.25–28; Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.26.29; Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa 8.23).

562. This statement is found only in the Pali text, although Chinese texts are effectively similar, in that they all speak of the Buddha's clairvoyance.

the origin of birth and death,
the unattached are freed
with the ending of birth and death.

30.15 Happy, they've come to a safe place,
quenched in this very life.
They've gone beyond all enmities and fears,
and risen above all suffering."

THE CHAPTER ON ANALYSIS

MN 131

One Fine Night

Bhaddekarattasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[563] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "I shall teach you the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.3 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "Don't run back to the past,
don't anticipate the future.[564]
What's past is left behind,
the future has not arrived;

3.5 and any present phenomenon[565]

563. A favorite of meditators, this discourse takes a distinctive set of verses as a template for explaining the aspect of meditation called *vipassanā*, commonly rendered "insight"; for why I use "discernment" see DN 14:1.37.5 and note. The next three discourses explain the same verses on different occasions, with MN 133 offering a complementary explanation.

564. To "anticipate" (*paṭikaṅkhe*) is not always bad. A mendicant ought to "anticipate" dangers (*pāṭikaṅkhitabba*, AN 4.122:1.1 = MN 67:14.2); Nālaka "anticipates" the arrival of the Buddha (*patikkhaṁ*, Snp 3.11:19.4); and an arahant "awaits their time" (*kālaṁ kaṅkhati*, SN 2.29:15.4). The verse here has a specific application in meditation, which is explained below.

565. Here "phenomenon" (*dhamma*) means anything that is directly knowable (see MN 133:17.9). | The two verses run on here, as indicated by the *ca* linking this line with the previous.

you clearly discern in every case.[566]
The unfaltering, the unshakable:[567]
having known that, foster it.

Today's the day to keenly work— 3.9
who knows, tomorrow may bring death!
For there is no bargain to be struck
with Death and his mighty horde.

One who keenly meditates like this, 3.13
tireless all night and day:
that's who has one fine night—
so declares the peaceful sage.[568]

And how do you run back to the past? You muster delight there, 4.1
thinking: 'I had such form in the past.' … 'I had such feeling … perception … choice … consciousness in the past.'[569] That's how you run back to the past.

And how do you not run back to the past? You don't muster 5.1
delight there, thinking: 'I had such form in the past.' … 'I had such feeling … perception … choice … consciousness in the past.' That's how you don't run back to the past.

And how do you anticipate the future? You muster delight there, 6.1
thinking: 'May I have such form in the future.' … 'May I have such feeling … perception … choice … consciousness in the future.' That's how you anticipate the future.

566. For *tattha tattha* as "in every case" see eg. DN 30:2.1.3, and compare *tato tattha vipassati* at Snp 5.15:4.4.
567. At Thag 14.1:5.1, this phrase refers to the mind developed in meditation on love and compassion, while at Snp 5.19:19.1 it refers to Nibbāna. In both cases, as here, it is the object of the verb, not an adverb.
568. The "peaceful sage" is the Buddha.
569. *Samanvāneti* is unique in early Pali, but the similar *samānayi* is found at DN 30:1.33.4 and Thig 12.1:10.2 in the sense of "reunite, bring together". "Muster" means both to bring together and to arouse. | SN 22.79 makes it clear that "in the past" means "in a past life".

7.1 And how do you not anticipate the future? You don't muster delight there, thinking: 'May I have such form in the future.' … 'May I have such feeling … perception … choice … consciousness in the future.' That's how you don't anticipate the future.

8.1 And how do you falter amid presently arisen phenomena?[570] It's when an unlearned ordinary person has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons. They regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. That's how you falter amid presently arisen phenomena.

9.1 And how do you not falter amid presently arisen phenomena? It's when a learned noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They don't regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. They don't regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. That's how you don't falter amid presently arisen phenomena.

10.1 'Don't run back to the past,
don't anticipate the future.
What's past is left behind,
the future has not arrived;

10.5 and any present phenomenon
you clearly discern in every case.
The unfaltering, the unshakable:
having known that, foster it.

570. *Dhammesu* ("phenomena") is plural here, whereas in the verse it is singular. Sanskrit fragments, however, have plural in the verse as well.

Today's the day to keenly work— 10.9
who knows, tomorrow may bring death!
For there is no bargain to be struck
with Death and his mighty horde.

One who keenly meditates like this, 10.13
tireless all night and day:
that's who has one fine night—
so declares the peaceful sage.'

And that's what I meant when I said: 'I shall teach you the sum- 11.1
mary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night.'"

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved 11.3
what the Buddha said.

MN 132

Ānanda and One Fine Night

Ānandabhaddekarattasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time Venerable Ānanda was educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the mendicants in the assembly hall with a Dhamma talk on the topic of the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night.

2.2 Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat, went to the assembly hall, where he sat down on the seat spread out, and addressed the mendicants: "Who was inspiring the mendicants with a talk on the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night?"

2.5 "It was Venerable Ānanda, sir."

2.6 Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda, "But in what way were you inspiring the mendicants with a talk on the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night?"

3.1 "I was doing so in this way, sir," replied Ānanda.

3.2 "Don't run back to the past,
don't anticipate the future.
What's past is left behind,
the future has not arrived;

3.6 and any present phenomenon
you clearly discern in every case.
The unfaltering, the unshakable:
having known that, foster it.

Today's the day to keenly work— 3.10
who knows, tomorrow may bring death!
For there is no bargain to be struck
with Death and his mighty horde.

One who keenly meditates like this, 3.14
tireless all night and day:
that's who has one fine night—
so declares the peaceful sage.

And how do you run back to the past? …[571] 4.1
And how do you not run back to the past? … 5.1
And how do you anticipate the future? … 6.1
And how do you not anticipate the future? … 7.1
And how do you falter amid presently arisen phenomena? … 8.1
And how do you not falter amid presently arisen phenomena? … 9.1
That's how you don't falter amid presently arisen phenomena.

'Don't run back to the past, 10.1
don't anticipate the future. …

that's who has one fine night— 10.13
so declares the peaceful sage.'

That's how I was inspiring the mendicants with a talk on the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night." 11.1

"Good, good, Ānanda. It's good that you were inspiring the mendicants with a talk on the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night." 11.2

And the Buddha repeated the verses and analysis once more. 13-19.1

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said. 13-19.17

571. Ānanda goes on to repeat the analysis as in the previous discourse, MN 131:4.1ff.

MN 133

Mahākaccāna and One Fine Night

Mahākaccānabhaddekarattasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Hot Springs Monastery.[572]

1.3 Then Venerable Samiddhi rose at the crack of dawn and went to the hot springs to bathe.[573] When he had bathed and emerged from the water he stood in one robe drying his limbs.

1.5 Then, late at night, a glorious deity, lighting up the entire hot springs, went up to Samiddhi, stood to one side, and said to Samiddhi:

2.1 "Mendicant, do you remember the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night?"

2.2 "No, reverend, I do not. Do you?"

2.4 "I also do not. But do you remember just the verses on the one who has one fine night?"[574]

2.6 "I do not. Do you?"

572. The hot springs near Rājagaha were a popular place for monks to bathe, so much so that they prompted a rule ensuring that the monks did not monopolize the springs (Bu Pc 57). They are still in use and just as popular as ever.

573. Soon after he went forth, a deity in the same location tempted Samiddhi to enjoy sensual delights (SN 1.20). Had he succumbed, that would have been a case of "faltering amid presently arisen phenomena". Samiddhi further appears in discourses at MN 136, where he had gone forth only three years, and AN 9.14, where he seems more mature. In SN 4.22, Māra threatens to shake his faith, prompting him to ask the Buddha about Māra's true nature (SN 35.65). This event is recalled in his verse at Thag 1.46.

574. The "verses" are, in fact, the same thing as the "recitation passage" mentioned above. The Tibetan and Chinese parallels lack the doubled question.

"I also do not. Learn the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night, mendicant, memorize it, and remember it. It is beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life." 2.8

That is what that deity said, before vanishing right there. 2.13

Then, when the night had passed, Samiddhi went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. Then he added: 3.1

"Sir, please teach me the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night." 4.13

"Well then, mendicant, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 4.16

"Yes, sir," Samiddhi replied. The Buddha said this: 4.17

"Don't run back to the past, 5.1
don't anticipate the future.
What's past is left behind,
the future has not arrived;

and any present phenomenon 5.5
you clearly discern in every case.
The unfaltering, the unshakable:
having known that, foster it.

Today's the day to keenly work— 5.9
who knows, tomorrow may bring death!
For there is no bargain to be struck
with Death and his mighty horde.

One who keenly meditates like this, 5.13
tireless all night and day:
that's who has one fine night—
so declares the peaceful sage."

6.1 That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling.[575]

7.1 Soon after the Buddha left, those mendicants considered, "The Buddha gave this brief summary recital, then entered his dwelling without explaining the meaning in detail. …

7.19 Who can explain in detail the meaning of this brief summary given by the Buddha?"

7.20 Then those mendicants thought:

7.21 "This Venerable Mahākaccāna is praised by the Buddha and esteemed by his sensible spiritual companions.[576] He is capable of explaining in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha. Let's go to him, and ask him about this matter."

7.24 Then those mendicants went to Mahākaccāna, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. They told him what had happened, and said:

8.1 "May Venerable Mahākaccāna please explain this."

9.1 "Reverends, suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But he'd pass over the roots and trunk, imagining that the heartwood should be sought in the branches and leaves. Such is the consequence for the venerables. Though you were face to face with the Buddha, you bypassed him, imagining that you should ask me about this matter. For he is the Buddha, the one who knows and sees. He is vision, he is knowledge, he is the manifestation of principle, he is the manifestation of divinity. He is the preacher, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the bestower of freedom from death, the lord of truth, the Realized One.

575. Though he set to teach the "recitation passage and analysis", the Buddha omits the analysis, so the monks ask Mahākaccāna for the analysis. The same situation obtains in MN 138:4.2. In both cases the Chinese and Tibetan parallels avoid the problem, since the Buddha only says he will teach the verses. Contrast the situation at MN 137:2.1 and MN 139:2.1.

576. See note at MN 18:10.9.

That was the time to approach the Buddha and ask about this matter. You should have remembered it in line with the Buddha's answer."

"Certainly he is the Buddha, the one who knows and sees. He 10.1
is vision, he is knowledge, he is the manifestation of principle, he is the manifestation of divinity. He is the preacher, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the bestower of freedom from death, the lord of truth, the Realized One. That was the time to approach the Buddha and ask about this matter. We should have remembered it in line with the Buddha's answer. Still, Venerable Mahākaccāna is praised by the Buddha and esteemed by his sensible spiritual companions. He is capable of explaining in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha. Please explain this, if it's no trouble."

"Well then, reverends, listen and apply your mind well, I will 11.1
speak."

"Yes, reverend," they replied. Venerable Mahākaccāna said this: 11.2

"Reverends, the Buddha gave this brief summary recital, then 12.1
entered his dwelling without explaining the meaning in detail:

> 'Don't run back to the past … 12.2
> that's who has one fine night—
> so declares the peaceful sage.'

And this is how I understand the detailed meaning of this sum- 12.6
mary recital.

And how do you run back to the past? Consciousness gets tied 13.1
up there with desire and lust, thinking: 'In the past I had such eyes and such sights.'[577] So you take pleasure in that, and that's when you run back to the past.

Consciousness gets tied up there with desire and lust, thinking: 13.4
'In the past I had such ears and such sounds … such a nose and such smells … such a tongue and such tastes … such a body and such

577. As in MN 18:16.1 and MN 138:10.2, Kaccāna's favored mode of analysis is through the six senses.

touches … such a mind and such ideas.' So you take pleasure in that, and that's when you run back to the past. That's how you run back to the past.

14.1 And how do you not run back to the past? Consciousness doesn't get tied up there with desire and lust, thinking: 'In the past I had such eyes and such sights.' So you don't take pleasure in that, and that's when you no longer run back to the past.

14.4 Consciousness doesn't get tied up there with desire and lust, thinking: 'In the past I had such ears and such sounds … such a nose and such smells … such a tongue and such tastes … such a body and such touches … such a mind and such ideas.' So you don't take pleasure in that, and that's when you no longer run back to the past. That's how you don't run back to the past.

15.1 And how do you anticipate the future? The heart is set on getting what it does not have, thinking: 'May I have such eyes and such sights in the future.' So you take pleasure in that, and that's when you anticipate the future. The heart is set on getting what it does not have, thinking: 'May I have such ears and such sounds … such a nose and such smells … such a tongue and such tastes … such a body and such touches … such a mind and such ideas in the future.' So you take pleasure in that, and that's when you anticipate the future. That's how you anticipate the future.

16.1 And how do you not anticipate the future? The heart is not set on getting what it does not have, thinking: 'May I have such eyes and such sights in the future.' So you don't take pleasure in that, and that's when you no longer anticipate the future. The heart is not set on getting what it does not have, thinking: 'May I have such ears and such sounds … such a nose and such smells … such a tongue and such tastes … such a body and such touches … such a mind and such ideas in the future.' So you don't take pleasure in that, and that's when you no longer anticipate the future. That's how you don't anticipate the future.

17.1 And how do you falter amid presently arisen phenomena? Both the eye and sights are presently arisen. If consciousness gets tied up

there in the present with desire and lust, you take pleasure in that, and that's when you falter amid presently arisen phenomena. Both the ear and sounds … nose and smells … tongue and tastes … body and touches … mind and ideas[578] are presently arisen. If consciousness gets tied up there in the present with desire and lust, you take pleasure in that, and that's when you falter amid presently arisen phenomena. That's how you falter amid presently arisen phenomena.

And how do you not falter amid presently arisen phenomena? 18.1
Both the eye and sights are presently arisen. If consciousness doesn't get tied up there in the present with desire and lust, you don't take pleasure in that, and that's when you no longer falter amid presently arisen phenomena. Both the ear and sounds … nose and smells … tongue and tastes … body and touches … mind and ideas are presently arisen. If consciousness doesn't get tied up there in the present with desire and lust, you don't take pleasure in that, and that's when you no longer falter amid presently arisen phenomena. That's how you don't falter amid presently arisen phenomena.

This is how I understand the detailed meaning of that brief sum- 19.1
mary recital given by the Buddha.

If you wish, you may go to the Buddha and ask him about this. 19.6
You should remember it in line with the Buddha's answer."

Then those mendicants, approving and agreeing with what Mahā- 20.1
kaccāna said, rose from their seats and went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened, adding:

"Mahākaccāna clearly explained the meaning to us in this manner, 20.25
with these words and phrases."

"Mahākaccāna is astute, mendicants, he has great wisdom. If you 21.1
came to me and asked this question, I would answer it in exactly the same way as Mahākaccāna. That is what it means, and that's how you should remember it."

578. *Dhamma* is rendered here with "ideas", namely those things which are known by the mind. Where it is rendered "phenomena", it includes the "ideas" as well as all else that is known.

21.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 134

Lomasakaṅgiya and One Fine Night

Lomasakaṅgiyabhaddekarattasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī 1.1
in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Now at that time Venerable Lomasakaṅgiya was staying in the 1.3
Sakyan country at Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.[579]

Then, late at night, the glorious godling Candana, lighting up the 2.1
entire Banyan Tree Monastery, went up to the Venerable Lomasakaṅgiya, and stood to one side. Standing to one side, he said to Lomasakaṅgiya:[580]

"Mendicant, do you remember the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night?" 2.2

"No, reverend, I do not. Do you?" 2.3

"I also do not. But do you remember just the verses on the one who has one fine night?" 2.5

"I do not. Do you?" 2.7

"I do." 2.9

"How do you remember the verses on the one who has one fine night?" 2.10

"This one time, the Buddha was staying among the gods of the 2.11
thirty-three at the root of the Orchid Tree on the stone spread with

579. Lomasakaṅgiya's verse speaks of his determination to forge his way through the dense jungle in search of seclusion (Thag 1.27). He is probably also the same monk who appears in SN 54.12. His name means "hairy-limbs".

580. The god Candana, whose name means "sandalwood", also appears at DN 20:10.5, DN 32:10.4, and SN 2.15.

a cream rug.[581] There he taught the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night to the gods of the thirty-three:

3.1 'Don't run back to the past,
don't anticipate the future.
What's past is left behind,
the future has not arrived;

3.5 and any present phenomenon
you clearly discern in every case.
The unfaltering, the unshakable:
having known that, foster it.

3.9 Today's the day to keenly work—
who knows, tomorrow may bring death!
For there is no bargain to be struck
with Death and his mighty horde.

3.13 One who keenly meditates like this,
tireless all night and day:
that's who has one fine night—
so declares the peaceful sage.'

4.1 That's how I remember the verses of the one who has one fine night. Learn the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night, mendicant, memorize it, and remember it. It is beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life."

4.6 That is what the godling Candana said before vanishing right there.

5.1 Then Lomasakaṅgiya set his lodgings in order and, taking his bowl and robe, set out for Sāvatthī. Eventually he came to Sāvatthī and

581. This suggests that Candana was one of the Thirty-three. In the Chinese parallels, however, he heard this at Rājagaha. | This tree forms the basis for an elaborate simile for renunciation at AN 7.69. | *Paṇḍukambala* is a kind of luxury upholstery.

Jeta's Grove. He went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened. Then he added:

"Sir, please teach me the summary recital and the analysis of the one who has one fine night." 5.26

"But mendicant, do you know that god?" 6.1

"I do not, sir." 6.2

"That godling was named Candana. Candana pays attention, applies the mind, concentrates wholeheartedly, and actively listens to the teaching.[582] Well then, mendicant, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 6.3

"Yes, sir," Lomasakaṅgiya replied. The Buddha said this: 6.6

"Don't run back to the past, 7.1
don't anticipate the future.
What's past is left behind,
the future has not arrived;

and any present phenomenon 7.5
you clearly discern in every case.
The unfaltering, the unshakable:
having known that, foster it.

Today's the day to keenly work— 7.9
who knows, tomorrow may bring death!
For there is no bargain to be struck
with Death and his mighty horde.

One who keenly meditates like this, 7.13
tireless all night and day:
that's who has one fine night—
so declares the peaceful sage.

582. Candana is here praised for his skill in learning, yet earlier he says that although he was present when the Buddha taught the "recitation passage and analysis", he only remembered the verses (MN 134:2.12). As at MN 133:6.2, the parallels are more coherent, as they only mention him hearing the verses.

8-13.1 And how do you run back to the past? …"[583]

14.17 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Lomasakaṅgiya approved what the Buddha said.

583. The Buddha goes on to repeat the analysis as in MN 131:4.1ff.

MN 135

The Shorter Analysis of Deeds

Cūḷakammavibhaṅgasutta

So I have heard.[584] At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then the student Subha, Todeyya's son, approached the Buddha, 2.1
and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

"What is the cause, worthy Gotama, what is the reason why even 3.1
among those who are human beings some are seen to be inferior and superior? For people are seen who are short-lived and long-lived, sickly and healthy, ugly and beautiful, insignificant and illustrious, poor and rich, from low and eminent families, witless and wise. What is the reason why even among those who are human beings some are seen to be inferior and superior?"

"Student, sentient beings are the owners of their deeds and heir to 4.1
their deeds. Deeds are their womb, their relative, and their refuge.[585] It is deeds that divide beings into inferior and superior."

"I don't understand the meaning of what the worthy Gotama has 4.4
said in brief, without explaining the details. Worthy Gotama, please teach me this matter in detail so I can understand the meaning."

584. This discourse has more parallels than any other Majjhima sutta: six in Chinese, two in Tibetan, two in Sanskrit, and fragments in Khotanese, Sogdian, and Tocharian. Its popularity is due to the detailed yet straightforward way it connects deeds with results, a subject of perennial fascination.

585. This phrase is also explained at AN 10.216. In AN 5.57 it is one of five sayings that should be frequently recollected by "a woman or a man, a layperson or a renunciate".

4.6 "Well then, student, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

4.7 "Yes, worthy sir," replied Subha. The Buddha said this:

5.1 "Take some woman or man who kills living creatures. They're violent, bloody-handed, a hardened killer, merciless to living beings.[586] Because of undertaking such deeds, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. If they're not reborn in a place of loss, but return to the human realm, then wherever they're reborn they're short-lived.[587] For killing living creatures is the path leading to a short lifespan.

6.1 But take some woman or man who gives up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of sympathy for all living beings. Because of undertaking such deeds, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. If they're not reborn in a heavenly realm, but return to the human realm, then wherever they're reborn they're long-lived. For not killing living creatures is the path leading to a long lifespan.

7.1 Take some woman or man who habitually hurts living creatures with a fist, stone, rod, or sword. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a place of loss … or if they return to the human realm, they're sickly …

8.1 But take some woman or man who would never hurt living creatures with a fist, stone, rod, or sword.[588] Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a heavenly realm … or if they return to the human realm, they're healthy …

9.1 Take some woman or man who is irritable and bad-tempered. Even when lightly criticized they lose their temper, becoming an-

586. The phrase "some woman or man" is used only here and in a few suttas that also deal with kamma (AN 3.70, AN 8.42, AN 8.43, AN 8.45). The mention of "woman or man" undercuts assumptions that women lack agency, or that their rebirth is lesser.

587. Rebirth in the human realm is always due to good deeds in the past, but while in this realm, bad kamma can take effect. Of course, not all afflictions are caused by past kamma, a doctrine of the Jains that the Buddha rejected.

588. A reason for one of the Buddha's marks (DN 30:2.7.2).

noyed, hostile, and hard-hearted, and displaying annoyance, hate, and bitterness.[589] Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a place of loss … or if they return to the human realm, they're ugly …

But take some woman or man who isn't irritable and bad- 10.1
tempered. Even when heavily criticized, they don't lose their temper, become annoyed, hostile, and hard-hearted, or display annoyance, hate, and bitterness. Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a heavenly realm … or if they return to the human realm, they're lovely …[590]

Take some woman or man who is jealous. They envy, resent, and 11.1
begrudge the possessions, honor, respect, reverence, homage, and veneration given to others.[591] Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a place of loss … or if they return to the human realm, they're insignificant …

But take some woman or man who is not jealous … Because of 12.1
undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a heavenly realm … or if they return to the human realm, they're illustrious …

Take some woman or man who doesn't give to ascetics or brah- 13.1
mins such things as food, drink, clothing, vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; and bed, house, and lighting.[592] Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a place of loss … or if they return to the human realm, they're poor …

But take some woman or man who does give to ascetics or brah- 14.1
mins … Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a heavenly realm … or if they return to the human realm, they're rich …

Take some woman or man who is obstinate and arrogant. They 15.1
don't bow to those they should bow to. They don't rise up for them,

589. A person with a "mind like an open sore" (AN 3.25:1.6).
590. The text switches from *vaṇṇavanta* ("beautiful", MN 135:3.4) to *pāsādika* ("lovely").
591. Also at AN 4.197:6.5.
592. Also in AN 4.197 and AN 10.177.

offer them a seat, make way for them, or honor, respect, esteem, or venerate those who are worthy of such.[593] Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a place of loss … or if they return to the human realm, they're reborn in a low class family …

16.1 But take some woman or man who is not obstinate and arrogant … Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a heavenly realm … or if they return to the human realm, they're reborn in an eminent family …

17.1 Take some woman or man who doesn't approach an ascetic or brahmin to ask:[594] 'Sir, what is skillful and what is unskillful? What is blameworthy and what is blameless? What should be cultivated and what should not be cultivated? What kind of action will lead to my lasting harm and suffering? Or what kind of action will lead to my lasting welfare and happiness?' Because of undertaking such deeds, after death they're reborn in a place of loss … or if they return to the human realm, they're witless …

18.1 But take some woman or man who does approach an ascetic or brahmin to ask: 'Sir, what is skillful and what is unskillful? What is blameworthy and what is blameless? What should be cultivated and what should not be cultivated? What kind of action will lead to my lasting harm and suffering? Or what kind of action will lead to my lasting welfare and happiness?' Because of undertaking such deeds, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. If they're not reborn in a heavenly realm, but return to the human realm, then wherever they're reborn they're very wise. For asking questions of ascetics or brahmins is the path leading to wisdom.

19.1 So it is the way people live that makes them how they are, whether short-lived or long-lived, sickly or healthy, ugly or lovely, insignificant

593. The first three of these, phrased a little differently, are found at Pvr 7:51.1.
594. This is the duty of a wheel-turning monarch (DN 26:5.6), as well as being a reason for one of the Buddha's marks (DN 30:1.25.3).

or illustrious, poor or rich, in a low class or eminent family, or witless or wise.

Sentient beings are the owners of their deeds and heir to their deeds. Deeds are their womb, their relative, and their refuge. It is deeds that divide beings into inferior and superior." 20.1

When he had spoken, Subha said to him, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the Teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha.[595] From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life." 21.1

595. He went for refuge first in MN 99:28.4 and subsequently in DN 10:2.37.9.

MN 136

The Longer Analysis of Deeds

Mahākammavibhaṅgasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

2.1 Now at that time Venerable Samiddhi was staying in a wilderness hut. Then as the wanderer Potaliputta was going for a walk he came up to Venerable Samiddhi and exchanged greetings with him.[596] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to him:

2.4 "Reverend Samiddhi, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the ascetic Gotama: 'Deeds by way of body and speech are done in vain. Only mental deeds are real.' And: 'There is such an attainment where the one who enters it does not feel anything at all.'"

2.7 "Don't say that, Reverend Potaliputta, don't say that! Don't misrepresent the Buddha, for misrepresentation of the Buddha is not good. And the Buddha would not say this: 'Deeds by way of body and speech are done in vain. Only mental deeds are real.'[597] But, reverend, there is such an attainment where the one who enters it does not feel anything at all."[598]

2.10 "Reverend Samiddhi, how long has it been since you went forth?"

2.11 "Not long, reverend: three years."

2.12 "Well now, what are we to say to the senior mendicants, when even such a junior mendicant imagines their Teacher needs defending?

596. This is the only time we meet Potaliputta. His name suggests he hails from the capital of Assaka, variously spelled Potali or Potana (DN 19:36.4). | As for Samiddhi, see note on MN 133:1.3.

597. There is indeed no such statement in the suttas.

598. This is the cessation of perception and feelings.

After doing an intentional deed by way of body, speech, or mind, reverend, what does one feel?"

"After doing an intentional deed by way of body, speech, or mind, 2.14
reverend, one feels suffering."[599] Then, neither approving nor rejecting Samiddhi's statement, Potaliputta rose from his seat and left.

Soon after he had left, Venerable Samiddhi went to Venerable 3.1
Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and informed Ānanda of all they had discussed.

When he had spoken, Ānanda said to him, "Reverend Samid- 3.4
dhi, we should see the Buddha about this matter. Come, let's go to the Buddha and inform him about this. As he answers, so we'll remember it."

"Yes, reverend," Samiddhi replied. 3.8

Then Ānanda and Samiddhi went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat 4.1
down to one side, and told him what had happened.

When they had spoken, the Buddha said to Ānanda, "I don't recall 5.1
even seeing the wanderer Potaliputta, Ānanda, so how could we have had such a discussion? The wanderer Potaliputta's question should have been answered after analyzing it, but this futile man answered categorically."

When he said this, Venerable Udāyī said to him, "But perhaps, sir, 6.1
Venerable Samiddhi spoke in reference to the statement: 'Suffering includes whatever is felt.'"

But the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda, "See what this fu- 6.4
tile man Udāyī comes up with?[600] I knew that he was coming up with something irrational. Right from the start Potaliputta asked about the three feelings. Suppose the futile man Samiddhi had answered the wanderer Potaliputta's question like this: 'After doing an intentional deed to be experienced as pleasant by way of body,

599. It is this answer of Samiddhi's that is criticized below.

600. There are several monks named Udāyī and it is not easy to distinguish them. One of them was known for his stupidity (AN 6.29:3.3). | *Ummagga* is from *ummujjati*, just below, "uprising, emergence".

speech, or mind, one feels pleasure. After doing an intentional deed to be experienced as painful by way of body, speech, or mind, one feels pain. After doing an intentional deed to be experienced as neutral by way of body, speech, or mind, one feels neutral.' Answering in this way, Samiddhi would have rightly answered Potaliputta.

6.14 Still, who are those foolish and incompetent wanderers of other religions to understand the Realized One's great analysis of deeds? If you would all listen, Ānanda, I will explain the Realized One's great analysis of deeds."[601]

7.1 "Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha explain the great analysis of deeds. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

7.3 "Well then, Ānanda, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

7.4 "Yes, sir," Ānanda replied. The Buddha said this:

8.1 "Ānanda, these four individuals are found in the world. What four? It's when an individual here kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct. They use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're covetous, malicious, and have wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

8.5 But some other individual here kills living creatures, steals, and commits sexual misconduct. They use speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're covetous, malicious, and have wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

8.7 But some other individual here refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, or using speech that's false, divi-

601. Text here reads *vibhajantassa*, which appears ungrammatical. This phrase is shared with AN 6.62:5.8, which is also a case where a junior monk has made a silly statement. There the Pali has *vibhajissāmi* ("I will explain"). The commentary does not explicitly comment on this phrase, but it does say that the Buddha thought, "I will make it clear for the mendicant Saṅgha" (*bhikkhusaṅghassa pākaṭaṁ karissāmīti*), which implies that it was reading the future tense. Compare the use of future tense in the stock phrase, "Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak" (MN 138:2.2).

sive, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

8.9 But some other individual here refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, or using speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're contented, kind-hearted, with right view. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

9.1 Now, some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right application of mind—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that it gives rise to clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman. With that clairvoyance they see that individual[602] here who killed living creatures, stole, and committed sexual misconduct; who used speech that's false, backbiting, harsh, or nonsensical; and who was covetous, malicious, and had wrong view. And they see that, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. They say: 'It seems, worthy sir, that there is such a thing as bad deeds, and the result of bad conduct.[603] For I have seen a individual here who killed living creatures … and had wrong view. And when their body broke up, after death, they were reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.'[604] They say: 'It seems that everyone who kills living creatures … and has wrong view is reborn in hell.[605] Those whose notion is this have the right

602. Meditation is described in the same way at DN 1:1.31.1, which is also concerned with those who draw inaccurate inferences from deep meditation.

603. The use of *kira* ("seems") conveys an appropriate degree of caution when framing a hypothesis. But as we shall see, the theorist does not maintain this.

604. Having framed their hypothesis, the theorist presents their supporting observations.

605. Now the theorist draws their inference, committing two logical fallacies. One is the fallacy of hasty generalization: the fact that *some people* who do bad deeds go to hell does not imply that *all people* who do bad deeds go to hell. The second is the post hoc fallacy: the fact that the bad deed *preceded* rebirth in hell does not imply that the bad deed *caused* rebirth in hell. The Buddha avoids the

notion. Those whose notion is otherwise have a wrong notion.'[606] And so they obstinately stick to what they have known, seen, and understood for themselves, insisting that: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.'[607]

10.1 But some other ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right application of mind—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that it gives rise to clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman. With that clairvoyance they see that individual here who killed living creatures … and had wrong view. And they see that they are reborn in a heavenly realm. They say: 'It seems that there is no such thing as bad deeds, and the result of bad conduct. For I have seen an individual here who killed living creatures … and had wrong view. And I saw that they were reborn in a heavenly realm.' They say: 'It seems that everyone who kills living creatures … and has wrong view is reborn in a heavenly realm. Those whose notion is this have the right notion. Those whose notion is otherwise have a wrong notion.' And so they

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fallacy of hasty generalization by surveying a much larger, statistically significant scope, said to be ninety-one eons (MN 71:14.2). And he avoids the post hoc fallacy by flipping the causal arrow: if the *presence* of kamma leads to rebirth, then the *absence* of kamma should lead to the ending of rebirth. By practicing to realize the ending of kamma he confirmed this for himself.

606. Leaving behind caution and going beyond observation, the theorist now asserts that the results of their reasoning are the truth. | Here words from the root √*ñā* are used for both right and wrong ideas. Normally I translate √*ñā* as "knowledge", but in English one cannot "know" something false. One might *believe* that it is nighttime when it is in fact the day, but one cannot *know* this. Usually √*ñā* does have the positive sense of "true knowledge", but when dealing with errant theorizers we also find it used for "false knowledge", in which case I use "notion" (eg. Snp 4.13:17.2).

607. Contemplatives sometimes deprecate logic as inferior to meditative insight. By not exercising the critical skills to evaluate and improve their reasoning, they become especially prone to using poor logic. The brilliance of meditative experiences can be overwhelming and it is easy to be convinced of the truth of one's inferences, without even recognizing them as inferences. Sutta passages such as this show that the interpretation of meditative experiences must be tempered with clear logic.

obstinately stick to what they have known, seen, and understood for themselves, insisting that: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.'

11.1 Take some ascetic or brahmin who with clairvoyance sees an individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view. And they see that they are reborn in a heavenly realm. They say: 'It seems that there is such a thing as good deeds, and the result of good conduct. For I have seen an individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view. And I saw that they were reborn in a heavenly realm.' They say: 'It seems that everyone who refrains from killing living creatures … and has right view is reborn in a heavenly realm. Those whose notion is this have the right notion. Those whose notion is otherwise have a wrong notion.' And so they obstinately stick to what they have known, seen, and understood for themselves, insisting that: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.'

12.1 Take some ascetic or brahmin who with clairvoyance sees an individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view. And they see that they are reborn in hell. They say: 'It seems that there is no such thing as good deeds, and the result of good conduct. For I have seen an individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view. And I saw that they were reborn in hell.' They say: 'It seems that everyone who refrains from killing living creatures … and has right view is reborn in hell. Those whose notion is this have the right notion. Those whose notion is otherwise have a wrong notion.' And so they obstinately stick to what they have known, seen, and understood for themselves, insisting that: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.'

13.1 In this case, when an ascetic or brahmin says this: 'It seems that there is such a thing as bad deeds, and the result of bad conduct,' I grant them that. And when they say: 'I have seen an individual here who killed living creatures … and had wrong view. And after death, they were reborn in hell,' I also grant them that. But when they say: 'It seems that everyone who kills living creatures … and has

wrong view is reborn in hell,' I don't grant them that. And when they say: 'Those whose notion is this have the right notion. Those whose notion is otherwise have a wrong notion.' I also don't grant them that. And when they obstinately stick to what they have known, seen, and understood for themselves, insisting that: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile,' I also don't grant them that. Why is that? Because the Realized One's knowledge of the great analysis of deeds is otherwise.

14.1 In this case, when an ascetic or brahmin says this: 'It seems that there is no such thing as bad deeds, and the result of bad conduct,' I don't grant them that. But when they say: 'I have seen an individual here who killed living creatures … and had wrong view. And I saw that they were reborn in a heavenly realm,' I grant them that. But when they say: 'It seems that everyone who kills living creatures … and has wrong view is reborn in a heavenly realm,' I don't grant them that. … Because the Realized One's knowledge of the great analysis of deeds is otherwise.

15.1 In this case, when an ascetic or brahmin says this: 'It seems that there is such a thing as good deeds, and the result of good conduct,' I grant them that. And when they say: 'I have seen an individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view. And I saw that they were reborn in a heavenly realm,' I also grant them that. But when they say: 'It seems that everyone who refrains from killing living creatures … and has right view is reborn in a heavenly realm,' I don't grant them that. … Because the Realized One's knowledge of the great analysis of deeds is otherwise.

16.1 In this case, when an ascetic or brahmin says this: 'It seems that there is no such thing as good deeds, and the result of good conduct,' I don't grant them that. But when they say: 'I have seen an individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view. And after death, they were reborn in hell,' I grant them that. But when they say: 'It seems that everyone who refrains from killing living creatures … and has right view is reborn in hell,' I don't grant them that. But when they say: 'Those whose notion is this have the

right notion. Those whose notion is otherwise have a wrong notion,' I also don't grant them that. And when they obstinately stick to what they have known, seen, and understood for themselves, insisting that: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile,' I also don't grant them that. Why is that? Because the Realized One's knowledge of the great analysis of deeds is otherwise.

17.1 Now, Ānanda, take the case of the individual here who killed living creatures … and had wrong view, and who, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. That bad deed of theirs that is to be experienced as painful was either done previously, or later, or else at the time of death they undertook wrong view.[608] And that's why, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. But anyone here who kills living creatures … and has wrong view experiences the result of that in this very life, or in the next life, or in some subsequent period.

18.1 Now, Ānanda, take the case of the individual here who killed living creatures … and had wrong view, and who is reborn in a heavenly realm. That good deed of theirs that is to be experienced as pleasurable was either done previously, or later, or else at the time of death they undertook right view. And that's why, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. But anyone here who kills living creatures … and has wrong view experiences the result of that in this very life, or in the next life, or in some subsequent period.

19.1 Now, Ānanda, take the case of the individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view, and who is reborn

608. The logic of this passage seems to be: "When a good result follows a bad deed, or bad follows good, then they must have done some other fitting deed at another time; and even if a bad result follows a bad deed, or good follows good, it is still possible that the result was caused by some other fitting deed." But the phrasing of the Pali does not quite say this. I suspect that some nuance has been lost, perhaps due to over-zealous standardization. | For deathbed kamma see MN 97:38.7 and note.

in a heavenly realm. That good deed of theirs that is to be experienced as pleasurable was either done previously, or later, or else at the time of death they undertook right view. And that's why, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. But anyone here who refrains from killing living creatures … and has right view experiences the result of that in this very life, or in the next life, or in some subsequent period.

20.1 Now, Ānanda, take the case of the individual here who refrained from killing living creatures … and had right view, and who is reborn in hell. That bad deed of theirs that is to be experienced as painful was either done previously, or later, or else at the time of death they undertook wrong view. And that's why, when their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. But anyone here who refrains from killing living creatures … and has right view experiences the result of that in this very life, or in the next life, or in some subsequent period.

21.1 So, Ānanda, there are deeds that are ineffective and appear ineffective. There are deeds that are ineffective but appear effective. There are deeds that are effective and appear effective. And there are deeds that are effective but appear ineffective."

21.2 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda approved what the Buddha said.

MN 137

The Analysis of the Six Sense Fields

Saḷāyatanavibhaṅgasutta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I shall teach you the analysis of the six sense fields.[609] 2.1 Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.3

"'The six interior sense fields should be understood. The six exterior sense fields should be understood. The six classes of consciousness should be understood. The six classes of contact should be understood. The eighteen mental preoccupations should be understood. The thirty-six positions of sentient beings should be understood. Therein, relying on this, give up that. The Noble One cultivates the establishment of mindfulness in three cases, by virtue of which they are a Teacher worthy to instruct a group. Of all meditation tutors, it is he that is called the supreme guide for those fit for training.' This is the summary recital for the analysis of the six sense fields. 3.1

'The six interior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are the sense fields of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. 'The six interior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. 4.1

609. Here and at MN 139:2.1 the Buddha only announces that he will teach the analysis, but proceeds to give the recitation passage as well. Contrast with MN 133:6.2 and MN 138:4.2.

5.1 'The six exterior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are the sense fields of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. 'The six exterior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

6.1 'The six classes of consciousness should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousness. 'The six classes of consciousness should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

7.1 'The six classes of contact should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There is contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. 'The six classes of contact should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

8.1 'The eighteen mental preoccupations should be understood.'[610] That's what I said, but why did I say it? Seeing a sight with their eyes, one is preoccupied with a sight that's a basis for happiness or sadness or equanimity. Hearing a sound with their ears … Smelling an odor with their nose … Tasting a flavor with their tongue …

8.7 Encountering a touch with their body … Becoming conscious of an idea with their mind, one is preoccupied with an idea that's a basis for happiness or sadness or equanimity. So there are six preoccupations with happiness, six preoccupations with sadness, and six preoccupations with equanimity. 'The eighteen mental preoccupations should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

9.1 'The thirty-six positions of sentient beings should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are six kinds of domestic happiness and six kinds of renunciate happiness. There are six kinds of domestic sadness and six kinds of renunciate sadness. There are six kinds of domestic equanimity and six kinds of renunciate equanimity.

610. Also at MN 140:10.1, SN 36.22:2.15, and AN 3.61:12.1. Outside of this context, *upavicāra* is only found in AN 6.52, where women are "preoccupied" with adornments and thieves are "preoccupied" with a hiding place.

And in this context what are the six kinds of domestic happiness? 10.1
There are sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasing, connected with the worldly pleasures of the flesh. Happiness arises when you regard it as a gain to obtain such sights, or when you recollect sights you formerly obtained that have passed, ceased, and perished. Such happiness is called domestic happiness. There are sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body … Ideas known by the mind, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasing, connected with the worldly pleasures of the flesh. Happiness arises when you regard it as a gain to obtain such ideas, or when you recollect ideas you formerly obtained that have passed, ceased, and perished. Such happiness is called domestic happiness. These are the six kinds of domestic happiness.

And in this context what are the six kinds of renunciate happi- 11.1
ness? When you've understood the impermanence of sights—their perishing, fading away, and cessation—happiness arises as you truly understand through right understanding that both formerly and now all those sights are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Such happiness is called renunciate happiness. When you've understood the impermanence of sounds … smells … tastes … touches … ideas—their perishing, fading away, and cessation—happiness arises as you truly understand through right understanding that both formerly and now all those ideas are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Such happiness is called renunciate happiness. These are the six kinds of renunciate happiness.

And in this context what are the six kinds of domestic sadness? 12.1
There are sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasing, connected with the worldly pleasures of the flesh. Sadness arises when you regard it as a loss to lose such sights, or when you recollect sights you formerly lost that have passed, ceased, and perished. Such sadness is called domestic sadness. There are sounds known by the ear … There are smells known by the nose … There are tastes known by the tongue … There are touches known

by the body … There are ideas known by the mind, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasing, connected with the worldly pleasures of the flesh. Sadness arises when you regard it as a loss to lose such ideas, or when you recollect ideas you formerly lost that have passed, ceased, and perished. Such sadness is called domestic sadness. These are the six kinds of domestic sadness.

13.1 And in this context what are the six kinds of renunciate sadness? When you've understood the impermanence of sights—their perishing, fading away, and cessation—you truly understand through right understanding that both formerly and now all those sights are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Upon seeing this, you give rise to longing for the supreme liberations: 'Oh, when will I enter and remain in the same dimension that the noble ones enter and remain in today?' When you give rise to longing for the supreme liberations like this, sadness arises because of the longing.[611] Such sadness is called renunciate sadness. When you've understood the impermanence of sounds … smells … tastes … touches … ideas—their perishing, fading away, and cessation—you truly understand through right understanding that both formerly and now all those ideas are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Upon seeing this, you give rise to longing for the supreme liberations: 'Oh, when will I enter and remain in the same dimension that the noble ones enter and remain in today?' When you give rise to longing for the supreme liberations like this, sadness arises because of the longing. Such sadness is called renunciate sadness. These are the six kinds of renunciate sadness.

14.1 And in this context what are the six kinds of domestic equanimity? When seeing a sight with their eyes, equanimity arises for the unlearned ordinary person—a foolish ordinary person who has not overcome their limitations and the results of deeds, and is blind to the drawbacks. Such equanimity does not transcend the sight. That's why it's called domestic equanimity. When hearing a sound with

611. See note at MN 44:28.6.

their ears … When smelling an odor with their nose … When tasting a flavor with their tongue … When encountering a touch with their body … When knowing an idea with their mind, equanimity arises for the unlearned ordinary person—a foolish ordinary person who has not overcome their limitations and the results of deeds, and is blind to the drawbacks. Such equanimity does not transcend the idea. That's why it's called domestic equanimity. These are the six kinds of domestic equanimity.

And in this context what are the six kinds of renunciate equanimity? When you've understood the impermanence of sights—their perishing, fading away, and cessation—equanimity arises as you truly understand through right understanding that both formerly and now all those sights are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Such equanimity transcends the sight. That's why it's called renunciate equanimity. When you've understood the impermanence of sounds … smells … tastes … touches … ideas—their perishing, fading away, and cessation—equanimity arises as you truly understand through right understanding that both formerly and now all those ideas are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Such equanimity transcends the idea. That's why it's called renunciate equanimity. These are the six kinds of renunciate equanimity. 'The thirty-six positions of sentient beings should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. 15.1

'Therein, relying on this, give up that.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? 16.1

Therein, by relying and depending on the six kinds of renunciate happiness, give up and go beyond the six kinds of domestic happiness. That's how they are given up. 16.3

Therein, by relying on the six kinds of renunciate sadness, give up the six kinds of domestic sadness. That's how they are given up. 16.5

Therein, by relying on the six kinds of renunciate equanimity, give up the six kinds of domestic equanimity. That's how they are given up. 16.7

16.9 Therein, by relying on the six kinds of renunciate happiness, give up the six kinds of renunciate sadness. That's how they are given up.

16.11 Therein, by relying on the six kinds of renunciate equanimity, give up the six kinds of renunciate happiness. That's how they are given up.

17.1 There is equanimity that is diversified, based on diversity, and equanimity that is unified, based on unity.

18.1 And what is equanimity based on diversity? There is equanimity toward sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. This is equanimity based on diversity.

19.1 And what is equanimity based on unity? There is equanimity based on the dimensions of infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, and neither perception nor non-perception. This is equanimity based on unity.

20.1 Therein, relying on equanimity based on unity, give up equanimity based on diversity. That's how it is given up.

20.3 Relying on not being determined by that, give up equanimity based on unity. That's how it is given up. 'Therein, relying on this, give up that.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

21.1 'The Noble One cultivates the establishment of mindfulness in three cases, by virtue of which they are a Teacher worthy to instruct a group.'[612] That's what I said, but why did I say it?

22.1 The first case is when the Teacher teaches Dhamma to his disciples out of kindness and sympathy: 'This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.' But their disciples don't want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They proceed having turned away from the Teacher's instruction. In this case the Realized One is not unhappy, he does not feel unhappiness. He remains unfestering,

612. The text has a unique teaching of three *satipaṭṭhānas* ("establishments of mindfulness").

mindful and aware.[613] This is the first case in which the Noble One cultivates the establishment of mindfulness.

The next case is when the Teacher teaches Dhamma to his disci- 23.1
ples out of kindness and sympathy: 'This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.' And some of their disciples don't want to listen. They don't actively listen or try to understand. They proceed having turned away from the Teacher's instruction. But some of their disciples do want to listen. They actively listen and try to understand. They don't proceed having turned away from the Teacher's instruction. In this case the Realized One is not unhappy, nor is he happy. Shunning both unhappiness and happiness, he remains equanimous, mindful and aware. This is the second case in which the Noble One cultivates the establishment of mindfulness.

The next case is when the Teacher teaches Dhamma to his disci- 24.1
ples out of kindness and sympathy: 'This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.' And their disciples want to listen. They actively listen and try to understand. They don't proceed having turned away from the Teacher's instruction. In this case the Realized One is happy, he does feel happiness. He remains unfestering, mindful and aware. This is the third case in which the Noble One cultivates the establishment of mindfulness. 'The Noble One cultivates the establishment of mindfulness in three cases, by virtue of which they are a Teacher worthy to instruct a group.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

'Of all meditation tutors, it is he that is called the supreme guide 25.1
for those fit for training.' That's what I said, but why did I say it?

613. In the Pali manuscripts and commentary, the Burmese manuscripts appear to be alone in having the negative form *anattamana* ("unhappy"). The Chinese parallel, however, supports the negative form (MA 163 at T i 693c29). | The commentarial derivation of *attamana* as "self-mind" (= *sakamana*, "own-mind") is unsatisfactory. Read with Sanskrit *āttamanas* or *ādattamanas* ("uplifted mind", "smiling mind").

Driven by an elephant trainer, an elephant in training proceeds in just one direction:[614] east, west, north, or south.

26.1 Driven by a horse trainer, a horse in training proceeds in just one direction: east, west, north, or south. Driven by an ox trainer, an ox in training proceeds in just one direction: east, west, north, or south. But driven by the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, a person in training proceeds in eight directions:[615]

27.1 Having physical form, they see forms. This is the first direction. Not perceiving physical form internally, they see forms externally. This is the second direction. They're focused only on beauty. This is the third direction. Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fourth direction. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth direction. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth direction. Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh direction. Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth direction. Driven by the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, a person in training proceeds in these eight directions.

28.1 'Of all meditation tutors, it is he that is called the supreme guide for those fit for training.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it."

614. It seems that the text is punning *sārita* ("driving") with *sārathi* ("charioteer").

615. Here follow the eight liberations, which show the course of practice for realizing the highest form of "equanimity based on unity".

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 28.3

MN 138

A Summary Recital and its Analysis

Uddesavibhaṅgasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, I shall teach you a summary recital and its analysis. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.3 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "A mendicant should examine in whatever way such that, while examining, consciousness would neither be scattered nor diffused externally, nor stuck internally, and they would not be anxious because of grasping.[616] When consciousness is neither scattered nor diffused externally, nor stuck internally, and they are not anxious because of grasping, there is no coming to be of the origin of suffering—of rebirth, old age, and death in the future."

4.1 That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling.[617]

5.1 Soon after the Buddha left, those mendicants considered, "The Buddha gave this brief summary recital, then entered his dwelling

616. Also at Iti 94:2.1. | For *vikkhittaṁ visataṁ*, see AN 5.51:3.4, where a river is "dispersed and displaced"; AN 4.246:3.4, where a lion ensures that his limbs are not "disordered or displaced"; SN 51.20:6.2. At SN 51.20 the four bases of psychic power are "scattered and diffused" due to sensual pleasures. | *Asaṇṭhita* in the sense "not stuck" is also found in the phrase "not stuck in the formless" at Snp 3.12:49.2 = Iti 51:3.2 = Iti 73:4.2. See also SN 22.70:1.4, and the phrase "when I stood still, I went under" at SN 1.1:1.7. | Read *cassa* as "and there would be" rather than "and for him", because it parallels *sati* ("there is") in the next line.

617. See note at MN 133:6.2.

without explaining the meaning in detail. Who can explain in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha?"

Then those mendicants thought, "This Venerable Mahākaccāna 5.6
is praised by the Buddha and esteemed by his sensible spiritual companions.[618] He is capable of explaining in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha. Let's go to him, and ask him about this matter."

Then those mendicants went to Mahākaccāna, and exchanged 6.1
greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. They told him what had happened, and said, "May Venerable Mahākaccāna please explain this."

"Reverends, suppose there was a person in need of heartwood. 7.1
And while wandering in search of heartwood he'd come across a large tree standing with heartwood. But he'd pass over the roots and trunk, imagining that the heartwood should be sought in the branches and leaves. Such is the consequence for the venerables. Though you were face to face with the Buddha, you bypassed him, imagining that you should ask me about this matter. For he is the Buddha, the one who knows and sees. He is vision, he is knowledge, he is the manifestation of principle, he is the manifestation of divinity. He is the preacher, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the bestower of freedom from death, the lord of truth, the Realized One. That was the time to approach the Buddha and ask about this matter. You should have remembered it in line with the Buddha's answer."

"Certainly he is the Buddha, the one who knows and sees. He 8.1
is vision, he is knowledge, he is the manifestation of principle, he is the manifestation of divinity. He is the preacher, the proclaimer, the elucidator of meaning, the bestower of freedom from death, the lord of truth, the Realized One. That was the time to approach the Buddha and ask about this matter. We should have remembered it in line with the Buddha's answer. Still, Venerable Mahākaccāna is praised by the Buddha and esteemed by his sensible spiritual com-

618. See note at MN 18:10.9.

panions. He is capable of explaining in detail the meaning of this brief summary recital given by the Buddha. Please explain this, if it's no trouble."

9.1 "Well then, reverends, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

9.2 "Yes, reverend," they replied. Venerable Mahākaccāna said this:

9.4 "Reverends, the Buddha gave this brief summary recital, then entered his dwelling without explaining the meaning in detail: 'A mendicant should examine in whatever way such that, while examining, consciousness would neither be scattered nor diffused externally, nor stuck internally, and they would not be anxious because of grasping. When consciousness is neither scattered nor diffused externally, nor stuck internally, and they are not anxious because of grasping, there is no coming to be of the origin of suffering—of rebirth, old age, and death in the future.' This is how I understand the detailed meaning of this summary recital.

10.1 How is consciousness said to be scattered and diffused externally? In this case, when a mendicant sees a sight with their eyes, and consciousness follows after the features of that sight—tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in its features—consciousness is said to be scattered and diffused externally.[619] When they hear a sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know an idea with their mind, and consciousness follows after the features of that idea—tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in its features—consciousness is said to be scattered and diffused externally. That's how consciousness is said to be scattered and diffused externally.

11.1 And how is consciousness said to be not scattered and diffused externally? In this case, when a mendicant sees a sight with their

619. "Features" (*nimitta*) are the aspects of sense experience that provoke a response. Compare the standard passage on sense restraint (eg. MN 27:15.1), and MN 137:8.3, where one is "preoccupied" with a sight giving rise to pleasure, etc.

eyes, but consciousness does not follow after the features of that sight—not tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in its features—consciousness is said to be not scattered and diffused externally. When they hear a sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know an idea with their mind, but consciousness does not follow after the features of that idea—not tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in its features—consciousness is said to be not scattered and diffused externally. That's how consciousness is said to be not scattered and diffused externally.

And how is it said to be stuck internally?[620] Take a mendicant 12.1
who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. When consciousness follows after that rapture and bliss born of seclusion—tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that rapture and bliss born of seclusion—the mind is said to be stuck internally.[621]

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected 13.1
are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. When consciousness follows after that rapture and bliss born of immersion—tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that rapture and bliss born of immersion—the mind is said to be stuck internally.

620. In the main summary, consciousness is the subject of each of the three clauses. When the clauses are separated out, the subject is left implicit.

621. *Samādhi* is the outcome of letting go (SN 48.9:4.2). This passage reminds us that letting go also applies to *samādhi* itself, so one should not be content to rest on one's laurels. | Note that in this section, with its focus on states of absorption, Mahākaccāna shifts from "consciousness" (*viññāṇa*) to "mind" (*citta*).

14.1 Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' When consciousness follows after that equanimity—tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that bliss with equanimity—the mind is said to be stuck internally.[622]

15.1 Furthermore, with the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. When consciousness follows after that neutral feeling—tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that neutral feeling—the mind is said to be stuck internally. That's how it is said to be stuck internally.

16.1 And how is it said to be not stuck internally? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. When consciousness does not follow after that rapture and bliss born of seclusion—not tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that rapture and bliss born of seclusion—the mind is said to be not stuck internally.[623]

17.1 Furthermore, they enter the second absorption … When consciousness does not follow after that rapture and bliss born of immersion—not tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that rapture and bliss born of immersion—the mind is said to be not stuck internally.

18.1 Furthermore, they enter and remain in the third absorption … When consciousness does not follow after that equanimity—not

622. Text has "equanimity" in the first case, "bliss with equanimity" subsequently.

623. The solution to being "stuck internally" is to continually deepen *samādhi* by deepening letting go, not, as taught by some 20th century meditation teachers, to avoid it out of fear of becoming attached.

tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that bliss with equanimity—the mind is said to be not stuck internally.

Furthermore, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption … 19.1
When consciousness does not follow after that neutral feeling—not tied, attached, and fettered to gratification in that neutral feeling—the mind is said to be not stuck internally. That's how it is said to be not stuck internally.

And how is it anxious because of grasping?[624] It's when an un- 20.1
learned ordinary person has not seen the noble ones, and is neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've not seen true persons, and are neither skilled nor trained in the teaching of the true persons. They regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. But that form decays and perishes, and consciousness latches on to the perishing of form. Anxieties occupy the mind, born of latching on to the perishing of form, and originating in accordance with natural principles. So it becomes frightened, worried, concerned, and anxious because of grasping. They regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. But that consciousness decays and perishes, and consciousness latches on to the perishing of consciousness. Anxieties occupy the mind, born of latching on to the perishing of consciousness, and originating in accordance with natural principles. So it becomes frightened, worried, concerned, and anxious because of grasping. That's how it is anxious because of grasping.

And how is it not anxious because of grasping? It's when a learned 21.1
noble disciple has seen the noble ones, and is skilled and trained in the teaching of the noble ones. They've seen true persons, and are

624. All Pali editions read "anxious because of not grasping". Implausible though it is, this is accepted by the commentary, which offers an explanation. The Saṁyuttanikāya, however, has several similar passages that consistently have the expected "anxious because of grasping" (SN 22.7, SN 22.8, SN 22.90:3.13). It seems the Majjhima preserves an ancient error and the Saṁyutta reading should be preferred.

skilled and trained in the teaching of the true persons. They don't regard form as self, self as having form, form in self, or self in form. When that form decays and perishes, consciousness doesn't latch on to the perishing of form. Anxieties—born of latching on to the perishing of form and originating in accordance with natural principles—don't occupy the mind. So it does not become frightened, worried, concerned, or anxious because of grasping. They don't regard feeling … perception … choices … consciousness as self, self as having consciousness, consciousness in self, or self in consciousness. When that consciousness decays and perishes, consciousness doesn't latch on to the perishing of consciousness. Anxieties—born of latching on to the perishing of consciousness and originating in accordance with natural principles—don't occupy the mind. So it does not become frightened, worried, concerned, or anxious because of grasping. That's how it is not anxious because of grasping.

22.1 The Buddha gave this brief summary recital, then entered his dwelling without explaining the meaning in detail: 'A mendicant should examine in whatever way such that, while examining, consciousness would neither be scattered nor diffused externally, nor stuck internally, and they would not be anxious because of grasping. When consciousness is neither scattered nor diffused externally, nor stuck internally, and they are not anxious because of grasping, there is no coming to be of the origin of suffering—of rebirth, old age, and death in the future.' And this is how I understand the detailed meaning of this summary recital. If you wish, you may go to the Buddha and ask him about this. You should remember it in line with the Buddha's answer."

23.1 Then those mendicants, approving and agreeing with what Mahākaccāna said, rose from their seats and went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened, adding:

23.14 "Mahākaccāna clearly explained the meaning to us in this manner, with these words and phrases."

24.1 "Mahākaccāna is astute, mendicants, he has great wisdom. If you came to me and asked this question, I would answer it in exactly the

same way as Mahākaccāna. That is what it means, and that's how you should remember it."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 24.4

MN 139

The Analysis of No Strife

Araṇavibhaṅgasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, I shall teach you the analysis of no strife.[625] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.3 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "Don't indulge in sensual pleasure, which is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. And don't indulge in self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and pointless.[626] Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One understood the middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment. Know what it means to flatter and to rebuke. Knowing these, avoid them, and just teach Dhamma. Know how to evaluate different kinds of pleasure. Knowing this, pursue inner pleasure. Don't talk behind people's backs, and don't speak sharply in their presence. Don't speak hurriedly. Don't insist

625. Rig Vedic *raṇa* usually means "joy, delight" (eg. 8.96.16, 10.104.7) or occasionally "war, strife" (6.15.5, 10.112.10, 10.113.4). | See note on MN 137:2.1.

626. This is adapted from the first sermon; text has *kāmasukhamanuyuñjeyya* which is a briefer expression that the original *kāmesu kāmasukhallikānuyogo* at SN 56.11:2.3.

on popular definitions and don't overstep normal labels.[627] This is the summary recital for the analysis of no strife.

'Don't indulge in sensual pleasure, which is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. And don't indulge in self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and pointless.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? Indulging in the happiness of the pleasure linked to sensuality is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. It is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. Breaking off such indulgence is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. Indulging in self-mortification is painful, ignoble, and pointless. It is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. Breaking off such indulgence is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. 'Don't indulge in sensual pleasure, which is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. And don't indulge in self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and pointless.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. 4.1

'Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One understood the middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. 'Avoiding these two extremes, the Realized One understood the middle way of practice, which gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. 5.1

'Know what it means to flatter and to rebuke. Knowing these, avoid them, and just teach Dhamma.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? 6.1

627. "Popular definitions" is *janapadanirutti*. | *Samaññā* ("label", Sanskrit *samājñā*) ought not be confused with *sāmaññā* ("agreement", "equality", Sanskrit *sāmānya*).

7.1 And how is there flattering and rebuking without teaching Dhamma? 'All those who indulge in the happiness of the pleasure linked to sensuality—low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless—are beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the wrong way.' In speaking like this, one rebukes some here.

7.4 'All those who have broken off indulging in the happiness of the pleasure linked to sensuality are free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the right way.' In speaking like this, one flatters some here.

7.6 'All those who indulge in self-mortification—painful, ignoble, and pointless—are beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the wrong way.' In speaking like this, one rebukes some here.

7.8 'All those who have broken off indulging in self-mortification are free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the right way.' In speaking like this, one flatters some here.

7.10 'All those who have not given up the fetter of continued existence are beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the wrong way.' In speaking like this, one rebukes some here.

7.12 'All those who have given up the fetter of continued existence are free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the right way.' In speaking like this, one flatters some here. That's how there is flattering and rebuking without teaching Dhamma.

8.1 And how is there neither flattering nor rebuking, and just teaching Dhamma? You don't say: 'All those who indulge in the happiness of the pleasure linked to sensuality—low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless—are beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the wrong way.' Rather, by saying this you just teach Dhamma: 'The indulgence is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way.'

8.7 You don't say: 'All those who have broken off indulging in the happiness of the pleasure linked to sensuality are free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the right way.' Rather, by

saying this you just teach Dhamma: 'Breaking off the indulgence is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way.'

You don't say: 'All those who indulge in self-mortification— 8.12
painful, ignoble, and pointless—are beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the wrong way.' Rather, by saying this you just teach Dhamma: 'The indulgence is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way.'

You don't say: 'All those who have broken off indulging in self- 8.17
mortification are free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the right way.' Rather, by saying this you just teach Dhamma: 'Breaking off the indulgence is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way.'

You don't say: 'All those who have not given up the fetter of con- 8.22
tinued existence are beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the wrong way.' Rather, by saying this you just teach Dhamma: 'When the fetter of continued existence is not given up, continued existence is also not given up.'

You don't say: 'All those who have given up the fetter of continued 8.26
existence are free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and they are practicing the right way.' Rather, by saying this you just teach Dhamma: 'When the fetter of continued existence is given up, continued existence is also given up.' That's how there is neither flattering nor rebuking, and just teaching Dhamma. 'Know what it means to flatter and to rebuke. Knowing these, avoid them, and just teach Dhamma.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

'Know how to evaluate different kinds of pleasure. Knowing this, 9.1
pursue inner pleasure.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are these five kinds of sensual stimulation. What five? Sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear … Smells known by the nose … Tastes known by the tongue … Touches known by the body, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation. The pleasure and happiness that arise from these five kinds of sensual stimulation is

called sensual pleasure—a filthy, common, ignoble pleasure. Such pleasure should not be cultivated or developed, but should be feared, I say. Now, take a mendicant who, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption … third absorption … fourth absorption. This is called the pleasure of renunciation, the pleasure of seclusion, the pleasure of peace, the pleasure of awakening. Such pleasure should be cultivated and developed, and should not be feared, I say. 'Know how to evaluate different kinds of pleasure. Knowing this, pursue inner pleasure.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

10.1 'Don't talk behind people's backs, and don't speak sharply in their presence.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? When you know that what you say behind someone's back is untrue, false, and pointless, then to the best of your ability you should not speak. When you know that what you say behind someone's back is true and correct, but pointless, then you should train yourself not to speak. When you know that what you say behind someone's back is true, correct, and beneficial, then you should know the right time to speak. When you know that your sharp words in someone's presence are untrue, false, and pointless, then to the best of your ability you should not speak. When you know that your sharp words in someone's presence are true and correct, but pointless, then you should train yourself not to speak. When you know that your sharp words in someone's presence are true, correct, and beneficial, then you should know the right time to speak. 'Don't talk behind people's backs, and don't speak sharply in their presence.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

11.1 'Don't speak hurriedly.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? When speaking hurriedly, your body gets tired, your mind gets stressed, your voice gets stressed, your throat gets sore, and your words become unclear and hard to understand. When not speaking hurriedly, your body doesn't get tired, your mind doesn't get

stressed, your voice doesn't get stressed, your throat doesn't get sore, and your words are clear and easy to understand. 'Don't speak hurriedly.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

'Don't insist on popular definitions and don't overstep normal labels.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? And how do you insist on popular definitions and overstep normal labels?[628] It's when among different populations they label the same thing as a 'cup', a 'bowl', a 'jar', a 'scoop', a 'vessel', a 'dish', or a 'plate'.[629] And however it is known among those various populations, you speak accordingly, obstinately sticking to that and insisting: 'This is the only truth, anything else is futile.' That's how you insist on popular definitions and overstep normal labels. 12.1

And how do you not insist on popular definitions and overstep normal labels? It's when among different populations they label the same thing as a 'cup', a 'bowl', a 'jar', a 'scoop', a 'vessel', a 'dish', or a 'plate'. And however it is known among those various populations, you speak accordingly, thinking: 'It seems that the venerables are referring to this.' That's how you don't insist on popular definitions 12.8

628. None of the terms below are regional or dialectical, so *janapadanirutti* means "expressions current among the people", "popular terms", "common vernacular" rather than "regional dialects". | A Sanskrit fragment paralleling this passage lists various words for "person", which likewise are not regional or dialectical terms (SHT ii 163aA3: *(jīvo) vā jantur-vā (poṣo) vā pudgalo vā manujo*).

629. All these terms are either attested in Pali and/or Sanskrit or are readily explicable from Pali roots. This is not about "translating" the Dhamma wholesale, but about using different popular terms, as in the U.S. they refer to the same thing as "soda" or "pop". | *Pātī* ("cup") is from the root √*pā*, "to drink", used in Pali for cups of bronze, gold, or silver. | *Patta* ("bowl"), the masculine form of the same root, is the standard word for a mendicant's alms bowl. | For *vittha* ("jar"; variants *vitta*, *piṭṭha*) see *vitthaka*, a small jar for sewing gear (Kd 15:11.5.15). | *Sarāva* ("scoop") is a common word for a scoop for water (eg. AN 3.57:3.2, Kd 15:14.3.30, Kv 1.1:356.6; Sanskrit *śarāva*, eg. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.1.4.12; Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.8.1; Manu 6.56; also in Jain texts). | For *dhāropa* ("vessel") accept variant *harosa* by analogy with *puṭosa* (MN 118:8.9), yielding the sense "carrier for food", "vessel". | *Poṇa* ("dish") is probably a concave dish with "sloped" sides (cp. English "hollowware"). | *Pisīlava* ("plate") was used for the butter placed on the altar (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 2.5.3.6: *piśīle vā pātryau vā*).

and don't overstep normal labels. 'Don't insist on popular definitions and don't overstep normal labels.'[630] That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

13.1 Now, mendicants, indulging in the happiness of the pleasure linked to sensuality is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. It is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Breaking off such indulgence is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

13.7 Indulging in self-mortification is painful, ignoble, and pointless. It is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Breaking off such indulgence is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

13.13 The middle way of practice that was understood by the Realized One gives vision and knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, awakening, and extinguishment. It is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

13.16 Flattering and rebuking without teaching Dhamma is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Neither flattering nor rebuking, and just teaching Dhamma is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

13.22 Sensual pleasure—a filthy, common, ignoble pleasure—is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. The pleasure of renunciation, the pleasure of seclusion, the pleasure of peace, the pleasure of awakening is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

630. This passage should be read with Kd 15:33.1.5. There, the Pali depicts the Buddha allowing individual glosses to terms (*sakāya niruttiya*).

Saying untrue, false, and pointless things behind someone's back 13.28
is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Saying true and correct, but pointless things behind someone's back is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Saying true, correct, and beneficial things behind someone's back is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

Saying untrue, false, and pointless things in someone's presence 13.37
is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Saying true and correct, but pointless things in someone's presence is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Saying true, correct, and beneficial things in someone's presence is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

Speaking hurriedly is a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and 13.46
fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Speaking unhurriedly is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

Insisting on popular definitions and overriding common usage is 13.52
a principle beset by pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the wrong way. That's why this is a principle beset by strife. Not insisting on popular definitions and not overriding common usage is a principle free of pain, harm, stress, and fever, and it is the right way. That's why this is a principle free of strife.

So you should train like this: 'We shall know the principles be- 14.1
set by strife and the principles free of strife. Knowing this, we will practice the way free of strife.'

14.3 And, mendicants, the gentleman Subhūti practices the way free of strife."[631]

14.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

631. This was apparently prompted by Subhūti's support of his fellow monk Saddha (AN 11.14), for which he was declared the foremost in living without strife (AN 1.201:1.1; he was additionally praised as worthy of donations (AN 1.202:1.1). Subhūti's meditation is praised at Ud 6.7, and his verse opens the Theragāthā at Thag 1.1.

MN 140

The Analysis of the Elements

Dhātuvibhaṅgasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was wandering in 1.1
the Magadhan lands when he arrived at Rājagaha. He went to see Bhaggava the potter, and said,[632] "Bhaggava, if it is no trouble, I'd like to spend a single night in your workshop."

"It's no trouble, sir. But there's a renunciate already staying there. 2.2
If he allows it, sir, you may stay as long as you please."

Now at that time a gentleman named Pukkusāti had gone forth 3.1
out of faith from the lay life to homelessness in the Buddha's name.[633]

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632. The Bhaggava clan was descended from the ancient sage Bhagu (Sanskrit Bhṛgu). They received the gift of fire conveyed by Mātariśvan the wind from the god Agni (eg. Rig Veda 1.60.1). In Pali they appear as potters (MN 81:19.3, SN 1.50:11.2, SN 2.24:12.2), unless they have gone forth (DN 24:1.1.6). Archaeologists refer to the strata around the Buddha's time as the Northern Black Polished Ware culture on account of the distinctive highly glazed polish that was achieved on the pottery of the time. This, together with the production of iron, marked a significant advance in the mastery of fire. Thus potters were no mere humble craftsmen, but leading technological innovators.

633. Buddhist texts of the middle period—starting a few centuries after the Buddha—share the story that Pukkusāti had been the king of Taxila in Gandhāra, who went forth out of faith upon reading texts of the Dhamma sent by his friend and ally, Bimbisāra. This story is found in detail in the Pali commentary to this sutta, and more briefly in several canonical texts of the northern traditions (T 211 at T iv 580c19; T 511 at T xiv 779a; Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya 3.2.26, which spells his name *puṣkarasāri*, the same name as the brahmin known in Pali as Pokkharasāti). Texts of this period also know of a script called *puṣkarasāri* (Lalitavistara 10, Vaidya 87; Mahāvastu 14, Senart 1.135). This would presumably have been the writing system in the city of Puṣkarāvati, another city in Gandhāra, the region where the oldest surviving Buddhist manuscripts have been found. The details of the Pukkusāti legend are improbable and it is mostly likely an origin myth suggested by the similarity of his name with Puṣkarāvati,

And it was he who had first taken up residence in the workshop. Then the Buddha approached Venerable Pukkusāti and said, "Mendicant, if it is no trouble, I'd like to spend a single night in the workshop."[634]

3.5 "The potter's workshop is spacious, reverend. Stay as long as you please."

4.1 Then the Buddha entered the workshop and spread out a grass mat to one side. He sat down cross-legged, set his body straight, and brought mindfulness to the present. He spent much of the night sitting in meditation, and so did Pukkusāti.

4.4 Then it occurred to the Buddha, "This gentleman's behavior is impressive.[635] Why don't I question him?"

4.7 So the Buddha said to Pukkusāti, "In whose name have you gone forth, mendicant? Who is your Teacher? Whose teaching do you believe in?"

5.2 "Reverend, there is the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' I've gone forth in his name. That Blessed One is my Teacher, and I believe in his teaching."

5.8 "But mendicant, where is the Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?"

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authorizing the establishment of the Dhamma in Gandhāra in the post-Ashokan period, as well as offering a precedent for the writing down of the Dhamma.

634. The Buddha addresses Pukkusāti as "mendicant" (*bhikkhu*), implicitly recognizing him as a Buddhist monk (compare MN 26:24.5 = MN 85:48.5), while Pukkusāti uses the respectful familiar form "reverend" (*āvuso*).

635. He had been sitting most of the night in meditation, indicating that he had already mastered immersion to a substantial degree. The commentary says that he had in fact attained the fourth absorption based on mindfulness of breathing.

"In the northern lands there is a city named Sāvatthī.[636] There the Blessed One is now staying, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha." 5.9

"But have you ever seen that Buddha? Would you recognize him if you saw him?" 5.11

"No, I've never seen him, and I wouldn't recognize him if I did."[637] 5.13

Then it occurred to the Buddha, "This gentleman has gone forth in my name. Why don't I teach him the Dhamma?"[638] 6.1

So the Buddha said to Pukkusāti, "Mendicant, I shall teach you the Dhamma. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 6.4

"Yes, reverend," replied Pukkusāti. The Buddha said this: 6.7

"'This person has six elements, six fields of contact, eighteen mental preoccupations, and four foundations.[639] Where they stand, the streams of conceiving do not flow. And where the streams of conceiving do not flow, they are called a sage at peace. Do not neglect wisdom; preserve truth; foster generosity; and train only for peace.' This is the summary recital for the analysis of the elements. 7.1

'This person has six elements.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are these six elements: the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness.[640] 'This person has six elements.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. 8.1

'This person has six fields of contact.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? The fields of contact of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, 9.1

636. Compare AN 2.37:4.2, where Sāvatthī is said to be in the east (probably from Madhurā).

637. Despite his wisdom, Pukkusāti fails to recognize the Buddha. In other cases such failure is a narrative indication of spiritual blindness (Ajātasattu at DN 2:11.2 and the park keeper at MN 31:3.4 = MN 128:0.2 = Kd 10:4.2.3).

638. The Buddha leads by persuading with the Dhamma, rather than by revealing his identity.

639. The six elements, six fields of contact, eighteen mental preoccupations are taught at AN 3.61:9.3ff., where they are followed by the four noble truths.

640. First the Buddha establishes the fundamental scope of his teaching. The elements describe the world as it is, and on them the course of meditation is based. The extension of the four elements to six hints at the practice of formless attainments.

and mind. 'This person has six fields of contact.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

10.1 'This person has eighteen mental preoccupations.'[641] That's what I said, but why did I say it? Seeing a sight with their eyes, one is preoccupied with a sight that's a basis for happiness or sadness or equanimity. Hearing a sound with their ears … Smelling an odor with their nose … Tasting a flavor with their tongue …

10.7 Encountering a touch with their body … Becoming conscious of an idea with their mind, one is preoccupied with an idea that's a basis for happiness or sadness or equanimity. So there are six preoccupations with happiness, six preoccupations with sadness, and six preoccupations with equanimity. 'This person has eighteen mental preoccupations.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

11.1 'This person has four foundations.'[642] That's what I said, but why did I say it? The foundations of wisdom, truth, generosity, and peace.[643] 'This person has four foundations.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.

12.1 'Do not neglect wisdom; preserve truth; foster generosity; and train only for peace.'[644] That's what I said, but why did I say it?

641. The "fields of contact" are the scope within which experience occurs, in response to which one becomes "preoccupied" due to the power of feeling. See note on MN 137:8.1.

642. Thus far we have dealt with what is in the world (the elements), how we experience the world (contact), and how we react to that experience (preoccupation with feeling). Now the Buddha turns to the path; instead of uncritical reaction to feeling, we develop a reflective response.

643. "Foundation" is *adhiṭṭhāna*, one meaning of which is the "plinth" or "base" on which a building rests; the commentary glosses with *patiṭṭhā*. Also at DN 33:1.11.150.

644. Here the Buddha echoes the pattern of his first discourse, where he first identified what the four noble truths are, then identified the duty or task to be undertaken in relation to each of them (SN 56.11; see also SN 56.12, SN 56.29).

And how does one not neglect wisdom?[645] There are these six elements:[646] the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness. 13.1

And what is the earth element? The earth element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior earth element? Anything internal, personal, that's hard, solid, and appropriated. This includes: head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, or anything else internal, personal, that's hard, solid, and appropriated. This is called the interior earth element. The interior earth element and the exterior earth element are just the earth element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the earth element, detaching the mind from the earth element. 14.1

And what is the water element? The water element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior water element? Anything internal, personal, that's water, watery, and appropriated. This includes: bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine, or anything else internal, personal, that's water, watery, and appropriated. This is called the interior water element. The interior water element and the exterior water element are just the water element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the water element, detaching the mind from the water element. 15.1

645. Thus begins the longest section of the discourse, continuing up to MN 140:25.3.

646. The Buddha returns to the six elements, for which we have already been prepared in brief. The discussion of the "elements" (*dhātu*) now continues in similar fashion to the five elements at MN 62:8.1. MN 28:5.1 teaches the four "principal states" (*mahābhūta*) in even more detail.

16.1 And what is the fire element? The fire element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior fire element? Anything internal, personal, that's fire, fiery, and appropriated. This includes: that which warms, that which ages, that which heats you up when feverish, that which properly digests food and drink; or anything else internal, personal, that's fire, fiery, and appropriated. This is called the interior fire element. The interior fire element and the exterior fire element are just the fire element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the fire element, detaching the mind from the fire element.

17.1 And what is the air element? The air element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior air element? Anything internal, personal, that's air, airy, and appropriated. This includes: winds that go up or down, winds in the belly or the bowels, winds that flow through the limbs, in-breaths and out-breaths; or anything else internal, personal, that's air, airy, and appropriated. This is called the interior air element. The interior air element and the exterior air element are just the air element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the air element, detaching the mind from the air element.

18.1 And what is the space element? The space element may be interior or exterior. And what is the interior space element? Anything internal, personal, that's space, spacious, and appropriated. This includes: the ear canals, nostrils, and mouth; and the space for swallowing what is eaten and drunk, the space where it stays, and the space for excreting it from the nether regions; or anything else internal, personal, that's space, spacious, and appropriated. This is called the interior space element. The interior space element and the exterior space element are just the space element. This should be truly seen with right understanding like this: 'This is not mine, I

am not this, this is not my self.' When you truly see with right understanding, you grow disillusioned with the space element, detaching the mind from the space element.[647]

What remains is sheer consciousness, pure and bright.[648] And 19.1
what does that consciousness know? It cognizes 'pleasure' and 'pain' and 'neutral'. Pleasant feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as pleasant.[649] When they feel a pleasant feeling, they know: 'I feel a pleasant feeling.' They know: 'With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as pleasant, the corresponding pleasant feeling ceases and stops.'

Painful feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced 19.7
as painful.[650] When they feel a painful feeling, they know: 'I feel a painful feeling.' They know: 'With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as painful, the corresponding painful feeling ceases and stops.'

Neutral feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced 19.10
as neutral.[651] When they feel a neutral feeling, they know: 'I feel a neutral feeling.' They know: 'With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as neutral, the corresponding neutral feeling ceases and stops.'

When you rub two sticks together, heat is generated and fire is 19.13
produced. But when you part the sticks and lay them aside, any corresponding heat ceases and stops.[652] In the same way, pleasant

647. From here, MN 62:12.9 proceeds in a different direction, outlining a series of meditations based on the elements and other things.

648. The phrase "sheer consciousness" (*viññāṇamyeva*) echoes Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.4.12, where the ultimate manifestation of the Self, the "principle reality", is said to be "a sheer mass of consciousness" (*vijñānaghana eva*). Here it refers to the mind following absorption that develops insight into feelings.

649. Such as the pleasant feelings of the first three absorptions.

650. Such as the painful feelings that arise in the body after emergence from absorption.

651. Such as the neutral feeling of the fourth absorption.

652. Experience depends on the collision of disparate elements, whose friction or "resistance" (*paṭigha*, DN 15:20.4) sparks the light of consciousness. Hence consciousness, like fire, is beautiful but also burning (SN 35.28).

feeling arises dependent on a contact to be experienced as pleasant. …

19.20 They know: 'With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as neutral, the corresponding neutral feeling ceases and stops.'

20.1 There remains only equanimity, pure, bright, pliable, workable, and radiant.[653] It's like when a deft goldsmith or a goldsmith's apprentice prepares a forge, fires the crucible, picks up some native gold with tongs and puts it in the crucible. From time to time they fan it, from time to time they sprinkle water on it, and from time to time they just watch over it. That native gold becomes pliable, workable, and radiant, not brittle, and is ready to be worked. Then the goldsmith can successfully create any kind of ornament they want, whether a bracelet, earrings, a necklace, or a golden garland.[654] In the same way, there remains only equanimity, pure, bright, pliable, workable, and radiant.

21.1 They understand: 'If I were to apply this equanimity, so pure and bright, to the dimension of infinite space, and develop my mind accordingly, this equanimity of mine, relying on that and grasping it, would remain for a very long time.[655] If I were to apply this equanimity, so pure and bright, to the dimension of infinite consciousness, and develop my mind accordingly, this equanimity of mine, relying on that and grasping it, would remain for a very long time.[656] If I were to apply this equanimity, so pure and bright, to the dimension of nothingness, and develop my mind accordingly, this equanimity of mine, relying on that and grasping it, would remain for a very long

653. This is the purified equanimity of the fourth absorption. Although the teaching is framed in terms of the development of discernment (*vipassanā*), nonetheless it follows the pattern of the absorptions, leading through the first four "form" absorptions to the radiant consciousness that can experience the formless.

654. This simile is developed further at AN 3.102:2.1.

655. The lifespans of rebirth in the first three formless realms is given in AN 3.116. For the gods of infinite space, it is twenty thousand eons.

656. Forty thousand eons.

time.[657] If I were to apply this equanimity, so pure and bright, to the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, and develop my mind accordingly, this equanimity of mine, relying on that and grasping it, would remain for a very long time.'

They understand: 'If I were to apply this equanimity, so pure and 22.1
bright, to the dimension of infinite space, my mind would develop accordingly. But that is conditioned.[658] If I were to apply this equanimity, so pure and bright, to the dimension of infinite consciousness … nothingness … neither perception nor non-perception, my mind would develop accordingly. But that is conditioned.'

They neither make a choice nor form an intention for existence 22.10
or nonexistence.[659] Because of this, they don't grasp at anything in the world. Not grasping, they're not anxious. Not being anxious, they personally become extinguished.

They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has 22.13
been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'

If they feel a pleasant feeling, they understand that it's imper- 23.1
manent, that they're not attached to it, and that they don't take pleasure in it.[660] If they feel a painful feeling, they understand that it's impermanent, that they're not attached to it, and that they don't take pleasure in it. If they feel a neutral feeling, they understand that it's impermanent, that they're not attached to it, and that they don't take pleasure in it.

If they feel a pleasant feeling, they feel it detached. If they feel a 24.1
painful feeling, they feel it detached. If they feel a neutral feeling, they feel it detached. Feeling the end of the body draw close, they

657. Sixty thousand eons.

658. "Conditioned" is *saṅkhata*, the past participle whose active verbal form is translated below as "choice". To be "conditioned", is to be "created" by an act of will or "choice".

659. For the idiom "make a choice nor form an intention", compare MN 52:4.2ff. and MN 121:11.4. | The craving for "nonexistence" (*vibhava*; see Snp 4.10:9.3) is the urge to annihilation, for which see MN 102:12.7.

660. This describes the reflective experience of the arahant.

understand: 'I feel the end of the body draw close.' Feeling the end of life draw close, they understand: 'I feel the end of life draw close.' They understand: 'When my body breaks up and my life has come to an end, everything that's felt, since I no longer take pleasure in it, will become cool right here.'[661]

24.6 Suppose an oil lamp depended on oil and a wick to burn. As the oil and the wick are used up, it would be extinguished due to not being fed. In the same way, feeling the end of the body draw close, they understand: 'I feel the end of the body draw close.' Feeling the end of life draw close, they understand: 'I feel the end of life draw close.' They understand: 'When my body breaks up and my life has come to an end, everything that's felt, since I no longer take pleasure in it, will become cool right here.'

25.1 Therefore a mendicant thus endowed is endowed with the ultimate foundation of wisdom. For this is the ultimate noble wisdom, namely, the knowledge of the ending of all suffering.[662]

26.1 Their freedom, being founded on truth, is unshakable. For that which is false has a deceptive nature, while that which is true has an undeceptive nature—extinguishment. Therefore a mendicant thus endowed is endowed with the ultimate foundation of truth. For this is the ultimate noble truth, namely, that which has an undeceptive nature—extinguishment.

27.1 In their ignorance, they used to acquire attachments. Those have been cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so they are unable to arise in the future. Therefore a mendicant thus endowed is endowed with the ultimate foundation of generosity. For this is the ultimate noble generosity, namely, letting go of all attachments.

661. To "become cool" is, as the simile makes clear, to realize extinguishment (*nibbāna*).

662. Here ends the discussion of the first "foundation", wisdom, which is perfected by an arahant. The remaining foundations, while each having a mundane meaning, are explained from this highest of perspectives.

In their ignorance, they used to be covetous, full of desire and lust. 28.1
That has been cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so it's unable to arise in the future. In their ignorance, they used to be contemptuous, full of ill will and malevolence. That has been cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so it's unable to arise in the future. In their ignorance, they used to be ignorant, full of delusion. That has been cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, obliterated so it's unable to arise in the future. Therefore a mendicant thus endowed is endowed with the ultimate foundation of peace. For this is the ultimate noble peace, namely, the pacification of greed, hate, and delusion.

'Do not neglect wisdom; preserve truth; foster generosity; and 29.1
train only for peace.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it.[663]

'Where they stand, the streams of conceiving do not flow. And 30.1
where the streams of conceiving do not flow, they are called a sage at peace.'[664] That's what I said, but why did I say it?

These are all forms of conceiving: 'I am', 'I am this', 'I will be', 31.1
'I will not be', 'I will have form', 'I will be formless', 'I will be percipient', 'I will be non-percipient', 'I will be neither percipient nor non-percipient.' Conceiving is a disease, a boil, a dart. Having gone beyond all conceiving, one is called a sage at peace. The sage at peace is not reborn, does not grow old, and does not die. They are not shaken, and do not yearn. For they have nothing which would cause them to be reborn. Not being reborn, how could they grow old? Not growing old, how could they die? Not dying, how could they be shaken? Not shaking, for what could they yearn?

'Where they stand, the streams of conceiving do not flow. And 32.1
where the streams of conceiving do not flow, they are called a sage

663. This concludes the discussion of the four foundations.
664. "Streams of conceiving" (*maññassavā*) is a unique image, allied to the notion that defilements may "stream on to" a person (*āsavā assaveyyuṁ*, AN 4.195:2.2).

at peace.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. Mendicant, you should remember this brief analysis of the six elements."[665]

33.1 Then Venerable Pukkusāti thought, "It seems the Teacher has come to me! The Holy One has come to me! The fully awakened Buddha has come to me!" He got up from his seat, arranged his robe over one shoulder, bowed with his head to the Buddha's feet, and said, "I made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of me to presume to address the Buddha as 'reverend'. Please, sir, accept my mistake for what it is, so I will restrain myself in future."

33.5 "Indeed, mendicant, you made a mistake. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of you to act in that way. But since you have recognized your mistake for what it is, and have dealt with it properly, I accept it. For it is growth in the training of the Noble One to recognize a mistake for what it is, deal with it properly, and commit to restraint in the future."

34.1 "Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?"

34.2 "But mendicant, do you have a full set of bowl and robes?"[666]

34.3 "No, sir, I do not."

34.4 "The Realized Ones do not ordain those without a full set of bowl and robes."

35.1 And then Venerable Pukkusāti approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

665. The "brief analysis" here is the summary teaching around which the sutta is developed (MN 140:7.4).

666. This is one of the questions asked of an ordination candidate (Kd 1:76.1.14). A mendicant is expected to have a bowl—made of metal or clay, not too big or too small—and three robes—the lower robe or sabong (*antaravāsaka*), the upper robe (*uttarasaṅga*), and the double-layered outer cloak (*saṅghāṭi*). In the suttas, the Buddha does not usually ask this question, so he must have observed that Pukkusāti, who had renounced of his own volition, lacked the proper requisites.

But while he was wandering in search of a bowl and robes, a stray cow took his life.[667] 35.2

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, the gentleman named Pukkusāti, who was advised in brief by the Buddha, has passed away. Where has he been reborn in his next life?" 36.1

"Mendicants, Pukkusāti was astute. He practiced in line with the teaching, and did not trouble me about the teachings. With the ending of the five lower fetters, he's been reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world."[668] 36.4

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. 36.6

667. Cows were normally regarded as gentle creatures (Snp 2.7:27.1). They sometimes become violent, however, especially when protecting young calves, resulting in the tragic fates of Bāhiya (Ud 1.10:10.2) and Suppabuddha (Ud 5.3:7.2). Attacks by cows still occur today in India and wherever cows are raised.

668. Pukkusāti is one of a group of seven who attained arahantship in the Pure Abode of Aviha (SN 1.50:3.2, SN 2.24:4.2).

MN 141

The Analysis of the Truths

Saccavibhaṅgasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Varanasi in the deer park at Isipatana. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha rolled forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And that wheel cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world.[669] It is the teaching, advocating, establishing, clarifying, analyzing, and revealing of the four noble truths. What four?

3.1 The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.[670]

4.1 Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha rolled forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And that wheel cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world. It is the teaching, advocating, establishing, clarifying, analyzing, and revealing of the four noble truths.

669. This is in reference to the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta, the so-called First Sermon (SN 56.11), for which the current discourse serves as a canonical commentary.

670. The four noble truths are sometimes said to be like a doctor who identifies the illness, discerns its cause, understands the recovery, and administers the cure until the patient is restored to health (SA 389 at T ii 105a25; SA-2 254 at T ii 462c10). This analogy is not found in the Pali canon.

Mendicants, you should cultivate friendship with Sāriputta and Moggallāna. You should associate with Sāriputta and Moggallāna. They're astute, and they support their spiritual companions. Sāriputta is like one who gives birth,[671] while Moggallāna is like one who raises the child.[672] Sāriputta guides people to the fruit of stream-entry, Moggallāna to the highest goal. Sāriputta is able to explain, teach, assert, establish, clarify, analyze, and reveal the four noble truths in detail." 5.1

That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One rose from his seat and entered his dwelling. 6.1

Then, not long after the Buddha left, Venerable Sāriputta said to the mendicants, "Reverends, mendicants!" 7.1

"Reverend," they replied. Sāriputta said this: 7.3

"Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha rolled forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And that wheel cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the world. It is the teaching, advocating, establishing, clarifying, analyzing, and revealing of the four noble truths. What four? 8.1

The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. 9.1

And what is the noble truth of suffering? Rebirth is suffering; old age is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are suffering; not getting what you wish for is suffering. In brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering. 10.1

671. To extol his leading students, the Buddha recalls his own upbringing, born of Māyā and raised by Mahāpajāpatī (who appears in the next discourse). Nonetheless, *janetā* is a masculine noun and it would be misleading to translate it as "mother". Both mother and father "give birth" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 6.4.14; the creator is male at 1.4.4).

672. *Āpādetā* is a causative agent noun from *ā* + √*pad* in the sense "one who raises". Again, both mother and father are "raisers" (*āpādakā*) of the child (AN 4.63:2.6).

11.1 And what is rebirth?[673] The rebirth, inception, conception, regeneration, manifestation of the aggregates, and acquisition of the sense fields of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called rebirth.

12.1 And what is old age? The old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called old age.

13.1 And what is death? The passing away, passing on, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates, laying to rest of the corpse, and cutting off of the life faculty of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called death.

14.1 And what is sorrow? The sorrow, sorrowing, state of sorrow, inner sorrow, inner deep sorrow in someone who has undergone misfortune, who has experienced suffering. This is called sorrow.

15.1 And what is lamentation? The wail, lament, wailing, lamenting, state of wailing and lamentation in someone who has undergone misfortune, who has experienced suffering. This is called lamentation.

16.1 And what is pain? Physical pain, physical unpleasantness, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from physical contact. This is called pain.

17.1 And what is sadness? Mental pain, mental displeasure, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from mind contact. This is called sadness.

18.1 And what is distress? The stress, distress, state of stress and distress in someone who has undergone misfortune, who has experienced suffering. This is called distress.

673. Here Sāriputta takes the analysis a step further than the Dhammacakkappavattanasutta. This extended analysis of the truths was adopted from here into DN 22:18.4, which further expanded the sections on the second and third noble truths in Abhidhamma style shared with Vb 4. | The definitions of rebirth, old age, and death are standard in dependent origination (SN 12.2:4.2), and are taught by Sāriputta also at MN 9:22.2.

And what is 'not getting what you wish for is suffering'? In sentient beings who are liable to be reborn, such a wish arises: 'Oh, if only we were not liable to be reborn! If only rebirth would not come to us!' But you can't get that by wishing. This is: 'not getting what you wish for is suffering'. In sentient beings who are liable to grow old … fall ill … die … experience sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress, such a wish arises: 'Oh, if only we were not liable to experience sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress! If only sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress would not come to us!' But you can't get that by wishing. This is: 'not getting what you wish for is suffering'. 19.1

And what is 'in brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering'?[674] They are the grasping aggregates that consist of form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. This is called 'in brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering'. This is called the noble truth of suffering. 20.1

And what is the noble truth of the origin of suffering?[675] It's the craving that leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights. That is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving for nonexistence. This is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering. 21.1

And what is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering? It's the fading away and cessation of that very same craving no residue left behind; giving it away, letting it go, releasing it, and not clinging to it. This is called the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. 22.1

And what is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering?[676] It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: 23.1

674. The five aggregates sum up the entirety of suffering, since all suffering is experienced within and by means of the aggregates.

675. The second and third noble truths are here analyzed to the same level of depth as the First Sermon, with no further definition of terms. See MN 9:16.2 for notes.

676. From here we have the standard definitions of the items of the noble eightfold path (SN 45.8:3.2, DN 22:21.1; compare MN 117).

right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

24.1 And what is right view?[677] Knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.[678] This is called right view.

25.1 And what is right purpose?[679] Purposes of renunciation, good will, and harmlessness.[680] This is called right purpose.

26.1 And what is right speech?[681] Refraining from lying, backbiting, harsh speech, and talking nonsense. This is called right speech.

27.1 And what is right action? Refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct.[682] This is called right action.

28.1 And what is right livelihood? It's when a noble disciple gives up wrong livelihood and earns a living by right livelihood.[683] This is called right livelihood.

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677. "View" (*diṭṭhi*, Sanskrit *dṛṣṭi*) is "seeing" and hence a term for "understanding" (Aitareya Upaniṣad 3.2). In Buddhism, it means a particular way of seeing or perspective, a theory or view through which one makes sense of the world. By itself it is neutral, although "views" in plural sometimes stands for the thicket of wrong views.

678. The fourth noble truth is the path, while the first path factor is the noble truths. These two teachings are different perspectives on the same *dhamma*. | Ignorance is described in the opposite way (MN 9:64.1–66.7, SN 12.2:14.2).

679. *Saṅkappa* is normally a synonym of *vitakka* in the suttas, hence it may be rendered "thought" (SN 14.8:3.3, MN 60:24.2). It is, however, not just verbalized thought, but the direction in which one applies the mind, hence "intention" (MN 41:14.3), "resolve", or "purpose". It has a directionality to it: in Rig Veda 10.164.5 it is the "evil intent" wished upon those who we hate, whereas in Atharva Veda 3.25.2 it is a quality of the arrow of love. For this reason, I usually render it as "purpose". This factor is the emotional counterpart of right view, ensuring that the path is motivated by love and compassion.

680. *Abyāpāda* is "non-ill-will" or simply "good will".

681. The factors of speech and action are defined in detail under the gradual training at MN 27:13.4, and under the ten pathways of skillful deeds at MN 41:12.4.

682. The first three of the five precepts. | "Sexual misconduct" is the betrayal of trust or otherwise causing harm in a sexual relationship.

683. Wrong livelihood is defined at MN 117:29.2 and AN 5.177:1.3, and in detail for renunciates at DN 2:56.1.

And what is right effort?[684] It's when a mendicant generates en- 29.1
thusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are fully developed. This is called right effort.

And what is right mindfulness?[685] It's when a mendicant medi- 30.1
tates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings … mind … principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of covetousness and displeasure for the world. This is called right mindfulness.

And what is right immersion?[686] It's when a mendicant, quite 31.1
secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture

684. Expanded to a full *saṁyutta* at SN 49.

685. Detailed especially in SN 47 and MN 10.

686. "Immersion" (*samādhi*) is treated in SN 53 and throughout the Suttas, eg. SN 12.23:2.15, MN 44:12.2 and notes. The primary sense is the mind "collected" or "immersed" inside itself, with a secondary connotation of radiant illumination. | Before the Buddha, we find *samādhi* and related terms in the sense of gathering kindling for the fire. The past participle *samāhita* occurs in the sense "collected, contained", as the essence of waters are "contained" in the Sun (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5.1.2.7). Certain Upaniṣadic usages presage the Buddhist sense, though expressed in a mystical form designed to be as obscure as possible. A realized sage, being "collected", sees only the self in the self and is free from evil, having become one with Divinity (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.24). For such a one, the whole world is "contained" in the space within the heart—earth and sky, fire and wind, sun and moon, all beings and all desires (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 8.1.3–5). The hidden Self, finer than the finest, larger than the largest, may only be discerned by one who is peaceful and "collected" (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.24).

and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected.[687] As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and mind at one, without placing the mind and keeping it connected.[688] And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, experiencing for themselves the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.'[689] With the giving up of pleasure and pain and the disappearance of former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.[690] This is called right immersion. This is called the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.

32.1 Near Varanasi, in the deer park at Isipatana, the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha rolled forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma. And that wheel cannot be rolled back by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or divinity or by anyone in the

687. *Jhāna* is a state of "elevated consciousness" (*adhicitta*), so all the terms have an elevated sense. | The plural form indicates that "sensual pleasures" includes sense experience, which the meditator can turn away from since they no longer have any desire for it. | The "unskillful qualities" are the five hindrances. | The "rapture and bliss born of seclusion" is the happiness of abandoning the hindrances and freedom from sense impingement. | "Placing the mind and keeping it connected" (*vitakka*, *vicāra*) uses terms that mean "thought" in coarse consciousness, but which in "elevated consciousness" refer to the subtle function of applying the mind to the meditation.

688. Each *jhāna* begins as the least refined aspect of the previous *jhāna* ends. This is not consciously directed, but describes the natural process of settling. The meditator is now fully confident and no longer needs to apply their mind: it is simply still and fully unified.

689. The emotional response to bliss matures from the subtle thrill of rapture to the poise of equanimity. Mindfulness is present in all states of deep meditation, but with equanimity it becomes prominent.

690. The emotional poise of equanimity leads to the feeling of pleasure settling into the more subtle neutral feeling. Pain and sadness have been abandoned long before, but are emphasized here as they are subtle counterpart of pleasure.

world. It is the teaching, advocating, establishing, clarifying, analyzing, and revealing of the four noble truths."

That is what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, the mendicants 32.3
approved what Sāriputta said.

MN 142

The Analysis of Religious Donations

Dakkhiṇāvibhaṅgasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Banyan Tree Monastery.

2.1 Then Mahāpajāpati Gotamī approached the Buddha bringing a new pair of garments. She bowed, sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha,[691] "Sir, I have spun and woven this new pair of garments specially for the Buddha.[692] May the Buddha please accept this from me out of sympathy."

2.4 When she said this, the Buddha said to her, "Give it to the Saṅgha, Gotamī. When you give to the Saṅgha, both the Saṅgha and I will be honored."[693]

2.7 For a second time …

2.13 For a third time, Mahāpajāpati Gotamī said to the Buddha, "Sir, I have spun and woven this new pair of garments specially for the Buddha. May the Buddha please accept this from me out of sympathy."

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691. Mahāpajāpati was the Buddha's foster-mother, sister of his birth mother Māyā. She is honored in the tradition as the first nun, the founder of the bhikkhunī order (AN 8.51:20.1). She was honored as the most senior of the nuns (AN 1.235:1.1). Though mostly remembered as the Buddha's mother, her own verses deconstruct her motherhood, relating how she has previously been a "mother, a son, a father, a brother, and a grandmother" but now has transcended all such states (Thig 6.6:3.1).

692. Mahāpajāpati offers on behalf of her son alone, whereas elsewhere offerings are said to be "specially for the Buddha and the mendicant Saṅgha" AN 5.30:2.4, AN 6.42:2.4, AN 8.86:2.5.

693. The Buddha gently tries to deflect Mahāpajāpati's familial attachment.

And for a third time, the Buddha said to her, "Give it to the Saṅgha, Gotamī. When you give to the Saṅgha, both the Saṅgha and I will be honored." 2.16

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha, "Sir, please accept the new pair of garments from Mahāpajāpati Gotamī. Sir, Mahāpajāpati was very helpful to the Buddha. As his aunt, she raised him, nurtured him, and gave him her milk. When the Buddha's birth mother passed away, she nurtured him at her own breast. 3.1

And the Buddha has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpati. It is owing to the Buddha that Mahāpajāpati has gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha. It's owing to the Buddha that she refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor. It's owing to the Buddha that she has experiential confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and has the ethics loved by the noble ones. It's owing to the Buddha that she is free of doubt regarding suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation.[694] The Buddha has been very helpful to Mahāpajāpati." 3.5

"That's so true, Ānanda. When someone has enabled you to go for refuge, it's not easy to repay them by bowing down to them, rising up for them, greeting them with cupped palms, and observing proper etiquette for them; or by providing them with robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. 4.1

When someone has enabled you to refrain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxicants of beer, wine, and liquor, it's not easy to repay them … 4.4

When someone has enabled you to have experiential confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and the ethics loved by the noble ones, it's not easy to repay them … 4.6

694. This description makes it sound like she is a virtuous laywoman who has attained stream-entry. Yet one of the parallels refers to her as a *bhikkhunī* (T 84 at T i 903c22). And while she was supposed to be the first *bhikkhunī*, the text below refers to the *bhikkhunī* order; see further discussion there (MN 142:7.9).

4.8 When someone has enabled you to be free of doubt regarding suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the practice that leads to its cessation, it's not easy to repay them by bowing down to them, rising up for them, greeting them with cupped palms, and observing proper etiquette for them; or by providing them with robes, almsfood, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick.

5.1 Ānanda, there are these fourteen religious donations to individuals.[695] What fourteen? One gives a gift to the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. This is the first religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to an independent Buddha. This is the second religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to a perfected one. This is the third religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of perfection. This is the fourth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to a non-returner. This is the fifth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of non-return. This is the sixth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to a once-returner. This is the seventh religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of once-return. This is the eighth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to a stream-enterer. This is the ninth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of stream-entry. This is the tenth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to

695. "Religious donation" (or "honorarium", *dakkhiṇā*, Sanskrit *dakṣiṇā*) is a Vedic term for the payment owed a brahmin priest for performing ritual services. In the Rig Veda this gift was of cattle offered at the dawn service; it yields benefits as the cow yields milk, and as Dawn sheds her bounteous light. Later it was found that gold or other precious things served just as well. The *dakṣiṇā* was said to absolve the sacrificer from the guilt of killing (Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 1.2.3.4). This is an overriding concern of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, which emphasizes how the dead of the sacrifice—a slain animal or pressed soma—is "enlivened" through the *dakṣiṇā* (2.2.2.2). In the Pali tradition, *dakkhiṇa* is etymologically linked with a gift given by the "right" or "capable" hand. In Snp 3.4, a brahmin gives the rice-cake left over from a fire oblation as a *dakkhiṇā*.

an outsider who is free of desire for sensual pleasures. This is the eleventh religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to an ordinary person who has good ethical conduct. This is the twelfth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to an ordinary person who has bad ethical conduct. This is the thirteenth religious donation to an individual. One gives a gift to an animal. This is the fourteenth religious donation to an individual.[696]

6.1 Now, Ānanda, gifts to the following persons may be expected to yield the following returns. To an animal, a hundred times. To an unethical ordinary person, a thousand. To an ethical ordinary person, a hundred thousand. To an outsider free of desire for sensual pleasures, 10,000,000,000. But a gift to someone practicing to realize the fruit of stream-entry may be expected to yield incalculable, immeasurable returns. How much more so a gift to a stream-enterer, someone practicing to realize the fruit of once-return, a once-returner, someone practicing to realize the fruit of non-return, a non-returner, someone practicing to realize the fruit of perfection, a perfected one, or an independent Buddha? How much more so a Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha?[697]

7.1 But there are, Ānanda, seven religious donations bestowed on a Saṅgha. What seven? One gives a gift to the communities of both monks and nuns headed by the Buddha. This is the first religious donation bestowed on a Saṅgha. One gives a gift to the communities of both monks and nuns after the Buddha has finally become quenched.[698] This is the second religious donation bestowed on a Saṅgha. One gives a gift to the Saṅgha of monks. This is the third

696. Jamison and Brereton translate *dakṣiṇā* as "priestly gift", which is correct for the Rig Veda. But whereas the Vedic tradition means the *dakkhiṇā* for brahmins alone, the Buddha redefines it to include all humans, including those of bad conduct, and even animals as well. All creatures are deserving of kindness, and such kindness is always a sacred act.

697. The idea of such a multiplying scale is anticipated in Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.33, which speaks of the multiplying joy in human and divine realms.

698. Following the passing of the Buddha, a complete dispensation has both *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunīs*.

religious donation bestowed on a Saṅgha. One gives a gift to the Saṅgha of nuns.[699] This is the fourth religious donation bestowed on a Saṅgha. One gives a gift, thinking: 'Appoint this many monks and nuns for me from the Saṅgha.' This is the fifth religious donation bestowed on a Saṅgha. One gives a gift, thinking: 'Appoint this many monks for me from the Saṅgha.' This is the sixth religious donation bestowed on a Saṅgha. One gives a gift, thinking: 'Appoint this many nuns for me from the Saṅgha.' This is the seventh religious donation bestowed on a Saṅgha.

8.1 In times to come there will be lambs of the flock wearing a scrap of ocher cloth, unethical and of bad character.[700] People will give

699. If Mahāpajāpati was still a lay person at this point, this mention of the *bhikkhunī* order could be read in one of two ways. One possibility is that she was not, in fact, the first *bhikkhunī*, an argument that I have made previously. In brief, the passages that assert she was the first *bhikkhunī*, while widely shared in the tradition, are full of textual problems that indicate they were added at a somewhat late date, which I think was around the time of the Second Council (see AN 8.51). Further, the Therīgāthā is the most important early account of *bhikkhunīs* in their own voices, yet no nun mentions Mahāpajāpati as teacher or founder of the order, while the verses of Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā appear to predate the formal ordination procedure ascribed to Mahāpajāpati (Thig 5.9). On the other hand, if this argument is incorrect, it might be the case that the order of nuns is mentioned here since the Buddha knew from the start of his dispensation that he would establish it (DN 16:3.8.4). Under this reading, the Buddha is perhaps dropping a hint for Mahāpajāpati to ordain. Regardless of her ordination status at this point, the praise of the order of nuns acts as an encouragement, balancing out the mild rebuke with which the discourse started (compare the Buddha's words to Ānanda at DN 16:5.14.2).

700. In early Pali, *gotrabhū* is always used for the very least of those who are worthy of gifts (AN 9.10:1.3, AN 10.16:1.3). It has a positive sense, this negative use being quite isolated. Later Buddhist traditions take *gotrabhū* as "one who is joining the clan", the first entry on the path to awakening, but I doubt this is what it means in early texts. The Buddha recognized clan as a convention (MN 98:12.1), but it was abandoned by those gone forth (AN 8.19:14.2), and he considered questions as to his own clan inappropriate (Snp 3.4:4.3) as it has nothing to do with purification (SN 2.20:3.4). Further, "clan" is always spelled *gotta* in Pali. The older Vedic spelling *gotra* points to the Vedic meaning of *gotra* as "cow-pen", a safe place to gather the herd of cattle, and by extension a name for the herd itself. And while the Saṅgha is never called a "clan" it is

gifts to those unethical people in the name of the Saṅgha. Then too, I say, a religious donation bestowed on the Saṅgha is incalculable and immeasurable.[701] But in any case, there is no way a personal offering can be more fruitful than one bestowed on a Saṅgha, I say.

Ānanda, there are these four ways of purifying a religious dona- 9.1
tion.[702] What four? There's a religious donation that's purified by the giver, not the recipient. There's a religious donation that's purified by the recipient, not the giver. There's a religious donation that's purified by neither the giver nor the recipient. There's a religious donation that's purified by both the giver and the recipient.

And how is a religious donation purified by the giver, not the 10.1
recipient? It's when the giver is ethical, of good character, but the recipient is unethical, of bad character.

And how is a religious donation purified by the recipient, not 11.1
the giver? It's when the giver is unethical, of bad character, but the recipient is ethical, of good character.

And how is a religious donation purified by neither the giver nor 12.1
the recipient? It's when both the giver and the recipient are unethical, of bad character.

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compared to a herd of cattle; MN 34 develops an extended simile where the different kinds of cattle in the herd are compared with different members of the Saṅgha. Now, in that discourse the last to cross over are the "followers of teachings, followers by faith". Like a newborn calf, they can only cross the ford with the assistance of their mother (MN 34:10.1); in AN 10.16:1.3 the *gotrabhū* follows even them. If we are on the right track, the suffix *-bhū* may be derived from *bhūna* (Sanskrit *bhrūṇa*) in the sense "baby", or perhaps "embryo" (MN 75:5.3). In English we use "flock" for a religious group under the protection of a leader, so we can render *gotrabhū* as "babies of the flock" or "lambs of the flock". | For *kāsāvakaṇṭha* as "scrap of ochre cloth", see note on Iti 48:4.1.

701. This rests uneasily with the statement below that a donation is purified by the recipient. This statement is not found in most parallels, so it is perhaps a later addition. But as it stands one argument might be that, since these offerings are made to the community as a whole, the merit that accrues from the community is not despoiled by the fact that the specific recipients are of bad character.

702. This passage is at AN 4.78 and included at DN 33:1.11.185.

13.1 And how is a religious donation purified by both the giver and the recipient? It's when both the giver and the recipient are ethical, of good character. These are the four ways of purifying a religious donation."

14.1 That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:[703]

14.3 "When an ethical person with trusting heart
gives a proper gift to unethical persons,
trusting in the ample fruit of deeds,
that offering is purified by the giver.

14.7 When an unethical and untrusting person,
gives an improper gift to ethical persons,
not trusting in the ample fruit of deeds,
that offering is purified by the receivers.

14.11 When an unethical and untrusting person,
gives an improper gift to unethical persons,
not trusting in the ample fruit of deeds,
I declare that gift is not very fruitful.

14.15 When an ethical person with trusting heart
gives a proper gift to ethical persons,
trusting in the ample fruit of deeds,
I declare that gift is abundantly fruitful.

14.19 But when a passionless one gives to the passionless
a proper gift with trusting heart,
trusting in the ample fruit of deeds,
that's truly the best of material gifts."

703. The discourse is wrapped up more satisfactorily in one of the parallels, as it omits these verses and instead concludes with Mahāpajāpati offering the robes to the Saṅgha (T 84 at T i 904b15).

THE CHAPTER ON THE SIX SENSES

MN 143

Advice to Anāthapiṇḍika

Anāthapiṇḍikovādasutta

1.1 So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

2.1 Now at that time the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was sick, suffering, gravely ill.[704] Then he addressed a man, "Please, my man, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him: 'Sir, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.' Then go to Venerable Sāriputta, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Say to him: 'Sir, the householder Anāthapiṇḍika is sick, suffering, gravely ill. He bows with his head to your feet.' And then say: 'Sir, please visit him at his home out of sympathy.'"

2.11 "Yes, sir," that man replied. He did as Anāthapiṇḍika asked. Sāriputta consented with silence.

3.1 Then Venerable Sāriputta robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, went with Venerable Ānanda as his second monk to Anāthapiṇḍika's home. He sat down on the seat spread out and said to Anāthapiṇḍika, "I hope you're keeping well, householder, I hope you're all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing."[705]

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704. Renowned as the foremost of benefactors, Anāthapiṇḍika appears in over twenty discourses in the Saṁyutta and Aṅguttara Nikāyas, discussing matters such as generosity, guarding the mind, and the development of meditation; the story of his conversion is recorded in the Vinaya (Kd 16:4.1.1). He is well known for his offering of the monastery at which the Buddha most often stayed, but this discourse marks his only personal appearance in the Majjhima.

705. The sick Anāthapiṇḍika was consoled by Ānanda at SN 55.27:3.2 and by Sāriputta at SN 55.26:4.2. In other cases, we find the Buddha making such

"I'm not keeping well, Honorable Sāriputta, I'm not getting by. 4.1
My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading. The winds piercing my head are so severe, it feels like a strong man drilling into my head with a sharp point. The pain in my head is so severe, it feels like a strong man tightening a strong leather strap around my head. The winds slicing my belly are so severe, like a deft butcher or their apprentice were slicing open a cow's belly with a sharp meat cleaver. The burning in my body is so severe, it feels like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. That's how severe the burning is in my body. I'm not keeping well, Honorable Sāriputta, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading."

"That's why, householder, you should train like this: 'I shall not 5.1
grasp the eye, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on the eye.'[706] That's how you should train.

You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp the ear, and there shall 5.4
be no consciousness of mine dependent on the ear.' …

'I shall not grasp the nose, and there shall be no consciousness of 5.7
mine dependent on the nose.' …

'I shall not grasp the tongue, and there shall be no consciousness 5.10
of mine dependent on the tongue.' …

'I shall not grasp the body, and there shall be no consciousness of 5.13
mine dependent on the body.' …

'I shall not grasp the mind, and there shall be no consciousness of 5.16
mine dependent on the mind.' That's how you should train.

visits to sick monks (SN 22.87:2.7, SN 22.88:2.8, SN 46.14:2.1, SN 46.15:2.1, AN 6.56:2.1), but for some reason visits to householders are only attested for Sāriputta (MN 97:28.2) or Ānanda (SN 47.29:2.2).

706. The teaching on the six senses typically begins by establishing awareness on the reality of the eye (etc.) as something that is grasped at (eg. MN 145:3.1). Here Sāriputta skips over this straight to letting go, signifying that his teaching starts with an advanced level of insight.

6.1 You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp sight, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on sight.' … 'I shall not grasp sound … smell … taste … touch … idea, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on idea.' That's how you should train.

7.1 You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp eye consciousness, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on eye consciousness.' … 'I shall not grasp ear consciousness … nose consciousness … tongue consciousness … body consciousness … mind consciousness, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on mind consciousness.' That's how you should train.

8.1 You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp eye contact … ear contact … nose contact … tongue contact … body contact … mind contact, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on mind contact.' That's how you should train.

9.1 You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp feeling born of eye contact … feeling born of ear contact … feeling born of nose contact … feeling born of tongue contact … feeling born of body contact … feeling born of mind contact, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on the feeling born of mind contact.' That's how you should train.

10.1 You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp the earth element … water element … fire element … air element … space element … consciousness element, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on the consciousness element.' That's how you should train.

11.1 You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp form … feeling … perception … choices … consciousness, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on consciousness.' That's how you should train.

12.1 You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp the dimension of infinite space … the dimension of infinite consciousness … the dimension of nothingness … the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, and there shall be no consciousness of mine depen-

dent on the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.' That's how you should train.

You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp this world, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on this world.' That's how you should train. 13.1

You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp the other world, and there shall be no consciousness of mine dependent on the other world.' That's how you should train. You should train like this: 'I shall not grasp whatever is seen, heard, thought, known, attained, sought, and explored by my mind, and my consciousness will not have that as support.' That's how you should train." 14.1

When he said this, Anāthapiṇḍika cried and burst out in tears. Venerable Ānanda said to him, "Are you failing, householder? Are you fading, householder?" 15.1

"No, Honorable Ānanda. But for a long time I have paid homage to the Buddha and the esteemed mendicants. Yet I have never before heard such a Dhamma talk." 15.4

"Householder, such Dhamma talk does not strike when teaching white-clothed laypeople.[707] Rather, it strikes when teaching those gone forth." 15.7

"Well then, Honorable Sāriputta, let such Dhamma talk strike when teaching white-clothed laypeople as well! There are gentlemen with little dust in their eyes. They're in decline because they haven't heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!" 15.9

And when the venerables Sāriputta and Ānanda had given the householder Anāthapiṇḍika this advice they rose from their seats and left. Not long after they had left, Anāthapiṇḍika passed away and was reborn in the host of joyful gods. 16.1

707. The verb here is *paṭibhāti*, the spontaneous striking of inspiration. Sāriputta is not saying such talks are never given, but that such topics are not what comes to mind when teaching laypeople.

17.1 Then, late at night, the glorious godling Anāthapiṇḍika, lighting up the entire Jeta's Grove, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and addressed the Buddha in verse:

17.3 "This is indeed that Jeta's Grove,
frequented by the Saṅgha of seers,
where the King of Dhamma stayed:
it brings me joy!

17.7 Deeds, knowledge, and principle;
ethical conduct, an excellent livelihood;
by these are mortals purified,
not by clan or wealth.

17.11 That's why an astute person,
seeing what's good for themselves,
would examine the teaching rationally,
that's how they become purified in that.

17.15 Sāriputta is full of wisdom,
ethics, and peace.
Even a mendicant who has crossed over
might at best equal him."

18.1 That is what the godling Anāthapiṇḍika said, and the Teacher concurred. Then the godling Anāthapiṇḍika, knowing that the Teacher concurred, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.

19.1 Then, when the night had passed, the Buddha told the mendicants all that had happened.

20.1 When he had spoken, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha:

20.2 "Sir, that godling must surely have been Anāthapiṇḍika. For the householder Anāthapiṇḍika was devoted to Venerable Sāriputta."

20.4 "Good, good, Ānanda. You've reached the logical conclusion, as far as logic goes. For that was indeed the godling Anāthapiṇḍika."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda ap- 20.7
proved what the Buddha said.

MN 144

Advice to Channa

Channovādasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[708] At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground.

2.1 Now at that time the venerables Sāriputta, Mahācunda, and Channa were staying on the Vulture's Peak Mountain.[709]

3.1 Now at that time Venerable Channa was sick, suffering, gravely ill.

3.2 Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Sāriputta came out of retreat, went to Venerable Mahācunda and said to him, "Come, Reverend Cunda, let's go to see Venerable Channa and ask about his illness."

3.4 "Yes, reverend," replied Mahācunda.

4.1 And then Sāriputta and Mahācunda went to see Channa and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. Then Sāriputta said to Channa, "I hope you're keeping well, Reverend Channa, I hope you're all right. I hope your pain is fading, not growing; that its fading is evident, not its growing."

5.1 "Reverend Sāriputta, I'm not keeping well, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading. The winds piercing my head are so severe, it feels like a strong man drilling into my head with a sharp point. The pain in my

708. This discourse recurs at SN 35.87. In the Saṁyutta Nikāya, as here in the Majjhima, it is immediately followed by the Puṇṇovādasutta (MN 145, SN 35.88).

709. For Mahācunda, see note on MN 8:2.1. | This Channa only appears only in this discourse. He is evidently not the same person as the Buddha's former charioteer who was famously admonished on the Buddha's deathbed (DN 16:6.4.1).

head is so severe, it feels like a strong man tightening a strong leather strap around my head. The winds slicing my belly are so severe, like a deft butcher or their apprentice were slicing open a cow's belly with a sharp meat cleaver. The burning in my body is so severe, it feels like two strong men grabbing a weaker man by the arms to burn and scorch him on a pit of glowing coals. I'm not keeping well, I'm not getting by. My pain is terrible and growing, not fading; its growing is evident, not its fading. Reverend Sāriputta, I shall commit suicide. I don't wish to live."[710]

"Please don't commit suicide! Venerable Channa, keep going! 6.1
We want you to keep going. If you don't have any suitable food, we'll find it for you. If you don't have suitable medicine, we'll find it for you. If you don't have a capable carer, we'll find one for you. Please don't commit suicide! Venerable Channa, keep going! We want you to keep going."

"Reverend Sāriputta, it's not that I don't have suitable food, or 7.1
suitable medicine, or a capable carer. Moreover, for a long time now I have served the Teacher with love, not without love. For it is proper for a disciple to serve the Teacher with love, not without love. You should remember this: 'The mendicant Channa will commit suicide blamelessly.'"

"I'd like to ask Venerable Channa about a certain point, if you'd 8.1
take the time to answer."

"Ask, Reverend Sāriputta. When I've heard it I'll know." 8.2

"Reverend Channa, do you regard the eye, eye consciousness, and 9.1
things knowable by eye consciousness in this way: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'? Do you regard the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, mind consciousness, and things knowable by mind consciousness in this way: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"Reverend Sāriputta, I regard the eye, eye consciousness, and 9.7
things knowable by eye consciousness in this way: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' I regard the ear … nose … tongue

710. See note on MN 145:5.32.

… body … mind, mind consciousness, and things knowable by mind consciousness in this way: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self'."

10.1 "Reverend Channa, what have you seen, what have you directly known in these things that you regard them in this way: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self'?"

10.7 "Reverend Sāriputta, after seeing cessation, after directly knowing cessation in these things I regard them in this way: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self'."

11.1 When he said this, Venerable Mahācunda said to Venerable Channa:

11.2 "So, Reverend Channa, you should regularly apply your mind to this instruction of the Buddha:[711] 'For the dependent there is agitation. For the independent there's no agitation.[712] When there's no agitation, there is tranquility. When there is tranquility, there's no inclination.[713] When there's no inclination, there's no coming and going. When there's no coming and going, there's no passing away and reappearing. When there's no passing away and reappearing, there's no this life or the next or between the two.[714] Just this is the end of suffering.'" And when the venerables Sāriputta and Mahācu-

711. Mahācunda is about to quote a phrase that appears at Ud 8.4.

712. The "dependent" is the world of conditions. The "independent" is Nibbāna. | "Agitation" is *calita*, otherwise "shaking, trembling".

713. "Inclination" is *nati*, from a root meaning "to bend". Sometimes used in the sense of a "inclination of mind" (MN 19:6.1), here, as the following lines make clear, it refers to the mind inclining to rebirth; explained by the commentary as "craving". Compare the English idiom, "one is bent on destruction".

714. Vedic cosmology speaks of a tripartite world: the earth, the heavens, and the "midspace" (*antarikṣa*), namely the atmosphere. The gods journey through the midspace to earth for the sacrifice, bringing bounty for mortals (eg. Rig Veda 7.45). Later, the process of rebirth was conceived of as a path of cosmological ascent returning to the world of the gods or the fathers (eg. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 5.10.1). For the suttas, rebirth is likewise seen as a process of moving between states, like a person leaving a house, walking down the street, and entering another house (DN 2:96.1).

nda had given Venerable Channa this advice they rose from their seats and left.

Not long after those venerables had left, Venerable Channa committed suicide. 12.1

Then Sāriputta went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him, "Sir, Venerable Channa has committed suicide. Where has he been reborn in his next life?" 13.1

"Sāriputta, didn't the mendicant Channa declare his blamelessness to you personally?" 13.4

"Sir, there is a Vajjian village named Pubbajira.[715] There Channa had families who were friendly, intimate, and hospitable."[716] 13.5

"The mendicant Channa did indeed have such families. But, Sāriputta, this is not enough for me to call someone 'blameworthy'. When someone lays down this body and takes up another body, I call them 'blameworthy'. But the mendicant Channa did no such thing.[717] You should remember this: 'The mendicant Channa committed suicide blamelessly.'"[718] 13.7

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Sāriputta approved what the Buddha said. 13.12

715. There are several variant spellings of this name, which does not seem to appear elsewhere.

716. The text plays with homonyms of *upavajja* as "blameworthy" (Sanskrit *upavadya*) and as "hospitable" (commentary: *upasaṅkamitabba*, Sanskrit *upavrajya*).

717. The Buddha confirms that Channa was an arahant.

718. Suicide generally is condemned in Buddhism as the taking of a human life. But from this and similar incidents (SN 4.23, SN 22.87) it is widely accepted that suicide in the final throes of a terminal illness is allowable for arahants, as they are incapable of committing a blameworthy act. The suttas, however, can also be read to support the reverse reading: the reason it is allowable for arahants is because it is not blameworthy. The underlying logic would be that ending life is normally bad because life is valuable, but at such a point life no longer has any value. Obviously this is a complex issue that cannot be resolved by a few short scriptural passages, but a Buddhist would be motivated by compassion and understanding for those going through such terrible suffering.

MN 145

Advice to Puṇṇa

Puṇṇovādasutta

1.1 So I have heard.[719] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

1.3 Then in the late afternoon, Venerable Puṇṇa came out of retreat and went to the Buddha. He bowed, sat down to one side, and said to the Buddha,[720] "Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I've heard it, I'll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute."[721]

2.2 "Well then, Puṇṇa, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.3 "Yes, sir," replied Puṇṇa. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "Puṇṇa, there are sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant approves, welcomes, and keeps clinging to them, this gives rise to relishing. Relishing is the origin of suffering, I say.

3.5 There are sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body … ideas known by the mind, which are likable, desirable, agreeable,

719. This sutta recurs at SN 35.88, with slight differences in the opening and closing. In addition to two discourse parallels in Chinese, the popularity of this narrative is attested by its appearance in later texts such as the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya and the Divyāvadāna, as well as in artworks (see Anālayo, *Comparative Study*, vol. ii, p. 828).

720. This Puṇṇa is to be distinguished from the Koliyan ascetic of MN 57 and the son of Mantāṇī of MN 23. His only other appearance is his Theragāthā verse at Thag 1.70.

721. The idea of a "retreat" as understood today was popularized in the 20th century. In early times, it seems, when an individual monastic felt they were ready, they would approach the teacher seeking advice for their retreat.

pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant approves, welcomes, and keeps clinging to them, this gives rise to relishing. Relishing is the origin of suffering, I say.

There are sights known by the eye, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant doesn't approve, welcome, and keep clinging to them, relishing ceases. When relishing ceases, suffering ceases, I say. 4.1

There are sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body … ideas known by the mind, which are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. If a mendicant doesn't approve, welcome, and keep clinging to them, relishing ceases. When relishing ceases, suffering ceases, I say. 4.5

Puṇṇa, now that I've given you this brief advice, what country will you live in?" 5.1

"Sir, there's a country named Sunāparanta. I shall live there."[722] 5.2

"The people of Sunāparanta are wild and rough, Puṇṇa. If they abuse and insult you, what will you think of them?" 5.3

"If they abuse and insult me, I will think: 'These people of Sunāparanta are gracious, truly gracious, since they don't hit me with their fists.' That's what I'll think, Blessed One. That's what I'll think, Holy One." 5.6

"But if they do hit you with their fists, what will you think of them then?" 5.10

"If they hit me with their fists, I'll think: 'These people of Sunāparanta are gracious, truly gracious, since they don't throw stones at 5.11

722. The commentary says that Puṇṇa was in fact born in Sunāparanta, specifically the trading port of Suppāraka, which is modern Nallasopara north of Mumbai on India's west coast. Sunāparanta is otherwise known as Aparanta ("Far West", Bv 29:17.2). Puṇṇa's choice was far-sighted, as from the time of Ashoka, Suppāraka became a major trading center with ports in India and lands west as far as Mesopotamia, Egypt, Eastern Africa, and Rome. A fabulous tale of such trading voyages is told in Ja 463.

me.' That's what I'll think, Blessed One. That's what I'll think, Holy One."

5.15 "But if they do throw stones at you, what will you think of them then?"

5.16 "If they throw stones at me, I'll think: 'These people of Sunāparanta are gracious, truly gracious, since they don't beat me with a club.' That's what I'll think, Blessed One. That's what I'll think, Holy One."

5.20 "But if they do beat you with a club, what will you think of them then?"

5.21 "If they beat me with a club, I'll think: 'These people of Sunāparanta are gracious, truly gracious, since they don't stab me with a knife.' That's what I'll think, Blessed One. That's what I'll think, Holy One."

5.25 "But if they do stab you with a knife, what will you think of them then?"

5.26 "If they stab me with a knife, I'll think: 'These people of Sunāparanta are gracious, truly gracious, since they don't take my life with a sharp knife.' That's what I'll think, Blessed One. That's what I'll think, Holy One."

5.30 "But if they do take your life with a sharp knife, what will you think of them then?"

5.31 "If they take my life with a sharp knife, I'll think: 'There are disciples of the Buddha who looked for a suicide weapon because they were horrified, repelled, and disgusted with the body and with life.

And I have found this without looking!'[723] That's what I'll think, Blessed One. That's what I'll think, Holy One."

"Good, good Puṇṇa! Having such self-control and peacefulness, 6.1
you will be quite capable of living in Sunāparanta. Now, Puṇṇa, go at your convenience."

And then Puṇṇa welcomed and agreed with the Buddha's words. 7.1
He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right. Then he set his lodgings in order and, taking his bowl and robe, set out for Sunāparanta. Traveling stage by stage, he arrived at Sunāparanta, and stayed there. Within that rainy season he confirmed around five hundred male and five hundred female lay followers. And within that same rainy season he realized the three knowledges. Some time later he became fully extinguished.[724]

Then several mendicants went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down 8.1
to one side, and said to him, "Sir, the gentleman named Puṇṇa, who was advised in brief by the Buddha, has passed away. Where has he been reborn in his next life?"

"Mendicants, Puṇṇa was astute. He practiced in line with the 8.4
teaching, and did not trouble me about the teachings. Puṇṇa has become fully quenched."

723. This is in reference to the notorious story of Migalaṇḍika in Bu Pj 3, told more briefly in SN 54.9. Several monks, meditating improperly on the unattractiveness of the body, sought death as the way out. In response, the Buddha taught mindfulness of breathing, which is "peaceful and sublime, a deliciously pleasant meditation". | The idiomatic phrase *satthahāraka* is difficult. The obvious reading is to take *sattha* as "knife", the meaning it has in the preceding sentence. However, that yields the sense "knife-bringer", "assassin", whereas the use of *idaṁ* in MN 145:5.32 shows it must be neuter, i.e. it is a thing not a person. Richard Gombrich suggests we read *sattha* here as equivalent to Sanskrit *śvasita*, "breathing, life" (see Brahmali's note on Bu Pj 3:2.49.1), yielding the sense "life-taker", "breath-stealer", "deadly weapon". This agrees with the Vinaya commentary, which explains, "What does it take? Life." (*Kiṃ harati? Jīvitaṁ*). Since this idiom is only used in the context of suicide, I call it "suicide weapon", and the verbal form "commit suicide".

724. The parallel passage at SN 35.88:18.7, says rather that he passed away in that same rainy season.

8.6 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 146

Advice from Nandaka

Nandakovādasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[725] At one time the Buddha was staying near 1.1
Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery.

Then Mahāpajāpati Gotamī together with around five hundred 2.1
nuns approached the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him,[726] "Sir, may the Buddha please advise and instruct the nuns. Please give the nuns a Dhamma talk."

Now at that time the senior monks were taking turns to advise 3.1
the nuns.[727] But Venerable Nandaka didn't want to take his turn.[728]

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725. This discourse deals with the fortnightly teaching of the nuns, a practice ostensibly set up at Mahāpajāpati's ordination (AN 8.51:13.1, Kd 20:1.4.7) and mandated in the Vinaya (Bu Pc 21, Bi Pc 59). This is the only mention of such a teaching in the discourses. However it does not follow the pattern laid out in the Vinaya, where the teaching consists of the eight *garudhammas* (Bi Pc 58), and the monks cannot go to the nuns' monastery to advise them (Bu Pc 23).

726. Here we see Mahāpajāpati in the leadership role that would be expected were she the founder of the nuns. However, this is the only case where this occurs.

727. Monks must be appointed by the Saṅgha to take on this role, and they must fulfill eight factors: they must be virtuous and learned, have memorized both Monastic Codes, be well-spoken, liked by the nuns, and capable, never having committed a heavy offense against a nun; and they must have been ordained at least twenty years (Bu Pc 21).

728. Nandaka was praised for his teaching of monks (AN 9.4). At AN 3.66 he taught the layman Sāḷha how to discern the true teaching, using the method of questioning as he does in the present discourse. On the strength of this teaching, Nandaka was declared the foremost in advising nuns (AN 1.229:1.1). His four Theragāthā verses are at Thag 4.4 according to the commentary. A second Nandaka at Thag 2.27 was the brother of Bharata (Thag 2.28). | While the text does not explain why he was reluctant to teach, the commentary says

3.3 Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, whose turn is it to advise the nuns today?"

3.5 "It's Nandaka's turn, sir, but he doesn't want to do it."

4.1 Then the Buddha said to Nandaka, "Nandaka, please advise and instruct the nuns. Please, brahmin, give the nuns a Dhamma talk."

4.5 "Yes, sir," replied Nandaka. Then, in the morning, he robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. He wandered for alms in Sāvatthī. After the meal, on his return from almsround, he went to the Royal Monastery with a companion.[729] Those nuns saw him coming off in the distance, so they spread out a seat and placed water for washing the feet. Nandaka sat down on the seat spread out, and washed his feet. Those nuns bowed, and sat down to one side.

4.12 Nandaka said to them, "Sisters, this talk shall be in the form of questions. When you understand, say so. When you don't understand, say so. If anyone has a doubt or uncertainty, ask me about it: 'Why, sir, does it say this? What does that mean?'"[730]

5.5 "We're already delighted and satisfied with Master Nandaka, since he invites us like this."[731]

6.1 "What do you think, sisters? Is the eye permanent or impermanent?"[732]

6.3 "Impermanent, sir."

6.4 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

6.5 "Suffering, sir."

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that those nuns were his wives in past lives and he wanted to avoid the potential for gossip.

729. The Royal Monastery (*rājakārāma*) was a residence for nuns near Sāvatthī, also featured in SN 55.11.

730. Nandaka does not lecture the nuns, but engages with them. He makes it clear that, against patriarchal expectations, the nuns should ask for clarifications.

731. Thus fulfilling one of the factors required for a teacher of nuns.

732. The discussion begins with the most obvious factors, the internal sense organs, and proceeds to analyze each in terms of the three characteristics: impermanence, suffering, and not-self. Nandaka ensures that the nuns are with him each step.

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 6.6

"No, sir." 6.8

"What do you think, sisters? Is the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind permanent or impermanent?" 6.9

"Impermanent, sir." 6.19

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?" 6.20

"Suffering, sir." 6.21

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 6.22

"No, sir. Why is that? Because we have already truly seen this with right wisdom: 'So these six interior sense fields are impermanent.'"[733] 6.24

"Good, good, sisters! That's how it is for a noble disciple who truly sees with right wisdom. 6.28

What do you think, sisters? Are sights permanent or impermanent?" 7.1

"Impermanent, sir." 7.3

"But if they're impermanent, are they suffering or happiness?" 7.4

"Suffering, sir." 7.5

"But if they're impermanent, suffering, and perishable, are they fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 7.6

"No, sir." 7.8

"What do you think, sisters? Are sounds … smells … tastes … touches … ideas permanent or impermanent?" 7.9

"Impermanent, sir." 7.19

"But if they're impermanent, are they suffering or happiness?" 7.20

"Suffering, sir." 7.21

"But if they're impermanent, suffering, and perishable, are they fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 7.22

"No, sir. Why is that? Because we have already truly seen this with right wisdom: 'So these six exterior sense fields are impermanent.'" 7.24

733. This level of direct insight normally indicates stream-entry. See below at MN 146:27.5.

7.28 "Good, good, sisters! That's how it is for a noble disciple who truly sees with right wisdom.

8.1 What do you think, sisters? Is eye consciousness … ear consciousness … nose consciousness … tongue consciousness … body consciousness … mind consciousness permanent or impermanent?"

8.18 "Impermanent, sir."

8.19 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

8.20 "Suffering, sir."

8.21 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

8.23 "No, sir. Why is that? Because we have already truly seen this with right wisdom: 'So these six classes of consciousness are impermanent.'"

8.27 "Good, good, sisters! That's how it is for a noble disciple who truly sees with right wisdom.

9.1 Suppose there was an oil lamp burning. The oil, wick, flame, and light were all impermanent and perishable.[734] Now, suppose someone was to say: 'While this oil lamp is burning, the oil, the wick, and the flame are all impermanent and perishable. But the light is permanent, lasting, eternal, and imperishable.' Would they be speaking rightly?"

9.6 "No, sir. Why is that? Because that oil lamp's oil, wick, and flame are all impermanent and perishable, let alone the light."[735]

9.10 "In the same way, suppose someone was to say: 'These six interior sense fields are impermanent. But the feeling—whether pleasant, painful, or neutral—that I experience due to these six interior sense fields is permanent, lasting, eternal, and imperishable.' Would they be speaking rightly?"

734. While the imagery of the dependence of the flame on its fuel is common in the suttas, this exact metaphor is not found elsewhere. Normally the Buddha employs metaphors in an ABA structure: he explains the doctrine, illustrates it, and repeats the explanation. Here, however, the metaphor acts as a springboard for the next stage of the argument, the impermanence of feelings.

735. The Self is often said to be a light (eg. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.3.7).

"No, sir. Why is that? Because each kind of feeling arises dependent on the corresponding condition. When the corresponding condition ceases, the appropriate feeling ceases." 9.14

"Good, good, sisters! That's how it is for a noble disciple who truly sees with right wisdom. 9.18

Suppose there was a large tree standing with heartwood. The roots, trunk, branches and leaves, and shadow were all impermanent and perishable.[736] Now, suppose someone was to say: 'There's a large tree standing with heartwood. The roots, trunk, and branches and leaves are all impermanent and perishable. But the shadow is permanent, lasting, eternal, and imperishable.' Would they be speaking rightly?" 10.1

"No, sir. Why is that? Because that large tree's roots, trunk, and branches and leaves are all impermanent and perishable, let alone the shadow."[737] 10.5

"In the same way, suppose someone was to say: 'These six exterior sense fields are impermanent.[738] But the feeling—whether pleasant, painful, or neutral—that I experience due to these six exterior sense fields is permanent, lasting, eternal, and imperishable.' Would they be speaking rightly?" 10.9

"No, sir. Why is that? Because each kind of feeling arises dependent on the corresponding condition. When the corresponding condition ceases, the appropriate feeling ceases." 10.13

"Good, good, sisters! That's how it is for a noble disciple who truly sees with right wisdom. 10.17

736. This is another unique application of a familiar image, although a similar metaphor for the six senses as the shadow of a post is found at AN 4.195:11.1.
737. Divinity is identified, albeit inadequately, with a shadow at Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.12. From Vedic times the shadow was both the place of relief from the hot sun (Rig Veda 6.16.38, 2.33.6) and the shadow of death (10.121.2).
738. The metaphor of shadow for the exterior sense fields is the inverse of that for the interior sense fields, light. This speaks to the high degree of care with which Nandaka structured his teaching. Further, the movement from light to shadow subconsciously prepares the audience for the darker metaphor to come.

11.1 Suppose a deft butcher or their apprentice, having killed a cow, were to carve it with a sharp meat cleaver, without damaging the flesh inside or the hide outside.[739] They'd cut, carve, sever, and slice through each of the connecting tendons, sinews, and ligaments with a sharp meat cleaver,[740] and then peel off the outer hide. Then they'd wrap that cow up in that very same hide and say: 'This cow is joined to its hide just like before.' Would they be speaking rightly?"

11.6 "No, sir. Why is that? Because even if they wrap that cow up in that very same hide and say: 'This cow is joined to its hide just like before,' still that cow is not joined to that hide."

12.1 "I've made up this simile to make a point. And this is the point. 'The inner flesh' is a term for the six interior sense fields. 'The outer hide' is a term for the six exterior sense fields. 'The connecting tendons, sinews, and ligaments' is a term for greed and relishing. 'A sharp meat cleaver' is a term for noble wisdom. And it is that noble wisdom which cuts, carves, severs, and slices the connecting corruption, fetter, and bond.

13.1 Sisters, by developing and cultivating these seven awakening factors, a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements.[741] What seven? It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. It is by developing and cultivating these seven awakening factors that a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom. And they live having realized it with their own insight in this very life due to the ending of defilements."

739. A similar image is applied to analysis by way of the elements (MN 10:12.3 = MN 119:8.3).

740. *Antarā* is "in-between", "connecting", not "inner".

741. Knowing that the nuns have good insight, Nandaka encourages them to continue deepening their meditation practice.

Then after giving this advice to the nuns, Nandaka sent them off, 14.1
saying, "Go, sisters, it is time."[742]

And then those nuns approved and agreed with what Nandaka 14.3
had said. They rose from their seats, bowed, and respectfully circled him, keeping him on their right. Then they went up to the Buddha, bowed, and stood to one side. The Buddha said to them, "Go, nuns, it is time."

Then those nuns bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keep- 14.5
ing him on their right, before leaving.

Soon after those nuns had left, the Buddha addressed the mendi- 15.1
cants: "Suppose, mendicants, it was the sabbath of the fourteenth day. You wouldn't get lots of people wondering whether the moon is full or not, since it is obviously not full.

In the same way, those nuns were uplifted by Nandaka's Dhamma 15.4
teaching, but they still haven't got all they wished for."

Then the Buddha said to Nandaka, "Well then, Nandaka, tomor- 16.1
row you should give those nuns the same advice again."

"Yes, sir," Nandaka replied. And the next day he went to those 16.3
nuns, and all unfolded just like the previous day.

Soon after those nuns had left, the Buddha addressed the men- 27.1
dicants: "Suppose, mendicants, it was the sabbath of the fifteenth day. You wouldn't get lots of people wondering whether the moon is full or not, since it is obviously full. In the same way, those nuns were uplifted by Nandaka's Dhamma teaching, and they got all they wished for. Even the last of these five hundred nuns is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, assured, destined for awakening."[743]

742. This seems at odds with the detail that Nandaka had gone to the nuns' monastery to teach. Parallels in Chinese and Tibetan say instead that Nandaka left (SA 276 at T ii 75c2; T 1442 at T xxiii 793c12, and D (3) 'dul ba, ja 57b7).

743. As noted above, the nuns' statements indicate that they had attained stream-entry even before being taught by Nandaka. Elsewhere, to have fulfilled one's wishes like the moon on the fifteenth day unequivocally means arahantship (Thag 10.2:10.1). Indeed, parallels indicate that at this point they have all attained arahantship (SA 276 at T ii 75c16; T 1442 at T xxiii 794a14; D (3)

27.6 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

'dul ba, ja 59a1). Remarkably, this detail is also confirmed in the commentaries to the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Theragāthā, and Therīgāthā, which say they became arahants when listening to Nandaka's second teaching.

MN 147

The Shorter Advice to Rāhula

Cūḷarāhulovādasutta

So I HAVE HEARD.[744] At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. 1.1

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind, "The qualities that ripen in freedom have ripened in Rāhula.[745] Why don't I lead him further to the ending of defilements?" 1.3

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvatthī for alms. 1.6

Then, after the meal, on his return from almsround, he addressed Venerable Rāhula, "Rāhula, get your sitting cloth.[746] Let's go to the Dark Forest for the day's meditation." 1.7

"Yes, sir," replied Rāhula. Taking his sitting cloth he followed behind the Buddha. 1.10

Now at that time many thousands of deities followed the Buddha, thinking,[747] "Today the Buddha will lead Rāhula further to the ending of defilements!" 2.1

744. This discourse recurs at SN 35.121.

745. Five perceptions that ripen in freedom are taught at DN 33:2.1.139, but apart from that we do not encounter this idea in the discourses. | In SN 18.1–5, Rāhula requests a teaching so he can go on retreat. The teachings given there can be compared with the parallel, which says the Buddha first told Rāhula to teach the five aggregates, the six sense-spheres, and conditionality, and then to go on retreat and meditate on the same teachings (SA 200 at T ii 51a23). Only then did the Buddha consider him ready.

746. The sitting cloth was a standard requisite of monastics (Bu Pc 89). Regularly featured in the texts of the Sarvāstivāda schools, it is rarely mentioned in the Pali suttas (but see DN 16:3.1.3).

747. The presence of a thousand deities, which is unique to this discourse, is not mentioned in the Chinese parallel, and is obviously a later addition.

2.3 Then the Buddha plunged deep into the Dark Forest and sat at the root of a tree on the seat spread out. Rāhula bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

2.6 "What do you think, Rāhula? Is the eye permanent or impermanent?"

2.8 "Impermanent, sir."

2.9 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

2.10 "Suffering, sir."

2.11 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

2.13 "No, sir."

3.1 "What do you think, Rāhula? Are sights permanent or impermanent?"

3.3 "Impermanent, sir."

3.4 "But if they're impermanent, are they suffering or happiness?"

3.5 "Suffering, sir."

3.6 "But if they're impermanent, suffering, and perishable, are they fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

3.8 "No, sir."

3.9 "What do you think, Rāhula? Is eye consciousness permanent or impermanent?"

3.11 "Impermanent, sir."

3.12 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

3.13 "Suffering, sir."

3.14 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

3.16 "No, sir."

3.17 "What do you think, Rāhula? Is eye contact permanent or impermanent?"

3.19 "Impermanent, sir."

3.20 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

3.21 "Suffering, sir."

3.22 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

"No, sir." 3.24

"What do you think, Rāhula? Anything included in feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness that arises dependent on eye contact: is that permanent or impermanent?" 3.25

"Impermanent, sir." 3.27

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?" 3.28

"Suffering, sir." 3.29

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 3.30

"No, sir." 3.32

"What do you think, Rāhula? Is the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind permanent or impermanent?" 4-8.1

"Impermanent, sir." 4-8.10

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?" 4-8.11

"Suffering, sir." 4-8.12

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 4-8.13

"No, sir." 4-8.15

"What do you think, Rāhula? Are ideas permanent or impermanent?" 4-8.16

"Impermanent, sir." 4-8.17

"But if they're impermanent, are they suffering or happiness?" 4-8.18

"Suffering, sir." 4-8.19

"But if they're impermanent, suffering, and perishable, are they fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 4-8.20

"No, sir." 4-8.22

"What do you think, Rāhula? Is mind consciousness permanent or impermanent?" 4-8.23

"Impermanent, sir." 4-8.24

"But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?" 4-8.25

"Suffering, sir." 4-8.26

"But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?" 4-8.27

"No, sir." 4-8.29

4-8.30 "What do you think, Rāhula? Is mind contact permanent or impermanent?"

4-8.31 "Impermanent, sir."

4-8.32 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

4-8.33 "Suffering, sir."

4-8.34 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

4-8.36 "No, sir."

4-8.37 "What do you think, Rāhula? Anything included in feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness that arises dependent on mind contact: is that permanent or impermanent?"

4-8.39 "Impermanent, sir."

4-8.40 "But if it's impermanent, is it suffering or happiness?"

4-8.41 "Suffering, sir."

4-8.42 "But if it's impermanent, suffering, and perishable, is it fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'?"

4-8.44 "No, sir."

9.1 "Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the eye, sights, eye consciousness, and eye contact. And they grow disillusioned with anything included in feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness that arises dependent on eye contact. They grow disillusioned with the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, ideas, mind consciousness, and mind contact. And they grow disillusioned with anything included in feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness that arises dependent on mind contact. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When they're freed, they know they're freed.

9.8 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"

9.9 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Rāhula approved what the Buddha said. And while this discourse was being spoken, Rāhula's mind was freed from defilements by not grasping.

And the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in 9.12
those thousands of deities: "Everything that is liable to arise is liable to cease."

MN 148

Six By Six

Chachakkasutta

1.1 So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!"

1.5 "Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

2.1 "Mendicants, I shall teach you the Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And I shall reveal a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure, namely,[748] the six sets of six. Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

2.4 "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

3.1 "The six interior sense fields should be understood. The six exterior sense fields should be understood. The six classes of consciousness should be understood. The six classes of contact should be understood. The six classes of feeling should be understood. The six classes of craving should be understood.

4.1 'The six interior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are the sense fields of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. 'The six interior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the first set of six.

5.1 'The six exterior sense fields should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? There are the sense fields of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and ideas. 'The six exterior sense fields should

748. While this description of the Dhamma is frequently found, it is not elsewhere used as an introduction to a specific teaching.

be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the second set of six.

'The six classes of consciousness should be understood.' That's 6.1
what I said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. 'The six classes of consciousness should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the third set of six.

'The six classes of contact should be understood.' That's what I 7.1
said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. The meeting of the three is contact. Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. The meeting of the three is contact. Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. The meeting of the three is contact. Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. The meeting of the three is contact. Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. 'The six classes of contact should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the fourth set of six.

'The six classes of feeling should be understood.' That's what I 8.1
said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Ear consciousness arises dependent on the ear and sounds. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Nose consciousness arises dependent on the nose and smells. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Tongue consciousness arises dependent on the tongue and tastes. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Body consciousness arises dependent on the body and touches. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact

is a requirement for feeling. Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. 'The six classes of feeling should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the fifth set of six.

9.1 'The six classes of craving should be understood.' That's what I said, but why did I say it? Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving.[749] Ear consciousness … Nose consciousness … Tongue consciousness … Body consciousness … Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for feeling. Feeling is a requirement for craving. 'The six classes of craving should be understood.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it. This is the sixth set of six.

10.1 If anyone says, 'the eye is self,' that is not tenable.[750] The arising and vanishing of the eye is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that the eye is self. So the eye is not self.

10.7 If anyone says, 'sights are self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of sights is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that sights are self. So the eye is not self and sights are not self.

10.13 If anyone says, 'eye consciousness is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of eye consciousness is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that eye consciousness is self. So the eye, sights, and eye consciousness are not self.

10.19 If anyone says, 'eye contact is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of eye contact is evident, so it would follow that one's

749. We have now included the six sense fields, contact, feeling, and craving, which are four of the items of dependent origination.

750. This is an unusual use of *na upapajjati* in the sense, "is not tenable", "does not obtain", or "is not justified".

self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that eye contact is self. So the eye, sights, eye consciousness, and eye contact are not self.

If anyone says, 'feeling is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and 10.25
vanishing of feeling is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that feeling is self. So the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, and feeling are not self.

If anyone says, 'craving is self,' that is not tenable. The arising 10.31
and vanishing of craving is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that craving is self. So the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, feeling, and craving are not self.

If anyone says, 'the ear is self' … 'the nose is self' … 'the tongue 11.1
is self' … 'the body is self' … 'the mind is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of the mind is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that the mind is self. So the mind is not self.

If anyone says, 'ideas are self' … 'mind consciousness is self' … 12.1
'mind contact is self' … 'feeling is self' … 'craving is self,' that is not tenable. The arising and vanishing of craving is evident, so it would follow that one's self arises and vanishes. That's why it's not tenable to claim that craving is self. So the mind, ideas, mind consciousness, mind contact, feeling, and craving are not self.

Now, mendicants, this is the practice that leads to the origin of 16.1
substantial reality. You regard the eye like this: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self.'

You regard sights … eye consciousness … eye contact … feeling 17-21.1
… craving like this: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self.' You regard the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind … ideas … mind consciousness … mind contact … feeling … craving like this: 'This is mine, I am this, this is my self.'

22.1 But this is the practice that leads to the cessation of substantial reality. You regard the eye like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'

23-27.1 You regard sights … eye consciousness … eye contact … feeling … craving like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' You regard the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.' You regard ideas … mind consciousness … mind contact … feeling … craving like this: 'This is not mine, I am not this, this is not my self.'

28.1 Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for the arising of what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral.[751] When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it,[752] the underlying tendency to greed underlies that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you sorrow and wail and lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion underlies that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you don't truly understand that feeling's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance underlies that. Mendicants, without giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, without dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, without eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, without giving up ignorance and without giving rise to knowledge, it is quite impossible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

29-33.1 Ear consciousness … Nose consciousness … Tongue consciousness … Body consciousness … Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for the arising of what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral. When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it, the underlying tendency

751. Literally, "With contact as dependency arises what is felt …"

752. Compare the analysis at SN 36.6.

to greed underlies that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you sorrow and wail and lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion underlies that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you don't truly understand that feeling's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance underlies that. Mendicants, without giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, without dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, without eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, without giving up ignorance and without giving rise to knowledge, it is quite impossible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

Eye consciousness arises dependent on the eye and sights. The 34.1
meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for the arising of what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral. When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you don't approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it, the underlying tendency to greed does not underlie that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you don't sorrow or wail or lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion does not underlie that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you truly understand that feeling's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance does not underlie that. Mendicants, after giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, after dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, after eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, after giving up ignorance and giving rise to knowledge, it's quite possible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

Ear consciousness … 35.1

Nose consciousness … 36.1

Tongue consciousness … 37.1

Body consciousness … 38.1

Mind consciousness arises dependent on the mind and ideas. 39.1
The meeting of the three is contact. Contact is a requirement for

what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral. When you experience a pleasant feeling, if you don't approve, welcome, and keep clinging to it, the underlying tendency to greed does not underlie that. When you experience a painful feeling, if you don't sorrow or wail or lament, beating your breast and falling into confusion, the underlying tendency to aversion does not underlie that. When you experience a neutral feeling, if you truly understand that feeling's origin, disappearance, gratification, drawback, and escape, the underlying tendency to ignorance does not underlie that. Mendicants, after giving up the underlying tendency to greed for pleasant feeling, after dispelling the underlying tendency to aversion toward painful feeling, after eradicating ignorance in the case of neutral feeling, after giving up ignorance and giving rise to knowledge, it's quite possible to make an end of suffering in this very life.

40.1 Seeing this, a learned noble disciple grows disillusioned with the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, feeling, and craving.

41.1 They grow disillusioned with the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, ideas, mind consciousness, mind contact, feeling, and craving. Being disillusioned, desire fades away. When desire fades away they're freed. When it is freed, they know it is freed.

41.7 They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is nothing further for this place.'"

41.8 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said. And while this discourse was being spoken, the minds of sixty mendicants were freed from defilements by not grasping.[753]

753. This is not found in parallel passages and is probably a later addition.

MN 149

The Great Discourse on What Relates to the Six Sense Fields

Mahāsaḷāyatanikasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants, "Mendicants!" 1.1

"Venerable sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 1.5

"Mendicants, I shall teach you the great discourse on what relates to the six sense fields.[754] Listen and apply your mind well, I will speak." 2.1

"Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this: 2.3

"Mendicants, when you don't truly know and see the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, and what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral that arises dependent on eye contact, you're aroused by these things. 3.1

Someone who lives aroused like this—fettered, confused, concentrating on gratification—accumulates the five grasping aggregates for themselves in the future.[755] And their craving—which leads to 3.2

754. For *āyatanika* see MN 121:10.5, where it refers to the life faculty of the body that is "related to the six sense fields"; there are also heavens and hells "related to the six fields of contact" (MN 50:22.2, Sb 35:35.135). In each case it refers to something that is connected to or related to the six sense fields, as indicated by the suffix *ika*. Here this refers to the fact that this discourse treats multiple distinct teaching frameworks in relation to the six sense fields. These include the majority of the *saṁyutta-mātikā*, the list of topics making up the Saṁyutta Nikāya. And this inclusive and integrative nature in turn explains why the teaching is "great".

755. In other words, one who becomes attached to sense experience creates kamma that generates a new life consisting of the five aggregates. This passage

future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights—grows.[756] Their physical and mental stress, torment, and fever grow. And they experience physical and mental suffering.

4-7.1 When you don't truly know and see the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, ideas, mind consciousness, mind contact, and what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral that arises dependent on mind contact, you're aroused by these things.

8.1 Someone who lives aroused like this—fettered, confused, concentrating on gratification—accumulates the five grasping aggregates for themselves in the future. And their craving—which leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights—grows. Their physical and mental stress, torment, and fever grow. And they experience physical and mental suffering.

9.1 When you do truly know and see the eye, sights, eye consciousness, eye contact, and what is felt as pleasant, painful, or neutral that arises dependent on eye contact, you're not aroused by these things.

9.2 Someone who lives unaroused like this—unfettered, unconfused, concentrating on drawbacks—disperses the five grasping aggregates for themselves in the future. And their craving—which leads to future lives, mixed up with relishing and greed, taking pleasure there wherever it alights—is given up. Their physical and mental stress, torment, and fever are given up. And they experience physical and mental pleasure.

10.1 The view of such a person is right view. Their intention is right intention, their effort is right effort, their mindfulness is right mindfulness, and their immersion is right immersion. And their actions of body and speech, and their livelihood, have already been fully purified before. So this noble eightfold path is fully developed.

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integrates the teachings on the six sense fields and the five aggregates under the first noble truth, as well as briefly implying the basic principle of dependent origination.

756. This is the second noble truth.

When the noble eightfold path is developed, the following are fully developed: the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, the four right efforts, the four bases of psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, and the seven awakening factors.[757] 10.8

And these two qualities proceed in conjunction: serenity and discernment.[758] They completely understand by direct knowledge those things that should be completely understood by direct knowledge.[759] They give up by direct knowledge those things that should be given up by direct knowledge. They develop by direct knowledge those things that should be developed by direct knowledge. They realize by direct knowledge those things that should be realized by direct knowledge. 10.9

And what are the things that should be completely understood by direct knowledge? You should say: 'The five grasping aggregates.' That is: form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. These are the things that should be completely understood by direct knowledge. 11.1

And what are the things that should be given up by direct knowledge? Ignorance and craving for continued existence. These are the things that should be given up by direct knowledge. 11.5

And what are the things that should be developed by direct knowledge? Serenity and discernment. These are the things that should be developed by direct knowledge. 11.8

And what are the things that should be realized by direct knowledge? Knowledge and freedom. These are the things that should be realized by direct knowledge. 11.11

When you truly know and see the ear … nose … tongue … body … mind, ideas, mind consciousness, mind contact, and what is felt as 12-18.1

757. The eightfold path is brought in as well, along with the other main teachings of the path.

758. Discussed in more detail at AN 4.170.

759. This refers to the distinct functions to be exercised in relation to each of the four noble truths (SN 56.11:5.1).

pleasant, painful, or neutral that arises dependent on mind contact, you are not aroused by these things. …

26.1 These are the things that should be realized by direct knowledge."

26.4 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants approved what the Buddha said.

MN 150

With the People of Nagaravinda

Nagaravindeyyasutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Kosalan brahmins named Nagaravinda.[760] 1.1

The brahmins and householders of Nagaravinda heard, "It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—while wandering in the land of the Kosalans has arrived at Nagaravinda, together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants. He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those fit for training, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras, and divinities, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. It's good to see such perfected ones." 2.1

Then the brahmins and householders of Nagaravinda went up to the Buddha. Before sitting down to one side, some bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their 3.1

760. We travel with the Buddha to several "villages of the Kosalan brahmins", but this is the only recorded visit to Nagaravinda. The name seems to mean "mountain-lotus" (*naga* = "mountain", *aravinda* = "lotus"). Sāvatthī lies only fifty kilometres south of the Himalayan foothills.

cupped palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent. The Buddha said to them:

4.1 "Householders, if wanderers who follow another religion were to ask you:[761] 'What kind of ascetic or brahmin doesn't deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration?' You should answer them: 'There are ascetics and brahmins who are not free of greed, hate, and delusion for sights known by the eye, who are not peaceful inside, and who conduct themselves badly among the good by way of body, speech, and mind. They don't deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration.[762] Why is that? Because we ourselves are not free of these things, so we do not see that they have any higher good conduct than us. That's why they don't deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration. There are ascetics and brahmins who are not free of greed, hate, and delusion for sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body … ideas known by the mind, who are not peaceful inside, and who conduct themselves badly among the good by way of body, speech, and mind. They don't deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration. Why is that? Because we ourselves are not free of these things, so we do not see that they have any higher good conduct than us. That's why they don't deserve honor, respect, reverence, and

761. This is an unusual framing, as usually the Buddha refers to wanderers of another religion when speaking with mendicants. The parallel simply says "other people" (SA 280 at T ii 76c8). Again, the fact that the villagers have diverse responses to the Buddha shows that they are not all Buddhists, and hence it would be out of character for the Buddha to assume otherwise, as the teaching here implies. Further, the Buddha's statement here reads as if it were an answer to a question on how to discern which of the many different ascetics were worthy of respect. It seems to me likely that the narrative has become a little confused.

762. The idiom *samavisamaṁ caranti* means "walk roughly in the smooth", in other words, "conduct themselves badly among the good", in contrast with those who "walk smoothly in the rough" (*caranti visame samaṁ*, SN 1.7:3.4, SN 2.6:8.6).

veneration.'[763] When questioned by wanderers of other religions, that's how you should answer them.

5.1 If wanderers of other religions were to ask you: 'What kind of ascetic or brahmin deserves honor, respect, reverence, and veneration?' You should answer them: 'There are ascetics and brahmins who are free of greed, hate, and delusion for sights known by the eye, who are peaceful inside, and who conduct themselves well by way of body, speech, and mind. They deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration. Why is that? Because we ourselves are not free of these things, but we see that they have a higher good conduct than us. That's why they deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration. There are ascetics and brahmins who are free of greed, hate, and delusion for sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body … ideas known by the mind, who are peaceful inside, and who conduct themselves well by way of body, speech, and mind. They deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration. Why is that? Because we ourselves are not free of these things, but we see that they have a higher good conduct than us. That's why they deserve honor, respect, reverence, and veneration.' When questioned by wanderers of other religions, that's how you should answer them.

6.1 If wanderers of other religions were to ask you: 'But what reasons and evidence do you have regarding those venerables that justifies saying, "Clearly those venerables are free of greed, hate, and delusion, or practicing to be free of them"?' You should answer them: 'It's because those venerables frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest. In such places there are no sights known by the eye to see and enjoy, there are no sounds known by the ear to hear and enjoy, no odors known by the nose to smell and enjoy, no flavors known by the tongue to taste and enjoy, and no touches known by

763. This is a much higher standard than that implied at MN 142:8.1. However, the context is different: there, it is whether offerings will be fruitful, here it is whether they are truly deserving of respect.

the body to feel and enjoy. These are the reasons and evidence that you have regarding those venerables that justifies saying, "Clearly those venerables are free of greed, hate, and delusion, or practicing to be free of them'". When questioned by wanderers of other religions, that's how you should answer them."

7.1 When he had spoken, the brahmins and householders of Nagaravinda said to the Buddha, "Excellent, worthy Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with clear eyes can see what's there, worthy Gotama has made the Teaching clear in many ways. We go for refuge to the worthy Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the worthy Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life."

MN 151

The Purification of Alms

Piṇḍapātapārisuddhisutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. 1.1

Then in the late afternoon, Sāriputta came out of retreat and went to the Buddha. He bowed and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Sāriputta, your faculties are so very clear, and your complexion is pure and bright. What kind of meditation are you usually practicing these days?" 1.3

"Sir, these days I usually practice the meditation on emptiness."[764] 2.3

"Good, good, Sāriputta! It seems you usually practice the meditation of a great man.[765] For emptiness is the meditation of a great man. 2.4

Now, a mendicant might wish: 'May I usually practice the meditation on emptiness.' So they should reflect: 'Along the path that I went for alms, or in the place I wandered for alms, or along the path that I returned from alms, was there any desire or greed or hate or delusion or aversion in my heart for sights known by the eye?'[766] Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that there was such desire or greed or hate or delusion or aversion in their heart, they should make an effort to give up those unskillful qualities. But 3.1

764. See MN 121:3.3 and note. This discourse offers a different perspective on this meditation.

765. While the concept of a "great man" is familiar, the "meditation of a great man" (*mahāpurisavihāra*) appears only here and at Kd 22:2.5.10, which seems to borrow from this passage.

766. Here the contemplation of the six sense fields is taught in the context of sense restraint through the active development of wisdom or discernment.

suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that there was no such desire or greed or hate or delusion or aversion in their heart, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

4-8.1 Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect: 'Along the path that I went for alms, or in the place I wandered for alms, or along the path that I returned from alms, was there any desire or greed or hate or delusion or repulsion in my heart for sounds known by the ear … smells known by the nose … tastes known by the tongue … touches known by the body … ideas known by the mind?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that there was such desire or greed or hate or delusion or aversion in their heart, they should make an effort to give up those unskillful qualities. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that there was no such desire or greed or hate or delusion or aversion in their heart, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

9.1 Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect:[767] 'Have I given up the five kinds of sensual stimulation?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have not given them up, they should make an effort to do so. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have given them up, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

10.1 Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect: 'Have I given up the five hindrances?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have not given them up, they should make an effort to do so. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have given them up, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

11.1 Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect: 'Have I completely understood the five grasping aggregates?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have not completely understood them,

767. The following sections may be a later addition, as they are absent from the parallel (SA 236 at T ii 57b24).

they should make an effort to do so. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have completely understood them, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect: 'Have I developed the 12.1
four kinds of mindfulness meditation?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they haven't developed them, they should make an effort to do so. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have developed them, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect: 'Have I developed the 13.1
four right efforts … the four bases of psychic power … the five faculties … the five powers … the seven awakening factors … the noble eightfold path?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they haven't developed it, they should make an effort to do so. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have developed it, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect: 'Have I developed 19.1
serenity and discernment?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they haven't developed them, they should make an effort to do so. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have developed them, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.

Furthermore, a mendicant should reflect: 'Have I realized knowl- 20.1
edge and freedom?' Suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they haven't realized them, they should make an effort to do so. But suppose that, upon checking, a mendicant knows that they have realized them, they should meditate with rapture and joy, training day and night in skillful qualities.[768]

768. Even the arahant continues to meditate and practice since it is a happy way to live, and to set a good example.

21.1 Whether in the past, future, or present, all those who purify their almsfood do so by continually checking in this way. So, Sāriputta, you should all train like this: 'We shall purify our almsfood by continually checking.'"[769]

21.6 That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Sāriputta approved what the Buddha said.

769. This clarifies the overall purpose of the discourse, to set out a method for mendicants to reflect during their daily walk for almsfood, at which time they are likely to encounter distracting sights, sounds, and smells.

MN 152

The Development of the Faculties

Indriyabhāvanāsutta

So I HAVE HEARD. At one time the Buddha was staying near Kajaṅgalā in a bamboo grove.[770] 1.1

Then the student Uttara, a pupil of the brahmin Pārāsariya, approached the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him.[771] When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him, "Uttara, does Pārāsariya teach his disciples the development of the faculties?" 2.1

"He does, worthy Gotama." 2.4

"But how does he teach it?" 2.5

770. The names here are spelled *gajaṅgalā* and *suveḷuvana*, but I keep consistency with AN 10.28, where a nun residing at this town gives a penetrative discourse to the townsfolk. In the Vinaya it is mentioned as the easternmost point of the "middle country", just beyond which lay Mahāsāla (Kd 5:13.12.2). The Milindapañha says it was a brahmin village on the slopes of the Himalayas where its main protagonist, the monk Nāgasena, was born (Mil 2:22.3). Assuming both these are the same place, we might look somewhere near Darjeeling for this town. In any case, it represents the furthest east that the Buddha taught. It is sometimes identified with 羯蠅揭羅 mentioned by Xuang Zang, but that has been located near Agra south of Sāvatthī.

771. A brahmin teacher named Pārāsariya (also spelled Pārāpariya or Pārāsiviya) features in Ja 222 and Ja 353 as one who warns that doing evil will lead to regret. The three similarly-named monks in the Theragāthā (Thag 1.116, Thag 16.2, Thag 16.10) share the same clan name (Sanskrit Pārāśarya). These are descendants of the great sage Parāśara Śāktya, who is mentioned in Rig Veda 7.1.18 alongside Śatayātu, Vasiṣṭha; his prayers to Agni are recorded at Rig Veda 1.65–73, and to Soma at 9.97.31–44.

2.6 "Worthy Gotama, it's when the eye sees no sight and the ear hears no sound.[772] That's how Pārāsariya teaches his disciples the development of the faculties."

2.8 "In that case, Uttara, a blind person and a deaf person will have developed faculties according to what Pārāsariya says. For a blind person sees no sight with their eyes and a deaf person hears no sound with their ears."[773] When he said this, Uttara sat silent, dismayed, shoulders drooping, downcast, depressed, with nothing to say.

3.1 Knowing this, the Buddha addressed Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, the development of the faculties taught by Pārāsariya is quite different from the supreme development of the faculties in the training of the Noble One."

3.3 "Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One. Let the Buddha teach the supreme development of the faculties in the training of the Noble One. The mendicants will listen and remember it."

3.5 "Well then, Ānanda, listen and apply your mind well, I will speak."

3.6 "Yes, sir," Ānanda replied. The Buddha said this:

4.1 "And how, Ānanda, is there the supreme development of the faculties in the training of the Noble One? When a mendicant sees a sight with their eyes, in them arises what is agreeable, what is disagreeable, and what is both agreeable and disagreeable. They understand: 'What is agreeable, what is disagreeable, and what is both agreeable and disagreeable have arisen in me. That's conditioned, crude, and dependently originated. But this is peaceful and sublime, namely equanimity.' Then the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanim-

772. This is perhaps a distorted reference to certain Upaniṣadic teachings that speak of the undifferentiated state of divinity that contains the potential for the faculties of seeing, etc. See DN 29:16.13 and note there. Perhaps, too, it refers to the notion that in deep sleep the senses are withdrawn into the "space of the heart" (Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad 2.1.17).

773. This teaching is not about deep meditation, where the senses can be in a state of abeyance, but about how we relate to the experience of the senses.

ity becomes stabilized. It's like how a person with clear eyes might open their eyes then shut them; or might shut their eyes then open them.[774] Such is the speed, the swiftness, the ease with which anything agreeable, disagreeable, and both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. In the training of the Noble One this is called the supreme development of the faculties regarding sights known by the eye.[775]

5.1 Furthermore, when a mendicant hears a sound with their ears, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. They understand: 'What is agreeable, what is disagreeable, and what is both agreeable and disagreeable have arisen in me. That's conditioned, crude, and dependently originated. But this is peaceful and sublime, namely equanimity.' Then the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. It's like how a strong person can effortlessly snap their fingers. Such is the speed, the swiftness, the ease with which anything agreeable, disagreeable, and both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. In the training of the Noble One this is called the supreme development of the faculties regarding sounds known by the ear.

6.1 Furthermore, when a mendicant smells an odor with their nose, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. They understand: 'What is agreeable, what is disagreeable, and what is both agreeable and disagreeable have arisen in me. That's conditioned, crude, and dependently originated. But this is peaceful and sublime, namely equanimity.' Then the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. It's like how a

774. The Buddha gives a series of similes, each one appropriate to the specific sense.

775. Bearing in mind that the word for "faculty", *indriya*, has the sense of "potential", this phrase emphasizes that the "restraint" of the senses is also the way to "develop" them to their fullest.

drop of water would roll off a gently sloping lotus leaf, and would not stay there. Such is the speed, the swiftness, the ease with which anything agreeable, disagreeable, and both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. In the training of the Noble One this is called the supreme development of the faculties regarding smells known by the nose.

7.1 Furthermore, when a mendicant tastes a flavor with their tongue, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. They understand: 'What is agreeable, what is disagreeable, and what is both agreeable and disagreeable have arisen in me. That's conditioned, crude, and dependently originated. But this is peaceful and sublime, namely equanimity.' Then the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. It's like how a strong person who's formed a glob of spit on the tip of their tongue could easily spit it out. Such is the speed, the swiftness, the ease with which anything agreeable, disagreeable, and both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. In the training of the Noble One this is called the supreme development of the faculties regarding tastes known by the tongue.

8.1 Furthermore, when a mendicant encounters a touch with their body, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. They understand: 'What is agreeable, what is disagreeable, and what is both agreeable and disagreeable have arisen in me. That's conditioned, crude, and dependently originated. But this is peaceful and sublime, namely equanimity.' Then the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. It's like how a strong person can extend or contract their arm. Such is the speed, the swiftness, the ease with which anything agreeable, disagreeable, and both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. In the training of the Noble One this is called the supreme development of the faculties regarding touches known by the body.

Furthermore, when a mendicant knows a thought with their mind, 9.1
the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. They understand: 'What is agreeable, what is disagreeable, and what is both agreeable and disagreeable have arisen in me. That's conditioned, crude, and dependently originated. But this is peaceful and sublime, namely equanimity.' Then the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. It's like how a strong person could let two or three drops of water fall onto an iron cauldron that had been heated all day. The drops would be slow to fall, but they'd quickly dry up and evaporate. Such is the speed, the swiftness, the ease with which anything agreeable, disagreeable, and both agreeable and disagreeable that arose in them cease, and equanimity becomes stabilized. In the training of the Noble One this is called the supreme development of the faculties regarding ideas known by the mind. That's how there is the supreme development of the faculties in the training of the Noble One.

And how are they a practicing trainee?[776] When a mendicant 10.1
sees a sight with their eyes, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. They are horrified, repelled, and disgusted by that. When they hear a sound with their ears … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know a thought with their mind, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. They are horrified, repelled, and disgusted by that. That's how they are a practicing trainee.

And how are they a noble one with developed faculties?[777] When 11-15.1
a mendicant sees a sight with their eyes, the agreeable, the disagree-

776. This is at least a stream-enterer; they still react to sense experiences that are agreeable or disagreeable, but they understand that they lead to suffering and train themselves to be freed.

777. This is the arahant. They still experience sense stimulation as pleasant, etc., but without reacting.

able, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' that's what they do.[778] If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and the repulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware, shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do.

16.1 When they hear a sound with their ear … When they smell an odor with their nose … When they taste a flavor with their tongue … When they feel a touch with their body … When they know a thought with their mind, the agreeable, the disagreeable, and the both agreeable and disagreeable arise in them. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and the repulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware, shunning both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. That's how they are a noble one with developed faculties.

17.1 So, Ānanda, I have taught the supreme development of the faculties in the training of the Noble One, I have taught the practicing trainee, and I have taught the noble one with developed faculties.

18.1 Out of sympathy, I've done what a teacher should do who wants what's best for their disciples. Here are these roots of trees, and

778. Here this ability is fully mastered. It is taught to those in training as a practice at AN 5.144.

here are these empty huts. Practice absorption, Ānanda! Don't be negligent! Don't regret it later! This is my instruction to you."[779]

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda ap- 18.3
proved what the Buddha said.

THE MIDDLE DISCOURSES ARE COMPLETE.

779. The Majjhima Nikāya ends with the Buddha encouraging the archetypal student of the suttas, Ānanda, to develop meditation.

Colophon

The Translator

Bhikkhu Sujato was born as Anthony Aidan Best on 4/11/1966 in Perth, Western Australia. He grew up in the pleasant suburbs of Mt Lawley and Attadale alongside his sister Nicola, who was the good child. His mother, Margaret Lorraine Huntsman née Pinder, said "he'll either be a priest or a poet", while his father, Anthony Thomas Best, advised him to "never do anything for money". He attended Aquinas College, a Catholic school, where he decided to become an atheist. At the University of WA he studied philosophy, aiming to learn what he wanted to do with his life. Finding that what he wanted to do was play guitar, he dropped out. His main band was named Martha's Vineyard, which achieved modest success in the indie circuit.

A seemingly random encounter with a roadside joey took him to Thailand, where he entered his first meditation retreat at Wat Ram Poeng, Chieng Mai in 1992. Feeling the call to the Buddha's path, he took full ordination in Wat Pa Nanachat in 1994, where his teachers were Ajahn Pasanno and Ajahn Jayasaro. In 1997 he returned to Perth to study with Ajahn Brahm at Bodhinyana Monastery.

He spent several years practicing in seclusion in Malaysia and Thailand before establishing Santi Forest Monastery in Bundanoon, NSW, in 2003. There he was instrumental in supporting the establishment of the Theravada bhikkhuni order in Australia and advocating for women's rights. He continues to teach in Australia and globally,

with a special concern for the moral implications of climate change and other forms of environmental destruction. He has published a series of books of original and groundbreaking research on early Buddhism.

In 2005 he founded SuttaCentral together with Rod Bucknell and John Kelly. In 2015, seeing the need for a complete, accurate, plain English translation of the Pali texts, he undertook the task, spending nearly three years in isolation on the isle of Qi Mei off the coast of the nation of Taiwan. He completed the four main Nikāyas in 2018, and the early books of the Khuddaka Nikāya were complete by 2021. All this work is dedicated to the public domain and is entirely free of copyright encumbrance.

In 2019 he returned to Sydney where he established Lokanta Vihara (The Monastery at the End of the World).

Creation Process

Primary source was the digital Mahāsaṅgīti edition of the Pali Tipiṭaka. Translated from the Pali, with reference to several English translations, especially those of Bhikkhu Bodhi.

The Translation

This translation was part of a project to translate the four Pali Nikāyas with the following aims: plain, approachable English; consistent terminology; accurate rendition of the Pali; free of copyright. It was made during 2016–2018 while Bhikkhu Sujato was staying in Qimei, Taiwan.

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