

# 1

## Vāseṭṭha Sutta

(Traditional) Sn 3.9 = Sutta Nipāta 3, Mahāvagga 9

The Discourse to Vāseṭṭha | M 98/2:196 = Sn 3.9/596-656/115-123; with Dh 396-423

Theme: You are what you do

Translated by Piya Tan ©2007, 2011

### 1 Sutta summary and highlights

**1.1 THE SUTTA TEXT.** The Vāseṭṭha Sutta text is not given in the Pali Text Society edition of the Majjhima Nikāya, as it is identical with **the Vāseṭṭha Sutta** of Sn 3.9, in prose (Sn pp115-123) and verse (Sn 594-656).<sup>1</sup> Verses 27-54 (Sn 620-647)—a total of 28—are found verbatim right at the end of **the Dhammapada** (Dh 396-423). Verse 62 (Sn 655 is also found at Tha 631 with a parallel in the Gaāndhārī Dharmapada (Gh:G 8).<sup>2</sup> Otherwise the discourse does not appear to have any other Buddhist parallels. Some of the Sutta verses, however, have parallels in the Jain text, the Uttarajjhayaṇa, one of the four “root texts” (*mūla,sūtra*) of the Śvetambara Jains.<sup>3</sup>

#### **1.2 SUTTA HIGHLIGHTS**

**1.2.1 Opening.** The Vāseṭṭha Sutta opens with two brahmin students (*māṇava*), Vāseṭṭha and Bhāra-dvāja [2], who are the best of friends, not agreeing on the definition of a “brahmin” (*brāhmaṇa*). While Bhāra,dvāja thinks that one is a brahmin by *birth*, Vāseṭṭha thinks that one is so through *moral virtue* [§§2-4]. Hearing that the Buddha is staying in the jungle nearby, they decide to consult him. The Buddha replies to their query by way of a famous series of 28 verses [1.1].

From the Buddhist viewpoint, it is obvious that Vāseṭṭha is right. Such an open discussion clearly reflects the intellectual and religious ferment of the Buddha’s time, when some of the long-held and mainstream views and dogmas are being questioned. It is now left to the Buddha to affirm Vāseṭṭha’s right view. Vāseṭṭha is also the one who addresses the Buddha [Sn 594-599]. On this account—Vāseṭṭha’s assertion that one is a brahmin on account of moral virtue, not birth—that the Sutta is understandably named after him.

**1.2.2 Main themes.** The Vāseṭṭha Sutta is not only an account of *the early Buddhist conception of sainthood*, but also a testimony on the oneness of humanity. Humanity, by its very nature (in biological terms) is one species, and is not naturally differentiated by way of caste or race. The Buddha begins his instructions by addressing the point that the essential differences seen amongst animals are not found in humans. There are many kinds or species (*aññam-añña hi jātiyo*) of plants, insects, quadrupeds, snakes, fishes and birds [§§601-606]. In the case of humans, however, as far as the essential bodily parts and vital organs are concerned, there is no essential difference at all [Sn 607-611].<sup>4</sup>

While the brahmins take *jati* (“birth”) as defining one’s *class*, the Buddha rejects this and declares that it is simply a biological term signifying *species*. Social divisions and classes (or castes) amongst humans are not natural. What the brahmins regard as class are merely *occupational*, not congenital: we are defined by my work. This point is natural and clear: while an animal of one species cannot naturally mate with another, those of the human species can mate with any other no matter from which class or caste.<sup>5</sup> “For, amongst human, any difference | is said to be by way of convention.” [Sn 611]

Obliquely, we can tease out, from the Vāseṭṭha Sutta, teachings on the causal conditions for social problems. We are very much conditioned and affected by the work we do. Such conduct in turn affects

<sup>1</sup> It has 2 PTS eds: (1) Viggo Fausböll 1885 (dated) & (2) Dines Andersen & Helmer Smith, 1913, since repr.

<sup>2</sup> E M Hare has prepared a concordance of parallel passages to the Vāseṭṭha Sutta verses (Sn:H 199 f), but many of the refs are wrong.

<sup>3</sup> The Śvetambara (“white-clad”) Jains monks wear only a white loin-cloth, while the Dīgambara go about naked as a sign of total renunciation. The latter reject such texts. For the parallels in the Uttarajjhayaṇa, cf Charpentier 1910b:65-68.

<sup>4</sup> Cf Divyāvadāna: “one indeed is life (human birth) in the world, equal, not manifold,” *ekaiva jātirloke’smin sāmānyā na prthagvidhā* (Divy 323.14).

<sup>5</sup> See Barua 1967:53.

others around us and our environment. Such unwholesome conduct, when widespread enough, inevitably leads to social problems and widespread suffering, even social degeneration and global catastrophes. However, if the causal conditions are recognized early and corrected, such disasters can be averted, and the good society prevails.<sup>6</sup>

**1.2.3 Social conventions.** Humans are only *conventionally* differentiated, says the Buddha: we are defined or known, by our work (Sn 612-619). We are all equally born as humans, and our social differences lie only in what we do. A brahmin, as such, is what a brahmin does: one is *not born* a brahmin. “Nor do I call him a brahmin | because he is born of a mother’s womb,” one must be of true spirituality [Sn 620ab].

**1.2.4 The true brahmin.** The Buddha now goes on to describe the true brahmin, which is really a definition of arhathood [Sn 620-647]. The Sutta then restates the fact that humans are merely differentiated by conventions. Then he makes one of the most famous statements on human dignity: “Not by birth is one a brahmin, | not by birth is one a non-brahmin; | one is a brahmin by deed [karma], one is a non-brahmin by birth.” [Sn 650]. The following two verses echo the universal fact that we are what we do: karma makes a man [Sn 651-652].

The Buddha closes his instructions by relating karma to dependent arising [§13], first by declaring that “the world turns on karma,” that all beings are related to their actions [Sn 653 f]. Only by truly practising the holy life do we attain “brahminhood supreme,” that is, arhathood [§Sn 655], so that we rise beyond even the divine [Sn 656].

Both Vāseṭṭha and Bhāra,dvāja rejoice in the Buddha’s teachings, and go for refuge. [2.2]

### 1.3 TEACHINGS AGAINST THE CLASS SYSTEM

**1.3.1 Aggañña Sutta (D 21): Humans evolve the same way.** It is clear from even the first part of the Buddha’s teachings [§§600-619], that the Buddha is against class distinction and race prejudice. Quoting the Vāseṭṭha Sutta, Malalasekera & Jayatilleke, in a UN publication on “Buddhism and the Race Question,” write that “It is argued on biological grounds that—unlike in the case of the plant and animal kingdoms, where differences of species are noticeable—mankind is one species” (1958:35); and “the apparent divisions between men are not due to basic biological factors but are ‘conventional classifications’ (*sam-aññā*)” (37).<sup>7</sup>

This theme of the conventionality of human differentiation is presented as a mythical narrative in **the Aggañña Sutta (D 21)**. It is a classic “origin story” of how the four classes came into being at the dawn of social evolution. These classes arose not on account of birth, but of the kind of *occupation* that people took up. The true brahmin, for example, was a spiritual man who lived a celibate and contemplative life of moral virtue.

Significantly, the Sutta is given by the Buddha to Vāseṭṭha and Bhāra,dvāja in response to some brahmins’ harsh criticism of their renouncing the world to become monks. The Buddha humorously relates the origins of society right from the dawn of the physical universe to show that the brahmins “have forgotten their origins,” that is, all mankind evolved in the same classless way, born from a human womb, not God’s mouth.<sup>8</sup>

**1.3.2 Madhurā Sutta (M 84): All beings are under the power of karma.** The king Avanti,putta of Madhurā tells the elder Mahā Kaccāna that the brahmins claim to be “the highest class.” Mahā Kaccāna replies by saying that this is only a conventional remark, “merely a sound in the world” (*ghoso-y-eva lok-asmim*). He goes on to explain this in four ways: economic, ethical, legal and spiritual. If we were wealthy, no matter which class we come from, we would be respected by kshatriyas, brahmins, vaishyas and

<sup>6</sup> See esp the verses [§§6-13/2:196 = Sn 594-656]. Discourses dealing with causal conditions for social problems incl: **Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda S (D 26, esp §§9-21/3:64-73) = SD 36.10, Aggañña S (D 27, esp §§16-20/3:88-93) = SD 2.19.** See discussion in Payutto 1994:73-75. Other suttas that investigate the causal conditions behind social disorder are **Sakka,pañha S (D 21), Mahā Dukkha-k,khandha S (M 13) and Kalaha,vivāda S (Sn 4.11).** Despite their differences in formulation, they all come to the same conclusion: see **Dependent arising = SD 5.16 (19.5).**

<sup>7</sup> 2006 online ed are on pp 8 & 9 respectively.

<sup>8</sup> D 27/3:80-97 = SD 2.19.

shudras. Similarly, no matter which class we belong to, if we committed bad deeds or good deeds, their appropriate karmic results would work on us all the same, irrespective of class. Thirdly, if someone committed a crime, he would be judged and punished accordingly by the king or the authorities. And fourthly, anyone, from any class, who practises the Dharma would attain the same liberation. King Avanti,putta is delighted and goes for refuge in the elder, who then advises him that “we do not take refuge in anyone other than the Buddha.”<sup>9</sup>

**1.3.3 Assalāyana Sutta (M 93): The class system is neither good nor true.** The Assalāyana Sutta is significant in that it records all the arguments ever used by the Buddha *against the brahmins’ claim to class supremacy*. Assalāyana is a 16-year-old brahmin student of Sāvathī, learned in the Vedas and related fields. After repeated requests by 500 brahmins to defeat the Buddha in a debate, he visits the Buddha and asks him his response to the claims of the brahmins that they are the highest class, born of Brahmā’s mouth.

The Buddha first proclaims the biological unity of mankind, that is to say, all humans, including the brahmins, are born in the same manner, from a mother’s womb, that is, biologically, and not from some God’s mouth, as claimed. Moreover, when a brahmin mates with a woman from whatever class, their child look just as human as their parents. There is no difference by way of birth amongst humans.

Socially, too, the various classes are not universal. In Yona<sup>10</sup> and Kamboja,<sup>11</sup> and in the outlying countries, for example, there are only two classes: masters and slaves, or lords and servants. Even such a system is not a rigid one, as lordship and slavery depend on *economic* factors (that is, a wealthy man could own slaves, and a slave could buy his freedom in due course).

Ethically, anyone, brahmin or not, would fare according to their karma: they are reborn in suffering states or joyful states according to their actions. Those who have done evil, whether brahmin or not, would suffer its painful fruits, and those who have done good would enjoys its fruits in due course.

The Buddha then speaks of the spiritual unity of mankind. Anyone, from whatever class, is capable of cultivating lovingkindness. There is no special purity for one who makes a fire offering: the fuel we burn produces a blazing fire, no matter who lights it. No one is purified by baptizing himself in a river: whoever uses water to wash, the dirt is washed off all the same. Similarly, even between uterine brothers, if one is learned and good, the other is foolish and immoral, the better one would rightly deserve religious offerings, not the bad one. Spiritually, class is no hindrance to the holy life. Birth, religious learning and class have no bearing on spiritual growth.

Assalāyana is saddened that he is unable to prove the Buddha wrong. The Buddha then relates how an ancient seer, Asita Devala (“the dark”), was despised and cursed by seven brahmin seers (on account of the former’s complexion). The more the brahmins cursed him, the more radiant his complexion became, until the guilt-ridden brahmins relented, and was instructed by Asita that no one should be despised of class, as we can never be sure of any pure lineage.

The Buddha closes his instructions by explaining to Assalāyana the nature of human birth, that it has nothing to do with class, but arises when the proper conditions are present. The conscious that is reborn does not belong to any class. It is simply consciousness. On being asked by the Buddha what Assalāyana

<sup>9</sup> M 84/2:83-90 = SD 69.8.

<sup>10</sup> **Yona** prob refers “Ionia,” an ancient generic term for the Greeks, which would be Bactria (Persian, Tajik; Chin 大夏 *dàxià*), the ancient name of a historical region from south of the Amu Darya (Oxus) river to west of the Indus river. It was a part of the eastern periphery of Persia (ancient Iran), now part of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The region was the birthplace of Zoroastrianism, and later Buddhism flourished there, before it was overrun by Muslims from the 7th century onwards. Cf MA 3:409; AA 3:110.

<sup>11</sup> **Kamboja** refers to a kshatriya Indo-Iranian tribe inhabiting the borders of the Iranians and the Indo-Aryans. The Kambojas migrated into India during the Indo-Scythian invasion from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cent BCE to 5<sup>th</sup> cent CE. Later they moved into the Indo-Aryan region and in due course various parts of northern India up to Asoka’s time. It is one of the 16 great states in the Buddha’s time (A 1:213, 4:252, 256, 261). A brahminical work, Viṣṇu Purāṇa (2.37) also states that the Kambojas does not accept the four-class system.

now thinks he is (what class he belongs to), he can only reply, “We know not what we are!” (*na mayam jānāma keci mayam homa*). But he rejoices in the Buddha’s teaching and takes refuge.<sup>12</sup>

**1.3.4 Esukārī Sutta (M 96): We are all capable of good.** The brahmin Esukārī visits the Buddha at Jetavana and asks him various questions on castes and their distinctions, that is, the lower classes of the four classes should serve those of the classes above them. The Buddha says that he rejects such a class system (based on birth) because it has been introduced by the brahmins without the consent of others. Anyone can serve another if such a service makes one “better” (*seyyo*), not “worse” (*pāpiyo*), then such a service is worthwhile.

The claims that brahmins are from the highest class is false. One is neither “better” nor “worse” simply because of one’s class. Whichever class we are from, if we do evil deeds, by that fact we are worse, but if we commit good deeds, then we are better.

Similarly, the brahmins have introduced a *class-based economic system* wherein a brahmin’s wealth is the offerings he should be offered; the kshatriyas’ wealth comes from his land (pastoral and agrarian farming); the vaishyas win wealth through commerce; and a shudra’s wealth comes from labouring. Here too the Buddha charges that the brahmins have unilaterally introduced such a system without a public consensus. We are not differentiated by our class (merely a social convention), but why our occupation. We are what we do.

The highest treasure we can have is not of this world, but it is the supramundane Dharma. As such, anyone from any class can cultivate lovingkindness and goodness. No one is purified by baptizing himself in a river: whoever uses water to wash, the dirt is washed off all the same. There is no special purity for one who makes a fire offering: the fuel we burn produces a blazing fire, no matter who lights it. Anyone can live the spiritual life, which is true service, and gain the Dharma, which is true wealth. At the end of the discourse Esukārī goes for refuge.<sup>13</sup>

**1.3.5 Tevijja Sutta (D 13): Anyone can go to heaven through lovingkindness.** The Tevijja Sutta is one of the most powerful statements against the God-idea. Historically, it is an unequivocal rejection of the brahminical supreme God and a redefinition of fellowship with Brahmā. The Buddha’s rejection of brahminical theism, indeed, any kind of supreme God-idea, for the brahmins exploit such an idea to introduce and sustain a class system, just as the theistic conquerors exploited non-Christian countries in the colonial days, over-running other countries and cultures, placing themselves as God-ordained rulers over lesser creatures, who are after all created by their God.

This is an utter rejection of a pernicious idea that false concentrates power in a single being, so that whoever defines and deifies such a being is in charge, as it were, over everyone and everything else. Rejecting any appeal to an external deity (“the God out there”), the Buddha teaches how we can and should cultivate *godliness*, that is, the four divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*) within ourselves. We should live with lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity.<sup>14</sup>

The Buddha points out the futility of the belief that merely knowing the Three Vedas can bring one to union or reunion with Brahmā (*brahmā, saḥavyatā*). The brahmins who claim to be the highest class and the spokesman of God (that they are born of the “mouth of Brahmā”) are simply false, as none of them have ever met or seen God, even as far back as seven generations (that is, into the historical past). The brahmins, like any other humans, we well know, are born from a mother’s womb.

In a series of colourful, even humorous, parables, the Buddha highlights the falsity, futility and harmfulness of such ideas. The brahmins’ claim to know God *without ever having met or known him*, except by an authoritarian tradition of their scriptures, makes them like *a file of blind men leading the blind*. Their faith and devotion to an unseen God is like someone supplicating the distant sun or moon; at least in the latter case, the objects of worship can be seen. Praying to such an external and alien agency is like a

<sup>12</sup> M 93/2:147-157 = SD 40a.2.

<sup>13</sup> M 96/2:177-184 = SD 37.9.

<sup>14</sup> On cultivating the divine abodes, see **Tevijja S** (D 13.76-79/1:250 f) = SD 1.8; see also **(Karaḥa, kāya) Brahma, vihāra S** (A 10.208/5:299) = SD 2.10.

man who claims he is in love with the most beautiful girl in the country, but has no idea whatsoever what she is like.

The futility and selfishness of theistic prayers are portrayed in two other similes. Such a prayer is like building a great staircase in the heart of the city where the highways meet, but a staircase that ends up in mid-air without leading anywhere. Although the brahmins claim to be the spokesmen of God, they invoke him without being good moral examples themselves. This is like a man sitting on this bank of the river, crying out to the far bank to come over! Or worse, the man is bound, his head covered and lying on the bank, and had no idea whatsoever where he is or what lies across the river.

Finally, the Buddha charges that the brahmins simply have no qualities of the God they claim to speak for. They have wives, wealth and wiles, while Brahmā is *celibate, owns nothing*, and is *free from bad*. As in many other suttas, the Buddha again proclaims that anyone can cultivate the divine abodes, those very qualities of an all-loving God, within their own hearts. The temple of God is truly within us.<sup>15</sup>

**1.3.6 The parable of the ocean.** The best Buddhist testimony to a classless community is surely the early Buddhist sangha. Anyone who is reasonably healthy in mind and body, male or female, who would not be a burden or danger to society, with faith in the Buddha's teaching and the desire for personal development could join the Buddha's monastic community. A famous passage that appears in **the Vinaya** (V 2:237-240), **the Pahārāda Sutta** (A 8.19) and **the Uposatha Sutta** (U 5.5), employs the parable of the ocean to highlight eight wonderful qualities of the early sangha. The parable is here summarized as follows:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (1) The ocean deepens gradually                     | the training in the Dharma-Vinaya is gradual.           |
| (2) The ocean does not overflow its shores          | the monastics would not transgress the rules.           |
| (3) The ocean does not associate with a dead body   | a false monastic is naturally not in communion.         |
| (4) The four great rivers lose their names therein  | all class members become one in the order.              |
| (5) The ocean is stable despite inflow of water     | nirvana is stable no matter how many gain it.           |
| (6) The ocean has only one taste: the taste of salt | the teaching has only the taste of freedom.             |
| (7) The ocean has many sunken treasures             | the Dharma has the 37 kinds of treasures. <sup>16</sup> |
| (8) The ocean is contains huge and strange beings   | the Sangha has the 8 kinds of saints. <sup>17</sup>     |
- (Cv 9.1.3-4 = V 2:237-240 = A 9.19/4:198-204 = U 5.5/53-56)

Of these eight images in the parable of the ocean, the fourth is of special significance in relation to the spirit of the Vāseṭṭha Sutta, that of *a classless community*. The fourth image is here given in full, thus:

Bhikshus, just as all the great rivers—that is to say, the Ganges, the Jumna, the Acira, vatī, the Sarabhū, the Mahī—on reaching the ocean, they all lose their former names, and are simply reckoned as “the great ocean,”

even so, bhikshus, these four classes—the kshatriyas, the brahmins, the vaishyas, and the shudras—having gone forth from home into homelessness in this Dharma-Vinaya declared by the Tathagata, lose their former names and clans, and are reckoned simply as “recluses, sons of the Sakya”—

this, bhikshus, is the fourth marvellous and wonderful thing from constantly having seen which the monks delight in this Dharma-Vinaya. (V 2:239)

<sup>15</sup> D 13/1:235-252 = SD 1.8.

<sup>16</sup> These are the 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi, pakkhiyā dhammā*), comprising the 7 sets, viz, the 4 focusses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), the 4 right efforts (*samm-p, padhāna*), the 4 paths to spiritual power (*iddhi, pāda*), the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*), the 5 powers (*bala*), the 7 awakening-factors (*satta bojjaṅga*), and the noble eightfold path (*ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga*): see **Bodhi, pakkhiyā dhammā** = SD 10.1.

<sup>17</sup> The 8 kinds of saints comprises a pair of each of the 4 kinds of saints—the streamwinner, the once-returner, the non-returner, and the arhat—ie, one walking “the path” (*magga*), a saint-to-be, and the other, one who has attained to the “fruition” (*phala*). For details, see **Sīla samādhi paññā** = SD 21.6 (4).

## 2 Vāsetṭha and Bhāra,dvāja

While Vāsetṭha is Pokkhara,sāti's<sup>18</sup> “seniormost resident student and foremost pupil,”<sup>19</sup> Bhāra,dvāja is a pupil of Tārukkha.<sup>20</sup> The life of the two brahmin students, Vāsetṭha and Bhāra,dvāja, have been detailed elsewhere.<sup>21</sup> Here, we will only briefly look at their spiritual development as the Buddha's disciples.

The Commentaries to both the Aggañña Sutta (D 27) and the Tevijja Sutta (D 13) connect the accounts of the two youths in **the Vāsetṭha Sutta** (M 98 = Sn 3.9),<sup>22</sup> **the Tevijja Sutta** (D 13)<sup>23</sup> and **the Aggañña Sutta** (D 27).<sup>24</sup> into a continuous narrative (DA 406, 860), thus:

<b>Vāsetṭha Sutta</b> (M 98 = Sn 3.9)	after the events of the Vāsetṭha Sutta, they take refuge;
<b>Te,vijja Sutta</b> (D 13)	after the events of the Tevijja Sutta, they take refuge (again) (MA 406); they join the order as novices.
<b>Aggañña Sutta</b> (D 27)	at the start, they are presented as aspiring to be ordained as monks (§1); after the Aggañña Sutta, they are ordained and become arhats (MA 406, cf 872).

It is noteworthy that here in the Vāsetṭha Sutta, they address each other with the brahmin appellation *bho* (“sir”) [§3a]. Later, in **Te,vijja S** (D 13), they simply address one another by name (D 13.7/1:236). This change probably reflects their gradual turning away from Brahmanism. In the Aggañña Sutta (D 27), they are depicted as preparing to be ordained as monks, and becoming arhats in due course.

## 3 Icchā,naṅgala

Icchā,naṅgala was a prosperous brahmin village in Kosala country. While staying in the jungle thicket (*vana,saṅḍa*) nearby, the Buddha taught **the Ambattha Sutta** (D 3).<sup>25</sup> Apparently, the village was near Pokkhara,sāti's village of Ukkatthā.<sup>26</sup> It was the residence of wealthy (*mahāsāla*, “great hall”) brahmins. **The Sutta Nipāta** (which calls it Icchā,naṅkala) and **the Vāsetṭha Sutta** (M 98), mention several eminent brahmins who lived there, such as Caṅkī, Tārukkha, Pokkhara,sāti, Jāṇussoṇi and Todeyya (Sn p15).

According to the Commentaries, learned brahmins of Kosala, were in the habit of convening at Icchā,naṅgala to recite the Vedas and interpret them. Furthermore, these brahmins met at Ukkatthā, under Pokkharasāti, when they wished to purify their status (or “caste”) (*jāti,sodhan'attha*), and at Icchā,naṅgala to revise their Vedic hymns (*mante sodhetu,kāmā*). Both the meetings (at Icchā,naṅgala and at Ukkatthā) were done every 6 months. (MA 3:431; SnA 463)

According to **the Icchā,naṅgala Sutta** (S 54.11), the Buddha once stays in the jungle thicket at Icchā,naṅgala for 3 months in solitary retreat, visited only by a single monk who brings him his food.<sup>27</sup> From **the (Pañcaka) Nāgita Sutta** (A 5.30), however, it appears that the Buddha's retreat is often interrupted by visits from the boisterous residents of Icchā,naṅgala, who come in large numbers. The Buddha has to send his attendant, Nāgita, to restrain the noisy visitors.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> **Pokkhara,sāti** is himself a follower of the Buddha and a streamwinner: see **Ambatṭha S** (D 3/1:87-110) @ SD 21.3 (1.2).

<sup>19</sup> *Jeṭṭh'antevāsī agga,sisso* (SnA 2:463); see also D 2:399; cf Sn p116.

<sup>20</sup> **Vāsetṭha S** (M 98.7 = Sn 594) = SD 37.1.

<sup>21</sup> See further **Aggañña S** (D 27) @ SD 2.19 (4).

<sup>22</sup> M 98/2:197/98 = Sn 3.9/115/594 ff = SD 37.1.

<sup>23</sup> D 13/1:235-252 = SD 1.8. See Collins 1993a:319.

<sup>24</sup> D 27/3:80-97 = SD 2.19.

<sup>25</sup> D 3/1:87-110 = SD 21.3.

<sup>26</sup> D 3.1.1.a/1:87 & SD 21.3(1.2) n.

<sup>27</sup> S 54.11/5:325.

<sup>28</sup> See **Lohicca S** (D 12) @ SD 34.8 (1.3); A 5.30/3:30-32; cf (**Chakka**) **Nāgita S** (A 6.42/3:341) & **Āvaraṇa S** (A 6.86/4:340-344).

## The Discourse to Vāseṭṭha

M 98/2:196 = Sn 3.9/596-656/115-123<sup>29</sup>

[Sn 115] 1 Thus have I heard.

### Uncertainty regarding a brahmin's true nature

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in the Icchā,naṅgala jungle<sup>30</sup> outside Icchā,naṅgala.

2 At that time, many distinguished and wealthy brahmins were staying in Icchā,naṅgala, that is to say, the brahmin Caṅkī, the brahmin Tārukkha, the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi, the brahmin Todeyya,<sup>31</sup> and other well known and wealthy brahmins (of the great halls).<sup>32</sup>

3a At that time, while the brahmin youths, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāra,dvāja were walking back and forth, exercising their legs,<sup>33</sup> this conversation arose:

“What, sir,<sup>34</sup> is a brahmin?”

3b The brahmin youth Bhāra,dvāja said this:

“When, sir, one is well born on both the mother's and the father's sides for seven generations, with neither reproach nor defect in terms of birth, to that extent, sir, one is a brahmin.”<sup>35</sup>

3c The brahmin youth Vāseṭṭha said this:

“When, sir, one is morally virtuous and is accomplished in one's vows, to that extent, sir, one is a brahmin.”<sup>36</sup>

4 Neither could the brahmin youth Bhāra,dvāja [Sn 116] convince the brahmin youth Vāseṭṭha, nor could the brahmin youth Vāseṭṭha convince the brahmin youth Bhāra,dvāja.

<sup>29</sup> The Sutta text here is not found in the PTS ed of the Majjhima Nikāya, as it is identical with **Vāseṭṭha S** (Sn 3.9) of Sutta Nipāta, of which there are 2 PTS eds: (1) Viggo Fausböll 1885 & (2) Dines Andersen & Helmer Smith, 1913, since repr. The embedded pagination & verse nos (right margin) refer to (2).

<sup>30</sup> “Jungle,” *vana,saṅḍa*, or “dense woods, jungle thicket.” It is likely that this is near Manasākaṭa, a brahmin village located north of the Acira,vatī, where there is a mango grove, where Vāseṭṭha and Bhāra,dvāja meet with the Buddha [§5].

<sup>31</sup> Comy says that the 5 brahmins, ie Caṅkī and the other four, are purohitas (royal priests, *purohita*) to rajah Pase-nadi of Kosala (MA 3431).

<sup>32</sup> Comy on **Te,vijja S** (D 13) says that they had gathered in Manasākaṭa (a brahmin village on the banks of the Acira,vatī in Kosala) to “purify” (*sodhetum*), ie, ritually affirm, their “the mantras.” It adds Caṅkī was from Opāsā-da, Tārukkha from Icchā,naṅgala, Pokkhara,sāti from Ukkaṭṭha, Jāṇussoṇi from Sāvattihī, and Todeyya from Tudi,-gāma (DA 2:399). It is said that they would gather once every 6 months, ie, twice a year, in 2 places: at Pokkhara,-sāti's residence in Ukkaṭṭha if they wish to purify their birth (*jāti,sodhana*), or at Icchā,naṅgala, to purify their “man-tras,” ie their command of the Vedas. This time, in the case of Vāseṭṭha S (M 98) here, they have gathered for pur-ifying their mantras (MA 3:431), ie, for reciting and scrutinizing the Vedas (*ved'ajjhāyana, parivīmaṃsan'attham*, SnA 462).

<sup>33</sup> Comy: After learning and memorizing mantras all day, in the evening, they went down to the river to bathe, and then walked up and down on the sand. (DA 2:399).

<sup>34</sup> On the Buddhist growth of Vāseṭṭha and Bhāra,dvāja, see Intro (2).

<sup>35</sup> *Yato kho, bho, ubhato sujāto hoti mātito ca pitito ca saṃsuddha,gahaṇiko yāva sattamā pitā,maha,yugā akkhit-to anupakkuṭṭho jāti,vādena, ettāvataṅ kho bho brāhmaṇo hoti ti*: this is stock: V 4:160; **Soṇa,danḍa S** (D 4/1:113 (×2), 120 (×2), 121, 123); **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5/1:130 (×2), 131 (×2), 137, 138, 139 (×2), 140, 141); **Caṅkī S** (M 95/2:165 (×2), 166 (×2)), **Vāseṭṭha S** (M 98/2:196 = Sn p115); **Ti,kappa S** (A 3.58/1:163); **Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 3.59/1:-166); **Yassam Disam S** (A 5.134/3:151); **Patthanā S 1** (A 5.135/3:152 f); **Patthanā S 2** (A 5.136/3:154); **Doṇa Brāhmaṇa S** (A 5.192/3:223 (×2), 224, 225, 227, 228 (×2)), and reflects the traditional brahmin view.

<sup>36</sup> *Yato kho, bho, sīlavā ca hoti vata,sampanno ca, ettāvataṅ kho bho brāhmaṇo hoti ti*. Be here reads *vatta-* (“dut-ies, routine”) for *vata-* (“vows”). Vāseṭṭha's view is not uncharacteristic of a brahmin, but reflects the changing times, when even some brahmins are re-thinking their orthodoxy. This line is expl in n on Sn 596e below.

## Bhāra,dvāja proposes they consult the Buddha

5 Then, the brahmin youth Bhāra,dvāja addressed the brahmin youth Vāsetṭha:<sup>37</sup>

“Now, master Vāsetṭha, the<sup>38</sup> recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyas, who went forth from the Sakya clan,<sup>39</sup> is now staying at the Icchā,naṅgala jungle outside Icchā,naṅgala.

Concerning this Blessed One, this fair report has been spread about, thus:<sup>40</sup>

‘The Blessed One is such: arhat [worthy], fully self-awakened one, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, supreme guide of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’<sup>41</sup>

Come then, Bharadvaja, let us go to the place where the recluse Gotama is staying; and when we have reached there, let us ask the recluse Gotama about this matter, and whatever he tells us, we shall accept it.”

“Yes, sir,” the brahmin youth Bhāra,dvāja replied in assent to the brahmin youth Vāsetṭha.

## Vāsetṭha and Bhāra,dvāja consult the Buddha

6 Then the brahmin youths, Vāsetṭha and Bhāra,dvāja approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, they sat down at one side. Sitting thus as one side, the brahmin youth Vāsetṭha said this to the Blessed One:

7 [Vāsetṭha:]

1 *Anuññāta,paṭiññātā*  
*tevijjā mayam asm’ubho*  
*ahaṃ pokkharasātissa*  
*tārukkhassāyaṃ māṇavo*

Ordained and acknowledged<sup>42</sup>  
are we both in the Three Vedas:  
I am Pokkharasāti’s pupil,<sup>43</sup>  
this is Tārukkha’s pupil. 594<sup>44</sup>

2 *Tevijjānam yad akkhātāṃ*  
*tatra kevalino’smase*<sup>45</sup>  
*padak’asmā veyyākaraṇā*<sup>47</sup>

Whatever is proclaimed by masters of the Three Vedas,  
fully accomplished<sup>46</sup> in them we are:  
padakas<sup>48</sup> are we, and grammarians, too,

<sup>37</sup> Cf **Te,vijja S** (D 13), where it is Vāsetṭha who proposes that they see the Buddha (D 13.7/1:236) = SD 1.8.

<sup>38</sup> *Ayaṃ*.

<sup>39</sup> A stock passage speaks of the Buddha as “the recluse Gotama, a Sakya son who went forth from the Sakya clan” (*samaṇo...gotamo sakya,putto sakya,kulā pabbajito*): **Mv 22.2/V** 1:35; **D 4.1/1**:111, **13.7/1**:236; **M 41.2/1**:285; **A 3.63.1/1**:180; **Sn** p103. On his renunciation, see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.14/1:163) = SD 1.11, **Soṇa,daṇḍa S** (D 4.6/1:115) = SD 30.5, **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5.7/1:131) = SD 22.8(7a) & **Caṅkī S** (M 95.9/2:167) = SD 21.15, the last three of which say that he is “from a high family” (*uccā kulā*).

<sup>40</sup> *Evaṃ kalyāṇo kitti,saddo abbhuggato*: **V 1**:35; **D 1**:49, 116, 236, **2**:317; **M 1**:285, **2**:167; **S 5**:352; **A 1**:180, **3**:58, **4**:80 (*kalyāṇo...abhuggaccheyya*); **Sn** p103; **J 1**:509.

<sup>41</sup> On the recollection of the Buddha, see **Buddhānussati** = SD 15.7b.

<sup>42</sup> By their respective teachers (MA 3:432,1).

<sup>43</sup> Pokkhara,sāti is a follower of the Buddha: see **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3/1:87-110) @ SD 21.3 (1.2).

<sup>44</sup> Sn 594-656 are in śloka metra, ie, they have, as a rule, 8 syllables to a line, with 4 or 6 lines in a stanza.

<sup>45</sup> Comy takes this as *asmase iti amha bhavāma* (SnA 463,15). The ending *-mase* (1 ind pl) is evidently the middle counterpart of the Vedic active *-masi*, and *-mhase* looks like a cross of *-mhe* and *-mase* (Geiger 1994 §122.3).

<sup>46</sup> “Fully accomplished,” *kevali*, a pre-Buddhist term, also used by the Jains to refer to their saints who knew “everything” (omniscient). On poss connection btw Buddhist & Jain usages, see Nakamura 1983:318. For a philological analysis, see Sn:N2 179 n82.

<sup>47</sup> Sn 595c = Ap 1.36, 126.2.

<sup>48</sup> A *padaka*, according to R N Dandekar, is a learned brahmin who can pronounce each word in a mantra separately “without coalescence or *sam̐dhi* and its own specific accent” (1953:139). The Vedas were redacted and transmitted in two versions: the most important is the *Pada,patha*, where each word is isolated in “pausa” (Lat “break”)

	<i>jappe ācariya,sādisā</i>	in the recitations, <sup>49</sup> we are like our teachers. <b>595 [Sn 117]</b>
3	<i>Tesaṃ no jāti,vādasmiṃ vivādo atthi gotama jātiyā brāhmaṇo hoti<sup>50</sup> bhāra,dvājo iti bhāsati<sup>51</sup> ahañ ca kammunā brūmi evaṃ jānāhi cakkhuma<sup>53</sup></i>	On this matter of birth, between us, O Gotama, there is a dispute. By birth is one a brahmin, thus says Bhāra,dvāja, but I say it is by karma [action] <sup>52</sup> — know thus, O one with the eyes. <b>596</b>
4	<i>Te na sakkoma saññatūṃ<sup>54</sup> aññam-aññam mayam ubho bhavantam puṭṭhum āgamā sambuddham iti vissutam</i>	We are both unable to convince one another in this matter. We've come to ask you, good sir, who is renowned as the self-awakened. <b>597</b>
5	<i>Candam yathā khayātītam<sup>55</sup> pecca pañjalikā janā<sup>57</sup> vandamānā namassanti lokasmim gotamaṃ</i>	<sup>56</sup> Just as people worshipping with lotus-palms, the moon, having returned, after its waning, we pay homage to Gotama in the world. <b>598</b>
6	<i>Cakkhum loke samuppannam mayam pucchāma gotamaṃ jātiyā brāhmaṇo hoti udāhu bhavati kammunā ajānataṃ no pabrūhi yathā jānemu<sup>58</sup> brāhmaṇan ti<sup>59</sup></i>	The eye that has arisen in the world, that Gotama we ask: Is one a brahmin by birth or is it by action that one becomes so? Tell us, who know not, so that we may truly know a brahmin. <b>599</b>

or resolved form, and the *Samhita, patha*, which combines words according sandhi rules, the process of which is described in the *Pratisakhya* (treatises on phonetics). The *Samhita, patha* is the memorized text used for recitation.

<sup>49</sup> *Jappa* here refers to the Vedas (SnA 463,17).

<sup>50</sup> Sn 596c = 599c.

<sup>51</sup> There are 9 syllables in this śloka: this can be corrected by reading *iti* as 'ti mc.

<sup>52</sup> Here karma (*kammunā* (vl *kammanā*) refers to *present* actions, not results of past karma, or more specifically, say Comys, the 10 wholesome courses of actions (*kusala kamma, patha*), of which the first 7, constituting actions of body and speech, are connected with “when, sir, one is morally virtuous” (*yato kho bho sīlavā hoti*) [Sn p115] (D 1:121+123; M 2:196). The 3 mental actions are connected with “is accomplished in one’s vows” (*vata, sampanno*) [id] (Ap 1:17; Nm 2:396; VbhA 297). Thus, he is accomplished in proper conduct (*tena samannāgato hi ācāra, sampanno hoti*, MA 3:432,16-20 = SnA 463,18-23). On the 10 courses of actions, see **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41/1:285-290) = SD 5.7.

<sup>53</sup> Sn 596f = S 1:166; D 2:28.

<sup>54</sup> M:Be *ñāpetum*; Sn:Ce *saññattam*; Sn:Ee *saññattum* (inf of *sañ-jñā* < *sañjñāptum*) (Norman); Sn:Be *saññāpetum*.

<sup>55</sup> The allusion here clearly is to the full-moon. Aldorf takes *khayātītam* as meaning “waxing again” (1962:135).

<sup>56</sup> This tr is not interlinear but follows the flow of English idiom.

<sup>57</sup> Comys: *Pecca* means “having arrived” (*peccā ti upagantvā*, MA 3:432,25 = SnA 463,24).

<sup>58</sup> *Jānemu* (Sn 76d, 599f, 999d), ie *jānema* with labialisation of -a > -u after m, as -emu: see Norman 2001:171 n714.

<sup>59</sup> *Br-* in *brāhmaṇam* does not make position. Norman, on Sn 519 (*bāhetvā sabba, pāpakāni...brahmā*), notes, “The pun on *bāhetvā* and *brahmā* only works in a dialect where *br-* has become *b-*. That this was the original situation in this verse is shown by the fact that *br-* does not make position here.” (Sn:N2 269 n519). This also suggests that an earlier version of this verse had *bamhaṇo* or its opp *abhambhaṇo* (Sn:N 290 n650).

## 8 [The Buddha:]

Animals are differentiated by species

7	<i>Tesaṃ vo ahaṃ vyakkhissam (vāsetṭhā ti bhagavā)<sup>60</sup> anupubbaṃ yathā,tathaṃ jāti,vibhaṅgaṃ pāṇānaṃ aññam-aññā hi jātiyo</i>	I shall explain to you regarding these, (Vāsetṭha, said the Blessed One, in proper sequence, as they truly are, regarding the species of living beings: for, varied indeed are they.	600
8	<i>Tiṇa,rukkhepi jānātha na cāpi paṭijānare<sup>61</sup> liṅgaṃ<sup>62</sup> jāti,mayaṃ tesaṃ aññam-aññā hi jātiyo</i>	Consider the grass and the trees: although they lay no claim to it, their mark arises from their species; for, there are many different species.	601 [Sn 118]
9	<i>Tato kīṭe<sup>63</sup> paṭaṅge<sup>64</sup> ca yāva kuntha,kipillike liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ tesaṃ aññam-aññā hi jātiyo</i>	And consider, too, worms and insects, down to the ants <sup>65</sup> and termites: their mark arises from their species; for, there are many different species.	602
10	<i>Catu-p,pade'pi jānātha khuddake ca mahallake liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ tesaṃ aññam-aññā hi jātiyo</i>	Consider, too, the four-legged, both small and large— their mark arises from their species; for, there are many different species.	603
11	<i>Pādūdare'pi jānātha urage dīgha,piṭṭhike liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ tesaṃ aññam-aññā hi jātiyo</i>	Consider, too, those with legs on their belly, the long-backed snakes— their mark arises from their species; for, there are many different species.	604
12	<i>Tato macche'pi jānātha udake<sup>66</sup> vāri,gocare liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ tesaṃ aññam-aññā hi jātiyo</i>	Consider, too, the fishes and those in the water, whose pasture is the water— their mark arises from their species; for, there are many different species.	605

<sup>60</sup> This line is hypermetrical (does not fit the rhythm) and is prob added by the *saṅgīti,kārā* (council reciters): similar insertions at Sn 18-29, 33 f (see Norman Sn:N2 154 n18-29).

<sup>61</sup> *Paṭijānare* is 3 pres med pl = *paṭijanante*, from *paṭi* + √JÑĀ, to know: see Geiger 1994: §121. Comy: “**They lay no claim to it**” means they know not thus, “We are grass; we are trees. I’m grass; I’m a tree” (*na cāpi paṭijānare ti mayaṃ tiṇā mayaṃ rukkhatī vā, ahaṃ tiṇaṃ, ahaṃ rukkhoti vā evaṃ na jānanti*, MA 3:433; more briefly at SnA 464)

<sup>62</sup> *Liṅga* (nt) PED: “sign; mark; attribute; feature; the generative organ; the gender (in grammar).”

<sup>63</sup> m or nt (ts). BHSD: “excrement”; *kīṭa,kumbha*, “chamber-pot,” poss “pot of worms” (Śikṣ 81.5); DP & SED: “worm or insect.” PED: “a general term for insect” (DhA 1:187), usu in above cpd (M 3:168; Sn 602; J 6:208; Miln 272; PvA 67; Vism 3.125/115), where Vism:Ñ has “moths.” Clearly, *kīṭa* is polysemic and should be tr contextually.

<sup>64</sup> See Geiger 1994: §42.1 & n3.

<sup>65</sup> *Kuntha*, cf Jain *kunthu* (Uttarā,dhyayana 26.138): see Jacobi 1895:220 n1, where it refers to “animalcule.”

<sup>66</sup> Be so; Ee *odake*. Comy glosses “**in the water**” means “born in the water, or any of the kinds of fishes, such as the red fish” (SnA 465,7-8). Cf Tha 345c & Sn:N2 286:n605.

- 13 *Tato pakkhī'pi jānātha  
patta,yāne vihaṅgame  
liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ tesam  
aññam-aññā hi jātiyo* Consider, too, the birds, those  
with wings as vehicle, those that fly in the air—  
their mark arises from their species;  
for, there are many different species. **606**

### Humans are a single species

9

- 14 *Yathā etāsu jātisu  
liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ puthu  
evaṃ n'atthi manussesu  
liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ puthu* Just as amongst these species,  
their marks<sup>67</sup> of the species are many,  
even so, amongst humans  
their species marks are not many. **607**

- 15 *Na kesehi na sīsehi  
na kaṇṇehi na akkhīhi  
na mukhena na nāsāya  
na oṭṭhehi bhamūhi vā* Not in the hair, nor in the head,  
nor in the ears, nor in the eyes,  
nor in the mouth, nor in the nose,  
nor in the lips, nor in the eye-brows, **608**<sup>68</sup>

- 16 *Na gīvāya na amsehi  
na udarena na piṭṭhiyā  
na soṇiyā na urasā  
na sambādhe na methune* nor in the neck, nor in the shoulders,  
nor in the belly, nor in the back,  
nor in the rump, nor in the chest,  
nor in the privies, nor in the coupling,<sup>69</sup> **609**

- 17 *Na hatthehi na pādehi  
n'aṅgulīhi nakhehi vā  
na jaṅghāhi na ūrūhi  
na vaṇṇena sarena vā  
liṅgaṃ jāti,mayaṃ n'eva  
yathā aññāsu jātisu* nor in the hand, nor in the feet,  
nor in the fingers, nor in the nails,  
nor in the legs,<sup>70</sup> nor in the thighs,  
nor in the complexion, nor in the voice—  
there is no mark at all arising from the species,  
as in other species.<sup>71</sup> **610**

- 18 *Paccattaṇ ca sarīresu  
manussesv-etaṃ na vijjati  
vokāraṇ ca manussesu  
samaññāya pavuccati* Not in the bodies individually  
is this difference found amongst humans.  
For, amongst humans, any difference  
is said to be by way of convention.<sup>72</sup> **611**

<sup>67</sup> This pl is forced (as *liṅgaṃ* is sg) to fit the English idiom.

<sup>68</sup> Sn 608-610 have close parallels in Divy 50-53/324.17-24 (ed Vaidya).

<sup>69</sup> Norman tr as “not female organs, nor testicles” (Sn:N2 30 n609). He rejects the above tr, saying that “the main objection to this would be that all the other words in the verse refer to parts of the body” (2001:286 n609). However, his conjecture is purely speculative, without any textual support.

<sup>70</sup> *Jaṅghā*, PED: “the leg, usu the lower leg (from knee to ankle) (D 2:17; S 1.16 = Sn 165, *eni*~); DP: “the shank, the shin” (V 3:106,29; D 3:157,4\*; A 4:129,11; Sn 610; Tha 312; DhA 3:119,11; J 5:336,11). In cpds *jaṅgha*-, except ~*vihāra*, “walking to exercise the legs” (M 1:108,21; U34,14; Sn p105,6 :: SnA 448,1; J 4:74,16; Ap 318,13). Cf *eni.jaṅgha*, “legs like an antelope’s” (one of the 32 great man’s marks) (D 2:17,5 :: DA 447,4; D 3:143,21; Sn 165 :: 207,16).

<sup>71</sup> That is to say, within the human species, at least within the current society, there is no further differentiation by way of any anatomical feature nor by sexuality. Human beings are a single species. See §9 (Sn 607-611).

<sup>72</sup> “Convention,” *samañña*. Comy explains that animals are differentiated by way of diversity in their bodily features which are determined by their birth (*yoni*), but there are no such distinctions amongst humans no matter which class they belong to. The distinction we see amongst brahmins, kshatriyas, etc, are purely a verbal designation, merely a conventional expression (MA 4:435; SnA 465 f).

Differentiation by way of occupation

[Sn 119]

10

19 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
go,rakkhaṃ upajīvati*<sup>73</sup>  
*evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi  
kassako so na brāhmaṇo*<sup>74</sup>

Who amongst humans  
earns a living by cattle-herding,  
Vāseṭṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a farmer, not a brahmin.

612

20 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
puthu,sippena jīvati*<sup>75</sup>  
*evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi  
sippiko so na brāhmaṇo.*

Who amongst humans  
lives by means of various arts,<sup>76</sup>  
Vāseṭṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a craftsman, not a brahmin.

613

21 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
vohāraṃ upajīvati  
evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi  
vāñijjo so na brāhmaṇo*

Who amongst humans  
lives by means of trading,  
Vāseṭṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a trader, not a brahmin.

614<sup>77</sup>

22 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
para,pessena jīvati  
evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi  
pessako so na brāhmaṇo*

Who amongst humans  
lives by running errands for others,  
Vāseṭṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a messenger [servant], not a brahmin.

615

23 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
adinnaṃ upajīvati  
evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi  
coro eso na brāhmaṇo*

Who amongst humans  
earn a living by taking the not-given,  
Vāseṭṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a thief, not a brahmin.

616

24 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
issatthaṃ upajīvati  
evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi  
yodh'ājīvo na brāhmaṇo*

Who amongst humans  
earn a living by archery  
Vāseṭṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a mercenary, not a brahmin.

617

25 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
porohiccena jīvati  
evaṃ vāseṭṭha jānāhi  
yājako so na brāhmaṇo*

Who amongst humans  
who lives by of priesthood,  
Vāseṭṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a sacrificer, not a brahmin.

618

26 *Yo hi koci manussesu  
gāmaṃ raṭṭhañ ca bhuñjati*<sup>78</sup>

Who amongst humans  
govern villages and countries,

<sup>73</sup> *Upajīvati* usu takes an acc subject (*go,rakkhaṃ*. etc): Sn 612b, 614b, 616b, 617b: see CPD sv. Cf *jīvati* in foll stanza.

<sup>74</sup> Sn 612-619, in line d, *br-* in *brāhmaṇo* does not make position: see Sn 599d n.

<sup>75</sup> *Jīvati* which takes an ins subject here, and Sn 615b, 618b, is syn with *upajīvati* at Sn 612b etc: see n ad loc.

<sup>76</sup> Comy glosses: “by various arts, such as the work of a weaver, etc” (*puthi,sippenā ti tanta.vāya,kamm'ādi,nānā,-sippena*, SnA 466,13).

<sup>77</sup> Qu at MA 3:39 & at SA 1:119, where *vohāra* is discussed; at UA 332, where *saṃvohāra*, “intercourse,” is discussed in some detail.

<sup>78</sup> *Bhuñjati* usu means “to eat (in general), to enjoy, make use of, take advantage of, use” (Sn 102, 240, 259, 619; Dh 324; Pug 55) (PED). *Bhuñjati*, in certain context, has the sense of “he rules,” as in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D3), where it is said, “he governs a gift [ie a brahmadeya, Ukkaṭṭhā] from rajah Pasenadi of Kosala” (*tañño pasenadissa kosalassa*

*evaṃ vāsetṭha jānāhi  
rājā eso na brāhmaṇo*

Vāsetṭha, know him to be so:  
he is a rajah, not a brahmin.

619

### The true brahmin, the arhat

11

27 *Na cāhaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ brūmi<sup>79</sup>  
yonijaṃ matti,sambhavaṃ  
bho,vādi nāma so hoti  
sa ce hoti sa,kiñcano  
akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ  
tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.<sup>84</sup>*

Nor do I call him a brahmin  
because he is born of a mother's womb.<sup>80</sup>  
He is but a "sir"-caller<sup>81</sup>  
if he has possessions.<sup>82</sup>  
He who has nothing, without grasping,<sup>83</sup>  
him I call a brahmin.

620 = Dh 396

28 *Sabba,samyojanaṃ chetvā  
yo ve na paritassati<sup>85</sup>  
saṅgātigaṃ visamyuttaṃ  
tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*

Having cut off all fetters,  
who trembles not,  
gone beyond attachments, fetter-free,  
him I call a brahmin.

621 = Dh 397

[Sn 120]

29 *Chetvā naddhiṃ varattaṃ ca  
sandānaṃ saḥ' anukkamaṃ  
ukkhitta,paḷighaṃ buddhaṃ  
tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*

Having cut off the thong and the strap,  
the tether, along with the bridle,  
the cross-bar raised,<sup>86</sup> he is awake<sup>87</sup>—  
him do I call a brahmin.

622 = Dh 398

30 *Akkosaṃ vadha,bandhaṃ ca  
aduṭṭho yo titikkhati  
khantī,balaṃ bal'ānīkaṃ<sup>88</sup>*

Who, when abused, struck or bound,  
endures without ill will, with  
endurance as his strength, his strength his army—

*dattikaṃ bhujjati* (D 3.2.6/1:103) = SD 21.3. Cf *raṭṭhaṃ bhujjati*, "he rules a country" (AA 3:261); *janapadaṃ gahetvā bhujjāmi*, "having seized the country, I rule it" (SnA 1:84; ApA 66). See also **Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda S** (D 26): *yathā,bhuttaṃ ca bhujjatha*, "And govern as you have done before" (D 26.6/2:62) = SD 36.10.

<sup>79</sup> Whole verse = Dh 396; cf DhA 4:158-233 ad Dh 396-423.

<sup>80</sup> Here, alluding to "pure descent" (*samsuddha,gahaṇika*, MA 2:436 = SnA 466; D 1:113; DA 1:281; M 2:165; MA 2:417).

<sup>81</sup> A *bho,vādi*, say Comys, is one who goes about saying "Sir, sir" in greeting (SnA 467,1-2; DhA 4:158,18-19), ie, "one who merely knows proper etiquette in greeting others, one who addresses other respectfully" (Dh:C&P 400). See Sn:N2 287 620 & Dh:N 158 n396.

<sup>82</sup> Comy ad Sn 645b: **Kiñcana** means "something, a formation through grasping on account of craving in those conditions of his (ie in the past, future and present)" (*kiñcanaṃ ti yass'etesu thānesu taṇhā,gaha,sāṅkhāraṃ kiñcanaṃ* (SnA 470,11).

<sup>83</sup> As at Sn 645c (qv).

<sup>84</sup> **Sn 620-647**, in line d, *br-* in *brāhmaṇo* does not make position: see Sn 599d n. **Sn 620-629**, cf the Jain texts: Uttarādhyayana Sūtra (Jacobi 1895; Charpentier 1922) 25.19-29, 33 f; Sūyagaḍaṅga 1.2.2.15.

<sup>85</sup> **Paritassati**, ie, he has no fear. Also spelt *paritasati* = *pari* ("all around, thoroughly") + *tas(s)ati*, where *tasati* can mean (1) (Skt *trṣyati*, to dry up) to be thirsty; fig to crave for (S 2:13; Miln 254); (2) (Ved *trasati*) to tremble, shake, to have fear (Sn 394; Nc 479; KhpA 245 (may be taken as 1). Both, past part *tasita*. Here (Sn 621) sense 1 is meant. Cf pot *parittase* in Sn 924d, the only eg of *tasati* (2). See PED: *paritassati*.

<sup>86</sup> *Ukkhitta,paligha* (bahuvrihi) (M 1:139,17; A 3:84,14; Sn 622), cf *okkhitta,paligha*, "cross-bar thrown down" (D 1:105,13); *okkhitta* = *avakkhitta*; opp *ukkhitta*. Interestingly, both expressions here give the same sense of an unbarred door. For *palikha* or *paligha*, Skt versions (eg Uv 23.61, U:Bk 69, Uv:R 67) has *parikha* ("ditch, trench," see BHSD): see Dh:G(B) 188 n43 & Luders §130. On the *-r-* & *-l-* alternation (an eastern feature), see Sn:N n29.

<sup>87</sup> Comy glosses as "awake on account of realizing the four noble truths" (*catunnaṃ saccānaṃ buddhattā buddhaṃ*, SnA 467,16); also at Sn 643c below. Dh:G here has *vira*, "hero," but Skt Uv has *buddham*: Dh:G(B) 188 n43.

<sup>88</sup> *Bal'ānīkaṃ* = *bala*, "strength, power, force," + *anīka*, "array, army, troops" (Sn 623; Dh 399; cf DhA 4:164).

	<i>tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	him do I call a brahmin.	<b>623</b> = Dh 399
31	<i>Akkodhanaṃ vata,vantaṃ sīla,vantaṃ anussadaṃ<sup>90</sup> dantaṃ antima,sārīraṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Without anger, keeping to his vows, <sup>89</sup> morally virtuous, not haughty, tamed, living his last body— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>624</b> = Dh 400
32	<i>Vāri,pokkhara,patt'eva āragge-r-iva<sup>91</sup> sāsapo<sup>92</sup> yo na limpatai kāmesu tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Just as water does not cling to a lotus leaf, just as a mustard seed on the tip of an awl, who clings not to sensual pleasure— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>625</b> = Dh 401
33	<i>Yo dukkhassa pajānāti idh'eva khayam attano panna,bhāraṃ<sup>93</sup> visamīyuttaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Who understands the ending of his own suffering right here, laid down the burden, unfettered— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>626</b> = Dh 402
34	<i>Gambhīra,paññaṃ medhāvīṃ maggāmaggaṃ kovidaṃ uttam'attham anupattaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Of deep wisdom, intelligent, skilled in what is and what is not the path, who has attained the supreme goal— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>627</b> = Dh 403
35	<i>Asaṃsaṭṭhaṃ gahaṭṭhehi anāgārehi<sup>94</sup> cūbhayaṃ<sup>95</sup> anoka,sāriṃ appicchaṃ, tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ.</i>	Socializing neither with householders, nor with homeless ones, not taking a house as refuge, <sup>96</sup> and with few wishes— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>628</b> = Dh 404

<sup>89</sup> “Keeping to his vows” (*vata,vantaṃ*): Comy glosses as being accomplished in the vows of the ascetic practices (*vata,vantaṃ ti dhuta,vatena samannāgataṃ*, SnA 467,23). There are 13 such ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*) (eg living on almsfood, eating at one sitting, living at the foot of a tree, not sleeping lying down, etc), all of which are voluntary (V 5:131, 194; Vism 2/59-93).

<sup>90</sup> *Anussada* = *na + ussada* (BHS *utsada*, “obtruding, raising oneself, excess”) (Sn 515d): see DP: *ussada*. Here Comy glosses “not haughty on account of not having the haughtiness of craving” (*taṇhā,ussadābhāvena anussadaṃ*, SnA 467,24), ie craving-free. At Sn 783d, *ussada* is glossed by Comy as these 7 kinds of “haughtiness”: lust, hate, delusion, conceit, view, defilement, and evil action (*rāga,dosa,moha,māna,diṭṭhi,kilesa,duccarita,saṅkhata satt'ussadā*, SnA 521,19); at Sn 855d (*ussada*) Comy briefly glosses *rāg'ādayo satta ussadā* (SnA 521,19).

<sup>91</sup> The sandhi infix *-r-* is often inserted between two vowels, and appears very freq before *iva*, esp after *ā*, *e* and *o*, eg *turiyā-r-iva* (Thī 381); *jana,majjhe-r-iva* (Thī 394); *thambho-r-iva* (Sn 214), *so-r-iva suṃsumāro* (J 2:228,21\*). For details, see Geiger 1994 §73.3; Dh:N 144 n338; Sn:N2 159 n29; Thī:N 54 n3.

<sup>92</sup> Cf Sn 631b below.

<sup>93</sup> *Panna,bhāra*, also at Sn 914c; M 1:139,18. *Panna*, “fallen (down); gone” (past part of *pajjati*, Ved *padyate*, “he goes, falls down), idiomatically here, “laid down.” Comys gloss *panna,bhāra* as “having put down the burden that is the aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations, consciousness)” (*ohita-k,khandha,bhāraṃ*, SnA 467,30 = DhA 4:168,8-11); see also MA 2:116,8-10, 3:438,4-5; AA 2:259:1-2, 264,9-10; SA 1:352,12-13; SnA 561,23; Nm 334,23-23, cf Nm 343,17 = Nc:Be 25:77,11). See Norman 1979:47. Related cpds are: *panna,gandha* (J 5:198,22 f); *panna-d,dhaja* (M 1:139,18; MA 2:116,7-8; AA 3:264,9 f, cf Nm 343,15; Nc 25:77,8 f); *panna,loma* (MA 3:167,1; UA 163,15-17).

<sup>94</sup> Historically (such as occurring in the prose text), this should be *anagārehi*, also at Sn 639b, 640b.

<sup>95</sup> *Cūbhayaṃ* = *ca ubhayaṃ*, “and both” (untr, implicity in “neither...nor...”).

<sup>96</sup> *Anoka,sāriṃ* = *na + oka + sāri*; alt tr, “wandering, independent of any house.” Comy glosses as “wandering without any attachment” (*anālaya,cāriṃ*, SnA 468,9 f). Cf Sn 966; see S 4.25/1:127,5 & SA 1:188,5.

36	<i>Nidhāya daṇḍaṃ bhūtesu tasesu thāvaresu ca yo na hanti na ghātetī tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Who has laid down the rod amongst beings, the moving and the still, <sup>97</sup> who neither kills nor causes to kill <sup>98</sup> — him do I call a brahmin.	629 = Dh 405
37	<i>Aviruddhaṃ viruddhesu atta,daṇḍesu<sup>99</sup> nibbutaṃ sādānesu anādānaṃ<sup>100</sup> tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Not hostile amongst the hostile, amongst those grasping rods, he is cool [quenched], amongst the grasping, he grasps not— him do I call a brahmin.	630 = Dh 406
38	<i>Yassa rāgo ca doso ca māno makkho ca ohito<sup>101</sup> sāsapo-r-iva āraggā<sup>102</sup> tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Whose lust and hate, conceit and hypocrisy, have fallen away like a mustard seed from an awl's tip— him do I call a brahmin.	631 = Dh 407 [Sn 121]
39	<i>Akakkasaṃ viññāpaniṃ gīraṃ saccaṃ udīraye yāya nābhisaje kiñci tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Who speaks unharshly, instructively, words of truth, with which he would not offend <sup>103</sup> anyone— him do I call a brahmin.	632 = Dh 408
40	<i>Yo ca<sup>104</sup> dīghaṃ va rassaṃ vā aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubhaṃ loke adinnaṃ n'ādiyati<sup>105</sup> tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	But who, whether long or short, tiny or large, beautiful or ugly, takes not the not-given in this world— him do I call a brahmin.	633 = Dh 409
41	<i>Āsā<sup>106</sup> yassa na vijjanti asmīṃ loke paramhi ca nirāsāsaṃ<sup>107</sup> visamyuttaṃ</i>	In whom no longing is found for this world or the hereafter, free from longing, unfettered—	

<sup>97</sup> *Tasesu thāvaresu ca*. Comy: This line refers to those who are shaken by [trembling with] craving, or who are stable on account of being without craving (the non-returners and the arhats) (*tasesu thāvaresu ca ti tanhā, tāsam tasesu tanhābhāvena thiratāya thāvaresu*, SnA 468,11 f). For a discussion on *tasa* and *thāvara*, see **Karaṇīya Metta S** (Sn 146b = Khp 8) n = SD 38.3

<sup>98</sup> *Ghātetī = ghātayati* (caus) (Geiger 2001:§179.5). Cf *na haneyya na ghātaye*, “one should neither kill nor cause to kill” (Dh 129d).

<sup>99</sup> *Atta, daṇḍa* = *atta* (Skt *āta*, past part of *ādiyati*, “he seizes, grasps”) + *daṇḍa*, “rod”; meaning “the violent.” On the opposition btw *atta, daṇḍa* and *nibbuta*, see Norman 1994:222 f = 1996:25 f.

<sup>100</sup> Cf Sn 620e.

<sup>101</sup> *Ohita* can be the past part of *odahati*, “he places (in), lays down, applies, directs” (V 1:9,14; D 1:230,13; M 1:117,28; S 2:267,13): (BHS *avahita*) “placed in, confined (in), applied, directed, A 3:240,23; Dh 150; or *oharati*, “he brings down, takes down, puts down, drags down” (V 2:110,35; Pv 18.6 = J 4:85,26\*): *oharita, ohita*, “taken down, removed” (V 2:111,29; DA 863,33; UA 244,18). This last sense applies here.

<sup>102</sup> See Sn 625b n above.

<sup>103</sup> “Would not offend,” Sn:Be *nābhisajje*, Dh:Ee Sn:Ee *nābhisaje*: pot 3 sg of *abhisajeti*, “he reviles, offends (acc).” Comy: speech on account of which no one is obstructed (“made to stick on”) on account of being angered (*yāya girāya aññaṃ kujjhāpanna, vasena na laggāpeyya*, SnA 468,27). Cf Sn 386d; also Dh:G 22 = Dh 406.

<sup>104</sup> So Dh:Be, Sn:Be; DhA 4:184,1 *yo dha*; Sn:Be *yam*. In fact, Dh:G 19 *du* & Uv 33.25 *tu*, “which suggests that in the exemplars followed by the redactors of those two texts there was a reading *ca* which they interpreted in the meaning “but.” (Sn:N2 2001:289 n633). Norman admits he is wrong in reading it as *yo dha*, foll Sn 636, 639 and 640 (= Dh 412, 415, and 416 resp) (Dh:N 161 n409). On *dha/ca/tu* alternation, see Dh:N n267.

<sup>105</sup> Dh:Ee Sn:Ee so; Sn:Be *n'ādeti*. On the palatalisation of *-a- > -i-* in *ādiyati*, see Sn:N2 148 n3.

<sup>106</sup> Comy glosses *āsā* as *tanhā*. “craving” (DhA 4:185,15); *nirāsāyaṃ ti nittañham*, “‘without longing’ means without craving” (DhA id; SnA 469,1). See n on *nirāsāsaṃ* below.

	<i>tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	him do I call a brahmin.	<b>634</b> = Dh 410
42	<i>Yass 'ālayā na vijjanti aññāya akathaṃ,kathim amat'ogadham<sup>109</sup> anuppattam tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇa</i>	In whom no attachments <sup>108</sup> are found due to knowledge, who has no doubt, who has reached the firm ground of no-death— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>635</b> = Dh 411
43	<i>Yo 'dha,puññaṃ ca pāpaṇca ubho saṅgam<sup>111</sup> upaccagā asokaṃ virajaṃ suddham tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Who here has overcome <sup>110</sup> both merit and demerit, sorrowless, dust-free, pure— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>636</b> = Dh 412
44	<i>Candaṃ va vimalaṃ suddham vippasannaṃ anāvilam nandī,bhava,parikkhīṇam tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Like the moon, stainless, pure, lucid, undisturbed [not turbid], his delighting in existence <sup>112</sup> destroyed— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>637</b> = Dh 413
45	<i>Yo imam pali,patham duggam saṃsāram moham accagā<sup>113</sup></i>	Who, this obstacle, this bad path that is a cycle of lives, delusion, has fared beyond, <sup>114</sup>	

<sup>107</sup> Be so; Ee *nirāsayaṃ* (DhA 4:185; Nc 31,27\*); cf *nirāsamsa* (SnA 108,18; Nc 31,27\* = SnA 597,4). There is a wordplay on *āsā* and *nirāsāsam* (or *nirāsayaṃ*). CPD, sv *āsasa*, however, gives no refs for *āsasa* in Pali, taking *nirāsasa* (Sn 369, 634, 1090 f) as vl for *nirāsaya*, “prob due to the misreading of *ya* as [*sa*] in the Sinh script.” Comys: “craving is called *āsā*” (*āsā vuccati taṇhā*, Nc186,29); “*nirāsaya* means without craving” (*nirāsayo ti nittanho*, NcA 127,18 = SnA 108,18). See DP: *nirāsasa* = *ni* (“without”) + \**āsasā*, \**āsāsā* = *āsamsā*? (“desire, expectations”); cf Pkt *ñirāsamsa* (“without desire”). See Norman Sn:N2 237 n369. Uv 33.43 reads *nirāsiṣam*, which makes better wordplay with *āsā*, and supports the reading *nirāsāsam* here. For wordplays, see Norman Dh:N 63 f nn9-10.

<sup>108</sup> *Ālaya* (ts), “attachment.” DP: **1** settling-place, abode, next, lair; house, hall, shelter; repository (S 5:400,21\*; Tha 307; Thī 270); **2** the wish or intention to have or keep or to settle; clinging; longing; desire, attachment; intention (M 1:191,4; Sn 535; Dh 411); **3** refuge; concealment, pretence, ruse (J 6:20,18, 20,29). See SN:N2 275 n535.

<sup>109</sup> By itself, *amat'ogadham* means “plunged into the depths where there is no death,” but on account of the presence of *anuppattam*, the former should be taken as *amat'ogādha*, where *amata* (“the death-free”) refers to nirvana (Sn 80, p14,12, 204, 635, 960; SnA 151,7, 252,31; cf Sn 453a, where *amata* simply means “deathless”), and *ogadha* is a by-form of *ogādha*, “a firm basis, footing” (CPD: *ogadha*). Comys often link *ogadha* with *ogāha* (ger, “plunging, bathing”) (VA 1303,8 as V 2:,7; MA 2:370,22-29 as M 1:304,21; SA 3:277,28 ad S 5:344,7). Dictionaries def it as *ogāha* (“(who) has plunged in, is immersed in”) (eg D Andersen, *Pali Glossary*, sv): see CPD: *ogadha*, 1:696.

<sup>110</sup> These two lines are translated as ba against the Pali.

<sup>111</sup> Comy seems to take *saṅgam* as in apposition to *ubho*, rather than in agreement (SnA 469,8). **Udāna,varga** parallel here has *ubhau saṅgāv upatyagāt* (Uv 33.29), which gives *saṅga* as pl. Lüders (1954) refers to **Sn 35** which has *sahāyam*, and its Mvst parallel has pl *sahāyān* (Mvst 1:359,10\*). Norman thus suggests that we should prob take *saṅgam* as a masc acc pl (Sn:N2 289 n636). On *-am* as acc pl end, see Lüders, *Beobachtungen*, 1954 §§202, 203, 205, 210, 216-219; cf Dh 412 & Dh:G 46. Also Sn:N2 n35.

<sup>112</sup> Comys say that this refers to the 3 kinds of existence (*tīsu bhavesu*), ie, sense-existence, form-existence and formless-existence (the whole of existence itself), for which his craving has been destroyed (SnA 469,14 = DhA 4:192). For the *ca/dha* alternation, see Sn:N2 n26.

<sup>113</sup> Comy: “He has not crossed over the samsara cycle on account of the delusion of not having penetrated the four noble truths” (*saṃsāra,vaṭṭaṃ ca catunnaṃ saccānaṃ appaṭivijjhāna,mohaṃ ca aṭṭo*, SnA 2:469,16-17). **Udāna,varga** here reads *saṃsāraugham upatyagāt* (Uv 33.41). **Bernhard**'s n ad loc (Uv:eB) reads *saṃsāram oham accagā* for Dh 414b. **Norman** thinks that a different punctuation would give the cpd *saṃsāra-m-oham* (< *ogham*), with the meaning “the flood of *saṃsāra*.” The nasalisation of *-a* before *-m-* would result in *saṃsāram-m-oham*, which was interpreted as *saṃsāram moham* in the Pali version (Sn:N2 289 n638).

<sup>114</sup> Sn 638ad alt tr: “Who, this obstacle, this bad path, | a flood that is samsara, has not crossed over...” This tr actually makes better sense.

	<i>tiṇṇo pāraṅgato jhāyī anejo akatham,kathī anupādāya nibbuto tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	crossed over, gone over to the far shore, a meditator, unmoved by lust, free from doubt, without grasping, quenched— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>638</b> = Dh 414 <sup>115</sup>
46	<i>Yo 'dha<sup>116</sup> kāme pahantvāna anāgāro<sup>117</sup> paribbaje kāma,bhava,parikkhīṇaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Who here, abandoning sensual pleasures, leaves the house as a wanderer, who has destroyed desire and existence <sup>118</sup> — him do I call a brahmin.	<b>639</b> = Dh 415
47	<i>Yo 'dha<sup>119</sup> taṇhaṃ pahantvāna anāgāro<sup>120</sup> paribbaje taṇhā,bhava,parikkhīṇaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Who here, abandoning craving, leaves the house as a wanderer, who has destroyed craving for existence— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>640</b> = Dh 416
48	<i>Hitvā mānusakaṃ yogaṃ dibbaṃ yogaṃ upaccagā sabba,yoga,visaṃyuttam tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Having abandoned the human yoke, <sup>121</sup> he has escaped from the divine yoke, unfettered by any yoke— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>641</b> = Dh 417
49	<i>Hitvā ratiṃ ca aratiṃ sītī,bhūtaṃ nirūpadhiṃ sabba,lokābhibhuṃ vīraṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	And having abandoned lust, become cool, free from acquisitions, <sup>122</sup> who has overcome all the worlds, a hero— him do I call a brahmin.	<b>642</b> = Dh 418 [Sn 122]
50	<i>Cutiṃ yo vedi sattānaṃ upapattiṃ ca sabbaso<sup>123</sup> asattaṃ sugataṃ buddhaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i>	Whoever understands the death of beings, and their arising [rebirth] in every way, unattached, well-farer, awake <sup>124</sup> — him do I call a brahmin.	<b>643</b> = Dh 419

<sup>115</sup> Cf A 4:290.

<sup>116</sup> *Yo 'dha* (also at Sn 640a) Be Ce Ee Se so. Dh:G 20 has *yo du*. Norman, noting that *du tu*, suggests that we should prob read *ca* in the sense of “but” (Sn:N2 289 n639-40).

<sup>117</sup> Historically (such as occurring in the prose text), this should be *anagāro*: see also Sn 628b, 640b.

<sup>118</sup> Comys explain here: “He has destroyed desire, and has destroyed existence, too” (*taṃ parikkhīṇa,kāmañ c 'eva parikkhīṇa,bhavañ ca*, SnA 469,23 = DhA 4:198,15). *Kāma,bhava*, in other words, is taken as a dvandva, as *kāma* and *bhava*. Radhakrishnan (*The Dhammapada*, London, 1950:185) (and a number of others) render it as a reversed tadpurusha (“in whom all craving for existence is extinguished”), “but I do not think that this is possible” (Sn:N 289 n639).

<sup>119</sup> See Sn 639 n on *Yo 'dha* above.

<sup>120</sup> Historically (such as occurring in the prose text), this should be *anagāro*: see also Sn 628b, 639b.

<sup>121</sup> “The human yoke,” here, I follow Sn:J 249.

<sup>122</sup> “**Acquisitions**,” *upadhi*, substrates of existence, essentials of being, worldly possessions as a source of rebirth. Comy mentions 4 kinds of acquisitions: the aggregates (*khandh 'upadhi*), defilements (*kiles 'upadhi*), volitional formations (*abhisankhār 'upadhi*), and the cords of sense-pleasure (*kāma,guṇ 'upadhi*) (MA 2:112, 3:169, 5:60). It is also possible to take this as the “nirvana with remains” (*sōpadhisesa nibbāna*) (A 9.12.4/4:379; It 2.2.7/38 f; ItA 165), ie, full awakening here and now.

<sup>123</sup> *Sabbaso* (adv). The adv suffix *-so* (Skt *-śas*) modifies a verb, such as in a numerical distributive sense (Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 1889 §1106), eg *ekaso*, “one by one,” as *anekaso* (*na + eka + so*), “several times, repeatedly” (J 3:224,23); in terms of time, *thānaso*, “at once” (V 3:70,21; A 3:238,6), or relationship, *hetuso*, “as to the cause” (M 1:70,4). See Sn:N 288

<sup>124</sup> Comy glosses as “awake on account of realizing the four noble truths” (*catunnaṃ saccānaṃ buddhattāya*, SnA 470,6); also at Sn 622c above.

- 51 *Yassa gatiṃ na jānanti  
devā gandhabba,mānusā  
khīṇ'āsavaṃ arahantaṃ  
tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ* Whose destiny they know not—  
be they devas, gandharvas or humans—  
the influx-free arhat<sup>125</sup>—  
him do I call a brahmin. **644** = Dh 420
- 52 *Yassa pure ca pacchā ca  
majjhe ca n'atthi kiñcanaṃ  
akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ<sup>128</sup>  
tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ* For whom, before and after,  
and in the middle,<sup>126</sup> there is not a thing,<sup>127</sup>  
having nothing, ungrasping—  
him do I call a brahmin. **645** = Dh 421
- 53 *Usabhaṃ pavaraṃ vīraṃ<sup>129</sup>  
mahesiṃ vijitāvinaṃ  
anejaṃ nhātakaṃ<sup>130</sup> buddhaṃ  
tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ* The fore-bull, noble hero,  
great seer, conqueror,  
lust-free, washed clean, awake—  
him do I call a brahmin. **646** = Dh 422
- 54 *Pubbe'nivāsaṃ yo vedi  
sagg'āpāyaṇ'ca passati<sup>132</sup>  
atho jāti-k,khayaṃ patto* Who knows past lives [that he has lived before],<sup>131</sup>  
and sees the heavens and the hells,  
and so won birth's ending<sup>133</sup>—

<sup>125</sup> Comy glosses this line as: “One is a *khīṇ'āsava* on account of having destroyed the mental influxes,<sup>125</sup> an *arahanta* on account of being remote [far away] from defilements” (*āsavānaṃ khīṇatāya khīṇ'āsavaṃ, kilesaṃ ārakatā arahantaṃ*, SnA 470,8 f). The term *āsava* (lit “inflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsavas*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kāma'sava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhava'sava*), (3) wrong views (*dīṭṭh'āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjā'sava*) (D 16.1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91; Pm 1.442, 561; Dhs §§1096-1100; Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) or “yokes” (*yoga*). 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 arhathood. See BDict: āsava. *Kilesa* (Skt BHS *kleśa*; BHS *kileśa*) affliction, distress (J 4:252,28\*), 5:500,9\*+13, 6:589,8\*+15); that which afflicts stains; an affliction, a defilement; a defiling passion, esp sexual desire, lust (V 3:92,11; A 2:6,15\*; Tha 67). Here, *kilesa* specifically means sensual desire and related fetters (*samyojana*), which are given up by the arhat. **The 10 fetters** (*dasa samyojana*) are: (1) self-identity view, (2) spiritual doubt, (3) attachment to rituals and vows, (4) sensual lust, (5) aversion, (6) greed for form existence, (7) greed for formless existence, (8) conceit, (9) restlessness (or remorse), (10) ignorance (S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377): see **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118.10/3:80) n = SD 7.13

<sup>126</sup> Comy: “‘before’ means in past aggregates; ‘after’ means in future ones; ‘in the middle’ means in present ones” (*pure ti atīta-k,khandhesu, pacchā ti anāgatesu, majjhe ti paccuppannesu*, SnA 470,11). There are the 5 **aggregates**, viz, form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness: see SD 17. Cf story of the acrobat **Ugga,sena** (Dh 348; DhA 24.6/4:62 f).

<sup>127</sup> “Thing” or “something” *kiñcana*, which Comy glosses as “something, a formation through grasping on account of craving in those conditions of his (ie in the past, future and present)” (*kiñcanaṃ ti yassa'ettesu ṭhānesu taṇhā,gaha,sankhāraṃ kiñcanaṃ* (SnA 470,11): see Sn 620c. See foll n.

<sup>128</sup> As at Sn 620e; cf 630c.

<sup>129</sup> Ce Ee Se *vīraṃ*; Be *dhīraṃ*. *Vīra*, “hero” (m), “heroic, manly, mighty” (adj) (S 1:137; Sn 44, 165, 642, 1096, 1102; Tha 736). *Dhīra*, “wise,” from *dhī* (2) (f), “understanding, intelligence, wisdom” (J 2:140,23, 5:80,8\*; Nm 44,24). On *v/dh* alternation, see Sn:N n44.

<sup>130</sup> Also as *nahataka*: here the svarabhakti (inherent vowel) is elided mc. On *nh/nah* alternation, see Sn:N 518.

<sup>131</sup> Alt tr is from Norman, Sn:N2 ad loc.

<sup>132</sup> Here, **Dh 423** (the last verse of Dh) adds a couplet (2 lines): “One is a sage perfected in knowledge; | one who has perfected all perfections” (*abhiññā vosito muni | sabba,vosita,vosānaṃ*), but omitted here. Comy explains this 2 lines in terms of the 4 noble truths (here summarized): he has understood what is to be understood, abandoned what is to be abandoned, attained what is to be attained, and cultivated what is to be cultivated (DhA 4:233)

<sup>133</sup> This verse alludes to the Buddha's 3 **vedas**, ie the knowledges of (1) the recollection of one's own past lives (*pubbe,nivāsānussati,ñāna*); (2) the divine eye (*dibba,cakkhu*), ie knowledge of the rebirth of others, according to

*tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ*

him do I call a brahmin.

647 = Dh 423

### Human differences are merely conventional

12

55 *Samaññā h'esā lokasmim  
nāma gottam pakappitam  
sammuccā<sup>134</sup> samudāgatam<sup>135</sup>  
tattha tattha pakappitam*

For, this is only a convention in the world,  
a designation for name and clan,  
arising through common assent,  
designated here and there.

648

56 *Dīgha, rattānusayitam  
diṭṭhi, gatam ajānataṃ  
ajānantā no pabrunti  
jātiyā hoti brāhmaṇo*

For a long while latent  
is the view of the ignorant.  
The ignorant proclaim not  
that one is a brahmin by birth.

649

57 *Na jaccā brāhmaṇo hoti<sup>136</sup>  
na jaccā hoti abrāhmaṇo<sup>137</sup>  
kammunā<sup>138</sup> brāhmaṇo hoti  
kammunā hoti abrāhmaṇo*

Not by birth is one a brahmin,  
not by birth is one a non-brahmin;  
one is a brahmin by deed [karma],  
one is a non-brahmin by deed.

650

58 *Kassako kammunā hoti  
sippiko hoti kammunā  
vāṇijo kammunā hoti  
pessako hoti kammunā*

One is a farmer by deed,<sup>139</sup>  
by deed is one a craftsman,  
one is a trader by deed,  
by deed is one a servant.

651

59 *Coro 'pi kammunā hoti  
yodh'ājīvo 'pi kammunā  
yājako kammunā hoti  
rājā 'pi hoti kammunā*

One is a thief, too, by deed,  
one is a mercenary by deed, too,  
by deed is one a sacrificer,  
one is a rajah, too, by deed.

652

their karma; & (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*), ie arhathood (D 3:281; M 1:34; A 1:255, 258, 3:17, 280, 4:421). Comy explains the verse meaning as follows: “he who, having uncovered his past abodes, knows; who sees with the divine eye the heavens with its 26 planes [*Bhāvanā* = SD 15.1 Fig 8.1] and the 4 states of deprivation (ghosts, animals, asuras and the hells); and then attains arhathood that is the ending of birth—him do I call a brahmin” (*yo pubbe, nivāsam pākaṭam katvā jānāti, cha-b, bīsati, deva. loka, bhedaṃ saggam catu-b, bidham āpāyaṃ ca dibba, cakkhunā passati, atho jāti-k, khaya, saṅkhatam arahattam patto, tam ahaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ vādāmi ti attho, SnA* )

<sup>134</sup> VI *sammaccā* (ger of *sammannati*, “he assents, consents”). In *sammuccā* (ins), we have a case of the labialisation of *-a- > -u-* after *-m-*; *sammuti* (n) (common) consent, convention (Sn 897, 904, 911); BHS *samvṛti*, with an *m/v* alternation: see Dh:G(B) 181 n15 & Dh:N n100. On vowel labialisation, see Norman 1976, 1983:279, Dh:N 89 n105.

<sup>135</sup> Cf Sn 1049c.

<sup>136</sup> This line at S 1:166,7+32. Cf Sn 136, 142, for the same template with *vasalo*, “outcaste,” replaces *brāhmaṇo*; cf Dh 393.

<sup>137</sup> In lines b & c, *-br* in *abrāhmaṇo* does not make position, which suggests that an earlier version of this verse had *abhambhaṇo* (Sn:N 290 n650): see Sn 599d n above.

<sup>138</sup> Be Se so; Ce Ee *kammanā* throughout.

<sup>139</sup> Comy: They are defined by their various present volitional acts related to farming (MA 3:441,25 = SnA 17).

Karma as dependent arising13<sup>140</sup>

## [Sn 123]

- 60 *Evam etaṃ yathā, bhūtaṃ  
kammaṃ passanti paṇḍitā  
paṭicca, samuppāda, dassā  
kamma, vipāka, kovidā* So it is according to reality,  
the wise see a deed [karma],  
see dependent arising,<sup>141</sup>  
wisely knowing karma and its fruits. **653**
- 61 *Kammunā vattati loko  
kammunā vattati pajā  
kamma, nibandhanā sattā  
rathass 'āṇīva yāyato*<sup>142</sup> The world turns on karma,  
people go by their karma.  
Beings are bound by their karma  
like a linchpin to the chariot as it goes. **654**
- 62 *Tapena brahma, cariyena*<sup>143</sup>  
*saṃyamena damena ca  
etena brāhmaṇo hoti  
etaṃ brāhmaṇam*<sup>144</sup> *uttamaṃ* By austerity, by the holy life,  
by restraint, and by taming,  
in this way one becomes a brahmin—  
this is brahminhood supreme. **655 = Tha 631**<sup>145</sup>
- 63 *Tīhi vijjāhi sampanno*<sup>146</sup>  
*santo khīṇa, punabbhavo*<sup>147</sup>  
*evam vāsetṭha jānāhi  
brahmā sakko vijānatan ti* Endowed with the three knowledges,  
at peace,<sup>148</sup> with rebirth ended,  
know thus, Vāsetṭha.  
he is Brahma, Shakra, to those who know. **656**

Vāsetṭha and Bhāra, dvāja take refuge

**14** When this was spoken, the brahmin youths Vāsetṭha and Bhāra, dvāja said this to the Blessed One:

<sup>140</sup> In this section, the word *kamma* no more means only present action determining our social status, but action as determining our whole existence, ie, as dependent arising, or how we are shackled to samsara [653 f]. When we understand this and break the cycle, we are liberated [655 f].

<sup>141</sup> On dependent arising, see SD 5.16.

<sup>142</sup> *Yāyato* comes *yāyati*, “he goes,” a by-form of *yati* (Geiger 1994 §138), with in an intensive meaning of “to drive, to move on quickly or by special means,” as in *yānena yāyati*, “he drives in a chariot” (V 1:191); 3 ind pl *yāyanti* (V 1:191,18); pot *yāyeyya* (V 1:191,2), opt *yāyeta* (V 2:276,28); pres part *rathass 'āṇīva yāyato* (Sn 654); ger *yāna, bhūmiṃ yāyitvā yānā oruḥa* (Sn 418); J 6:125.

<sup>143</sup> While the first 2 verses of this section speaks of karma controlling all unawakened beings binding them to samsara, the last 2 verses refer to the arhat, fully liberated from samsara. The contrast here is no more between brahmin and non-brahmin, but between the arhat and those caught up in samsara, the awakened and the unawakened.

<sup>144</sup> Comys gloss *brāhmaṇa* here as “the state of a brahmin” (*brāhmaṇa, bhāvaṃ*, MA 3:443,12 = SnA 472,21). Tha Comy ad **Tha 631**: “When it is said, ‘Not by birth is one a brahmin (*brāhmaṇa*), etc,’ or ‘This is brahminhood (*brāhmaṇa*) supreme,’ *brāhmaṇa* means the state of a brahmin” (*brāhmaṇan ti vā brahmaṇṇam āha, evam uttamaṃ brahmaṇṇam, na jacc 'ādī ti adhippāyo*) (ThaA 2:265). This clearly refers to an arhat: see §11 (27\*-54\*) = Sn 620-647 = Dh 396-423; see also V 1:3, 2:156; Tha 140, 221; Dh 383-395. The Gāndhārī version (Dh:G 8) has *brammaṇa*, which points to the better known *brahmaṇṇa* (cf *brahmaṇṇatā*, Dh 332d). Brough (see foll n) says that BHS *brāhmaṇa* occurs with the same meaning, and its existence is confirmed by BHS *śrāmaṇa* (for the more common *śrāmaṇya*, P *sāmaṇṇa*). In other words, here *brāhmaṇa* = *brahmaṇṇa* = *sāmaṇṇa*, “recluseship”: see **Sāmaṇṇa-phala S** (D 2/1:47-86) = SD 8.10.

<sup>145</sup> *Taveṇa bramma-yiryeyṇa | saṇameṇa dameṇa ca || edena brammaṇo bhodi | eda brammaṇa utamu ||* (Dh:G(B) 170 & 179 (n8). Cf Dh:G 8.

<sup>146</sup> This line at S 1:166\*.

<sup>147</sup> P *santa* - Skt *sānta*; cf Dh:G 7 *śadu kṣina, punarbhavu* & 70 *pada śada* (P *padam santam*, Dh 368).

<sup>148</sup> Comy: “At peace” means that the defilements have been pacified (*santī ti santa, kilesa*, SnA 472,2).

“Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent, master Gotama! Just as if one  
 were to place upright what had been overturned, or  
 were to reveal what was hidden, or  
 were to show the way to one who was lost, or  
 were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,  
 in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by the master Gotama.

We go to the Blessed Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks. May the master Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge, from this day forth, for life.”

— evaṃ —

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