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Mahā Assapura Sutta

The Greater Discourse at Assapura | M 39

Theme: A recluse should be worth his salt

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003

1 Assapura & the 16 great countries

1.1 The most important suttas delivered by the Buddha at Assapura are the **Mahā Assapura Sutta** (M 39/1:271-280), the **Cūḷa Assapura Sutta** (M 40/1:281-284) (MA 2:312), and the **Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta** (D 1:111-126). According to the **Cetiya Jātaka** (J 422/3:460), Assapura was built by the second of the five sons of King Apacara (or Upacara) of Ceti, on the spot where the prince saw a pure white horse (*assa*). It lay to the south of Sotthivatī, Apacara's capital (J 3:460).

1.2 The Assapura of the suttas was a city in the kingdom of **Aṅga**, the easternmost of the sixteen "great countries" (*mahājanapadā*) mentioned in the Pali Canon, namely, Aṅga, Magadha, Kāsī, Kosala, Vajjī, Mallā, Cetī, Vamsā, Kuru, Pañcāla, Macchā, Sūrasena, Assaka, Avantī, Gandhāra, and Kambojā (A 1:213, 4:252, 256, 260, etc).¹ The Aṅga territory lay south of the Ganges, to the east of Magadha (eastern part of south Bihar today), separated by the river Campā. Its capital city was **Campā** or Campā,puṛī, on the confluence of the Campā and the Ganges. Undoubtedly, this area is today denoted by Campa,nagara and Campura, 34 km (24 mi) to the east of modern Bhagalpur.²

1.3 The country is generally referred to by the name of its people, the Aṅgā, though occasionally, it is called Aṅga,raṭṭha (DhA 1:384). In the Buddha's time it was part of Magadha, ruled by king Bimbisāra, who was well-respected by the people of Aṅga (MA 1:279 f). There were frequent movements of people between the two countries (J 2:211), and occasional wars between them (J 4:454, 5:316, 6:271).

1.4 In the Buddha's time the rajah of Aṅga was merely a wealthy kshatriya, mentioned in the suttas as having granted a pension to a brahmin (M 2:163). The people of Aṅga and Magadha are generally mentioned together.³ The people of Aṅga-Magadha provided Uruvelā Kassapa with offerings for his great fire sacrifices (V 1:27). It was their custom to offer an annual sacrifice to Mahā Brahmā in the hope of gaining a hundred-thousandfold reward (SA 1:351). On one occasion, it is said, Shakra, the king of the gods, himself, appeared in person and went with them to the Buddha so that they may not waste their resources in futile sacrifices (SA 1:269 f).

1.5 The Mahā Govinda Sutta (D 19) seems to indicate that once, in the past, Dhata,raṭṭha (Skt *Dhṛta,rāṣṭra*) was king of Aṅga (D 2:235 f), but this probably refers to another country.⁴ Before **Soṇa Kolivisa** joined the Order, he was a serf or humble servant (*paddhagu*) of Aṅga (Tha 632).⁵

2 Summary

1.1 In the Mahā Assapura Sutta, the Buddha admonishes the monks to live up to their vocation as recluses (*samaṇā*) so that they are worthy of the alms they receive and bring great spiritual benefit to their donors. As true recluse and brahmins, they should be have moral shame and moral fear, be pure in deed, word and thought, guard the sense-doors, be moderate in food, be ever vigilant, mindful and fully aware, be rid of the 5 mental hindrances and cultivate the dhyanas or mental absorptions (*jhāna*). Such a monk is truly called a recluse (*samaṇa*), a brahmin (*brāhmaṇa*), one baptized [purified by water] (*nahātaka*), one accomplished in sacred knowledge (*vedagū*), a learned in sacred lore (*sotthiya* = *sottiya*), a noble one (*ariya*), and an arhat (*arahanta*).

¹ Other similar lists mention ten countries, eg D 2:200; cf Mvst 1:34, 198; Lalv 24(22).

² Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India*, ed Majumdar, Calcutta, 1924:546 f. J Finegan, *An Archaeological History of Religions of Indian Asia*, NY: Paragon House, 1989:84 f.

³ D 2:202; M 2:2; V 1:27; ThaA 1:548

⁴ D:RD 2:270 n.; see also The Rāmāyaṇa 1.8, 9, 17, 25.

⁵ For detailed list, see (**Tad-ah'**) **Uposatha S** (A 3.70) @ SD 4.18 App.

1.2 In the sutta title, Mahā Assapura Sutta, the word *mahā* refers to *sutta*. In other words, this is the “great” or “greater” discourse given at Assapura. In most cases, where *mahā* prefixes a sutta title, it means that there is at least one other identically titled sutta prefixed with a *cūla*, “lesser,” usually shorter. However, in some cases, the *mahā* clearly refers to a name, for example, the Mahā Kaccāna Bhadd’eka-ratta Sutta (M 113), it is “Mahā Kaccāna” that is referred to. IB Horner helpfully discusses the qualifiers *cūla* and *mahā* in sutta titles in her introduction to *Middle Length Sayings* (M:H 1:xiii-xvii).

3 Anomalies in the list of stages?

3.1 **Rod Bucknell**, in his paper, “The Buddhist path to liberation: An analysis of the listing of stages,”⁶ thinks that there is a textual corruption in the reading of *hiri, ottappa* (moral shame and moral fear) as a dvandva [3] instead of as two separate terms, as in this passage on the second and third of the seven good qualities of a noble disciple from **the Sekha Sutta** (M 53):⁷

He has moral shame. He is ashamed of bodily misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. He is ashamed of engaging in bad unwholesome states.

He has moral fear. He fears of bodily misconduct, of verbal misconduct, and of mental misconduct. He fears of engaging in bad unwholesome states. (M 53, 11-12/1:356)

3.2 A second “textual corruption” noted by Bucknell is the inclusion of the “purity of mental conduct” (*parisuddha mano, samācāra*) passage [6]:

Two anomalies [in the Mahā Assapura list of stages] have now been noted:

(a) the illogical position of pure mental conduct [6] and pure livelihood [7], suggesting a combination of the two familiar triads⁸; and

(b) the atypical treatment of *hiri* and *ottappa* as a single stage. These two anomalies are in one respect complementary: the first amounts to the addition of an extra stage, the second effectively reduces the total number of stages by one. This suggests that the two are perhaps associated aspects of a single textual corruption. The observed facts can be accounted for with the following hypothesis:

The list of ten “things to be done by recluses and brahmins” formerly began thus:

- (1) *hiri*
- (2) *ottappa*
- (3) pure conduct of body
- (4) pure conduct of speech
- (5) pure livelihood
- (6) guarding the sense-doors
- etc.

Monks responsible for memorizing and transmitting this list were also familiar with the triad of conduct of body, speech, and mind. Since the list contained the first and second members of this triad, they added the third member; and to compensate for the resulting increase in the number of “things to be done,” they simultaneously combined *hiri* and *ottappa* into a single item. This corruption—which may have been carried out largely unconsciously—went undetected because the

⁶ R Bucknell, “The Buddhist Path to Liberation: An analysis of the listing of stages.” JIABS 1984:7-40.

⁷ Bucknell 1984:17. “In other lists [besides Mahā Assapura S] where *hiri and ottappa* occur, they are invariably reckoned as two separate items... [such as] in the *pañca balāni* (five powers): *saddhā, hiri, ottappa, viriya, paññā* (faith, shame, fear of blame, energy, insight) [A 3:9, 5:123 f; cf D 2:120 for better known set that excludes *hiri and ottappa*], and the *satta saddhammā* (seven excellent qualities): *saddhā, hiri, ottappa, bahussuta, viriya, sati, paññā* (faith, shame, fear of blame, hearing much, energy, mindfulness, insight) [D 3:252; M 1:356]” (1984:19; emphases added).

⁸ The triads are: (1) pure conduct of body, speech and mind; and (2) right speech, right action, and right livelihood (Bucknell, “The Buddhist Path to Liberation: An analysis of the listing of stages.” JIABS 7,2 1984:19).

list occurred only once in the entire Tipiṭaka (in the *Mahā-Assapura-sutta*).⁹ Hence the list as we now have it. (1984:19 f)

3.3 Analayo, in *A Comparative of the Majjhima Nikāya*, notes that, although the Pali sutta begins by stipulating moral shame and moral fear as two qualities of a true recluse, this statement is not found in the Chinese versions of the sutta, of which two exist, one in the Madhyama Āgama and the other in the Ekotara Āgama.¹⁰ A few lines of the sutta have also been preserved in the Sanskrit fragments discovered in Central Asia.¹¹ From this finding, it is possible that the section of moral shame and moral fear could have been added some time after the Chinese translations were made or that the Chinese translation is based on a text that did not have this passage.

3.4 Be that as it may, it should also be remembered that Buddhism is not so much a text-based system as it is **an oral tradition** even to this day.¹² “Oral tradition” here has two important senses: first, the textual transmission through recitation and recited texts; and secondly, the direct and personal teaching or lineage of transmitting the Dharma from teacher to pupil (going back to the Buddha’s own day). No matter how much technical care is taken in the reciting and the writing or printing of the sacred texts, they would suffer various errors, such as scribal errors, lost leaves, sectarian revisions and worst of all, misinterpretations, misuse and disuse.

3.5 The personal transmission of the Dharma through living Dharma-spirited teachers, nurtured by one’s mindfulness, is still the most foolproof way of tasting the original flavour of the Dharma. That is, if one’s intention is to find spiritual liberation. The texts no matter how authentic or accurate are but dry ink on dead leaves. The spirit of the Dharma only come alive when we experience and understand these teachings as a personal experience of true reality. No matter how well made the spoon is, it still does not taste the soup; only the taster tastes and is nourished.

4 Studying the sutta

4.1 Except for the occasion of this sutta, its teachings are all staple and found elsewhere in the Nikāyas, which attest to their age and importance. The section on abandoning the hindrances and their similes [12-14] are found in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta**¹³ and **the Yodh’ājīva Sutta 1**.¹⁴ **The (Nīvaraṇa) Saṅgārava S**¹⁵ gives a colourful simile to each of these hindrances. The Majjhima Commentary gives elaborate details for each of the 5 similes here.¹⁶

4.2 The section on the dhyanas [15-18] are also found in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta**.¹⁷ Similarly, the rest of the Mahā Assapura Sutta (ie on the three knowledges) [19-21], except for the closing section, on

⁹ Bucknell: “Had the earlier list occurred in several *suttas* in different *nikāyas*, palpable discrepancies would have resulted, thereby alerting the memorizers to the corruption. Thus, generally speaking, infrequent occurrence of a textual passage would be conducive to corruption of it.” (JIABS 1984:39 n34)

¹⁰ These are MĀ 182 = T1.724c & EĀ 49.8 = T2.801c-802b. MĀ 182 and EĀ 49.8 agree with M 39 on the location of the sutta (鶯騎國馬邑 in MĀ 182, apparently abbreviated to 鶯藝村 in EĀ 49.8). MĀ 182 also has the same title as the Pali version (馬邑), without however qualifying this discourse to be a “greater” one. (Analayo 2006 Intro)

¹¹ Cat bo 562 in SHT 1:250 (identification of this fragment as a parallel to M 39 by Schlingloff 1967:422); and cat no 1392 in SHT 6:113. Cat no 562 parallels the assumption that nothing more needs to be done, found at M 1:271,-26; cat no 1392 parallels the Buddha’s instruction to purify mental conduct at M 1:272.20; cat no 562 and cat no 1392 each also have a part paralleling the description of sense-restraint at M1:273,3. (Analayo 2006 ad M 1:271)

¹² Technically, I have rendered *anussavana* as “aural tradition” (referring esp to brahminical traditions), and reserved “oral” for the Buddhist reciter tradition.

¹³ D 2.67-74/1:71-74.

¹⁴ A 5.75.12/ 2:244 f.

¹⁵ S 46.55/5:121-126.

¹⁶ See Nyanaponika, *The Five Mental Hindrances*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, Wheel no 26, 1961:27-34 & Appendix below.

¹⁷ D 2.75b-82/1:74-76.

the etymologies of “arhat” [22-29], are found in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2.93-98/1:82-84) and **the Bhaya,bherava Sutta**.¹⁸

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The Greater Discourse at Assa,pura

M 39

[271]

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying amongst the Aṅga people. There was a market town of the Aṅgas called Assa,pura.

1.2 Then the Blessed One addressed the monks: “Bhikshus!”

“Bhante!” the monks replied in assent.

What makes a recluse?

The Blessed One said this:

2 “‘Recluses, recluses,’ bhikshus, that is how people perceive you. And when you are asked, ‘What are you?’ you claim, ‘We are recluses.’

Bhikshus, since you are designated thus, since you claim thus, you should train yourself thus,

3 ‘Having undertaken the duties that make one a recluse and that make one a brahmin, **we will do those duties** so that our designation will be true and our claim will be valid, and we partake of the requisites of robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicine and support for the sick, so that our deeds will be of great fruit, of great benefit,¹⁹

and so that this going-forth would not be barren but be fertile and fruitful.’

3.2 And what, bhikshus, are the things that makes one a recluse and makes one a brahmin?²⁰

(1) Bhikshus, you should train yourself thus,

‘We will be accomplished in **moral shame and moral fear**.’²¹

¹⁸ M 4.27-32/1:22 f.

¹⁹ That is, help the monks in physically supporting them in their spiritual cultivation and also bringing great merit to the donors.

²⁰ *Dhammā samaṇa,karaṇā ca brāhmaṇa,karaṇā ca*. In **Cūḷa Assa,pura S** (M 40), the by-line is “the proper way of a recluse” (*samaṇa,sāmīci-p,paṭipadā*) (M 40/1:281-284) = SD 41.8. Here, “brahmin” is used not in a social or biological sense of a class, but in a *spiritual* sense of a true practitioner, a recluse.

²¹ “Moral shame and moral fear,” *hiri ottappa*. Comy (MA 2:313 f) qu (**Loka,pāla**) **Hiri,ottappa S** where they are said to be “protectors of the world” (A 2.1.9/1:51), so called because they are the pillars of a healthy society.

The Abhidhamma defines moral shame (*hiri*) as “to be ashamed of what one ought to be ashamed of, to be ashamed of performing bad and unwholesome deeds” (Pug 24); cf Dhs:R 18 f. It is one of the 7 noble treasures (*ariya,dhanāni*, DA 2:34; ThaA 240; VvA 113), ie the treasures of generosity (*cāga,dhanāni*, D 3:163, 251; A 4:5; VvA 113; cf A 3:53): faith, moral conduct, moral shame, moral dread, learning, generosity, wisdom. Cf Sn 77, 462 (= D 1:168), 719.

Moral shame is often paired with moral fear (*ottappa*) (eg M 1:271; S 2:220; A 2:78; It 34; Tikap 61; J 1:127; Vism 221; DhA 3:73). The term *ottappa* is derived from *apa* + √TRAP, to be abashed [Skt **āpatrapya* > *apatrapā* (Trenckner)]. Andersen suggests that this etym must be preferred to that of Childers: **autappya* > *uttāpa*, *ut* + √TAP, heat (PG 62). Edgerton (BHSD) has *apatrāpya* and the cpd *hrīr-apatrāpya* (P *hiri,ottappa*). According to **Visuddhi,magga**, the proximate cause for moral shame is self-respect, while for moral dread it is respect for others. Out of self-respect (*attāna garu katvā*), one, like the daughter of a good family, rejects bad-doing through moral shame. Out of respect for others (*param garu katvā*), one, like a courtesan, rejects bad-doing through moral dread (Vism 14.142/464 f). The former is sometimes known as self-regarding moral conduct (motivated by the *shame* the deed entails), while the latter as other-regarding moral conduct (motivated by the healthy *fear* of karmic repercussion). As such these two actions are

3.3 But, bhikshus, you may think,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear.

3.4 That much is enough, we have done enough,²² the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.²³

3.5 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship²⁴—**there is still more to be done.**²⁵

The fourfold purity

4 And, bhikshus, what more should be done? [272]

(2) ‘Bhikshus, you should train yourself thus,

‘**Our conduct of body will be pure**, clear, open, flawless, restrained,
and we will not praise ourselves and scorn others on account of that pure bodily conduct.’

4.2 But, bhikshus, you may think,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;
our conduct of body is pure.

4.3 That much is enough, we have done enough, the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.

4.3 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done.*

5 And, bhikshus, what more should be done?

(3) ‘Bhikshus, you should train yourself thus,

‘**Our verbal conduct will be pure**, clear, open, flawless, restrained,
and we will not praise ourselves and scorn others on account of that pure verbal conduct.’

5.2 But, bhikshus, you may think,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;
our conduct of body is pure;
our verbal conduct is pure.

5.3 That much is enough, we have done enough, the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.

5.4 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done.*

known as the two bright states that protect the world, if not for which “one would neither respect one’s mother, nor one’s mother’s sister, nor one’s brother’s wife, nor one’s teacher’s wife” (A 1:50). [In his translation, Ñāṇamoli rendered *hiri* as “conscience,” but apparently mistranslated *ottappati* as “is ashamed” and *ottappa* as “shame,” Vism:Ñ 524 f.] See Intro (3).

²² “That much is enough, we have done enough,” *alam ettāvātā katam ettāvātā*, lit “that much is enough, that much has been done.”

²³ “You would be pleased with yourselves with just that much,” *tāvataken ’eva tuṭṭhim āpajjeyyātha*, lit “you would fall into contentment with just that much.”

²⁴ Comy (MA 2:314) qu **Sāmañña S 1 & 2** (S 45.35-36/5:25): “What, bhikshus, is recluseship (*sāmañña*)? The noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view...right concentration—this is called recluseship. And what, bhikshus, is the goal of recluseship (*sāmaññ’attha*)? The destruction of greed, hate and delusion—this is the goal of recluseship.”

²⁵ *Sati uttarim karaṇīye*. This means that sainthood and liberation have not been attained yet. A similar teaching with this statement is given by Ānanda to the brahmin youth Subha in (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,1,31 etc @ SD 40a.13

6 And, bhikshus, what more should be done?

(4) ‘Bhikshus, you should train yourself thus,

‘**Our mental conduct**²⁶ **will be pure**, clear, open, flawless, restrained,
and we will not praise ourselves and scorn others on account of that pure mental conduct.’

6.2 But, bhikshus, you may think,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;
our bodily conduct is pure;
our verbal conduct is pure;
our mental conduct is pure.

That much is enough, we have done enough, the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.

6.3 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done.*

7 And, bhikshus, what more should be done?

(5) ‘Bhikshus, you should train yourself thus, ‘**Our livelihood will be pure**, clear, open, flawless, restrained, and we will not praise ourselves and scorn others on account of that pure livelihood.’

7.2 But, bhikshus, you may think,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;
our conduct of body is pure;
our verbal conduct is pure;
our mental conduct is pure;
our livelihood is pure. [273]

7.3 That much is enough, we have done enough, the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.

7.4 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done.*

Restraint of the senses

8 (6) Bhikshus, what more should be done?

8.1 Bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus,

‘We will **guard the sense-doors.**

8.2 On seeing a form with the eye, we will not grasp at any sign or detail by which

—if we were to dwell without restraint over the eye faculty—

the bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure²⁷ might assail us.

²⁶ R Bucknell thinks that the addition of this *parisuddha mano, samācāra* passage is a “textual corruption”: see Intro (3).

²⁷ “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassā*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that covetousness and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one’s meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā, domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S**: “Bhikshus, before my awakening, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me...’Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the wretchedness

We will practise restraint, we will guard the eye faculty, we will dwell with the eye faculty restrained.

8.3 On hearing a sound with the ear, we will not grasp at any sign or detail by which

—if we were to dwell without restraint over the ear faculty—

the bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might assail us.

We will practise restraint, we will guard the ear faculty, we will dwell with the mind faculty restrained.

8.4 On smelling a smell with the nose, we will not grasp at any sign or detail by which

—if we were to dwell without restraint over the nose faculty—

the bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might assail us.

We will practise restraint, we will guard the nose faculty, we will dwell with the mind faculty restrained.

8.5 On tasting a taste with the tongue, we will not grasp at any sign or detail by which

—if we were to dwell without restraint over the tongue faculty—

the bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might assail us.

We will practise restraint, we will guard the tongue faculty, we will dwell with the mind faculty restrained.

8.6 On feeling a touch with the body, we will not grasp at any sign or detail by which

—if we were to dwell without restraint over the body faculty—

the bad unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might assail us.

We will practise restraint, we will guard the body faculty, we will dwell with the mind faculty restrained.

8.7 On knowing a thought with the mind, we do not grasp at any sign or detail by which

—if we were to dwell without restraint over the faculty of the mind—

the bad unwholesome states of covetousness or grief might assail us.²⁸

We will practise restraint, we will guard the mind faculty, we will dwell with the mind faculty restrained.

8.8 But, bhikshus, you may think,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;

our conduct of body is pure;

our verbal conduct is pure;

our mental conduct is pure;

our livelihood is pure;

our senses are restrained.

8.9 That much is enough, we have done enough, the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.

8.10 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done.*

Moderation in food²⁹

(*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world’.” (A 1:258/3.101, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

²⁸ For a elaborate teaching on sense-restraint, ie “the cultivation of the faculties” (*indriya bhāvanā*), **Indriya-****bhāvanā S** (M 152/3:298-301), SD 17.13.

²⁹ This reflection is one of the 4 on the use of monastic supports (robes, food, shelter and medicine) (see **Sabb’-āsava S**, M 2,13-16/1:10 @ SD 30.3) and found by itself at **Mahā Assapura S** (M 39,9/1:273), SD 10.13; **Sekha S** (M 53,9/1:355), SD 21.14; **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107,5/3:2), SD 56.3; **Sāriputta Saddhī, vihārika S** (S 35.-129/4:104); **Rathōpama S** (S 35.239/4:176, 177), SD 55.14; **Apaṇṇaka Paṭipada S** (A 3.16/1:114), SD 74.11; **Aparihāna S** (A 4.37,4/2:40); (**Taṇhā**) **Bhikkhuṇī S** (A 4.159,4/2:145), SD 10.14; **Nanda S** (A 8.9,3/4:167); **Nm** 1:240, 241, 368× 2, 484; **Nc:Be** 292; **Dhs** 231; **Vbh** 249; **Pug** 25.

9 (7) Bhikshus, what more should be done? Bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus,

9.2 ‘We will be **moderate in food**.

Wisely considering food, we will take it,
not for amusement, not for intoxication, not for fattening, not for adorning;
but only that this body may endure and continue,
for keeping it unharmed,
for helping it to live the holy life, thus,
“I shall end the old feeling [of hunger], and not cause a new feeling to arise.

Thus will I be blameless and live at ease.”³⁰

9.3 But, bhikshus, you may think,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;

our conduct of body is pure;
our verbal conduct is pure;
our mental conduct is pure;
our livelihood is pure;
our senses are restrained;
we are moderate in food.

9.4 That much is enough, we have done enough, the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.

9.5 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done*.

Wakefulness

10 (8) Bhikshus, what more should be done? Bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus,

10.2 ‘We will devote ourselves to **wakefulness**.

During the day, while walking to and fro and sitting down, we will purify the mind of obstructions.³⁰

During the first watch of the night,³¹ [274] while walking to and fro and sitting down, we will purify the mind of obstructions.

During the middle watch of the night, we will, after mentally noting the time for rising,³² mindfully and fully aware lie down, lion-like³³ on our right side, one foot placed on the other.

³⁰ “Obstructions,” *āvāraṇā*, syn of *nīvaraṇā*, “mental hindrance.” See *Āvaraṇa, nīvaraṇa S* (S 5:94-96).

³¹ In the Buddha’s time, the day was divided into 2 parts: forenoon (dawn to noon) and afternoon (noon to sunset); and the night into 3 watches (*yāma*): the first watch (6.00-10.00 pm), the middle watch (10.00-midnight) and the last watch (midnight to 6.00 am) (DA 1:45 ff, 3:727; MA 1:255; SA 3:184; SnA 131 f; BA 8, 133. 298).

³² After mentally noting the time for rising,” *uṭṭhāna, saññam manasi karitvā*: **D 33/3:209**; **M 39, 10/1:274**, **53, 5+10/1:354 f**; **S 4.7/1:107**, **35.120/4:105**, **35.239/4:177**, **35.243/4:184**; **A 3.16/1:114**, **4.23/2:40**, **4.58.9/4:87**, **8.9.4/-4:168**, **10.67, 1/5:123**, **10.68, 1/5:126**; **U 8.5/84**. When one is going to sleep is an example of “sleeping mindfully,” mentioned in **Sati, paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8(7)/1:57). In **Pacalā S** (A 7.58), the Buddha exhorts, “Moggallāna, mindful and fully aware, you should lie down lion-like on your right side, placing foot on foot, keeping in mind the thought that on awakening, you would get up quickly, thinking, ‘I will dwell without indulging in the pleasure of sleep, or in the pleasure of reclining, or in the pleasure of drowsiness’” (*na seyya, dukhaṃ na passa, sukhaṃ na middha, sukhaṃ anuyutto*) (A 7.58/4:87), SD 4.11. On this mental noting of rising up again, see also n at **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,4.14/2:135, 16,5.1/2:137), SD 9.

³³ **Seyyā S** (A 4.244) mentions 4 sleeping-postures (*seyyā*): that of the ghosts (*petā*) (lying supine like a corpse); that of those who indulge in sense-pleasures (*kāma, bhogī*) (lying on the left side); that of the lion (lying on the right side); and that of the Tathāgata (lying while in the 4 dhyanas); the lion’s sleeping posture is described in detail (A 4.244/2:244 f), SD 76.6. Comy qu **Seyyā S** but places *kāma, bhogī, seyyā* first (MA 2:316). See **Avassuta Pariyāya S** (S 35.143) where the Buddha, after saying, “My back aches, so I will stretch it,” and lies in the lion posture (S 35.143/4:184). Cf SA 1:78; UA 403; VbhA 345.

During the last watch of the night, while walking to and fro and sitting down, we will purify the mind of obstructions.³⁴

10.3 But, bhikshus, you may think,
 ‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;
 our conduct of body is pure,
 our verbal conduct is pure,
 our mental conduct is pure;
 our livelihood is pure;
 our senses are restrained;
 we are moderate in food;
 we are devoted to wakefulness.

10.4 That much is enough, we have done enough, the goal of recluseship has been won. There is nothing more to be done.’

And so you would be pleased with yourselves with just that much.

10.5 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done*.

Mindfulness and full awareness

11 (9) Bhikshus, what more should be done? Bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus,

11.2 ‘We will be **accomplished in mindfulness and full awareness**:

While going forward and returning,	we will act fully aware;
while looking toward and looking away,	we will act fully aware;
while bending and extending our limbs,	we will act fully aware;
while carrying our outer cloak, our upper robe, and our bowl,	we will act fully aware;
while eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting,	we will act fully aware;
while peeing and voiding,	we will act fully aware;
while walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking, or remaining silent,	we will act fully aware.’

11.3 Now, bhikshus, you may think thus,

‘We are accomplished in moral shame and moral fear;
 our conduct of body is pure;
 our verbal conduct is pure;
 our mental conduct is pure;
 our livelihood is pure;
 our senses are restrained;
 we are moderate in food;
 we are devoted to wakefulness;
 we are accomplished in mindfulness and full awareness.³⁵

11.4 Bhikshus, I declare to you; bhikshus, I make it known to you: you who desire recluseship, do not lose sight of the goal of recluseship—*there is still more to be done*.

Effective meditation

12 Bhikshus, what more should be done?³⁶

³⁴ For refs on this pericope, see **Danta, bhūmi S** (M 125,18) n, SD 46.3.

³⁵ On this pericope, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8) n, SD 13.3.

³⁶ This well known stock is found at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,67-74/1:71-74) & **Yodh’ājīva S 1** (A 5.75,12/3:92 f). **The (Nīvaraṇa) Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55/5:121-126) gives a colourful simile to each of these hindrances. MA gives elaborate details of each of the 5 similes here: see Nyanaponika, *The Five Mental Hindrances*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Soc, Wheel 26, 1961:27-34. See Appendix below.

12.2 PLACES CONDUCTIVE FOR MEDITATION. Here, bhikshus, a monk resort to a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw.³⁷

13 Returning from his alms-round, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body upright, and establishes mindfulness before him.³⁸

13.2 OVERCOMING THE MENTAL HINDRANCES

(1) Abandoning **covetousness** with regard to the world,
he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness.

He cleanses his mind of covetousness.

(2) Abandoning **ill will and anger**,
he dwells with a mind free of ill will,
caring for the welfare of all living beings. [275]

He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.

(3) Abandoning **sloth and torpor**,
he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light.
He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.

(4) Abandoning **restlessness and worry**,
he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled.
He cleanses his mind of restlessness and worry.

(5) Abandoning **doubt**,³⁹
he dwells having crossed over doubt,
with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states.
He cleanses his mind of doubt.

³⁷ This stock is found, with minor variations at: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,67.2/1:71); (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,2.-6.2/1:207); **Mahā Govinda S** (D 19,46/2:242); **Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S** (D 25,16/3:49, 50, 51); **Cūḷa Hatthi,-padōpama S** (M 27,17/1:181); **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 38,37.2/1:269); **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,12/1:274); **Kandaraka S** (M 51,18/1:346); **Bhaddali S** (M 65,14+15/1:440, 441); **Ghoṭa,mukha SD** (M 94,20/2:162); **Deva,-daha S** (M 101,36/2:226); **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107,8/3:3); **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,22.2+23.2+24.3+24.5/-3:115, 116×2, 117); **Attan Tapa S** (A 4.198/2:210); **Yodh'ajīva S 1** (A 5.75/3:92); **Yodh'ajīva S 2** (A 5.76/3:100); (**Navaka**) **Nāga S** (A 9.40/4:437); (**Durabhisambhava**) **Upāli S** (A 10.99/5:207); **Nm** 1:26, 1:140, 2:341; **Vbh** 244 (more elaborate), 251 (abbreviated); **Pug** 29, 68. The more common (prob later) stock phrase of 3 places conducive to meditation—the forest or to the foot of a tree or to an empty house—are at D 2:29; M 1:56, 297, 398, 425, 2:263, 3:82, 89, 4:297; S 5:311, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 323, 329, 336; A 1:147, 148, 149, 3:92, 100, 4:437, 5:109, 110, 111; Pm 1:175, 2:36. This older (longer) list prob refers to the time when the monastics were mostly wanderers. In **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), prob an older account, the foll instruction is given: “Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue and this aggregate of noble sense-restraint and this aggregate of noble mindfulness and full awareness, and this aggregate of noble contentment, he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw,” D 2,67/1:71), SD 8.10. The oldest ref to an ideal meditation spot is in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26) and **Saṅgārava S** (M 100): “still in search of the wholesome, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I walked by stages through Magadha until eventually I arrived at Senānigama near Uruvelā. There I saw an agreeable spot, a delightful grove with a clear-flowing river with pleasant, smooth banks and nearby a village for alms resort. I sat down there thinking: ‘This is conducive for spiritual striving.’” (M 26,17/1:167 = 100,13/2:212).

³⁸ Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in **the Vibhaṅga**: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (MA 2:216; DA 1:210; SA 1:238; Vbh §537/252). **M Abhinava Ṭikā**: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha,-nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose (MṬ:Be 2:124).

³⁹ These are not doubts seeking answers, but persistent doubts regarding the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, the threefold training (moral virtue, mental cultivation, wisdom), the past, the future, both past and future, and states arising through specific conditionality and dependent arising (Vbh 914/365).

Parables for the abandoning of the 5 hindrances⁴⁰

14 (1) COVETOUSNESS. [D 2.69] Bhikshus, suppose that a man, taking a loan, invests it in his businesses. His businesses succeed. He repays his old debts and there is a surplus for wife and ornaments.

The thought would occur to him, ‘Before, taking a loan, I invested it in my businesses. Now my businesses have succeeded. I have repaid my old debts and there is a surplus for wife and ornaments.’

Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

(2) ILL WILL AND ANGER. [D 2.70] Now, bhikshus, suppose that a man falls sick, in pain and seriously ill. He does not enjoy his meals and there is no strength in his body.

As time passes, he recovers from that sickness. He enjoys his meals and there is strength in his body.

The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was sick; now I have recovered from that sickness. I enjoy my meals and there is strength in my body.’

Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

(3) SLOTH AND TORPOR. [D 2.71] Now, bhikshus, suppose that a man is bound in prison.

As time passes, he eventually is released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of property.

The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was bound in prison. Now I am released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’

Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

(4) RESTLESSNESS AND WORRY. [D 2.72] Now, bhikshus, suppose that a man is a slave, subject to others, not subject to himself, unable to go where he likes.

As time passes, he eventually is released from that slavery, subject to himself, not subject to others, free, able to go where he likes.

The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was a slave subject to others, not subject to himself, unable to go where he likes. Now I am released from that slavery, subject to himself, not subject to others, free, able to go where I like.’

Because of that **[276]** he would experience joy and happiness.

(5) DOUBT. [D 2.73] Now, bhikshus, suppose that a man, carrying money and goods, is journeying on a road through the wilderness.⁴¹

As time passes, he eventually emerges from the wilderness, safe and sound, with no loss of property.

The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, carrying money and goods, I was journey on a road through the wilderness. Now I have emerged from the wilderness, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’

Because of that he would experience joy and happiness.

[D 2.74] In the same way, when these five hindrances are not abandoned in himself, the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a journey on a road through the wilderness.⁴²

[D 2.75] But when he knows that **these five hindrances** are abandoned in him, he regards it as solvency, good health, release from prison, emancipation, a place of security.

THE 4 DHYANAS⁴³

The 1st dhyana

15 Having abandoned the 5 mental hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom,⁴⁴ quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states,

⁴⁰ For tr of Comy on this section, see App below, where similes for the 5 mental hindrances are given. These 5 similes also appear, with some minor differences, in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.69-75/1:71-73), SD 8.10.

⁴¹ “Journeying...through the wilderness,” *kantār’addha,magga*.

⁴² For tr of Comy of this section, see Appendix below.

⁴³ This section is almost as at **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,75.2-82/1:74-76).

⁴⁴ “That weaken wisdom,” *paññāya dubbhā,kaṇe*. Since the mental hindrances prevent us from seeing the truth and weakens our wisdom, they have to be overcome.

he enters and remains in **the first dhyana**,

accompanied by initial thought (*vitakka*) and sustained thought (*vicāra*),
accompanied by zest (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*), born of seclusion.⁴⁵

He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body⁴⁶ with the zest and happiness born of seclusion.

15.2 Bhikshus, just as if a **skilled bathman or bathman's apprentice** would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water,
so that his ball of bath powder—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and without—would not drip;

15.3 even so, bhikshus, does a monk permeates, pervades, suffuses this very body with the zest and happiness born of seclusion.

There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of seclusion.

The 2nd dhyana

16 Furthermore, bhikshus, with the stilling of initial thought and sustained thought,

by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,

he enters and remains in **the second dhyana**,

free from initial application and sustained application,
accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.⁴⁷

He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the zest and happiness born of concentration.

There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of concentration.

16.2 Bhikshus, just like **a lake with spring-water welling up from within, [277]**

having *no* inflow from the east,

no inflow from the west,

no inflow from the north, and

no inflow from the south,

and with the skies *not* bringing abundant rain over and again.⁴⁸

Yet the cool spring welling up from within the lake would permeate and pervade, flood and fill it with cool waters—there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters.

16.3 Even so, bhikshus, does a monk permeates, pervades, suffuses this very body with the zest and happiness born of concentration.

There is nothing of his entire body unpervaded by zest and happiness born of concentration.

The 3rd dhyana

17 And furthermore, bhikshus, with the fading away of zest,

he remains equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness with the body.

He enters and remains in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare,

⁴⁵ Ie, of samadhi.

⁴⁶ Here “body” (*kāya*) refers to the “mental body” (*nāma,kāya*), ie feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāna*) (Vism 4.175/169). AA however says that it refers to the “living physical body” (*karaja,kāya*, AA 3:232).

⁴⁷ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṅhī,bhāva*) because within it initial thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka,vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 2:-273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī,saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie, either talk Dharma or meditate).

⁴⁸ Be Ee *devo ca na kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya. Ce devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ nā-nupaveccheyya. Se omits na: devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya. See D 1:74 n6. For preferring the na reading, see Dhyana, SD 8.4 (8.2).*

‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body with the happiness free from zest.

17.2 Bhikshus, just as in a **pond of blue lotuses, red and white lotuses, or white lotuses**,⁴⁹

some blue lotuses, red and white lotuses, or red lotuses born and growing in the water,

stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water,

so that they are permeated, pervaded, suffused and

filled with cool water from their roots to their tips,

and nothing of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water;

17.3 even so, bhikshus, does a monk permeates, pervades, suffuses this very body

with the happiness free from zest,

so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded with this happiness free from zest.

The 4th dhyana

18 And furthermore, bhikshus, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,⁵⁰

and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,

attains and dwells in **the fourth dhyana**

that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.⁵¹

He sits, pervading the body with a purified [radiant] mind,⁵²

so that there is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded with a purified [radiant] mind.

18.2 Bhikshus, just as if **a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth**

so that there would be no part of [278] his body to which the white cloth did not extend;

18.3 even so, the monk sits, permeating the body with a purified [radiant] mind.

There is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded with a purified [radiant] mind.

THE 3 KNOWLEDGES⁵³

The recollection of past lives

19 (1) REBIRTH. With his concentrated mind thus purified,

⁴⁹ The 3 kinds of lotus are *uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (Skt *padma*) and *puṇḍarika* (ts). There are 2 kinds of *padumā*, ie the red (*ratta, paduma*, VvA 191; PvA 157) and the white (*seta, paduma*) (J 5:37; SnA 125). Also mentioned is the “five-coloured lotus” (*pañca, vaṇṇa, paduma*, J 1:222, 5:337, 6:341; VvA 41). They are further classified as 100-petalled (*sata, patta*) and 1000-petalled (*sahassa, patta*) (VvA 191) (*patta* here lit tr as “leaves”); the usual word for “petal” is *dala*, which can also mean “leaf.” In other words, the ponds mentioned here are filled with lotus of more than three colours.

⁵⁰ “Joy...pain,” *sukha-dukkha*: this refers to the physical feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *domanassa-somanassa*—refers to mental feelings, which have been transcended earlier. Mental feelings need to be overcome first so that the mind is not distracted by itself, as it were. Then, all the other feelings (arising from the physical sense-contacts) are transcended. On the significance of this, see **Sall’atthena S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.

⁵¹ Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4th dhyana—equanimity (*upekhā*), mindfulness (*sati*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5.4).

⁵² “With a purified [radiant] mind” (*cetasā pariyodātena*): a clear allusion to the “radiant mind” (*pabhassara citta*) of **Accharā Vagga** (A 1.6.1-2): “Bhikshus, this mind is radiant (*pabhassara*), but it is defiled by defilements from outside. The uninstructed ordinary person does not understand this as it really is. As such, for him there is no personal development.” (A 1:10). On reaching the 4th dhyana, the practitioner becomes directly aware of the truly and naturally pure nature of the mind. There are two views of what this “radiant mind” is: (1) it is the natural pervasive wholesome “original mind” (a common Mahāyāna teaching); (2) it arises only when one has attained dhyana (held by Theravāda meditation teachers such as Brahmavainso). See also A:ÑB 1999 §4.

⁵³ This section is almost identical as at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.93-98/1:82-84) & **Bhaya, bherava S** (M 4.27-32/1:22 f). The term “one with the threefold knowledge” (*te, vijja*) refers to an arhat with these three realizations in counterpoint to the masters of the 3 Vedas: see **Te, vijja S** (D 8), SD 1.8.

and bright, unblemished, free from defects,⁵⁴ pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,
he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives**.⁵⁵

He recollects his manifold past lives, that is,
one birth, two births, three births, four, five,
ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty,

one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand,
many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,
many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, (recollecting),

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life.

Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.

Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

Thus, bhikshus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

19.2 With his concentrated mind thus purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects,⁵⁶
pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives.

He recollects his manifold past lives, that is,
one birth, two births, *three births, four, five,*
ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty,

one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand,
many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,
many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, (recollecting),

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.

Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.

There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-span.

Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

Thus, bhikshus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

19.3 Bhikshus, just as if **a man were to go from his home village to another village,**

and then from that village to yet another village,
and then from that village back to his home village.

The thought would occur to him,

‘I went from my home village to that village over there.

There I stood in such a way, sat in such a way,
talked in such a way, and remained silent in such a way.

From that village I went to that village over there,
and there I stood in such a way, sat in such a way,
talked in such a way, and remained silent in such a way.

From that village I came back home’;⁵⁷

19.4 even so, bhikshus, does a bhikshu recollects his manifold past lives, that is,
one birth, two births, three births, four, five,

⁵⁴ *Upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff are meant here, but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (Walshe)

⁵⁵ “Past lives,” (*pubbe, nivāsā*), lit “previous abodes”.

⁵⁶ *Upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff are meant here, but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (Walshe)

⁵⁷ The 3 villages are the world of sense-desire, the form world, and the formless world (DA 1:223; MA 2:323).

*ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty,
 one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand,
 many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,
 many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, (recollecting),
 ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.
 Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such the end of my life.
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.
 There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.
 Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-span.
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’*

Thus, bhikshus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

The passing away & re-arising of beings

20 (2) KARMA. With his concentrated mind thus purified,
 and bright, unblemished, free from defects,⁵⁸ pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,
 he inclines it to **the knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings**.
 He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],⁵⁹ purified and superhuman—
 beings passing away and re-appearing,
 and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate,
 faring in accordance with their karma:
 ‘These beings [279]—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind,
 who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views
 and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—
 after death, when the body has broken up,
 have re-arisen in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.
 But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind,
 who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views
 and undertook actions under the influence of right views—
 after death, when the body has broken up, have re-arisen in a happy destination, in heaven.’
 Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and understands
 how they fare according to their karma.

20.2 Suppose, bhikshus, **there were two houses with doors and a man with vision standing there between them,**

and a man with good eyes were to see people entering a house, leaving it, wandering about,

20.3 even so, bhikshus, with his concentrated mind thus purified,
 and bright, unblemished, free from defects,⁶⁰ pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,
 he sees by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],⁶¹ purified and superhuman—
 beings passing away and re-appearing,
 and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate,
 faring in accordance with their karma:
 ‘These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind,
 who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views
 and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—
 after death, when the body has broken up,

⁵⁸ *Upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff are meant here, but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (Walshe)

⁵⁹ *Dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*) (see n in §102).

⁶⁰ *Upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff are meant here, but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (Walshe)

⁶¹ *Dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*) (see n in §102).

*have re-arisen in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.
But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind,
who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views
and undertook actions under the influence of right views—
after death, when the body has broken up, have re-arisen in a happy destination, in heaven.’*

Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and understands how they fare according to their karma.

The destruction of mental influxes

21 (3) LIBERATION.⁶² With his concentrated mind thus purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

the monk directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the ending of the mental influxes.**⁶³

21.2 He knows, as it is really is, that

this is suffering (*dukkha*);
this is the arising of suffering;
this is the ending of suffering;
this is the path to the ending of suffering;⁶⁴

these are mental influxes;
this is the arising of influxes;
this is the ending of influxes;
this is the path to the ending of influxes.’⁶⁵

21.3 His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the influx of sensual desire, the influx of existence, the influx of ignorance.

With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Liberated (am I)!’

He knows thus:

‘Birth is ended,
the holy life has been lived,
done is that which needs to be done.

There is nothing further beyond this.⁶⁶

21.4 Bhikshus, just as if there were **a pool of water in a mountain glen,**
clear, limpid and unsullied,

⁶² The is a well known stock passage: D 1:83; M 1:23; A 4:178.

⁶³ *Āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (i.e. either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, bad (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence or becoming (*bhav’āsava*), (3) (wrong) views (*ditth’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as “floods” (*oghā*) and “yokes” (*yogā*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhatship. See BDict under *āsava*.

⁶⁴ These 4 statements on suffering pose an interesting problem: they are not called “noble truths” here (and in **Ariya,pariyesanā S**, M 26.43). Norman remarks that “since they appear to be subordinate to the four statements about the *āsavas*, it is possible that the statements about misery are a later addition, which led to a parallel, but inappropriate, set of four statements being evolved about the *āsavas*, to provide a symmetry” (Norman 1982:377-91, 1990:130). See also Schmithausen 1981:205.

⁶⁵ As in **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26.42), SD 1.11.

⁶⁶ *Nāparam itthatāya*: lit. “there is no more of ‘thusness’.” This is the climax and conclusion for all the instructions where the Buddha says “There is still something to be done,” beginning with §§3.3-3.5. See **Mahānidāna S** (M 15.22), SD 5.17.

where a man with good eyesight standing on the bank
could see shells, gravel and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting,
and it would occur to him,

‘This pool of water is clear, limpid, and unsullied.
Here are these [280] shells, gravel, and pebbles,
and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.’

21.5 Even so, bhikshus, a bhikshu knows, as it is really is, that

*this is suffering;
this is the arising of suffering;
this is the ending of suffering;
this is the path to the ending of suffering;⁶⁷
these are mental influxes;
this is the arising of influxes;
this is the ending of influxes;
this is the path to the ending of influxes.*

His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the influx of sensual desire, the influx of existence, the influx of ignorance.

With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Liberated (am I)!’

He knows thus:

*‘Birth is ended,
the holy life has been lived,
done is that which needs to be done.
There is nothing further beyond this.’*

The arhat⁶⁸

22 Bhikshus, such a monk is called
**a recluse,
a brahmin,
one who has washed clean,
one accomplished in sacred knowledge,
one learned in sacred lore, a noble one,
and an arhat [one who is worthy].**

23 And how, bhikshus, is a monk a recluse (*samaṇa*)?
He has stilled (*samīta*) bad unwholesome states that defile,
that bring rebirth, troubling, resulting in pain, that bring further birth, decay and death.
Thus, bhikshus, a monk is a recluse.

24 And how, bhikshus, is a monk a brahmin (*brāhmaṇa*)?
He has pushed out (*bahīta*) bad unwholesome states that defile,
that bring rebirth, troubling, resulting in pain, that bring further birth, decay and death.
Thus, bhikshus, a monk is a brahmin.

25 And how, bhikshus, is a monk one who has been washed clean (*nhātaka*)?

⁶⁷ These 4 statements on suffering pose an interesting problem: they are not called “noble truths” here (and in **Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,43). Norman remarks that “since they appear to be subordinate to the four statements about the *āsavas*, it is possible that the statements about misery are a later addition, which led to a parallel, but in-appropriate, set of four statements being evolved about the *āsavas*, to provide a symmetry” (Norman 1982:377-91, 1990:130). See also Schmithausen 1981:205.

⁶⁸ The derivations of the various terms here are more wordplay and grammatical etymologies. They are meant to be didactic devices (for teaching purposes), not so much for grammatical analysis.

He is washed cleaned (*nhāta*)⁶⁹ of bad unwholesome states that defile,
that bring rebirth, troubling, resulting in pain, that bring further birth, decay and death.

Thus, bhikshus, a monk is purified by water.

26 And how, bhikshus, is a monk one accomplished in sacred knowledge (*vedagū*)?

He has won knowledge (*viditā*)⁷⁰ of bad unwholesome states that defile,
that bring rebirth, troubling, resulting in pain, that bring further birth, decay and death.

Thus, bhikshus, a monk is one purified by water.

27 And how, bhikshus, is a monk learned in sacred lore (*sotthiya*)?⁷¹

He has outwitted (*nissuta*)⁷² bad unwholesome states
that bring rebirth, troubling, resulting in pain, that bring further birth, decay and death.

Thus, bhikshus, a monk is learned in sacred lore.

28 And how, bhikshus, is a monk a noble one (*ariya*)?

He is far away (*āraka*) from bad unwholesome states
that bring rebirth, troubling, resulting in pain, that bring further birth, decay and death.

Thus, bhikshus, a monk is a noble one.

29 And how, bhikshus, is a monk an arhat [one who is worthy] (*arahanta*)?

He far away (*āraka*) from bad unwholesome states that defile,
that bring rebirth, troubling, resulting in pain, that bring further birth, decay and death.

Thus, bhikshus, a monk is an arhat.”

The Blessed One said this. The monks joyfully approved⁷³ of the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

Appendix

COMMENTARY

ON THE SIMILES OF THE MENTAL HINDRANCES

mentioned in the Mahā Assapura Sutta
 (MA 2:318-321 on M 39.14/1:276,12)

[The text of the discourse says:] “...when these five hindrances are not abandoned (in himself), the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a journey on a road through the wilderness.”

Here the Blessed One compares the unabandoned hindrance of lustful desire to a debt; and compares the other hindrances to an illness, and so on. These [similes] here should be understood thus:

1. Lustful desire (*kāma-c, chanda*)⁷⁴

⁶⁹ “The term ‘washed’ (*nhātaka, nahātaka, nhāta, nahāta*) refers to a brahmin who, at the end of his discipleship under his teacher, has taken a ceremonial bath marking the end of his training” (M:NB 1235 n420). Cf Sn 521.

⁷⁰ *Viditā*, lit “he has known.”

⁷¹ *Sotthiya* (Skt *śrotiya*) = *sottiya*, Skt *śrotiya* (fr Ved *śrotas* or *śrotra*, ear), syn *suta*, “one who has heard (much).” The Skt *śrotiya* refers to a brahmin well versed in the Vedas and sacred lore.

⁷² There is a wordplay here: (a) *ni* + *suta*, lit “he has out-heard,” ie “outlearned,” conquered (bad) with his wisdom; (2) *ni* + *sota*, lit “flowed out,” ie purged of (bad). Comy glosses *nissuta* as *apahat’attā*, “whose mind has warded off (bad).”

⁷³ “Joyfully approved,” *attamanā...abhinandum*.

⁷⁴ The term “covetousness” (*abhijjhā*) is used instead in the Sutta.

When a man has fallen into debt, he is ruined. When his creditors, pressing him to settle the debt, speak roughly to him, or harass and beat him, he is unable to retaliate but has to bear it all. This endurance is simply because of his debt.

In the same way, if a man is filled with lustful desire for someone, filled with craving for that object of his desire, he would be attached to it. Even if he is roughly spoken to by that person, or harassed, or beaten, he will bear it all. This endurance is simply because of his lustful desire—he is like a house-husband⁷⁵ being beaten up by his wife. In this way, lustful desire is like a debt.

2. Ill will (*vyāpāda*)

If a man suffering from a bile disorder⁷⁶ were to receive even honey and sugar, he will not enjoy its taste because of his bile disorder. He would simply vomit it, complaining, “It is bitter! It is bitter!” In the same way, when one with an angry mind is admonished even slightly by his teacher or preceptor for his benefit, he does not accept their advice. Saying words like “You are harassing me too much!” he would leave the Order, or would go away and roam about.⁷⁷

Just as the person with bile disorder does not enjoy the taste of honey and sugar, even so one who has the disease of anger will not enjoy the taste of the Buddha’s Teaching consisting in the joy of meditative dhyanas, etc. In this way, ill will is like an illness.

3. Sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*)

A person who is imprisoned during a festival day is unable to see the beginning or the middle or the end of the festivities. When released on the following day, he hears people saying,

“Oh, how delightful yesterday’s festival was! Oh, those dances and songs!” he will not reply. And why not? Because he did not enjoy the festival himself.

In the same way, even if a very eloquent Dharma discourse is being given, one overcome by sloth and torpor would not know its beginning, middle or end. If after the discourse, he hears it being praised:

“How pleasant it was to listen to the Dharma! How interesting the subject was and how good the similes!” he will not reply. And why not? Because of his sloth and torpor, he did not enjoy the discourse. In this way, sloth and torpor are like imprisonment.

4. Restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca, kukkuccha*)

A slave who wants to enjoy himself at a festival is told by his master, “Go quickly to such and such a place! There is urgent work to be done. If you do not go, I shall have your hands and feet cut off, or your ears and nose cut off!” Hearing that, the slave will quickly go as ordered, and will not be able to enjoy any part of the festival. This is because of his dependence on others.

In the same way it is with a monk not well versed in the Vinaya, who has gone to the forest for the sake of solitude. If in any matter, down to the question of permissible meat [such as pork], thinking that it is not permissible [taking it for bear’s flesh],⁷⁸ he has to disrupt his solitude to seek a Vinaya master to purify his moral conduct. Thus he will not be able to experience the joy of solitude due to his being overcome by restlessness and worry. In this way, restlessness and worry are like slavery.

⁷⁵ “House-husband,” *ghara, sāmika*, lit “house owner.”

⁷⁶ “Bile disorder” (*pitta, roga*), ie a liver disorder. On the traditional Indian medicine, see **Sivaka S** (S 36.21/4:230 f), SD 5.6.

⁷⁷ In **Khaluṅka S** (A 8.14), it is stated, “Again, bhikshus, here the monks accuse a monk of an offence. That monk, being thus accused of an offence by the monks, strongly objecting to the accusation, says thus, ‘Why do you venerable sirs fuss so much over me? Let me now give up the training and return to the low life!’ Having given up the training and return to the lowlife, he says thus, ‘Now, bhantes, are you satisfied?’” (A 8.14.17/4:194 f)

⁷⁸ These 2 examples are from MAT.

5. Doubt (*vicikicchā*)

A man journeying on a road through the wilderness where travellers have been plundered or killed by robbers would, at the mere sound of a twig or of a bird, become anxious and fearful, thinking, “The robbers have come!” would say, “Go! Stop! Turn back!” Thus he would be more frequently stopping than going ahead. Only with toil and trouble would he reach a safe place, or he might not even reach it.

In the same way, there would be the eight reasons⁷⁹ for doubt to arise in him, such as whether the Buddha is awakened or not. He is unable to accept such matters out of faith. Being unable to do so, he does not attain to the paths and fruits.

Thus, like the traveller on a road through the wilderness who is uncertain whether there are robbers or not, there arise in him persistent doubt and distrust, wavering, mental agitation. Thus he creates an obstacle for himself from reaching the safe ground of the noble ones. In this way, doubt is like travelling on a road through the wilderness.

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⁷⁹ He has doubts regarding the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, the threefold training (moral virtue, mental cultivation, wisdom), the past, the future, both past and future, and states arising through specific conditionality and dependent arising (Vbh 914/365).