

18

(Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatarā Brahmā Sutta

The Discourse on a Certain Brahma (of a Different View) | S 6.5

Be Aññatara Brahma Sutta The Discourse on a Certain Brahma

Ee Aparā Diṭṭhi Sutta The Discourse on the One of Different View

Theme: The Buddha corrects Brahma's wrong view

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008, 2019

1 Sutta summary and occurrence

1.1 SUMMARY

1.1.1 The (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatarā Brahmā Sutta (S 6.5) records how the Buddha, using his meditative powers appears in the brahma world, lorded by **Brahmā Baka**,¹ who holds the wrong view that “there is no recluse, no brahmin, who can come here!” [§2]. Without saying a word, the Buddha sits in meditation, absorbed in the attainment of the fire-element, whose radiance brightens the brahma world. [2.1; 2.3.1]

1.1.2 The Buddha is followed by **4 other great disciples**—Mahā Moggallāna, Mahā Kassapa, Mahā Kappiṇa and Mahā Anuruddha—each sitting in the same meditation respectively to the east, the south, the west and the north of the Buddha [§§12, 16, 20, 24]. Mahā Moggallāna then asks Brahma about his view [§22], and Brahma admits that he has given up his wrong view [§23] and feels a sense of spiritual urgency on account of the appearance of the Buddha and the arhats [§24]. [2.2]

1.1.3 After the Buddha has left, Brahmā Baka then sends one of the brahmas to ask Mahā Moggallāna whether there are other spiritually powerful monks like the Buddha and the 4 great arhats [§§25-28]. He is told that there are *many* such arhat disciples of the Buddha [§§29-31]. [2.3]

1.2 THERA,GĀTHĀ AND ITS COMMENTARY

1.2.1 Sutta location. The Thera,gāthā on the elder Moggallāna's verses (**Tha 1198-1200**) quotes the verses of **the (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatarā Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.5) with additional information of the location of the event (Moggallāna's dialogue with Brahma) (Tha 1198ab). The Sutta only tells us that the elder Moggallāna, having emerged² from his meditation on the fire element, “addressed Brahmā in verse” [§21]. **Tha 1198ab** adds that it is Moggallāna “Who asked Brahmā before the Sudhamma hall assembly, ...” (*yo brahmānaṃ paripucchati sudhammāyaṃ abhito sabhaṃ*, Tha 1198ab).³

1.2.2 Related sutta

1.2.2.1 The Thera,gāthā Commentary on the elder Moggallāna's verses (ThaA 174,23-176,29) gives helpful details which are not found in the Saṃyutta Commentary on S 6.5. The Commentary tells us that the context and meaning of **Tha 1198** (which implicitly includes **1119-1120**) is to be found in “the Baka Brahmā Sutta.” “For it is said” (*vuttam h'etaṃ*) and then follows the full text of **the (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatarā Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.5).

¹ This name is not found in S 6.5, but is deduced from Tha Comy [1.2.2.1, 2.1.1.1].

² On the meditator emerging from dhyana before acting further, see (2.3.2.1); also SD 33.1b (6.4.2.3).

³ Comy tells us this Sudhamma hall is not in Tāvatiṃsa, but in the brahma world; and that every deva world has its own Sudhamma assembly-hall (ThaA 174,24-26). See Tha:N 287 n1198.

1.2.2.2 Most previous translators wrongly identified⁴ the “**Baka Brahmā Sutta**” (ThaA 174-176) [1.2.2.1] as **the Brahma Nimantanika Sutta** (M 49), SD 11.7. Although Brahmā Baka is the interlocutor of M 49, the contexts of these two Suttas are very different. There is, in fact, **the Brahmā Baka Sutta** (which is synonymous with the commentarial name “Baka Brahmā Sutta”): this is **S 6.4** (S 1:142-144, SD 11.6), where Brahmā Baka is said to have the wrong view that “This (brahma world) is eternal ... there is no escape beyond here.”⁵ At the end of the Sutta, Brahmā Baka acknowledges the Buddha.

The question and answer in **Moggallāna’s Thera,gāthā** (Tha 1198cdef, 1199cd, 1200) are also found in **the (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatara Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.5) [S 580 f]. Their relationship goes beyond this, as we shall see.

1.2.2.3 Textually, the “Baka Brahmā Sutta” of the Thera.gāthā Commentary [1.1.2.2] refers to **the (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatara Sutta** (S 6.5); but it is closely related to its near-namesake, **the Brahmā Baka Sutta** (S 6.4) [1.3.2.2]. It is not uncommon for more than one sutta to share the same name.⁶ “The Brahmā Baka Sutta” (in name) [1.1.2.2], then, refers to both S 6.4 and S 6.5. However, textually—“This matter, says the Commentary, should be clarified by the Baka Brahmā Sutta” (*ayam pan’attho baka,brahma,-suttana dīpetabbo*, ThaA 175,8 f)—and then follows the full text of **the (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatara Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.5).

1.2.2.4 S 6.5 is *untitled* in the Pali canon itself. The Sutta’s colophon (*uddāna*) lists it mnemonically as *aparā ca diṭṭhi*; hence, the Sinhala (BJT), the Siamese (SR) and European (PTS) editions named it **the Aparā Diṭṭhi Sutta**, “the discourse on another view (or one with a different view).” The Burmese edition, seeing its connection with S 6.4, and involving the same Brahmā, Baka, names it **the Aññatara Brahmā Sutta**, “the discourse on a certain brahma.” It could well be also called **the Aparā Brahmā Sutta**, “the discourse on another brahma” or **the Dutiya Brahmā Baka Sutta** but was not used probably because there is no mention of Baka in S 6.5.

1.3 THE BUDDHA TEACHING THE BRAHMAS

1.3.1 The 4 noble truths. The Commentary on **Tha 1198-1200** [1.2.2.1] gives another interesting detail. The Buddha visits the brahma world and mid-air goes into the attainment of the fire element. His great radiance brightens the whole of that brahma world. Knowing that the brahmas’ minds are ready (*brahmano kala,cittatā*), the Buddha gives them an exposition on the 4 truths.

At the end of the teaching, countless thousands of brahmas attain the path and the fruition. It is at this point, the Commentary says that **the Buddha** (implied by the Commentary context): “He uttered the verse, ‘**Avuso, do you now still have that view ... ?**’ [S 580*], reproving (Brahmā) in this connection” (*taṃ sandhāya codento “ajjāpi te āvuso sā diṭṭhīti gathaṃ āha*). (ThaA 175,2-8)

1.3.2 Which sutta’s conclusion?

1.3.2.1 The problem is that this conclusion does *not* fit **S 6.5**; but works better as the conclusion to **S 6.4**, the Brahmā Baka Sutta, where the Buddha himself teaches Baka and the brahmas. Of significance, too, is the closing verse, spoken by Baka, thus:

⁴ See Tha:N 287 n1198.

⁵ S 6.4,2/1:152 (SD 11.6).

⁶ Suttas with the same name are not uncommon, eg **Ānanda S**: S 22.37 (SD 33.11), S 22.38 (SD 33.12), A 3.32a (SD 31.8a), S 8.4 (SD 16.12), S 44.10 (SD 2.16(5)).

Surely you know this life-span of mine; the others, too, you know—thus you are the Buddha!
Thus this blazing majesty of yours shines and remains in the brahma realm! (S 6.4,10)⁷

We can, of course, read “**this blazing majesty of yours**” (*tyāyaṃ jalitānubhāvo*) in lines cd figuratively, in the sense of understanding the Buddha’s teaching. However, *jalita* seems here used in a literal sense of “burning glory,” as in the Peta,vatthu (Pv 1.10,14). This does not seem to connect to any part of S 6.4 as we have it. The Commentary mentions this as the conclusion of “the Brahmā Baka Sutta,” which clearly fits the ending of **S 6.5**.

1.3.2.2 A more likely possibility is that **the Brahmā Baka Sutta** (S 6.4), **the (Apara Diṭṭhi) Aññātara Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.5) and **the Brahmā Nimantanika Sutta** (M 49) actually form a single narrative or even sutta. S 6.4 and M 49 share the same opening, the **sutta thesis** describing Brahmā Baka’s wrong view. A brief conclusion is provided by the Thera,gāthā Commentary on Moggallāna verses (ThaA 3:175,6-8). There are 2 possible reconstructions—both provisionally go by the same name: **the *Vitthāra Brahmā Baka Sutta**, the full discourse on Brahmā Baka:⁸

The *Vitthāra Brahmā Baka Sutta 1: S 6.4 + M 49 + Conclusion;

The *Vitthāra Brahmā Baka Sutta 2: S 6.4 + S 6.5 + M 48 + Conclusion.

2 Sutta significance

2.1 BRAHMA AND MAHĀ BRAHMĀ

2.1.1 Definitions

2.1.1.1 (1) The Pali term *brahmā*—literally meaning “perfect” or “divine”—as a name, is anglicized as “**brahma**” generically (such as *devā*, “the devas”), gods who inhabit the dhyanic heavens (the form world and the formless world), or as “**Brahma**” as a proper name referring to Mahā Brahmā or simply Brahmā, sometimes with his name attached, such as Brahmā Baka or Baka Brahmā [2.1.1]. Mahā Brahmā is actually a title just like “lord of the devas” (*devānam inda*) in Sakra’s case.⁹

The Thera,gāthā Commentary, quoting S 6.5, glosses *brahmā* with “the great brahma” (*mahā,brahma*, ThaA 3:174,23) [2.1.1.2]. We also know from the same Commentary that he is called **Baka** (ThaA 3:175,8) [2.1.2]. However, there are numerous Mahā Brahmās, each with their own name [2.1.2].

(2) Another related term used in the Sutta is *brahma,pārisajja*, “Brahma’s retinue” [§25 etc]. The Saṃyutta Commentary glosses this with “Brahma’s servants” (*brahma,paricārikāṃ*, SA 3:215,19).¹⁰ They form the *lowest* of the 3 categories of brahmas in the 1st form-dhyana heaven. Above them are “brahma’s ministers” (*brahma,purohita*, literally, “brahma’s chaplains”), who clearly form a sort of “inner circle” around Mahā Brahmā. At the top of this celestial hierarchy is Mahā Brahmā himself.¹¹

(3) In the suttas—such as **the Aruṇa,vati Sutta** (S 6.14)—we see another term, “brahma assembly” (*brahma,parisa*), often appearing in a triad of *brahma*, *brahma,pārisajja* and *brahma,parisa*. Usually, *brahma,parisa* is a generic term for all the brahmas, that is, “the brahma assembly,” as one of the 8 as-

⁷ S 6.4,10/579*/1:144 (SD 11.6).

⁸ For details, see SD 11.6 (3.2.2).

⁹ On *devānam inda*, see **Sakka,nāma S** (S 11.22,2 (7)), SD 54.19; SD 54.8 (4.3.4).

¹⁰ Cf *pāda,paricārika*, see SD 54.8 (1.4.3).

¹¹ On their relative lifespans, see Appendix on the 31 planes: SD 1.7.

semblies (*aṭṭha parisa*), in which the Buddha appears unrecognized, that is, those of kshatriyas, of brahmins, of householders, of recluses, of devas of the 4 great kings, of Tāvatiṃsa, of maras, and of brahmas.¹² However, in its limited usage in the abovementioned triad of brahma terms, *brahma,parisa* or “brahma’s assembly” probably refers to “Brahma’s ministers” (*brahma,purohita*).¹³

2.1.1.2 The (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatara Brahmā Sutta (S 6.5) records an interesting situation where the Buddha corrects another’s wrong view simply by his silent action. He simply appears in glorious fiery meditation above **Brahma**, that is, the Mahā Brahmā, “the great brahma,” the lord of his brahma realm—just as Sakra is the lord (*sakka devānam inda*) of the realm of the 4 great kings and Tāvatiṃsa.¹⁴

Mahā Brahmā is one of the “system lords” of his quadrant of the universe into which he is the first to arise when the universe re-evolves. Hence, he thinks that he has created that universe.¹⁵ Other brahmas then arise and, seeing that he has arisen before them, share the same view.¹⁶

2.1.2 Mahā Brahmā. Amongst the Mahā Brahmās mentioned in the suttas are the following:

- Sahampati** The seniormost of the great brahmas (*jeṭṭhaka mahā,brahmā*, DA 2:467);¹⁷ a 1st-dhyana non-returner.¹⁸ He sees himself as the one inviting the newly awakened Buddha to teach the Dharma.¹⁹ His verses (S 598-603) are in **the Andhaka,vinda Sutta** (S 6.13).²⁰ He is probably identical with Ghaṭikāra²¹ (below), also called Sahaka(pati).²²
- Ghaṭikāra** A Mahā Brahmā probably identical with Sahampati (above): see **the Brahmā Sahampati Sutta** (S 48.57), SD 86.10. On his close connection with the Bodhisattva Jotipāla, see **Ghaṭikāra Sutta** (M 81) + SD 49.3 (1.5.2).
- Sanaṅkumāra** A Mahā Brahmā who is a devout follower of the Buddha,²³ and patron brahma to the kshatriya class. He is often mentioned for his great virtue.²⁴
- Baka** A Mahā Brahmā who falsely views that his brahma world is eternal [1.2.2.2]: **Brahma Nimantanika Sutta** (M 49)²⁵ and **Brahmā Baka Sutta** (S 6.4).²⁶ **The (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatara Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.5) records how Baka falsely views that his world is inaccessible to non-brahmas [§2]. It is likely that all these 3 suttas are integrally connected.²⁷

¹² D 16,3.21-23/2:109 f, 33,3.1(8)/3:260; M 12,29-31/1:72; A 8.69/4:307.

¹³ **Aruṇa,vati S** (S 6.14,12/1:155 f), SD 54.17.

¹⁴ On **Mahā Brahmā**, see SD 12.1 (2.3.4); as “Almighty God”: SD 49.8b (SD 14.2). See DEBN sv. On Sakra, see SD 54.2 (3.2.3.6).

¹⁵ On Brahmā viewing himself as the “world-creator,” see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,2.2), SD 25; SD 52.1 (16.2.5.2).

¹⁶ On the evolution of the universe and the arising of Mahā Brahmā and other brahmas see:

Brahma,jāla S (D 1,39-44), SD 25.2.

¹⁷ See SD 12,1 (2.3.4); SD 12.2 (2).

¹⁸ SD 12.2 (2.1.1.3); SD 49.3 (1.5.2.3).

¹⁹ See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,20.3), SD 1.11; **Āyācana S** (S 6.1) + SD 12.2 (2).

²⁰ S 6.13/1:154 (SD 54.21).

²¹ On Ghaṭikāra, see SD 49.3 (4).

²² SD 49.3 (1.5.2.2).

²³ SD 54.3d (2.2.3).

²⁴ For nn & refs, see SD 54/3d (2.2).

²⁵ M 49/1:326-331 (SD 7.11).

²⁶ S 6.4/1:142-144 (SD 11.6).

²⁷ See SD 11.6 (3.2.2).

- Tudu**²⁸ (Called Turu in the Burmese texts.) An individual brahma (*pacceka brahmā*),²⁹ a non-returner.³⁰ He was Kokālika’s preceptor. Having attained non-returning, he was reborn in a brahma world.³¹ When the schismatic Kokālika lies gravely ill, Tudu exhorts him to listen to Sāriputta and Moggallāna, but fails.³² See **Brahmā Tudu Sutta** (S 6.9), SD 71.17.
- Nārada** He was the Bodhisattva as Mahā Brahmā in a past life, as related in **the Mahā Nārada Kassapa Jātaka** (J 545).³³

2.2 “THERE IS NO RECLUSE, NO BRAHMIN, WHO CAN COME HERE!” [§2]

2.2.1 Recluses and brahmins

2.2.1.1 The (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññātara Brahmā Sutta (S 6.5) opens by telling us of Brahma Baka’s wrong view, “There is no recluse, no brahmin, who can come here!” Who are these “recluses and brahmins”? Historically, **the brahmins** (*brāhmaṇa*) had been the dominant religious class who monopolized the mainstream religious teachings and rituals. From around the Buddha’s time, their power was significantly displaced by that of the kshatriyas (the noble/warrior class), and their religious dominance diluted by **the recluses** (*samaṇa*) who rejected the Vedas (the ancient scriptures of the brahmins) and brahminical sophistry and priestcraft; instead, they propagated self-accountability and self-effort for salvation.

2.2.1.2 The Buddha often adopted various **brahminical terms** (amongst those of others) and detoxed them of brahminical theology, casuistry and priestcraft—he detheologized, demythologized and humanized such terms.³⁴ While the brahmins invented myths and rituals, pretending to be born from God’s mouth and the other social classes from lower parts of his body,³⁵ **the Buddha** teaches that our humanity is the basis and reason for self-effort in the purification of our own body (morality) and mind (insight) for self-liberation here and now. He called such individuals the true “**brahmins**”—who are not born brahmin but *become* brahmin by virtue of their own good and wisdom.³⁶

2.2.1.3 In modern terms, **Brahma’s wrong views** form the basis for any monotheistic worldview—mythically speaking—that conceives of some kind of “Mahā Brahmā” (Almighty God) and his heaven. This heaven is inaccessible to any other being, other than Brahma’s “angels,” that is, Brahma’s ministers (*brahma, purohita*) (the archangels) and Brahma’s retinue (*brahma, pārisajja*) (the ordinary angels). While Brahma (that is, Mahā Brahmā) has himself abandoned his wrong views, not all his brahmas have done so, especially those who are reborn in his heaven after the event. Hence, we still see today the prevalence of theistic notions.

²⁸ Called Turu in Be texts.

²⁹ An individual brahma or pratyeka brahma (*pacceka brahmā*) is a brahma who lives alone and has no retinue (*eka, cārī brahmā, na parisa, cārī brahmā’ti attho*, SAPṬ:Be 1:245).

³⁰ See **Brahmā Tudu S** (S 6.9/1:149), SD 71.17; (**Dasaka**) **Kokālika S** (A 10.189/5:171), SD 71.18;

Takkāriya J (J 481/4:245).

³¹ SA 1:215,12; AA 5:59,21 f.

³² **Kokālika S 2** (S 6.10/1:149), SD 71.16b; (**Dasaka**) **Kokālika S** (A 10.189/5:171), SD 71.18; **Takkāriya J** (J 481/4:245); SA 1:215,11-18; AA 5:59,22-60,4; SnA 2:476,4-11.

³³ J 545/6:220, esp 242-255; Ap 535,31/2:483.

³⁴ **Sigāl’ovāda S** (D 31), SD 4.1 (3); SD 39.3 (3.3.4.3).

³⁵ See eg **Aggañña S** (D 27) +SD 2.19 (6).

³⁶ **Dh 382**, SD 5.11 = SD 20.9 (II Mod Comy: Tha 1119); **Dh ch 26**. See also **Vāseṭṭha S** (M 98 = Sn 3.9), SD 37.1. See DEB sv brāhmaṇa (2).

Human theologies then *invent, elaborate, propagate and defend* stories of the rewards of faith (as defined by the theologians and religious leaders). Faithful believers will go to **heaven** and enjoy eternal life. Since such a theology is one of power and obedience, and is closely linked with keeping the tribe together, and in due course empowering the consecrated king or legitimized emperor, unbelievers are consigned to the opposite of heaven, that is, **hell**. In essence, this is how the “tribal” religions are defined and function.³⁷ Hence, theism necessarily has to be based on **faith**, that is, the belief that the impossible and unnatural will happen for the benefit of a select tribe.³⁸

2.2.2 Inaccessibility of the brahma world

2.2.2.1 Brahma Baka’s wrong views are defined in **the Brahma Nimantanika Sutta** (M 49) and **the Brahma Baka Sutta** (S 6.4) as follows:

- 1 This (brahmā realm) is permanent; this is everlasting; this is eternal;
 - 2 this is everything [complete in itself];
 - 3 this is not subject to passing away,
 - 4 this (body) is neither born, nor decays, nor dies, nor passes away (from here),
 - 5+6 nor reappears [is reborn]; and there is no escape beyond here.³⁹ (M 49,2 = S 6.4,2)⁴⁰
- These are the details of Brahmā Baka’s wrong views:

- (1) His **eternalist view** (*sassata, diṭṭhi*). Basically, this is the notion that Brahma, the other brahmas and the brahma world exist forever.⁴¹
- (2) Brahma assumes that his world is all (*kevala*) that there really is; there is nothing beyond it.
- (3) He views that he and the brahmas will not die (the truth is that their lifespan is astronomically long).
- (4) He believes that since he does not die, he was not born; he will not change (he looks the same all the time); none of the brahmas will die there nor fall away from that heaven.
- (5) Hence, neither he nor any brahma will be reborn anywhere.
- (6) “No escape from beyond here” means that there is neither way nor need of leaving the brahma world. This is, in effect, a rejection of the path and its fruits, that is, the possibility of awakening. These wrong views are the staples of the roots of the theistic ideas of God and heaven. [2.2.1.2]

2.2.2.2 In **S 6.5**, Brahmā Baka declares: **“There is no recluse, no brahmin, who can come here!”** [S2]. We can broadly assume that Brahmā Baka is referring to any kind of religious practitioner, monastic or lay; in other words, anyone other than the brahmas themselves do *not* have access to the brahma world. In modern religions, this is exemplified by the idea of the salvation of faithful believers, that is, there is “no salvation outside the Church” (*extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*).⁴²

³⁷ On the “tyranny” of God-belief, see SD 11.7 (7).

³⁸ Such a theology is also found in apocryphal or “viral Buddhist” works, such as the Lotus Sutra which demean the Buddha and the arhats.

³⁹ Idam niccam idam dhuvaṃ idam sassataṃ idam kevalam idam acavana, dhammaṃ, idam hi na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati, ito ca pan’aññaṃ uttarim nissaraṇaṃ n’atthi.

⁴⁰ See **Brahma Nimantanika S** (M 49,2/1:142), SD 11.7 = **Baka Brahmā S** (S 6.4,2/1:326) + SD 11.6 (4).

⁴¹ Interestingly, Brahma, the other brahmas and their world came into being at some point in time, as described in **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1,39-44), SD 25.2. In other words, he can only be said to have had a beginning, but only claim they will have no end. Ironically, on account of their arising, they are by that very process subject to time: whatever that arises must pass away!

⁴² This expression comes from Cyprian of Carthage, 3rd-cent bishop.

This is a tautology of faith: outside the Tribe (or Church) there is no salvation because the Tribe *is* the salvation. The theologians then argue that our mere presence or absence from the Tribe does not constitute salvation: but it is not a perfect system, as Augustine confessed: “How many sheep there are without, how many wolves within!”⁴³ The membership of the saved, then, is known to God (Brahma) alone. If anyone is saved, he must, in some sense, be a member of the Tribe; in what sense, we cannot always say. So say the theologians.

2.2.2.3 In early Buddhism, **the sangha** (*saṅgha*)—a term which originally referred to the republican tribes of the Sakyas and of the Licchavīs—was used by the Buddha to refer to the community of arhats, and then of those who have attained the path (beginning with the streamwinners). This is known as the “noble community” (*ariya,saṅgha*), comprising both monastic and lay disciples who have attained the path.

In due course, when the Buddha allowed a properly constituted “sangha” (monastics in conclave) to admit or ordain qualified individuals as “conventional” monastics, the term sangha also applies to **the “conventional sangha”** (*sammuti,saṅgha*). They are “conventional” in the sense of being *de jure* renunciants—monastics admitted by a legal act of the Sangha as a legal person—that is, those who have vowed to work for the salvation by way of the path in this life itself.

2.2.2.4 The significance of **the noble sangha** (*ariya,saṅgha*) is clearly defined in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) in these words, which loudly speak for themselves as the Buddha’s lion-roar:

5.27 “... in whatever Dharma-Vinaya [teaching and discipline], where the noble eightfold path is not found,

the recluse of the 1 st kind	[streamwinner]	is not found therein,
the recluse of the 2 nd kind	[once-returner]	is not found therein,
the recluse of the 3 rd kind	[non-returner]	is not found therein,
the recluse of the 4 th kind	[arhat]	is not found therein.

5.27.2 ⁴⁴But ... in whatever Dharma-Vinaya, where **the noble eightfold path** is found,

the recluse of the 1 st kind	[streamwinner]	is found therein,
the recluse of the 2 nd kind	[once-returner]	is found therein,
the recluse of the 3 rd kind	[non-returner]	is found therein,
the recluse of the 4 th kind	[arhat]	is found therein.

5.27.3 *Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines.*⁴⁵

But ... if these monks were to live rightly here [in this teaching], this world will not be empty of arhats.” (D 16,5.27), SD 9

This lion-roar is echoed in **the Cūḷa Sīha,nāda Sutta** (M 11,2) and **the (Catukka) Samaṇa Sutta** (A 4.239) as follows:

⁴³ Augustine, “Homilies on John 45.12.”

⁴⁴ This para and the next line are at **Cūḷa Sīha,nāda S** (M 11,2/1:63 f), SD 49.2, & **(Catukka) Samaṇa S** (A 4.239/2:238), SD 49.14.

⁴⁵ *Suññā para-p,pavādā samaṇehi aññe*. Comy says that “other sects” are the proponents of the 62 views, who lack the 12 kinds of ascetics, viz, the 4 who have attained the fruits (*phal’atṭhaka,samaṇa*), the 4 who have attained the path (*magg’atṭhaka,samaṇa*), and the 4 working on insight (*āradhha,vipassaka samaṇa*) to attain the respective paths (AA 3:214).

Only here, ⁴⁶ bhikshus, there is	the recluse; ⁴⁷	<i>Idh'eva bhikkhave samaṇo</i>
here, there is	the 2 nd recluse; ⁴⁸	<i>idha dutiyo samaṇo</i>
here, there is	the 3 rd recluse; ⁴⁹	<i>idha tatiyo samaṇo</i>
here, there is	the 4 th recluse. ⁵⁰	<i>idha catuttho samaṇo</i>
Empty of recluses are the other outside doctrines ⁵¹ —		
thus, bhikshus, you rightly ⁵² roar the lion-roar!		(M 11,2) = (A 4.239,1) ⁵³

The true sangha, the community of noble individuals, only exists when there are the streamwinner, the once-returned, the non-returned and the arhat. These are the “true individuals” (*sappurisa*) who have reached the path, or, in the case of the arhat, reached its end, nirvana. Others, who have not yet reached the path, or who reject these noble individuals are “outsiders” (*bahira, bāhiraka*).⁵⁴

In terms of the (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññātara Brahmā Sutta (S 6.5), the true individuals—the 4 kinds of saints—who have mastered dhyana, even just the 1st dhyana—have free access to the brahma world. When they are there, or in any of the heavens, whether those of the sense-world or of the higher worlds, they will not, at the end of their life-span there, fall into any of the subhuman planes.⁵⁵ They will continue to be reborn in places that conduce to Dhamma practice—except, of course, for the arhat, whose task is all done.

2.3 THE ATTAINMENT OF THE FIRE ELEMENT (*tejo, dhatu samāpatti*)

2.3.1 A mandala of fiery arhats

⁴⁶ “Only here” (*idh'eva*), only in the Buddha’s teaching (MA 2:4): see (1.1.1). The 4 recluses (*samaṇa*) here are the 4 kinds of noble disciples (*ariya, sāvaka*), viz, the streamwinner, the once-returned, the non-returned and the arhat: Comy (MA 2:5,18) cites (Catukka) Samaṇa S (A 4.239), SD 49.14, and to the Buddha’s admonition to Subhadda in Mahā, parinibbāna S (D 16,5.27/2:151 f), SD 9. On the 4 saints, see also Samaṇa-m-acala Ss 1+2 (A 4.87), SD 20.13 + (A 4.88), SD 20.14.

⁴⁷ This is the streamwinner (*sot'āpanna*), def in (Catukka) Samaṇa S (A 4.239/2:238), SD 49.14. Significantly, streamwinning is simply name without numbering it.

⁴⁸ This is the once-returned (*sakadāgāmī*), def in (Catukka) Samaṇa S (A 4.239/2:238), SD 49.14.

⁴⁹ This is the non-returned (*anāgāmī*), def in (Catukka) Samaṇa S (A 4.239/2:238), SD 49.14.

⁵⁰ This is the arhat (*arahata*), def in (Catukka) Samaṇa S (A 4.239/2:238 f), SD 49.14.

⁵¹ These “outside doctrines” (*para-p, pavāda*) are the 62 wrong views (or bases for wrong views), ie, eternalism (4), partial eternalism (4), extensionism (4), endless hedging (4), fortuitous arising (2), conscious survival (16), non-conscious survival (8), neither conscious nor non-conscious survival (8), annihilationism (7), and supreme nirvana here and now (5) (MA 2:5). These 10 groups are listed in detail as the 62 bases for wrong views in Brahma, jāla S (D 1) + SD 25.1 (5).

⁵² *Sammā*. Comy says that here *sammā* (which usu means “right, full, complete”) means “with cause, with reason” (MA 2:7).

⁵³ This sentence forms part of a longer lion-roar (*sīha, nāda*) at Cūḷa Sīha, nāda S (M 11,2.2), SD 49.2 & (Catukka) Samaṇa S (A 4.239/2:238,9), SD 49.14. The latter elaborates on the 4 kinds of recluses.

⁵⁴ Cūḷa Hatthi, padōpama S (M 27,25.4) n + SD 40a.5 (1.1.2); Dakkhīṇa Vibhaṅga S (M 142,5(11)) + nn, SD 1.9; SD 47.1 (1.1.2).

⁵⁵ On divine beings who have not attained the path, falling away from heaven and heading for the subhuman realms, see (Nānā, karaṇa) Puggala S 1 (A 4.123), SD 23.8a.

2.3.1.1 The (Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññātara Brahmā Sutta (S 6.5) relates to us how the Buddha responds to the Brahma Baka’s wrong view that “There is no recluse, no brahmin, who can come here!” The Buddha visits his brahma world and, *without a word*, goes into the dhyana or attainment of the fire element. He does this almost at once, bursting into a glorious fiery aura, brightening all the brahma world! In due course, he is joined by 4 other great arhats, and they form a refulgent mandala of arhats, all cultivating the attainment of the fire element [2.3.1.3].

When Brahma notices the wonder of this mandala of arhats in fiery attainment, Moggallāna⁵⁶ asks him: “Do you see the light, the radiance, of the Buddha, the blessed one, surpassing the light of the other brahmas’ bodies, mansions and adornments in this brahma world?”⁵⁷ (SA 1:213). This is the meaning of **S 580*** [§22].

2.3.1.2 The Commentary adds that this fiery aura comprises **rays of 6 colours** (*cha-b,baṇṇa*), that is, red, orange, yellow, green, bluish-black, indigo, and violet. The ancient Indian Buddhists perceived these colours emanating from the Buddha’s body as being bluish-black (*nīla*), yellow (*pīṭa*), red (*lohitaka*), light orange-ochre (*mañjeṭṭha/ka*), white (*odāta*) or crystal (*phalika*), and a composite of them (*pabhassara*). These colours are those of the rainbow as the ancient Indians perceived them.⁵⁸

The Buddha’s radiance from his aura brightens up all the brahma world (SA 1:213,4-5). Clearly, there is no need for any verbal response to Brahma Baka’s wrong view here!

Then, 4 of the great disciples—Mahā Moggallāna, Mahā Kassapa, Mahā Kappina and Anuruddha—too, arrive, and go into the same meditation, all glorious in their own fiery aura. These great disciples systematically positioned themselves at each of the cardinal points just below the Buddha, forming what we today understand as a mandala.

2.3.1.3 Simply, a **mandala** (*maṇḍala*) is a pattern of holy figures or images with the principal figure at its centre. This is the oldest example we have of a mandala of arhats: the Buddha at the centre, with a great arhat at each of the cardinal points just below him. **The Aparā Diṭṭhi Aññātara Brahmā Sutta** (S 6.5), then, is the locus classicus of the tradition of the Buddhist mandala.

The term “**mandala**” (*maṇḍala*, ts) simply means “a circle,” that is, a circle of arhats sitting in meditation. Hence, it is a kind of a “meditative circle” that is visualized as a recollection of the Buddha (*buddhānussati*). This meditation is helpful for those strong in the faith faculty (*saddh’indriya*), that is, the faith-inclined. Generally, this is one of the “inspiring meditations” that helps us to free our mind that is stuck during meditation.⁵⁹

2.3.1.4 After the Buddha’s time, **the mandala**, in the minds and hands of later Buddhists, took a life of its own to become a kind of sacred or magical “psychocosmogram,” a mental chart of one’s world of faith. A well known example of this is found in a popular protective chant (*paritta*) called **the Ratana,pañjara** (the cage of jewels) (composed in 16th century Siam), and its later version, **the Jina,pañjara** (the cage of conquerors).⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Comy does not specifically mention Moggallāna but is implied from its context (SA 1:213,7-10).

⁵⁷ Imasmim brahma,loke añña,brahma,sarīra,vimān’ālaṅkā’ādinam pabhā atikkamamānam buddhassa bhagavato pabhassaram pabham passasīti (SA 1:213,7-10).

⁵⁸ On the 6 rays of colours (*cha-b,baṇṇa ramāsī*), see SD 27.5b (3.1.1); SD 36.9 (4.5.2).

⁵⁹ There are 6 “inspiring meditations,” ie, the recollections of (1) the Buddha, (2) the Dharma, (3) the sangha, (4) moral virtue, (5) charity, and (6) deities. See SD 15.1 (1.5.6); (**Agata,phala**) **Mahānāma S** (A 6.10), SD 15.3 (2, 3.3); SD 10.16 (1.4.1.3).

⁶⁰ The oldest version of Jina,pañjara was prob composed in Chiangmai (then ruled by the Burmese) in the time of king Anawratha Minsaw (1578–1607). Lily de Silva (“Paritta: A historical and religious study

The “conquerors” here are, of course, the arhats; but when translated in the singular, “*the conqueror*,” it refers to the Buddha. Schematically, the idea of such a paritta is clearly influenced by or a response to the brahminical belief and worship of the tutelary gods of the quarters.⁶¹ In other words, we see a kind of retrobrahminization (a return to Brahminism), which the Buddha has expressly rejected. But properly done, when reciting or reflecting on such a paritta, we should apply the recollection on any of the 3 jewels [2.3.1.3].

2.3.2 The fire element attainment

2.3.2.1 The term “**attainment**” (*samāpatti*) is a backformation of the absolutive *samāpajjitvā*, “having attained” [§§4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20], found in the phrase, “having entered the attainment of the fire element” (*tejo, dhātuṃ samāpajjitvā*). The phrase literally reads “having entered the fire element.” However, the Pali verb, *samāpajjitvā*, by itself lexically⁶² means “having attained the attainment,” which sounds tautologous in English, and is better idiomatically rendered as “entered the attainment (of the fire element).”

Usually the word “**attainment**” (*samāpatti*) refers to the 4 formless attainments, that is, the 4 formless dhyanas (*arūpa-j, jhāna* or *ārūppa*). However, keeping to the context of *samāpajjitvā* and for convenience, I have used “attainment” broadly to include the form-dhyanas, too. *Attainment* here, then, refers to any of the **4 form dhyanas** (*rūpa-j, jhāna*), especially the 4th, which is the basis and springboard for psychic powers.

2.3.2.2 The Saṃyutta Commentary explains how the Buddha **went into the attainment of the fire element** (*tejo, dhatuṃ samāppajjitvā*). Having done the “preparatory work” (*parikamma*) on the fire-kasina,⁶³ he emerges from this basic dhyana (*pādaka-j, jhānato*), and determines: “Let flames come out of my body!” By the power of this determination, flames shoot out of his entire body. (SA 1:212,19-23).

To successfully gain the fire attainment—that is, to project the fire element as a visual reality—we have to first fully understand the nature of **the fire element** (*tejo, dhātu*), that is, our physical aspect that we know as *heat, digestion and decay*.⁶⁴ Then, we go on to master the meditation on **the fire kasina** (*tejo, kasina*), that is, we direct our full concentration to the fire element until we, as it were, “become” fire, the heat element. Technically, we are mentally projecting what is seen as fire.⁶⁵

From the way the fire attainment is described in the suttas and the Commentaries—the Buddha emanating an aura of 6 rays of rainbow-like colours [2.3.1.2]—having emerged from his meditation, he

of the Buddhist ceremony of peace and prosperity in Sri Lanka,” *Spolia Zeylanica* 36,1 1981:9), says that the Thai version was composed [more likely, discovered and popularized] during the reign of Rāma II (1808-1809) by a monk named Buḍḍhācariya, ie, Somdet Phra Phutthacharn (To Brahmaraṃsī) (1788-1872), said to be renowned for his magical powers. Also in Justin Thomas McDaniel, *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magical Monk: Practicing Buddhism in Modern Thailand*, NY” Columbia Univ Press, 2011:81-84. See Roger R Jackson, “A Tantric echo in Sinhalese Theravāda? *Pirit* ritual, the book of *Paritta* and the *Jinapañjaraya*,” *Dhīh* 19 1994:121-140. See also <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jinapanjara>.

⁶¹ See SD 4.1 (2.1) + Diag 2.

⁶² “**Lexically**” simply means “following the dictionary meaning,” as opposed to “**idiomatic**”: an idiom is one whose meaning cannot be inferred from the words that make it up, but is natural to the language itself, ie, it is the language’s “style.”

⁶³ On the fire kasina, see SD 49.5b (1.3).

⁶⁴ See **Mahā Rāhul’ovāda S** (M 62,10), SD 3.11.

⁶⁵ SD 49.5b (1.3).

projects a vision of radiant flames of 6 colours shooting out of his body, around it, and forming an aura (technically, a mandorla).⁶⁶

2.3.2.3 Not only is the Buddha able to gain the fire-element attainment in all its glorious aura of 6 rainbow colours, he is also able to project **the water element** (*āpo, dhātu*) *simultaneously* (DhA 3:241);⁶⁷ hence, it is called “**the twin wonder**” (*yamaka pāṭihāriya*).⁶⁸ Due to its complexity—especially the ability to attain and emerge from fire and the water attainments in very close succession—only the Buddha is able to perform the twin wonder.

At the very beginning of the 2nd week of the great awakening,⁶⁹ the Buddha, to dispel the doubt of the gods about his awakening, rises into the air and displays the twin wonder: fine jets of fire and of water shooting out from each of his pores, dancing around his body, forming a magnificent mandorla around himself.

This miracle can only be performed by the Buddha⁷⁰ and he has performed it only 4 times,⁷¹ that is, “the 8th day miracle” (on the 8th day after the great awakening), “the Kapilavatthu miracle” (the 2nd year), “the Pātika,putta’s park miracle” (Pātika Sutta, D 24,2.13), and “the mango tree miracle” (the 7th year).⁷²

2.3.2.4 The Commentaries⁷³ describe **the twin wonder** (*yamaka pāṭihāriya*) as follows. First, the Buddha projects a jewelled walkway (*ratana caṅkama*), from where he performs the twin wonder. The twin wonder is so called because it consists in the occurrence of pairs of phenomena of opposite character, such as flames issuing forth from the upper part of the body and thin jets of water from the lower, and then the reverse. Or, jets of fire and streams of water issue forth alternately from the right side of his body and from the left.

Furthermore, from every pore of his body, the 6-coloured rays [2.3.1.2] dart forth, upwards to the brahma world and downwards to the edge of the universe. As the Buddha walks up and down the jewelled walkway, he teaches the multitude from time to time, depending on the various dispositions of those present in the assembly. He also displays various other psychic wonders. All this may last up to 16 days.

At the conclusion of the twin wonder, the Buddha, emulating the example of past buddhas, makes his way, in three strides, to **Tāvatiṃsa heaven**. There, he teaches the Abhidhamma⁷⁴ to his mother, reborn in Tusita as a divine being (*deva,putta*). She comes down to Tāvatiṃsa to hear the teachings. The Buddha, it is said, teaches in Tāvatiṃsa (rather than in Tusita, just above it), so that the earth-based devas of the 4 great kings and of Tāvatiṃsa (the most pleasurable of heavenly realms) have a chance to listen to the Dharma, too.

2.3.3 The Buddha corrects Brahma’s wrong views. The Saṃyutta Commentary tells us that Brahma (Baka) held **2 wrong views**: (1) that no recluses could come to his world [§2]; and (2) an eternalist view:

⁶⁶ MA 2:184; UA 51; BA 8; J 1:77.

⁶⁷ On the water element (*āpo, dhātu*), see SD 49.5b (1.2)..

⁶⁸ See **Miraculous Stories**, SD 27.5b (3.1.2, 3.1.5).

⁶⁹ For the 7 weeks after the great awakening, see **Dhamma and Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1(5).

⁷⁰ It is one of his 6 “unique knowledges” (*asādhāraṇa, ñāna*, Miln 106; DA 2:463, 3:874; SnA 1:264, 2:605; BA 27, 133, 178, 185, 236, 298; UA 335; ItA 1:7, 130; CA 7; PmA 1:56; DhsA 295; Nāma.rūpa, pariccheda 123).

⁷¹ Miln 106, 349; AA 1:101, 126, 174; J 1:77; ApA 82, 118; DhsA 31, 35. See DPPN sv (682 f).

⁷² SD 27.5b (3.1.2).

⁷³ DhA 14.2b/3:204-206 (DhA:B 3:38-40); J 483/4:263-266; DA 1:57-59.

⁷⁴ The “Abhidhamma” here cannot be the 3rd *piṭaka*, which was compiled only after the Buddha. It simply means teachings “in connection with the Dhamma”: see **Dhamma and Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1.

that he and his world are eternal [1.2.2.2]. The former was abandoned when he saw the Buddha and his disciples coming to his world. After that, the Buddha taught him the Dharma, at the end of which he was established in the fruit of streamwinning. Thus, through the power of streamwinning, he abandoned his eternalist view. (SA 1:213,12-19)⁷⁵

2.4 THE 4 GREAT DISCIPLES IN THE BRAHMA WORLD

2.4.1 After the Buddha has gone into the attainment of the fire element for the brahma's benefit, he is joined successively by **4 other great disciples**—Mahā Moggallāna, Mahā Kassapa, Mahā Kappina and Mahā Anuruddha—each sitting in the same meditation, respectively, to the east, the south, the west and the north of the Buddha [§§12, 16, 20, 24]. The question here is: **Why these 4 great arhats?**

These 4 great arhats are declared by the Buddha to be the foremost (*agga*), respectively, of the monks who have psychic powers, have asceticism, have taught the monks, and have the divine eye (A 1:23). All these arhats are adept in mind-reading, dhyana meditation and astral travel; hence, they are able to know where the Buddha is staying, and able to reach the brahma world to be with him.

2.4.2 Mahā Moggallāna—who is very familiar in dealing with non-humans (such as pretas and devas), then asks Brahma about his view [§22], and Brahma admits that he has given up his wrong view [§23] and feels a sense of spiritual urgency⁷⁶ [§24], that is, catches some clear vision of true reality. The Buddha purposefully does not instruct Brahma the first time, since he is not fully ready. Moreover, clearly, the Buddha wants to impress on Brahma and the other brahmas that even his disciples are able to visit the brahma world, not as tourists, but as meditators in all their glory. [2.2]

2.5 MANY ARE THE ARHATS

2.5.1 The arhats' powers. Towards the end of the Sutta, we are told that Brahma sends someone from Brahma's retinue to ask Moggallāna whether there are those other than the Buddha himself—like Moggallāna, Kassapa, Kappina and Anuruddha—who are just as powerful and mighty, that is, they are able to reach the brahma world, levitate and go into the attainment of the fire element. Moggallāna replies that there are many such arhats.

2.5.2 The arhat's knowledges

2.5.2.1 Moggallāna replies to Brahma's question with **this verse**, which the brahma repeats to Brahma (Baka) himself:

*Te, vijjā iddhi, pattā ca
ceto, pariyāya, kovidā
khīṇ'āsavā arahanto
bahū buddhassa sāvakā'ti.*

(S 582 f)

The 3-knowledge bearers, endowed with the powers, and skilled in reading others' minds, arhats, whose influxes⁷⁷ are destroyed—many are the Buddha's disciples. [§§28 = 30]

⁷⁵ On Brahmā Baka's streamwinning and Māra's influence on him, see SD 11.6 (3.2.2.5).

⁷⁶ "Spiritual urgency" (*saṃvega*): see SD 1.11 (3); SD 9 (7.6).

⁷⁷ "Influxes" (*āsava*) are those of sensual lust, existence, ignorance; later list add "views" as the 3rd: see SD 30.3 (1.3.2).

This ancient verse lists the 3 knowledges of the arhat [2.5.2.2] quite randomly. We may conclude that this verse is old because it mentions only the *briefest* list of the arhat’s knowledges, that is, “**the 3 knowledges**” (line a). But it also lists “**the powers**” (*iddhi*) (line a), which is the 1st of the 6 knowledges [2.5.2.3] of the arhat (which is a later formulation than that of the 3 knowledges). Then, it lists “**skilled in reading others’ minds**” (line b) almost as randomly as that of the “powers.” However, it does not mention the “divine ear” [2.5.2.3]. Finally, it describes the arhats as those “whose influxes are destroyed” (line c) [2.5.2.4].

2.5.2.2 The 3 knowledges (*ti, vijjā*) of the “3-knowledge arhat” (*te, vijja arahata*) are those of:⁷⁸

- (1) the recollection of past lives (of oneself);
- (2) the passing away and rebirth of beings (the divine eye);
- (3) the destruction of the influxes (sensual desire, existence, views, ignorance).

Only the 3^d is *the* “direct knowledge” (*abhiññā*), that is, it brings awakening, freedom from the cycle of birth and death. This list, due to its brevity, is probably the oldest list of knowledges defining an arhat.

2.5.2.3 A more comprehensive set of **the 6 knowledges** (*cha-l-abhiñña*), defining the arhat, is also found in the suttas. These 6 knowledges or superknowledges are:⁷⁹

- (1) psychic powers (*iddhi, vidhā*);
- (2) the divine ear (*dibba, sota*) or clairaudience;
- (3) knowledge of others’ minds (*ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*) or mind-reading (*ādesanā pāṭihāriya*);
- (4) recollection of (one’s own) past lives (*pubbe, nivāsānussati*) or retrocognition;
- (5) knowledge of the arising and passing away (of beings) (*cutūpapāta, ñāṇa*) or the divine eye;
- (6) knowledge of the destruction of influxes (*āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*), *the* “direct knowledge” of the arhat.

Hence, together with (1) psychic “**powers**” (*iddhi*) and (3) **mind-reading**, they form 5 of the super-knowledges” (*abhiñña*) listed in the verse [S 582 f]. The Commentary notes that although the super-knowledge that is **the divine ear** (clairaudience) is not mentioned, it is *implied* (SA 1:213, 29 f). This means that it is included in the 1st of the 6 superknowledges—that of psychic powers.

2.5.2.4 The 6th and last of the 6 superknowledges (*abhiññā*)—**the knowledge of the destruction of mental influxes**—is highlighted by being apparently mentioned *twice*, the first being implicit in the 3 knowledges [line a] and the second as the arhat’s defining quality [line d]. The second mention of “whose influxes are destroyed” [line d] is not actually one of the 3 or 6 superknowledges, but a synonym for the arhat, who is also called “one whose influxes have been destroyed” (*khīṇ’āsava*).⁸⁰

— — —

⁷⁸ SD 30.3 (1.3.2).

⁷⁹ On the 6 superknowledges, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2, 89-99), SD 8.10; **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11, 55-66), SD 1.7; SD 27.5a (5).

⁸⁰ SD 51.19 (2.2).

(Aparā Diṭṭhi) Aññatarā Brahmā Sutta The Discourse on a Certain Brahma (of a Different View)

S 6.5

[144]

- 1 Originating at Sāvattṭhī.
- 2 Now at that time, the following bad wrong view had arisen in a certain brahma:⁸¹
“There is no recluse, no brahmin, who can come here!”⁸²
- 3 Then, the Blessed One, having known Brahma’s mind with his own, just as it takes a strong man to stretch his flexed arm or to flex his stretched arm, disappeared from Jeta’s grove and reappeared in that brahma world.
- 4 Then, the Blessed One, having entered the attainment⁸³ of **the fire element**, sat cross-legged in the air above the Brahma.⁸⁴

Mahā Moggallāna joins the Buddha

- 5 Then, this occurred to the venerable **Mahā Moggallāna**:
“Where now is the Blessed One dwelling?”
- 6 The venerable Mahā Moggallāna, with his divine eye, purified, surpassing the human, saw the Blessed One, having entered the attainment of the fire element, sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma.
- 7 Seeing him so, he, just as it takes a strong man to stretch his flexed arm or to flex his stretched arm, disappeared from Jeta’s grove and reappeared in that brahma world.
- 8 Then, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna stationed himself on the east, *having entered the attainment of the fire element, was sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma*, but lower than the Blessed One.

Mahā Kassapa joins the Buddha

- 9 *Then this occurred to the venerable Mahā Kassapa*:⁸⁵
“Where now is the Blessed One dwelling?”
- 10 The venerable Mahā Kassapa, with his divine eye, purified, surpassing the human, saw the Blessed One, having entered the attainment of the fire element, sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma.
- 11 Seeing him so, he, just as it takes a strong man to stretch his flexed arm or to flex his stretched arm, [145] disappeared from Jeta’s grove and reappeared in that brahma world.
- 12 Then, the venerable Mahā Kassapa stationed himself on the south, *having entered the attainment of the fire element, sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma*, but lower than the Blessed One.

⁸¹ Tena kho pana samayena aññatarassa brahmuno eva, rūpaṃ pāpakaṃ diṭṭhi, gatam uppannam hoti. On brahmā and Brahmā, see (2.1).

⁸² N’atthi so samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā, yo idha āgaccheyyāti. See (2.2).

⁸³ On attainment, see (2.3.2.1).

⁸⁴ Atha kho bhagavā tassa brahmuno upari vehāsam pallaṅkena nisīdi tejo, dhātum samāpajjitvā. On the Buddha’s attainment of the fire element, see (2.3).

⁸⁵ On Mahā Kassapa and the other elders forming a mandala of arhats, see (2.3.1.3).

Mahā Kappina joins the Buddha

13 Then this occurred to the venerable **Mahā Kappina**:

“Where now is the Blessed One dwelling?”

14 The venerable Mahā Kappina, with his divine eye, purified, surpassing the human, saw the Blessed One, having entered the attainment of the fire element, sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma.

15 Seeing him so, he, just as it takes a strong man to stretch his flexed arm or to flex his stretched arm, disappeared from Jeta’s grove and reappeared in that brahma world.

16 Then, the venerable Mahā Kappina stationed himself on the west, having entered the attainment of the fire element, sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma, but lower than the Blessed One.

Anuruddha joins the Buddha

17 Then this occurred to the venerable **Anuruddha**:

“Where now is the Blessed One dwelling?”

18 The venerable Anuruddha, with his divine eye, purified, surpassing the human, saw the Blessed One, having entered the attainment of the fire element, sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma.

19 Seeing him so, he, just as it takes a strong man to stretch his flexed arm or to flex his stretched arm, disappeared from Jeta’s grove and reappeared in that brahma world.

20 Then, the venerable Anuruddha stationed himself on the north, having entered the attainment of the fire element, sitting cross-legged in the air above Brahma, but lower than the Blessed One.

Moggallāna addresses Brahma

21 Then, the venerable **Mahā Moggallāna** addressed Brahma in verse:

22 <i>Ajjāpi te āvuso sā diṭṭhi yā te diṭṭhi pure ahu passasi vītivattantaṃ brahma,loke pabhassaraṇ’ti</i>	(S 580) ⁸⁶	Avuso, do you now still have that view, the view that was yours before? Do you see the radiance that surpasses the brahma world?	d c
---	-----------------------	---	--------

[Brahma:]

23 <i>Na me mārisa sā diṭṭhi yā me diṭṭhi pure ahu passāmi vītivatt’antaṃ brahma,loke pabhassaraṃ svāhaṃ ajja kathaṃ vajjaṃ ahaṃ nicco’ mhi sassato’ti</i>	(S 581) ⁸⁷	No more in me is that view, good sir, that view I had before: I see the radiance overwhelming the brahma world. How then could I now say, “I am permanent, eternal.” ⁸⁸	d c
---	-----------------------	---	--------

⁸⁶ **S 580** = Tha 1198 cdef (= ThaA 176,5-29). **Tha 1198** adds: “Who asked Brahmā before the Sudhamma hall assembly, ...” (*yo brahmānaṃ paripucchati sudhammāyaṃ abhito sabhaṃ*, Tha 1198ab): see Tha:N 287 n1198. [2.3.1.1]

⁸⁷ **S 582** = Tha 1199cd + 1200.

⁸⁸ On eternalism and how it arises, see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,30-37), SD 25.2.

24 Then, after Brahma had felt a sense of urgency,⁸⁹ the Blessed One, *just as it takes a strong man to stretch his flexed arm or to flex his stretched arm*, disappeared from that brahma world and reappeared in Jeta’s grove.⁹⁰

The brahmas honour the arhats

25 Then, Brahma addressed a certain one of Brahma’s retinue (*brahma, pārisajja*):⁹¹

“Come, good sir, approach Mahā Moggallāna and ask him:

‘Now, good sir Moggallāna, are there those other than the Blessed One who are as powerful, **[146]** as mighty, just like masters Moggallāna, Kassapa, Kappina and Anuruddha?’⁹²

26 “Yes, good sir!” the one from Brahma’s retinue replied, and approached Mahā Moggallāna. Then, he asked the venerable Mahā Moggallāna thus:

“Now, good sir Moggallāna, are there those other than the Blessed One who are just as powerful, as mighty, like masters Moggallāna, Kassapa, Kappina and Anuruddha?”

27 Then, the venerable **Mahā Moggallāna** replied to that brahma from Brahma’s retinue:

28 *Te, vijjā iddhi, pattā ca*

ceto, pariyāya, kovidā

khīṇ’āsavā arahanto

bahū buddhassa sāvaka’ti. (S 582)

The 3-knowledge bearers,⁹³ endowed with the powers, and skilled in reading others’ minds, arhats, whose influxes are destroyed⁹⁴— many are the Buddha’s disciples.

29 Then, **that brahma** from Brahma’s retinue, having rejoiced and approved of the venerable Mahā Moggallāna, approached Brahma and said:

30 “Good sir, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna spoke thus:

Te, vijjā iddhi, pattā ca

ceto, pariyāya, kovidā

khīṇ’āsavā arahanto

bahū buddhassa sāvaka’ti. (S 583)

The 3-knowledge bearers, endowed with the powers, and skilled in reading others’ minds, arhats, whose influxes are destroyed— many are the Buddha’s disciples.

31 The brahma from Brahma’s retinue said this, and Brahma joyfully approved of the word of the brahma from Brahma’s retinue.

— evaṃ —

190513 190525 190915

⁸⁹ “Had felt a sense of spiritual urgency,” *saṃvejetvā* [2.4.2].

⁹⁰ The Buddha leaves because his task in the brahma world is done. Moreover, he has left behind Moggallāna and 3 other great arhats to instruct Brahma. Apparently, the Buddha returns later for a more sustained instruction when Māra works his mischief through one of the brahmas, and Baka himself is momentarily influenced by Māra, as related in **Brahma Nimantanika S** (M 49); see SD 11.7 (3.2.2.4).

⁹¹ Atha kho so brahmā aññataraṃ brahma, pārisajjaṃ āmantesi.

⁹² These 4 great arhats are declared by the Buddha to be the foremost (*agga*), respectively, of the monks who have psychic powers, asceticism, taught the monks, and the divine eye (A 1:23). [2.4]

⁹³ The 3 knowledges (*ti, vijjā*) [2.5.2].

⁹⁴ This is the 6th and last of the 6 superknowledges (*abhiññā*), which is highlighted by being indirectly mentioned *twice*, the first being implicit in the 3 knowledges. [2.5.2.4]