

18

Nālaka Sutta

The Nālaka Discourse | **Sn 3.11** (Sn 679-723)

Vatthu, gāthā, the verse introduction (Sn 679-698)

Nālaka Gāthā, the Nālaka verses, or **Moneyya Sutta**, the Discourse on Sagehood (Sn 699-723)

Theme: Asita’s visit to the child Bodhisattva and the nature of sagehood

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2016

1 Overview

1.1 THE SUTTA BASICS

1.1.1 The Nalaka Sutta (Sn 3.11) recounts how the sage Asita first meets the new-born infant Siddhattha Gotama in Kapila, vatthu in northern India. This Sutta is the canonical locus classicus of the Asita episode in the traditional Buddha narrative [1.1.3]. It comprises two sections: an introduction, the Vatthu, gāthā [679-698], which contains the Asita story, and the *Nālaka Gāthā, a record of the Buddha’s instruction to Asita’s nephew, Nālaka [699-723]. [1.2.1]

1.1.2 The Nalaka Sutta (Sn 3.11) is both a narrative and a teaching, all given in verses. The narrative section—known as the “introductory verses” (*vatthu, gāthā*) or “story talk” (*vatthu, kathā*), in the Siamese canon—gives the introductory story (Sn 679-698) [1.2]. The teaching section—the Nālaka Gāthā or Nālaka Verses—is a dialogue between Nālaka and the Buddha (Sn. 699-723) dealing with sagehood (*moneyya*), that is, the nature of the “silent sage” (*muni*).¹

1.1.3 Kapila, vatthu

1.1.3.1 Kapila, vatthu (literally, “Kapila’s land”)—in Sanskrit, Kapila, vastu—was the ancient capital city of the Sakyā kingdom. King Suddhodana and queen Mahā Māyā were traditionally said to be the rulers or leaders of the Sakyas. Their only son, Siddhattha Gotama (Skt *siddhārtha gautama*) is said to leave his palace at Kapilavastu at 29, to renounce the world, and later to become the Buddha.²

1.1.3.2 Formerly known as **Taulihawa**, it is today a municipality and administrative centre of Kapilavastu District in Province No 5 of southern Nepal. It is located about 25 km (16 mi) to the south-west of Lumbini, the Buddha’s birthplace. The municipality lies at an altitude of 107 m (351 ft) above sea level on Nepal’s southern border across from Khunwa, Uttar Pradesh state, India. There is today a customs check-point for goods while movement of Indian and Nepalese nationals across the border is unrestricted.³

1.1.3 Asita

1.1.3.1 Asita (ts) was a brahmin seer (*isi*), a matted-hair ascetic (*jaṭila*) [**Sn 689a**], who was chaplain to king Sīha, hanu, the Buddha’s grandfather, and teacher of the Buddha’s own father, king Suddhodana. Asita visited Suddhodana morning and evening, and was greatly respect by the king. In due course, with the king’s permission, he retired as a hermit in the royal park and was attended by him.

1.1.3.2 After renouncing the world, Asita, through meditation gained **the 8 attainments**⁴ and the 5 powers.⁵ According to tradition, he was capable of seeing 40 world-cycles (*kappa*) into the past and 40

¹ The notes of this Sutta tr are mostly based on the studies of Jayawickrama 1976, 1978a; see Norman 2001 (Sn:N).

² K Trainor, in *Routledge Encyclopedua of Buddhism*, 2010:436 f, sv Kapilavastu.

³ For other details, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kapilavastu>.

⁴ *Attha samāpatti*, ie, the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments: see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (12.3).

cycles into the future (J 1:54). Early Buddhism, however, rejects this latter notion—that of seeing far into the future—as the future has not yet happened. [6.1 @ Sn 681]

If it were possible to do so, and such visions were true, then, our lives would be predetermined, and ethics-based religion would be meaningless and useless. Even if only certain events were predetermined and not others, how are we to know which events these would be the ones? In short, we can only speculate about the future, and perhaps make reasoned conclusions or educated guesses about them.⁶

After his meals in the palace, he would visit the Himalayas or a deva world (such as the heaven of the 4 great kings and so on), to have his day-rest (SnA 483-486). After some time, he retired into solitude in the Himalayas. During a day-rest in the heaven of the 33 devas (*tāva,tiṃsa*), he learned that the future Buddha, Siddhattha Gotama, had been born as the son of king Suddhodana [Sn 683 f] (J 1:54).

1.1.3.3 Asita went to Suddhodana’s palace to see **the infant**. When the child was brought to him, to everyone’s surprise, the child’s feet found themselves on Asita’s head. The custom was for his devotees to place their heads at the sage’s feet. However, it is said that if Asita had placed his feet on the Bodhisattva’s head, Asita’s head would have split into 7 pieces! So, he rose from his seat and saluted the auspicious child.⁷

Asita went on to examine the child and discovered that he was endowed with the 32 marks of the great man (*mahā, purisa lakkhaṇa*).⁸ He was sure that the child would become the fully self-awakened Buddha in due course, and jubilated at this fact. Despite his joy, however, Asita was also sad to realize that he had reached 90, and would not live long enough to witness the great awakening. Upon dying, he would be reborn in a formless realm, and so would not be able to listen to the Buddha’s teaching. Hence, he wept. This is the famous “**smiling/weeping**” **Asita episode**. (SnA 2:488)

1.1.3.4 Asita then went to his sister’s house and urged his nephew, Nālaka, to renounce the world in anticipation of the future Buddha’s awakening.⁹ Nālaka complied and, in due course, renounced as the Buddha’s disciple. Following the teaching given to him by the Buddha, as recorded in **the Nālaka Sutta**, he attained arhathood (SnA 2:500 f).

1.1.3.5 Asita apparently see the child Bodhisattva either on the very day that he was born, or within three days thereafter. **The Buddha,vaṃsa Commentary** mentions the 5th day as the “head lustration” and naming day, when 108 brahmins were invited. If these, 8 of them—beginning with Rāma¹⁰ (J 1:56, v270)—were versed in reading the 32 marks of the great man. Seven of them raised two fingers, predicting that the child would become a wheel-turner if he lived a household life, and become buddha if he renounced the world.

The youngest of them, Koṇḍañña, was certain of the child’s future, and raised one finger, proclaiming that he would surely become the Buddha. Koṇḍañña later becomes the eldest of the group of 5 monks who attended to the Bodhisattva before his awakening. However, Asita is not mentioned amongst these brahmins.

⁵ *Pañc’abhiññā*, ie, (1) psychic powers, (2) the divine ear, (3) mind-reading, (4) retrocognition (recall of past lives) and (5) karmic recollection—ie, the 6 knowledges (*cha-ḷ-abhiññā*) without arhathood: **Kevalāḍḍha S** (D 11,55-66), SD 1.7; SD 27.5a (5).

⁶ On the Buddha’s omniscience, see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90): SD 10.8 (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76,21+52): SD 35.7 (3.2); SD 36.2 (5.1.1.2).

⁷ In the Jātaka version of the Asita story, the Bodhisattva does not place his feet on Asita’s head (J 1:55,3). The JA account, however, is later than SnA, which it quotes.

⁸ On the 32 signs of the great man, see Sn 690b n below.

⁹ Sn pp131-136; SnA 483; J 1:54 f; BA 276 f (called Kāla,devala).

¹⁰ This Rāma is prob the father of Rāma,putta. The full list of names is given at J 1:56 v170.

1.1.3.6 In the Pali sources, Asita was also known as **Kāḷa,devala** (SnA 487,3; J 1:54), **Kaṇha,siri** (Sn 689; SnA 487,13) and **Siri,kaṇha** (SnA 487,14).¹¹ These names attest to the fact that he was of dark complexion (*kaṇhā*). Asita’s alternate name of Kāḷa Devala in the Jātaka—or Kāla Devala 1—should not be confused with his namesake, alternately called Asita Devala 1 [4.2.2], whose story is recorded in **the Assalāyana Sutta** (M 93), and is said to be the Buddha himself in a past life¹² (MA 3:411) [3.2.2].

1.1.3.7 The Sanskrit parallels of the *vatthu,gāthā*, especially **the Mahā,vastu**¹³ (Mvst 2:30-45) [2.2.3.3] and **the Lalita,vistara** (Lalv 76 ff),¹⁴ agree in the main details with the Pali version. However, the Mahāvastu says that Asita was the son of a brahmin from Ujjenī and he lived in the Vindhya mountains, and then he was said to live on Mt Kailāśa, a range in the Himalayas. There seems to be a confusion between our Asita and Asita Devala, who was a different person [1.1.3.6].

The Lalita,vistara gives the name of Asita’s nephew as Nāradata, but the rest of its account agrees somewhat closely with that of the Mahāvastu. Both works are more developed than the Nālaka Sutta, hence later than the Nālaka Gāthā. The *Vatthu,gāthā*, too, is late [1.2.2]. However, both the Nālaka Gāthā and the Mahāvastu parallel contain old materials that go back to probably an older common source (an ur-text).¹⁵

1.2 THE SUTTA INTRODUCTION

1.2.1 The *vatthu,gāthā*

1.2.1.1 Scholars have noted that, as a rule, introductions to old Pali ballads (narrative and teachings in verses)¹⁶ are considerably later than the poems themselves.¹⁷ As a rule, the verse introductions to other suttas—such as the “introductory verses” or *vatthu,gāthā* to **the Pārāyana** (Sn 976-1031)—recount the events leading up to the teaching. In the case of the Nālaka Sutta, its *vatthu,gāthā* seems to have been added at a late canonical time, perhaps, as an editorial afterthought.

1.2.1.2 There is an interesting parallel between the *vatthu,gāthā* of the Nālaka Sutta and of the Pārāyana. Bāvāri who sends his 16 students to see the Buddha, Asita sends Nālaka to wait for the Buddha’s awakening. Jayawickrama compares Nālaka to Piṅgiya, who returns to his teacher Bāvāri with the Buddha’s teachings,¹⁸ but by the time that Nālaka meets the Buddha, Asita is already dead.¹⁹

¹¹ SnA 487 says that Kaṇha,siri and Siri,kaṇha are his alternate names. Siri,kaṇha is Śrīkrṣṇa (viz Krishna) but he is clearly not the divine charioteer of the Bhagavadgītā, a post-Buddha polemical work against Buddhism. See SD 36.1 (1.7.1).

¹² **Assalāyana S** (M 93,17.3-18.30/2:154), SD 40a.2. See Ency Bsm 2:176 f, sv Asita Devala.

¹³ **Mahā,vastu** (Mvst), “the great chapter,” or, fully, Mahāvastu Avadāna, the earliest Skt biography of the Buddha, a part of the Vinaya Piṭaka of the Lokottara,vāda (affiliated with the Mahāsaṅghika). Like the major Buddhist Skt works, it is heavily interpolated, parts of which may date as early as the 2nd cent BCE. Ed E Senart, 3 vols, Paris, 1882-1897, [GRETIL](http://gretil.org/), 2005. Tr J J Jones, *The Mahāvastu*, 3 vols, London, 1949-1956.

¹⁴ **Lalita,vistara** (Lalv). Orig a non-Mahāyāna work with Mahāyāna interpolations; the Buddha’s life from Tusita descent to the first sermon; 1st cent CE. Ed S Lefmann 1902:101-108; Skt <https://suttacentral.net/lal>. Tr A Foucher, *La Vie du Bouddha*, Paris, 1949:61-63, Eng tr S B Boas, Middleton, CT, 1963:42-46; summarized, E Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1988:673 f.

¹⁵ Parallels of **the Asita story**. Pali, J 1:54 f; Skt Mvst 2:30 f (tr Mvst:J 2:27 f) & Saṅghabhedavastu (Gnoli, 1977: 1:52-55). Chin: Abhiniṣkramaṇa Sūtra, T3.619c23 f (tr Beal, [The Romantic Legend of Sakya Buddha](http://www.sacred-texts.com/bud/abhi/), London, 1875: 56 f).

¹⁶ Besides the *vatthu,gāthā* of **Nālaka S** (Sn 679-698), there are also those of (**Kalyāṇa,mitta**) **Rāhula S** (Sn 335 f), SD 64.20, and of **Pārāyana** (Sn 976-1031).

¹⁷ See Thomas 1949:38 f; Jayawickrama 1976:86.

¹⁸ On the account of Bāvāri’s 16 youths, see **Pārāyana Vagga** (Sn ch 5); on Piṅgiya, see **Piṅgiya Māṇava Pucchā** (Sn 5.17), SD 49.6b.

1.2.1.3 In the case of the **Pārāyana** [1.2.1.1] and the **Sela Sutta** (M 92), we see their respective *vatthu, gāthā* introducing us directly into their respective teachings.²⁰ In terms of temporal sequence, the *vatthu, gāthā* of the Nālaka Sutta are widely separated from the *Nālaka Gāthā²¹ or the Sutta proper by over 30 years. Asita meets the new-born Siddhattha, who renounces the world at 29, and awakens 6 years later at 35.²² If Nālaka joins the Buddha in the first year of the ministry, the time-span is exactly 35 years,

1.2.1.4 The *vatthu, gāthā* of the Nālaka Sutta apparently only serve to introduce us to Asita's nephew, Nālaka. In terms of the Buddha narrative, the *vatthu, gāthā*, however, recounts the interesting and famous "Asita episode," which inspires us with the beauty of the Buddha's infancy story.

1.2.1.5 We find independent accounts of the *vatthu, gāthā* materials in the Nidāna, kathā (the introduction to the Jātaka Commentary), the Mahāvastu, the Lalita, vistara and the Tibetan Vinaya (Dulva)—all of which are post-canonical works and, hence, later than the Sutta Nipāta. This attests to the fact the Nālaka Sutta—comprising the *Vatthu, gāthā* and the *Nālaka, gāthā—"are in reality two independent poems differing in age, brought together at a subsequent date which, most probably, coincided with that of the final collation of Sn." (Jayawickrama 1978:16)

The sutta redactor's placing of the two related texts into a single sutta is clearly helpful for those studying the suttas. It connects two important events in the Buddha's life: his birth and his early teaching on sagehood (*moneyya*). It is the story of Nālaka that links the two accounts together—which also shows that they are not really independent accounts.

1.2.2 Age of the *vatthu, gāthā*

1.2.2.1 The form of the *vatthu, gāthā*—its language, style and metre—differs quite starkly from those of the Nālaka Verses [Sn 699-723]. The *vatthu, gāthā* features various aspects of the Buddha legend, such as allusions to the 32 marks of the great man (*lakkaṇa*) [§12b] and also the term *bodhisatta* [§Sn 683a].²³ Further signs of the lateness of the *vatthu, gāthā* are the accounts of the devas rejoicing at the Buddha's birth²⁴ [§§679-684] and Asita's prophecy [§693].

1.2.2.2 The language, style and metre of the *vatthu, gāthā* [2] significantly differs from those of the Nālaka Gāthā, that is, the Sutta proper. The *vatthu, gāthā* shows important developments in the Buddha-narrative or the early Buddhist mythos. This legendary tone is clearly absent from the Nālaka Gāthā (the Sutta proper), which presents only teachings. Clearly, the *vatthu, gāthā* is later than the Sutta proper.

However, despite the apparently weak link between the preamble and the Sutta itself, the internal [2] and external evidence [3] attest to a concatenation of two independent poems. Although the two poems are well separated in time, the *vatthu, gāthā* prepares us for the greatest spiritual event in religious history: the advent of the historical Buddha. Nālaka plays the role of Everyman, as it were, reminding us that this is no small ripple in the human ride, and that we should flow with it to reach the shores of nirvana.

¹⁹ Jayawickrama 1978:13.

²⁰ M 92 = Sn 3.7 (SD 45.7a).

²¹ The initial star means that this name is an innovation, one which I have used to refer to the second part of the Nālaka Sutta—the Sutta proper.

²² See the n on the "7 years": SD 51.11 (1.2.1).

²³ According to Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, the Bodhisattva doctrine arose prob in the 2nd century BCE (1932:43). However, the Pali *bodhisatta* is clearly older, but does not reflect an older stratum in the texts.

²⁴ The story of Asita's epiphany which moved him to visit the child Siddhattha (Sn 679-698) is accepted by many scholars as the source for the Biblical story of Simeon's visit to the infant Christ (Luke 2:8-14, 25-35): see E W Lanman, *Buddhist Legends*, 1921:10.

2 Language, style and verse

2.1 LANGUAGE AND STYLE

2.1.1 Sanskritic forms

Jayawickrama, in his critical study of the Sutta Nipāta, notes that there are many late and Sanskritic forms lying side by side with equally numerous very old Pali forms, such as:

		<u>Metre</u>
Sn 680	(b) <i>cittim karitvā</i> ; (c) <i>atiriva kalya,rūpo</i>	extended Triṣṭubh
Sn 681	(c) <i>loma,haṃsano</i> ; (d) <i>marū</i>	Jagatī
Sn 683b	(b) <i>manussa,loke hita,sukhatāya</i>	extended Triṣṭubha
Sn 684	(abd) the epithets	Jagatī
Sn 685a	<i>avaṃsari</i> (an analogical form) (cf <i>samavassari</i> , Thī 210)	acd extended Triṣṭubh; b extended Jagatī
Sn 687a	<i>sikhi</i> (fire), related imageries in lines bc	extended Triṣṭubh
Sn 689d	<i>paṭiggāhe</i> (an artificial form)	Jagatī
Sn 690a	<i>sakya,puṅgavaṃ</i>	Jagatī
Sn 691	(a) <i>gamanam</i> (= <i>maraṇam</i>), (b) <i>akalya,rūpo</i>	abd extended Triṣṭubh; c Triṣṭubh, resolved 5 th syllable
Sn 692	the sandhis, (a) <i>isim-avoca</i> , (c) <i>cāp'imassa</i>	extended Triṣṭubh
Sn 692d	the phrase <i>adhimanasā bhavātha</i>	(see preceding)
Sn 694	(b) <i>kāla,kiriyā</i> , (c) <i>asama,dhurassa</i>	extended Triṣṭubh
Sn 697	<i>hita,manasena</i>	ad extended Jagatī; bc Jagatī, resolved 5 th syllables

Such Sanskritisms and late forms in the *vatthu,gāthā* suggest that these verses were composed at a late canonical time. The early verses—such as those of the Nālaka Gāthā—do not have any Sanskritism or late form. [2.2]

2.2 STYLE

2.2.1 The narrative and the instructive

2.2.1.1 The Nālaka Gāthā or Sutta proper significantly differs in style from the *vatthu,gāthā* or Verse Story (the introduction). The *vatthu,gāthā* are full of the miraculous and supernatural. Even its narrative parts are highly ornate, filled with similes and metaphors. The child Siddhattha Gotama (the Bodhisattva) is described to be “blazing just like gold, | fashioned so skillfully at the furnace’s mouth” [Sn 686ab] and to be

... like crested flame, | pure bright lord of stars, crossing the heavens.
burning like the sun in the cloudless autumn sky. [Sn 687abc]

2.2.1.2 The style of the Nālaka Gāthā is comparatively simpler. We do not see any such hyperbole or fabulous imageries in the Nālaka Gāthā at all. The main reason for this is clearly that the Nālaka Gāthā is predominantly instructive. Whatever figurative language that is used is directed to highlighting or clarifying the teaching given. Such figures are powerful in drawing our attention and very effective in presenting the Buddha’s intention behind his teaching. [2.2.2]

2.2.2 Imagery and figures in the Nālaka Gāthā

2.2.2.1 The Nālaka Gāthā, in fact, applies about just a much figurative language as does the *vatthu, gāthā*. However, such imagery and figures play a didactic role—they attract our attention to the meaning and purpose of the teaching. We will look the imagery and figurative devices used in the Nālaka Gāthā.

2.2.2.2 Here is a list of **figurative expressions** in the Nālaka Gāthā. For more details, see the references under (4.2):

Sn 703a = 714a	“high and low” (<i>uccāvaca</i>) = “good and bad”
Sn 704d	“moving or still” (<i>tasa, thāvāra</i>) = worldly and saints, etc [4.2]
Sn 714a = 703a	“high and low” (<i>uccāvaca</i>) = “difficult and easy”
Sn 714c	“the far shore” (<i>pāra</i>) = nirvana
Sn 715b	“whose stream is cut off” (<i>chinna, sota</i>) = abandoned all defilements
Sn 715d	“fever” (<i>pariḷāha</i>) = heedlessness arising from greed or hate
Sn 717c	“free of raw stench” (<i>niramagandha</i>) = free from defilements
Sn 719a	“brighten the ten quarters” (<i>bhāsihi dasa, disā</i>) = his fame will spread everywhere
Sn 719b	“silent fame” (<i>nigghosa</i>), an oxymoron
Sn 720	imagery of water and noise
Sn 721	imagery of volume and solidity

2.2.2.3 Here is a list of **similes and metaphors** in the Nālaka Gāthā. For more details, see the references under (4.2):

Sn 703b	“like crests of flames in a forest fire” (<i>dāye aggi, sikhūpamā</i>), of karma
Sn 716b	“sharp like a razor’s edge” (<i>khura, dhārūpamo</i>) = mindful in using life supports
Sn 720cd	“noisily go the little streams, silently flow the great ocean”
Sn 721cd	“like a half-filled pot is the fool, like a full lake is the wise.”

2.2.3 Metre

2.2.3.1 Metre is a poetic measure of sound and rhythm in a line, usually a verse. The *vatthu, gāthā* [Sn 679-698] have “a jumble of metres,”²⁵ which A K Warder named Ānandajāta, after the first word of the section.²⁶ The *vatthu, gāthā* are composed partly in the Triṣṭubh/Jagatī metre²⁷ and partly in an extended version of the Triṣṭubh with a redundant long syllable resolved into two short syllables.²⁸

2.2.3.2 Unlike the *vatthu, gāthā*, the Nālaka Gāthā [Sn 699-723] are in uniform *śloka* metre—like **the Pabbajjā Sutta** (Sn 3.1) and **the Padhāna Sutta** (Sn 3.2).²⁹ Although it is generally held that, historically, the *śloka* metre is later than the Triṣṭubh, does not necessarily imply that the Nālaka Gāthā *ślokas* are later than the Triṣṭubh verses in the *vatthu, gāthā*.

2.2.3.3 This metre occurs in the Mahāvastu, but not in the Asita episode, which suggests, concludes Norman, “that these biographical details are taken from a common store of history and legend concerning the Buddha, but are not closely related” (1983b:67).

²⁵ Jayawickrama 1978:14. On these metres, see SD 49.12 (2.2).

²⁶ A K Warder 1967:213 n2.

²⁷ Like that of the “3 refuges,” *Buddham saraṇam gacchāmi*, etc: see SD 49.13 (2.2.3).

²⁸ For technical details, see Warder 1967:213 n2; Sn:N 301 n679-98.

²⁹ **Pabbajjā S** (Sn 3.1/405-424), SD 49.19; **Padhāna S** (Sn 3.2/425-449), SD 51.2. **Dhammapada** (Dh) is the best known collection of verses in *śloka*. On the *śloka*, see SD 49.13 (2.2).

The divergence in the metres of the *vatthu, gāthā* and the Nālaka Gāthā suggests that these two works were composed separately and later put together in their present form. In fact, the Sanskrit versions—which are close parallels with the two sections of the Nālaka Sutta—are preserved separately in **the Mahāvastu**: Asita and the young Gotama (Mvst 2:31-43) and the questions of Nālaka (Mvst 3:382-389) respectively.³⁰

3 Nālaka

3.1 WHO IS NĀLAKA?

3.1.1 Asita's nephew

3.1.1.1 Nālaka was the nephew of Asita (the son of his sister). When Asita realised that he would not live to meet the Buddha, he visited Nālaka and asked him to at once become an ascetic in readiness to benefit from the Buddha's awakening. It is said that Nālaka's aspiration to learn and practise solitary silent sagehood (*moneyya*) was made in the time of Padum'uttara Buddha.³¹

3.1.1.2 Although very wealthy—possessing some 800 billion gold coins—Nālaka renounced the world and spent his time in Himavā (the Himalaya foothills). When the Buddha had arisen in the world, he visited him a week after he has given the first discourse. Nālaka questioned him on the practice of solitary silent sagehood (*moneyya, paṭipadā*) (SnA 2:453). Hence, it is also called **the Nālaka, paṭipadā**, and also because it is included in the Nālaka Sutta, that is, the *Nālaka Gāthā [**Sn 699-723**].

3.1.1.3 Nālaka retired once more into Himavā and there attained arhathood. There, he spent seven months leaning against a golden rock, practising the path of sagehood (spiritual silence and solitude) in its highest form. After his death, the Buddha, with some monks, visited his remains, cremated them and built a (*cetiya*) over them.

3.1.1.4 The Mahāvastu calls him **Nālaka Kātyāyana** (P *kaccāna*) (Mvst 3:380, 387), Nālaka of the Kātyāyana (P *kaccāna*) clan or gotra.³² His father was a very wealthy brahmin from the Avantī town of Markaṭa (P *makkarakatā*).³³ He was the purohita and teacher to king Ujjhebhaka Toṇehāraka of Avantī, and has two sons, Nālaka and Uttara.

3.1.1.5 The Tibetan sources give a very different account of his conversion,³⁴ but shares some similarities with the introduction to the Mahāvastu version, such as the episode of Nāga Elapatra which precedes the Nālaka story.

3.1.2 Nālaka's sagehood

3.1.2.1 At the conclusion of the Buddha's teaching, Nālaka—says the Commentary—was so inspired that he gained the quality of **fewness of wishes** (*app'icchatā*) in 3 things—seeing, hearing and questioning. Having saluted the Buddha, he left for the forest. Never again did he have the longing (*lola, bhāvam*), “O, if only I may see the Blessed One!” This was his fewness of wishes regarding seeing (*dassane app'icchatā*).

³⁰ These have been respectively in Mvst:J 2:27-42 and Mvst:J 3:379-388.

³¹ J 1:55; SnA 2:483, 501. Padum'uttara was the 13th buddha from first Taṇhānkara mentioned in the texts, and the 15th from Gotama Buddha. See SD 36.2 (3), esp (3.4.3).

³² Mvst 3:379-388. In Mvst 2:43, it is Nārada who belong to this clan, while at Mvst 2:63, he is said to belong to the Kauśika clan.

³³ A town associated with the Kaccāna clan: DPPN sv Makkarakatā.

³⁴ Dulva XI f 118 ff; Rockhill 1883:18, 45 f.

Further, he never again had the longing, “O, that I may hear the teaching!” This was his fewness of wishes regarding hearing (*savane app’icchatā*). And he never again had the longing, “O, that I may again ask about the path of sagehood!” This was his fewness of wishes regarding questioning.

3.1.2.2 Being of few wishes, he left for the hills. Henceforth, he did not spend two days in the same forest grove. He did not sit for two days at the foot of the same tree. He did not go into the same village for alms for two days. He wandered from forest to forest, from tree to tree, from village to village. Following the proper practice, he attained the foremost fruit (arhathood).

3.1.2.3 Now, a monk who wins sagehood in the highest degree lives for only 7 months. One who fulfills it to a middle degree, lives for 7 more years. And one who fulfills sagehood to a minor degree, lives for 16 more years. Nālaka fulfilled his sagehood in the highest degree.

Hence, at the end of the 7 months, knowing that he would soon die, he bathed, and then put on his lower robes and double upper robe. Facing the Buddha’s direction, he prostrated, saluting him. Then, leaning against the Hīngula mountain, he attained the nirvana-element without residue.³⁵

The Buddha, learning of Nālaka’s final passing-away, went there with the community of monks. He had the Nālaka’s body cremated, the relics collected, had them enshrined in a caitya, and then left. (SnA 500 f)

3.2 CHRISTIANITY: PARALLELS AND INFLUENCES

3.2.1 The Simeon story

3.2.1.1 Various attempts have been made by scholars to show a connection between **the nativity stories** in Buddhism and in Christianity. In the case of Christ’s birth (Luke 2:22-32), Bunsen,³⁶ Seydel³⁷ and Lillie³⁸ see an echo of the story of the Buddha’s birth. Thomas notes that Seydel, Edmunds³⁹ and Pischel see in the story in the Sutta Nīpāta the original story of Simeon.⁴⁰ According to Pischel, the differences between the two stories are less than their correspondence.⁴¹

3.2.1.2 C F Aiken, an American theologian, understandably rejects all these works as being merely based on “spurious evidence used to impugn the originality of the Gospels.”⁴² Windisch discusses the parallels in his *Buddha’s Geburt*,⁴³ and in *Festschrift Kuhn*, he traces Asita Devala back to brahminical

³⁵ On the “nirvana-element without residue” (*anupādi,sesa nibbāna,dhātu*), see **Nibbāna,dhatu S** (It 2.2.7), SD 50.13.

³⁶ Ernst de Bunsen, *The Angel-Messiah of Buddhists, Essenes and Christians*, London, 1880:34.
https://archive.org/stream/angelmessiahofbu00buns/angelmessiahofbu00buns_djvu.txt.

³⁷ R Seydel, *Das Evangelium von Jesus in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddhia-sage und Buddha-lehre*, Leipzig, 1882: 136.

³⁸ A Lillie, *Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity*, London & NY, 1893:26.
<https://archive.org/details/influenceofbuddh00lill>;

http://www.khamkoo.com/uploads/9/0/0/4/9004485/the_influence_of_buddhism_on_primitive_christianity.pdf.

³⁹ A J Edmunds, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, Philadelphia, 1902, 2 vols. For a helpful overview, see Z P Thundy, *Buddha and Christ: Nativity stories and Indian traditions*, Leiden, 1993.

⁴⁰ E J Thomas 1949:43. See also J Kennedy, “The Gospels of the Infancy, the Lalita Vistara, and the Vishnu Purana: Or the Transmission of Religious Legends between India and the West,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc* 1917: 209-243, 469-540.

⁴¹ R Pischel, *Leben und Lehre des Buddha*, Leipzig, 1910:23,
<https://archive.org/details/lebenundlehrede00piscgoog>.

⁴² C F Aiken, *The Dhamma of Gotama Buddha and the Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Boston, 1900:xiv.

⁴³ E Windisch, *Buddha’s Geburt*, Leipzig, 1908:195 ff, 221.

literature. He regards it “not absolutely proved that the Simeon of St Luke owes his existence to the Asita of the Buddhist legend.”⁴⁴

3.2.2 Common source?

3.2.2.1 Most probably, **the Asita story** was introduced into the biographical accounts of the Buddha in pre-Christian times. Both the early Buddhists of India and the ancient Israelites might have drawn from a common ancient source of the story. However, any suggestion of a borrowing on the part of Christianity or even of a common origin prior to the birth of Christianity may cast serious doubts on the originality and uniqueness of the Gospel legends.

On the other hand, it is possible that both stories might have originated independently and were merely parallel developments. However, it is difficult to imagine that both the ancient Indians and the ancient Israelites had contact whatsoever with one another.

3.2.2.2 Comparative studies of the origins of religious stories, or even of religion themselves, can be fascinating—but they are admittedly mostly speculative and likely to be biased. The point is that a living religion is successful significantly because it is able to respond to external challenges, especially from other religions. They are likely to make on-going reviews and adaptations from such challenges.

Even then, no religion would openly admit that they have borrowed, say, meditation from Buddhism. They will somehow “theologize” such new developments—explain it away in terms of their own dogmas and casuistry. Interesting as the parallels may be, it should be remembered that parallels never meet.

3.2.2.3 The major world religions may be said to contain nothing much that is unique or original in their teachings. Their success is not so much due to their beliefs and teachings, as it is to their public relations and social dominance. Much of their success of modern religion can be seen to have come from their organizational abilities, political lobbying and, above all, the mustering and deployment of wealth in their conversion or marketing image.⁴⁵

3.2.2.4 If we are truly seeking some kind of real meaning and purpose of religion—or better, of life itself—then, we must be courageous and persistent in our quest for the liberating truth. This is not a quest for external structures and success, but a pilgrimage away from the worldly crowd. We must take an inner journey to discover the conditions that have shaped our personality and how we can fully realize the genius of our humanity and potential for spiritual awakening and liberation. The historical Buddha is an excellent, even ideal, model to start and end with.

4 Textual sources for the Asita story

4.1 LATE COMPOSITION

4.1.1 We have already noted that the *vatthu, gāthā* are a later work than the Nālaka Gāthā [1.2.2]. The fact that the *vatthu, gāthā* is only distantly connected with the Nālaka Gāthā further shows that it was the work of later editors—as is clearly the case of the *vatthu, gāthā* of the Pārāyana Vagga, too. They are the works of the Council fathers (*saṅgīti, kāra*) (SnA 483 & 580 respectively).

⁴⁴ Ernst Windisch, *Festschrift Kuhn*, Munich, 1916.

⁴⁵ Colonialism started in Renaissance Europe with the Roman Church, and the fever to conquer and colonize “lesser” races—the heathens and pagans of Christianity—then spread to western Europe. The colonial spirit is deeply seated in the heart of God-centred faiths to “have dominion ... over all the earth” (Genesis 1.26). The blatant and bloody colonialism may be over, but the colonial heart is still beating. If it stops beating, it will die—so they have no choice, no free will, but to relentlessly continue colonizing others and their faiths.

4.1.2 The Lalita,vistara, the Mahāvastu, the Nidāna,kathā and Dulva—although they are all later than the Sutta Nipāta—all treat the accounts of the *vatthu*,gāthā and Nālaka Gāthā as independent texts. This attests to the fact that the two parts of the Nālaka Sutta were originally two independent poems differing in age. At some later date, they were put together into a single Sutta, most probably with the final compilation of the Sutta Nipāta. We can safely say that this would certainly be by Asoka’s time (mid-2nd century BCE), perhaps even earlier.

4.2 COMMENTARIAL PALI SOURCES

4.2.1 The Nidāna,kathā (J 1:54 f) account, with its elaborate details and accounts of miracles, is clearly later than the well known Buddhist Sanskrit sources. The Nidāna,kathā narrative, however, basically agrees with the older sources in essential details. The name of the aged sage is Kāla,devala, “Devala the dark”: the name *asita* also means “dark” (*kāla*) (M 2:80). He is simply an ascetic (*tāpasa*) from Avanti Dakkhīna,paṭha (Ujjenī; cf Mvst); he is not a seer (*ṛṣi*). The Buddha is said to awaken at 35, as in the Tibetan Vinaya (Dulva).

4.2.2 Among other references to the name **Asita** in the Pali Canon are two named Asita,devala (Devala the dark). We shall call them Asita Devala 1 and Asita Devala 2. Asita Devala 1 is mentioned in **the Assalāyana Sutta** (M 93), and was said to be the Buddha in a past life [1.1.3.6]. Asita Devala 2 was more commonly known as Kāla Devala (Devala the black), an ascetic of Arañjara (a mountain town in the Middle Country). His younger brother was Narada, also a resident of Arañjara or Arañjara,giri.⁴⁶

In the concluding connection (*samodhāna*) of **the Indriva Jātaka** (J 423/3:469), Kāla,devala is identified with Kaccāna, perhaps the counterpart of Nālaka Kātyāyana in the Mahāvastu. or Mahā Kātyāyana of the Dulva (Rockhill 1883:18, 45). Narada of Arañjara is also mentioned in the same Jātaka (J 423/-3:463-469) and **the Sara,bhaṅga Jātaka** (J 522/5:133 f). Such confusion could have arisen over time as the stories became more complex with the influence of Sanskrit legends.

4.2.3 Although the accounts of the Nidāna,kathā and the Dulva are later than the Buddhist Sanskrit sources, their general agreement suggests a common origin for all these accounts. Although Thomas views that there is no evidence to show that the Asita story itself was pre-Christian (1949:39), Jayawickrama proposes that “this alone is no proof of its being so late as that” (1978:16).

Jayawickrama thinks that the story might have existed independently long before it was canonised in the *vatthu*,gāthā. There is no reason to exclude the *vatthu*,gāthā from the Sutta Nipāta, which was known to the author of the Milinda,pañhā (Miln 411, 414, etc). Thus, it is very likely that this narrative goes back to pre-Christian times. However, it is certainly younger than the Nālaka Gāthā (1978:16).

4.3 SANSKRIT SOURCES

4.3.1 The more fabulous Buddhist Sanskrit accounts are clearly later than that of the *vatthu*,gāthā. The *vatthu*,gāthā account of the Buddha’s birth generally agrees with parallels in **the Nidāna,kathā** (the Jātaka introduction) and Sanskrit works, that is, **the Lalita,vistara**, **the Mahā,vastu**, and **the Dulva** (the Tibetan Vinaya), but they differs considerably in details.⁴⁷

4.3.2 Although the prose section of **the Lalita,vistara** (Lalv ch 7) parallels the *vatthu*,gāthā account, its verses show no connection at all with the Nālaka Sutta. It seems to have developed with its own fascinating details, telling its own story. The following interesting points of this account should be noted:

⁴⁶ See DPPN, sv Asita Devala.

⁴⁷ E J Thomas (1949:38-43) gives a brief comparative study of this without going into any details.

- (1) Asita's nephew is Nara,datta and not Nalaka as in Sn.
- (2) There are more miracles, but the Bodhisattva does not place his feet on Asita's forehead (J 1:55).
- (3) Asita, with the divine eye, sees the birth of the Buddha and informs his nephew of it, declaring the only two courses of action open to such a being. [PBR 3,1, 1978]
- (4) He brings his nephew along to Kapilavastu and meets Suddhodana, but not the Sakyas, as in Sn.
- (5) The 32 marks of the great man are dealt with in great detail.
- (6) After announcing that the new born babe would become the Buddha, he returns to the ashram and advises Naradatta to follow the Buddha when the time comes.

The details of the Mahāvastu version are even more similar to those of the Lalita,vistara.

4.3.3 The Mahā,vastu version agrees closely with the *vatthu,gāthā* account, but differs from the Nālaka Gāthā (the Sutta proper).⁴⁸ In the Mahāvastu, Asita, the seer (Skt *rṣi*) from Ujjayinī (P *ujjenī*) goes to Kapilavastu with his pupils, including Nālaka (who later in the same account is called Narada).

Although the soothsayers (Skt *naimittika*) declare that the child would become a wheel-turner (Skt *cakra,vartin*), Asita is certain of his becoming the Buddha. Amongst the other miracles is that of the birth of 500 each of girls, boys, male and female slaves, etc, connatals of the Bodhisattva.

The Mahāvastu verses that follow (Mvst 2:33-43) describe the same event in greater detail. Asita advises Narada to practise the holy life under the Buddha. It is also noteworthy that the Buddha's interlocutor here is called Nālaka Kātyāyana (Mvst 3:386), who on the advice of his father, the purohita to king Toṇehāra, seeks ordination and is admitted by the *ehi bhikṣu* formula.

5 The Nālaka Gāthā or (Nālaka) Moneyya Sutta

5.1 THE SUTTA PROPER

5.1.1 An early work

5.1.1.1 The Sutta proper of the Nālaka Sutta is called **the *Nālaka Gāthā** ("Nālaka's Verses") or **(Nālaka) Moneyya Sutta** ("The (Nālaka) Discourse on Sagehood) (Sn 699-723). It deals with the nature of silent sagehood (*moneyya*), describing the proper conduct of a silent sage (*muni*). He is a forest-dwelling ascetic who often dwells alone, but may live his solitary life in a small remote community of silent sages. This subject is indicative of the verses' early origin, and belongs to a category of suttas in the Sutta Nipāta designated as the "muni class." [5.1.2]

5.1.1.2 Unlike its preamble, the *vatthu,gāthā* [5.1.1], the Nālaka Gāthā contain no late forms by way of language, style or metre. The language is old and preserves several archaic forms many of which are poetic. Its verses are in uniform *śloka* metre—like those of the Dhammapada [2.2.3.2]. This divergence shows that the Nālaka Gāthā and its *vatthu,gāthā* are two independent works that had been put together in their present form [2.2.3.3].

5.1.2 The "muni" suttas

5.1.2.1 There is an ethical theme underlying the Gāthā, which is much more pronounced than even in **the Muni Sutta** (Sn 1.12) or **the Sammā Paribbājaniya Sutta** (Sn 2.13). This theme is fully and best presented in **the Khagga,visāṇa Sutta** (Sn 1.3) [5.1.2.4] with their ethical undertone centering on to the monk as a "silent sage" (*muni*). This is the earliest Buddhist ideal itinerant monk who wanders alone "like a rhinoceros" is the main theme of the Khagga,visāṇa Sutta.

⁴⁸ Mvst 2:30-45, 3:382-389.

5.1.2.2 The ideas of the Gāthā have much in common as contemporary Indian thought. This is not surprising at all—in fact, it is to be expected because the Buddha often speaks in the language of his immediate audience, and he employs “natural adaptation,” a skilful means by way of adapting mainstream and prevalent ideas as vehicles for his teachings.⁴⁹

5.1.2.3 The stanzas Sn 702, 703, 705, 711, 712, 713, 714, 716, 720-722 are examples of ideas common to the literature of the period: we see echoes of the Brahmaṇas (commentaries on the Vedas) and the Upaniṣads. In Sn 716, we have mention of a yogic practice done by the Bodhisattva before his awakening, described more fully in **the Vitakka Saṅṭhāna Sutta** (M 20), thus: “with clenched teeth and the tongue pressing on the palate, he should subdue, restrain, attack the (bad) mind with the (good) mind.”⁵⁰

The theme of the whole poem, however, is distinctively Buddhist. The theme pervading the whole Gāthā is that of a lone ascetic. K E Neumann, in his German translation of the Sutta Nipāta, *Die Reden Buddha Gotamos ... Suttanipato* (1911)⁵¹ mentions in his footnotes some of such parallels and connections in the themes.

5.1.2.4 Among the oldest suttas of early Buddhism are the “*muni*” suttas or “*muni* class” of suttas, that is, discourses dealing with the theme of **silent sagehood** (*moneyya*) or the way of the solitary silent sage (*sage*). These are the suttas that are representative of the state of the *muni*:

Khagga,visāṇa Sutta	Sn 1.3/6-12	= Sn 35-75	SD 109.3	
Muni Sutta	Sn 1.12/35-38	= Sn 207-221	SD 49.20	
Sammā Paribbājaniya S	Sn 2.13/63-66	= Sn 359-375	SD 103.8	
Nālaka Gāthā ⁵²	Sn 3.11/131-139	= Sn 699-723	SD 49.18	The sutta proper of Sn 3.11
(Tika) Moneyya Sutta	A 3.120/273		SD 49.21	
(Iti) Moneyya Sutta	It 3.2.8/56 ⁵³	= It 67	SD 49.22	
Saṅgīti Sutta	D 1,10(53)/3:220			Only mentions the 3 kinds of sagehood

5.1.2.5 The (Iti) Moneyya Sutta (It 3.2.8) of the Iti,vuttaka is a very short sutta that succinctly summarizes the teaching of Nālaka Gāthā, that is, on sagehood (*moneyya*). It mentions the 3 kinds of sages (*muni*), or rather, the 3 qualities of a sage, that is, in terms of good conduct of the body, of speech and of the mind, thus:

<i>Kāya,muniṃ vācā,muniṃ</i>		The sage in body, sage in speech,
<i>mano,muniṃ anāsavaṃ</i>		sage in mind, influx free—
<i>muni,moneyya,sampannaṃ</i>		the sage accomplished in sagehood,
<i>āhu niṇhāta,pāpakan'ti</i>	67	they say, is one with evil [bad] washed away.
		It 3.2.8/56 (SD 49.21)

5.1.2.6 The (Tika) Moneyya Sutta (A 3.120)⁵⁴ almost identically repeats the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta definition, but defines the 3 qualities of the sage—those of body, speech and mind—as the tenfold abstention, that is, not committing any of the 10 courses of unwholesome karma (*akusala kamma,patha*).⁵⁵

⁴⁹ On the Buddha’s “natural adaptation,” see SD 39.3 (3.3.4).

⁵⁰ M 20,7/1:120 f (SD 1.6), where see §7.1 n for refs. It should be noted that this is the only place in the early Buddhist texts where this practice seems to be recommended, even then as a last resort.

⁵¹ Karl Eugen Neumann, (German) *Die Reden Gotamo Buddhos, aus der Sammlung der Bruchstücke Suttanipato des Pali-Kanons*, Munich: R Piper, 1911:220-232 (tr of Nālaka S).

⁵² Also called **(Nālaka) Moneyya S**, the (Nālaka) Discourse on Sagehood. Both these titles are neologisms. The second name was already used by Jayawickrama (1978).

⁵³ Jayawickrama wrongly refers to this as “It 3.3.8,” which is a different sutta.

⁵⁴ A 3.120/1:273 (SD 49.20).

The (Tika) Moneyya Sutta also closes with the same verse as the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta, but for two exceptions: in line b, the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta reads *ceto,munim* instead of *mano,munim* (both phrases mean the same thing), and in the last line (*pāda*), it replaces *ahu niṅhāta,pāpakam* with *sabba-p,-pahāyinaṃ*, “one who has abandoned all.” [5.1.2.7]

5.1.2.7 The *muni* or silent sage, then, is one who has “let go” of “the all”—he is one who is no more defined by his senses, that is, by external realities. What we experience—even mentally—are regarded as being “external” (*bāhiddha*), meaning that the *muni* is neither defined nor limited by his sense-experiences, “the all.” He is liberated, awakened to nirvana—an arhat.⁵⁶

5.1.2.8 Although the Nālaka Gāthā neither clearly specify the 3 kinds of sages (in terms of body, speech and mind), nor directly mention the abstaining from the 10 unwholesome courses of karma, all this is clearly implied in it. The Gāthā covers a wider range than the focused teaching of the (Tika) Moneyya Sutta (A 3.120) or the (Iti) Moneyya Sutta (It 3.2.8) mentioned above.

Besides alluding to the abstention from the 10 unwholesome courses of karma (Sn 704-706), the Nālaka Gāthā list the positive qualities of the *muni*. The lack of a well-defined or technical list of doctrines, and the focus on the nature of the *muni*, the lone, wandering, forest-living recluse, all attest to the fact that the Nālaka Sutta is earlier than two Sutta mentioned above.

5.1.3 The Asokan inscriptions

5.1.3.1 On Asoka’s Calcutta-Bairāt rock edict, its fifth “Dharma exposition” (*dharmapaliyāya*), the “Moneyya-sūte,”⁵⁷ has been identified as the (Nālaka) Moneyya Sutta or Nālaka Gāthā (Sn 699-723).⁵⁸ Kosambi suggested this (1912:40). Mrs Rhys Davids wrongly identifies it with It 3.2.8,⁵⁹ and Winternitz (1933 2:607) echoes it.⁶⁰ If the “Moneyya-sūte” in Asoka’s edict refers to the Nālaka Gāthā, it means that the Gāthā must be pre-Asokan⁶¹ (the 3rd century BCE or earlier). It is also possible that the Nālaka Gāthā was still an independent text during Asoka’s times, but we cannot be certain of this.

5.1.3.2 Although the Asokan edict use of the title “Moneyya-sūte” coincides with the title of the Moneyya Sutta (A 3.120 + It 3.2.8), it is highly unlikely that “Moneyya-sūte” refers to either of them. The teachings are simple and focused on only the abstention from the 10 unwholesome courses of karma. The Nālaka Gāthā, on the other hand, not only alluded to this, but also to various other interesting aspects of the *muni*, which would apply to both monastics and the laity. As an emperor, Asoka surely would be concerned over the Buddhist community *as a whole*, and not merely the reclusive silent sage.⁶²

⁵⁵ The 10 unwholesome courses of karma (*akusala kamma,patha*), are: 3 of body (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct), 4 of speech (false speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, frivolous chatter), and 3 of mind (covetousness, ill will, wrong views). See **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,7-10) SD 5.7; **Sañcetanika S** (A 10.206,1-7) SD 3.9.

⁵⁶ On “the all,” see **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1.

⁵⁷ *Vinaye-samukase aliya-vasāṇi anāgatha-bhayāni muni-gāthā moneyya-sūte upatisa-pasine e chā lāghulovade* (E Hultsch, 1925:173).

⁵⁸ Jayawickrama, in *Pali Buddhist Review* 1,3 1976:138. Hirakawa, in *A History of Indian Buddhism* (Honolulu, 1990:101) inaccurately identifies it as the whole of the Nālaka Sutta, “Sn 679-723.” Norman 2001:xxxiii.

⁵⁹ ≈ A 1:273,18-36. C A F Rhys Davids, *A Manual of Buddhism*, London, 1932:312-314. “It 367” is clearly a misprint for It no 67. Chalmers (1932:xi) states that the Nālaka S is called Moneyya Sutta, but gives no authority for his statement. Jayawickrama states that the corresponding section of Mvst (Mvst 3:387 f) is called Mauneya (1948c: 230 = 1978:19), but there seems to be no evidence for this. He also wrongly refers to Moneyya S as “It 3.3.8,” which is a different sutta.

⁶⁰ M Winternitz, [1912] 1933 2:607

⁶¹ Emperor Aśoka reigned c 268-232 BCE.

⁶² R K Mookerji, in his *Asoka* [Gaekwad lectures], identifies the “Moneyya-sūte” as the “Nālaka Sutta” (London, 1928:118 n). <https://archive.org/details/asokagaekwadlectradh>.

5.1.3.3 Norman's caveat on the identification of such ancient suttas should be noted:

“The fact that suttas sometimes have alternative names complicates the task of identifying the suttas mentioned by Aśoka. Aśoka's [Calcutta-Bairāt] edict means only that suttas with these names were in existence at the time of Aśoka. If these identifications are correct, it does not mean that these suttas were parts of the Sn in Aśoka's time, nor that they were in their present form. If they are correct, the fact that the names used by Aśoka are not those by which the suttas are known at present show that the nomenclature was not fixed in the third century BC.” (Sn:N 2001:xxxiv §16)

5.1.4 The Nālaka Gāthā and the Mahāvastu

5.1.4.1 Of all the Nālaka accounts in the Pali and the Buddhist Sanskrit texts, the only one that closely parallels the Nālaka Gāthā or (Nālaka) Moneyya Sutta (**Sn 699-723**) is to be found at **the Mahāvastu** (Mvst 3:387-389).⁶³ Often the parallels are so close that their only difference seems to be that of language—one is in Pali, the other in Buddhist Sanskrit. Where they do diverge, it is of no great significance.⁶⁴

5.1.4.2 The 24 verses of the Mahāvastu relating to the Buddha's birth follow a sequence different from that of the 25 verses of the Nālaka Gāthā. **Sn 718** and **719a** have no correspondence in the Mahāvastu. **Sn 709** and **714** only vaguely parallels their Mahāvastu counterparts. **Sn 706** is slightly expanded in the Mahāvastu. The pairs of verses, **Sn 708ab + 707ab** and **708cd + 709cd**, respectively form two stanzas in the Mahāvastu.

5.1.4.3 Other noteworthy difference between the two texts are as follows:

<u>Nālaka Gāthā (Sn)</u>	<u>Mahāvastu (Mvst)</u>	<u>Meaning (J J Jones)</u>
702d <i>santo anuṇṇato care</i>	3:387,7 <i>kṣānto cānumato</i> ⁶⁵ <i>bhava</i>	“be calm and humble”
711a <i>āgamma</i>	3:387.19 <i>āsāḍya</i>	“when he has descended on”
711d <i>payutaṃ</i>	3:388,1 <i>prepsutām</i>	“when he has obtained it”
708b <i>abhihārave</i>	3:388,6 <i>abhirakṣaye</i>	“he should keep to (the forest edge)”
715a <i>visatā</i>	3:388,10 <i>saritā</i>	“(no) flow (of desire)”
716a <i>moneyyaṃ te upaññissam</i>	3:388,14 <i>evaṃ mauneyaṃ upeṣyasi</i>	“Thus will you attain the stage of a sage”
714b <i>na pāraṃ dviguṇāyati</i>	3:389,2 <i>nāpi caivaṃ guṇāyati</i> ⁶⁶	“The Beyond is not a future twice-repeated”

5.1.4.4 Despite their differences, the Nālaka Gāthā or (Nālaka) Moneyya Sutta and its Mahāvastu version bear more significantly close parallels. It is likely that the Pali Nālaka Gāthā are older than its Buddhist Sanskrit Mahāvastu parallel. However, it is unlikely that the Mahāvastu account is based on the Nālaka Gāthā. We may surmise that the two texts were based on a common older text or tradition. Besides, there are several other Moneyya Suttas in the Pali canon [5.1.2.4].

⁶³ Jayawickrama erroneously refers to “the Buddha's nativity” in comparison to “Mvst III, 386 ff.” (1978:18).

⁶⁴ However, see the case of **Pabbajjā S** (Sn 3.1), where there are significant divergences between the Pali version and its BHS parallel in Mvst: SD 49.19 (1.2).

⁶⁵ Amended to *anuṇṇato*, “not raised” (Mvst:J 3:385 n2).

⁶⁶ Amended to *na pāraṃ dviguṇāyati* (Mvst:J 3:388 n1).

6 The Sutta summary with notes

6.1 THE INTRODUCTORY VERSES (VATTHU, GĀTHĀ)

6.1.1 Asita’s vision

Sn 679. Asita, through his meditations, attained special powers that enable him to visit the heavens of the sense-world [1.1.3.2]. While the seer Asita is taking his noon siesta in the heaven of the 33 (“host of 30”), he sees them well-dressed, reveling and singing praises with their leader, Sakra.

Sn 680. Asita is curious why the devas are celebrating, [681] in a manner even more exuberant than when they celebrated their victory over the asuras. [682] He wants to know the reason for their great joy.

Sn 681-682. The Commentary says that Asita is able to recall 40 world-cycles into the past and future (*atītānāgate cattālīsa, kappe anussaritum*). The verb *anussarati* usually means “to recall (the past)” but here more broadly means to “know the past and the future.” (SnA 2:485,18). **The Jātaka Nidāna**, in fact, states that ascetic Asita is able to “know or see” 40 world-cycles (*tāpaso atīte cattālīsa kappe, anāgate cattālīsāti asīti kappe anussarati*, J 1:54,31-35). The verb *anussarāmi* (“I see”; literally, “I recall”) is used in this sense at **692b**, too. [1.1.3.2]

Sn 683. The devas tell him of the Bodhisattva’s birth amongst the Sakyas in Lumbinī. [684] He will turn the Dharma-wheel.

Sn 684. Asita prophesizes the coming of the world teacher.

Sn 685. Asita hurries down to see king Suddhodana, and at once asks to see the new born child. [686] The child, in all his splendour, is brought to Asita, [687] and he is overjoyed. [688-689] He sees the gods themselves attending to the child with all the royal regalia.

Sn 686-689. Asita’s epiphany: he sees the infant Siddhattha is glorious divine form.

Sn 690. Joyfully smiling, Asita—after examining the boy’s bodily marks—announces that he will become Buddha.

Sn 691. Then, recalling his advanced age and impending death, he weeps, realizing that he will not be able to meet the Buddha or hear his teaching [694]. The Sakyas, seeing this, are suddenly worried.

Sn 692. Asita comforts them, [693] declaring that the child will teach the Dharma and holy life. [Sn 694] He is sad, he explains, because he is unable to hear the Buddha’s Dharma. Asita will pass away before the Buddha’s awakening (SnA 2:489,9).

692bc. These two lines record Asita’s prophecy regarding the infant Siddhattha. Interesting, he uses the verb *anussarāmi*, usually translated as “I recall” some past life or event. At **Sn 681**, Asita actually recalls how the devas how the god rejoiced when they defeated the asuras in past battles. [6.1.1 ad loc]

Sn 693, see 692.

Sn 694, see 692.

6.1.2 Nālaka

Sn 695. The narrator then tells us that Asita then visits his nephew, Nālaka, to urge him to renounce the world in preparation to meet the Buddha. [696] He tells Nālaka that the moment he hears the word “Buddha,” it means that the Dharma has been taught. Nālaka should then go directly to the Buddha to live the holy life under him.

Sn 697. Nālaka, who has himself a great store of merit [3.1.1.1], lives a morally pure life, awaiting the Buddha.

Sn 698. As soon as he hears word that the Buddha has taught the Dharma, he goes to the Buddha and asks him about sagehood. And so Asita’s prophecy is fulfilled. The preceding verse and this one (697-698) refer to a time well after Asita, when the Buddha is arisen and teaching the Dharma. These two verses link the *Vatthu, gāthā* with the Nālaka Gāthā that follow. The Commentary says that Nālaka meets the Buddha a week after the 1st discourse (SnA 4:290).

6.2 THE NĀLAKA GĀTHĀ OR (NĀLAKA) MONEYYA SUTTA

Sn 699. Nālaka tells the Buddha about Asita, and how he (Nālaka) himself wishes to ask the Buddha a question. [700] Nālaka declares his desire to live as a *bhikkhu* or alms-man’s life to attain the highest spiritual state, that is, silent sagehood, here an allusion to awakening itself.

The Commentary explains **700b** as referring to “the unblemished habit of the noble ones (the saints) in the quest, that is the alms-round” (*ariyehi āciṇṇaṃ anupakkiliṭṭhaṃ bhikkhācariyaṃ pariyesāmanassa*, SnA 2:491,7-9).

Sn 701. The Buddha begins his teaching by telling Nālaka to be resolute in his endeavor. [Sn 702] He should cultivate equanimity towards abuse and homage in the world, keeping his mind at peace, and be humble.

Sn 702. The Commentary says that **702** refers to abandoning defilements arising from engagement (socializing) with the village (*gāmūpanibaddha, kilesa-p, pahānaṃ dassento*) and to promoting austerity (*sallekha*) (SnA 2:492,5-8). The Mahāvastu parallel to **702** calls him Nālaka Katyāyana and records the Buddha as instructing: “Maintain your equanimity whether you be reviled or be well spoken of in the village” (*samāna, bhāgaṃ kuryāsi grāme ākruṣṭa, vanditaṃ*).⁶⁷

The Commentary notes that the observance of **sagehood** (*moneyya*) here is that of supreme self-effacement (*parama, sallekha*) (SnA 2:492,5), as taught in **the Sallekha Sutta** (M 6).⁶⁸

Sn 703. Sensual pleasures arise in many forms like a great forest-fire. The sage (as practitioner) should not in any way be drawn to women: he should lead a purely celibate life. The Commentary says that **703** refers to the abandoning of defilements connected with attachments to the forest (*ārāñṇūpanibaddha, kilesa-p, pahānaṃ dassento*, SnA 2:492,16).

Sn 704. He should refrain from any kind of sense-pleasures, and not be attached to anyone or anything at all in the world. The Commentary on **704** notes that it is an abridgement of the “morality of the monastic code” (*pātimokkha, sīla*, SnA 2:493,20 f), and that “having abandoned sense-pleasures” (*hitvā kāme*) and the rest of Sn 704 refers to “sense-restraint” (*indriya, saṃvara*, SnA 2:493,21 f).

⁶⁷ Mvst 3:387,6 :: Mvst:J 3:384 f. See also Sn:N 309 n702.

⁶⁸ M 6 (SD 51.8).

Sn 705. Understanding the golden rule,⁶⁹ says the Buddha, he [Nālaka] should neither kill nor encourage it.

Sn 706. He should not harbour any kind of lust, but mindfully practise to overcome suffering. The Commentary says that **706a**, on the overcoming of greed and lust highlights the “purity of livelihood” (*ājīva, parisuddhi*), esp with regards to being satisfied with one’s basic support of robes, almsfood, shelter and medical supply (SnA 2:493,23 f + 27-30).

Sn 707a. The practice of moderation in food.

707b. He should be moderate in his food, and overcome all wishes—be desire-free. The Commentary speaks of the 4 kinds of fewness of wishes: “Having few wishes (*app’icchā*) regarding support (*paccaya*), austerities (*dhutaṅga*), theoretical knowledge (*pariyatti*) and attainment (*adhigama*)” (SnA 2:494 f). Essentially, the Commentary says that the true sage does everything in moderation. He is easy to support because he has few and simple needs, and not arrogant about his qualities.

(A) **Few wishes regarding requisites** (*paccay’app’icchatā*), the Commentary speaks of the “12 kinds of contentment” (*dvādasa, vidha santuṭṭhi*), that is, the 3 kinds of contentment in terms of the fewness of wishes regarding the 4 requisites. This is being content (*santosa*) towards each of the requisites in terms of the gains (*yathā, lābha, santosa*), in terms of one’s strength (*yathā, bala, santosa*), and in terms of the suitability (*yathā, sāruppa, santosa*) of the robes, almsfood, lodging or medicine.

(1) **Robes.** In terms of gains, he uses whatever robe he receives, whether it is of good or bad quality, wishes not for another, and rejects it even when offered a new one. In terms of strength—when he is ill or easily tires with a heavy robe, he exchanges it with an agreeable monk for a light one. In terms of suitability—when he receives a costly robe of fine material, he gives it to worthy learned elders, and is content to collect pieces of cloth from the dust-heap or elsewhere, and make a robe for himself.

(2) **Almsfood.** Whatever he gains, good or bad, he eats it according to his need. In terms of strength—if he is ill and his food is unsuitable, he gives it to an agreeable monk for some ghee, honey, milk and so on. He goes on with his ascetic practice. In terms of suitability—when he gets fine food, he gives it to worthy elders long gone forth or other monks in need of such food. He is contented with walking for alms and eating mixed foods.

(3) **Lodging.** Whatever he gains, he accepts. In terms of strength—if he is ill or his illness worsens in a crowded lodging, he exchanges it with an agreeable monk for a suitably cool place, and continues with his ascetic practice. In term of suitability—he rejects any fine lodging that conduces to heedlessness, where he easily gets drowsy and falls asleep, and where, upon waking, he may be filled with sensual thoughts. He is content living in the open air, at the foot of a tree, or in a leaf-hut. [707d]

(4) **Medicines.** Whatever he gains, such as myrobalan,⁷⁰ he is content with it, rejecting ghee, honey, palm syrup and so on, even when he is offered them. In terms of strength—when he is sick and gets palm syrup, he gives it to an agreeable monk for some oil to prepare medicine, and continue with his ascetic practice. In terms of suitability—when he is given a choice of a bottle of myrobalan in cow’s urine and a bottle of a blend of the 4 sweets, he reflects: “The homeless life relies on medicine of cow’s urine—you should persevere in that way for life” (V 1:58).⁷¹ He will choose the myrobalan in cow’s urine as medicine. (KhpA 145-147)

(B) **Fewness of wishes regarding ascetic practices** (*dhutaṅg’app’icchatā*). He practises only those austerities that are useful for his personal and meditative progress. He does not in any way wish, “May others know me as an ascetic practitioner!”

(C) **Fewness of wishes regarding learning** (*pariyatti, app’icchatā*). He does not accumulate knowledge for its own sake, nor to boast, “May others me know me as one who is learned!”

⁶⁹ On the golden rule, see **Veḷu, dvāreyya S** (S 55.7,6-12), SD 1.5. For other refs, see DEB, sv.

⁷⁰ Yellow myrobalan or emblic myrobalan (*harītakam vā āmalakam vā*) (SnA 1:146).

⁷¹ *Pūti, mutta, bhesajjam nissāya pabbajjā tattha te yāva, jīvam ussāho karaṇīyo* (Mv 1.30.4 @ V 1:58,20).

(D) **Fewness of wishes regarding attainment** (*adhigam'appa'icchatā*). As for “attainment,” even when he has won any level of awakening, even arhathood, he does wish, “May others know me as having attained a wholesome state!” Such an exemplar is the elder Majjhantika, well known for his modesty. Despite being an arhat, he does not want anyone to know this.⁷² (SnA 2:494)

Further, it is helpful to reflect the fewness of wishes regarding attainments in terms of our own times: The true practitioner sees arhathood as the only final goal in the Buddha’s teaching, without the need or wish for new Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, deities, demons or beings. Where they exist, they are merely understood as skillful means that symbolizes various qualities of the historical Buddha or his Dharma. In other words, these “beings” are only literary devices not to be mistaken as real in themselves, which is wrong view, entailing serious bad karma with subhuman rebirths.

Sn 708. He should live under a tree at the forest’s edge, [709] and there he should joyfully meditate to his best ability.

Sn 709, see Sn 708.

Sn 710. At dawn, he should enter the village for alms, mindfully without any expectation. He should finish his meal and return just as he has left, collecting nothing from the village. **710cd** describes the true sage’s practice of “going for alms from the house to house without missing out any” (*ghara,paṭipāṭiyā piṇḍapātena*, SnA 2:497,2).

Sn 711. While in the village, he should respect families, keep silent, or be mindfully of few words. **711b** means that the true sage, when on alms round, neither takes breaks in his round of houses nor socially engages with the house-people (*ananulomikam gihi,samsaggam na apajjeyya*, SnA 2:497,5 f).

The Commentary advises that a monk should simply be silent, especially when there is no need for speech. When he is ill, if he wishes, he may speak for the purpose of healing his illness. When he is healthy, he should not even hint for a lodging; he should not speak in any way that is insinuating, indirect or suggestive of desiring any other requisites. (SnA 2:497).

Na vacam payutam bhane recurs in the **Kathā,vatthu Sutta** (A 3.67), in a broader context.⁷³ Its commentary explains the line as “one should not speak words that mix lies with truth” (*saccālika,paṭisam-yuttam bhane*, AA 2:314,1-2). The **Mahāvastu** parallel says: “He speaks not desirous words” (*na vācā prepsutām bhane*) (Mvst 3:388,1).⁷⁴ *Prepsā* is the desiderative of *pra + √ĀP*, to obtain, meaning “wish to obtain, desire, longing for”; the adj *prepsu* (mfn) means “wishing to attain, desirous of obtaining, seeking, longing for, aiming at” (SED).

Sn 712. The true sage is happily equanimous whether he receives almsfood or does not: he is said to be “just so” (*tādī*), contented even with a tree-dwelling, where he asserts himself spiritually.

712d: He returns to his tree-dwelling to continue his practice, to have his meal, or to rest—not for inaction or idling. The Commentary seems to take the *-v-* in *rukham'v'upanivattati* as comparative *iva* (SnA 2:497), but it is also possible to read it as the emphatic *eva*.⁷⁵ In such a situation, it is best to be inclusive and let the Pali line speak for itself—the *-v-* is polysemous [717d]. The translation tries to combine these twin senses of the Pali:

(1) One should be a like (*iva*) a person seeking fruits, approaches a tree and whether or not he finds some fruit, he leaves just as he has come, neither delighted nor disheartened. In the same way, a sage approaches families: whether or not he receives anything, he leaves in a neutral state of mind.

⁷² MA 2:139,25 f; AA 1:76,2.

⁷³ A 3.67,12d*/1:199,12), SD 46.11.

⁷⁴ Cf Mvst:J 3:386 n7, which takes it in a different sense.

⁷⁵ The Skt parallel, however, simply reads *rukham vinivartaye*, “he returns to the tree” (Mvst 3:388,5).

(2) Whether the sage receives alms from the village or not, he simply (*eva*) returns to the tree (the same one or a different one) because it is his dwelling, the home of a sage.

Sn 713. On his alms-rounds, he is totally silent, accepting whatever food he is offered from whomever.

Sn 714. Spiritual practice is attended by different kinds of difficulties. We awaken only once, but we there are different stages of progress towards awakening.

714a: The Commentary says that the line “**high and low is way of practice**” (*uccâvacā ... paṭipadā*) is an allusion to the 4 paths of progress (*paṭipadā*), that is, the “high” is that of pleasant progress with quick direct knowledge; the “low,” that of painful progress with slow direct knowledge; in the remaining two paths, the “low” refers to the painful or slow direct knowledge, while the “high” is the pleasant or quick direct knowledge.⁷⁶

714b. There seems to be a wordplay on *samañena*, which can refer either to “the recluse,” that is, the Buddha or to “any recluse.” In the latter case—referring to recluses in general—the verse, then, addresses the 2 extremes (*antā*) rejected by the Buddha in **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11,3), SD 1.1. They do not constitute the path to nirvana. Since neither works, we cannot get there even once. See notes on **714c+d**, especially the BHS reading *śrāmaṇyena* for Pāli *samañena*.

714c: *Na pāraṃ di,guṇaṃ yanti*. The Commentary explain this as meaning: “It is ‘one-way’; they go not to nirvana twice” (*eka,maggam dvi-k,hattum nibbānam na yanti*, SnA 2:497 f). The defilements that have been destroyed by the path cannot and need not be destroyed again.⁷⁷ Yet, although the “far shore” (*pāra*) is reached only once, it can be felt again any time for the arhat.⁷⁸ See notes on **714b+d**.

714d: *Na-y-idaṃ eka,guṇaṃ mutam*. The Commentary explains this as follows: “There is no arhat who touches the far shore only just once” (*tañ ca pāraṃ eka-k,khattum yeva phusan’arahaṃ na hoti*, SnA 2:497,3), that is, there are the 2 kind of nirvana: the first is “with remains” (*sa,upādi,sesa nibbāna,dhātu*), the arhat living with the 5 aggregates, and the final one is “without remains” (*anupādi,sesa nibbāna,dhātu*), when he is no more reborn.⁷⁹ We can also say that nirvana is seen (in different ways) by the 4 kinds of noble individuals—the streamwinner, the once-returner, the non-returner and the arhat.

The Mahāvastu version closely parallels the Pāli, but inverts the lines as cd-ab, thus: *na pāraṃ dvi,-guṇāyati nāpi caivaṃ guṇāyati | uccâvacā pratipadā śrāmaṇyena prakāśitā*, “Neither one goes twice to the far shore nor one goes only once, | high and low are the paths proclaimed by recluseship.” The compound *caivaṃ* should be changed to *caikam* (*ca-ekam*) following the Pali (Mvst:J 3:388 n1). *Śrāmaṇyena* is probably a wrong reading, and should be corrected to *śramaṇena*, as in the Pali.

See also notes on **714b+c**.

Sn 715ab. The one who has overcome craving is no more reborn. He has abandoned the karma of good and bad, and thus free from the “stream” (*sota*) of defilements, such as craving. **715c:** The Commentary glosses this line as referring to the abandonment of both the wholesome and the unwholesome (*kusalâkusala-p,pahīnena*, SnA 2:498,11-13). This is synonymous with “abandoning both good and bad” (*puñña,papa,pahīna*), as stated in **Dh 39**;⁸⁰ “given up good and bad” (*pahāya puñña,pāpaṃ*, Sn 520); “on the utter destruction of good and bad” (*puñña,pāpa,parikkhaya*);⁸¹ “with the utter exhaustion of good and bad” (*puñña,pāpa,parikkhīṇo*).⁸² **715d:** The “fever” (*pariḷāho*), is the heedlessness arising from lust or from hate (*rāga,jo vā dosa,jo vā appamattako*, SnA 2:498,10).

⁷⁶ SnA 2:497,26-498,3. The 4 modes of practice are given in **Paṭipadā Vagga** (A 4.161-170), see esp A 4.167 (SD 46.16). See SD 4.11 (3).

⁷⁷ DA 744,7 f; MA 1:230,1 f.

⁷⁸ See also Mvst 3:389 :: Mvst:J 3:388 n1 qu I B Horner. See lines bd nn.

⁷⁹ See **Sa,upādi,sesa S** (A 9.12), SD 3.3(3).

⁸⁰ SD 2.10 (3.2.3.4).

⁸¹ Vv 992/63.18/92; Pv 19.

⁸² Ap 1:301, 2:488.

Sn 716. When Nālaka thinks that attaining arhathood is easy, the Buddha reminds him to be “sharp” (clear-minded) like a razor (SnA 2:498,13-17). The Commentary, however, interprets this parable, thus: Just as we should carefully lick honey smeared on a razor, so that we do not cut our tongue, so should we made use of properly obtained supports so that defilements do not arise in the mind (SnA 2:498,20-28).

Sn 717. His spiritual effort should be just right, and he should free his mind of thoughts. Without clinging even to thoughts, he will be free of defilements.

717c: “Free from raw stench” (*nirāmagandho*) means “free from defilements,” *nikkilesa*, especially overcoming craving and views (*taṇhā, diṭṭhi*) (SnA 2:499,4-6). **The Āmagandha Sutta** (Sn 2.2) discusses the true nature of *āmagandha* as “raw stench.”⁸³

717d: In the text-note [§39d], we have already noted that *parāyaṇa* can mean either “support” (in a mundane or “instrumental” sense) or as “going across (to the far shore, that is, nirvana)” (in the supermundane sense). *Parāyaṇa* is polysemic and the translation—“as a support for going across.” We should be free from craving and views (*taṇhā, diṭṭhi*) through “crossing over” (*parāyaṇa*) into the 3 trainings (*sikkha-t, taya*), that is the whole of the holy life: *sikkha-t, taya, sakala, sāsana, brahmacariya, parāyaṇo* (SnA 2:499,4-6).⁸⁴ [712d]

Sn 718ab. The Commentary takes *ek’āsana* (“solitary seat”) broadly to mean “solitary dwelling,” that it refers to “all postures” (*vivitt’āsanassa ... sabba, iriya, pathā*) in reference of “bodily solitude” (*kaya, viveka*) (SnA 2:499,7 f). It sees a wordplay on *samañūpāsana* (**718b**), linking *āsana* to “seat,” taking the whole phrase as referring to “mental solitude,” ie, meditation (*citta, viveka*, SnA 2:499,10-12). This is a reference to the 3 kinds of solitude (*viveka*). [See following note.]

718b “And attend to the recluse’s duties” (*samañūpasanassa ca*): this refers to “the cultivation of the 38 meditation-objects” (*aṭṭha, tims’ārammaṇa, bhāvanā*) for the ascetics. These 38 meditation-objects do not seem to be listed in the suttas or Commentaries—they are simply a sum of meditation methods taught in the suttas, but the “38 meditation-objects” (*aṭṭha, tims’ārammaṇa*) or “38 meditations” (*aṭṭha, timsa kammaṭṭhāna*) are often alluded to in the Commentaries.⁸⁵

However, they are fully listed in chapter 7 of Upatissa’s **Vimutti, magga**,⁸⁶ as follows:⁸⁷

10 kasinas (*kaṣiṇa*): those of earth (*pathavī*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*), wind (*vāyo*); blue-green (*nīla*),⁸⁸ yellow (*pīta*), red (*lohita*), white (*odāta*); space (*ākāsa*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*);⁸⁹

⁸³ Sn 2.2/42-45 (Sn 239-252), SD 4.24.

⁸⁴ On the 3 trainings, see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

⁸⁵ The 38 meditation-objects (*aṭṭha, tims’ārammaṇa* or *aṭṭha, timsa kammaṭṭhāna*) are mentioned (not listed) at VA 1:229,16; DA 1:185,32 = MA 1:254,30 = SA 3:184,6 = VbhA 349,7; DA 2:393,23+25 (ad D 1:223,12) = MA 2:413,24 (ad M 1:329,31); DA 644; MA 1:168,25, 195,25, 2:87,25; SA 1:99,9, 104,10 (ad S 1:47,13*); AA 3:111, 266, 4:95; SnA 2:499; J 1:316,23, 5:257,11; PmA 1:166,22; VbhA 118,17. **The 40 meditation subjects:** Vism 89,28, 110,14, 110,20-111,7 full list; Abdhv 90,25 f; AbdhvNT 2:220,23; CA 315,23; VVN 3128; DhsA 168,9. For other refs, see CPD: ²kamma-ṭṭhāna.

⁸⁶ Vimm ch 7. **Vimutti, magga** (Vimm) is an Abhidharma work (pre-5th cent), perhaps from northern India, prob written in Pali, which is lost. It has been full tr into Chin as 解脫道論 *Jiètuō dào lùn* (505) by Saṅghapāla of Funan (Khmer, អានាចក្រនគរភ្នំ or ហ្លួណុន, *anachakr nokoro phnom* or *hvaunan*; Chin 扶南 *Fúnán*, Mekong delta, Khmer). Buddhaghosa used it as the basis of his Visuddhi, magga (Vism). While Vimm reflects the Abhayagiri ideology, Vism represents that of the Mahāvihāra in Sri Lanka. Eng tr of Chin by N R M Ehara, Soma & Kheminda, **The Path of Freedom** (Vimm:ESK), Colombo, 1961:63.

⁸⁷ For the 40 meditations (Vism 3.104-133/110-112), see Abhs §§6-11 (Abhs:BRS 332-338); SD 15.1 (Fig 8.1); DEB (App 2). On meditation in general, see **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1.

⁸⁸ “Blue-green” or verdigris (*nīla*). Buddhaghosa describes it as “greenish blue [verdigris] (*kaṁsa nīla*), leaf-green (*palāsa nīla*), collyrium blue (*añjana nīla*), surrounding it with a different colour element. See SD 15.1 (9.2.2); SD 15.12 (9.1).

- 10 perceptions (*saññā*) of (the stages of bodily) decomposition: those of the bloated (*uddhumātaka*), the livid (*vinīlaka*), festering (*vipubbaka*), the cut-up (*vikkhitaka*), the gnawed (*vikkhāyitaka*), the hacked and cut-up (scattered) (*hata,vikkhitaka*), the bleeding (*lohītaka*), the fissured (*vicchiddaka*), the worm-infested (*puḷvaka*) and bones (*aṭṭhika*);⁹⁰
- 10 recollections (*anussati*): those of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*), the Dharma (*dhammānussati*), the sangha (*saṅghānussati*), moral virtue (*sīlānussati*), charity (*cāgānussati*), deities (*devatā'nussati*); death (*maraṇānussati*), mindfulness regarding the body (*kaya,gatā,sati*),⁹¹ mindfulness of the breath (*ānāpāna,sati*) and peace (*upasamānussati*);⁹²
- 4 immeasurables (*appamañña*):⁹³ the cultivation of lovingkindness (*mettā,bhāvanā*), compassion (*karuṇā,-bhāvanā*), gladness (*muditā,bhāvanā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā,bhāvanā*);
- 1 delimitation (*vavatthāna*): the analyses of the 4 elements (*catu,dhātu,vavatthāna*), of earth, water, fire and wind;
- 1 perception of the loathsomeness [foulness] of food (*āhāre paṭikkula,saññā*);⁹⁴
- 1 the base of nothingness (*ākiñcaññ'āyatana*); and
- 1 the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n'eva,saññā,nāsaññ'āyatana*).⁹⁵

718c: The Commentary says that “aloneness or solitude” of sagehood (*mona*) is “on account of the solitude of body and mind” (*kaya,citta,viveka,vasena*) (SnA 2:499,16 f). This may be understood as referring to living a life of moral virtue and sense-restraint (bodily solitude) for the purpose and benefit of mental cultivation and stillness, including dhyana where possible (mental solitude). Broadly, as here, mental solitude includes the states of the Buddha and the saints. The 3rd kind of solitude is the “solitude from the substrates” (*upadhi,viveka*). The “substrates” (*upadhi*) are the defilements (*kilesa*), the aggregates (*khandha*) and formations (*abhisankhāra*) (or karma). “The solitude from the substrates” refers to the death-free, nirvana.⁹⁶

The purpose of the holy life is to win nirvana. Hence, the sage should live a solitary life dedicated to recluseship,⁹⁷ enjoying the joy of aloneness.

Sn 719. Through his practice and attainment, the true sage’s fame will spread through the 10 directions (east, south, north, west, those in between, above and below), that is, everywhere. The silent sage who has

⁸⁹ “Consciousness kasina,” A 1.20.72/1:41 [A:B 1.465]; A 10.29,4 (SD 16.15). For the last 2, Vism substitutes “perception of light” (*āloka,kasiṇa*) and “perception of limited space” (*paricchinn'ākāsa,kasiṇa*) (Vism 3.105/110). See n below on the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

⁹⁰ The Vimm sequence is: *uddhumātaka, vinīlaka, vipubbaka, vikkhitaka, vikkhāyitaka, hata,vikkhitaka, vicchiddaka, lohītaka, puḷvaka* and *aṭṭhika*.

⁹¹ Technically, in the suttas, this is the “**perception of the impurities**” (*asubha,saññā*) or simply “the impurities” (*asubha* or *asucī*): **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S**, D 22,5/2:293, SD 13; **Ānāpāna,sati S**, M 10,10/1:57 (SD 13 = SD 7.13); **Giri-m-ānanda S**, A 10.60/5:109 (SD 15.15), *asubha,saññā* (perception of foulness) or simply *asubha* (the foul) or *asucī* (the impurities). It refers to the observing of the 31 parts of the body, of which the Comys list 32 parts, adding “brain (in the head)” (*matthake matthaluṅgam*) (KhP 3/2, Pm 1:6 f, Vism 8.42-144/236-266 & KhpA 60), calling them *kāya,gata sati* (mindfulness of the body)—which in **Kāya.gatā,sati S** (M 119,7) broadly refers to “body-based contemplation” (*kāyānupassanā*), SD 12.21.

⁹² The recollection of peace (*upasamānussati*) refers to the meditation on nirvana (M 140,28), SD 4.17.

⁹³ *Catasso appamañña*, D 3:223 f. Vimm: *appamañña,citta*.

⁹⁴ Sometimes known as “the one perception” (*eka,saññā*) (Ap 1:121,10-11; ApA 396; Ap 210,4).

⁹⁵ The base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. In the above sutta list of **kasinas**, the space kasina and the consciousness kasina: technically, they are identical with the base of boundless space and the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, respectively. Vism adds the light kasina (*āloka kasiṇa*) and the limited space kasina (*paricchinn'ākāsa kasiṇa*), making a total of 40 meditation methods (Vism 3.104-133/110-112).

⁹⁶ See **Viveka,nissita**, SD 20.4 (4.2).

⁹⁷ A better term here would be “**reclusehood**,” although it is a neologism, but a helpful one in reminding us that it is a state that is not bestowed on one, but arises naturally as a result of one’s spiritual efforts.

given up sense-pleasures will inspire the Buddha’s disciples in their moral life and spiritual faith in their practice.

Sn 719d: “**Hearing the silent fame**” (*sutvā ... nigghosam*) is a beautiful wordplay on an oxymoron, where *nigghosa* (literally, “without sound or voice” = *moneyya* or *mona*, “sagehood,” the wisdom of blissful silence. The Commentary explains *nigghosa* (literally, “voicing out”) as “the sound of glory,” (*kitti,ghosa*, SnA 2:499,22). The meaning is that “The wise proclaim him.” It also has a different sense at **818** (“outcry”) and **1061** (“proclamation”). At **959**, *nigghosa* means “noise-free.” These examples attest to the polysemy of *nigghosa* and many Pali words [comy 722 n]. Clearly, *nigghosa* is a play on the silence of the sage.⁹⁸

In **719d**, note also that *māmako* (“mine”) is singular and clearly refers to Nālaka. See note in the translation.

Sn 720. Small streams flow noisily, while the ocean moves silently. Fools are like small streams; the wise like the ocean. **[721]** The fully awakened is peacefully filled with wisdom, like a full lake. The foolish, like a half-filled pot, knowing little, but talks as if he know everything.

Sn 721, see 720.

Sn 722. The recluse, when he speaks much, speaks only meaningful and purposeful Dharma on the spiritual training and nirvana. The true sage is self-restrained, speaking much from experience and wisdom. He is a worthy sage because he is awakened. **722b:** The Commentary (alluding to line c, too) explains *attha,samhita* as “endowed with good means endowed with *attha*, endowed with *dhamma*” (*atth’upetaṃ dhamm’upetaṃ ca hitena ca saṃhitaṃ*, SnA 500,13 f). *Attha* here is polysemic.⁹⁹ This explanation is best understood in the light of *attha,veda dhamma,veda*, “joy in the meaning, joy in the teaching.”¹⁰⁰

This verse and its commentary can be taken as an explanation of the word *upaññissam* [**701a = 716a**] and *upaññāta*.¹⁰¹

Sn 723b. “**Knowing, he speaks not much,**” means “Knowing that what is spoken does not bring good and happiness to beings, he does not speak much of that” (*yaṃ bhasitaṃ sattānaṃ hita,sukhāvahaṃ na hoti taṃ jānaṃ bahu bhāsati*, SnA 2:500,26f). Here the Commentary seems to limit the sage’s “silence” to selective speech. According to **the Muni Sutta** (Sn 1.12), the *muni* is an anchorite (who lives or wanders alone) or a hermit (who lives a solitary life in a small group) (Sn 207-221, SD 109.5).

One is not versed in Dharma	who merely speaks much.
One who, hearing but little,	who sees truth directly [personally]—
he is truly one ‘versed in the Dharma,’	who is not heedless of the truth.” (Dh 259)

Sn 723d. The Commentary defines **sagehood** (*mona*) in terms of spiritual practice and liberation, thus: “one who is worthy of sagehood is one reckoned as being on the path of sagehood” (*moneyya,paṭipadā,-saṅkhataṃ monaṃ arahati*); “one who has reached sagehood is reckoned to have attained the path-knowledge of arhathood” (*arahatta,magga,ñāṇa,sāṅkhataṃ monaṃ ajjhagā*) (SnA 2:500,27 f). In short, the Commentary equates the sage (*muni*) with an arhat.

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⁹⁸ See SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2).

⁹⁹ For another polysemy, see **Sn 696b**; see comy 719d. On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1 f).

¹⁰⁰ See (**Agata,phala**) **Mahānāma S** (A 6.10) SD 15.3 (4); SD 10.16 (3.4.3.2).

¹⁰¹ (**Duka**) **Upaññāta S** (A 2.5) + SD 51.5 (5.1.1 + 5.1.2.1).

The Nālaka Discourse

Sn 3.11

THE INTRODUCTORY VERSES

(Vatthu, gāthā)¹⁰²

Asita's vision

[Narrator:]

<p>1 <i>Ānanda, jāte ti, dasa, gaṇe patīte sakkañ ca indaṃ suci, vasane ca deve dussaṃ gahe tvā atiriva thomayante asito isi addasa diva, vihāre</i></p>	<p>[132] 679</p>	<p>During his day-rest, the seer Asita saw the joyful and revelling host of 30¹⁰³ and Sakra, lord of the devas, in clean clothes, holding cloth, praising exceedingly.¹⁰⁴</p>	<p><i>d</i> <i>a</i> <i>b</i> <i>c</i></p>
<p>2 <i>Disvāna deve mudita, mane udagge cittim karitvāna idam avoca tattha kiṃ deva, saṅgho atiriva kalya, rūpo dussaṃ gahe tvā ramayatha kiṃ paṭicca</i></p>	<p>680</p>	<p>Seeing the devas glad and joyful, showing regard, said this to them, “Why is the deva host exceeding glad? Why do they hold cloth, twirling them about?”</p>	
<p>3 <i>Yadā 'pi āsī asurehi saṅgamo jayo surānaṃ asurā parājītā tadā 'pi n'etādiso loma, haṃsano kim abbhutaṃ daṭṭhu marū pamoditā</i></p>	<p>681</p>	<p>Even after a battle with the asuras, a victory for the devas, defeat for the asuras,¹⁰⁵ there is no such hair-raising excitement: having seen what marvel do the gods rejoice?¹⁰⁶</p>	
<p>4 <i>Seḷenti gāyanti ca vādayanti ca bhujāni phoṭenti ca naccayanti ca pucchāmi vo 'haṃ meru, muddha, vāsine dhunātha me saṃsayaṃ khippa, mārisā</i></p>	<p>682</p>	<p>They whistle¹⁰⁷ and sing and play music; they slap their arms and dance; I ask you, dwellers of Meru's crest: hasten to dispel my doubt, dear sirs!¹⁰⁸</p>	

[The devas:]

<p>5 <i>So bodhi, satto ratana, varo atulyo manussa, loke hita, sukhatāya jāto</i></p>	<p>“The Bodhisattva, incomparable, noble jewel, is born in the human world for its good and joy,</p>
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¹⁰² These 20 verses [679-698] are called *vatthu, gāthā* by Comy (SnA 2:483,18). See Jayawickrama 1978a:13. They are ascribed to Ānanda at the time of the 1st Council (*saṅgīti*). See Sn:N 300: n679-723.

¹⁰³ “Host of 30,” *ti, dasa, gaṇe*, a poetic ref to the 33 devas (*tāva, tiṃsa*): see SD 1.7 App.

¹⁰⁴ For the *Asita story* refs, see (1.1.37) n.

¹⁰⁵ Asita is able to know this on account of his power of recollecting the past and the future: see (6.1.1) n ad loc.

¹⁰⁶ Comy relates, in this connection, the story of *how the youth Magha becomes Sakra* (SnA 2:484 f). The full story is at DhA 2.7b/1:264-272 (tr DhA:B 1:314-319). *Sakra's 7 vows* are at *Vata, pada S* (S 11.11/1:228), SD 54.12.

¹⁰⁷ *Seḷenti*, (Comy *seḷanti*), pl of *seleti* (ab obscure word), Comy glosses as “to produce a whistling sound with the mouth” (*mukhena usselana, saddaṃ muñcati*, SnA 2:485,25 ≈ VAT:Be 2:373,24 which adds “it mean to go on making loud silly sounds” (*mahantaṃ katvā abyatta, saddaṃ pavattenṭīti attho*); “to make rowdy noises with the mouth” (*seḷentiṭṭi mukhena seḷita, saddaṃ karonti*); DAT 2:39 ≈ MAT:Be 2:341 on *seḷana*. See CPD: ussel(h)ana.

¹⁰⁸ Aṅguttara Comy: *Mārisa* is a vocative term of endearment, used esp by deities (*mārisāti piya, vacanam etaṃ, devatānaṃ paṭiyekko vohāro*, DA 2:698,27). SED equates P *mārisā* with *mādrīsa*, from *mādrīś*, “like me, resembling me.”

*sakyāna gāme janapade lumbineyye
tenamha tuṭṭhā atiriva kalya,rūpā*

in Lumbinī village, in the country of the Sakyas.
683 Hence, we rejoice exceedingly in festive form.¹⁰⁹

6 *So sabba,satt'uttamo agga,puggalo
nar'āsabho sabba,pajānam uttamo* [133]
*vattessati cakkam isi,vhaye vane
nadaṃ'va sīho balavā migābhibhū*

Supreme amongst beings,¹¹⁰ foremost person is he:
a bull among men, supreme amongst all mankind.
He'll turn the wheel in the park called Seer [*isi*],
684 like a roaring lion, mighty overlord of the beasts.”

Asita and the child Bodhisattva

[Narrator:]

7 *Taṃ saddaṃ sutvā turitam avaṃsarī¹¹¹ so
suddhodanassa tada bhavanam upāvisi
nisajja tattha idam avocāsi¹¹² sakyē*

Hearing that word, he hurried down,
and went to Suddhodana's abode.
Seated there, he told the Sakyas,

[Asita:]

kuhiṃ kumāro aham api daṭṭhu,kāmo

685 “Where is the boy [prince], I wish to see him.”

[Narrator:]

8 *Tato kumāram jalitam iva suvaṇṇam
ukkā,mukh'eva sukusala,sampahaṭṭham
daddallamānam siriya anoma,vaṇṇam
dassesu puttam asita,vhayassa sakyā*

Then, the boy blazing just like gold,
fashioned so skillfully at the furnace's mouth,
resplendent in glory, perfect in complexion—
686 the Sakyas showed the boy to him named Asita.

9 *Disvā kumāram sikhim iva pajjalantam
tārāsabham va nabhasi,gamaṃ visuddham
suriyam tapantam sarada-r-iv'abbha,muttam
ānanda,jāto vipulam,alattha pītim*

Seeing the boy, like crested flame,
pure bright lord of stars, crossing the heavens,
burning like the sun in the cloudless autumn sky,
687 he was overjoyed, welling in abundant bliss.

10 *Aneka,sākhaṃ ca sahassa,maṇḍalam
chattam marū dhārayum antalikkhe
suvaṇṇa,daṇḍā vītipatanti cāmarā
na dissare cāmara,chatta,gāhakā* [134] **688**

They held up in the sky a parasol¹¹³ of *b*
countless ribs and a thousand circled tiers,¹¹⁴ *a*
golden handled yak-tailed whisks fanned,
but the bearers of whisks and parasols are unseen.

¹⁰⁹ Comy: They joy arises from the fact that with the advent of the Buddha, they (the gods), as well as humans, will be able to attain the path of awakening as learners (*sekha*)—streamwinners, once-returns and non-returns—and adepts (*asekha*), arhats, ie the 4 kinds of noble individuals. (SnA 2:486).

¹¹⁰ Comy gloss *sattā* as “devas [gods] and humans” (*deva.manussa*), and *pajā* (line b) as “the rest of the courses or realms (of beings)” (*sesa,gāti*) (SnA 2:486,19). *Pajā*, however, refers only to humans. Hence, the senses of the two words apply more correctly in reverse, ie, *sattā* refers to all beings in general, while *pajā* to “devas and humans.”

¹¹¹ Be *avasari*; Ce Se *avasari*; Ee SnA:Ce *avaṃsarī*.

¹¹² Ce Ee *avocāsi*; Be (Phayre) *avoca cāpi*; Be Se *avocāpi*.

¹¹³ “A parasol,” *chatta*, ie, a white celestial parasol (*dibba,seta-c,chattam*, SnA 2:487,10) [Sn 689c]. The white parasol (*chatta*) and the fly-whisk (*camara*) are emblems of royalty. The fivefold royal regalia (*kakudha,bhaṇḍa*) are: (1) the crown (main symbol of kingship), (2) the sword (symbolizing military might), (3) the royal staff (justice), (4) the royal fan (golden) and fly-whisk (hair from the white elephant's tail), and (5) the royal slippers (golden). An important in situ (fixed) royal emblem is the 9-tiered white parasol, which hangs above the king in state. See SD 36.10 (5.4.2.4).

¹¹⁴ V Comy speaks of 2 kinds of umbrellas: (1) with the handle attached to the ribs in the umbrella's centre (like a modern umbrella) (*maṇḍala,baddha*) and with the handle attached to the rim (*salāka,baddha*): see Sn:N 304 n688. However, from the sutta account, we could imagine that the celestial parasol actually has no handle at all (like the

- 11 *Disvā jaṭī kaṇha,siri,vhayo isi
suvanṇa,nikkham viya paṇḍu,kambale
setañ ca chattam dhariyanta muddhani
udagga,citto sumano paṭiggaha* 689 The matted-hair¹¹⁵ seer, Kaṇha,siri,¹¹⁶ having seen him like a gold ornament on a red blanket,¹¹⁷ with a white parasol being held above him, heart uplifted, joyful minded, received him.
- 12 *Paṭiggahetvā pana sakya,puṅgavam
jigīsako lakkhaṇa,manta,pāragū
pasanna,citto giram abbhudīrayi
anuttarāyam dvi,padānam uttamo* 690 Holding the bull of the Sakyas, the master of signs¹¹⁸ and mantra-expert, with a radiant heart, he raised his voice, “The peerless one, supreme of the two-legged!”
- 13 *Ath’attano gamanam anussaranto
akalya,rūpo gaḷayati assukāni
disvāna sakyā isim avocum rudantam
No ve kumāre bhavissati antarāyo¹¹⁹* 691 Then, recalling his own departure, downcast, his tears rolled off. Seeing the seer sorrowing, the Sakyas asked, “Surely, there’s no danger to the child!”
- 14 *Disvāna sakyē isim avoca akalye
nāham kumāre ahitam anussarami
na cāp’imassa bhavissati antarāyo
na orakāyam adhimanasā¹²¹ bhavātha* 692 Seeing the Sakyas saddened, the seer said, “I see¹²⁰ neither harm to the boy nor danger will there be to him— This is no mean gain.¹²² Be not concerned!”
- 15 *Sambodhi-y-aggam phussissat’āyam kumāro
so dhamma,cakkaṃ parama,visuddha,dassī
vattessat’āyam bahu,jana,hitānukampī
vitthārik’assa bhavissati brahma,cariyam* 693 This boy will flower into foremost awakening; who sees the perfectly pure Dharma-wheel.¹²³ Out of compassion, good for the many, he will turn this Dharma-wheel. widely renowned will be his holy life. [135]
- 16 *Mamañ ca āyu na cīram idhāvaseso
ath’antarā me bhavissati kāla,kiriyā
so’ham na sossam asama,dhurassa dhammam
ten’amhi aṭṭo vyasanañ,gato aghāvī* 694 But my time not long remains; my time will be done before then.¹²⁴ I will not hear the teaching of the one of the peerless task. Thus, disaster is mine, miserable!”

royal umbrella hanging from the ceiling of the throne hall of the Thai king. Such an umbrella must be suspended in the air or held by some deva by its peak from above.

¹¹⁵ Comy glosses *jaṭī* as “matter-hair ascetic” (*jaṭila*) (SnA 487,13).

¹¹⁶ Meaning “black glory,” since he is of dark complexion and greatly wise seer (*isi*) (SnA 2:483,25).

¹¹⁷ “Red blanket”: In the cpd *paṇḍu,kambala*, **paṇḍu** (Ved *pāṇḍu, palita, pāṭala*) is a colour that have a range of red, reddish, light red, and pale/light yellow, and *kambala* is a woollen blanket. Comy however glosses *paṇḍu,-kambala* as “red woollen blanket” (*ratta,kambala*, SnA 2:487,15).

¹¹⁸ “Signs,” *lakkhaṇa*, ie, the 32 marks of the great man and its 80 lesser tokens: see SD 36.9 (3+4). See [1.2.2.1].

¹¹⁹ **Sn 691d**: All read *No ce ...*. It would read better with the emphatic *ve*, which we follow here. B Comy here has: “They asked ... ‘Is there to be some stumbling-block for our young master?’” (BA:M) (*Kin nu kho bhante amhākaṃ ayya,puttassa koci antarāyo bhavissati ti pucchimsu*, BA 277,3). Hence, although *no* can be read as the interrogative *nu*, we can simply read it as it is, meaning “our.”

¹²⁰ “I see,” a contextual tr of *anussarāmi*: see (Sn 681).

¹²¹ Be *adhimānasā*; Ce Ee Se *adhimanasā* (pref).

¹²² “This is no mean gain,” **na orakāyam**. I see a wordplay in *-āyam*, reading it as *ayam*, “this” and as *āya*, “coming in, arrival, source; inlet, entrance; income, revenue; profit” (S 1:59,20; A 4:282,19; Sn 978).

¹²³ Be *parama,visuddhi*, “perfect purity.” Hence, line c can alt read: “who sees the Dharma-wheel of perfect purity.” Comy glosses **parama,visuddha,dassī** as “the seer of nirvana” (*nibbāna,dassī*, SnA 2:489,6). Here, the Dharma-wheel symbolizes both the teaching and its goal, nirvana.

¹²⁴ “Before then” (**ath’antare**), ie, Asita will pass away before the Buddha’s awakening (SnA 2:489,9).

Instructions to Nālaka

[Narrator:]

- 17 *So sākiyānaṃ vipulaṃ janetvā pītiṃ
ante, puramhā niggamā brahma, cārī
so bhāgineyyaṃ sayāṃ anukampamāno
samādapesi asama, dhurassa dhamme* 695
- Having inspired abundant joy in the Sakyas, he left the inner palace. The brahmachari,¹²⁵ out of compassion for his own nephew, urged him to undertake the peerless task in the Dharma.

[Asita:]

- 18 *Buddho 'ti ghosaṃ yada parato suṇāsi
sambodhi, patto vivarati dhammamaggaṃ*¹²⁶
*gantvāna tattha samayaṃ paripucchamāno
carassu tasmim bhagavati brahma, cariyaṃ* 696
- “When you hear from another the sound ‘Buddha,’ then, he has revealed the foremost teaching [the Dharma-path].¹²⁷ Having gone there, asking about this doctrine, live the holy life under the Lord.”

[Narrator:]

- 19 *Tenānusiṭṭho hita, manasena*¹²⁸ *tādinā
anāgate parama, visuddha, dassinā
so nālako upacita, puñña, sañcayo
jinaṃ patikkhaṃ parivasi rakkhit'indriyo* 697
- Having been counselled with such good by him who sees highest purity to come, Nālaka, who has himself piled up merits, with faculties guarded, dwelled awaiting the Conqueror.
- 20 *Sutvāna ghosaṃ jina, vara, cakka, vattane
gantvāna disvā isi, nisabhaṃ pasanno* [136] *moneyya, seṭṭhaṃ muni, pavaraṃ apucchi
samāgate asitā, vhayassa sāsane 'ti* 698
- Hearing word of the Conqueror’s noble wheel-turning,¹²⁹ he went and saw the mighty bull of seers, with faith, he asked the noble sage about the highest sagehood¹³⁰— the prophecy of the one called Asita is fulfilled.

The introductory verses concluded (*Vatthu, gāthā niṭṭhitā*)

¹²⁵ “Brahmachari,” *brahma, cārī*, “one who lives the celibate holy life,” here referring to Asita.

¹²⁶ The embedded “m” is Romanized (while the rest of the word is italicized) to indicate its polysemy [comy 722 n]. See foll n.

¹²⁷ Comy glosses *dhammamagga* as both *dhamma, magga* and as *dhammam, agga* (SnA 2:489,27-29; see Miln 21,29 + Miln:H 29 n5). The alt tr shows that there are two possible readings here, both of which apply. As a path, Comy explains *dhamma, magga* as “the path to nirvana, the highest reality” (*paramattha, dhammassa nibbānassa maggaṃ*, SnA 2:489,27).

¹²⁸ Be Se *hita, manena*; Ce Ee *hita, manasena*.

¹²⁹ Comy says that Nālaka meets the Buddha on the 7th day after the Buddha’s 1st discourse (SnA 2:490).

¹³⁰ Comy glosses “the highest sagehood” (*moneyya, seṭṭhaṃ*) as “supreme knowledge, path-knowledge” (*ñāṇ'uttamaṃ magga, ñāṇaṃ*), ie, sainthood (SnA 2:490,23).

NĀLAKA'S VERSES¹³¹

(*Nālaka Gāthā)

or, The (Nālaka) Discourse on Sagehood, (Nālaka) Moneyya Sutta

[Nālaka:]

- 21 *Aññātam etaṃ vacanaṃ
asitassa yathā, tathaṃ
taṃ taṃ gotama pucchāmi
sabba, dhammāna pāraguṃ* 699 “Having understood this utterance
of Asita to be true to reality,
I ask you about this, Gotama,
who has gone beyond all states [dharmas].¹³²
- 22 *Anagāriy'upetassa
bhikkhā, cariyāṃ jigimsato¹³³
muni pabrūhi me puṭṭho
moneyyaṃ uttamaṃ padaṃ* 700 Having gone into homelessness.
there is desire to go on alms-round.¹³⁴
Tell me, O sage, who have asked,
about the supreme state of sagehood.”

[The Buddha:]

- 23 *Moneyyaṃ te upaññissam
(iti bhagavā)
dukkaraṃ durabhisambhavaṃ
handā te naṃ pavakkhāmi
santhambhassu dalho bhava* [Sn 716a] 701 “I shall show you how to gain¹³⁵ sagehood,
(said the Blessed One:)
difficult to practise, difficult to attain.
Now then, I will tell you about it:
Be resolute,¹³⁶ be firm!¹³⁷
- 24 *Samāna, bhāgam¹³⁸ kubbetha
gāme akkuṭṭha, vanditaṃ
mano, padosaṃ rakkheyya
santo anuññato care* [137] 702 Cultivate an even mind, responding alike,¹³⁹
to abuse and homage in the village.
You should guard against a troubled mind:
fare on in peace, not haughty.¹⁴⁰
- 25 *Uccāvacā niccharanti
dāye¹⁴² aggi, sikhūpamā* 703 High and low [Good and bad]¹⁴¹ emerge
like the crests of flames in a forest fire.

¹³¹ For a Skt parallel, see Mvst 3:382, 386-389 (tr Mvst:J 3:379, 385-388).¹³² Or, “the transceiver of all states.” Comy explains that **Sn 699d** refers to the 6 aspects (*ākāra*) of transcending of all states (*dhama*) as stated in **Hemavata S** (Sn 1.9) (SnA 2:491,5-7): this is the discarding of all clinging to world, ie, the 5 cords of sense-pleasures and the mind as the 6th (*channam eva upādāya chassu loko vihaññati*, **Sn 169d**; see **169-172**).¹³³ Be *jigīsati*; Ee Se *jigimsato*.¹³⁴ Sn 700b: see (6.2) ad loc.¹³⁵ “I shall teach you how to taste,” *upaññasim* [701a=706a], fut 1 sg of *upajānāti*, “to know for oneself.” This means: “I shall show you from my own experience, not taught by others.” See (6.2) ad loc for comy & **(Duka) Upañ-ñāta S** (A 2.5) + SD 51.5 (5.1.1 + 5.1.2.1). See also CPD & DP: *upa-jānāti*.¹³⁶ Comy glosses *santhambassu* (2 sg imp) as “prop yourself with the support of effort with ability that is difficult to muster” (*dukkara, karaṇa, samatthena viriyūpatthambhena attānaṃ upatthambhaya*, SnA 2:491,27-29).¹³⁷ Comy glosses *dalho bhava* “Be firm, be not lax in endeavour, able to endure what is difficult to obtain!” (*dura-bhisambhava, sahana, samatthāya asithila, parakkamatāya thiro hohi*, SnA 2:491,29 f).¹³⁸ **Sn 702a**: Be Ce SnA *samāna, bhāgam*; Ee Se *samāna, bhāvam*. The Comy lemma (SnA 2:492,9 and all other eds) and Mvst 3:387,6 give *-bhāgam*. See (6.2) ad loc.¹³⁹ This line is a free amplified tr to tease out the sense of the Pali.¹⁴⁰ See (6.2) ad loc.¹⁴¹ **Sn 703a**: *Uccāvacā* (mf; ts), lit, “high and low,” (idiomatic) “this and that,” good and bad (ie, karma); various, diverse, manifold: for refs, see CPD sv.

<p><i>nāriyo munim palobhenti</i>¹⁴³ <i>tā su tam mā palobhayum</i></p>	<p>703 Women may try to tempt the sage— may they not tempt you.¹⁴⁴</p>
<p>26 <i>Virato methunā dhammā</i> <i>hitvā kāme paro 'pare</i>¹⁴⁶ <i>aviruddho asāratto</i> <i>pāñesu tasa,thāvare</i></p>	<p>704 Refraining from sexual intercourse,¹⁴⁵ having abandoned sense-pleasures, fine or coarse, neither adverse nor attached to beings, moving or still.¹⁴⁷</p>
<p>27 <i>Yathā aham tathā ete</i> <i>yathā ete tathā aham</i> <i>attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā</i> <i>na haneyya na ghātaye</i></p>	<p>705 As I am, so are these; as these are, so am I.¹⁴⁸ Comparing oneself to others,¹⁴⁹ let one neither kill nor cause to kill.</p>
<p>28 <i>Hitvā icchañ ca lobhañ ca</i> <i>yattha satto puthujjano</i> <i>cakkhumā paṭipajjeyya</i> <i>tareyya narakam imam</i></p>	<p>706 Having abandoned longing and greed,¹⁵⁰ wherein the worldling is stuck,¹⁵¹ as one with eyes he should walk the path so that he would cross over this hell.¹⁵²</p>
<p>29 <i>Ūnūdarō mit 'āhāro</i> <i>app 'icchassa alolupo</i></p>	<p>Without a full belly,¹⁵³ measured in food,¹⁵⁴ with few wishes,¹⁵⁵ not greedy.¹⁵⁶</p>

¹⁴² *Dāya* [Skt *dāva*, forest fire; wood = easily inflammable; related to *dunoti* (to burn), caus *dāvayati*; cf Gr. *δαίω* (to burn) & P *dava* (1) (PED)] wood; jungle, forest; a grove (V 1:10 (*miga*~), 15, 350, 2:138; S 2:152 (*tiṇa*~), 4:189 (*bahu,kaṇṭaka* ~ = jungle); A 5:337 (*tiṇa*~); J 3:274, 6:278. See also *dāva*. *Dāy,pāla*, a grove keeper (V 1:350; M 1:205).

¹⁴³ Sn 703c: *Palobhenti* = *palobhayanti* (in the sense of “attempt to seduce or tempt”), see Thī 387 + Thī:N 143 n387.

¹⁴⁴ See (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁴⁵ See (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁴⁶ *Paro 'pare*, lit, “high and low,” (idiomatic) good and bad (ethical or aesthetic), all kinds. = *uccāvaca* [§25a]. Here, “high” is meditative or dhyanic bliss, and the low (or coarse) is sense-based stillness and joy. See also **Brahma Nimantanika S** (M 49,9c*), SD 11.7.

¹⁴⁷ “Moving or still,” *tasa,thāvare*. Here, this Pali idiom incl the senses: (1) worldlings (the “moving”) and saints (the “still”) or (2) beings (people etc) who are spiritually cultivated (“still”) uncultivated. = *tasā vā thāvarā vā*: **Karaṇīya Metta S** (Khp 9,4b = Sn 146b) + SD 38.3 (5.3).

¹⁴⁸ Lines ab is an expression of specific conditionality applied to Buddhist ethics. On specific conditionality (*idap,-paccayatā*), see SD 5.16 (2).

¹⁴⁹ These 2 lines recur at Dh 129 f. The ideas expressed in this verse is the basis for the “golden rule”: see SD 1.5 (1.2).

¹⁵⁰ See (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁵¹ There is a beautiful wordplay with *satto*, which normally means “a being,” but here it can also mean “stuck”: past part of *sajjati* (from √SAÑJ, “to hang”), “to hang (on), cling (to), be attached (to)” (V 1:185; D 2:246; Dh 342; J 1:376),

¹⁵² “Hell” (*naraka*) refers to “wrong livelihood” (*micch 'ājīva*) and “craving for the supports” (*paccaya,tanḥā*) (SnA 2:494,4 f).

¹⁵³ “Without a full belly,” *ūnūdarō* = *ūna* + *udara*, which Comy glosses as “not having a bloated belly” (*uddhumā-tūdarō*, SnA 2:494.14-16). As “unfilled belly,” see *dīgha,raṭṭam ūnōdarō* (vl *onādarō*), “with empty belly all night long” (DhA 1:170,23). But here, it is not an “unfilled or empty belly,” but rather practicing moderation in food, ie, stopping before one feels full: see SD 37.13, How Pasenadi overcame his gluttony. Cf opp: *udarāvadeham bhūñjati*, see (**Majjhima(Ceto,khila) S** (M 16,23), SD 32.14.

¹⁵⁴ This line recurs at **Sāriputta Tha** (Tha 982 c).

¹⁵⁵ See (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁵⁶ See (6.2) ad loc.

- sadā icchāya nicchāto*¹⁵⁷
aniccho hoti nibbuto
- 30** *Sa piṇḍa, cāraṃ caritvā*
van'antam abhihāraye
upaṭṭhito rukkha, mūlasmim
asanūpagato muni
- 31** *Sa jhāna, pasuto dhīro*
van'ante ramito siyā
jhāyetha rukkha, mūlasmim
attānam abhito sayam
- 32** *Tato ratyā vivasāne*
gām'antam abhihāraye
avhānam nābhinandeyya
abhihāraṇ ca gāmato
- 33** *Na munī gāmam āgama*
kulesu sahasā care
ghās'esanam china, katha
na vācam payutam bhaṇe
- 34** *Alattham yad idam sadhu*
nālattham kusalam iti
ubhayen'eva so tādi
rukkham'v'upanivattati [137]
- 35** *Sa patta, pāṇi vicaranto*
amūgo mūga, sammato
appam dānam na hīleyya
dātāram nāvajāniyā
- 36** *Uccāvacā hi paṭipadā*
samaṇena pakāsītā
- 707 Never at all hungry with yearning,
having no wishes—cooled is he.
- 708 Having walked on his alms-round,
the sage brings himself to the forest's edge.
Setting himself up¹⁵⁸ at the foot of a tree,
the sage takes his seat there.
- 709 One wise in meditation [one intent on dhyana]
should delight in the forest-edge.
Let him meditate at the foot of a tree,
to his heart's content.
- 710 Then, when the night is ended,
he should bring himself to the village;
he should delight neither in collecting alms
nor in bringing anything from the village.¹⁵⁹
- 711 The sage who has come to a village
shall not act disruptively with families,¹⁶⁰
he cuts off talk about search for food,
he utters not an ulterior word.¹⁶¹
- 712 'That which is received is good,
what is not received is well,¹⁶² too.'
In either case, he is simply just so:¹⁶³
he simply returns to the tree.¹⁶⁴
- 713 Wandering about, bowl in hand,
he's not dumb, but regarded to be so.
He should neither despise a small offering
nor scorn the giver.
- For, high and low¹⁶⁵ is the way of practice¹⁶⁶
proclaimed by the recluse.¹⁶⁷ There is

¹⁵⁷ *Nicchāto*: from *ni* (“out, down, not”) + *chāta* (“hungry”): “free from hunger” (here used figuratively to mean “free from craving”).

¹⁵⁸ “Setting himself up” (*upaṭṭhito*), “standing at the foot of a tree” (SnA 2:495,14 f). Its n form is *upaṭṭhāna*, as in *sati'upaṭṭhana*, “setting up (or foundation, focus) of mindfulness” [SD 13.1(3.1.2)].

¹⁵⁹ On Sn 710cd, see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁶⁰ Sn 711b, see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁶¹ Recurs at Sn 930b & Kathā, vatthu S (A 3.67,12d), SD 46.11. On *payutam* (vī *payuttam*), see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁶² “Well” (*kusala*) and “good” (*sadhu*) in line a are synonyms.

¹⁶³ Sn 712c. “Just so” (*tādi*), which Comy glosses as “remaining unchanged” (*nibbikāro hutvā*, SnA 2:16 f). Its abstract n is *tādi, bhava*. In both cases—as n and as adj—*tādi* also has the sense of “impartiality,” ie, the action of wisdom and compassion working together for the benefit of others: see M 47,10.2 n (SD 35.6); SD 15.7 (2.2.2). In important way, its sense overlaps with that of *tathāgata* [SD 15.7 (2)]. On *tādi*, see SD 15.7 (2.2.2); SD 47.10.2 n (SD 35.6); SD 49.20 (1.3.1). On *tādino* (gen sg), see Sabba Kamma Jaha S (U 3.1.12/21) + SD 39.3 (1.4.2).

¹⁶⁴ Sn 712d: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁶⁵ On the sense of “high and low,” see n *uccāvacā* at §703.

¹⁶⁶ Sn 714a: see (6.2) ad loc.

<p><i>na pāraṃ dī, guṇaṃ yanti na-y-idaṃ eka, guṇaṃ mutaṃ</i></p>	<p>714</p>	<p>neither going over to the far shore twice¹⁶⁸ nor is this felt [experienced]¹⁶⁹ but once.¹⁷⁰</p>
<p>37 <i>Yassa ca visatā n'atthi chinna, sotassa bhikkhuno kiccâkicca-p, pahīnassa pariḷāho na vijjati</i></p>	<p>715</p>	<p>For whom there is no craving,¹⁷¹ for the monk whose stream¹⁷² is cut off, who has abandoned what is to be done and not to be done,¹⁷³ there is no fever.¹⁷⁴</p>
<p>38 <i>Moneyyan te upaṇṇissamā (iti bhagavā) khura, dhārūpamo bhava jivhāya tālum āhacca udare saññato siyā</i></p>	<p>[Sn701a] 716</p>	<p>I shall show you how to gain sagehood, (said the Blessed One).¹⁷⁵ Be sharp as a razor's edge.¹⁷⁶ Having pressed the tongue against the palate, he should be restrained regarding the belly.</p>
<p>39 <i>Alīna, citto ca siyā na cāpi bahu cintaye nirāmagandho asito brahma, cariya, parāyaṇo</i></p>	<p>717</p>	<p>His mind should neither be sluggish nor should he think too much. Free from raw stench,¹⁷⁷ unclinging.¹⁷⁸ The holy life is the support for going across (to the far shore that is nirvana).¹⁷⁹</p>
<p>40 <i>Ek'āsanassa sikkhetha samaṇūpāsanassa ca¹⁸¹</i></p>	<p>718</p>	<p>He should train himself for a solitary seat¹⁸⁰ and attend to the recluse's duties.¹⁸²</p>

¹⁶⁷ **Sn 714b**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁶⁸ **Sn 714c**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁶⁹ **Muta**, “felt or sensed,” ie, experienced. *Muta* forms part of the well known phrase, “the known, the heard, the sensed and the cognized” (*diṭṭha, suta, muta, viññāta*) [SD 3.13 (5.2); SD 53.5]—ie, it encompasses hearing, tasting and touching. However, here, it is used in a non-technical sense simply meaning “experienced.” However, I prefer simpler Anglo-Saxon words, esp where they convey the same sense or can be defined so; hence, “felt” or “sensed” (ie, experienced through any of the senses). Hence, it is here a general word for “experience,” not necessarily a *direct* one, when I would normally use “feel.”

¹⁷⁰ **Sn 714d**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁷¹ **Sn 715a**: Comy glosses *visatā* as “craving” (*taṇhā*, SnA 2:498,10). *Visata* or *visaṭa* is cognate with BHS *visṛta* (from *vi-sṛit*, the act of flowing asunder), “gone in various directions, dispersed; come forth, issuing or proceeding from; stretched out, spread, extended” (SED 1001a). Here it is a gerund (a verb functioning as a noun). Mahāvastu, however, has *yasyātra sariṭā nāsti*, “For whom there is no flow of desire” (Mvst 3:388,10). (**Jālinī**) **Taṇhā S** (A 4.199) uses both *sariṭa* and *visaṭā* to describe craving: “craving is the sticky net that traps, cast wide into a river” (*taṇhā jālinī sariṭā visaṭā visattikā*, A 4.199/2:211,31-32), SD 31.15. The same Sutta speaks of 108 “currents of craving” (*aṭṭha, sata taṇhā, vicarita*). Cf Tha 282d *chinna, sutta*.

¹⁷² **Sn 715b**: “Stream,” *sota*, ie, that of defilements (*kilesa, sota*) which is cut off (SnA 2:498,10; Nm 433,15-19 ad Sn 948, of craving (*taṇhā*)).

¹⁷³ **Sn 715c**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁷⁴ **Sn 715d**: On “fever,” *pariḷāho*, see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁷⁵ See (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁷⁶ **Sn 716b**. See (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁷⁷ **Sn 717c**. “Free from raw stench,” *nirāmagandho* = *nir* + *amagandha*. “defilements”; Comy glosses “free from defilements, undefiled” *nikkilesa*, esp overcoming craving and views (*taṇhā, diṭṭhi*) (SnA 2:499,4-6). On *amagandha*, see **Amagandha S** (Sn 2.2), SD 4.24.

¹⁷⁸ “Unclinging,” *asito* = free from craving and views (SnA 2:499,5).

¹⁷⁹ **Sn 717d**. Here, *parāyaṇa* has the sense of “support” in the “instrumental” (philosophical) sense; more commonly it is used is the “intrinsic” sense of “ending in; goal.” Cf Mahāvastu, where instead of *brahmacariya, parāyaṇo*, we have *vrkṣa, mūla, parāyaṇo*, “with the root of a tree as support/goal” (Mvst 3:388,16). See (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁸⁰ **Sn 718ab**: see (6.2) ad loc.

	<i>ekattaṃ monaṃ akkhātāṃ eko ve abhiramissati</i> ¹⁸⁴		Aloneness [Solitude] is called sagehood: ¹⁸³ 718 alone, you will surely rejoice.	
41	<i>¹⁸⁵Atha bhāsihi¹⁸⁶ dasa,disā sutvā dhīrānaṃ nigghosaṃ jhāyīnaṃ kāma,cāgīnaṃ tato hiriṇ ca saddhaṇ ca bhiyyo kubbetha māmakō</i>	[139]	719	Then, you will brighten the ten quarters. Having heard the silent fame ¹⁸⁷ of the wise, of the meditators, of those who have given up sense-pleasures, then, let my disciple ¹⁸⁸ all the more grow in moral shame and faith. <i>e d</i>
42	<i>Tan nadīhi vijānātha sobbhesu padaresu ca saṇantā yanti kusobbhā tuṅhī yāti¹⁹⁰ mah'odadhī</i>		720	Know this from the waters in crevices and in pools: ¹⁸⁹ noisily go the little streams, silently flows the great ocean.
43	<i>Yad ūnakaṃ taṃ saṇati yaṃ pūraṃ santam eva taṃ aḍḍha,kumbhūpamo bālo rahado pūro'va paṇḍito</i>		721	What is not full makes noise, what is full is ever at peace. Like a half-filled pot is the fool, like a full lake is the wise.
44	<i>Yaṃ samaṇo bahu¹⁹¹ bhāsatī upetaṃ attha,samhitāṃ jānaṃ so dhammaṃ deseti jānaṃ so bahu bhāsatī</i>		722	The recluse ¹⁹² speaks much, replete in sense and goal. ¹⁹³ Knowing, he teaches the Dharma, ¹⁹⁴ knowing, he speaks much. ¹⁹⁵

¹⁸¹ Be Se *samaṇūpāsanassa ca*; Ce *samaṇ'upāsanassa ca*; Ee *samaṇōpāsanassa ca*.

¹⁸² Ie, attend to meditation: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁸³ **Sn 718c**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁸⁴ Be *eko ce abhiramissasi*; Ce *eko ve abhiramissati*; Ee *eko ce abhiramissati*; Se *eko ve abhiramissasi*.

¹⁸⁵ **Sn 719**. This verse has 5 lines (*pāda*). Clearly, line a flows with **Sn 718d**, and 2 parallel lines form a half-verse in Mvst 3:388,13*. Norman thinks that line c is an “intruder” (Sn:N 314 n719).

¹⁸⁶ Be *bhāsihi*; Ce Ee Se *bhāsihi*. **Bhāsihi** (fut 2 sg) from √BHĀS, to shine (*bhāsatī*).

¹⁸⁷ **Sn 719d**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁸⁸ Note that *māmakō* (“mine”) is sg, and clearly refers to Nālaka. **Māmaka** means “one who makes (the 3 jewels) mine,” ie, one devoted to the 3 jewels (Sn 806 = *buddha,māmaka, dhamma,māmaka, saṅgha,māmaka*, Nm 125,3, 382,27 f; VA 5:1010; DA 1:160 = MA 3:119 = SA 2:340). Later usage: a lay follower of the 3 jewels (VA 1:176; MA 2:21, 312; DhA 1:206; UA 115; ThaA 3:121; ApA 252, 454; J 1:299, 3:182).

¹⁸⁹ **Sn 720b**: Comy glosses *sobbhesu* as “channels, water-courses” (*mātikāsu*, SnA 2:499 f), which are usu man-made. *Sobbha*, however, is “a (natural) pool” (S 2:32; Sn 720b; Vism 186). **Padaresu** is glossed as *darīsu* (SnA 2:500,1, where *darī* means “cleavage, cleft, hole, cave, cavern” (J 1:18, 462, 2:418). Clearly here a contrast is meant to be highlighted.

¹⁹⁰ Be Se *yanti*; Ce Ee *yāti*.

¹⁹¹ Be *bahuṃ*; Ce Ee Se *bahu*.

¹⁹² **Sn 722a**: Comy says that “the recluse” (*samaṇa*) refers to the Buddha (SnA 2:500,12). Taking the Buddha as our exemplar, the teaching of the verse also applies to us, both monastic and lay, at our own level of practice.

¹⁹³ *Attha,samhitāṃ* here poetically refers to famous *attha,veda* and *dhamma,veda*, “joy in the meaning, joy in the purpose” formula—the teaching is referred complete in meaning (*attha*) (1st +2nd noble truths) and purpose (*dhamma*) (3rd + 4th noble truths): see (**Agata,phala**) **Mahānāma S** (A 6.10), SD 15.3 (4); SD 10.16 (3.4.3.2). **Sn 722b**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁹⁴ The Buddha speaks from direct knowledge and understanding, knowing whatever that needs to be known and can be known (Nm 1:131; Pm 2:195,1-7). Cf Mvst: “knowing, he speaks much for the realization of nirvana” (*nirvānaṃ sāksātkaryāya jānanto bahu bhāsatī*, Mvst 3:389,9).

¹⁹⁵ Note that **Sn 723b** says just the opposite and yet makes good sense in terms of the *muni*.

45 *Yo ca jānaṃ saṃyat'atto*¹⁹⁶
jānaṃ na bahu bhāsati
sa munī monam arahati
sa munī monam ajjhagā'ti

For, he, knowing, is self-restrained;
 knowing, he speaks not much¹⁹⁷—
 he's a sage worthy of sagehood;¹⁹⁸
723 he's a sage who's reached sagehood.”

— evaṃ —

READING

[For full **Bibliography**, see the end of SD 49c]

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¹⁹⁶ Be Se *saṃyat'atto*; Ee *yatatto* (which means **Sn 723a** has only 7 syllables), Fausboll's ed has *saṃyatatto*; Ce *samaṃ yutto*. The tr “mentally self-restrained” highlights that the sage's or arhat's mind, too, is harmoniously restrained. This is contrasted with “self-restrained” (*yat'atta*), eg, at Sn 490b, where it refers to monks in general, not all of whom may be arhats or even non-returners.

¹⁹⁷ **Sn 723b**: see (6.2) ad loc.

¹⁹⁸ **Sn 723d**: see (6.2) ad loc.