

7

(Arahatta) Bāhiya Sutta

The Discourse to Bāhiya (on his arhathood) | U 1.10

Theme: The time to learn is now (Bāhiya Dāru, cīriya)

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010

*For Loh Sai Yin who has great faith in the Dharma***1 Sutta teachings**

1.1 SENSE-RESTRAINT. **Bhikkhu Bodhi**, in his Introduction to the translation of the Saḷāyatana Vagga of the Saṃyutta Nikāya explains that sense-restraint “involves stopping at the bare sensum, without plastering it over with layers of meaning whose origins are purely subjective” (S:B 1127). **Upali Karunaratne**, in his Encyclopaedia of Buddhism entry on “Indriya Saṃvara,” notes the crucial role of sense-restraint in the perceptual process when feelings arise (Ency Bsm 5:568).

In the suttas, the most famous instruction on sense-restraint is known as the Bāhiya teaching, because it is perhaps the oldest formulation of the teaching given by the Buddha on the subjects. It is given to Bāhiya Dāru, cīriya, recorded in **the (Arahatta) Bāhiya Sutta** (U 1.10). The same instruction is given to the aged Māluṅkyaputta (when he has given up all his intellectual speculating and decides to go into solitary retreat), as recorded in **the Māluṅkyaputta Sutta** (S 35.95):

Here, Māluṅkyāputta, in what¹ is to be seen, heard, sensed² and cognized [known] by you:³

in the seen	there will only be the seen;	
in the heard	there will only be the heard;	
in the sensed	there will only be the sensed;	
in the cognized	there will only be the cognized.	(S 35.95,12/4:73), SD 5.9 [§16]

1.2 “BARE ATTENTION.” This passage is sometimes used by some modern teachers to refer to the practice of “bare attention,” that is, simply (without comment) noting phenomena as they arise and fall away. In other words, this is a practical summary of how to train our attention so that distraction and suffering does not arise.

The first paragraph exhorts us to simply observe our sense-experiences *as is* (as “as are”), without any comment, to *just let them come and let them go*. After a while, with consistent mindful practice, we begin to have a better understanding of how our minds work and what experience really is.

1.3 ENIGMATIC WORDS. The phrase “**not by that**” (*na tena*) means that we would not be aroused “this or that” lust, hate, delusion, or fear. One way of understanding this is that the world is caught up “by that,” that is, by the conditionality of lust, hate, delusion and fear. Nirvana frees us of this conditionality.

“**Not be therein**” (*na tattha*) means that we would not be caught up *in* any experience, such as in visual forms, sounds, etc. One way of understanding this is that the awakened is no more caught up in time, that is, drawing into the “past” of our sense-experiences, and the knowing that arises in these connections. There nothing more to sense, nothing more to know. Freed from the past, we have no present, without with which we have no bother about the future. We have transcended time.

¹ “In what is to be seen, heard, sensed and cognized,” *diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññātabbesu dhammesu*. See foll n.

² *Muta*, ie, what is tasted, smelt and touched. See prev n.

³ This verse is the crux of the sutta and *satipaṭṭhāna*. In sutta terms, such experiences are not to be seen as “This is mine” (*etam mama*) (which arises through craving, *taṇhā*), or as “This I am” (*eso ‘ham asmi*) (due to conceit, *māna*), or as “This is my self” (*eso me attā*) (due to wrong view, *diṭṭhi*) (**ANATTĀ LAKKHAṆA S**, S 3:68). In short, such experiences are not “beliefs” but direct experiences of reality. See Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. In simple Abhidhamma terms, such a process should be left at the sense-doors, and not be allowed to reach the mind-door. As long as the experience of sensing is mindfully left at its sense-door and taken for what it really is, that is an experience of reality (*param’attha*); after it has reached the mind-door and evaluated, it becomes conventional (*paññatti*) reality, that brings us suffering due to greed, hate or delusion. When such sense-experiences are mindfully left on the reality level, we would, in due course, see the 3 characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. See Mahasi Sayadaw, *A Discourse on Malukyaputta Sutta*, tr U Htin Fatt, Rangoon, 1981.

“**Be neither here, nor there, nor in between the two**” (*n’ev’idha na huram na ubhayam antarena*) means that we would not be reborn anywhere, not into this world again, nor into some heaven, nor be caught in any intermediate state. We are free from birth and from suffering.⁴ To be reborn is to take up some kind of space. The lower the birth, the more narrow and right is the space; the higher the birth, the more spacious it is for that birth. Still, every birth is conditioned by space; hence, by time and conditionality, too. On attaining nirvana, we are free from space itself; hence, from time and conditionality, too.

1.4 THE MĀLUṆKYĀ,PUTTA SUTTA (S 35.95) contains a spiritually beautiful poem, a long one, on sense-restraint, composed by Māluṅkyā,putta as a versification of what he has himself realized.⁵ These stanzas are a reflection on what is briefly stated in the Bahiya teaching [§§15-17].

These verses, found in the Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta (S 35/95, where it occurs twice), is also preserved as **the Māluṅkyā,putta Thera,gāthā** (Tha 794-817). They are arranged in two cantos of six stanzas each: the first canto is on “Delighting in the senses” and its disadvantages (Tha 794-805), and the second canto is on “Not delighting in the senses” and its benefits (Tha 806-817).

2 Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya

2.1 BĀHIYA’S LAST LIFE.

2.1.1 Bāhiya is shipwrecked. The arhat Bāhiya, in his last life, is born into the family of a householder of a place or country called **Bāhiya**⁶ (**the Apadāna** says that he is born in Bhārukaccha, modern Broach).⁷ As such, Bāhiya is merely his toponym (place-name used as a personal name), and we only know him by his sobriquet (nick-name), Dāru,cīriya (the bark-dressed). In due course, he becomes a trader, sailing the high seas. Seven times, he sails down the Indus to distant lands and returns home safely.

On the eighth occasion, however, while on his way to Suvanna,bhūmi (“the land of gold,” a general term for south-east Asia), he is shipwrecked and, floating on a plank, is washed ashore near Suppāraka.⁸ As this ancient port is on located near modern Mumbai on the western Indian coast, it is likely that the ship has not sailed very far before being caught in a devastating storm.

Having lost all his clothes while in the waters, he makes himself a bark dress. As he goes about in Suppāraka with a bowl in hand, seeking almsfood, people there, seeing his bark dress and calm demeanour, pay him homage, taking him for a holy man. Although they offer him costly robes and many other luxuries, he refuses them all, thus enhancing his charisma, and so his fame grows. On account of his clothing, he is called Dāru,cīriya, “the bark-dressed.”

2.1.1 Bāhiya meets the Buddha. In due course, say the Commentaries, he comes to believe that he has actually attained arhathood, but a devata (a non-returner Suddhāvāsa brahma), who has been his fellow brahmacari (celibate monk) in the time of Kassapa Buddha (the Buddha before ours), reading his thoughts and wishing him well, points out his error to him and advises him to see the Buddha, who is at Sāvatti.⁹ By the devata’s power, Bāhiya reaches Sāvatti, 120 yojanas¹⁰ away, in one night, but is then told that the Buddha is in the city on almsround.

⁴ For details, see SD 5.9 (2).

⁵ S 35.95,14/4:73 f @ SD 5.9. For a study of **Bāhiya’s teaching**, see same, SD 5.9 (2).

⁶ Cf **Bāhiya J** (J 108/1:421 f), a tale of a fat and poorly dressed woman, but of decent and clean habits, who marries Brahma,datta, the king of Benares. The woman is referred to as a *bāhiyā*, which Comy glosses *bahi,janapada,-vāsī*, “one who lives outside the country.” As such, *bāhiya* here could either mean “foreigner,” or “rustic” (DPPN: Bāhiya Jātaka) if we tr it as “a resident out in the country.”

⁷ Ap 533.13/2:476.

⁸ Suppāraka (Skt Śūrpāraka), today called **Sopāra** (or Supāra), in the district of Ṭhāna, near modern Mumbai, Maharashtra state. **Mahāvamsa** says that Vijaya and his followers landed here, but when he follower became violent, they sailed on to Sri Lanka (Mahv 6.46). Cf **Suppāraka J** (J 463). According to Law (1932) and Mangvungh (1990), Sopāra is a large village in the Bassein [now Vasa or Wasai] sub-division of the Ṭhāna district, 6.5 km [4 mi] away from Bassein itself, 59.5 km [37 mi] north of Bombay, 6.5 km [4 mi] southwest of the Virar station on the Baroda railway. See **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145), SD 20.15 (3).

⁹ MA 2:127; AA 1:280; ApA 510; cf UA 81-83, 95.

Bāhiya approaches the Buddha in Sāvattihī and at once implores him to teach him the Dharma. Twice he asks and twice the Buddha refuses, saying that it is not the proper time for teaching as the Buddha is on his almsround. But Bāhiya insists, saying that life is uncertain, and that either the Buddha or he might die at any time.

The Commentaries explain that Bāhiya is overly excited by his meeting with the Buddha, and that the Buddha, wishing to calm him down first, refuses him twice (UA 90). The Buddha, it is said, knows of Bāhiya's impending death and also of his readiness (*upanissaya*) for arhathood (that is, he is living his last life, a *pacchima, bhavika*).

The Buddha then teaches him *the proper method of regarding all sense-experiences*, that is, merely as objective phenomena. Even as he listens, Bāhiya becomes an arhat and the Buddha continues on his almsround. Shortly afterwards, Bāhiya is gored to death by a cow with her young calf.¹¹ Later, the Buddha, seeing his body lying on a dung heap, asks the monks to remove it and to have it cremated, and a stupa built over his remains. In the ensuing assembly, the Buddha declares Bāhiya to be the foremost among those who are quick in attaining direct knowledge (*khippābhiññā*).¹² Bāhiya, after all, awakens to arhathood within minutes of meeting the Buddha.¹³

Clearly here the Buddha's refusal to teach Bāhiya has nothing to do with any Vinaya rule. The Pāṭimokkha has 16 rules listing the occasions when a monastic is prohibited from teaching the Dharma (Sekhiya 57-72),¹⁴ and none of these apply here. They were probably formulated after the event, anyway. The Buddha's hesitation here is merely a skillful means to rest and calm Bāhiya down as he is tired but excited on meeting the Buddha. Through the Buddha's skillful means, Bāhiya realizes arhathood, even as a layman.

2.2 BĀHIYA'S PAST LIVES

2.2.1 Highlights of Bāhiya's past lives (in 47 stanzas) are recorded in **the Bāhiya Therāpadāna** (Ap 533). Bāhiya's resolve to win this eminence, it is said, was made in the time of Padum'uttara Buddha,¹⁵ when he heard the Buddha declared a monk as the foremost amongst those of the quick attainment of direct knowledge.

In the time of Kassapa Buddha, when the Buddha's teaching was disappearing, Bāhiya was one of seven monks who climbed up a rock-hill, determined not to leave it until they had attained their goal. Their leader became an arhat and the second a non-returner, passing away into the Suddh'āvāsa world. The rest were reborn in our Buddha's time as the monks Pukkusāti, Kumāra Kassapa,¹⁶ Dabba Malla, -putta,¹⁷ Sabhiya and Bāhiya.¹⁸

2.2.2 The Commentaries say that although Bāhiya had kept the precepts in previous lives, he had never given a bowl or a robe to a monk. For this reason, the Buddha does not, at the end of his admonition, admit him by the "Come, O monk" going-forth (*ehi bhikkhu pabbajjā*). Furthermore, the Buddha

¹⁰ 1 yojana = 11.25 km (7 mi); so 120 yojanas = 1350 km or 840 mi (the distance as the crows flies is about 100 km or so shorter).

¹¹ *Gāvī taruṇa, vacchā*. A cow is usually docile and harmless, but can be dangerous when she has a calf to protect. This is said to be the same cow that kills Pukkusāti, Tamba, dāthika and Suppabuddha (UA 77-79, esp 80 f, 96 f; AA 1:278-283; DhA 8.2/2:209-216; Ap 533/2:475-478). On Suppabuddha the leper's fate, see U 5.3/48-51. For the cow's story, see DhA 5.7a/2:35 f.

¹² A 1:24; U 1.10; DhA 2:216. This is one of the 4 "modes of progress" (*paṭipadā*): see **Kosala S 1** (A 10.29.8/-5:63), SD 16.15. See also **Levels of learning**, SD 40.4.

¹³ The next record of the shortest time for attaining arhathood is perhaps that of Sāriputta who, while fanning the Buddha while he teaches Dīgha, nakha (Sāriputta's nephew), fully awakens right there while Dīgha, nakha becomes a streamwinner: see **Dīgha, nakha S** (M 74/1:497-501), SD 16.1.

¹⁴ Sekh 57-72 (V 4:200-205); see *The Pāṭimokkha* (ed W Pruitt; tr R R Norman, Oxford: PTS), 2001: 242-247.

¹⁵ Ap 533/2:475-478. Padum'uttara is the 13th of the 24 Buddhas, the 16th before our own: see **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14), SD 49.8 (2).

¹⁶ On **Kumāra Kassapa**, see **Vammika S** (M 23), SD 28.13 (2.2).

¹⁷ On **Dabba Malla, putta**, see U 8.9/92 f, 8.10/93 (closing discourses of U).

¹⁸ Ap 2:473; DhA 2:212; UA 81.

knows, too, it is said, that Bāhiya does not have sufficient merit to obtain divine robes. Some say that he was once a brigand and had shot a Pratyeka Buddha with an arrow, and had stolen his begging bowl and robe.¹⁹

Such a karmic account seems a bit contrived or far-fetched. That the Buddha would stand by and let a noble disciple face his karma, as it were, suggests a fatalistic tone. This is clearly a traditional tale of later times. The suttas, on the other hand, often recount the Buddha and his disciple significantly changing the karma of those they meet.

Of course, there are certain kinds of karma that even the Buddha himself could not change, or perhaps sees no reason to do so. The point is that Bāhiya has reached the pinnacle of the spiritual life. How his body reaches the end of its shelf-life does not really matter.

2.2.3 Bāhiya's death

2.2.3.1 Bāhiya, while searching for a robe in which to be ordained, meets his death, gored by a cow with her young calf. It is said to be an “amok cow” (*bhanta, gavi*), that is, a stray cow running berserk, which, says the Majjhima Commentary, was rushing after her wandering young calf (MA 5:62). The cow is said to have been a yakshini (ogress) who was a cow in 100 births. In her last birth as a cow, besides goring Pukkusāti to death (DhA 2:35), she also killed the monk Bāhiya Dāru, cīriya, the public executioner Tamba, dāṭhika and the leper Suppabuddha (UA 289).

In a past life, the cow was a courtesan and these 4 men, the sons of wealthy merchants, took her to a park for the pleasure of her company. In the evening, they killed her and took back the jewels and money they had given her. While dying, she vowed vengeance to kill them in a hundred existences. (UA 289; DhA 2:35)

2.2.3.2 Bāhiya is gored to death by a cow with a young calf, but dies an arhat [2.1.1]. In the Dhamma, pada Commentary story of Bāhiya (DhA 8.2), the Buddha, in praise of Bāhiya and for our present spiritual benefit, closes his discourse with this verse:²⁰

*Sahassam pi ce gāthā
anatta, pada, saṃhitā
ekam gāthā, padaṃ²¹ seyya
yaṃ sutvā upasammati*

If there were a thousand verses,
made up of useless lines,
better it is a single line of verse,
hearing which one is at peace. (Dh 101)²²

— — —

The Discourse to Bāhiya (on His Arhathood)

U 1.10

1 Thus have I heard.

Bāhiya thinks that he is an arhat

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Anātha, piṇḍika's park in Jeta's grove near Sāvattḥī.

2 At that time, Bāhiya Dāru, cīriya [the Bark-robed] was living on the sea-shore at Suppāraka, being respected, revered, esteemed, worshipped, honoured, being a recipient of robe, almsfood, lodging, and medicinal requisites and support for the sick.

¹⁹ AA 1:281; DhA 2:215; UA 95; ApA 513. See SD 45.16 esp (1.2.1.4).

²⁰ DhA 8.2/2:216.

²¹ In *gāthā, pada, pada* can mean either “word” or “line,” esp in a stanza.

²² AA 1:281; DhA 2:216; UA 96; ThīA 102 (prelude to Bhaddā Kuṇḍala, kesī's arhathood); ApA 514; cf KhpA 123, 238 (ref to 2-line verse).

3 Then while Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya was in the privacy of his solitary retreat, this thought arose in his mind:

“Whoever are arhats or have attained to the arhat path, I am one of them.”

Bāhiya hears of the Buddha

4 Then [7] a devata who had been a former blood-relative of Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya, out of compassion for him, desiring his welfare, upon knowing with his mind the thought in Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya’s mind, went up to him and said this:

“You, Bāhiya, are certainly no arhat, nor even one who has attained the arhat-path; nor is this practice of yours one by which you could become an arhat, or one who would attain the arhat-path.”²³

5 “Then, who now in this world, O devata, are arhats or those who have attained the arhat-path?”

“There is, Bāhiya, in the northern countries a city named Sāvattthī. Therein now dwells the Blessed One, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one. That Blessed One, Bāhiya, is indeed not only an arhat, but also teaches the Dharma for the sake of arhathood.”

Bāhiya meets the Buddha

6 Then, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya, moved by religious urgency [samvega] on account of the devata, immediately left Suppāraka and, taking but one night for the journey arrive at Anātha,piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove near Sāvattthī.

7 Now at that time, a number of monks were pacing up and down in the open.

Then, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya approached the monks and said this to them:

“Where now, bhante, does the Blessed One, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one, dwell?”

8 “The Blessed One, Bāhiya, has entered amongst the houses on alms-round.”

Bāhiya requests for a teaching

9 Then, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya, hurriedly left Jeta’s grove. On entering Sāvattthī, he saw the Blessed One walking on alms-round, pleasant, inspiring, calm of faculty, calm of mind, endowed with supreme taming and calmness like a noble elephant whose faculties are tamed and guarded.²⁴

10 Upon seeing him, he went up to the Blessed One. Having bowed his head at the Blessed One’s feet, he said this to him:

“Teach me the Dharma, bhante! Teach me the Dharma, Sugata [well-farer]! For my good and happiness for a long time!”

11 When this was said, the Blessed One said this to Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya:

“This is not the time, Bāhiya, I have entered amongst houses on alms-round.”

12 For the second time, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya said this to the Blessed One:

“But, bhante, it is hard to know the dangers to the Blessed One’s life or to my life! [8] Teach me the Dharma, bhante! Teach me the Dharma, Sugata [well-farer]! For my good and happiness for a long time!”

13 For the second time, the Blessed One said this to Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya:

“This is not the time, Bāhiya, I have entered amongst houses on alms-round.”

14 For the third time, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya said this to the Blessed One:

“But, bhante, it is hard to know the dangers to the Blessed One’s life or to my life! Teach me the Dharma, bhante! Teach me the Dharma, Sugata [well-farer]! For my good and happiness for a long time!”²⁵

²³ *N’eva kho tvam, bāhiya, arahā, nāpi arahatta,maggam vā samāpanno. Sāpi te paṭipadā n’atthi yāya tvam arahā vā assa arahatta,maggam vā samāpannō ti.*

²⁴ As at (Pāda) Doṇa S (A 4.36,2/2:38), SD 36.13.

²⁵ Bāhiya’s excitement here is that of “dharma restlessness” (*dhamm’uddhacca*): see SD 2.2.2 & SD 45.18 (2.5.5).

The Bāhiya teaching²⁶

15 “In that case, Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus:

16 ²⁷ In the seen	there will only be the seen	<i>diṭṭhe</i>	<i>diṭṭha,mattam bhavissati;</i>
in the heard	there will only be the heard	<i>sute</i>	<i>suta,mattam bhavissati;</i>
in the sensed	there will only be the sensed ²⁸	<i>mute</i>	<i>muta,mattam bhavissati;</i>
in the cognized	there will only be the cognized	<i>viññāte</i>	<i>viññāta,mattam bhavissati.</i>

Thus, Bāhiya, you should train yourself.

17 When, for you, Bāhiya, ²⁹			<i>Yato kho te, bāhiya,</i>
in the seen	there will only be the seen	<i>diṭṭhe</i>	<i>diṭṭha,mattam bhavissati;</i>
in the heard	there will only be the heard	<i>sute</i>	<i>suta,mattam bhavissati;</i>
in the sensed	there will only be the sensed	<i>mute</i>	<i>muta,mattam bhavissati;</i>
in the cognized	there will only be the cognized,	<i>viññāte</i>	<i>viññāta,mattam bhavissati;</i>
then you, Bāhiya, are	‘not by that.’	<i>tato tvaṃ, bāhiya,</i>	<i>na tena</i>
When you, Bāhiya, are	‘not by that,’	<i>yato tvaṃ, bāhiya,</i>	<i>na tena</i>
then, you, Bāhiya, are	‘not therein.’	<i>tato tvaṃ, bāhiya,</i>	<i>na tattha</i>
When you, Bāhiya, are	‘not therein,’	<i>yato tvaṃ, bāhiya,</i>	<i>na tattha, ”</i>
then you, Bāhiya, are	‘neither here nor beyond nor in between the two.’	<i>tato tvaṃ, bāhiya,</i>	<i>n ’ev ’idha na huram na ubhayam-antarena</i>

—This is itself the ending of suffering.”³⁰

es ’ev ’anto dukkhassā ti.

Bāhiya dies

18 Then, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya, on account of this brief advice given by the Blessed One, was at once liberated from the influxes.

19 Then, the Blessed One, having given Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya this brief advice, left.

20 But, not long after the Blessed One had left, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya was gored by a cow with a young calf, depriving him of his life.³¹

Bāhiya, a layman arhat

²⁶ This teaching is also given to Māluṅkya,putta, where here, **Māluṅkya,putta S** (S 35.95,12/4:73), SD 5.9 has this line: “Regarding things seen, heard, sensed and cognized [known]” (*ettha ca te māluṅkya,putta diṭṭha,suta,-muta,viññātabbesu dhammesu*). See **Diṭṭh suta muta viññāta**, SD 53.5.

²⁷ This verse is the crux of the sutta and *satipaṭṭhāna*. In sutta terms, such experiences are not to be seen as “This is mine” (*etam mama*) (which arises through craving, *tanhā*), or as “This I am” (*eso ’ham asmi*) (due to conceit, *māna*), or as “This is my self” (*eso me attā*) (due to wrong view, *diṭṭhi*) (**Anatta Lakkhaṇa S**, S 3:68). In short, such experiences are not “beliefs” but direct experiences of reality. See Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f. In simple Abhidhamma terms, such a process should be left at the sense-doors, and not be allowed to reach the mind-door. As long as the experience of sensing is mindfully left at its sense-door and taken for what it really is, that is an experience of reality (*param ’attha*); after it has reached the mind-door and evaluated, it becomes conventional (*paññatti*) reality, that brings one suffering due to greed, hate or delusion. When such sense-experiences are mindfully left on the reality level, one would in due course see the three characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self. See Mahasi Sayadaw, *A Discourse on Malukyaputta Sutta*, tr U Htin Fatt, Rangoon, 1981.

²⁸ *Muta*, that is, what is tasted, smelt and touched.

²⁹ *Yato kho te bāhiya...*

³⁰ On this koan-like teaching, see **The taming of the bull**, SD 8.2 (10).

³¹ On Bāhiya’s death, see (2.2.3.1). On the notion that laymen arhats, if they do not ordain, would die that very day, see SD 39.3 (1.4.4).

21 Then, the Blessed One, having entered Sāvattthī for alms, having returned from his almsround and finished his meal of almsfood, left the city with a number of monks. They saw that Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya had died.

22 Seeing this, he said to the monks:

“Bhikshus, take Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya’s remains, and put it on a couch. Then carry it away to be cremated. Then construct a stupa for him, a fellow brahmachari, bhikshus, whose time is done.”³²

23 “Yes, bhante,” the monks answered in reply to the Blessed One.

They took Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya’s remains, put in on a couch, carried it away and cremated it. Then, having constructed a stupa for him, they went up to the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down at one side.

24 Sitting thus at one side, the monks said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya’s remains have been cremated and a stupa has been built for him. What is his destiny? What is his future state?”

25 “Wise, bhikshus, was Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya. He practised the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, and he did not vex me³³ [9] on account of the Dharma. Bhikshus, Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya has attained final nirvana.”³⁴

Inspired utterance on Bāhiya

26 Then, the Blessed One, knowing the significance, on the occasion, uttered this udana [inspired utterance].³⁵

27 Where neither water nor earth,
nor fire nor wind find a footing,
there, no stars shine,
nor the sun blazes,
there, the moon glows not,
nor is there darkness.³⁶

*Yattha āpo ca pathavī,
tejo vāyo na gādhati,
na tattha sukkā jotanti,
ādicco na-p,pakāsati,
na tattha candimā bhāti,
tamo tattha na vijjati.*

28 And who knows this for himself,
through sagehood, a sage, a brahmin,
then from form and formless³⁷
freed is he, from joy and pain, too.

*Yadā ca attanā,vedi,
muni monena brāhmaṇo,
atha rūpā arūpā ca
sukha,dukkhā pamuccatī ti.*

— evaṃ —

³² We have no evidence that in the Buddha’s own time, the remains of monastics were treated in this manner. Here is a probable clue that this story, or this stupa episode, is a late account, compiled at a time when the stupa cult was popular. The possible lateness of the narrative in no way affects the veracity of the sutta’s teachings.

³³ Cf M 2:146, 3:270; S 4:63, 5:346; U 5.3/50.

³⁴ Comys, of course, tell us that he does not receive formal admission or ordination. In due course, the tradition arose that any layman attaining arhathood has either to join the order, or to attain parinirvana that same day. This view first appeared in **Milinda,pañha** (Miln 264). On **laymen arhats**, see **Naḷaka,pāna S** (M 68), SD 37.4 (4) & **Laymen saints**, SD 8.6 (13) Why no mention of lay arhats? + (19) Destiny of the lay arhat. See also Somaratne 2009.

³⁵ *Atha kho bhagavā etam atthaṃ viditvā tāyaṃ velāyaṃ imaṃ udānaṃ udānesi.*

³⁶ This verse alluding to **nirvana**, qu at Nett 150; cf “Where do these four primary elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without remainder?” **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11,67-85/1:215-223) + SD 1.7 esp (2). Cf Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 2.2.10-12: “There the sun does not shine, | nor the moon and the stars; | There lightning does not shine, | of the common fire need we speak! | Him [the Ātman] alone, as he shines, do all things reflect; | this whole world radiates with his light.” || (Patrick Olivell’s tr, *The Early Upaniṣads*, 1998:447-449; see also Paul Deussen (tr), *Sixty Upaniṣads of the Veda*, 1897:581). Cf Śvetāśvatāra U 6.14; Kāṭha U 5.15

³⁷ These 2 last lines apparently allude to the 9 progressive abobe (the 4 dhyanas, 4 formless attainments, and the cessation of perception and feeling): see **Raho,gata S** (S 36.11/4:216-218), SD 33.6.

Reading

Brahmavamso (Peter Betts)

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