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Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta

The Lesser Discourse on the Elephant's Hoofprint Parable | M 27

Theme: The training for true discipleship

Translated by Piya Tan ©2008

1 Sutta summary and highlights**1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY**

1.1.1 Theme. The Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta centres around the best reason for praising the Buddha, that is, in terms of the true purpose of the spiritual life he teaches. The Sutta gives a full description of a monk's "fruits of recluseship" (*sāmañña, phala*) or the gradual training and its highest goal.¹

King Pasenadi's chaplain (*purohita*), Jāṇussoṇi, in his magnificent all-white mare-drawn chariot meets the wanderer Pilotikā Vacchāyana [§§1-2], who declares his deep faith in the Buddha's ability to inspire anyone, *whether kshatriyas, brahmins, houselords or recluses*, by his teachings, so that they do not ever think of challenging him. He calls this the Buddha's "4 footprints" (*cātu pada*), alluding to the notion that a large elephant hoofprint connotes a large elephant [§§3-7] [4].

1.1.2 An outsider's faith and attainment. Jāṇussoṇi, highly impressed, approaches the Buddha and relates to him all that Pilotikā has said [§§8-9]. The Buddha, however, rejects such praises, saying that they are misplaced since they do not reflect the best reason for praising him [§10].

Even an **outsider** (*bāhiraka*) is able to attain the 4 dhyanas [§§19-22] or the 3 knowledges [§§23-25],² and on attaining streamwinning, they automatically become "insiders," that is, noble saints or true Dharmafarers. Before that, these qualities are merely *stages* in the gradual training to fully self-awakening as arhats, which concludes the training [1.3.7]. Only full awakening itself—the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes [§26]—the very attaining of arhathood itself—is fully and uniquely Buddha Dharma.

The (Sotāpanna) Nandiya Sutta (S 55.40) is instructive here, where it effectively shows that we are all "outsiders" to the Buddha's teaching until we have at least attained streamwinning. The minimum standard of being a follower of the Buddha's teaching then is being a streamwinner. Being a Buddhist, even going to the 3 refuges with deep faith, but ever without aspiring to be a streamwinner, we are still "outsiders," still not part of the holy community of disciples. However, we are close enough, standing at the Dharma portal.³

We need to take that step through the portal: this begins, for us, with an aspiration to attain at least streamwinning in this life itself.⁴ Then, says the (Sotāpanna) Nandiya Sutta (S 55.40), we are not negligent noble disciples, but are diligent ones (*appamāda ariya, sāvaka*).⁵

1.1.3 The fruits of recluseship. The Buddha then teaches the "fruits of recluseship" (*sāmañña, phala*) sequence, that is, the 3 trainings in moral virtue, meditation and wisdom, resulting in liberation. The Buddha Dharma is present in the world [§11]. A person, hearing the Dharma, is inspired into renouncing the world [§12]. He keeps to the training in moral virtue [§13], preparing himself for mental cultivation [§§14-17], overcomes the mental hindrances [§18] and attains dhyana [§§19-22].

¹ See **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2), SD 8.10 (3) & SID: *sāmañña, phala*.

² Comy says that these dhyanas and higher knowledges are common attainments, those of outsiders (*bāhrika*), and that the attainment is still not concluded even at the point of path-attainment (MA 2:217,25-27). In other words, only with the attaining of the fruition of streamwinning (a full-fledged streamwinner) are we "insiders," part of the noble sangha (*ariya, sangha*). See §25.4 n. Here, an "outsider," might, at best, only attain the first two superknowledges, ie, those of rebirth and of karma; but the third knowledge, if attained, is only superficial and garbled. In other words, all the 3 knowledges would still be imperfect in them, and they would have wrong views (usually based on eternalism) about them: see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1,31-37), SD 25.1 (5.2) + 25.2

³ On the "outsider," see SD 47.1 (1.1.2.2).

⁴ On how to aspire to streamwinning, see esp (**Anicca**) **CakkhuS** (S 25.10), SD 16.7.

⁵ S 55.40,32-56 + SD 47.1 (1.2.2).

On account of his calm and clear dhyanic mind, he is able to attain the 3 knowledges of past-lives recollection [§23], the divine eye [§24], and cultivating wisdom, that is, gaining the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes [§25]. As a result, he is freed [§26]. Jāṇussoṇi is impressed and goes for refuge [§27].

1.2 THE TWO HATTHI,PADÔPAMA SUTTAS. There are two discourses named Hatthi,padôpama Sutta, both found in the “third chapter” (*tatiya vagga*) of the “first fifty” (*mūla,paññāsa*) of the Majjhima Nikāya, that is, the Cūḷa Hatthi,padôpama Sutta (M 27) and the Mahā Hatthi,padôpama Sutta (M 28). Where there are pairs of suttas prefixed with Mahā- and with Cūḷa-, the Mahā version is usually the longer, but not in this case. **The Cūḷa Hatthi,padôpama Sutta** (M 27), however, is longer than the Mahā Hatthi,padôpama Sutta (M 28), and also precedes it. This is also the case with **the Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** (M 63) and **the Mahā Māluṅkyā,putta Sutta** (M 64).

Even here—in the case of M 27 and M 28—where both share the same title and make use of the “elephant hoofprint parable” (*hatthi,padôpama*), their respective topics are very different.⁶ In the case of the two Gopālaka Suttas, however, the Cūḷa version (M 34) employs only one parable related to “cowherd” (*gopālaka*), while the Mahā version (M 33) presents eleven. But the two **Dhamma Samādāna Suttas** (M 45+46) share much in common.⁷

1.3 RELATED TEXTS

1.3.1 Laṅka. According to Sinhala hagiography, as recorded in the Mahāvamsa, the Cūḷa Hatthi,padôpama Sutta was the first sutta taught by Mahinda to the king of Lanka, leading to his conversion and to the early spread of Buddhism in Lanka (Mahv 14.22).

1.3.2 Chinese parallel. The Sutta has a Chinese parallel in **the Madhyama Āgama**.⁸ The Chinese version opens by saying how the wanderer Pilotikā visits the Buddha, receives a teaching, and leaves deeply inspired. On his way back, he meets the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi. M 27, however, omits this account, and begins with the meeting between the two.

1.3.3 Pilotikā’s faith. When Jāṇussoṇi asks Pilotikā about his impression of the Buddha’s wisdom,⁹ both versions [1.3.2] record Pilotikā as telling Jāṇussoṇi that he (Pilotikā) has seen how different debaters are unable to refute the Buddha in debate.¹⁰ Only M 27, however, says that these debaters also convert, and that some of them even renounce, train diligently, and gain awakening [§7.5-9].¹¹

In both versions, the wanderer Pilotikā compares his faith in the Buddha to an elephant-forester who, on seeing the large footprint of an elephant, at once concludes that its must belong to a large elephant. After that, Jāṇussoṇi visits the Buddha and recounts the whole conversation.

1.3.4 The fruits of recluship. Both the Sutta and its Chinese version [1.3.2] continue by relating how the Buddha presents the parable of the elephant’s hoofprint by elaborating on the “fruits of recluship” [1.1.3], by way of showing the parable’s full implications. Both versions’ descriptions of the stages of the gradual training closely agree, except for a few minor differences.

⁶ M 27/1:175-184 @ SD 40a.5; M 28/1:184-191 @ SD 6.16.

⁷ On the prefixes *mahā* and *cūḷa* (or *culla*) in sutta names, see **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22, M 10), SD 13.1 (2).

⁸ The parallel is MĀ 146 @t T1.656a-658a, and agrees with M 27 on Jeta’s grove as the venue. The Chin title, however, is simply 象跡喻經 *xiàng jì yù jīng*, “the discourse on the parable of the elephant’s hoofprint,” which differs from M 27 only in omitting the prefix “lesser” (*cūḷa*). On MĀ 146, see also THICH Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Agama and the Pali Majjhima Nikāya*, 1964:99 f, 206.

⁹ The opening dialogue between Pilotikā and Jāṇussoṇi parallels the one between the brahmins Piṅgiyāni and Kāraṇa,pāli in Vesālī, as recorded in **Kāraṇa,pāli S** (A 5.194/3:237,2-14) @ SD 45.11.

¹⁰ While in §2.2 (M 27,2.2/1:175,20), Pilotikā refers to the Buddha as “the recluse Gotama” (*samaṇa gotama*), at MĀ 146 @ T1.656a27 he addresses the Buddha as 世尊 *shìzūn* (*bhagavā*, “the Blessed One”), reflecting his faith in the Buddha. On 世尊, see W E Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 1937:164; A Hirakawa, *Buddhist-Chinese Dictionary*, 1997:69; J Nattier, *A Few Good Men*, 2003: 232.

¹¹ M 27/1:177,12.

The minor differences are as follows. The Chinese version, in its description of abstention from killing, also includes the killing of insects.¹² It also mentions the abstention from alcohol, which is not mentioned on M 27.¹³ The Chinese version, in its section on speech, contrasts harsh speech against gentle speech, but M 27 merely describes harsh speech.¹⁴

1.3.5 Omissions in Chinese version. Forms of conduct to be avoided that are mentioned only in the Sutta version, not in the Chinese translation, are as follows:

- accepting raw meat.
- acting as a go-between or messenger.
- buying and selling.
- cheating with scales, bronzes or measures.
- bribery, cheating and fraud.
- maiming, murdering, putting in bonds, highway robbery, dacoity [banditry] and violence.¹⁵

1.3.6 The gradual training. According to both versions, even the attainment of the four dhyanas [§§19-22], although a significant affirmation of the Buddha’s teaching, thus being a “Tathagata’s foot-

¹² MĀ 146 @ T I 657a16: “insects and bugs,” 蠅蟲 *kūn chóng*, already noted by C S Prasad, *Some Reflections on the Relations Between the Āgamas and the Nikāyas*, 1985:136; see also P Ramers, *Die ‘drei Kapitel über die Sittlichkeit im Śrāmaṇyaphala-Sūtra*, 1996:45, L Schmithausen, “Buddhism and the Ethics of Nature, Some Remarks,” 2000a: 52, 2002:13 n47. A ref to insects in defs of killing is found in V 1:97,2, in a quotation in **Dharma,skandha**, fragment 4737 folio 19v10 (S Dietz, *Fragmente des Dharmaskandha*, 1984:80,24 and T1537 @ T26.455b2, and in **Bhikṣuṇī Karma,vacana** fragment 25b1 (Dietz, op cit 1984:80 n358; C M Ridding et al, “A fragment of the Sanskrit Vinaya, Bhikṣuṇīkarmavācānā,” 1919:138,9; M Schmidt, “Bhikṣuṇī-Karmavācānā,” 1993:263,17), and in **Karma.vacana** fragment 232R (H Härtel, *Karmavācānā*, 1956:27; cf Sarvāstivāda **Upasampadā,vastu** (CHUNG Jin-il, *Das Upasampadāvastu*, 2004: 47,3. (Analayo 2011:190 n244)

¹³ MĀ 146 @ T1.657b18: 離酒, 斷酒 *lǐjiǔ duànjiǔ*. Abstention from intoxicants is often mentioned the suttas in connection with the 5 precepts, eg, D 5/1:146,20 (with its monastic counterpart in Pācittiya 51 @ V 4:110,13: Kieffer-Pülz 2005b); **Sabba,lahusa S** (A 8.40) says that those who habitually break this precept are reborn as hell-beings, animals, ghosts, or unhinged humans (A 8.40/4:248,9) @ SD 6.5. Moral restraint in the gradual path is described in **Saṅgha,bheda,vastu** (Gnoli 1978a:233) and DĀ 20 @ T1.83c27, without mentioning the taking of strong drinks. Nattier points out that variations in regard to refs to abstaining from strong drinks can occur even within a single work, such as **Mahavastu** (2003a:109 n11). In one passage in this work, a listing of the 10 courses of action (*karma,patha*), includes refraining from strong drinks, at the cost of omitting a ref to harsh speech; in another passage in the same work, the 10 courses are listed without any ref to intoxicants, cf R Basak, *Mahāvastu Avadāna*, 1963 1:126,4, 1965 2:139,12; E Senart, *Le Mahāvastu*, 1882 1:107,13, 1890 2:99,5 (on such combinations of 10 courses of action with 5 precepts, cf Nattier, “The ‘eleven precepts’ for laity in the Ugraparipṛcchā-sūtra,” 2002). The importance of abstaining from intoxicants is highlighted in **Abhidharma,kośa,bhāṣya** (Abhk), according to which such a lack of restraint endangers the other precepts, too: Abhk 4.34 in P Pradhan (ed), *Abhidharmakośa,bhāṣya*, 1967: 218,18, T1558 @ T29.77b8, and T1559 @ T29.234a22. N R Reat, 1996:49 comments that “though it is clear that the Buddha did not approve of intoxicants and drugs, abstinence from intoxicants...in the Pali sutras...is...not nearly as prominent an ethical issue as it came to be in later Buddhism” (“The historical Buddha and his teachings,” in *Ency of Indian Philosophies*, 1996:9); cf L Schmithausen, *The Problem of the Sentience of Plants in Earliest Buddhism*, 1991:8 n42. (Analayo 2011:190 n245)

¹⁴ MĀ 146 @ T1.657b1 also indicates that harsh speech is a hindrance to the cultivation of concentration; cf similar ref in the context of a gradual path (in *Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*: SHT III 808R5 p15) to harsh speech as *asamā[dh]i[sā]m[va]r[dhan]ī*. Although the “fruits of recluseship” pericope omits this particular consequence of harsh speech, it is mentioned in teachings on the 10 courses of action (*kamma,patha*), eg in **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41/1:286,37) @ SD 5.7.

¹⁵ **M 27/1:180,10** *Āmaka,māmsa,paṭiggahaṇā paṭivirato hoti*; 1:180,15 *Dūteyya,pahiṇa,gamanānuyoga paṭivirato hoti*. *Kaya,vikkayā paṭivirato hoti*. *Tulā,kūṭa,kāmsa.kuṭa,māna.kuṭa paṭivirato hoti*. *Ukkoṭana,vañcana,nikatisaci,-yogā paṭivirato hoti* [M:Se 1:343,18: *ukkoṭana,vañcana,nikatisavi,yoga...*]. *Chedana,vadha,bandhana,viparamosa,-alopa,sahas’ākarā paṭivirato hoti*. These form the last part of the “lesser moralities” (*cuḷa,sīla*) in the “fruits of recluseship” pericome, as in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,1.10/1:5) @ SD 25.2 & **Sāmañña,phala S** (M 2,45/1:64) @ SD 8.10. See also THICH Minh Chau, *The Chinese Madhyama Agama and the Pali Majjhima Nikāya*, 1964:31, 82.

print,”¹⁶ is not sufficient in themselves for inspiring faith in the Buddha as one fully awakened. While the Sutta account of the fruits of recluship culminates in the three higher knowledges [§§23-25], the Madhyama Āgama version proceeds from the attainment of the fourth dhyana directly to the destruction of the mental influxes.¹⁷ This point is noteworthy, says **Analayo**, since standard descriptions of the gradual path (the fruits of recluship) in the Pali discourses usually mention the whole set of three higher knowledges, or even the six higher knowledges¹⁸ (2011:191).

Furthermore, adds Analayo, from a practical perspective, however, to proceed from the fourth dhyana directly to the destruction of the mental influxes would be possible, as the early suttas do not consider recollection of past lives and the knowledge of the passing away and reappearing of beings according to their deeds as necessary requirements for the destruction of the mental influxes. However, here the Buddha’s audience is a brahmin, and “outsider.” As such, it fits the context well if he were to mention all of the “3 knowledges” (*te, vijjā*), as the Buddhist counterpart to the three Vedas of the brahmins.¹⁹

1.3.7 Wordplay on “conclusion”

1.3.7.1 Another difference between the two versions is that the Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta presents insight into the 4 noble truths as *the way* to reach full faith [§25.2], while the successful destruction of the mental influxes [§26] is the point at which full faith *has been reached*.²⁰ The Madhyama Āgama version does not have such a distinction, but simply treats insight into the 4 noble truths and the destruction of the mental influxes together.²¹

1.3.7.2 In the mental training and wisdom training sections of the Sutta, there is the refrain “the noble disciple does *not* come to the conclusion” (*na tv-eva tāva ariya, sāvako niṭṭhaṅgato gacchati*) that the goal has been attained. This refrain occurs for each of the passages on the 4 dhyanas [§§19-22] and the 3 knowledges [§§23-25].²² There is a wordplay here on “conclusion” (*niṭṭha*) which alludes to the parable of the Tathagata’s *footprints* as well as to the *fulfillment* of the gradual training.

1.3.7.3 The Commentary says that the noble disciple does not come to a conclusion regarding the 3 jewels on account of the dhyanas and the 3 knowledges because they are all held in common with those outside (*bāhiraka*) the Buddha’s teachings. Only when the disciple has awakened as an arhat is his training truly “concluded” (*niṭṭhaṅ, gata*). (MA 2:217,24)

1.3.7.4 According to the Commentary, Analayo points out, the finer distinction introduced at this point refers to the difference between path and fruition attainments, since at the path-moment, the noble disciple is about to reach full faith, whereas with the fruition-moment of full awakening he has completely done so (MA 2:217,24). Yet, according to the standard commentarial explanation, at the path-moment the noble disciple has already destroyed the defilements.²³

¹⁶ M 27/1:181,29 and MĀ 146/T1:657c23: *tathāgata, pada* 如來所行 *rúlái suǒxíng*.

¹⁷ M 27/1:182,19 and MĀ 146/T1:658a11.

¹⁸ On the 3 knowledges, see **Te, vijja S** (D 13), SD 1.8 (2.2).

¹⁹ In **Ti, kaṇṇa S** (A 3.58/1:163,6), a brahmin proposes *te, vijjā* to be knowledge of the 3 Vedas, which the Buddha rejects, replying that they are really the 3 direct knowledges (*vijjā*) that make one a “three-knowledge brahmin” (*eta- hi tīhi vijjahi, tevijjo hoti brahmaṇo*, A 3:58/1:165,31). Cf Comy where the brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha takes the word “knowledge” (*vijjā*) on its own to refer to knowledge of the 3 Vedas (*vijjā nāma tayo vedā*) (DA 1:267,30). For a modern interpretation of the 3 knowledges, see Bucknell, “The ‘three knowledges’ of Buddhism,” 1983. (Analayo 2011:192 n250)

²⁰ M 27 indicates that with insight into the 4 noble truths in relation to *dukkha* and in relation to the mental influxes, the noble disciple has not yet reached complete faith, but is in the process of doing so, *na tv-eva tava ariya, sava- ko niṭṭham gato hoti, api ca kho niṭṭham gacchati* (M 27.25/1:183,34), whereas once the 3 mental influxes are eradicated, he has reached complete faith, M 27/1:184,6: *niṭṭhaṅgato hoti* (here and above foll M:Se 1:348,3); Be Ce Ee *niṭṭham gato hoti*. (Analayo 2011:192 n251)

²¹ MĀ 146 @ T1.658a19.

²² See §25.4 n.

²³ For the case of streamwinning, see DhsA 234,2; Vism 22.14/675,4.

Thus, the commentarial explanation does not seem to really fit the passage it purports to explain, as in the Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta, where the mental influxes are said to be destroyed only at the point that the commentary regards as the arhat's fruition moment. (2011:192)

1.3.8 Jānussoni takes refuge. Both the Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta and its parallel conclude in the same way by reporting that the brahmin Jānussoni is inspired by the Buddha's teaching and takes refuge. There is, however, an interesting difference. The Chinese version reports that when Jānussoni takes refuge as a lay disciple, he does not address the Buddha by his name Gotama (瞿曇 *qútán*, MĀ 146 @ T1.-658a22), but uses the honorific "Blessed One" or "Lord" (世尊 *shìzūn*, MĀ 146 @ T1.658a23).

In the Sutta (M 27), however, he continues to address the Buddha by name even after taking refuge. This is the brahmins' habit, as recorded in other Majjhima suttas, where they address the Buddha as "master Gotama" (*bho gotama*) even when they have taken refuge as lay disciples.²⁴ The way that the brahmin Jānussoni here [§27] addresses the Buddha shows that he has not yet become a disciple.²⁵

1.3.9 The best candidates for renunciation? In the Cūḷa Assa, pura Sutta (M 39) any caste member—kshatriya (noble), brahmin (priest), vaishya (business) and shudra (worker)—is regarded as suitable for recluship.²⁶ In the commentary on the Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta, however, an attempt is made to show that the householders (*gaha, pati*) are the best candidates for the holy life [§12.1], as the kshatriyas are taken up by conceit on account of their class and the brahmins harbour conceit on account of mantra (Vedic) learning (MA 2:204).

It should be firstly noted here that in the Sutta itself, only the "wise recluses" (*samaṇa, paṇḍita*) are said to have renounced the world after being convinced by the Buddha. This is understandable because they are already renunciants (*pabbajita*) in their own right. Joining the Buddhist monastic community is therefore a natural progression. From other suttas (such as M 39), we know that many other monastics come from a cross-section of Indian society. This openness and egalitarianism of the early sangha is famously mentioned in the parable of the great ocean, found in **the Vinaya** (V 2:237-240), **the Pahārāda Sutta** (A 8.19) and **the Uposatha Sutta** (U 5.5).²⁷

The commentarial statement here surely reflects the social conditions of its own time, that is, the first 5 after-centuries, leading up to the time of the Commentaries and commentators such as Buddhaghosa. These were clearly times when the brahmins had regained their social influence—the kshatriyas were less powerful despite the rise of Indian empires; the vaishyas were too busy with their business; the menial shudras would probably not be well respected as monastic members where Buddhists were more status-conscious. The householders (*gaha, pati*) had real estate and assets, and as such, some "homeliness" (*agāriya*)²⁸ to renounce, and would be regarded as having made a great sacrifice in joining the monastic community. We see familiar echoes here in some traditional attitudes towards monastics and monasticism in our own times!

2 Pilotikā

The Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta opens with the brahmin Jānussoni meeting the wanderer (*paribbājaka*) Pilotikā. Jānussoni addresses the wanderer as Vacchāyana (Skt Vātsyāyana), his gotra name, and the Sutta give his personal name as Pilotikā. The Commentary confirms that his name is Pilotikā, that is, in the feminine gender. He is a young man, his skin has a golden colour, and he loves ministering to the Buddha and his eminent disciples (MA 2:195).

²⁴ M 27/1:184,11; also M 30/1:205,4, 60/1:413,21, 93/2:157,18, 95/2:177,11, 96/2:184,21, 99/2:208,10, 100/2:-213,9, 107/3:7,2, 135/3:206,26.

²⁵ On Jānussoni's refuge-taking, see SD 44.3 (2.3).

²⁶ M 39.13/1:283 f @ SD 41.8.

²⁷ Cv 9.1.3-4 = V 2:237-240 = A 9.19/4:198-204 = U 5.5/53-56. See **Vāsetṭha S** (M 98), SD 37.1 (1.3.5).

²⁸ DA 1:180; MA 1:111 = 180 = 2:205 = SA 2:180 = AA 3:187 = UA 309 = ItA 2:73 = VA 1:203 = PugA 235; MA 1:180 = SnA 1:157 = UA 174; ThaA 1:126.

As a wise wanderer (*paṇḍita paribbājaka*) and wise recluse (*samaṇa, paṇḍita*), he is mentioned together with Sabhiya²⁹ (SA 2:258). Pilotikā is identified with Dev'inda, a brahmin minister of king Vedeha, in the Mahā Ummagga Jātaka (J 546/6:478).

In the Cūḷa Hatthi, padōpama Sutta, Pilotikā expresses his deep admiration and faith in the Buddha as someone who is able to beat anyone, even wise kshatriyas, brahmins, house lords and recluses. He is convinced of the Buddha's awakening and genius just as a skilled elephant-forester, seeing a large hoofprint, would deduce that it is that of a large bull elephant [§§3-7].

His exuberant faith in the Buddha impresses the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi, who then recounts the conversation to the Buddha. Apparently, Pilotikā is not present during the teachings, as only Jāṇussoṇi is mentioned as benefitting from them. We might see Pilotikā as an example of someone from the masses, an outsider, who shows faith in the Buddha.

3 Jāṇussoṇi

Early in his morning chariot drive, Jāṇussoṇi meets the wanderer Pilotikā, whose faith in the Buddha impresses him. He visits the Buddha and reports his conversation with Pilotikā. The Buddha tells him it would be a mistake to conclude at once from seeing a large hoofprint that it belongs to a very large bull elephant. There are many other elephants, including cow-elephants, that have large hoofs.

The Buddha goes on to describe the training of a true recluse in accordance with the well known "fruits of recluseship" formula. He highlights the attainment of 4 dhyanas, the 3 knowledges and arhat-hood, as "the Tathagata's footprints." Jāṇussoṇi is impressed and goes for refuge.³⁰

4 Hoofprint parables and footprint similes

4.1 TWO SETS OF PARABLES. The Cūḷa Hatthi, padōpama Sutta gives two sets of parables: the 4 kinds of elephant's hoofprints and the 8 footprints of the Tathagata. The elephant's hoofprint parable is given by the wise wanderer **Pilotikā** illustrating how a skilled elephant-forester is able to deduce a large bull elephant from the hoofprints he sees. The four large hoofprints represent the Buddha's teaching skill in convincing his audience of kshatriyas, brahmins, house lords and recluses, which effectively covers all the educated sector of Indian society then.

The Buddha rejects Pilotikā's praises and devotion as being mundane, reflecting only what the world sees as being admirable in a teacher, that is, debating skills and oratory. Furthermore, anyone, even an outsider could master these skills, which after all do not lead to self-awakening, personal development, or even any deep wisdom.

The Buddha presents his own complete set of the Tathagata's footprints, that is, the gradual training, famously known as **the "fruits of recluseship"** (*sāmañña, phala*). This is the 3 trainings in moral virtue, mental stillness and wisdom.³¹ The "Tathagata's footprints," however, specifically refers to the 4 dhyanas [§§19-22], the 3 knowledges [§§23-25] and the attaining of liberation through arhat-hood [§26]. In short, while Pilotikā admires the Buddha for what might be said to be his *social and didactic skills*, the Buddha declares that his forte is mental cultivation ending in full self-awakening.

4.2 THE FRUITS OF RECLUSESHP AS A GRADUAL PATH. Like the first 13 suttas of the Dīgha Nikāya, the Cūḷa Hatthi, padōpama Sutta contains the "fruits of recluseship" (*sāmañña, phala*) formula. In simple terms, this forms the steps of the gradual training.³² The Sutta presents a basic formula of the fruits of recluseship, where the formula sees its most elaborate canonical formulation in the 7 stages of purity (*satta, visuddhi*) in **the Ratha Vinīta Sutta** (M 24).³³

²⁹ See **Sabhiya S** (Sn 3.6/510-547/p91-102).

³⁰ On Jāṇussoṇi, see SD 44.3 (2).

³¹ On the 3 trainings, see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

³² See **The gradual way**, SD 56.1.

³³ The 7 purifications are those of moral virtue (*sīla, visuddhi*), of the mind (*citta, visuddhi*), of views (*diṭṭhi, visuddhi*), of overcoming doubt (*kaṅkhā, vitarāṇa, visuddhi*), by knowledge and vision of the path and the not-path (*magg-*

Both formulas—those of the Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta and the Ratha Vināta Sutta—are based on the 3 trainings (*ti, sikkhā*)—but while the former is an early teaching on the gradual way, the latter is more developed in doctrinal terms, identifying almost every stage of spiritual liberation in terms of sainthood.

The key similarity between the two formulas, which is vital for our own spiritual training, is not only that of gradual progress, but of a dependent arising of one development stage leading to another. The Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta shows that while the various stages of training in moral virtue, mental stillness and wisdom lay the foundation for spiritual liberation, but none of them is the final goal. The journey is *not* the destination. The true goal of the Buddha’s teaching is *neither* Bodhisattvahood *nor* Buddhahood (as claimed by the Mahāyāna), but clearly is that of full self-awakening itself, that is, **arhathood**.

The training for arhathood is a salient feature of monastic training, which demands a total dedication to moral purity and mental clarity, leading to mastery of the dhyanas, so that the mind is fully purified. On account of such an emphasis and the simplicity of its gradual path formula, the Cūḷa Hatthi, padopama Sutta is clearly an early text.

Even if arhathood is quite beyond the range of an average lay practitioner, the spirit of the Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta is clear. All Dharma teachings and trainings are stages in the path to awakening. They should neither be idealized nor idolized—we are reminded of this in the parable of the watersnake. The Dharma should be taken as steps of training in the spirit of the parable of the raft.³⁴

The Lesser Discourse on the Elephant’s Hoofprint Parable

M 27

1 [175] Thus have I heard.

Jāṇussoṇi meets Pilotikā

2 At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha, piṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove, near Sāvattthī.

2.2 Now at that time, the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi was leaving Sāvattthī in the bright of day [at noon], in an all-white mare-drawn chariot.³⁵

2.3 The brahmin Jāṇussoṇi saw the wanderer Pilotikā coming from afar. When he saw the wanderer Pilotikā,³⁶ he said this to him:

āmagga, ñāṇa, dassana, visuddhi), by knowledge and vision of the way (*paṭipadā, ñāṇa, dassana, visuddhi*), and of knowledge and vision (*ñāṇa, dassana, visuddhi*): M 24/145-151 @ SD 28.3.

³⁴ See **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22/1:130-142) @ SD 3.13: the parables of the watersnake [§11], and of the raft [§§12-14].

³⁵ *Tena kho pana samayena Jāṇussoṇi brāhmaṇo sabba, setena vaḷavābhi, rathena [Be Se; Ce Ee vaḷabhī, rathena] sāvattthiyā niyyāti divā divassa*. Comy glosses *divā divassa* as “at noon time” (*majjhaṇha, kāle*, MĀ 2:195,17). Jāṇussoṇi appears in a similar way at the *end* of (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99) where he meets the brahmin youth Subha, and questions him in the same way (M 99,30-31/2:208 f) @ SD 38.6. The most detailed description of **Jāṇussoṇi in his chariot**, however, is given in (**Ariya, magga**) **Brāhmaṇa S** (S 45.4), where Ānanda, on his early morning almsround meets him, and the brahmin sings praises of the noble eightfold path (S 45.4,3/5:4,21) @ SD 65.15. Comy says that every 6 months, Jāṇussoṇi rides in a sunwise procession (*padakkhiṇa*) around the city in his chariot, decorated with plantain plants and flags, and he would strew 5 kinds of flowers all over town permeating it with fragrance, thus displaying his glory and merits (SA 3:119). Comy on M 27 quotes S 45.4, and adds that the chariot is drawn “by 4 pure-white mares” (*sakala, setena catuhi vālavāhi yutta, rathena*, MĀ 2:194).

³⁶ On **Pilotikā** and his name, see Intro (2).

“Now, master Vacchāyana,³⁷ where have you come from in the bright of day?”
 “I’ve come, sir, from the presence of the recluse Gotama.”

Pilotikā’s high regard for the Buddha

2.4 “What do you think, master Vacchāyana, of the recluse Gotama’s clarity of wisdom?³⁸ Do you think he is wise?”³⁹

“But who am I, sir, that I would know the recluse Gotama’s clarity of wisdom?”⁴⁰

Indeed, one must surely have to be the recluse Gotama’s equal, too, to know his clarity of wisdom!”⁴¹

2.5 “Truly master Vacchāyana praises the recluse Gotama with high praises!”⁴²

“Who am I, sir, to praise the recluse Gotama?”

Surely, master Gotama is praised by the praised⁴³ as the best amongst devas and humans.”⁴⁴

2.6 “But, what reason [benefit] does master Vacchāyana see that he is so deeply devoted to the recluse Gotama?”⁴⁵

PILOTIKĀ’S THUNDER⁴⁶

The skilled elephant-forester

3 “Suppose, sir, a skilled elephant-forester,⁴⁷ were to enter an elephant-forest and were to see in the elephant-forest, [176] a great elephant hoofprint, long and wide.⁴⁸

He would come to the conclusion, sir,⁴⁹ ‘What a great bull elephant this is!’⁵⁰

³⁷ Jāṇussoṇi addresses Pilotikā politely by his clan or gotra (*gotta*) name of Vacchāyana (Skt Vātsyāyana) (MA 2:195): see Intro (2).

³⁸ “Clarity of wisdom,” *paññā,veyyattiyam*, alt tr “lucidity of wisdom”; as at **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12), where the Buddha tells Sāriputta that “even if you have to carry me about on a litter, still there will be no change in the Tathagata’s clarity of wisdom” (M 12,62/1:82) @ SD 49.1; also at SD 1.13.

³⁹ This whole line: *Tam kim maññasi, bhavaṃ bhāra,dvājo samaṇassa gotamassa paññā’veyyattiyam paṇḍito maññe’ti?* This whole section [§2.4-2.6] is also in the conversation btw the brahmins Piṅgiyānī and Kāraṇa,pālī in **Kāraṇa,pālī S** (A 5.194/3:236-239 @ SD 45.11).

⁴⁰ *Ko cāhaṃ, bho, ko ca samaṇassa gotamassa paññā,veyyattiyam jānissāmi?* This remark and his foll one are the same as those he utters to Subha in (**Brahma,vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99,30.2+3/2:208 f), SD 38.6.

⁴¹ *So’pi nūn’assa tādiso’va yo samaṇassa gotamassa paññā,veyyattiyam jāneyyāti.*

⁴² This remark and his previous one are the same as those he utters to Subha in (**Brahma,vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99,30.2+3/2:208 f), SD 38.6.

⁴³ Comy lists “the praised” (*pasattha*) the foll: rajah Pasenadi (praised by the people of Kāsi-Kosala), Bimbisāra (praised by those of Aṅga-Magadha), the Licchavis of Vesālī (praised by the Vajjīs), the Mallas of Pāvā and of Kusinārā (praised by the kshatriyas in their respective districts), brahmins such as Caṅkī (praised by other brahmins), laymen-disciples (*upāsaka*) such as Anātha,piṇḍika (praised by other laymen disciples), laywomen disciples such as Visākhā (praised by other laywomen disciples), wanderers such as Sakul’udāyi (praised by many other wanderers), nuns such as Uppala,vaṇṇā (praised by other nuns), great elders such as Sāriputta (praised by many hundreds of other monks), devas like Sakka (praised by many thousands of other devas), brahmas such as Mahā,brahmā (praised by many thousands of other brahmas), and they all praise the Buddha, the one with the ten powers (*dasa,bala*) (MA 2:196 f).

⁴⁴ *Pasattha,pasattho’va so [Ee ca so] bhavaṃ gotamo seṭṭho deva,manussānaṃ.*

⁴⁵ *Kaṃ pana bhavaṃ vacchāyano attha,vasaṃ sampassamāno samaṇe gotame evaṃ abhippasanno’ti?*

⁴⁶ **Pilotikā gajjita*, a name I thought fitting for his effusive faith in the Buddha, although he is not a monk. Cf “Doṇa’s Thunder” (*doṇa,gajjita*), a poem that Doṇa recites from a hill-top to quell the uneasy gathering of kings and other claimants to the Buddha’s relics (DA 2:207 f): see (**Pāda**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36), SD 36.13 (2.2).

⁴⁷ “Elephant-forester,” *nāga,vanika*. The Comy defines him as “a man who dwells in an elephant-forest skilled in the art of maintaining it” (*nāga,vaniko’ti nāga,vana,vāsiko anuggahita,sippo puriso. Parato pana uggahita,sippo puriso nāga,vanikoti āgato*, MA 2:197). The Comy on **Danta,bhūmi S** (M 125/3:132), quoting M 27, and says that he is a man who wanders in the elephant-forest (*nāga,vana,carako puriso*), skilled in trapping elephants and training them (*hatthi,sikkhāya kusalo hatthim gahetuṃ samattho*) (MA 4:198).

⁴⁸ *Dīghato ca āyatam, tiriyaṇ ca vitthatam*, lit “long in extent, and wide across.”

- 3.2 Even so, sir, when I saw **the 4 footprints of the Blessed One**, I came to the conclusion,
 the Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one; *sammā,sambuddho bhagavā*
 the Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One; *svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo*
 the community of disciples is well-practised
 [good in conduct]. *suppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho*
- 3.3 What are the four?

THE 4 FOOTPRINTS OF THE BUDDHA

The Buddha's first footprint (Pilotikā)

4 (1) Here, sir, I see some **kshatriyas** [nobles, *khattiya*], intelligent, subtle, experienced in debate, who go about hair-splitting, it seems, tearing apart the views of others with their gathered wisdom.⁵¹

4.2 They hear thus: ‘Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama will be arriving in such and such a village or market-town.’

They come up with questions,⁵² thinking, ‘We will approach the recluse Gotama and question him.’
 If we question him this way, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus.

And if we question him that way, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus, too.

4.3 They hear thus: ‘Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama has arrived in such and such a village or market-town.’

They approach the recluse Gotama.

The recluse Gotama instructs, inspires, rouses and gladdens them with a Dharma talk.⁵³

4.4 They, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened by the recluse Gotama's Dharma talk, indeed, do *not* ask the recluse Gotama any question—how would they ever refute his doctrine?

4.5 In fact, they become disciples of the recluse Gotama.⁵⁴

4.6 When I, sir, saw this first footprint of the recluse Gotama, I came to the conclusion, thus:

the Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one;
the Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One;
the community of disciples is well-practised.

⁴⁹ This voc is from the foll utterance: *mahā vata bho nāgo 'ti*. I have tr it as Pilotikā's addressing Jāṇussoṇi rather than as part of the elephant-forester's soliloquy, which is equally acceptable reading, too.

⁵⁰ *Mahā vata bho nāgo 'ti*. *Nāga* here usu refers to the leading bull elephant, either of its tribe or in a battle troop: see eg Dh 320.

⁵¹ ...*paṇḍite nipuṇe kata,para-p,pavāde vāla,vedhi,rūpe, te bhindantā* [Ce Ee, *vobhindantā*] *maññe caranti paññā,gatena diṭṭhi,gatāni*. This whole section [§4] as at **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89.17/2:122) @ SD 64.10. This same passage [§4.1] is more commonly expressed as *paṇḍitā nipuṇā kata,para-p,pavādā vāla,vedhi,rūpā, te bhindantā* [Ce Ee, *vobhindantā*] *maññe caranti paññā,gatena diṭṭhi,gatāni* (often said of “recluses and brahmins”): **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1.64/1:26,24) @ SD 25.2; **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (D 8.4/1:162,20) @ SD 73.12; Nm 1:180, 2:358, 452; Nc:Be 176; Pm 2:196, 2:203. Comy explains *vāla,vedhi,rūpa* and *te bhindantā maññe* (D 1:26,24, 162,20; M 1:176,28, 2:122,22) as: “**Hair-splitting** means like an archer trying to pierce with a horse-hair. **It seems, tearing apart** means one goes about using one's gathered wisdom demolishing the views of others striking at them as if they were horse-hair” (*vāla,vedhi,rūpā 'ti vāla,vedhi,dhan'uggaha,sadisā. Te bhindantā maññe 'ti vāla,vedhi viya vālam sukhumāni pi paresam diṭṭhi,gatāni attano paññā,gatena bhindantā viya carantīti attho*, DA 1:117).

⁵² *Pañham* (sg), but the context demands a plural rendition.

⁵³ *Te samaṇo gotamo dhammiyā kathāya sandasseti samādapeti samuttejeti sampahamseti*. See V 1:18; D 1:126, 149, 2:86, 98, 109, 110, 127, 3:27, 209; M 1:209, 354, 2:139, 3:155; S 2:215, 3:95, 4:183, 5:155; A 3:380, 4:67, 118, 307×2, 5:122, 125; U 39, 82, 87. On the stages of teaching, see **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122), SD 11.4 (4.3).

⁵⁴ *Aññad-atthu samanass 'eva gotamassa sāvakā sampajjanti*.

The Buddha's second footprint (Pilotikā)

5 (2) Furthermore, here, sir, I see some **brahmīns** (*brāhmaṇa*), intelligent, subtle, experienced in debate, who go about, hair-splitting, it seems, tearing apart the views of others with their gathered wisdom.

5.2 They hear thus: 'Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama will be arriving in such and such a village or market-town.'

They come up with questions, thinking, 'We will approach the recluse Gotama and question him.'

If we question him this way, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus.

And if we question him that way, too, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus, too.

5.3 They hear thus: 'Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama has arrived in such and such a village or market-town.'

They approach the recluse Gotama.

The recluse Gotama instructs, inspires, rouses and gladdens them with a Dharma talk.

5.4 They, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened by the recluse Gotama's Dharma talk, indeed, do not ask the recluse Gotama any question—how would they ever refute his doctrine?

5.5 In fact, they become disciples of the recluse Gotama.

5.6 When I, sir, saw this second footprint of the recluse Gotama, I came to the conclusion, thus:

the Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one;

the Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One;

the community of disciples is well-practised.

The Buddha's third footprint (Pilotikā)

6 (3) Furthermore, here, sir, I see some **houselords** (*gaha,pati*), intelligent, subtle, experienced in debate, who go about, hair-splitting, it seems, tearing apart the views of others with their gathered wisdom.

6.2 They hear thus: 'Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama will be arriving in such and such [177] a village or market-town.'

They come up with questions, thinking, 'We will approach the recluse Gotama and question him.'

If we question him this way, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus.

And if we question him that way, too, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus, too.

6.3 They hear thus: 'Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama has arrived in such and such a village or market-town.'

They approach the recluse Gotama.

The recluse Gotama instructs, inspires, rouses and gladdens them with a Dharma talk.

6.4 They, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened by the recluse Gotama's Dharma talk, indeed, do not ask the recluse Gotama any question—how would they ever refute his doctrine?

6.5 In fact, they become disciples of the recluse Gotama.

6.6 When I, sir, saw this third footprint of the recluse Gotama, I came to the conclusion, thus:

the Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one;

the Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One;

the community of disciples is well-practised.

The Buddha's fourth footprint (Pilotikā)

7 (4) Furthermore, here, sir, I see some **recluses** (*samaṇa*), intelligent, subtle, experienced in debate, who go about, hair-splitting, it seems, tearing apart the views of others with their gathered wisdom.

7.2 They hear thus: 'Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama will be arriving in such and such a village or market-town.'

They come up with a question, thinking, 'We will approach the recluse Gotama and question him.'

If we question him this way, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus.

And if we question him that way, too, he will answer thus, and we will refute his doctrine thus, too.

7.3 They hear thus: ‘Sirs, I hear that the recluse Gotama has arrived in such and such [177] a village or market-town.’

They approach the recluse Gotama.

The recluse Gotama instructs, inspires, rouses and gladdens them with a Dharma talk.

7.4 They, having been instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened by the recluse Gotama’s Dharma talk, indeed, do not ask the recluse Gotama any question—how would they ever refute his doctrine?

7.5 In fact, they request the recluse Gotama to grant them leave to go forth from the household life into homelessness.

7.6 The Blessed One has them admitted as renunciants.⁵⁵

7.7 THE RIGHT GOING-FORTH PERICOPE.⁵⁶ Then, not very long after having gone forth, they, dwelling alone,⁵⁷ aloof, diligent, exertive, and resolute,⁵⁸

in no long time at all, right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge, attained and dwelled in the supreme goal of the holy life,

for the sake of which sons of family⁵⁹ rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

7.8 They said thus: ‘Sirs, we truly were nearly lost! Sirs, we indeed nearly perished!⁶⁰

For, before, we were *not* recluses, but we claimed to being recluses!⁶¹ We were *not* celibates [brahmacharis], but we claimed to being celibates! We were *not* arhats, but we claimed to being arhats!

7.9 Now we *are* indeed recluses! Now we *are* indeed brahmacharis! Now we *are* indeed arhats!’

7.10 When I, sir, saw this fourth footprint of the recluse Gotama, I came to the conclusion, thus:

the Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one;

the Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One;

the community of disciples is well-practised.

7.11 As such, sir, when I saw **the 4 footprints of the Blessed One**, I came to the conclusion,

The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.

The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.

The community of disciples is well-practised.”

JĀṄUSSOṆĪ

Jāṅussoṇi’s faith

8 When this was said, the brahmin Jāṅussoṇī descended from his all-white mare-drawn chariot, arranged his robe to one side, and putting his palms together in the Blessed One’s direction, uttered this inspired words (*udāna*) thrice:

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa

*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassāti.*⁶²

⁵⁵ *Te samaṇo gotamo pabbājeti.*

⁵⁶ See SD 7.14 (56.4).

⁵⁷ “Alone,” Ee *eke* (preferred); Ce *eko*; Be Se omit.

⁵⁸ *Eke vūpakaṭṭhā appamattā ātāpino pahit’attā viharantā* (pl). This is stock: V 2:258; M 1:177; A 2:258, 3:218; U 24. The first word, “alone” (*eka*) refers to bodily aloneness and physical solitude; “aloof” (*vūpakaṭṭha*) is mental solitude; often this word alone refers to a practitioner’s effort to rid the mind of sensual thoughts (M 36/1:246f = 85-/2:93); “exertive” (*āṭāpī*) is putting forth both physical and effort; “resolute” (*pahit’atta*), “mentally resolute” by absence of longing regarding the body or life itself (MA 1:180). Also as *ekā vūpakaṭṭhā appamattā ātāpino pahit’attā vihareyya* (V 2:258; A 3:218 (Ke Se *ekeka*...), 4:280). Sometimes the initial *eka* is omitted in the pericope.

⁵⁹ *Kula,puttā* are of 2 kinds: those who are born so (*jāti kula,putta*), and those who are so by conduct (*ācāra kula,putta*). Either the second (which is all inclusive) is meant (DA 2:363), or both is meant (MA 1:180).

⁶⁰ *Manam vata bho anassāma, manam vata bho pan’assāma*. On *manam*, see PED sv (519).

⁶¹ *Mayañ hi pubbe assamaṇā’va samānā samaṇ’amhā’ti paṭijānimha. Paṭijānimha* (p 3 pl), M 27,7.7/1:777,21+22 +23. The whole sub-section as at **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89,17/2:123,20+21+22) @ SD 64.10.

“Homage to him the Blessed One, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one!
Homage to him the Blessed One, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one!
Homage to him the Blessed One, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one!

8.2 Perhaps, sometime or other, we, too, [178] would meet the master Gotama. Perhaps, we, too, would have some conversation with him!”⁶³

Jāṇussoṇi approaches the Buddha

9 Then the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi approached the Blessed One, and exchanged greetings with the Blessed One. When the cordial and friendly greetings were concluded, he sat down at one side.

9.2 Sitting thus at one side, the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi related to the Blessed One the whole conversation that he had had with the wanderer Pilotikā right up to that time.⁶⁴

9.3 When this was said, the Blessed One said this to the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi:

“Now, brahmin, to that extent, the parable of the elephant’s hoofprint is neither fully detailed nor complete.

10 And, brahmin, as regards how the parable of the elephant’s hoofprint is fully detailed and complete listen now to it, brahmin, pay close attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi replied to the Blessed One in assent.

THE FULL PARABLE OF THE ELEPHANT’S HOOFPRIENT

4 kinds of hoofprints

10.2 The Blessed One said this:

“Suppose, brahmin, a skilled elephant-forester, were to enter an elephant-forest and were to see in the elephant-forest, a great elephant hoofprint, long and wide. [§3.2]

10.3 (1)⁶⁵ However, as a skilled elephant-forester, he would *not* come to the conclusion, ‘Sir, what a great bull elephant this is!’

Why is that? For, brahmin, there are in the elephant-forest cow-elephants called **Vāmanikā** [“she-dwarfs”]⁶⁶ that have large hoofs—the hoofprint could belong to any of them.⁶⁷

10.4 He follows the hoofprints, and then sees in the elephant-forest (another) hoofprint, long and wide—and grazing signs on high (in the trees).⁶⁸

10.5 (2) However, as a skilled elephant-forester, he would *not* come to the conclusion, ‘Sir, what a great bull elephant this is!’

Why is that? For, brahmin, there are in the elephant-forest cow-elephants called **Uccā Kālārikā** [“the tall prong-tuskers (cow-elephants)”]⁶⁹ that have large hoofs—the hoofprint could belong to any of them.

⁶² For another, even more famous, public utterance of this verse, see the brahminee Dhanañjanī in **(Deva) Saṅgā-rava S** (M 100,2) + SD 10.9 (1.2) & **Dhanañjanī S** (S 7.1,3), SD 45.5.

⁶³ It is possible that this remark would lead to Jāṇussoṇi’s first meeting with the Buddha: see SD 44.3 (2.3).

⁶⁴ *Ekam-antaṃ nisinno kho jāṇussoṇi brāhmaṇo yāvatako ahoṣi pilotikena paribbājakena saddhiṃ kathā, sallāpo taṃ sabbam bhagavato ārocesi.*

⁶⁵ This internal sequence (1-4), according to the Buddha, refers to Pilotikā’s 4 “hoofprints.”

⁶⁶ *Vāmanikā* (ts), female dwarf. Comy: “A cow-elephant with a large belly, short in height and length (*rassā, āyāmato pi na dīgha, mahā, kucchi, hatthiniyo*, MA 2:198,31).

⁶⁷ *Santi hi, brāhmaṇa, nāga, vane vāmanikā nāma hatthiniyo mahā, padā, tāsam p’etaṃ padaṃ assāti.*

⁶⁸ “Signs of grazing on high (branches),” *uccā ca nisevitam* (a free tr); *uccā* (ts); cf Skt *niviṣṭa*, “turned to, intent upon, resorting to.” *Nivesita* lit means “having dwelt; dwelling.” Tr follows Comy which says that he sees where its shoulders have knocked against the trees, etc (MA 2:198,32). Alt tr: “resorting to the green on high.”

⁶⁹ “Tall cow prong-tuskers,” *uccā kālārikā* (or *kaḷārikā*); *ucca* (ts); cf Skt *kaḷara*, “having a gaping mouth and protruding teeth” (SED). Comy says that they have prong-like tusks, one high and one low (*uccā ca...kaḷārikā ca dantānam kaḷāratāya, tāsam kira eko danto unnato hoti, eko onato*, MA 2:198,34).

10.6 He follows the hoofprints, and then sees in the elephant-forest (another) hoofprint, long and wide—and grazing marks on high (branches), and tusk-scrappings on high.⁷⁰

10.7 (3) However, as a skilled elephant-forester, he would *not* come to the conclusion, ‘Sir, what a great bull elephant this is!’

Why is that? For, brahmin, there are in the elephant-forest cow-elephants called **Uccā Kaṇerukā** [“the tall bud-tuskers (cow-elephants)”]⁷¹ that have large hoofs—the hoofprint could belong to any of them.

10.8 (4) He follows the hoofprints, and then sees in the elephant-forest (another) hoofprint, long and wide—and grazing signs on high (in the trees), tusk-scrappings on high, and high branches that are broken.⁷²

10.9 He follows the hoofprints, and following them, he sees in the elephant-forest a large hoofprint, long and wide. And he sees that bull elephant walking about, or standing, or sitting, or reclining, at the foot of a tree, or in the open air.⁷³

He comes to conclusion, ‘*This* is indeed that great bull elephant!’

Presence of the Dharma⁷⁴

11 ⁷⁵Even so [179], brahmin, there arises here in the world the Tathagata [the Buddha thus come], an arhat, fully self-awakened one, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, well-farer [Sugata], knower of worlds, unexcelled trainer of tamable persons, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.⁷⁶

11.2 Having realized by his own direct knowledge, this world with its gods, its Mara [tempters] and its Brahma [high god], this generation, with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers⁷⁷ and people, he makes it known to others.

11.3 He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, endowed with meaning and phrasing. He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

12 A houselord or a houselord’s son, hearing the Dharma, gains faith⁷⁸ in the Tathagata and reflects thus:

⁷⁰ “Tusk-scrappings on high,” *uccā ca dantehi ārañjitāni*. Comy says that an elephant 7-8 cubits high (*satt’atṭha,-ratan’ubbedhe*) (about 9-10 ft or 2.75-3 m tall) would scrap at the trunk of banyan and other trees with its tusks (MA 2:199,1). On the cubit and other measurements, see **Juṇhā S** (U 4.4.4/40) nn @ SD 24.9.

⁷¹ *Uccā kaṇerukā*, “tall cow bud-tuskers.” Comy says that they are young cow-elephants with tusks like flower-buds (*kaṇerukā*) (MA 2:199,3).

⁷² “High branches that are broken,” *uccā ca sākā, bhaṅgaṃ*.

⁷³ *Tañ ca nāgaṃ passati rukkha, mūla, gatam vā abbhokāsa, gatam vā gacchantam vā tiṭṭhantam vā nisinnam vā nipannam vā*.

⁷⁴ This whole passage as in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.40-41/1:62) @ SD 8.10.

⁷⁵ §§11-12 form the renunciation pericope: see (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,1.7) n, SD 40a.13.

⁷⁶ For details on the 9 virtues of the Buddha here, see **Buddhānussati** @ SD 15.7.

⁷⁷ *Deva*, here in the sense of “gods by convention” (*sammati, deva*), ie kings or rulers. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti, deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi, deva*), ie the Buddhas, pratyeka-buddhas and arhats. (Nc 307, KhpA 123). See §2 & n where the voc “your majesty” is *deva*.

⁷⁸ “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlika, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170,21); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,-8, 401,23); also called *avecca-p, pasāda* (S 12.41.11/2:69). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlika* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Ledi Sayadaw** speaks of 2 kinds: “ordinary faith” (*pakati saddhā*) and “faith through cultivation” (*bhāvanā saddhā*) (*The Manuals of Buddhism*, 1965:339 f). “Ordinary faith” is mainly based on giving and pious acts (which can be either wholesome or unwholesome, depending on the intention). “Faith through cultivation” is founded on mindfulness practice and meditation. **Gethin** also speaks of 2 kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective (eg ERE: Faith, & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963: 387): “Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith is its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or faith towards something or somebody...the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings

‘The household life is stifling, a dusty path.’⁷⁹ The life of renunciation is like the open air. It is not easy living in a house to fully practise the holy life, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell.

12.2 What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?’

12.3 Then, after some time, he abandons all his pile of wealth, little or great, and circle of relatives, small or large, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

(A) CULTIVATION OF MORAL VIRTUE

Going forth in the Dharma

13 Having thus gone forth, he is one accomplished in the training along with the livelihood of monks.⁸⁰

THE LESSER SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

Novice’s precepts 1-3

(1) Having abandoned the destruction of life, he abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and sword laid down, conscientious,⁸¹ merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

(2) Having abandoned the taking of the not-given, he abstains from taking the not-given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a pure mind.

(3) Having abandoned incelibacy, he lives a celibate life,⁸² living apart, refraining from coupling [from sexual intercourse], the way of the village.⁸³

Right speech⁸⁴

(4) Having abandoned false speech, he abstains from false speech.

He speaks the truth, the truth is his bond,⁸⁵ trustworthy, reliable, no deceiver of the world.⁸⁶

appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary” (Gethin 2001:107; my emphases).

⁷⁹ *Sambādho gharavāso rajā, patho*. There is a wordplay on *sambādha*, “crowded, stifling, narrow, full of hindrances,” which also refers to the sexual organ, male (V 1:216, 2:134) or female (V 4:259; Sn 609; J 1:61, 4:260). *Rajā, patha*, “a dusty path,” here refers to “the dust of passion,” and to “the path of returning” (*āgamana, patha*), ie rebirth (DA 1:180,17 = MA 2:179,20; UA 237,27).

⁸⁰ This whole passage [§§11-13] is the “short (M) renunciation pericope”: **Cūḷa Hatthi, padopama S** (M 27,11-13/1:179), SD 40a.5; **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38,30-33/1:267), SD 7.10; **Kandaraka S** (M 51,12-14/1:345), SD 32.9; **Ghoṭa, mukha S** (M 94,15-17/2:162); **Deva, dāha S** (M 101,35-37/2:226), SD 18.4; **Cha-b, bisodhana S** (M 112,18-20/3:33), SD 59.7. Elsewhere, this sentence ends the “full (A) renunciation pericope”: (**Catukka Attan Tapa S** (A 4.198/2:208 f), SD 56.7; (**Durabhisambhava) Upāli S** (A 10.99/5:204 f), SD 30.9; (**Puggala) Attan Tapa S** (Pug 4.24/56 f). Cf the “long (D) renunciation pericope” (without this line): **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,40-42) SD 8.10. For a fuller treatment of the precepts (ie, incl *mahā, sīla*), see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1,8-27/1:4-11); cf **Sāley-yaka S** (M 41,7-14/1:287), **Kandaraka S** (M 51,14-19/1:345-7), **Cha-b, bisodhana S** (M 112,13-17/3:33-36); also A 2:208 f, 4:249-251.

⁸¹ *Lajjī*, “feel shame, modest,” explain in the Comy on S 1:73 as “one who has moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*).” Opp *alajjī*, shameless.

⁸² *Brahma, cariya* is the supreme conduct or holy life, ie celibacy. Dīgha Comy points out that it involves refraining from other forms of erotic behaviour besides intercourse (DA 1:73). See foll n.

⁸³ *Gāma, dhamma*, ie the way of the village, vulgar (in the sense of being associated with the masses) (MA 2:206 = DA 1:72). See **Gavesī S** (A 5.180,17) n, SD 47.15.

⁸⁴ Also at **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1,9/1:4 f @ SD 25.2) = **Mahā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38,31-33/1:267 @ SD 7.10).

⁸⁵ “The truth is his bond,” *sacca, sandha*. Comy glosses as *saccena saccam sandahati*, “he joins truth with truth” (MA 1:206 = DA 1:73).

(5) Having abandoned divisive speech, he abstains from divisive speech.

What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here.

What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.

Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or consolidating those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks words conducive to concord.⁸⁷

(6) Having abandoned abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech.

He speaks words that are gentle, pleasant to the ear, loving, touching the heart, urbane, delightful and pleasing to the people.⁸⁸ [180]

(7) Having abandoned idle chatter, he abstains from idle chatter.

he speaks at the right time,⁸⁹ speaks what is true, speaks what is beneficial,⁹⁰

speaks what is the teaching,⁹¹ what is the discipline;⁹²

he speaks words worth treasuring, spoken in time, well-reasoned, well-defined [not rambling],

connected with the goal.⁹³

Respecting plant life

(8) He abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.⁹⁴

Novice's precepts 6-10

(9) He eats only once a day, refraining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.⁹⁵

(10) He abstains from dancing, singing, music and from watching shows.⁹⁶

(11) He abstains from wearing garlands and from beautifying himself with scents and make-up.⁹⁷

(12) He abstains from high and luxurious beds and seats.⁹⁸

(13) He abstains from accepting gold and silver [money].⁹⁹

⁸⁶ *Sacca, vādī sacca, sandho theto paccayiko avisamvādako lokassa.* This line as in **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30,2.16/3:170) @ SD 36.9.

⁸⁷ This para is stock, eg **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,9/1:286 f), SD 5.7 & **Sevitabbāsevitabba S** (M 114,6.7/3:49), SD 39.8.

⁸⁸ *Yā sā vācā nelā kaṇṇa, sukhā pemaṇīyā hadayaṇ, gamā porī bahu.jana, kantā bahu.jana, manāpā tathā, rūpiṃ vācam bhāsītā hoti.*

⁸⁹ *Kāla, vādī ... bhāsītā hoti kālena.* Here, *kāla-* means “befitting the occasion,” while *kālena* means “in time,” ie neither too early nor too late. However, *bhāsītā hoti* qualifies *nidhāna, vādī* (preceding it) as the 7th course of good karma—as *nidhāna, vādī bhāsītā hoti*—at D 3:269, 290; M 1:287; A 5:266, 275-278.

⁹⁰ *Bhūta, vādī attha, vādī.* Comy glosses *attha, vādī*, as that he speaks about what is connected with the spiritual goal here and now, and hereafter (MA 2:208; DA 1:76). However, here, I have rendered *attha* as “the beneficial, the good (incl the goal),” which fits the flow of ideas better. As *attha* (as “goal”) appears at the end of this stock passage, I have rendered this closing word as “the goal,” which seems more fitting.

⁹¹ He speaks on the 9 supramundane things (*nava lok’uttara, dhamma*) (MA 2:208 = DA 1:76), ie the 4 paths, 4 fruitions, nirvana (Dhs 1094).

⁹² *Dhamma, vādī vinaya, vādī.* The disciplines of restraint (*samvara*) (of the senses) and of letting go (*pahāna*) (of defilements) (MA 2:208 = DA 1:76). We can also connect *attha, vādī* (in the prec line) here, as alt have “He speaks on meanings, he speaks on teachings, he speaks on the discipline.”

⁹³ *Nidhāna, vatīm vācam bhāsītā kālena sāpadesam pariyaṇa, vatīm attha, samhitam.* *Pariyaṇa, vati* means “within limits, well defined.” On “the goal” (*attha*), see n on “speaks on the beneficial” above here.

⁹⁴ Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted. As at D 1:10. On *bija, gāma, bhūta, gāma*, see Pāc 11 (V 4:34); see also D 1:5; MA 2:208.

⁹⁵ “Improper times” here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83, 4:86); cf S 5:470; A 1:212; Kvu 2.6).

⁹⁶ A *dukkata* (wrong-doing) offence for monks (V 2:108); a *pācittiya* for nuns (V 4:267). Cf D 1:6, Kvu 2.7.

⁹⁷ Cf Kvu 2.8.

⁹⁸ See Pāc 87; V 1:192, 2:163; D 1:7; A 1:181. Comy says that the “high beds” are those that exceed the prescribed measurements and the “large beds” are those that are not allowable (MA 2:209).

⁹⁹ See Nissagīya 18 (V 3:236 ff); Kvu 2.10. For detailed discussion, see **Money and monastics**, SD 4.19-23.

Abstaining from wrong livelihood

(14) He abstains from accepting uncooked grain; raw meat;¹⁰⁰ women and girls; male and female slaves; goats and sheep, fowl and pigs; elephants, cattle, horses, and mares.

(15) He abstains from accepting fields and lands [property].¹⁰¹

(16) He abstains from running messages [or errands].¹⁰²

(17) He abstains from buying and selling.

(18) He abstains from dealing with false scales, false metals,¹⁰³ and false measures.¹⁰⁴

(19) He abstains from bribery, deception, and fraud.

(20) He abstains from wounding, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence.¹⁰⁵

(B) CULTIVATION OF SAMADHI

Contentment

14 He is content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes he sets out taking only these¹⁰⁶ with him.

Here, just as a bird, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden,¹⁰⁷ so, too, he is content with robes to protect his body¹⁰⁸ and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes, he takes only these with him.¹⁰⁹

Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, he experiences within himself a joy that is undefiled.¹¹⁰

Sense-restraint

15¹¹¹(1) When he sees **a form** with *the eye*, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

¹⁰⁰ “Raw meat.” See V 3:208 where the nun Uppala,vaṇṇā prepares or roasts meat before offering to the Buddha.

¹⁰¹ The Buddha, however, accepted land from rajahs like Bimbisāra and Pasenadi, and others like Anāthapiṇḍika and Visākhā, all in the name of the sangha. What is connoted here is accepting land on a personal basis.

¹⁰² “Running messages.” See D 1:8; S 3:239.

¹⁰³ “False metals,” *kaṁsa,kūṭa*. See Nun’s Nis 11, 12 & n at V:H 3:230. Comy however says that *kaṁsa* refers to a bronze bowl with a veneer of golden colour, presented as a golden bowl, to mislead others. (MA 2:210 = DA 1:79).

¹⁰⁴ Comys mention 3 methods: *hadaya,bheda* (“heartbreak”), used in measuring ghee, oil, etc; *sikhā,bheda* (“heap break”), used in measuring sesamum, husked rice, etc; *rajju,bheda* (“cord break”), used in measuring fields and sites (MA 2:210 = DA 1:79). *Sikhā* refers to a pyramid-shaped heap of grain on a tray of prescribed measurements.

¹⁰⁵ Dīgha Comy says that they kidnap victims by hiding in the snow and by hiding in a thicket (DA 1:80).

¹⁰⁶ “These,” ie the 8 requisites (*aṭṭha parikkhāra*): a small razor (*khuddaka,vāsi*), needle (*sūci*), water-strainer (*parissāvana*), almsbowl (*patta*) with a shoulder-strap, the triple robe (*ti,cīvara*), belt (*kāya,paṭibandha*) (MA 2:213 = DA 1:297; DA 1:206 = J 1:65; DhA 2:61; J 4:342, 5:254). Explained in detail at DA 1:206 f.

¹⁰⁷ Contextually, the “two wings” of a bird here refers to the monastic bowl and robe. This is a small physical “burden” of a monastic. The true monastic “burden” (*dhura*) comprises mental cultivation, ie, samatha and vipassana, as part of the 3 trainings: see *Sīla samādhi paññā*, SD 21.6.

¹⁰⁸ As in *Sāmañña,phala S* (D 2.66/1:71).

¹⁰⁹ This whole section (Contentment) up to here as in “the mental development” section of *Sāmañña,phala S* (D 2.66/1:71). This para (the bird parable): D 2,66/1:71 = M 51,15/1:346 = 38,34/1:268 = 112,14/3:35 = A 4.198.10/-2:209 f.

¹¹⁰ *So iminā ariyena indriya saṁvarena samannāgato ajjhataṁ abyāseka,sukhaṁ paṭisaṁvedeti*. Cf *Sāmañña,-phala S* (D 2,63/1:70) @ SD 8.10.

¹¹¹ This whole para: *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṁ disvā na nimitta-g,gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g,gāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇaṁ enaṁ cakkhundriyaṁ asaṁvutaṁ viharantaṁ abhijjhā,domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā an-vāssaveyyuṁ, tassa saṁvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṁ, cakkhundriye saṁvaram āpajjati. On Na nimitta-g,gāhī hoti nānuyyañjana-g,gāhī*, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at a detail (feature),” see SD 19.14. Comys say that “**sign**”(nimitta) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda,rāga,vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi,matta,vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuyyañjana*) here refers

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure¹¹² might overwhelm him, to that extent, therefore he keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of *the eye-faculty*, he commits himself to the restraint of *the eye-faculty*.

(2) When he hears a **sound** with *the ear*, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, therefore he keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of *the ear-faculty*, he commits himself to the restraint of *the ear-faculty*.

(3) When he smells a **smell** with *the nose*, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, therefore he keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of *the nose-faculty*, he commits himself to the restraint of *the nose-faculty*.

(4) When he tastes a **taste** with *the tongue*, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, therefore he keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of *the tongue-faculty*, he commits himself to the restraint of *the tongue-faculty*.

(5) When he feels a **touch** with *the body*, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, therefore he keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of *the body-faculty*, he commits himself to the restraint of *the body-faculty*.

(6) When he cognizes a **mind-object** with *the mind*, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him, to that extent, therefore he keeps himself restrained.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of *the mind-faculty*, he commits himself to the restraint of *the mind-faculty*.¹¹³

Possessing this noble sense-restraint, he experiences within himself a joy that is undefiled.

Mindfulness and clear comprehension¹¹⁴

to finding delight by grasping at another's limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of *nimitta*, see SD 13 §3.1a.

¹¹² "Covetousness and displeasure," *abhijjhā, domanassam*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as "hankering and fretting for the world"; alt tr "covetousness and displeasure" or "longing and loathing." MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first two hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the 5 hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in one's meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā, domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb'eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101): "Bhikshus, before my enlightenment, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... 'Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantages (*ādinava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world.'" (A 3.101/1:258, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

¹¹³ This whole passage at **D 2,64/1:70**, **10,2.2/1:207**, **33,1.11(10)/3:225**; **M 27.15/1:180**, **33,20/1:223**, **38,35/1:269**, **51,16/1:346**, **53,8/1:355**, **94,18/2:162**, **101,33/2:226**; **S 35.120/4:104**, **35.239/4:176**; **A 3.16/1:113**, **4.14/2:16**, **4.37/2:39**, **4.164/2:152** (×4), **4.198.11/2:210**, **5.76.12/3:99 f**, **5.140.11/3:163**, **10.99.6/5:206**, **11.18.23/5:351**. For a detailed analysis, see Vism 1.53-59/20-22. For a study, see SD 19.14.

- 16** (1) in going forward or going backward [stepping back], he clearly comprehends what he is doing.
 (2) In looking forward or looking back, *he clearly comprehends what he is doing.*
 (3) In bending or stretching, *he clearly comprehends what he is doing.*
 (4) In carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl, *he clearly comprehends what he is doing.*
 (5) In eating, drinking, chewing and tasting, *he clearly comprehends what he is doing.*
 (6) In voiding or peeing, *he clearly comprehends what he is doing.*
 (7) In walking, in standing, in sitting, in being asleep, in being awake,¹¹⁵ in talking, or in remaining silent, *he clearly comprehends what he is doing.*

Preparing for meditation

17 Possessing this aggregate of noble virtue, and possessing this aggregate of noble sense-restraint, and possessing this noble mindfulness and clear comprehension,¹¹⁶ he seeks out a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw.¹¹⁷

Overcoming the 5 mental hindrances¹¹⁸

18 Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.¹¹⁹

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

(2) Abandoning **ill will and anger**, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of *ill will and anger*.

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

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

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

The Tathagata's footprints: 4 dhyanas

19 (1)¹²⁰ THE 1ST DHYANA. Having abandoned the 5 mental hindrances, impurities of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite detached from sensual pleasures, detached from unwholesome mental states, he enters and remains in **the first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*), accompanied by zest (*pīti*) and happiness (*sukha*) born of seclusion.

¹¹⁴ *Sati, sampajañña = sati*, “mindfulness,” *sampajañña*, “clear comprehension.” In **Satipaṭṭhānas Ss**, however, this section is “clear comprehension” (*sampajañña*); “mindfulness” (*sati*). **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,67/1:71) reading: *sati, sampajāna, kārī*, “he acts with mindfulness and clear comprehension,” so too below here [36]. As in **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,4/2:293) = **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8/1:57) @ SD 13 (3.6.1+2+3).

¹¹⁵ “When asleep, when awake” *sutte jāgarite* (both loc of reference). Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, “lying down, reclining.” See SD 13.1 (3.6.2).

¹¹⁶ As in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,67/1:71).

¹¹⁷ “He seeks out... a heap of straw,” see **Mahā Assa, pura S** on wakefulness (M 39.12/1:274) & **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107,8/3:3).

¹¹⁸ As in **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,36/1:60). See details in **Mahā Assapura S** (M 39,12-18/1:274 f).

¹¹⁹ Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in the Vibhaṅga: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (Vbh §537/252). NT: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha, nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose.

¹²⁰ This new internal numbers **(1-8)**, in bold, refers to the Tathagata's 8 footprints [§§19-***].

19.2 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata's footprint, or the Tathagata's resort, or the Tathagata's scrapings [tusk marks].¹²¹ [§10]

19.3 However, the noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion, thus:¹²²

The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.

The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.

The community of disciples is well-practised.

20 (2) THE 2ND DHYANA. Furthermore, bhikshus, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,

he enters and remains in **the second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.¹²³

20.2 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata's footprint, or the Tathagata's resort, or the Tathagata's scrapings [tusk marks].

20.3 However, the noble [182] disciple does not yet come to the conclusion thus:

The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.

The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.

The community of disciples is well-practised.

21 (3) THE 3RD DHYANA. And furthermore, bhikshus, with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body.

He enters and remains in **the third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, 'Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.'

21.2 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata's footprint, or the Tathagata's resort, or the Tathagata's scrapings [tusk marks].

21.3 However, the noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion thus:

The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.

The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.

The community of disciples is well-practised.

22 (4) THE 4TH DHYANA. And furthermore, bhikshus, with the abandoning of joy and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of joy and pain—

he enters and dwells in **the fourth dhyana**, that is neither pleasant nor painful and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

22.2 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata's footprint, or the Tathagata's resort, or the Tathagata's scrapings [tusk marks].

22.3 However, the noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion thus:

The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.

The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.

The community of disciples is well-practised.

THE 3 KNOWLEDGES¹²⁴

¹²¹ *Idampi vuccati brāhmaṇa tathāgata, padaṃ itipi, tathāgata, nisevitaṃ iti 'pi, tathāgat'ārañjitaṃ iti 'pi.*

¹²² This is the first statement by the Buddha that "the noble disciple does *not* come to the conclusion" that the goal has been attained. This refrain occurs for each of the passages on the 4 dhyanas [§§19-22] and the 3 knowledges [§§23-25]: see §25.4 n.

¹²³ The 2nd dhyana is known as "the noble silence" (*ariya, tuṇhī, 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).

¹²⁴ The passages here form the famous 3 knowledges (*ti, vijjā*) pericope: (1) the knowledge of rebirth [§23,1], (2) the knowledge of karma [§24,1] and (3) the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes (*āsava*) [§25,1+2] (D 3:281; M 1:34; A 1:255, 258, 3:17, 280, 4:421). On *āsava*, see §25.2 n.

(1) The knowledge of the recollection of past lives¹²⁵

23 (5) With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives**.¹²⁶ He recollects his manifold past existences, that is to say,

1 birth, 2 births, 3 births, 4 births, 5 births, 10 births, 20 births, 30 births, 40 births, 50 births, 100 births, 1000 births, 100,000 births,

many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,

many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus:

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

Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life.

Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.

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

Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span.

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

Thus, brahmin, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.¹²⁷

23.2 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata’s footprint, or the Tathagata’s resort, or the Tathagata’s scrapings [tusk marks].

23.3 However, the noble disciple does *not* yet come to the conclusion thus:

The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.

The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.

The community of disciples is well-practised.

(2) The knowledge of death and rebirth (the divine eye)

24 (6) With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings.¹²⁸

He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],¹²⁹ purified and surpassing the human—

beings passing away and re-arising, and

he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, in the heavens, in the suffering states,

faring in accordance with their karma:

‘These beings—who were endowed with evil conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, with the body’s breaking up, have re-arisen in a plane of misery, an evil destination, a lower realm, in hell.

But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—after death, with the body’s breaking up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’

¹²⁵ This knowledge and the foll two (ie 4-6) constitutes “the 3 knowledges” (*te, vijjā*) of the Buddha and the arhats (D 3:220, 275; A 5:211), and is a shorthand for “the 6 knowledges” (*cha-l-ābhiñña*) listed here and elsewhere.

¹²⁶ *Pubbe, nivāsānānussati, ñāṇa*, lit “the knowledge of the recollection of past abidings [existences].” The remainder of this is expanded into 4 sections in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1.1.31-34/1:13-16 @ SD 25.3(76.3)) and 3 sections in **Sampasādaniya S** (D 27.15-17/3:107-112 @ SD 10.12). In both cases, each explains how the eternalist view arose.

¹²⁷ This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

¹²⁸ *Cutūpapāta ñāṇa*, “the knowledge of the falling away and rebirth (of beings),” or “knowledge of rebirth according to karma” (*yathā, kammūpaga ñāṇa*), or “the divine eye” (*dibba, cakkhu*): see foll n.

¹²⁹ *Dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma, cakkhu*) (see n in §104). On the relationship of this knowledge to the 62 grounds for wrong views, see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1) @ SD 25.3(76.3). See prec n.

Thus, brahmin, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-arising, and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, in the heavens, in the suffering states, faring in accordance with their karma.

24.2 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata's footprint, or the Tathagata's resort, or the Tathagata's scrapings [tusk marks].

24.3 However, the noble disciple does not yet come to the conclusion thus:

The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.

The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.

The community of disciples is well-practised.

(C) CULTIVATION OF WISDOM

(3) The knowledge of the destruction of mental influxes

25 (7) With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

the monk directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes**.¹³⁰

25.2 He knows, as it is really is,	‘This is suffering’;
he knows, as it really is,	‘This is the arising of suffering’;
he knows, as it really is,	‘This is the ending of suffering’;
he knows, as it really is,	‘This is the path to the ending of suffering’; ¹³¹
<i>he knows, as it really is,</i>	‘These are mental influxes’;
<i>he knows, as it really is,</i>	‘This is the arising of influxes’;
<i>he knows, as it really is,</i>	‘This is the ending of influxes’;
<i>he knows, as it really is,</i>	‘This is the path to the ending of influxes.’ ¹³²

25.3 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata's footprint, or the Tathagata's resort, or the Tathagata's scrapings [tusk marks].

25.4 However, the noble disciple does *not* yet come to the conclusion thus:¹³³

¹³⁰ *Āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa*. The term *āsava*, “mental influxes, or mental fluxes” (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These four are also known as “floods” (*oghā*) and “yokes” (*yogā*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict under *āsava*.

¹³¹ These 4 statements on suffering pose an interesting problem: they are not called “noble truths” here (nor in **Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,43). Norman remarks that these four statements, which also likewise appear in **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,42/1:249), but are not referred to as the noble truths about suffering, “and since they appear to be subordinate to the four statements about the *āsavas*, it is possible that the statements about misery are a later addition [here], which led to a parallel, but inappropriate, set of four statements being evolved about the *āsavas*, to provide a symmetry” (Norman 1990:26). For a discussion on the formulation of the noble truths, see Norman 1982:377-91 & also Schmithausen 1981:205.

¹³² See Intro (1.3.7). As in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,42) @ SD 1. On the application of the 4-noble-truth template to both *dukkha* and to *āsava* here, see Analayo 2003:224 n28 & SD 17.4(8.4)

¹³³ This refrain starts in §19.3 (see n), and applies to each of the passages on the 4 dhyanas [§§19-22] and the 3 knowledges [§§23-25]. Even at this point, the noble disciple is not yet freed (ie, still an “outsider,” *bāhiraka*): this

*The Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one.
The Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One.
The community of disciples is well-practised.*

Final liberation

26 (8) Thus knowing, thus seeing, [184]

the mind is *released* from the influx of sensual desire,

the mind is *released* from the influx of existence,

the mind is *released* from the influx of ignorance.

26.2 With release, there is the knowledge,

‘Freed (am I)!’ He knows that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived, done is that which needs to be done. There is nothing further beyond this.’

26.3 This, too, brahmin, is called the Tathagata’s footprint, or the Tathagata’s resort, or the Tathagata’s scrapings [tusk marks].

26.4 Thus far, brahmin, the noble disciple comes to the conclusion that¹³⁴

the Blessed One is the fully self-awakened one; *sammā,sambuddho bhagavā*

the Dharma is well spoken by the Blessed One; *svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo*

the community of disciples is well-practised. *suppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka,saṅgho*

26.5 Thus far, brahmin, is **the parable of the elephant’s hoofprint** detailed and complete.

Jānussoni goes for refuge

27 When this was said, the brahmin Jānussoni said this to the Blessed One:

“Wonderful, bhante! Wonderful, bhante! 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 the Blessed One has, in numerous ways, made the Dharma clear.

I go to the Blessed One for refuge, and to the Dharma, and to the community of monks, too.

May the Blessed One remember me as a layman who has gone for refuge from this day forth for life.”¹³⁵

— evaṃ —

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occurs only in the next stage [§26]. There is a play on the word “conclusion” here, alluding to “the Tathagata’s footprints” as well as the disciple’s awakening: see Intro (1.3.7). See also SD 33.1b (4.4.2.4).

¹³⁴ Here the noble disciple’s training comes to a full “**conclusion**” (*niṭṭhaṅgata*) [1.3.7], ie, he is awakened as an arhat. This means that the preceding 7 footprints, all must lead to this conclusion, just as the wise elephant forester sees a large hoofprint [§10.2], not jumping into any conclusion, follows them [§§10.3-10.8], until finally he sees the actual bull elephant [§10.9].

¹³⁵ Jānussoni goes for refuge at least 12 times: see SD 44.3 (2.4).