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Nagarôpama Sutta

The Discourse on the Citadel Parable | A 7.63 (A:B 7.67)

Theme: The spiritually disciplined is like a citadel

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1 Summary and highlights

1.1 SUMMARY

1.1.1 Purpose of the 7 true virtues

1.1.1.1 The Nagarôpama Sutta is a summary of the full Buddhist training by way of a parable of a rajah's frontier citadel. The Sutta opens with the parable, comprising the 7 requisites of a citadel [§§2-10] and its 4 kinds of foods [§§11-16].

1.1.1.2 The 7 citadel-requisites illustrate **the 7 “true virtues”** (*satta saddhamma*) or good qualities of a noble disciple or true practitioner, that is, faith, moral shame, moral fear, much learning, effort, mindfulness and wisdom. A “simpler” version of these 7 true treasures is the 7 noble treasures (*satta ariya,-dhana*), which has the same items, except that the 6th treasure is charity (*cāga*)—these 7 treasures are the tools for attaining at least streamwinning. [2.3.2.2]

The 4 kinds of food represent the 4 dhyanas, (*jhāna*) which should be cultivated by the disciple [§§28-33]. In other words, the purpose of these “true virtues” is the attaining of at least non-returning, if not arhathood itself. Keeping to this regime of practice, the disciple will not fall under the power of Māra, the bad one who distracts us from spiritual progress.

1.1.2 The Sekha Sutta. The teachings of **the Nagarôpama Sutta**—the 7 true virtues and the 4 dhyanas—form the bulk of the teaching that Ānanda gives to the monks on the Buddha's instruction, as recorded in **the Sekha Sutta** (M 53,11-17), SD 21.14. **The Sekha Sutta** is given to the Sakyas of Kapilavatthu with Mahānāma at their head in their newly opened assembly-hall.

The Nagarôpama Sutta teaching by the Buddha is slightly more detailed than the Sekha Sutta teaching by Ānanda. However, Ānanda's teaching on the 7 true virtues and the 4 dhyanas is prefaced by a set of teachings comprising moral virtue, sense-restraint, moderation in food, and wakefulness.

1.2 HIGHLIGHTS

1.2.1 The citadel imagery

1.2.1.1 The Nagarôpama Sutta (A 7.63) opens with the 7 requisites of a citadel [1.4], with which “it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside” [§§3-10]. Furthermore, 4 kinds of food [1.5] are available to the inhabitants “at will, without trouble, without difficulty,” and which “are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside.” [§§11-18].

1.2.1.2 The Nagarôpama Sutta—like the Sekha Sutta (M 53) [1.1.2]—applies the citadel metaphor to highlight the “7 true virtues” (*satta saddhamma*) of the noble disciple [2.3], here especially referring to the noble saints of the path (the streamwinner, the once-returner and the non-returner) to attain arhathood, that is, awakening.

However, if a lay practitioner is capable and diligent enough to cultivate these true virtues, he, too, would be able to attain the path. In other words, the lay practitioner should at least aspire to attain streamwinning in this life itself.¹

1.2.2 The food imagery

1.2.2.1 While the 7 requisites protect the citadel itself, the 4 kinds of food [1.5] nourish its inhabitants, giving them joy, relief, comfort, and, above all, life. The function of the citadel, then, is not merely to allow the inhabitants to *live*, that is, be free of any outside encroachment, but to live *well*, to be happy and prosper, that is, “for their delight, relief and comfortable dwelling.” [§2-15]

1.2.2.2 The 7 requisites of the citadel and the 4 kinds of food work together to give its inhabitants happy, healthy and comfortable lives by ensuring that the citadel is not “undone by those outside, by foes or by disloyal friends” [§17.2]. In other words, no matter how bad the conditions may be outside of the citadel, its inhabitants always *prosper and progress* with plenty and security within the citadel itself.

1.2.2.3 Similarly, the 7 true virtues and the 4 dhyanas [1.5.1.2] work together to keep the noble disciple progressing on the path of awakening heading for distinction, that is, awakening itself. Even while they are working on the path, these disciples—cultivating the dhyanas—will enjoy happiness even here and now.

As an unawakened lay-person, when we cultivate and master the dhyanas, it expedites our journey on the path, so that we, too, would be able to attain awakening in this life itself. However, even when we are unskilled in the dhyanas, we can still work with the reflection of impermanence, and aspire to attain streamwinning in this life itself. [1.2.1.2]

1.3 CITADEL OR CITY PARABLES

1.3.1 Occurrences of the parable

Parables of the city as a safe place—illustrating the Buddhist training or life as keeping oneself on the right track heading for a haven, that is, nirvana—are popular in early Buddhism. This is perfectly understandable since early Buddhism sees itself as a path, implying that *we need to make the journey*, exert effort in a personal quest for awakening.

Here we will examine some well-known occurrences of **the parable of the city** in the suttas and some verses:

1.3.1 How long is an aeon?

Sāsapā Sutta (S 15.6/2:182), SD 49.8b(1.5.2)

1.3.1.1 The Sāsapa Sutta (S 15.6) records the Buddha’s answer to a monk who asks him about the length of an aeon or world-period (kappa). Since the length of an aeon is difficult to be put into numbers, the Buddha uses a unique parable—that of an iron-walled city, a yojana² long, a yojana wide, a yojana high, filled with mustard seeds packed tight like sugar-grains.

¹ See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

² A *yojana* (unit of distance), the “greater yojana,” a league (11.25 km (7 mi) = 4 *gāvutas*): See SD 4.17 (1.2.2); SD 47.8 (2.4.4.1). See also DEB: yojana 2.

After every century, a man would remove only a single mustard seed from the city. Even when all the mustard seeds have been duly removed, an aeon has still not passed!³

1.3.1.2 The lesson of this parable is that we have lived for so many countless lives over countless aeons, we should really be tired of it—if we understood the true reality of it all:

... with neither a beginning nor an ending⁴ is this samsara [cycle of rebirths and redeaths].⁵ A first point cannot be discerned of beings roaming and wandering on,⁶ hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving.⁷

For such a long time, bhikkhu, you have suffered painfully, suffered deeply, suffered disastrously, swelling the graveyards.⁸

Surely, bhikkhu, this is enough to feel revulsion towards all formations, enough to become dispassionate towards them, enough to be liberated from them.⁹

(S 15.6/2:182), SD 49.8b(15.2)

1.3.2 The one-gate citadel

Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16,1.17/1:83), SD 9 = **Nālandā Sutta** (S 47.12,8/5:160), SD 12.18 = **(Dasaka) Uttiya Sutta** (A 10.95/5:194), SD 44.16.

1.3.2.1 The Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16) preserves passages—reprinted in **the Nālandā Sutta** (S 47.12)—on Sāriputta’s lion-roar, declaring his faith in the Buddha, “that there never has been, there will never be, and there is now no other recluse or brahmin who is better or wiser than the Blessed One, that is to say, as regards self-awakening!” The Buddha retorts by asking Sāriputta whether he has met the past buddhas, or the future ones, or even knows the present buddha. Sāriputta replies that what he proclaims is based on “**the drift of the Dharma**” (*dhamm’ anvaya*), which, in simple terms, means “the true nature of thing.” Through fully understanding the Dharma, one also knows the buddhas, who are but the embodiments of the Dharma, so to speak.¹⁰

1.3.2.2 Sāriputta—as recorded in the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta and the Nālandā Sutta—closes his lion-roar [1.3.2.1] by stating the parable of rajah’s frontier citadel, similar to that in the Nagarōpama Sutta [§§2-17], but in an abridged form, thus:

³ S 15.6/2:182, (SD 49.8b(15.2)).

⁴ On *anamatagga*, see SD 28.7a (2); SD 48.3 (1.2.3).

⁵ This and next para (§11): *Anamataggāyaṃ bhikkhave saṃsāro pubba,koṭi na pannāyati avijjā,nīvaraṇānaṃ sattānaṃ taṇhā,saṃyojanānaṃ sandhāvataṃ saṃsataṃ.*

⁶ “Roaming and wandering on,” *sandhāvataṃ saṃsataṃ* (gen pl); cf *aneka,jāti,saṃsāraṃ sandhāvissaṃ anib-bisaṃ*, “Through numerous births in samsara, have I run without rest” (Dh 153).

⁷ “Hindered by ignorance, fettered by craving” (*avijjā,nīvaraṇānaṃ ... taṇhā,saṃyojanānaṃ*). As stated in **Vijjā,-bhāgiya S** (A 2.3.10), while ignorance hinders wisdom, craving prevents liberation (*rāg’upakkiliṭṭhaṃ vā ... cittāṃ na vimuccati, āvijj’upakkiliṭṭhā vā paññā na bhāviyati*, A 2.3.10/1:61).

⁸ *Evaṃ dīgha,rattaṃ vo bhikkhu dukkhaṃ paccanubhūtaṃ tibbaṃ paccanubhūtaṃ vyasaṇaṃ paccanubhūtaṃ kaṭasi vaḍḍhitā.*

⁹ *Yāvañ c’idam bhikkhu alam eva sabba,saṅkhāresu nibbinditum alaṃ virajjitum alaṃ vimuccitun’ti.*

¹⁰ This statement must be understood in the spirit of non-self (*anattatā*), that, eg, the teacher is simply the exemplar of the teaching.

Bhante, it is just as if there were a rajah's frontier citadel with strong bastions and a strong encircling wall with an archway that has a single gateway, and a moat around it.

The gate-keeper there, intelligent, experienced and wise, keeps out strangers and lets in only those whom he knows. He patrols [checks] along the pathway all around the city so that he will see neither cracks nor cavities in the wall not even large enough for a cat to pass through.¹¹ [1.4.7]

Even so, bhante, is the drift of the Dharma known to me.

Bhante, whatever arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones, there were of past times, all these Blessed Ones,

having overcome the 5 mental hindrances¹² that are mental impurities that weaken wisdom, then, placing their minds firmly in the 4 focuses of mindfulness,¹³

then, cultivating the 7 awakening-factors¹⁴ according to reality, attain to the peerless full self-awakening.¹⁵

D 16,1.17/1:83 (SD 9) = S 47.12,8/5:160 (SD 12.18) = A 10.95/5:194 (SD 44.16)

1.3.2.3 Note that in this parable [1.3.2.2], the citadel has only **one gate** (*eka, dvāra*), and in the Nagaropama Sutta parable, the citadel has only one gate-keeper (*eka, dovārika*) [§8]. The Aṅguttara Commentary on **the (Dasaka) Uttiya Sutta** explains that this “single gateway” (*eka, dvāra*) refers to the Buddha as the only fully self-awakened and his peerless wisdom, unlike those of other systems which are uncertain and unsafe and which are like the many gateways of a city needing many gate-keepers. (AA 5:65,4)

This **one gate**, furthermore, is *the Dharma*, while **the one gate-keeper** is *the Buddha* himself. To enter nirvana, all must enter only by this gate, no other—this is known as the “one-going way” (*ek'ayana magga*).¹⁶ This imagery confirms 2 key teachings of early Buddhism:

- (1) that there is only one fully self-awakened Buddha, that is, the historical Buddha Gotama, and
- (2) the Buddha's awakening and that of the arhats are the same.

¹¹ See (2.3.6.2).

¹² **The 5 mental hindrances** (*pañca nīvaraṇā*) are: (1) sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*); (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*); (4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkucca*); (5) persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*). See (*Nīvaraṇā*) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55/5:121-126).

¹³ **The focuses of mindfulness** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are: (1) contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), comprising 14 exercises: the 4 postures, full awareness, reflection on foulness, the 4 elements [§§12-13], and the 9 “corpse” meditations; (2) contemplations of feelings (*vedanā'nupassanā*), 1 exercise, considering feeling in terms of the affective quality—as either pleasant, painful or neutral—with each being examined again as being either carnal or spiritual; (3) contemplation of the mind (or mind-consciousness) (*cittānupassanā*), 1 exercise, examining 16 states of mind coloured by their concomitants—**Pubba S** (S 51.11/5:263-266); (4) contemplation of mind-objects (or “the nature of things”) (*dharmānupassanā*) [§§36-45] is the most diversified exercise involving these 5 schemes: the 5 hindrances, the 5 aggregates, the 6 sense-bases, the 7 awakening-factors, and the 4 noble truths. See **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22), **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118) and **Mahā Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 62).

¹⁴ **The 7 awakening-factors** (*satta (sam)bojjhaṅga*) are the awakening-factors of: (1) mindfulness (*sati sambojjhaṅga*); (2) mental investigation (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*); (3) effort (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*); (4) zest (*pīti sambojjhaṅga*); (5) tranquillity (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*); (6) concentration (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*); (7) equanimity (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*) (D 3:251, 282; Vbh 277).

¹⁵ After a long intervening passage, **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28,21/3:116) and **Nālandā S** (S 47.12,10/5:161) close with the Buddha saying: “Therefore, Sāriputta, you should repeat this Dharma exposition frequently to the monks and the nuns, to the layman followers and the laywoman followers. Even though some foolish people may have doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata, when they hear this Dharma exposition their doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata will be abandoned.” The underscored passage refers to the comprehensive meditation practice leading to awakening: see **The Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1(6b).

¹⁶ **Ekāyana** = *eka*, “one” + *ayana*, “going,” “the one-going,” viz the 4 satipaṭṭhānas (see n above on “the focuses of mindfulness: SD 13.1 (3.2 + 3.4)).

The Buddha's singularity is attested by such texts as **the Bahu,dhātuka Sutta** (M 115), where the Buddha declares: "He understands that it is impossible, there is no chance, that *two worthy fully self-awakened ones (arahatā sammā,sambuddhā)* would simultaneously¹⁷ arise in the same world system—this is not possible.¹⁸ In other words, there is only one buddha in our universe or any universe.

The one gate-keeper imagery also affirms the unified nature of awakening—that both of the Buddha and of the arhat—are the same, only that the Buddha, as it were, is the first to enter the city, or who founded it. This is the essence of **the Sambuddha Sutta** (S 22.58), SD 49.10.¹⁹

1.3.2.4 In the (Dasaka) Uttiya Sutta (A 10.95), the wanderer Uttiya asks Ānanda regarding the 10 unanswered questions—speculations about the nature of the universe, of the self, and of the posthumous state of the saint.²⁰ Ānanda replies that the Buddha rejects such questions,²¹ and Uttiya is dissatisfied. He then asks, perhaps with a tinge of sarcasm, whether the Buddha saves the "whole" world, or only a part of it—another irrelevant question!

It is then that Ānanda responds with the parable of the rajah's single-gate frontier citadel [1.3.2.2] to impress on Uttiya the nature of the Buddha, his teaching and awakening—and why the Buddha does not teach on what is not relevant to the spiritual life and liberation. (A 10.95, SD 44.16)

The parable of **the rajah's single-gate frontier citadel**, used by Sāriputta [1.3.2.2] and by Ānanda, is an abridged version of the parable of the rajah's frontier citadel in the Nagarôpama Sutta. All these 3 applications of the parable are similar: to illustrate the true nature of the Dharma, the Buddha's teaching.

1.3.3 A 6-gate frontier city

Kiṃsuka Sutta (S 35.245/4:194 f), SD 53.10

1.3.3.1 The Kiṃsuka Sutta (S 35.245) relates how a monk inquiring about the nature of arhathood, referred to as "well-purified vision" (*suvisuddham dassanam*). He approaches different monks (all of whom are arhats), who each gives a different answer according to their respective experiences. The first monk then goes to the Buddha with his confusion. The Buddha explains to him that each of the monk has answered according to their personal experience of awakening. Hence, their answers sound contradicting to the inexperienced and unawakened—like some one who has never seen an exotic tree would be confounded by the different descriptions of the tree that he hears.

1.3.3.2 The Buddha then closes his teaching by relating the parable of **the 6-gate frontier city**, basically to illustrate how messengers from 6 different directions first meet the gate-keeper who directs him to the lord of the city, sitting at the city square, thus:

Suppose, monk, a king had a **frontier city** with strong ramparts, walls, arches, and with 6 gates. The gate-keeper posted there would be wise, competent, and intelligent; one who keeps

¹⁷ *Apubbam acarimam*, lit "not before, not after" (D 2:225,5; A 1:28,1; Pug 13,26; Miln 40,30; DhA 1:12,17).

¹⁸ M 115,14 (SD 29.1a). This statement recurs in **Mahā Govinda S** (D 19,13/2:224). **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28,19/-3:114), **Bahu,dhātuka S** (M 115,14/3:65), **Aṭṭhāna Vagga** (A 1.15,10/1:27 f), Vbh 335. Comy says that the arising of another Buddha is impossible from the time the Bodhisattva takes his final conception until his dispensation (*sāsana*) has completely disappeared (MA 4:113). For a discussion, see Miln 236-239.

¹⁹ See also **Pavāraṇā S** (S 8.7), SD 49.11.

²⁰ A 10.95,1-2/5:194, SD 44.16.

²¹ See **Silence and the Buddha**, SD 44.1 (5.2).

out strangers and admits acquaintances. A swift pair of messengers would come from the east ... the west ... the north ... the south and ask the gate-keeper, “Where, my good man, is the lord of this city?” He would reply, “He is sitting in the central square of the city [where the 4 roads meet]. Then, the swift messenger would deliver their message of things as they are to the lord of the city and leave by the route by which they came.

I have made up this simile, monk, to show you the meaning, that is to say: “**The city**” is a designation for this body consisting of the 4 elements, originating from mother and father, built up of rice and gruel, subject to impermanence, to being worn and rubbed away, to breaking apart and dissolution. “**The 6 gates**” are a designation for the 6 internal sense-bases. “**The gate-keeper**” is a designation for mindfulness. “**The swift messengers**” are a designation for calmness and insight. “**The lord of the city**” is a designation for consciousness (the mind). “**The central square [where 4 roads meet]**” (*siṅghāṭaka*) is a designation for the 4 great elements—the earth element, the water element, the fire element, the wind element.’ “**A message of things as they are**” is a designation for nirvana. **The route by which they had arrived** is a designation for the noble eightfold path (S 35.245/4:194 f), SD 53.10 = SD 2.17 (8.4)²²

Basically, the parable illustrates how we should apply mindfulness—being mentally focused—at each of the 6 sense-doors. From this proper attention arises calm and insight (the “swift messengers”) that bring the message of impermanence to the mind. This is the right mental route for us, the meditator, so that we attain nirvana (the “message” of true reality).

1.3.4 Kusā,vatī: fabulous meditation city

Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17,1.3-1.6/2:170 f), SD 36.12

1.3.4.1 The Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17) relates to us in great detail the most fabulous city in the suttas, indeed, in all Buddhist literature—this is **Kusā,vatī**, the royal capital of the mythical king Mahā Sudassana (D 17,1.3-1.6), SD 36.12. While the rajah’s frontier citadel of the Nagarôpama Sutta has only a single encircling wall and a single gate, Kusā,vatī has 7 encircling walls [D 17,9], 4 gates (1 for each quarter) [D 17,8], before each gate there are 7 such pillars [D 17,3], each 3-4 times a man’s height, one of gold, one silver, one beryl, one crystal, one ruby, one emerald, and one of various gems [D 17,1.4 f], SD 36.12.

There are a number other fabulous details of Kusā,vatī—such as palm-trees of precious metal and gems, magical lotus-lakes, the Dharma palace (for meditation), his fabulous wealth, powers and armies—but this is sufficient for our present comparative study.

1.3.4.2 What do these two very different cities signify?

The rajah’s frontier citadel metaphorizes **the 7 true virtues** (*satta saddhamma*)—faith, moral shame, moral fear, much learning, effort, mindfulness and wisdom [§§19-27]—as the bases for the practice of **the 4 dhyanas**. The cultivation of these 7 virtues and the 4 dhyanas are said to ensure that we have “nothing to do with Māra, ... not overcome by the bad one” [§34], which concludes the whole Sutta.

We may surmise, then, that this refers to the disciple’s training in renunciation or “letting go” of the world, personified by Māra, so that we reach the path of awakening leading to nirvana—which is represented by another kind of frontier citadel but is of a spiritual nature: “the ancient city” [1.3.1.4].

Mahā Sudassana’s fabulous Kusā,vatī, on the other hand, is his sprawling capital city, right in the heart of his kingdom. It is a key element in the early Buddhist mythology of meditation, an instructive

²² PTS numbering is S 35.204/4:194 f.

tale and text on Gotama's role as a world monarch (*cakka, vatti*) and a hint at his future role as a world-renunciant and fully awakened buddha.

Kusā,vaṭi is no ordinary place but a huge *mandala* (*maṇḍala*)²³—a psychocosmogram, a mental map—of dhyana (*jhāna*) meditation [D 17,2.3] and the divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*) [D 17,2.4]. The Mahā Sudassana closes with a reflection on impermanence [D 17,2.17.4].

1.3.5 Verses on the city metaphor: the Dhammapada and the Jātaka

Dh 40, 150, Thī 497, Dh 315 = Tha 653 = 1005, J 518/30.242/5:81

1.3.5.1 Dh 40

<p><i>kumbh'upamaṃ kāyam imaṃ²⁴ viditvā</i> <i>nagarūpamaṃ cittam idaṃ thapetvā</i> <i>yodhetha māraṃ paññāvudhena</i> <i>jitañ ca rakkhe anivesano siyā</i></p>	<p>(Dh 40)²⁵</p>	<p>Knowing that this body is (fragile) like a pot, steadying this mind like a citadel, one should fight Māra with the weapon of wisdom, and guarding that victory, one should be detached.²⁶</p>
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500 monks, having received their meditation-subject, retire to a forest to meditate. Tree-spirits, unnerved by human presence, cause them to see bodyless heads and headless bodies, to hear frightful voices, and to catch various kinds of diseases. The monks return to the Buddha to relate their experiences. “I will provide you with a ‘weapon’,” replies the Buddha. Then, he recites the Metta Sutta,²⁷ and instructs the monks to do the same.

The monks do just that and the tree-spirits, moved by the lovingkindness, even help the monks in their meditation. The Buddha, learning of the monks' progress, appear to them in a hologram and utters this verse to them, rejoicing in their progress. Within that rains-retreat itself, the 500 monks become arhats²⁸ complete with the analytic insights.²⁹ (DhA 3.6/1:313-318)³⁰

²³ *Maṇḍala* (ts) means (1) “a circle” (D 1:134; Sn 990; Vism 143); (2) “disc,” as of the sun (VvA 224, 271) or the moon (Vism 174; PvA 65); (3) a round flat surface, eg, of the knee (PvA 179), of the forehead (D 1:106; Sn p108); (4) an enclosed space or “ring” for an event, eg a race (M 1:446), a horse-race (Vism 308), a drinking-hall, pub (J 6:332, 333; DhA 3:146; strong winds, tropical storm (J 1:73); (5) a group, eg of young animals (J 5:418); (6) the border or hem of monastic robes (V 1:287, 2:177); (7) *maṇḍala, māḷā*, a pavilion (D 1:2; Sn p104; Miln 16; SnA 132; Vva 175: see esp (D 2,10.4/1:50), SD 8.10. Here, it is used in a post-Buddha sense (such as in Mahāyāna) and in a modern sense of a “psychocosmogram.”

²⁴ *Se idaṃ*.

²⁵ Also at SD 38.3 (1.2.2).

²⁶ *Anivesana*, lit “without a house,” hence, a play on “homelessness,” a renunciant's life. Comy glosses as “un-attached” (*analayo*, DhA 1:317,17). Technically, it means not to “house” any thoughts so that consciousness will find a footing, prolonging one's existence: **Hālidakāni S** (S 22.3,4-7), SD 10.12 & **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11,85.3) n, SD 1.7. For details, see SD 38.3 (1.2.2.3) Dh 40 n.

²⁷ Sn 1.8 = Khp 9 (SD 38.3).

²⁸ **Arhat** (Skt *arhat, arhant; P arahanta*), “one who is far from the defilements” (ThaA 2:57; see Tha:N n185; cf DhA 3:272 where *ariya* is mentioned). Various derivations: fr √ARH (to deserve); *ari + ha*, “enemy-killer,” etc. (See also M 1:280, Vism 198.) The term is used in Pali Buddhism to refer to one of the noble disciples (*ariya* or *ariya, sāvaka*) who have attained the final stage of freedom, ie absolute emancipation or nirvana.

In R̥gveda 2.3.3, the term *arhat* refers to Agni, the god of fire. It is also an epithet of Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. It was applied to the Buddha by his contemporaries and took on a specialized meaning in Buddhist usage, where it is synonymous with *khīṇāsava*, “one whose mental influxes are destroyed.” The oldest set is prob that of 3 **influxes**—of sense-desire (*kāma'sava*), of existence (*bhava'sava*), and of ignorance (*avijjāsava*): see **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216,9); **Sammā Ditṭhi S** (M 9,70/1:55,10); **Cūḷa Suññata S** (M 121,11/3:108,18); **Āsava S** (S 38.8/-

1.3.5.2 Dh 150

*aṭṭhīnaṃ nagaraṃ kataṃ
maṃsa,lohita,lepanaṃ
yattha jarā ca maccu ca
māno makkho ca ohito*

(Dh 150)

Of bones is this city made,
plastered with flesh and blood,
wherein are decay and death,
where are stored, too, conceit³¹ and contempt.³²

Beautiful Janapada Kalyāṇī, like her elder brother Nanda,³³ renounces not out of faith but mainly out of regard for her relatives, most of whom have joined the order. Fearing that the Buddha would reproach her on her vanity, she avoids meeting him face-to-face. One day, she goes to the monastery, mingling with the crowd so that the Buddha would not see her. The Buddha creates the form of a beautiful woman fanning him, and she quickly goes through the stages of decay, disease and death. Nandā is brought to the realization of impermanence. On that occasion, the Buddha utters this verse comparing the body to a city of flesh, blood and bones. (DhA 11.5/3:113-119)³⁴

1.3.5.3 Thī 497. For a related, see this verse from **the Sumedhā Therī,gāthā**:

*sara caturo'dadhī upanīte
assu,thañña,rudhiramhi
sara eka,kappaṃ aṭṭhinam
sañcayam vipulena samam*

(Thī 497)

Recall that the 4 oceans are like
tears, milk and blood.
Recall how the heap of bones (for a person),
in an aeon, piles up like Mount Vipula.

1.3.5.4 Dh 315 = Tha 653 = 1005

*nagaraṃ yathā paccantaṃ
guttaṃ santara,bāhiram,
evaṃ gopetha attānaṃ
khaṇo vo³⁵ mā upaccagā,
khaṇ'ātītā hi socanti
nirayamhi samappitā*

(Dh 315)

Like a frontier city,
guarded within and without,
so, too, you should guard the self.
Let not this moment slip by—
for, when this moment is gone, they sorrow
when they find themselves in hell.

4:256,4 = 45.163/5:56,15 = 47.50/189,29); **Ti,kaṇṇa S** (A 35.8/1:165,16); **(Te,vijja) Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 3.59,4/1:167,22); **Nibbedhika Pariyāya S** (A 6.63/3:414,11); **Vbh 914/384,13**; **MA** 1:86,10, 3:41,25 ad M 1:361,24.

²⁹ "Analytic insights," *paṭisambhidā*, ie, those in effects (*attha*~), in causes (conditionality) (*dhamma*~), in language (*nirutti*~), and ready wit (*paṭibhāna*~) (A 2:160; Pm 1:119; Vbh 294): see SD 28.4 (4).

³⁰ For a fuller account, see SD 38.3 (1.2). For a more detailed but slightly different background story to the same Sutta, see KhpA 232,7-235,23, 251,25-252,20; where the narrator, after giving his own version of the Buddha's final instructions to the monks, says, "Furthermore, it is said ... " (*apare pan'āhu*) and continues with an entirely different account. Possibly, this refers to another occasion.

³¹ On "conceit" (*māna*), see SD 50.12 (2.4.3).

³² On "contempt" (*makkha*), see SD 50.14 (1.3.2.2).

³³ Also called **Rūpa,nandā** because of her beauty. She is the **Sundarī Nandā** of Thī 82-86, declared by the Buddha as the foremost of nuns who are meditators (*jhāyīnaṃ*, A 1:25). See SD 43.7 (1.1.1.1). She is not to be confused with the female wanderer Sundarī: **Sundarī S** (U 4.8), SD 49.23.

³⁴ For Janapada Kalyāṇī Nandā's story, see AA 1:363-365. On the literary connections of her story with those of other nuns like Khemā, see DhA:B 1:48-51 (§7d).

³⁵ Ee ve.

Some monks visiting a border country have to live in great discomfort because the inhabitants there are busily engaged in fortifying their city against bandits, and so have no chance to minister properly to the visiting monks. The monks relate their experience to the Buddha, who advises them to fortify themselves like a citadel. (DhA 3:487-489)

The verse recurs in **the Phussa Thera,gāthā** (Tha 1005), while Dh 513abcd recur as **the Revata Thera,-gāthā** (Tha 653).

1.3.5.5 The Paṇḍara Jātaka (J 30.242)

<p><i>Yathāpi assa nagaram mahantam āḷarakam āyasam bhadda,salam samanta,khātā,parikhā upetam evam pi me te idha guyha,mantā</i></p>	<p>(30.242)</p>	<p>Just as a great city with its houses and shops, surrounded by thick iron walls, a moat, dug all around there is, too— here, such is my counsel secret to them.</p>
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The Paṇḍara Jātaka (J 518) is about keeping secrets and true friendship. The garudas (*garuḍa*)³⁶ or harpies want to know how the nagas (*nāga*)³⁷ or serpent-beings protect themselves when attacked by the garudas. The garuda king meets a fraudulent naked ascetic who promises to wheedle the secret out of the nagas. The naga-king reluctantly divulges the nagas' secrets. As a result, many nagas are killed and the naga-king himself captured by the garuda-king, the former laments his foolishness in telling a secret to a dishonest ascetic. After some open exchanges, the two became friends, and the garuda frees the naga. The above verse (J 30.242) is uttered by the garuda. (J 518/5:81)

1.3.6 Nirvana as a city

S 12.65,19-33/2:105 f (SD 14.2)

The Nagara Sutta (S 12.65)³⁸ contains the most famous of the city imageries—that of the city that is nirvana (*P nibbāna*), the highest good or goal of every true Buddhist practitioner. The Buddha describes his awakening in terms understanding dependent arising,³⁹ that is, the conditionality of all existence and reality. This truth is always there, known by the buddhas of the past; future buddhas will discover the same truth and declare it to the world.

Most importantly, it is known, in our own time, by Gotama the historical Buddha who has declared the Dharma for 45 years, and enough of his teachings have been preserved in the suttas and handed down to us for our study, practice and realization of the path and nirvana. The Buddha compares the path and nirvana that he has discovered to be like the city of the ancients (of the 4 kinds of saints) or the ancient city (nirvana), thus:

³⁶ In Indian mythology, **garudas** are the deification of the sun's brilliance; hence, they are like the phoenix in western mythology. They are described as having an upper torso of an eagle, and the lower, of a human. Eating only meat, they are mortal enemies of the nagas (*nāga*) whom they devour. See sv: Ency Bsm & Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism.

³⁷ **Nagas** (*nāga*) are mythical beings inhabiting the depths of earth or water, and roots of great trees. In their natural form, they are huge serpents with a cobra's hood, often with multiple (often 7) heads. They sometimes assume human form, esp as a 16-year-old boy. The most famous naga in early Buddhism in Mucalinda, who shelters the meditating Buddha during the 6th week after the awakening: SD 27.5a (6.2.1.1). There is also a Himalayan tribe called Naga. See Ency Bsm sv.

³⁸ S 12.65/2:104-107 (SD 14.2).

³⁹ On dependent arising, see **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.

It is just as if, bhikshus, a man, while wandering in a forest on a mountain-side, arrives at an **ancient road**, an ancient highway [a straight, direct way], followed by people in the past.

He arrived there.

Having arrived there, he sees an ancient city, an ancient royal city, inhabited by people, endowed with parks, endowed with forests, endowed with lotus ponds, and surrounded with ramparts⁴⁰—delightful.

Then, bhikshus, the man informs the rajah or a royal minister:

‘Please, sir, you should know this:

While I was wandering in a forest on a mountain-side, I saw an ancient road, an ancient highway [a straight, direct way], followed by people in the past.

I followed it, and following it, I saw *an ancient city, an ancient royal city, inhabited by people, endowed with parks, endowed with forests, endowed with lotus ponds, and surrounded with ramparts—delightful.*

Would you, sir, please renovate that city.’⁴¹

Then, bhikshus, the rajah or a royal minister renovates the city. In due course, it becomes a city that is successful and prosperous, widely known, popular, endowed with prosperity and plenty.⁴²

(S 12.65,19-21), SD 14.2

The Buddha then relates how he has discovered **the ancient road** “followed by the fully self-awakened ones in the past.” This ancient road is the noble eightfold path, and following it, he discovers the nature of true reality by way of dependent arising. Having discovered this ancient path and reached the ancient city (or the city of the ancients), the Buddha declares it to us for our benefit.

(S 12.65,21-33), SD 14.2

1.4 THE ELEMENTS OF THE CITADEL PARABLE [§1.2.1]

1.4.1 The citadel pillar [§3]

1.4.1.1 The parable of the rajah’s frontier citadel begins with a description of the citadel pillar (*esikā*), that it is “deeply buried, well sunk, unshakable” [§3]. The pillar is significantly the first of the 7 requisites of a citadel⁴³ because it is its “palladium,” that is, the “protector” of the city and its people, often believed to be a god or some kind of power. In psychological terms, it is the spirit or rallying-point of the nation.

Hence, it is located at the city-centre, acting as the hub of a huge wheel that is the citadel. Mythically, this represents the axis mundi, the centre of the universe, like Mount Meru in early Buddhist mythology.⁴⁴

It should be noted that **Kusa,vatī** [1.3.4], the royal capital of the mythical king Mahā Sudassana—in **the Mahā Sudassana Sutta** (D 17)—has 7 such pillars [1.3.4.1].

1.4.1.2 The city pillar—the nation’s palladium—should be distinguished from another important pillar that is, a strong bolt or “locking post” (*khīla*) for the city-gate or gates. The word *khīla* (not to be confused with *khila*, “barrenness”) means “a peg, spike, stake, bolt, pillar.” More fully, a *khīla*, especially in the expression, *inda,khīla*, “Indra’s bolt,” is “a post or stone set in the ground at the door of a house or

⁴⁰ “Ramparts,” **Uddāpa**~, preferred vl for *uddhāpa*~.

⁴¹ *Taṃ bhante nagaram māpehīti.*

⁴² SA 2:115-119 explains this parable in great detail, such as showing the correspondences between the elements of the parable and aspects of the Dharma.

⁴³ On the def of “citadel” (*nagara*), see §1 n.

⁴⁴ See **Brahmajāla Sutta** (D 1,1.31), SD 25, a mountain-peak; also SD 47.8 (2.2); SD 49.8n (15.1.3.4).

palace or at the city gates against which the door or gate was closed [SnA 185,21]” (DP).⁴⁵ The most famous mention of *inda, khīla* is in **the Ratana Sutta** (Khp 4 = Sn 2.1): “Even as Indra’s bolt stays put in the ground” (*yath’inda.khīlo paṭhavim sīto siyā*) unmoved by the 4 winds, the noble sangha comprises those who understand the 4 noble truths.⁴⁶

1.4.1.3 The key significance of the citadel pillar lies in its strength and immovability—so is the **faith** (*saddhā*) of the noble disciple [§20]. And the pillar also inspires the inhabitants with a common love and ideal, that is, for the city, nation and country. Even so, our wise faith⁴⁷ in the 3 jewels arises from understanding the teachings and practising it correctly and effectively, which further deepens our wisdom, leading us to liberation. [2.3.1]

1.4.2 The citadel moat [§4]

1.4.2.1 The 2nd requisite of the citadel is its **moat** (*parikhā* or *parikkhā*), literally meaning “what is dug all around,” a trench, ditch or moat, “deep and wide” [§4], either dry or filled with water, surrounding a castle, fortification, building or town, to provide it with a preliminary line of defence. When the moat is wide and deep, filled with water, it is difficult for invaders to scale the city walls to break into it.

1.4.2.2 The moat, says the Sutta, represents **moral shame** (*hiri*) [§21]. We should be morally shameful even as we think, and certainly before we speak or act. We should be reminded how we can look bad before others and feel bad ourselves when we have done something bad. We are reminded that a single bad act can be the seed for many more to come—it has *deep* moral implications. A single moral lapse can bring *wide* ruin to our reputation, even to our mindset and self-respect. Once we fall into the moat or moral shamelessness, it can be very difficult to get out. [2.3.2]

1.4.3 The citadel’s encircling path [§5]

1.4.3.1 A disciple’s moral fear (*ottappa*) is like the citadel’s **encircling path** [§5], which normally goes right around on the top of the citadel’s outer wall just behind the parapet. In military terms, this is a second-line defence, the first being the moat [1.4.2]. Guards keep watch at various crucial points on the path to raise the alarm when lurking or attacking enemies are in sight. Soldiers can also easily defend the citadel from atop the wallwalk (walkway on top of the citadel walls) from the wall’s height and behind the parapet’s safety.

1.4.3.2 Moral fear protects us from the tendency to do bad by reminding us that even when we merely think of something bad, we are letting down our guard. It’s like we are guarding the citadel on the wallwalk but not mindfully looking to see if any enemy is lurking below the parapet or in the distance. It is just a matter of time when they may scale the walls and break into the citadel and conquer it. [2.3.3]

1.4.4 The citadel’s armoury [§6]

1.4.4.1 The rich armoury of weapons [2.1] that the citadel has not only empowers it to ward off and defeat invaders, but, more so, act as a **deterrent** for any from outside who have any plans to attack or take over the citadel. In the long run, such deterrence would encourage peaceful coexistence with other

⁴⁵ See SD 32.14 (3.1.1.1) & sv *inda-khīla* in CPD & DP.

⁴⁶ Khp 6.8 = Sn 229 (SD 101.2).

⁴⁷ On wise faith (*mūlika saddhā* or *avecca-p, pasāda*), see **Pañca Vera Bhaya S 1** (S 12.41,11 n), SD 3.3(4.2).

tribes and nations, creating a larger market for economic prosperity and cultural growth and unifying humanity beyond countries, politics, race and religion.

1.4.4.2 The hard-earned peace—often won with great loss of lives and widespread destruction—is best preserved with free inquiry, great learning and universal education [2.3.4]. The more learned we are, the more opportunities we have in seeing things in a wider perspective.

Education is merely schooling when we see it as a strategy for career and wealth; it is only a sophisticated form of slavery to the whims of worldliness and Māra. Education should be a key tool in the promotion of sutta learning, meditation practice, right livelihood and social engagement that are Dharma-inspired. Such an approach will benefit monastic renunciants and lay Dharma workers in their task of Dharma-teaching and quest for awakening. It will attract true seekers and bring out the best in them as they taste the Buddha Dharma.

Just as the wise use of the citadel's weapons, armies [1.4.5] and power can bring peace, prosperity and progress, so, too, a wise understanding and application of great learning nurtures the material, personal and spiritual growth and happiness of the individuals who make up the community, the nation, the world and beyond. [2.3.4]

1.4.5 The citadel's troops [§7]

1.4.5.1 The rajah's frontier citadel is said to have a huge army of troops [§7]—who, with the great armoury of weapons [1.4.4]—are able to defend the citadel and country very well, or peacefully coexist with other communities, cities and countries. We see, in the Buddha's time, how **Bimbisāra** had extended his kingdom of Magadha by annexing Aṅga.⁴⁸ He married Pasenadi's sister, Kosala,devī; hence, the two countries were allied through marriage. His son, Ajāta,sattu,⁴⁹ as king, conquered the Vajjī country (whose capital was Vesālī).

Bimbisāra was thus the founder of the first great royal dynasty of India, the Haryāṅka, and the territory that he ruled over served as a base for the empires of the subsequent dynasties, especially the Nandas and the Mauryas. It was during the Maurya period, under **Asoka** (ruled c 268-c 232 BCE), that India saw its greatest empire.⁵⁰ Yet, even empires decline and disintegrate; by 180 BCE, the empire that Asoka had built was no more, with the Śuṅgas coming into power, along with other smaller kingdoms and states.

Members of the Licchavī clan who escaped Ajāta,sattu's devastation of Vesālī were later connected with the imperial Guptas. Chandragupta I (reigned 320-335) married Kumāra,devī, a daughter of the Licchavīs, who mothered Samudragupta (r 335-380).⁵¹ Although Buddhism survived during this period, we see the rise of Hinduism which was used by the Guptas to unify their realm.

1.4.5.2 After the Buddha, Indian Buddhism was a diversity of sects with large prosperous monasteries in or near urbanized areas with impressive stupas and worship-places like the cathedrals of Europe. News of the fabulous wealth of the monastics and monasteries of India reached the Turks farther west.

⁴⁸ Magadha was located in modern southern Bihar, while Aṅga was on the river Champa, prob down to the shores of the Bay of Bengal itself.

⁴⁹ See SD 8.10 (1).

⁵⁰ Thapar 2002:150-156; D Rothermund, "Bimbisāra," in *Ency of India*, Thomson Gale, 2006 1:154.

⁵¹ DA 99; Journal of the Asiatic Soc of Bengal (JASB) 17 1921:269-271.

In 651, during Harsha’s reign (c 606-c 647 CE), Muslim armies conquered Ctesiphon,⁵² capital of the Persian empire. By 711, the Muslims had occupied territories in what is present-day Pakistan. By the 13th century, the Muslim armies had overrun northern India and effectively obliterated Buddhism from India—and yet the stricter Jain sects survived to this day there.⁵³

1.4.5.3 The Buddha is aware of the violence and vicissitudes of war. He is a man of peace and often teaches a different kind of war—that against the self—the inner battle won only through renunciation and liberation by love and wisdom.

<p><i>Yo sahaṣsaṃ sahaṣṣena saṅgāme mānuse jine ekañ ca jeyyam attānaṃ⁵⁴ sa ve saṅgāma,j’uttamo⁵⁵</i></p>	<p>(Dh 103)</p>	<p>Even when one conquers a thousand times a thousand men in battle, one who conquers himself is indeed best of conquerors. [2.3.5]</p>
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1.4.5.4 The latter-day Buddhist monastics and priests repeatedly disobeyed the Buddha in 3 main ways, thus:

- (1) ideologizing the Buddha: making idols of him; creating numerous Buddhas; rejecting his awakening; putting the teacher and tribe (race) above the teaching;
- (2) theologizing the Dharma: reintroducing the soul-idea; ritualizing the suttas; taking Dharma as measure of class and status;
- (3) secularizing the sangha: degrading the arhats; taking “sangha” as celibate hierarchy; taking renunciation as a career.

Such wrong views and practices entail heavy karmic consequences destroying our Dharma roots. Thus weakened, we are unable to withstand the challenges of the world. So we are washed away by the floods of lust, existence, views and ignorance. We have lost the battles with Māra; we have failed to conquer ourselves. Ironically, the gentler Jains—even the laity—who kept to their strict precepts and teachings survived the terrible Turk invasions. There are vital lessons here for us to learn.⁵⁶

1.4.6 The citadel’s gate-keeper [§8].

1.4.6.1 The Sutta mentions that there is only one gate-keeper (*dovārika*). In fact, this parable is the fullest version of the “single-gate (*eka,dvāra*) citadel” found elsewhere [1.3.2]. Other versions of the gate-keeper imagery appear in abridged forms of the citadel parable, such as in **the (Dasaka) Uttiya Sutta** (A 10.95,3.3) [1.3.2.4], or as a parable in itself, as in **the Sampasādaniya Sutta** (D 28,2.2) [2.3.1.3]. The wise gate-keeper, as we have noted, represents the Buddha [1.3.2.3].

⁵² Ctesiphon was located on the eastern bank of the Tigris river about 35 km (22 mi) SE of present-day Baghdad. It became the capital of the Parthian empire c 58 BCE, and remained as the capital of the Sassanian empire until the Muslim conquest of Persia in 651.

⁵³ See Piya Tan, *History of Buddhism*, Singapore, 2005 ch 1.30-31.

⁵⁴ Be Ee Se *jeyyam attānaṃ*; Ce *jeyya attānaṃ*.

⁵⁵ *Saṅgāmajuttamo* = *saṅgāma* + *ji* (Skt *jit*) + *uttamo*. This can mean either “he is the best (battle) conqueror” or “he is the best of conquerors.”

⁵⁶ See Piya Tan, *History of Buddhism*, Singapore, 2005: ch 1.31.

1.4.6.2 There are 3 kinds of **gates** that the citadel in the parables have. In the Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17) parable, Kusā,vatī has 4 gates, which represents the 4 dhyanas, and also the 4 divine abodes [1.3.4]. In the Kimsuka Sutta (S 35.245), the city has 6 gates with a gate-keeper each. This represents our 6 senses (the 5 physical senses and the mind), and the gate-keeper is our mindfulness, which should guard the sense-doors [1.3.3]. In the Nagarôpama Sutta, there is only *one* gate, which is guarded by a **wise gate-keeper**. This wise gate-keeper is either the Buddha or our wholesome mind, depending on the context. [2.3.6]

1.4.7 The citadel's wall plaster [§9]

1.4.7.1 The citadel's high and wide encircling wall is said to be "**well covered with a good coat of plaster**" (*vāsana, lepana, sampanna*) [§9]. The emphasis is not on the high and wide encircling wall itself, but how it looks to those outside: it is "well covered with a good coat of plaster." Firstly, it looks beautiful and perhaps dazzlingly whitewashed, which will hamper the invaders' sight. Secondly, it is well covered and when the gate-keeper "patrols [checks] along the pathway all around the city ... he will see neither cracks nor cavities in the wall even large enough for a cat to pass through." [1.3.2.2]

1.4.7.2 The emphasis here is on **seeing** (*passana*) or sight—outsiders *perceive* the wall, because it is well plastered—as being not only strong but *not* worth their effort to even try to *scale or breach*. However, when we apply our **insight** (*vipassanā*), we see things, not as what they appear to be, but *as they really are*. Hence, this is an interesting "reverse metaphor," where the worldly vision is merely a virtual perception, but the spiritual insight is true awareness of things as they really are. This is the disciple's wisdom [2.3.7]

1.5 THE 4 KINDS OF FOOD AND THE 4 DHYANAS [§1.2.2]

1.5.1 Grass, wood and water [§12]

1.5.1.1 From the Nagarôpama Sutta, we must deduce that "grass, wood and water" represent **the 1st dhyana**. Grass is food for the animals that is the source of food for the people—the *food* for those that *provide food* for humans. Wood is very necessary for cooking and also for making tools, structures and buildings. Water is necessary for consumption, cleaning and irrigation of the fields for the crops. In short, these are the basic essentials of material daily life.

1.5.1.2 In the same way, **the 1st dhyana** is the most basic of the 4 dhyanas, which has 5 dhyana-factors (*jhān'anga*): (1) initial application (*vitakka*), (2) sustained application (*vicāra*), (3) zest (*pīti*), (4) joy (*sukha*) and (5) one-pointedness of mind (*ek'aggatā*). As we progress in our dhyana meditation, the factors lessen—as we bail out our boat, it moves faster (Dh 369).

In **the 2nd dhyana**, both initial application and sustained application—the first 2 dhyana factors—disappear. Our mind is now completely free from thought. It just feels, directly experiences itself with growing joy and peace.

In **the 3rd dhyana**, zest (an active form of joy) resolves itself. Our inner joy is refined so that there is beautifully resolved happiness—the greatest comfort and pleasure that are wholesome.

And in **the 4th dhyana**, happiness itself is resolved, leaving only a total sense of blissful equanimity.⁵⁷ [§29]

When taking a good meal, we mindfully eat as we need to. When, our hunger is satiated, we are full, so stop eating. In dhyana meditation, too, as we progress, it seems as if we need to let go of our effort to

⁵⁷ See SD 8.4 (6).

attain anything—we keep on renouncing our mental states, first all our thoughts; then, even our feelings of joy, letting go of a lesser joy for a greater one and so on. As we become more peaceful with and within ourself, our mind settles, and the dhyana refines itself, stage by stage—until the mind, our heart, is totally free. [§12]

1.5.2 Rice and barley-corn [§13]

1.5.2.1 The 2nd of the 4 kinds of food listed in the Nagarôpama Sutta are **rice** (*sālī*) and **barley-corn** (*yava*). These—especially rice—are staple food of the ancient Indians and, indeed, of most of Asia. The Sutta uses the phrase *sālī,yava,ka*, with the *-ka* suffix functioning as *et cetera*; the word of “barley-corn” is *yava*. The Commentary glosses *sālī,yava,kaṃ* as “various kinds of rice especially and (various) barley-corns, too” (*nāna-p,pakāra,sāliyo c’eva yavā ca*, AA 4:55,19).

We should note, then, that **yava**, in early Indian times, probably refers to “any grain or corn yielding flour or meal ... seed or seed-corn” or “barley-corn (measurement or weight)” (SED), that is, to both barley (Hindi, *jao*) and corn (Hindi, *sasya*). PED says that it is corn in general and barley in particular.

Sālī,yava,ka, then, can be taken as a synecdoche (short-hand) for “hill-rice (*sālī*), broadcast rice (*vīhi*),⁵⁸ barley-corn (*yava*), wheat (*godhuma*), millet (*kaṅga*), beans (*varaka*), rye (*kudrūsaka*)” (SnA 1:315,2). This may include the 7 kinds of pulses and cereals (*apar’añña*, “other food”), that is, such as green peas and beans (*mugga,māsa*), etc.⁵⁹ [§13]

1.5.2.2 Grass, wood and water are the most common and vital sources of nutrition, health and comfort. Grass for animals, and wood and water for humans. Even **rice and barley-corn** (*sālī,yavaka*), the staple foods in India, depend on *water*. Hence, “grass, wood and water” come first—representing the 1st dhyana, followed by rice and barley-corn. Clearly, this is the logic behind linking “rice and barley-corn” with the 2nd dhyana. [§30]

1.5.3 Sesame, green peas, beans and other food [§14]

1.5.3.1 “Sesame, green peas, beans and other kinds of food” (*tila,mugga,māsâpar’aññaṃ*)⁶⁰ form the 3rd category of the 4 kinds of food of the citadel. The Commentaries list 7 kinds of grain (*pubb’añña*, “first food,” or *satta,dhañña*, “the 7 grains”): “green peas, beans, sesame, horse gram (Hindi, “kulathi,” *Dolichos biflorus*), bitter gourd, pumpkin, and so on” (*mugga,māsa,tila,kulattha,alābu,kumbhaṅḍ’ādi-bedhaṃ*, VA 4:784,31) and 7 kinds of pulses and cereals (*apar’añña*, “other food”), such as green peas and beans (*mugga,māsa*), etc.⁶¹

Dhañña, “grains” (Skt, *dhānya*; here, as synonymous with *añña*, “food”), is a generic name for both grains and food (*sa,dhaññaṃ pubb’añña’paraṅḅ’ādi,bhedam*);⁶² but *apar’añña* includes “vegetables” (CPD sv).⁶³ [§14]

⁵⁸ On rice (*Oryza sativa indica*), see SD 52.1 (2.2.1.9).

⁵⁹ VA 2:340,3 = DA 1:78,25 = MA 2:210,1 = AA ad A 2:209,28.

⁶⁰ Comy resolves as *tila,mugga,māsā + sesâpar’annaka* (AA 4:55,20).

⁶¹ VA 2:340,3 = DA 1:78,25 = MA 2:210,1 = AA ad A 2:209,28.

⁶² DA 1:245,29 = MA 3:415,10.

⁶³ On *sālī* and *vīhi*, see **Cakka,vati Sīha,nāda S** (D 26,19) n on *sālī,mam’s’odano*, SD 36.10. *Odana* is boiled rice ready to be eaten. **Niddesa** classes them as “natural” (*pubb’añña*) and “prepared” (*apar’añña*) (Nc 314). On *kudrūsaka*, see D 26,19 n, SD 36.10. See also V:H 1:83 n4.

1.5.3.2 This 3rd category of Indian food—sesame, green peas, beans and so on—is used for making dishes or as condiments to go with the staples of boiled rice (*odana*)⁶⁴ and other main meal dishes (such as flatbreads and other breads). These main foods are served with other dishes prepared from beans, pulses, spices, vegetables, seeds and so on prepared with spices, oil, salt, vinegar, sugar, sauces and so on.

Understandably, this 3rd category is taken to represent the 3rd dhyana [§31]. Just as these third-level dishes go with the main meal, so, too, the 3rd dhyana is a refinement of the 2nd dhyana, which is itself based on the 1st dhyana. [1.5.1.2].

1.5.4 Medicine [§15]

1.5.4.1 Ghee, butter, oil, honey and molasses [§15] are the 5 items allowed by the Vinaya as “medicines” (*bhesajja*) for monastics—they can be taken whenever needed, especially for the sick or infirm, and be stored for 7 days.⁶⁵ One important reason for this rule of limitation is to prevent a monastic from being cluttered up with too many things.

The Cakka,vattī Sīha,nāda Sutta (D 28,10) prophesizes that the 5 kinds of tastes will disappear from human society as it devolves to its lowest, when the human life-span is only 10 years (SD 36.10).⁶⁶ [§15]

1.5.4.2 The Nagarôpama Sutta parable of the citadel mentions **6 kinds of medicine**: ghee (*sappi*), butter (*nava,nīta*), oil (*tela*), honey (*madhu*), molasses (*phāṇita*) and salt (*loṇa*) [§15].⁶⁷ The 6th and last item, salt, is not found in the Vinaya list of 5 medicines [1.5.4.1]. This is because **salt** is allowable as medicine in itself for an unlimited time⁶⁸—unlike the 5 kinds of medicine which can only be kept for 7 days at the most.

1.5.4.3 Ghee, butter, oil, honey and molasses (or sugar) as a set forms the 4th and last category of **food**, abundant and easily available in the citadel, keeping its inhabitants strong and healthy. These items serve as condiments to go with the main dishes or as appetizers as separate preparations. They are also used in making preserves and pickles, and to preserve food.

As the 4th category of food, they naturally compare to the 4th dhyana, the last of the form dhyanas. Like these basic foods, the 4th dhyana is also *basic* in the sense it has the fewest of dhyana-factors—in fact, only 1 factor: *mental oneness based on equanimity*, a totally blissful stillness of the mind. This is like we have enjoyed and finished our meal and is fully satisfied. [§32]

⁶⁴ See SD 52.1 (2.2.1.9).

⁶⁵ See Vinaya (Pāc 23 @ V 3:251; V 1:199 f, 209; VA 3:718,5 f).

⁶⁶ **The list recurs in Kūṭa,danta S (D 5,18/1:141) as items used in a fire sacrifice; Anuruddha Mahā,vitakka S (A 4:232); Vinaya (A 1:58+ 96 as allowable “extra gains” (atireka lābha) for monastics”; Vbh 82 as examples of the “water” element (āpo,dhātu); Dhs 144 as among the examples of “solid food” (kabalīkāra āhāra).**

⁶⁷ Also allowable are the “5 cow products” (*pañca go,rasa*): milk (*khīra*), curds (*dadhi*), buttermilk (*takka*), butter (*nava,nīta*) and ghee (*sappi*), esp when travelling (Mv 7.21.34 @ V 1:244 f). While butter and ghee can only be kept for 7 days, milk, curds and buttermilk, being perishable, should not be kept.

⁶⁸ Mv 7.1.8 (V 1:202).

2 Sutta key topics

2.1 WEAPONS [§6]

Most of the information on the weapons here are culled from the commentaries to **the Nagarōpama Sutta** (AA 4:54 f) and to **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (DA 156 f) which often give the same explanations. They are compiled by the same commentator, Buddhaghosa (5th century CE).

The Sutta mentions the citadel's "**great armoury of weapons**" (*bahum āvudham sannicitam*) [§6.1], such as *salāka* [2.1.1] and *jevanika* [2.1.2]—which we will attempt to identify in some useful detail here.

2.1.1 Salāka

2.1.1.1 According to the Sutta's Commentary, *salāka* refers to weapons that are propelled, shot or "released" (*nissaggiya*), such as darts, arrows and spears (AA 4:54,1 f). The word *salāka* probably overlaps in meaning with the better known *salla*, "dart, arrow," most famously featured in the poisoned dart (arrow) parable in **the Cūḷa Māluṅkya,putta Sutta** (M 63).⁶⁹

2.1.1.2 Monier-Williams' *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (SED) gives the Sanskrit cognates of both the Pali words, that is, respectively, *śalyaka* and *śalya*. **Śalyaka** (P *salāka*) means "arrow, dart, spear, thorn, etc (= *śalya*)"; it is noted to be synonymous with *śalya* (P *salla*), which, more broadly, means "dart, javelin, lance, spear, iron-headed weapon (cf *upaśalya*), pike, arrow, shaft." In short, these weapons are forms of "missiles" shot or hurled in some way: the catapult may be included here.⁷⁰ [2.1.1.3]

2.1.1.3 The Jain texts record that Ajāta,sattu of the Haryanka dynasty,⁷¹ in his attacks on Vajjī country of the Licchavīs, made use of 2 new weapons—*mahāsila,kaṇṭaka* ("a great-stone thorn"),⁷² a catapult (probably a torsion trebuchet) that shot stone-missiles, and *ratha,musala* ("pestle-chariot"), a covered "scythed chariot" with a swinging mace or scythe on both wheels. These terrible weapons were probably modelled from the Achaemenid (550-330BCE) imperial military weapons of Persia to the west of India.⁷³

2.1.2 Jevanika or *jevanīya* has a number of variants: *jevanika, jeganika, vedhanika*. The Commentary says that it refers to other types of hand-held weapons, such as one-edged swords (AA 4:54,1 f). PED says that *jevanika* is "a kind of (missile) weapon, said to be single-edged, etc." However, as we have noted [1.2.2], the Commentary says that such weapons are included under *salāka*. Hence, we must conclude that *jevanika* is a generic term for "swords."

⁶⁹ M 63,5/1:429 (SD 5.8).

⁷⁰ See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajatashatru> & https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_India#The_Magadha_dynasties.

⁷¹ Reigned c 492-c460 BCE or early 4th cent BCE.

⁷² SED def **mahā,śilā** as "a kind of weapon (a Śat-ghni with iron nails)." A *śata-ghni* is "a particularly deadly weapon (used as a missile, supposed to be some sort of fire-arms or rocket, but described by the Comm on the Mahābharata as a stone or cylindrical piece of wood studded with iron spikes" (SED 1049: śata-ghni). *Śata-ghnin*, "one with a *śata-ghni*" (Mahābharata 13.1157).

⁷³ Esp the Achaemenid empire (ancient Persia) under Cyrus II (the Great) (c 600-530 BCE) and Darius I (r 522-486 BCE): see SD 52.1 (8.3.1.3 (4)) + (11.2.2.4). For examples of ancient Indian weapons, see <https://steemit.com/blog/@royalmacro/top-10-deadliest-ancient-indian-weapons>.

2.2 TROOPS [§7]

2.2.1 The Sutta lists the “**many kinds of troops**” (*bahu,bala,kāya*): “elephant-riders, horsemen, chariot-warriors, archers, standard-bearers, camp marshals, supply corps officers, shudra warrior princes, front-line killer-squad, great-elephant-warriors, hero-fighters, armoured warriors, leather-armoured warriors, young slave-soldiers” (*hatth’ārohā ass’ārohā rathikā dhanu-g,gahā celakā calakā piṇḍa,dāyakā uggā raja,puttā pakkhandino mahānāgā sūrā papphālikā camma,yodhino dāsaka,puttā*) [§7.1].

2.2.2 We will try to identify the meanings of these various terms, from their occurrences elsewhere in the suttas and from the Commentaries.

(1) **Hatth’ārohā** refers to “all the mahouts, elephant-healers, elephant-keepers, etc” (*sabbe pi hatthi.ācariya,hatthi.vejja,hatthi.bhaṇḍ’ādayo*, AA 4:54,3 f = DA 1:156,16 f). The word “mahout” may refer to an elephant rider, trainer or keeper, or all of them. The translation “elephant-keepers” is based on the Vinaya Commentary on *hatthi,bhaṇḍa*.⁷⁴

(2) **Ass’ārohā** refers to “all the riding teachers, horse healers, horse-keepers, etc” (*sabbe pi ass’ācariya,assa.vejja,assa.bhaṇḍ’ādayo*, AA 4:54,5 = DA 1:156,18). The translation “horse-keepers” is based on the Vinaya Commentary on *assa,bhaṇḍa*.⁷⁵ The word “horsemen,” however, can collectively refer to all these people dealing with horses.

(3) **Rathikā** refers to “chariot-masters, chariot-warriors and chariot-keepers” (*rath’ācariya,ratha.yodha,ratha.rakkh’ādayo*).⁷⁶ The translation “charioteers” sounds better than “chariotmen.”

(4) **Dhanu-g,gahā** refers to archers (*issāsā*, AA 4:54,9), but Dīgha Commentary says that it refers to both “archery teachers and archers” (*dhanu.ācariya,issāsā*, DA 1:156,21)

(5) **Celakā** are “standard-bearers” who lead the troops into battle bearing the standards of victory (AA 4:54,10 f = DA 1:156,22 f).

(6) **Calakā** are “battle marshals” (*senā,vyūha,kārakā*) who organize the camps and battle array, thus: “This is the king’s place, this is the place for the chief minister,” and so on (AA 4:54,12 f = DA 1:156,24 f).

(7) **Piṇḍa,dāyakā**, literally means “givers of food-lumps,” that is, the food-servers who serve food and drink to the warriors during the battle, that is, the “supply corps”—hence, they are “supply corps-men.” This is the most likely sense of the term.

The Commentary adds that the term may refer to powerful great warriors who charge into the opposing army and fly about cutting them up as if into lumps (*piṇḍa,piṇḍam iva*). Just as they appear, they depart. (AA 4:54,14-17 = DA 1:156,26-30)

(8) **Uggā rāja,puttā** is a compound comprising 2 terms: *uggā* and *rāja,putta*, which probably go together. The Commentaries apparently derived the word from *uggata*, meaning “very noble, of very high

⁷⁴ Comy glosses *bhaṇḍa* as “herders” (*go,paka*): “*Hatthā,bhaṇḍa* and *assa,bhaṇḍa* are elephant-keepers and horse-keepers” (*hatthi,bhaṇḍe assa,bhaṇḍe’ti hatthi,gopake ca assa,gopake ca*, VA 5:1015,31).

⁷⁵ See prec n: VA 5:1015,31.

⁷⁶ AA 4:54,7 f = DA 1:15619 f.

rank.”⁷⁷ They are “royal princes (*rāja,puttā*) experienced in battle who have risen higher and higher (in military rank and influence)” (*uggat’uggatā saṅgāmāvacarā raja,puttā*, AA 4:54,18)

The SED, however, says that the *ugra* (Skt) were “of a mixed tribe (from a Kshatriya father and a Śūdra mother).”⁷⁸ The *uggā rāja,puttā*, then, are probably warriors of mixed kshatriya-shudra classes. It also notes that, as an adjective, it can mean “impetuous, strong, huge, formidable, terrible,” “high, noble,” and also “cruel, fierce, ferocious, savage.” These may well be amongst the qualities of these “shudra warrior princes.” (AA 4:54,18 f = DA 1:157,1 f)

(9) **Pakkhandino** (literally, “those who leap forward”) are battle commandos, probably the suicide squad. They ask their commanders: “Whose head or weapon shall we bring?” and when told, “That one!” they leap (*pakkhandanti*) into the midst of battle and bring it. In short, they are the “front-line killer-squad” or “storm-troopers.” (AA 4:54,20-22 = DA 1:3-6)

(10) **Mahā,nāgā**, the “great elephant fighters” or “warriors brave as elephants,” who, like the bull-elephants, do not retreat even when the enemy’s war-elephants, etc, are coming straight at them (AA 4:54,23 f = DA 1:157,6). For convenience, we can call them “great bull warriors”: the “bull” here refers *the bull-elephant*.

(11) **Sūrā** (“the brave”) is a term for “the sun.”⁷⁹ Here, they are said to be “unique heroes” (*eka,sūrā*), able to cross bodies of water (*sa,jālikā*) even while wearing a coat of mail or carrying their armour—which reminds us of the ninjas of feudal Japan (DA 157,9 = AA 4:54,25 f). “Hero-fighters” should be a suitable translation.

(12) **Papphālikā** is probably related to the Sanskrit *prapālaka* or *prapāli*, meaning “protector.” They are probably “armoured warriors.” This reading is found only in the Sinhala and the Siamese manuscripts. It is not listed in any of the Commentaries. Thus, its sense can only be conjectured.

(13) **Camma,yodhino** (“shield-bearing soldiers”) are those who wear a coat of leather mail, or who carry a leather shield as protection against arrows. (AA 4:55,1 f = DA 1:157,11). Hence, they are “leather-armoured warriors.”

(14) **Dāsaka,puttā** (“domestic-slave soldiers”): young “deeply affectionate domestic-slave soldiers” (*balava,sinehā ghara,dāsa,yodhā*, AA 4:55,3 = DA 1:157,13). Probably, they are “home-born slaves” (A:H 4:70) or “sons of house-slaves” (Miln:H 2:170) who are fighters (like conscripts) or follow their masters into battle. Hence, they are probably pages to some of the heroic warriors or those who serve the needs of their lords. They are the “young slave-soldiers.”

⁷⁷ DA 157,1; AA 4:54,18; cf DA 273,3; MA 3:305,4; SA 2:393 + 394; AA 3:236,27.

⁷⁸ This is reflected in **Abhidhāna-p,paḍīpika** (by Moggallāna, 11th cent dictionary) (*uggo suddāya khattajo*, Abh 503). See CPD: ²ugga.

⁷⁹ Tha 150 = Ap 5.90; J 5:56.

2.3 THE 7 TRUE VIRTUES (*satta saddhamma*)

2.3.0 The set of 7 virtues in the suttas

2.3.0.1 This teaching appears in **the Sekha Sutta** (M 53) as being given by Ānanda to the Sakyas, headed by Mahānāma in Kapila,vatthu, on the occasion of the consecration of their new assembly-hall. The 7 virtues form the 5th of the 6 qualities of a noble disciple (*ariya,sāvaka*):

The 6 qualities of a noble disciple

According to **the Sekha Sutta** (M 53), a noble disciple has the following qualities:

(1) he is accomplished in moral virtue,	[2.3.1]	<i>sīla,sampanno hoti</i>
(2) his sense-doors are guarded,	[2.3.2]	<i>indriyesu dutta,dvāro hoti</i>
(3) he knows moderation in food,	[2.3.3]	<i>bhojane mattaṭṭaṅṅū hoti</i>
(4) he is devoted to wakefulness,	[2.3.4]	<i>jāgariyaṃ anuyutto hoti</i>
(5) he is accomplished in the 7 virtues , ⁸⁰	[2.3.5]	<i>sattehi dhammehi samannāgato hoti</i>
(6) he obtains at will, with neither trouble nor difficulty, the 4 dhyanas that is the higher mind, providing pleasant dwellings [abidings] here and now. ⁸¹	[2.3.6]	<i>catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ abhicetasikaṃ diṭṭha,-dhamma,sukha,vihārānaṃ, nikāma,lābhī hoti akicchā,lābhī akasira,lābhī</i>

It is clear from the above listing that the teachings of **the Nagarôpama Sutta** and the teachings (5+6) of **the Sekha Sutta** are identical. The only difference is that the Sekha Sutta gives introductory teachings to the 7 true virtues (*satta saddhamma*).⁸² The Nagarôpama Sutta gives more detailed definitions of each of the 7 true virtues.

2.3.0.2 Although the teachings of the Nagarôpama Sutta is addressed by the Buddha to the monks, the very same teachings—the 7 true virtues and the 4 dhyanas—are addressed by Ānanda (at the Buddha’s instruction—to **the laity**, that is, the Sakyas of Kapilavatthu, headed by Mahānāma. They are advised to practise these very same 7 true virtues and 4 dhyanas for the attaining of nirvana in this life itself. Hence, these practices can and should be taken up by a serious lay practitioner. Significantly, this is also one of the suttas where the 4 dhyanas is taught to the laity.

2.3.0.3 The Saṅgīti Sutta (D 32) lists the 7 qualities in two opposing sets: the 1st set lists their 7 respective opposites as the “7 qualities that are false virtues” (*satta asaddhammā*), that is, the qualities of a false person: one who is faithless (*asaddha*), morally shameless (*ahirika*), lacking moral fear (*anottappī*), of little learning (*appa-s,suta*), lazy (*kusita*), and confused (*muṭṭha-s,sati*) and lacking wisdom (*duppaññā*)—these are the “7 qualities that conduces to ruin” (*satta dhamma hāna,bhāgiyā*), that is, personal, mental and spiritual decline.⁸³

⁸⁰ See §11 (5) below.

⁸¹ See §18 n below.

⁸² M 53,11-18/1:355 f (SD 21.14).

⁸³ D 33,2.3(4)/3:252.

Then, follows the list of “7 qualities that conduces to distinction” (*satta dhamma visesa, bhāgiya*), those that conduce to the personal and mental development, and to the attaining of the path of awakening.⁸⁴

2.3.0.4 The Das’uttara Sutta (D 33) lists the same 7 true virtues (*satta saddhamma*) twice but each under a different heading. The 1st set lists their 7 respective *opposites*, as the “7 qualities that conduces to ruin” (*satta dhamma hāna, bhāgiyā*), that is, to personal, mental and spiritual decline, that is, one who is.⁸⁵

(1) faithless,	<i>asaddha</i>
(2) morally shameless,	<i>ahirika</i>
(3) lacking in moral fear,	<i>anottappī</i>
(4) of little learning,	<i>appa-s, suta</i>
(5) lazy,	<i>kusita</i>
(6) mentally confused, and	<i>muṭṭha-s, sati</i>
(7) lacking wisdom.	<i>duppaññā</i>

Then, follows the “normal” list of the “7 qualities that conduces to distinction” (*satta dhamma visesa, bhāgiya*), that is, to the attaining of the path of awakening.⁸⁶

2.3.1 The noble disciple is *faithful* (*saddha*) [§20]

“A noble disciple has **faith** (*saddho*);⁸⁷ he has faith in the Tathagata’s awakening ...” [§20]

2.3.1.1 A true disciple’s faith (*saddhā*) is like **the citadel pillar** (*saddh’esika*), “deeply buried, well sunk, immovable, unshakable” [§3]. He has wise unshakable faith in the Buddha’s awakening—the possibility of spiritual evolution of beings, especially the human, into the divine and beyond. And that both the Buddha’s awakening and the arhat’s awakening are the same, except that the Buddha discovers and teaches that truth so they become arhats. In other words, he is **the 1st arhat**, the one of the many, the 1st amongst equals.⁸⁸ [1.4.6]

2.3.1.2 This faith—like the citadel pillar—is “*for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.*” A smaller version of the citadel pillar—called the “locking post” (*khīla*) [1.4.1.2]—securely locks the city-gate against being rammed open from the outside—even so, our faith keeps us from being distracted by outside teachings and influences. The disciple’s faith is strong because he is emotionally independent of others⁸⁹—he is wise and happy by his own efforts—which confirms the Buddha’s awakening.⁹⁰ [2.3.1]

2.3.1.3 Just the citadel pillar **inspires strength in its inhabitants**, so, too, our faith in the 3 jewels—even though we are yet unawakened—inspires us to diligently practise the Dharma, and remain happy and inwardly peaceful throughout our lives, so that we gradually but surely approach the path of awaken-

⁸⁴ D 33,2.3(5)/3:252.

⁸⁵ D 34,1.8(5)/3:282.

⁸⁶ D 34,1.8(6)/3:282.

⁸⁷ Cf S 5:196.

⁸⁸ See **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58), SD 49.10.

⁸⁹ See **Emotional independence**, SD 40.8.

⁹⁰ See the case of the layman Citta: **Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta S** (S 41.8), SD 40a.7; SD 40a.8 (5.6.3).

ing. This is the wise faith that protects and perpetuates the path of awakening so that it is still open to us even today.

With this faith, *we abandon the unwholesome and cultivate the wholesome. We abandon the blame-worthy and cultivate the blameless. We keep ourself in purity.* This refrain (in the 3rd person) is repeated for each of the other 6 true virtues. This is the function of every true virtue (*saddhamma*).

In short, the disciple's faith—wise in understanding the nature of the 3 jewels—is unshakable, like that of the arhat monk Sāriputta⁹¹ and of the layman non-returner Citta⁹² [2.3.1.2].

2.3.2 The noble disciple is morally shameful (*hirimā*) [§21]

“He feels **moral shame** towards misconduct of the body, misconduct of speech, misconduct of the mind; he feels moral shame towards bad unwholesome states.” [§21]

2.3.2.1 A disciple's moral shame (*hiri*; Skt *hrī*), is said to be like the citadel's “**moat**, deep and wide.” Moral shame—like the moat—is our preliminary defence against any intention to do immoral acts. This is a reminder that we should carefully reflect on our intention before we act—before we think of something, before we speak, and before we do it—whether it harms us, or harms others, or harms the environment (the world around us). We should do the same while doing it. At the proper time, we should recollect what we have done and reflect on it in the same way. This is the teaching of **the Amba,laṭṭhika Rāhul'ovāda Sutta** (M 61).⁹³ [1.4.3]

2.3.2.2 Ideally, moral shame is a wise and compassionate sense of disgust with the bad and unwholesome. The Abhidhamma defines it as “to be ashamed of what one ought to be ashamed of, to be ashamed of performing bad and unwholesome deeds” (Pug 24).⁹⁴ It is one of **the 7 noble treasures** (*satta ariya, -dhana*): faith, moral conduct, moral shame, moral fear, learning, charity (*cāga*),⁹⁵ wisdom.⁹⁶ Moral shame is often paired with moral fear (*ottappa*)⁹⁷ [2.3.3], and, as the foundation for morality, called “the world-protectors” (*loka,pāla*, A 1:51), since they are the preconditions for a functional society [2.3.3.2].

2.3.2.3 According to **the Visuddhi,magga**, the proximate cause for moral shame is self-respect, while for moral fear it is other-respect. Out of self-respect (*attāna garu katvā*), one, like the daughter of a good family, rejects bad-doing through moral shame. Out of respect for others (*param garu katvā*), one, like a courtesan, rejects bad-doing through moral fear (Vism 14.142/464 f).

The former is sometimes known as self-regarding moral conduct (motivated by considerate *shame* that the deed entails), and the latter as other-regarding moral conduct (motivated by a healthy *fear* of karmic repercussions). Hence, these 2 attitudes are known as the 2 “bright states” that protect the world,

⁹¹ On Sāriputta's faith, see **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28,1-2) + SD 14.14 (2.3) & SD 40a.8 (5.6.2).

⁹² On Citta's faith, see **Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta S** (S 41.8), SD 40a.7; SD 40a.8 (5.6.3).

⁹³ M 61/1:414-420 (SD 3.10).

⁹⁴ Cf Dhs:R 18 f.

⁹⁵ Note that these 7 noble treasures are identical to the 7 true virtues (*satta saddhamma*) except that this (6) “charity” (*cāga*) is replaced by “mindfulness” (*sati*). While the “7 noble treasures” are tools for attaining at least streamwinning, the “7 true virtues” is for the “open” path leading right up to arhathood—hence, the presence of “mindfulness,” which refers to the dhyanas [1.1.1.2]. See SD 37.6 (1.1.1.4). On the necessity of the dhyanas for non-returning and arhathood, see SD 8.5 (2); SD 10.16 (1.5.1.6); SD 15.1 (13); SD 41.1 (2.2.2.4); SD 23.6 (4).

⁹⁶ See **Ariya Dhana S 1** (A 7.5/4:4 f) + SD 37.6 (1.1-2); **Ariya Dhana S 2** (A 7.6/4:5 f); **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30,2.1(2.2)/-3:163), **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,23(i)/3:251); also UA 285; VvA 113; cf A 3:53; DA 2:34; ThaA 240; VvA 113. Cf Sn 77, 462 (= D 1:168), 719; Thī 342.

⁹⁷ Eg M 1:271; S 2:220; A 2:78; It 34; Tikap 61; J 1:127; Vism 221; DhA 3:73.

if not for which “one would neither respect one’s mother, nor one’s mother’s sister, nor one’s brother’s wife, nor one’s teacher’s wife” (A 2.9/1:51), SD 51.9.

2.3.3 The noble disciple is morally fearful (*ottappī*) [§22]

“He feels **moral shame** towards misconduct of the body, misconduct of speech, misconduct of the mind; he feels moral shame towards bad unwholesome states. [§22]

2.3.3.1 Moral shame and moral fear, as we noted [2.3.2] work together as the ground for our moral conduct, acting in a civil and wholesome manner so that the “good society” prevails. **Moral fear** is an “other-regarding moral conduct” in the sense that we are wisely and clearly aware of the karmic consequences of our intentions, so that we are guarded against acting them out. It becomes worse when such intentions are unguarded or are projected as speech and bodily action.

It’s like we are supposed to be guarding the citadel by patrolling along the citadel’s encircling path or wallwalk—we must keep vigil, a mindful regard, whether there are enemies lurking below the walls or in the distance. If we see any danger, we at once alert the guards and warn the city. [1.4.3]

2.3.3.2 Together with moral shame [2.3.2], moral fear work as the 2 “bright states” that are **world-protectors** (*loka, pāla*), essential and natural qualities serving as the bases for a functional and wholesome society or “good society.” While moral shame reminds us of our value as an individual, moral fear reminds us to respect others for value that other persons and beings have in this interbeing of life.

2.3.4 The noble disciple is much learned (*bahu-s, suta*) [§23]

“He remembers what he has **learned**, builds up what he has learned. Those teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and the letter [both in meaning and phrasing], that proclaim the holy life fully complete and pure—such teachings he has learned much, remembered, recited, mentally investigated, and penetrated well by view.”⁹⁸ [§23]

2.3.4.1 A disciple’s much learning (*bahu-s, sacca*) is like the citadel’s **armoury** [1.4.4]. Just as the variety of weapons and battle strategies allows the citadel to keep up an effective defence and to defeat the enemy, so, too, our *wide learning* is an effective weapon against lust, hate, delusion, fear and ignorance. With proper use of knowledge and experience—with wisdom—we will be able defeat and destroy the various defilements that hinder our personal development and spiritual growth. [1.4.4]

2.3.4.2 Great learning and good education that come from wholesome instruction (*anusāsana*) can touch our hearts, changing our lives. This is the kind of positive change that brings goodness and progress to the community, even the world. This is called the miracle of instruction (*anusāsani pāṭihāriya*) in **the Kevaḍḍha Sutta** (D 11).⁹⁹ [1.4.4]

⁹⁸ Cf **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,15/3:11), SD 33.5; **(Ahitāya) Thera S** (A 5.88/3:114-116), SD 40.16.

⁹⁹ D 11,8/1:214 (SD 1.7).

2.3.5 The noble disciple is *exertive* (*āradḍha, viriya*) [§24]

“He dwells **exerting effort** in abandoning unwholesome states, in promoting wholesome states. He is vigorous, steadfast in striving, unrelenting in his task in promoting wholesome states.”¹⁰⁰ [§24]

2.3.5.1 A disciple’s effort (*viriya*) is like the citadel’s **troops** [1.4.5]. Weapons need a trained, skillful and unflagging army to use them with the desired effect. The trained soldiers give power to the weapons they use, and this power is what brings victory to the nation, which also preserves its sovereignty and independence from external domination. In India of the Buddha’s time, we see how powerful kings with their armies were able to expand their kingdom and territories, marking the beginnings of the Indian empires.

2.3.5.2 Our effort (*viriya*), when wisely and relentlessly applied becomes **diligence** (*appamāda*), well-directed energy to wholesome ends, especially by way of the 4 right efforts (*samma-p, padhāna*). This means that we mindfully work to restrain ourself so that unarisen bad unwholesome states do not arise, and abandon those that have arisen; to cultivate arisen good wholesome states and maintain them.¹⁰¹

This is like the functions of the citadel’s troops. They *prevent* any internal strife or outside attacks, and *defeat*, or at least ward off, those who act inimically to the nation; and *generate* peace and prosperity in the nation, and maintain them. [1.4.5]

2.3.6 The noble disciple is *mindful* (*satimā*) [§25]

“He is **mindful**, possessing excellent mindfulness and prudence [discrimination];¹⁰² and he remembers and recalls what was done long ago, what was spoken long ago.” [§25]

2.3.6.1 A disciple’s mindfulness (*sati*) is like the citadel’s **gate-keeper** “who is intelligent, experienced and wise, keeps out strangers [those whom he knows not], lets in only those whom he knows.” [§8]. In a longer metaphor of the rajah’s frontier citadel—in **the Mahā, parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), **the Nālandā Sutta** (S 47.12) and **the (Dasaka) Uttiya Sutta** (A 10.95)—the gate-keeper “patrols [checks] along the pathway all around the city so that he will see neither cracks nor cavities in the wall not even large enough for a cat to pass through” [1.3.2.2].

In practical terms, this metaphor refers to **the nimitta.vyañjana pericope**--the practice of sense-restraint, that is, how to master the senses and control the mind, explained in detail in **the Visuddhi-magga** (Vism 1.53-50). Essentially, we are taught by the suttas that when we see a form with the eye, we should “grasp neither its sign nor its details.” So long as we are unrestrained in the eye-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure (liking and disliking) may overwhelm us. Hence, we should be restrained in that way. The same instruction is applied to each of the other 5 sense-faculties, ending with the mind-faculty. This is the basic practice of personal mindfulness.¹⁰³

2.3.6.2 He “**remembers and recollects**” what was said or done long ago—for effective Dharma learning and practice, we should have a good memory. The Commentary distinguishes between *sarita*, “remembering” (that is, remembering once) and *anussarita*, “recollecting” (remembering again and

¹⁰⁰ Cf M 85,58/2:95; S 48.9/5.14.4; A 5:197/3:11, A 7.4.4/4:3; U 4.1.11/37.

¹⁰¹ See **(Cātu) Padhāna S** (A 4.14), SD 10.2.

¹⁰² “Mindfulness and prudence,” *sati, nepakka*; on *nepakka*, see Vbh 249; VbhA 311 f.

¹⁰³ See **Nimitta and anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

again). To “remember” means to be familiar with past events or experiences with it, recalling them almost at once. To “recollect,” on the other hand, needs some effort to recall something.

Mindfulness (*sati*), then, should be understood as memory. **Attention** to the present moment is the basis for a good memory. The Commentary takes the mention of *sati* here to imply all 7 factors of awakening,¹⁰⁴ of which it is the first. (MA 3:30)

2.3.6.3 In the case of **the gatekeeper** metaphor [2.3.6.1] at **the (Dasaka) Uttiya Sutta** (A 10.95), it adds, “Now, he might not have such a knowledge, ‘So many people has entered or left the city. But he knows this much, ‘Whichever large creatures that enter this city or leave it, all of them have to enter or leave by this gateway’” (SD 44.13). This is a beautiful parable for mindfulness and mental cultivation.

There is another “frontier city” parable for mental cultivation in **the Kimsuka Sutta** (S 35.245),¹⁰⁵ where the Buddha explains the imageries he uses. It is more detailed than the gatekeeper metaphor in **the Nagara Sutta** (S 12.65).¹⁰⁶ [1.4.6]

2.3.6.4 In the extended metaphor of the rajah’s frontier citadel of **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), Sāriputta explains to us that **the gatekeeper’s qualities** [2.3.6.1] refers to the “drift of the Dharma” (the nature of the Dharma), that is,

Bhante, whatever arhats [worthy ones], fully self-awakened ones, there were of past times, all these Blessed Ones,
 having overcome the 5 mental hindrances¹⁰⁷ that are mental impurities that weaken wisdom, then, placing their minds firmly in the 4 focuses of mindfulness,¹⁰⁸
 then, cultivating the 7 awakening-factors¹⁰⁹ according to reality,
 attain to the peerless full self-awakening.¹¹⁰

D 16,1.17/1:83 (SD 9)¹¹¹

¹⁰⁴ See *satta bojjhaṅga*, SD 10.15.

¹⁰⁵ S 35.245/4:194 f, (SD 53.10; qu at SD 2.17 (8.4)).

¹⁰⁶ S 12.65,8+19-21/2:105 f, (SD 14.2).

¹⁰⁷ **The 5 mental hindrances** (*pañca nīvaraṇā*) are: (1) sensual desire (*kāma-c, chanda*); (2) ill will (*vyāpāda*); (3) sloth and torpor (*thīna, middha*); (4) restlessness and worry (*uddhacca, kukkucca*); (5) persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*). See (*Nīvaraṇā*) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55/5:121-126).

¹⁰⁸ **The focuses of mindfulness** (*satipaṭṭhāna*) are: (1) contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*), comprising 14 exercises: the 4 postures, full awareness, reflection on foulness, the 4 elements [§§12-13], and the 9 “corpse” meditations; (2) contemplations of feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), 1 exercise, considering feeling in terms of the affective quality—as either pleasant, painful or neutral—with each being examined again as being either carnal or spiritual; (3) contemplation of the mind (or mind-consciousness) (*cittānupassanā*), 1 exercise, examining 16 states of mind coloured by their concomitants—**Pubba S** (S 51.11/5:263-266); (4) contemplation of mind-objects (or “the nature of things”) (*dhammānupassanā*) [§§36-45] is the most diversified exercise involving these 5 schemes: the 5 hindrances, the 5 aggregates, the 6 sense-bases, the 7 awakening-factors, and the 4 noble truths. See **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22), **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), **Ānāpānasati S** (M 118) and **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62).

¹⁰⁹ **The 7 awakening-factors** (*satta (sam)bojjhaṅga*) are those of: (1) mindfulness (*sati sambojjhaṅga*); (2) mental investigation (*dhamma, vicaya sambojjhaṅga*); (3) effort (*virīya sambojjhaṅga*); (4) zest (*pīti sambojjhaṅga*); (5) tranquillity (*passaddhi sambojjhaṅga*); (6) concentration (*samādhi sambojjhaṅga*); (7) equanimity (*upekkhā sambojjhaṅga*) (D 3:251, 282; Vbh 277).

¹¹⁰ After a long intervening passage, **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28,21/3:116) and **Nālandā S** (S 47.12,10/5:161) close with the Buddha saying: “Therefore, Sāriputta, you should repeat this Dharma exposition frequently to the monks and the nuns, to the layman followers and the laywoman followers. Even though some foolish people may have doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata, when they hear this Dharma exposition, their doubt or uncertainty regarding the Tathagata will be abandoned.” The underscored passage refers to the comprehensive meditation practice leading to awakening: see **The Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1(6.2).

2.3.7 The noble disciple is *wise* (*paññāva*) [§26]

“He is **wise**;¹¹² he possesses noble penetrative wisdom regarding the rising and passing away (of phenomena), leading to the complete destruction of suffering.¹¹³” [§26]

2.3.7.1 A disciple’s wisdom (*paññā*) is like the fact that the citadel’s **encircling wall** is “well covered with a coat of plaster” [§9], impressing on outsiders who *see* it for its strength, indomitability, as well as beauty. This vision discourages the enemy from even thinking of scaling or breaching the city wall for what it is and because it is high, strong, a full circle, and so well maintained.

However, it is not the *wall* but how the wall *looks*, or how the outsiders or enemies perceive the wall—that it is beautiful and indomitable—that saves the inhabitant even the trouble of fighting off attackers, who are unlikely to attack because they see that it would not be worth their effort and that they would fail. Hence, the wall is said to be “**well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.**” [1.4.7]

2.3.7.2 In a “reverse metaphor” of seeing [1.4.7.2], the citadel’s **coat of plaster** represents the disciple’s **wisdom**. “He is accomplished in noble penetrative wisdom regarding *the rising and passing away (of phenomena)*, leading to the complete destruction of suffering” [§26.2]. For those who have yet to be liberated—those like us, the sutta student and practitioner—our level of wisdom is sufficient for us to “abandon the unwholesome and cultivate the wholesome; abandon the blameworthy and cultivate the blameless; and to keep ourself in purity—that is, to be “bodily cultivated” (*kaya, bhāvita*) in moral virtue and “mentally cultivated” (*citta, bhāvita*) in concentration, ready for the arising of liberating wisdom.¹¹⁴

This **disciple’s wisdom** is that of insight and of the path, capable of penetrating the rise and fall of the 5 aggregates. The Commentary explains that “Here, path wisdom (*maggā, paññā*) is called ‘penetrative’ (*nibbedhikā*) because it penetrates and uproots the masses (*khandha*) of greed, of hate and of delusion. Insight wisdom (*vipassanā, paññā*) is called penetrative because it penetrates them momentarily (*tad-aṅga, vasena*) and because it leads to the path.” (MA 3:31)

— — —

Nagarôpama Sutta

The Discourse on the Citadel Parable

A 7.63

1 Bhikshus,¹¹⁵ when a rajah’s frontier citadel¹¹⁶ is well equipped¹¹⁷ with the 7 requisites of a citadel and the 4 kinds of food¹¹⁸ obtainable whenever they desire it, without trouble, without difficulty¹¹⁹—

¹¹¹ = S 47.12,8/5:160 (SD 12.18) = A 10.95/5:194 (SD 44.16).

¹¹² Cf **Bodhi Rāja, kumāra S** (M 85,57-58/2:95).

¹¹³ This refers to the wisdom of insight and of the path, capable of penetrating the rise and fall of the 5 aggregates. Comy: Here, path wisdom (*maggā, paññā*) is called “penetrative” (*nibbedhikā*) because it penetrates and uproots the masses (*khandha*) of greed, of hate and of delusion. Insight wisdom (*vipassanā, paññā*) is called penetrative because it penetrates them momentarily (*tad-aṅga, vasena*) and because it leads to the path. (MA 3:31)

¹¹⁴ **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja S** (S 35.127,7), SD 27.61.

¹¹⁵ The first half of the Sutta—on the parable of the frontier citadel—starts here and ends at §17.

1.2 this, bhikshus, is said to be a **rajah's frontier citadel** that cannot be undone by those outside, by foes or by disloyal friends [perfidious allies].¹²⁰

2 With what **7 requisites of a citadel** is it well provided?¹²¹

THE 7 REQUISITES OF A CITADEL

(1) The citadel pillar [1.3, 1.4.1]

3 Here, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel there is a **pillar**,¹²² deeply buried, well sunk, immovable, unshakable.¹²³

3.2 With this **1st citadel requisite**, it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.¹²⁴

(2) The city moat [1.4.2]

4 Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel there is a **moat**, deep and wide.¹²⁵

4.2 With this **2nd citadel requisite**, it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside. **[107]**

(3) The citadel's encircling path [1.4.3]

5 Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel there is an **encircling pathway [wall-walk]**, high and wide.¹²⁶

¹¹⁶ "Citadel" (from French *citadelle*, Italian *cittadella*, diminutive of *citta*, *cittade*, "city"; often used to tr Gk *acropolis*) is prob the best tr of *nagara* here, since it refers to a fortified city (which explains the term). See (1.3).

¹¹⁷ "Well equipped," *suparikkhatam* (Be Ce Se) throughout; Ee *suparikkhitam*, "encircling, surrounded by." See §§3-10.

¹¹⁸ On the 4 kinds of food, see §§11-16.

¹¹⁹ *Yato kho bhikkhave rañño pac'antimam nagaram sattahi nagara,parikkhārehi suparikkhittam hoti catunnañ ca āhārānam nikāma,lābhī hoti akiccha,lābhī akasira,lābhī*. For the underscored stock, "whenever they desire it, without trouble, without difficulty," in dhyana context, see §11.

¹²⁰ *Idam vuccati bhikkhave rañño pacc'antimam nagaram akaraṇiyam bāhirehi paccatthikehi paccāmittehi. Paccatthika*, from *paṭi* (against) + *attha* (benefit) + *ka* (adj particle), lit "opposite to useful," an opponent, adversary, enemy (V 2:94 f; D 1:50, 70, 137; A 5:71; It 83). *Paccā,mitta*, lit "reverse-friend," enemy (D 1:70; A 4:106; J 1:488).

¹²¹ *Katamehi sattahi nagara,parikkhārehi suparikkhatam hoti. Katamehi*, inst of *katama*, "what?"

¹²² "Pillar," *esikā* (see foll n). On the pillar's significance, see (1.4.1).

¹²³ *Idha bhikkhave rañño pacc'antime nagare esikā hoti gambhīra,nemā sunikhātā acalā asampavedhī* [only Ee *asampavedhī*]. *Esika* (neut) + *esikā* (fem) [a by-form of *isikā*; BHS *aṣikā*] a pillar or post = *thambha*, usu at a city-gate, symbolic of endurance and stability (D 2:171,1 f; A 4:106,14 = 109,6; J 2:95,5, 6:276,3+7. Metaphorically used of deeply rooted nature of craving (*taṇhā*) (MA 2:116,2): Often in cpd, ~*ṭṭhāyī*, "as stable as a pillar" (D 1:14,2; S 3:202,7, 211,8, 217,20; DA 1:105,8). Cf *khila*, which is the bolt to the city-gate [1.4.1.***].

¹²⁴ *Iminā paṭhamena nagara,parikkhārena suparikkhittam hoti rañño pacc'antimam nagaram abbhantarānam guttiyā bāhirānam paṭighātāya*.

¹²⁵ *Puna ca param bhikkhave rañño paccantime nagare parikhā* [Ce Ee so; Be Se *parikkhā*] *hoti gambhīrā c'eva vitthatā ca*.

¹²⁶ *Puna ca param bhikkhave rañño pacc'antime nagare anupariyāya,patho hoti ucco c'eva vitthato ca. Anupariyāya,patha* is a path or wall walk (behind the parapet of a fortress); A 4:107,2 = 109,26 (~o *hoti ucco c'eva vitthato ca* = *anto,pākārena saddhim gato mahā,patho, yattha ṭhitā bahi,pākāre ṭhitehi saddhim yujjhanti*, AA 4:53,22); acc

5.2 With this **3rd citadel requisite**, *it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.*

(4) The citadel's armoury [1.4.4]

6 Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel there is a **great armoury of weapons**, such as missiles and swords.¹²⁷

6.2 With this **4th citadel requisite**, *it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.*

(5) The citadel's troops [1.4.5]

7 Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel there reside **many kinds of troops**, that is to say, elephant-riders, horsemen, charioteers, archers, standard-bearers, camp marshals, supply corpsmen, shudra warrior princes, front-line killer-squad [storm troopers], great bull-warriors, hero-fighters, armoured warriors, leather-armoured warriors, young slave soldiers.¹²⁸

7.2 With this **5th citadel requisite**, *it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.*

(6) The gate-keeper [1.4.6]

8 Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel there is a **gate-keeper** who is intelligent, experienced and wise, keeps out strangers [those whom he knows not], lets in only those whom he knows.¹²⁹

8.2 With this **6th citadel requisite**, *it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.*

(7) The citadel wall [1.4.7]

9 Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel there is a **wall**, high and wide, and well covered with a good coat of plaster.¹³⁰

9.2 With this **7th citadel requisite**, *it is well-equipped for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside.* **[108]**

~am (samantā ~ anukkamāno), D 2:83,12 = 3:101,4 (= anupariyāya, nāmakam pākāra, maggaṃ, DA 3:880,35) = S 5:160,21 (= do, SA 3:211,16) = A 5:195,1 (do, = AA 5:65,13).

¹²⁷ Puna ca param bhikkhave rañño pacc'antime nagare bahuṃ āvudham sannicītaṃ hoti salākañ c'eva jevanīyañ [Ce Ee so; Be Se jevanīkañ] ca. For comy on the types of weapons (āvudha), see (2.1).

¹²⁸ Puna ca param bhikkhave rañño paccantime nagare bahu, bala, kāyo paṭivasati, seyyathīdam hatth'ārohā ass'ārohā rathikā dhanu-g, gahā celakā calakā piṇḍa, dāyakā uggā raja, puttā pakkhandino mahā, nāgā sūrā [Ce Se add papphālikā] camma, yodhino dāsaka, puttā. For comy on the individuals comprising the troops (bala, kāya), see (2.2). This stock forms part of a longer list of common occupations in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 1,14/1:51), SD 8.10, and Miln 331,3-5. Both related Comys—AA 4:54 f and DA 1:156 f—explain the terms in mostly identical ways. None of the occupations listed here appears in the long lists in Mvst 3:113 f, 442 f + Mvst:J 3:110, 443 f esp nn.

¹²⁹ Puna ca param bhikkhave rañño pacc'antime nagare dovāriko hoti paṇḍito vyatto medhāvī aññātānaṃ nivāretā ñātānaṃ pavesetā. On the city-gate(s), see (1.3.2 + 1.3.3). On the gate-keeper, see (1.4.6).

¹³⁰ Puna ca param bhikkhave rañño pacc'antime nagare pākāro hoti ucco c'eva vitthato ca vāsana, lepana, sampanno ca.

10 It is well equipped with these 7 citadel requisites.

THE 4 KINDS OF FOOD

11 Of what **4 kinds of food** does it obtain as they desire it, without trouble, without difficulty?¹³¹

12 (1) Here, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel, much **grass, wood and water** are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside.¹³²

13 (2) Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel, much **rice and barley-corn**¹³³ are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside.

14 (3) Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel, much **sesame, green peas, beans and other food**¹³⁴ are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside.

15 (4) Furthermore, bhikshus, in the rajah's frontier citadel, much **medicines**—namely, ghee, butter, oil, honey, sugar and salt¹³⁵—are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside.

16 These, bhikshus, are the 4 kinds of food it obtains at will, without trouble, without difficulty.

The citadel's 7 requisites and 4 kinds of food

17 Bhikshus, when a rajah's frontier citadel is well equipped with these 7 requisites of a citadel and these 4 kinds of food it obtains at will, without trouble, without difficulty—

17.2 this, bhikshus, is said to be **a rajah's frontier citadel** that cannot be undone by those outside, by foes or by disloyal friends.

THE NOBLE DISCIPLE

18 Even so, bhikshus, when **a noble disciple** is accomplished in 7 true virtues and **[109]** attains the 4 dhyanas, the higher mind,¹³⁶ at will, without any difficulty, without any trouble [in abundance],¹³⁷ dwells happily here and now¹³⁸—

¹³¹ *Katamesaṃ catunnaṃ āhārānaṃ nikāma, lābhī hoti akicchā, lābhī akasira, lābhī.* *Katamesaṃ* is gen pl of *kata-ma*, “what?” The underscored stock recurs at: **Ākaṅkheyya S** (M 6,9/1:33,31) SD 59.1 = **Nava Bhikkhu S** (S 21.4/-2:278,10), SD 72.13. For recurrence and more refs, see **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28,19.3) n, SD 14.14.

¹³² *Idha bhikkhave rañño pacc’antime nagare bahum tiṇa, kaṭṭh’odakam sannicitam hoti abbhantarānam ratiyā aparitassāya phāsu, vihārāya bāhirānam paṭighātāya.* The phrase, “for the delight, relief and comfort” (*ratiyā aparitassāya phāsu, vihārāya*) recurs 5 times in **Anuruddha Mahā ,vitakka S** (A 8.30/4:230 f), SD 19.5.

¹³³ “Rice and barley-corn,” *sālī, yavakam.*

¹³⁴ “Sesame, green peas, beans and other kinds of food,” *tila, mugga, māsāparannaṃ*, which Comy resolves as *tila, mugga, māsā + sesāpar’annaka* (AA 4:55,20). See (1.5.3).

¹³⁵ *Sappi navanitam telam madhu phanitam loṇam:* On this set, see (1.5.4).

¹³⁶ “The higher mind,” Be Ce Se *ābhicetasikānam;* only Ee *abhi-*; Comys both *ābhi-* and *abhi-*.

¹³⁷ For a mundane context of “whenever they desire it, without trouble, without difficulty,” see §1.

this noble disciple, bhikshus, is said to be one who has nothing to do with Māra, who is not overcome by the bad one.¹³⁹

THE 7 TRUE VIRTUES OF THE NOBLE DISCIPLE¹⁴⁰

19 In what 7 true virtues is he accomplished?¹⁴¹ [§2]

(1) One with faith (*saddha*)

20 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah's frontier citadel there is a pillar,¹⁴² deeply buried, well sunk, immovable, unshakable, [§3]

for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside—

20.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple **has faith** [faithful] (*saddha*): he has faith in the Tathagata's awakening, thus:

'So, too, is he the Blessed One: he is arhat, fully self-awakened one, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable persons, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'¹⁴³

20.3 The noble disciple, bhikshus, is one whose pillar is faith (*saddhesika*): He abandons the unwholesome and cultivates the wholesome.

He abandons the blameworthy and cultivates the blameless.

He keeps himself in purity.

He is accomplished in **this 1st true virtue**.¹⁴⁴

(2) Morally shameful (*hirimā*)

21 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah's frontier citadel there is a moat, deep and wide, [§4] *for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside—*

21.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple **has moral shame** (*hirimā*):¹⁴⁵ he feels moral shame towards misconduct of body, misconduct of speech, misconduct of the mind, he feels moral shame towards attaining bad unwholesome states.

21.3 The noble disciple, bhikshus, is one whose moat is moral shame (*hirī,parikkha*): *He abandons the unwholesome and cultivates the wholesome.*

He abandons the blameworthy and cultivates the blameless.

He keeps himself in purity.

¹³⁸ *Catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ abhicetasikānaṃ diṭṭha, dhamma, sukha, vihārānaṃ nikāma, lābhī akiccha, lābhī akasira, -lābhī*. This is stock: **Sekha S** (M 53,18/1:356), SD 21.14; also D 3:113; M 1:33; S 2:278; A 2:23.

¹³⁹ *Ayaṃ vuccati bhikkhave ariya, sāvako akaraṇiyo mārasa akaraṇiyo pāpimato*. **Akaraṇiya** is tr in an amplified manner in two ways here: A 4:109,3 (here) = **Devāsura Saṅgāma S** (A 9.39/4:434,1), SD 61.20. Used in a mundane sense in **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16): "the Vajjis will not be conquered by the king of Magadha" (*~ā vajjī raññā māgadheṇa*; Comy; D 16,1.5/2:76,2 = A 7.22/4:20,29 (Comy) (SD 9).

¹⁴⁰ The second half of the Sutta—on the 7 virtues and the 4 dhyanas—starts here and goes right to the end.

¹⁴¹ *Katamehi sattahi saddhammehi samannāgato hoti*. See §2. For comy, see (2.3).

¹⁴² This imagery of "faith as a pillar" (*saddhesika*) is qu at SnA 143,30 f.

¹⁴³ For Pali text and nn on the Buddha's 9 virtues, see SD 15.7 (2.) and **Dhajagga S** (S 11.3), SD 15.5 (2).

¹⁴⁴ *Iminā paṭhamena saddhammena samannāgato hoti*.

¹⁴⁵ This whole para: *evam eva kho bhikkhave ariya, sāvako hirimā hoti, hiriyati kaya, duccharitena vacī, duccharitena mano, duccharitena, hiriyati papa, kānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ samāpattiyā*.

He is accomplished in **this 2nd true virtue**.

(3) Morally fearful (*ottappī*)

22 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah's frontier citadel there is **an encircling pathway [wallwalk]**, high and wide, [§5]

for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside—

22.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple **has moral fear (*ottappī*)**:¹⁴⁶

he feels moral fear towards misconduct of body, misconduct of speech, misconduct of mind,

he feels moral fear towards attaining bad unwholesome states.

22.3 The noble disciple, bhikshus, is one whose encircling pathway is **moral fear** (*ottapa,pariyāya.patha*):
He abandons the unwholesome and cultivates [110] the wholesome.

He abandons the blameworthy and cultivates the blameless.

He keeps himself in purity.

He is accomplished in **this 3rd true virtue**.

(4) Much learned (*bahu-s,suta*)

23 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah's frontier citadel there is **a great armoury of weapons**, such as missiles and swords, [§6]

for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside—

23.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple **is much learned (*bahu-s,suta*)**:¹⁴⁷

He remembers what he has learned [heard], builds up what he has learned.

Those teachings that are good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end,

both in meaning and in phrasing [in the spirit and in the letter],

that proclaim the holy life that is fully complete and pure¹⁴⁸—

such teachings he has learned much, remembered, recited, mentally investigates, and penetrates well by view.¹⁴⁹

23.3 The noble disciple, bhikshus, is one whose weapon is **learning** (*sut'āvudha*):

He abandons the unwholesome and cultivates the wholesome.

He abandons the blameworthy and cultivates the blameless.

He keeps himself in purity.

He is accomplished in **this 4th true virtue**.

¹⁴⁶ This whole para: *evam eva kho bhikkhave ariya,sāvako hirimā hoti, hiriyati kaya,duccaritena vacī,duccaritena mano,duccaritena, hiriyati papa,kānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ samāpattiyā.*

¹⁴⁷ This whole para: *Evam eva kho bhikkhave ariya,sāvako bahu-s,suto hot suta,dhara suta,sannicayo, ye te dhammā ādi,kalyānā majjhe kalyānā pariyosāna,kalyānā sāttham sa,vyañjanaṃ kevala,paripunnaṃ parisuddham brahma,cariyaṃ abhivadanti, tathā,rūpāssa dhammā bahu-s,sutā honti dhatā vacasā paricitā manasā'nupekkhitā diṭṭhiyā suppaṭividdhā.* On the underscored stock, see DA 1:176; MA 2:202; SA 2:5; AA 2:288. For full formula and explanations, see **Dhammānussati**, SD 15.9 (2.1).

¹⁴⁸ While most other phrasing of this pericope takes the Buddha as the subject (the speaker)—see eg **Sāmañña,-phala S** (D 2,40.2), SD 8.10—the phrasing here take *dhamma*, “the teachings,” as the subject. This para is part of the renunciation pericope: for refs, see (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,1.7) n, SD 40a.13. For an explanation of this *sāsana* pericope, see SD 40a.1 (8.1.2).

¹⁴⁹ *Tathā,rūpāssa dhammā bahu-s,sutā honti dhatā vacasā paricitā manasānupekkhitā diṭṭhiyā suppaṭividdhā.* Cf **Sekha S** (M 53,14), SD 21.14; **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,15/3:11), SD 33.5; (**Ahitāya**) **Thera S** (A 5.88/3:114-116), SD 40.16.

(5) Exertive (*āradḁha, viriya*)

24 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah’s frontier citadel there reside **many kinds of troops**, that is to say, elephant-riders, horsemen, charioteers, archers, standard-bearers, camp marshals, supply corpsmen, shudra warrior princes, front-line killer-squad, great bull-warriors, hero-fighters, armoured warriors, leather-armoured warriors, young slave soldiers, [§7]

for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside—

24.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple **is exertive in effort** (*āradḁha, viriya*): he dwells exerting effort in abandoning unwholesome states, in promoting wholesome states.

He is vigorous, steadfast in striving, unrelenting in his task in promoting wholesome states.¹⁵⁰

24.3 The noble disciple, bhikshus, is one whose troops are effort (*viriya, bala, kāya*): *He abandons the unwholesome and cultivates the wholesome.*

He abandons the blameworthy and cultivates the blameless.

He keeps himself in purity.

He is accomplished in **this 5th true virtue**.

(6) Mindful (*satimā*)

25 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah’s frontier citadel there is **a gate-keeper** who is intelligent, experienced and wise, keeps out **[111]** strangers [those whom he knows not], lets in only those whom he knows, [§8]

for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside—

25.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple is **mindful** (*satimā*):¹⁵¹ possessing excellent mindfulness and prudence [discrimination];¹⁵²

who remembers and recalls¹⁵³ what was done long ago, what was spoken long ago.¹⁵⁴

25.3 The noble disciple, bhikshus, is one whose weapon is learning (*sut’āvudha*): *He abandons the unwholesome and cultivates the wholesome.*

He abandons the blameworthy and cultivates the blameless.

He keeps himself in purity.

He is accomplished in **this 6th true virtue**.

(7) Wise (*paññavā*)

26 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah’s frontier citadel there is **a wall**, high and wide, and well covered with a good coat of plaster [§9],

for the protection of the city inhabitants and for warding off those outside—

26.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple **is wise** (*paññavā*): he is accomplished in noble penetrative wisdom regarding the rising and passing away (of phenomena),¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ *Thāṁavā daḁha, parakkamo anikkhitta, dhuro kusalesu dhammesu.*

¹⁵¹ Cf S 5:197; A 3:11.

¹⁵² “Mindfulness and prudence,” *sati, nepakka*; on *nepakka*, see Vbh 249; VbhA 311 f.

¹⁵³ “Remembers and recollects.” See (2.3.6.2).

¹⁵⁴ This para: *Evam eva kho bhikkhave ariya, sāvako satimā hoti paramena sati, nepakkena samannāgato cira, - katam pi cira, bhāsitam pi saritā anussaritā.*

leading to the complete destruction of suffering.¹⁵⁶

26.3 The noble disciple, bhikshus, is one whose good coat of plaster is **wisdom** (paññā, vāsana.lepana.sampanna):

He abandons the unwholesome and cultivates the wholesome.

He abandons the blameworthy and cultivates the blameless.

He keeps himself in purity.

He is accomplished in **this 7th true virtue**.

27 These are the 7 true virtues that he is accomplished in.¹⁵⁷

THE 4 DHYANAS OF THE NOBLE DISCIPLE

28 Of what **4 dhyanas**, the higher mind, does he attain at will [as he wishes], without any difficulty, without any trouble [in abundance], dwells happily here and now?¹⁵⁸ [§11]

(1) The 1st dhyana

29 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah's frontier citadel, much **grass, wood and water** are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside— [§12]

29.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple,
quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states,
attains and dwells in the **1st dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application,
accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude¹⁵⁹—

29.3 for the delight, relief, comfortable dwelling, for descending into nirvana.¹⁶⁰

(2) The 2nd dhyana

30 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah's frontier citadel, **[112]** much **rice and barley-corn** are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside— [§13]

30.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple,
with the stilling of initial application and sustained application,
by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, reaches and dwells in **the 2nd dhyana**,
free from initial application and sustained application,

¹⁵⁵ On the practice of watching rising and passing away, see **Dīgha, jānu S** (A 8.54,15), SD 5.10; also D 3:237,17; M 1:356,19; S 5:197,19; A 3:2,26; Nm 40,2 etc. On watching the rising and falling of feeling, see **(Aññathatta) Ānanda S 1** (S 22.37/3:37 f), SD 33.11.

¹⁵⁶ *Uday'attha, gāminiyā paññāya samannāgato ariyāya nibbedhikāya sammā, dukkha-k, khaya, gāminiyā*. See (2.3.7).

¹⁵⁷ All MSS: *Imehi sattahi saddhammehi samannāgato hoti*.

¹⁵⁸ *Katamesaṃ catunnaṃ jhānānaṃ ābhicetasikaṃ diṭṭha, dhamma, sukha, vihāraṃ nikāma, lābhī hoti akicchā, lābhī akasira, lābhī*. While in §11, *lābhī* is tr as “does ... obtain,” he it is rendered as “does ... attain” to fit the context better. *Lābhī* technically means “one who attains.” Here the tr is idiomatic.

¹⁵⁹ For details on the dhyana-factors, see SD 8.4 (5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek'aggatā*) and “concentration” (*samādhi*) here, see **Laymen and Dhyana**, SD 8.5.

¹⁶⁰ *Attano ratiyā aparitassāya phāsu, vihārāya okkamanāya nibbānassa*. On *okkamanāya*—of which the verb is *okkamati*, “to descend” as into a boat beside a pier (of one attaining streamwinning); here applied to attaining arhathood: see SD 16.7 (1.6.3.2).

accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration¹⁶¹—
30.3 *for the delight, relief, comfortable dwelling, for descending into nirvana.*

(3) The 3rd dhyana

31 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah’s frontier citadel, much **sesame, green peas, beans and other food** are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside— [§14]

31.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple,
with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He reaches and dwells in **the 3rd dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness’—

31.3 *for the delight, relief, comfortable dwelling, for descending into nirvana.*

(4) The 4th dhyana

32 Bhikshus, just as in the rajah’s frontier citadel, much **medicines**—namely, ghee, butter, oil, honey, sugar and salt—
are stored up for the delight, relief and comfortable dwelling of the inhabitants, for warding off those outside— [§15]

32.2 even so, bhikshus, the noble disciple,
with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,¹⁶²
and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,
attains and dwells in **the 4th dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant,
and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity¹⁶³—

32.3 *for the delight, relief, comfortable dwelling, for descending into nirvana.*

33 These are the 4 dhyanas, the higher mind, that he attains at will, without any difficulty, without any trouble [in abundance], dwells happily here and now. [113]

¹⁶¹ The 2nd dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within its initial application and sustained application (thinking and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf. S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In Ariya, pariyesanā S (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate).

¹⁶² “Joy ... pain,” *sukha...dukkha*: this refers to *physical* feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *domanassa ... somanassa*—refers to *mental* feelings, transcended earlier. Mental feelings must be overcome first so that the mind is not distracted by itself, as it were. Then, all the other feelings (arising from the physical sense-contacts) are transcended. On the significance of this, see **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.

¹⁶³ Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4th dhyana—equanimity (*upekkhā*), mindfulness (*satī*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See also **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2.83/1:75), SD 8.10 & **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5.4).

Conclusion

34 Bhikshus, when a noble disciple is accomplished in these 7 true virtues and attains these 4 dhyanas, the higher mind, at will, without any difficulty, without any trouble, dwells happily here and now—

this noble disciple, bhikshus, is said to be one who has nothing to do with Māra, who is not overcome by the bad one. [§18]

— evaṃ —

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