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Lok'āyatikā Brāhmaṇā Sutta

The Discourse on Lok'āyata Brahmins | A 9.38/4:428-432

Theme: The world's end cannot be reached by going

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1 Sutta summary

1.1 THE WORLD-VIEWS OF THE TWO SECTARIAN TEACHERS. Two brahmins, advocates of nature lore (*lok'āyata*), approach the Buddha to ask him regarding two sectarian teachers, Pūraṇa Kassapa [3.2] and Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta [3.3]. Both of whom claim to be omniscient: Pūraṇa claims that the universe is infinite, while Nāta,putta claims that it is finite. They wonder which of the two does the Buddha think is right [§§1-2].

The Buddha rejects the question [§3], and goes on to give a parable of the four men at the world's ends [§4]. Each of these men has “a supreme pace and supreme stride” that span a whole ocean. Living for a full hundred years, they travel during that time heading for the world's end, but none of them succeed in doing so, because the world's end “cannot be known, seen or reached by going.”

1.2 HOW TO END THE WORLD. Yet, declares the Buddha, as he has done to the deva Rohitassa, “without having reached the end of the world, there is *no* making an end to suffering, I say!”¹ [§4f]. This is the Sutta thesis.

The Buddha continues his discourse by defining the world as the five cords of sense-desire, that is, the five sense-objects that are seen as desirable [§5-6]. Letting go of this wrong perception, we attain the nine successive abodes (*anupubba, vihāra*), that is, the dhyanas [§§7-8], the four formless attainments [§§9-10] and the cessation of perception and feeling, that is, the attainment of arhathood [§11].

2 Lok'āyata

2.1 USAGE IN EARLY BUDDHISM. The terms *lok'āyata* (nature-lore) and *lok'āyatika* (skilled in nature-lore, nature-lore-ist)² are often mentioned in the suttas, especially in the Dīgha Nikāya:

Mahā, sīla list (to be avoided)	<i>lok'āyata ... tiracchāna, vijiā</i> , etc	D 1.26/1:11, 2.60/1:69 etc
Ambaṭṭha Māṇava	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	D 3.3/1:88
Soṇa, daṇḍa Brāhmaṇa	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	D 4.5/1:114, 13/1:120, 15/1:121, 20a/1:123
Kūṭa, danta Brāhmāṇa	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	D 5.6/1:130
Purohita Brāhmaṇa	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	D 5.14/1:138, 17b/1:141
Assalāyana Māṇava	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	M 93.3/2:147
Lok'āyatika Sutta	<i>lok'āyatika</i> (“cosmologist”?)	S 12.48/2:77
Āsava Sutta	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	A 6.58/1:163
Dāru Kammika Sutta	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	A 6.59/1:166
Doṇa Brāhmaṇa	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	A 5.192/3:223
Lok'āyatika Brāhmaṇā Sutta	<i>lok'āytikā brāhmaṇā</i>	A 9.38/4:428
Sela Sutta	<i>lok'āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa</i>	Sn 3.7/p105
Sippa Sutta	<i>lok'āyata sippa</i>	U 3.9/32 (×2); UA 205
Vinaya	<i>lok'āyate sāra, dassavī</i>	Cv 5.33.2 = V 2:139

A number of prominent brahmins, such as the youth Ambaṭṭha (D 3), Soṇa, daṇḍa (D 4),³ Kūṭa, danta (D 5)⁴ and the royal purohita in the Sutta's embedded Jātaka (D 5),⁵ the youth Assalāyana (M 93), Doṇa

¹ **Rohitassa S** (S 2.26/1:62) = SD 7.2 = A 4.45/2:47-49, **Lok'anta Gamana S** (S 35.116/4:93) = SD 7.4, **Rohitassa S 2** (A 4.46/2:49 f). Here “world” (*loka*) that must be ended is the “world of formations” (*saṅkhāra, loka*), ie “world” on the level of “ultimate truth” (*param'attha, sacca*), in contrast to the “physical world” (*okāsa, loka*), on the level of “conventional truth” (*sammuti, sacca*). On the 2 levels of language, see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9/1:178-203) in SD 7.14 Intro (4).

² *Lok'āyata* = *loka* (“world”) + *āyata* (“extended”).

³ D 4.5(3)/1:114 = SD 30.5.

(A 5.192)⁶ and Sela (Sn 3.7),⁷ are all said to be accomplished in “nature-lore and the marks of the great man” (*lok’āyata, mahā.purisa, lakkhaṇa*). In fact, **T W Rhys Davids**, in a detailed discussion, proposes that the term is actually used in a complimentary sense, but only gradually and later acquired the negative meanings of sophistry and materialism (D:RD 1:166-172).

“Nature-lore” (*lok’āyata*) is listed in the *mahā, sīla* (great moralities) of the ancient pericope on the moralities (*sīla*) found in all the first thirteen suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya (that is the Sīla-k, khandha Vagga). There it is said to be an “animal learning” (*tiracchāna, vijjā*) and to be avoided by the monastic.

The Lok’āyatika Sutta (S 12.48) provides some clues in the definition of *lok’āyata*. The Buddha defines the *lok’āyata* views as follows:

- The oldest or chief (*jeṭṭha*) *lok’āyata* “All exists” (*sabbam atthi*);
- The second *lok’āyata* “All does not exist” (*sabbam n’atthi*);
- The third *lok’āyata* “All is a unity [singularity]” (*sabbam ekattaṃ*);
- The fourth *lok’āyata* “All is a plurality” (*sabbam puthuttaṃ*).

The Commentary here explains *lok’āya* as meaning “the art of sophistry, familiarity with *lok’āyata* [casuistry?]”⁸ (SA 2:76). Its Ancient Subcommentary adds: “*Lok’āyata* is so called because, on account of it, the world does not strive for nor advance towards future welfare. For, relying on this belief, beings do not arouse even the thought of doing meritorious deeds (*puñña, kiriyā*), much less to make the effort.”⁹ All this commentary probably prompted **Jayatileke**,¹⁰ and following him, **Bodhi**,¹¹ to translate *lok’āyata* here as “cosmology” and *lok’āyatika* as “cosmologist.”¹² Such terms are too technical for such a context, where simply rendering it as “speculation and “speculator” respectively would be more apt and clear. [2.2]

Although **the Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1) does not refer to the *lok’āyata* by name, it deals with the origins and nature of existence is, an important way, an exposition of the true nature of the world, a sort of discourse clarifying the popular speculations about the nature of existence and reality, such as what the *lok’āyata* (“nature-lore” or natural philosophy) of the Buddha’s time concerns itself with. Amongst such topics are those explaining the origin or the nature of the universe, and of reality, such as the concepts of “unity [singularity]” (*ekatta*), “plurality” (*nānatta* or *puthutta*), and “universality” (*sabba*).¹³

The Sippa Sutta (U 3.9) lists *lok’āyata* amongst the chief trades of the laity, but a true monastic does not support himself by any trade, as he lives by his own spirituality, that is, his training, practice and attainment.¹⁴ Understandably, *lok’āyata* is also listed amongst the wrong livelihood or unwholesome activities of the “great moralities” (*mahā.sīla*), as already mentioned above.¹⁵

2.2 LOK’ĀYATA AS NATURE-LORE. These early occurrences of *lok’āyata* does not seem to reflect any reference to the materialistic philosophy of Cārvāka, which is apparently later.¹⁶ The early meaning of the

⁴ D 5.6(3)/1:130 = SD 22.8.

⁵ D 5.14(3)/1:138 = 17b(3)/1:141 = SD 22.8.

⁶ A 5.192/3:223 = SD 36.4.

⁷ Sn 3.7/p105.

⁸ **Lokāyatikō** ti vitaṇḍa, satthe lokāyate kata, paricayo. Cf Miln 4.

⁹ *Āyatim hitam tena loko na yatati na ihatī ti lok’āyatam. Na hi tam laddhim nissāya sattā puñña, kiriyāya cittaṃ pi uppādentī, kuto payogo, tam etassa atthi, tattha vā niyuttō ti lok’āyatiko* (SAṬ:Be 2:89; also Saddn:Be 66).

¹⁰ KN Jayatileke 1963:48-57.

¹¹ Bodhi, S:B 584 (tr of S 12.48) :: 763 n128.

¹² Both **I B Horner** (V:H 5:194), in her Vinaya tr of Cv 5.33.2 = V 2:139, and **E M Hare** (A:H 4:287), in his tr of A 9.38, render *lok’āyata* as “metaphysics,” which (although still technical) is broader than “cosmology,” and includes the sense of speculative talk and learning (V:H 5:194).

¹³ M 1/1:1-6 = SD 11.8. See Jayatileke 1963:55 f.

¹⁴ U 3.9/31 f = SD 69.5.

¹⁵ D 1.26/1:11, 2.60/1:69 etc.

¹⁶ See Rhys Davids, D:RD 1:166-172; Jayatileke 1963:48-58 (§§55-67); Nanayakkara 1971.

term Lok'āyata seems to be “nature-lore,”¹⁷ that is, natural philosophy, and mythology and legends connected with nature. It is probably close to what we today understand as “natural philosophy” or “the philosophy of nature” (from Latin *philosophia naturalis*), a term applied to the study of nature and the physical universe that was dominant before the rise of modern science. It is considered to be the precursor of natural sciences such as physics.

Forms of science historically developed out of philosophy or, more specifically, natural philosophy. At older universities, long-established Chairs of Natural Philosophy are nowadays occupied mainly by physics professors. Modern notions of science and scientists date only from the 19th century. Both the OED and Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary date the first use of the word “scientist” to 1834. Before then, the word “science” simply meant “knowledge,” and the word “scientist” did not exist. Isaac Newton's 1687 learned treatise is known as *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*.

The Culla,vagga of the Vinaya records the public complaining that the group of six monks were indulging in the story of *lok'āyata*, seeing the “essence” of knowledge (*sāra,dassavī*) it. People accused that they were “including in sense-pleasures.”¹⁸ Here, we begin to see a later sense of the word, alluding to a more worldly knowledge, suggesting elements of hedonism.

2.3 LATER MEANINGS. As mentioned above [2.1], **the Lok'āyatika Sutta** (S 12.48) gives us some clues as to the meaning of *lok'āyata* in the time of the Suttas. However, the Commentaries and later ancillary works (such as its Porāṇa Tīkā, SAṬ:Be 2:89, quoted above) clearly reflect its later sense of “materialism, the system of atheistical philosophy (taught by Cārvāka),” as defined in Monier-Williams's Sanskrit-English Dictionary.

The Vinaya Commentary, for example, explains *lok'āyata* as a speculative and casuistic¹⁹ system, thus: “*Lok'āyata* means everything is rejected, everything is unrejected. It is the lore of the outside sects, connected with what is utterly profitless, which says by this or that method, a crow is white, a crane is black”²⁰ (VA 1214).

The Commentary to **the Lok'āyatika Sutta** (A 2:77) disapprovingly says that “*Lok'āyata* is aimed at (*āyata*) at only the world; the foolish worldlings' being long-drawn (*āyata*) about the world; an inferior [small], defiled view that appears great and deep” (AA 2:75).²¹ **The Udāna Commentary** alludes that they are “annihilationist,” addicted to the sense-pleasures of this world, to which they are stuck.²² **The Iti,vuttaka Commentary** criticizes the Lokāyatikas as rejecting nirvana (“It is mere talk... it does not exist in the ultimate sense”) (ItA 161).²³

¹⁷ Here, “lore” is used in the sense of “traditional knowledge,” usu one handed down from previous teachers or traditions.

¹⁸ Cv 5.33.2 = V 2:139.

¹⁹ “Casuistic” popularly and pejoratively means making use of clever but unsound reasoning, esp in relation to moral questions. Casuistry (like sophistry) is reasoning used to resolve moral problems by applying theoretical rules to particular instances. In **applied ethics**, casuistry is case-based reasoning. It is used in juridical and ethical discussions of law and ethics, and often is a critique of principle- or rule-based reasoning. See M J Adler's *The Great Ideas*”: <http://www.thegreatideas.org/apd-casu.html>.

²⁰ **Lokāyatam** nāma sabbam ucchiṭṭham sabbam anucchiṭṭham, seto kāko kāḷo bako iminā ca iminā ca kāraṇenā ti evam-ādi,niratthaka,kāraṇa,paṭisaṃyuttam tittiya,sattham (VA 1214).

²¹ **Ce Lokāyatan** ti ca lokass 'eva āyatam, bāla,puthujjana,lokassa āyatam, mahantam gambhīran ti upaṭṭhitam [Be wr upadhāritabbam] parittam s'āsavaṃ diṭṭhi,gatam (AA 2:75). Instead of s'āsavaṃ, Be has bhāvaṃ, “concerning existence”; Se has chava-, “vile.” The Be vl are problematic.

²² “While some, being caught up with sense-pleasures, desirous of satisfying the sense-faculties with whatever they can find, attach themselves to an annihilationist view like (*anugūṇa*) that of the *lok'āyata*, are said to be running away from uprooting themselves from the samsaric rounds,” *kāma,sukham-anuyuttā pana ekacce yaṃkiñci katvā indriyāni santappetu,kāmā lokāyatikā viya tad-anugūṇaṃ uccheda,dassanaṃ abhinivisanti anupāyena vaṭṭ' - upacchedassa pariyesanato atidhāvanti nāma* (UA 353) :: UA:M 894 f.

²³ Cf UA 394; see ItA:M 399 (esp on the vl).

The Brahma,jāla Sutta (D 1) commentary says that the art and doctrine of sophistry are called *lok'āyata*.²⁴ The Commentary clearly takes *lok'āyatika* as synonymous with *lok'akkhāyika* (“one who speculates about the world”), which it explains as follows: “A *lok'akkhāyika* is one who thinks thus: ‘Who made this world? The world was made by so and so. Crows are white because their bones are white. Cranes are red because their blood is red,’ or such similar speculations, discussions and talk.”²⁵ (DA 1:90).

In the **Vidhūra Paṇḍita Jātaka** (J 545), the Bodhisattva admonishes the king with these words:

*Na sādharmaṇa, dārassa
na bhuñje sādum-ekako
na seve lokāyatikam
n'etaṃ paññāya vaḍḍhanam.*

Share not your women [be loyal to your wife],
do not enjoy a pleasant dish alone,
associate not with the worldly speculators—
wisdom grows not in this. (J 545/6:286, verse 1452)

The Jātaka Commentary explains: “As regards the *lok'āyatika*, one should not associate with the doctrine of the world-speculators, sophistic talk [disputatious chatter], leading not to liberation, that does not bring one to the path to heaven, on account of being useless [not leading to the spiritual goal].”²⁶

In summary, it is thus clear that during in the suttas, the term *lok'āyata* and *lok'āyatika* are actually complimentary terms (at least not pejorative) that probably refers to nature-lore or natural science and their exponents. By commentarial times, the *lok'āyata* probably became more systematized and more materialistic (in the sense of being practically this-worldly), even rejecting religion and spiritual pursuits. The terms therefore should be understood in its right context.

3 The two sectarian teachers

3.1 THE SIX SECTARIAN TEACHERS. The six teachers (*cha satthā*) or ford-makers (*tittha, kāra*) mentioned in the **Kutūhala, sālā Sutta** (S 44.9) are as follows, with a mention of their beliefs as culled from the **Sāmañña, phala Sutta** (D 2), where their teachings are mentioned in some detail:²⁷

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) Pūraṇa Kassapa | antinomian ethics, amoralism, non-action |
| (2) Makkhali Gosāla | fatalism, determinism, denial of causality |
| (3) Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta | fourfold restraint, liberation through self-mortification |
| (4) Sañjaya Belaṭṭhi,putta | agnosticism, skepticism, evasion |
| (5) Pakudha Kaccāyana | atomism (forerunner of Vaiśeṣika philosophy) |
| (6) Ajita Kesa, kambalī | materialism, annihilationism. ²⁸ |

3.2 PŪRAṆA KASSAPA [§2a] (Skt Pūraṇa Kāśyapa, died ca 484 or 503 BCE) was an Ājīvika (naked ascetic),²⁹ taught an antinomian ethics, that is, there is neither good nor evil, and that actions have no moral causality (or karma does not exist).³⁰ Pūraṇa's theory of non-action (*akiriya, vāda*) is refuted in the **Apaṇṇaka Sutta** (M 60),³¹ the **Karota Sutta** (S 24.6)³² and the **Hetu Sutta** (S 24.7).³³

²⁴ *Lok'āyatam vuccati vitaṇḍa, vāda, sattham* (DA 1:247).

²⁵ *Lok'akkhāyikā ti ayam loko kena nimmito, asukena nāma nimmito. Kāko seto, aṭṭhīnam setattā; balākā rattā. Lohitassa rattattā ti evam ādikā lokāyata, vitaṇḍa, sallāpa, kathā* (DA 1:90; cf 95 on *kāveyyan ti*).

²⁶ *Lokāyatikan ti anatta, nissitam sagga, maggānam adāyakam aniyyānikam vitaṇḍa, sallāpam lokāyatika, vadam na seveyya* (J 6:287).

²⁷ D 2.16-32/1:52-59 = SD 8.10.

²⁸ See **Kutūhala Sālā S** (S 44.9/4:398-400) = SD 23.15 Intro (2).

²⁹ On **Ājīvikas**, see SD 8.10 §18n (Makkhali Gosāla); DPPN sv; Basham 1951; Jayatilleke 1963: 143-145 (see index); Jaini (1970) 2001:57-61.

³⁰ See **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.16-18/1:53) = SD 8.10 & **Hetu S** (S 24.7/3:210 f) = SD 23.6; also V 1:291; M 1:238; S 1:66.

³¹ M 60.13-20/1:404-407 = SD 35.5

³² S 24.6/3:208 f = SD 23.10.

³³ S 24.7/3:210 f = SD 23.6.

3.3 NIGAṆṬHA NĀTA,PUTTA [§2b] (Skt Nirgrantha Jñāti,putra) is the name given in the Pali Canon to Vardhamāna Mahāvīra (c 540-568 BCE?), the leader of the Jains.³⁴ He is several times unfavourably referred to in the Canon, such as in **the Upāli S** (M 56), where he is presented as teaching “the four restraints” (*catu.yāma*).³⁵ The word *nigaṇṭha* (Skr *nirgrantha*, “without knots”) is an epithet (title) meaning “free from bonds.”³⁶

Historically, Nāta,putta or Mahāvīra was the leader of the Jains, who teaches liberation of the soul through self-mortification.³⁷ The Nikāyas record a number of encounters, often philosophically humorous ones, such as **the Upāli Sutta** (M 56), which refutes his claim to omniscience,³⁸ **the Deva,daha Sutta** (M 101), where some of his views are refuted,³⁹ and **the Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta Sutta** (S 41.8), where Citta the householder confounds the nirgrantha on the nature of faith.⁴⁰

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The Discourse on the Lok’āyata Brahmins

A 9.38/4:428-432

The two teachers’ views

1 Now, two brahmins, skilled in natural philosophy [nature-lore],⁴¹ approached the Blessed One, and exchanged greetings with him. When the friendly exchange was completed, they sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the brahmins said this to the Blessed One:

2a “Master Gotama, **Purāṇa Kassapa**,⁴² claims that he is one who knows all, sees all, with unlimited knowledge and vision,⁴³ thus:

‘Whether I walk or stand, am sleeping or awake, knowledge and vision are ever, always, present in me!’⁴⁴

He said thus: ‘With unlimited knowledge, I dwell knowing and seeing a *finite* world.’⁴⁵ [429]

2b Master Gotama, **Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta**,⁴⁶ too, claims that he is one who knows all, sees all, with unlimited knowledge and vision,⁴⁷ thus:

³⁴ : See **Upāli S** (M 56) @ SD 27.1(2.1).

³⁵ M 56.12a/1:376 f) & SD 27.1 (3.4.1): see **Upāli S** (M 56) @ SD 27.1 (3.4).

³⁶ See **Upāli S** (M 56) @ SD 27.1 (3.5).

³⁷ D 2.27-29/1:57 f = SD 8.10.

³⁸ M 56/1:371-387 = SD 27.1.

³⁹ M 101/2:214-228 = SD 18.4.

⁴⁰ S 41.8/4:298-300 = SD 40.7. On Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta, see further Jayatilleke 1963:140 f (see index) & Jaini (1970) 2001: 57-61.

⁴¹ *Lok’āyatikā*, which Comy here glosses as “those who follow the doctrine of *lok’āyata*, “nature-lore” (Be *lok’āyata, vādakā*) or as “students of nature-lore” (Ee *lok’āyata, paṭhaka, ~paṭhakā*) (AA 4:200). On “natural philosophy” and “nature-lore” (*lok’āyata*), see Intro (2).

⁴² See Intro (3.2)

⁴³ The nature of omniscience is discussed at length in eg **Sandaka S** (M 76/1:513-524) = SD 35.7. See also **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133) = SD 10.8 Intro (2).

⁴⁴ *Pūraṇo, bho gotama, kassapo sabbaññū sabba,dassāvī aparisesaṃ ñāṇa,dassanaṃ paṭijānāti “carato ca me tiṭṭhato ca suttaṃ ca jāgarassa ca satataṃ samitaṃ ñāṇa,dassanaṃ paccupaṭṭhitan’ ti*

⁴⁵ Ce Ee *So evam āha “ahaṃ anantena ñāṇena antavantaṃ [Be Se WT anantaṃ] lokam jānam passaṃ viharāmi ti*. From the context (see foll remark on Nāta,putta), where the statements of the two teachers are said to be “contradictory” (*vipaccanīka*), the better readings is surely *antavanta* here as opposed to *ananta* below. For the same corrected reading (with further details), see Jayatilleke 1963:250 (§393).

⁴⁶ See Intro (3.3).

‘Whether I walk or stand, am sleeping or awake, knowledge and vision are ever, always, present in me!’

He said thus: ‘With unlimited knowledge, I dwell knowing and seeing an *infinite* world.’

2c Master Gotama, of these two knowledge doctrines, these two that contradict one another, who speaks the truth and who speaks falsely?’⁴⁸

The Buddha’s “silence”

3 “Enough, brahmins, this question, ‘of these two knowledge doctrines, these two that contradict one another, who speaks the truth and who speaks false,’ let it be!

I will teach you the Dharma, brahmins, listen, pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, master,” the brahmins answered to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said this:

The parable of the four men at the world’s ends⁴⁹

4a “Suppose, brahmins, four men were standing at the four quarters of the world, each endowed with supreme pace [speed] and supreme stride;⁵⁰

and, just as fast as an archer with a strong bow,⁵¹ trained, skillful, well-practised, experienced,⁵² could easily shoot past the shadow of a palmyra tree⁵³ with a light arrow, endowed were they with such speed, such was their stride that it spanned the eastern ocean and the western ocean.

4b THE MAN IN THE EASTERN QUARTER. Then, the man standing in the eastern quarter would say, ‘I will reach the end of the world by going!’⁵⁴

Although possessing such speed and such a stride, and having a lifespan of a hundred years, living for a hundred years, travelling for a hundred years, pausing only to eat, drink, to take meals and snacks, to void and pee, to sleep and dispel tiredness—he would die along the way without reaching the world’s end. [430]

4c THE MAN IN THE WESTERN QUARTER. Then, the man standing in the western quarter would say, ‘I will reach the end of the world by going!’

Although possessing such speed and such a stride, and having a lifespan of a hundred years, living for a hundred years, travelling for a hundred years, pausing only to eat, drink, to take meals and snacks, to

⁴⁷ On the rebuttal of Nāta,putta’s omniscience, see **Deva,daha S** (M 101.10/2:217 f) = SD 18.4. The nature of omniscience is discussed at length in eg **Sandaka S** (M 76/1:513-524) = SD 35.7. See also **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133) = SD 10.8 Intro (2).

⁴⁸ *Imesaṃ, bho gotama, ubhinnaṃ ñāṇa,vādānaṃ ubhinnaṃ aññaṃ-aññaṃ vipaccanīka,vādānaṃ ko saccaṃ āha ko musā ti?*

⁴⁹ On §§4-6, cf Rohitassa Bhoja,putta’s remark in **Rohitassa S** (S 2.26.5-8/2:61 f) = SD 7.2 in a similar context.

⁵⁰ *Seyyathāpi, brāhmaṇā, cattāro purisā catuddisā ṭhitā paramena javena ca samannāgatā paramena ca pada, -vīti,hārena.*

⁵¹ “With a strong bow,” *daḷha,dhammo*. Comy glosses *daḷha,dhammo* (lit “of a strong nature”) as *daḷha,dhanu* (“with a strong bow”); possessed of a bow of the greatest size (*uttama-p,pamāṇena dhanunā samannāgato*) (SA 1:115). This is stock: M 1:82; S 1:62, 2:266; A 2:49; J 4:211; cf S also S:W 2:178. The plural *daḷha,dhammino* occurs at S 708b/1:185. KR Norman, in his tr (Tha:N) of **Tha 1210** proposes that this form must have been borrowed from a dialect where *-nv-* > *-mm-* instead of *-nn-*. SED lists two Skt words meaning “having a strong bow,” *ḍṛḍha-dhanvan* and *ḍṛḍhadhanvin*. See Tha:N 289 n1210. Bodhi proposes that we could assume it is the former that appears in Pali as *daḷha,dhamma*, the latter as *daḷha,dhammin*. See S:B 393 n181 & 411 n264.

⁵² “Trained...experienced,” *sikkhito kata,hattho [kata,yoggo]* kat ’upāsano. Kata,hattho*, lit “done with the hand,” handy. [*Only Rohitassa S has *kata,yoggo*, “well-practised,” S 2.26.5/1:62.] This stock phrase, describing an adept archer, also occurs in **Dhanu-g,gaha S** (S 20.6/2:266) = SD 52.7.

⁵³ “Palmyra tree,” *tāla*, the fan palm, *Borassus flabelliformis*.

⁵⁴ *Seyyathāpi nāma puratthimā samuddā pacchimo samuddo atha puratthimāya disāya ṭhito puriso evaṃ vadeyya “ahaṃ gamanena lokassa antaṃ pāpuṇissāmi ti.*

void and pee, to sleep and dispel tiredness—he would die along the way without reaching the world’s end.

4d THE MAN IN THE NORTHERN QUARTER. Then, the man standing in the northern quarter would say, ‘I will reach the end of the world by going!’

Although possessing such speed and such a stride, and having a lifespan of a hundred years, living for a hundred years, travelling for a hundred years, pausing only to eat, drink, to take meals and snacks, to void and pee, to sleep and dispel tiredness—he would die along the way without reaching the world’s end.

4e THE MAN IN THE SOUTHERN QUARTER. Then, the man standing in the southern quarter would say, ‘I will reach the end of the world by going!’

Although possessing such speed and such a stride, and having a lifespan of a hundred years, living for a hundred years, travelling for a hundred years, pausing only to eat, drink, to take meals and snacks, to void and pee, to sleep and dispel tiredness—he would die along the way without reaching the world’s end. [430]

4f What is the reason for this?

As to that end of the world, brahmins, it cannot be known, seen or reached by going, I say.⁵⁵

However, brahmins, without having reached the end of the world, there is no making an end to suffering, I say!⁵⁶

The world is our senses

5 Brahmins, these five “cords of sensual desire” (*kāma,guṇa*) are called “the world” in the discipline of the aryas [the noble ones].⁵⁷ What are the five?

6 What are the five?⁵⁸

(1) Forms cognized by *the eye*

that are desirable, agreeable, pleasurable, lovable, connected with sensual desire, arousing lust;

(2) Sounds cognized by *the ear*

that are desirable, agreeable, pleasurable, lovable, connected with sensual desire, arousing lust;

(3) Smells cognized by *the nose*

⁵⁵ *Nāhaṃ brāhmaṇā eva,rūpāya sandhāvanikāya lokassa antaṃ nātayyaṃ daṭṭhayaṃ pattayyan ti* [Be nātayyaṃ daṭṭhayaṃ patteyyan ti] vadāmi. Comy glosses *sandhāvanikāya* as “by running on foot” (*padasā dhāvanena*, SA 4:201). This rare word apparently appears only twice in the Suttas, once here, and the other in **Khemaka S** (S 22.89), where the monk Khemaka tells the monk Dāsaka, “Avuso Dāsaka, enough of this running about!” (*alam āvuso dāsaka kiṃ imāya ~*, S 22.89.17/3:129) = SD 14.13. A parallel line appears in **Lok’anta Gamana S 1** (S 35.-116) and **Rohitassa S 2** (A 4.46), but instead of *eva,ūpāya ~*, the reading there is *gamanena*, thus: *Nāhaṃ brāhmaṇā gamanena lokassa antaṃ nātayyaṃ daṭṭhayaṃ pattayyan ti* (S 35.11.2/4:93) = SD 7.4; (A 4.46.1/2:50) = SD 52.8.

⁵⁶ *Na cāhaṃ brāhmaṇā appatvā’va lokassa antaṃ dukkhass’anta,kiriyaṃ vadāmi*. As in **Rohitassa S** (S 2.26/1:62) = SD 7.2 = A 4.45/2:47-49, **Lok’anta Gamana S** (S 35.116/4:93) = SD 7.4, **Rohitassa S 2** (A 4.46/2:49 f). Here “world” (*loka*) means the “world of formations” (*saṅkhāra,loka*), on the level of “ultimate truth” (*param’attha,sacca*), in contrast to the “physical world” (*okāsa,loka*), on the level of “conventional truth” (*sammuti,sacca*). On the 2 levels of language, see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9/1:178-203) in SD 7.14 Intro (4).

⁵⁷ *Pañc’ime, brāhmaṇā, kāma,guṇā ariyassa vinaye lokō ti vuccati*. Cf **Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) S** (A 6.63): “Bhikkhus, these are not sensual objects (*kāma*), but in the noble discipline, they are called ‘cords of sensual desire’ (*kāma,guṇa*)” (*apī ca kho bhikkhave n’ete kāmā, kāma,guṇā nam’ete ariyassa vinaye vuccanti*) (A 6.63.3/3:410 f) = SD 6.11. See also **Sabba S** (S 35.23), where “the all” (*sabba*) is def as the 6 sense-faculties and the 6 sense-objects (S 35.23/4:25) = SD 7.1.

⁵⁸ As at **Te,vijja S** (D 13.27/1:245: called “shackles, *andu*; bonds, *bandhana*”); **Saṅgīti S** (D 33.2.1(3)/3:234); **Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S** (M 13.7/1:85); **Bahu Vedanīya S** (M 59.6/1:398); **Sunakkhatta S** (M 105.7/2:253); **Araṇa,vibhaṅga S** (M 139.9a/3:233); **Miga,jāla S 1+2** (S 35.63+64/4:35-38); **Uttiya S** (S 45.30/5:22); **Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) S** (A 6.63.3/3:411); **(Sāriputta) Nibbāna S** (A 9.34.3/4:415); **Kukkuḷa Kathā** (Kvu 2.8.3/210); cf V 1:184. *Kāma,guṇa* is also tr as “strand(s) of sensual pleasure.”

- that are desirable, agreeable, pleasurable, lovable, connected with sensual desire, arousing lust;
- (4) Tastes cognized by *the tongue*
that are desirable, agreeable, pleasurable, lovable, connected with sensual desire, arousing lust;
- (5) Touches cognized by *the body*
that are desirable, agreeable, pleasurable, lovable, connected with sensual desire, arousing lust.

These five cords of sensual desire, brahmins, are called the world in the discipline of the arya [the noble ones].

The first dhyana⁵⁹

7 Here, brahmins, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, attains and dwells in the **first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and joy born of solitude.⁶⁰

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’⁶¹

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’⁶² [431]

The second dhyana

8a Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, with zest and joy born of concentration.⁶³

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’

The third dhyana

8b Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, with the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and feels joy with the body.⁶⁴ He attains and dwells in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

⁵⁹ Hereon begins the 9 progressive abodes (*anupubba, vihāra*), ie, the 4 dhyanas, the 4 formless attainments, and the cessation of perception and feeling. Each of the first stages is to be well cultivated, and then abandoned for the next, until cessation (and liberation) are attained. This whole section closely parallels that in **Laṭṭikikōpama S** (M 66), where the practitioner is instructed to abandon each of the first 8 levels for the next until cessation is reached (M 66.26-34/1:455 f) = SD 28.11. (**Pañcāla, caṇḍa**) **Sambadha S** (A 9.42) says that each of the first 8 stages has a “confinement” (*sambadha*), ie, a factor or factors that should be abandoned before we can progress to the next level until attaining liberation itself (A 9.42/4:449-451) = SD 33.2.

⁶⁰ “Born of solitude,” *viveka, ja*; ie it is the result of abandoning the hindrances: on the 3 kinds of solitude, see **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see **The layman and dhyana** = SD 8.5.

⁶¹ *Ayam vuccati, brāhmaṇā, “bhikkhu lokassa antam-āgama lokassa ante viharatī ti.*

⁶² *Ayam pi loka, pariyāpanno, ayam pi anissaṭo lokamhā ti.*

⁶³ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it initial application and sustained application (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). See **Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.2/4:263 f) = SD 24.12.

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’

The fourth dhyana

8c Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’

The attainment of infinite space

9 Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, by completely transcending the perceptions of form, with the disappearance the perceptions of sense-reaction,⁶⁷ with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that “Space is infinite,” he attains and dwells in **the sphere of infinite space**.⁶⁸

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’

The attainment of infinite consciousness

10a Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, by completely transcending the sphere of infinite space, aware that “Consciousness is infinite,” he attains and dwells in **the sphere of infinite consciousness**.⁶⁹

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’

⁶⁴ On this point, see **The Buddha discovers dhyana** = SD 33.1b (6.4.1) (On coming out of dhyana).

⁶⁵ “Joy and 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’atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210) = SD 5.5.

⁶⁶ 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).

⁶⁷ “Perceptions of sense-reaction,” *paññā*, also “sensory impact” (M:ÑB 267), “resistance-perception, reflex-perception” (BDict), said to be absent in the formless dhyanas. This is one of those terms that are only used contextually. See Vibh 245, §262; Vism 10.12-16.

⁶⁸ See **Ākāśānañc’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.5/4:266) = SD 24.15.

⁶⁹ See **Viññāṇañc’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.6/4:266 f) = SD 24.16.

The attainment of nothingness

10b Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, by completely transcending the base of infinite consciousness, aware that “There is nothing,” he attains and dwells in **the base of nothingness**.⁷⁰

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’

The attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception

10c Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, by completely transcending the base of nothingness, he enters and dwells in **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.⁷¹

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk who, having arrived at the end of the world, dwells in the world’s end.’

Others say thus of him: “This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.”

But I, too, brahmin, say thus:

‘This one is still world-bound. This one is still not gone out of the world.’

The cessation of perception and feeling

11 Furthermore, brahmins, a monk, having completely transcended the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, attains and dwells in **the cessation of perception and feeling**.⁷²

and *having seen with wisdom* that his mental influxes are destroyed.

This, brahmins, is called ‘a monk [432] who, having arrived at the end of the world, *having crossed over the poison that is craving*⁷³ *to the world, dwells at the world’s end.*’⁷⁴

— evaṃ —

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⁷⁰ See **Ākiñcaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.7/4:267 f) = SD 24.17.

⁷¹ See **N’eva,saññā.nāsaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.8/4:268) = SD 24.18.

⁷² *Saññā,vedayita,nirodha* or *nirodha,samāpatti*. The last of 9 stages, comprising the 4 dhyanas (*jhāna*), the 4 formless attainments (*samāpatti*) and the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*), are known as “the 9 successive abodes” (*anupubba,vihāra*): see **(Pañcāla,caṇḍa) Sambadha S** (A 9.42.11/A 4:451) & SD 33.2-(2); **Anupubba Nirodha S** (A 9.31/4:409 = D 33.3.2(6)/3:266) = SD 33.6 (3.2.3); also S 2:216, 222; U 78; Pm 1.5, 2.30; Miln 176. They are also called “the 9 successive cessations” (*anupubba,nirodha*) (D 33.3.2(6)/3:266, 290, cf 2:156; A 9.31/ 4:409, 456; Pm 1.35). **(Anupubba) Vihāra S 2** (A 9.33) calls them “the successive attainments” (*anupubba,samāpatti*) (A 9.33/4:410-414). On “the progressive cessation of formations” (*anupubba,sāṅkhārānaṃ nirodho*), see **Raho,gata S** (S 36.11/4:217) & SD 33.6 (3.5). See **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.25/1:296) & SD 30.2 (4); **S 14.11/2:150 f**, **28.9/3:238**, **36.11/4:216**, **41.6/4:293-295**; A 4:410; D 3:265, 290; Vism 23.51/709; cf S 22.95/3:-143*; Dh 41.

⁷³ *Visattika* is polysemous, and Comys give various derivations, esp “craving” (*taṇhā*) (ThaA 2:192 ad Tha 457) and “poison” (*visa*) (ThaA 2:219 ad Tha 519 (detailed); MA 2:163; SA 1:175; AA 3:204 f; Nm 9; also Dhs §1059/-189 & DhsA 364 (DhsA:PR 468 f); cf SnA 338, 513,6-7 (ad Sn 768). 550.9 (ad Sn 857). See Tha:N 189 n400.

⁷⁴ *Ayaṃ vuccati, brāhmaṇā, “bhikkhu lokassa antam-āgamma lokassa ante viharati tiṇṇo loka visattikan ti.*

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