

# 3

## Gāraḥa Sutta

The Discourse on Respect | S 6.2

Nearly identical to Uruvelā Sutta 1 (A 4.21/2:20 f), SD 55.3

Theme: Even the Teacher respects the teaching

Translated by Piya Tan ©2004

### 1 Sutta highlights and significance

#### 1.1 SUTTA HIGHLIGHTS

##### 1.1.1 Summary and style

**1.1.1.1 The Gāraḥa Sutta** (S 6.2) is a short narrative in the Buddha’s own words about his reflection when he is residing in the actual local of the event reported. The reflection is on the necessity of having a proper teacher, and the holding up the Dharma—the truth and teaching of his awakening—above the teacher.

That is to say, the Dharma is above even the Buddha himself [§§1-8]. *The teaching is always above the teacher* [2]. Brahmā Sahampati endorses the Buddha’s declaration by stating that the buddhas of the past, too, have done the same thing [§§9-15].

**1.1.1.2** The Sutta is mainly given in a personal (1<sup>st</sup> person) narrative form, reported in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person by **an omniscient narrator**,<sup>1</sup> thus:

§§1-2 “Thus have I heard ... this reflection arose in his mind.”

§3 “Then, it occurred to the Blessed One: ... ”

§12 “This is what Brahmā Sahampati said ... he added.”

However, there is neither any mention of the sangha nor any audience addressed: note the total absence of the vocation *bhikkhu* (sg) or *bhikkhave* (pl). There is no mention of the sangha because it arose after the Buddha has begun to teach. The narratives here relate to events “just after he (the Buddha) had become fully awakened.”

**1.1.1.3** The Sutta opening is introduced by the narrator—probably **the elder Ānanda**—to whom these events were related personally by the Buddha. The Buddha also relates the same account, on another occasion, to a Dharma assembly, as recorded in **the Uruvelā Sutta 1** (A 4.21), SD 55.8.

It is possible that the Uruvelā Sutta 1—which mentions only 4 Dharma aggregates—records an earlier occasion than the Gāraḥa Sutta, which mentions 5 Dharma aggregates [§§3-7]. This is understandable when Ānanda became the Buddha’s personal attendant only during the last 25 years of the Buddha’s life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The omniscient narrator, usu anonymous, knows everything and everyone related to the account or story; hence, he speaks in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, but quotes the account’s actors (the Buddha and Brahmā Sahampati).

<sup>2</sup> See SD 50.15 (1.2.3.1).

### 1.1.2 Related suttas

**1.1.2.1** Like **the Āyācana Sutta** (S 6.1),<sup>3</sup> the Gāraṇa Sutta is one of the familiar canonical episodes in the life of the Buddha. Both events—Brahmā’s request and Brahmā’s appearance here—occur at the same venue: the goatherd banyan tree beside the Nerañjarā river at Uruvelā, that is, in the 5<sup>th</sup> week after the Buddha’s awakening.<sup>4</sup>

**1.1.2.2** This sutta is nearly identical to **the Uruvelā Sutta 1**,<sup>5</sup> by way of a narrative by the Buddha, which however omits the 5<sup>th</sup> dharma aggregate [3.3; §7] but has an additional closing paragraph [§13].

### 1.1.3 Chinese versions

There are two Chinese Āgama versions of this Sutta, both entitled 尊重經 (Zūnzhòng jīng), that is,<sup>6</sup>  
SĀ 1188 = T99.44.321c18-322a27;  
SĀ2 101 = T100.5.410a3-410b9.

These two Chinese versions are closely identical, but they locate the venue as being under the Bodhi tree and not at the Goatherd’s Banyan Tree as the Pali versions do [§1].<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1.4 Sanskrit and other parallels

**1.1.4.1** There are also Sanskrit fragments of **the Uruvelā Sutta 1**. Three birch-bark fragments have been preserved amongst the Buddhist manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection, and they appear to belong to a single incomplete folio.<sup>8</sup> Its script is in the so-called “Gilgit Bamiyan Type I.”<sup>9</sup>

**1.1.4.2** The main part of the three birch-bark fragments appear to represent a Sanskrit parallel to the following:

- the Pali Uruvela Sutta (A 4.21 ≈ S 6.2), SD 12.3;
- a short sūtra (Tibetan) cited by Śamathadeva in his Essential Commentary on Vasubandhu’s Abhidharmakośa (Abhidharmakośa-upāyika-ṭīkā, AbhkṬ); and
- two Chinese translations [1.1.3].

**1.1.4.3** Fragment MS 2381/186 was identified as a parallel to **Gāraṇa Sutta** (S 6.2) by P Skilling, 14 June 2002; fragment MS 2381/241 and 2382/uf18/2d were identified by Saerji, 5-8 Aug 2012, both using preliminary transcriptions made by Klaus Wille. However, from reasons given in BMSC4 2016, these scholars now conclude that these fragments are from a possible parallel to **Uruvelā Sutta** (A 4.21) rather than to **Gāraṇa Sutta**.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>3</sup> S 6.1/1:136-138 (SD 12.2).

<sup>4</sup> SA 1:203: see **Dhamma & Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1 (5), 5<sup>th</sup> week.

<sup>5</sup> A 4.21/2:21 f.

<sup>6</sup> The Chinese Āgama versions are listed under A 4.21 in R S Bucknell’s *Pali-Chinese Sutra Correspondences* (draft, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> See Etienne Lamotte, “The Gāraṇasutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya and its Mahāyānist developments,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 9 1981:127-144

<sup>8</sup> P Skilling, Saerji 萨尔吉 & P Assavavirulhakarn. “A possible Sanskrit parallel to the Pali *Uruvelasutta*,” BMSC4 2016:159-182. [Download link](#).

<sup>9</sup> As described by L Sander, “Paleographical analysis,” in BMSC1:298-300.

<sup>10</sup> BMSC 2016:161 n3; see esp 175-177 (V. Comparison of the versions).

## 1.2 MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF GĀRAṆA

**1.2.1 Gāraṇa as respect.** The title Gāraṇa Sutta reflects its theme. The word *gāraṇa*, both a noun (also as *gāraṇatā*)<sup>11</sup> as well as a verb,<sup>12</sup> meaning “respect, reverence, esteem,” sometimes literally, “heaviness.”<sup>13</sup> There is also the form *sa,gāraṇa*, “respectful, showing respect.”<sup>14</sup> The opposite is *agāraṇa*.<sup>15</sup> Both forms come from the adjective *garu*, meaning “heavy.”

It should be noted that although *gāraṇa* appears often enough throughout the Nikāyas,<sup>16</sup> most of its references (as *gāraṇa* and its various forms) are overwhelmingly more common in the Commentaries.<sup>17</sup> The reason for this is probably, and understandably, that the issue of respect is more real and urgent after the Buddha, when the monastic community became more established and more populated.

The English word, **respect**, comes from the Latin cognate, which is derived from *respicere*, “to look (back) at, regard, consider.” It is ordinarily taken, especially in traditional societies or religious groups, to mean a show of deference to “the master,” that is, one of greater power or greater learning, or those who are “elders,” the senior members of a family or community or society.

### 1.2.2 Social dimension of respect

**1.2.2.1 MORAL SHAME AND MORAL FEAR.** Respect, on a social level, is a wholesome expression of moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*). If we are to wholesomely relate with others, there must be some kind of mutual respect, that is, a proactive awareness that responds positively to others. In healthy social exchanges, in other words, we should be guided and tempered by both other-regard and self-regard.

**1.2.2.2 OTHER-REGARD** is traditionally known as **moral shame**, that is, a healthy regard for others, not so much as not offending others (we would not normally meet someone merely to offend him), but more so to create and sustain an ambience where we can truly enjoy and benefit from our meeting.

In traditional Buddhist communities, the guest is generally treated with some degree of respect, by way of **welcome** (*paṭisanthāra*). We would at least ensure that guests or friends are comfortable in every way, providing them with proper food and drinks depending on the occasion, speaking in the spirit of right speech, and so on. This spirit of goodwill naturally moves us, especially as hosts, to respect even the differences in the other party.

For example, traditional Asians, especially Buddhists, generally show great **tolerance** for the faith and beliefs of others, such as ensuring that food shared with them are halal or kosher. Sadly, this Asian traditional other-respect is often taken as a weakness or an opportunity for Christian evangelists to force their beliefs on them. This persistent disrespect for others, in an important way, is slowly rotting this whole-

<sup>11</sup> (n) V 2:168,34, 92,4; D 3:284,25; A 4:97,5; Sn 265; Tha 278; J 1:465,11; Ap 389,15, 438,11.

<sup>12</sup> (adj) V 5:161, 31\*; VA 1362,28; M 3:6,23 (*tibba,gāraṇa*).

<sup>13</sup> (“heaviness”) Vism 636,1; NdA 2:106,18; PmA 589,37 (*gāraṇatā*).

<sup>14</sup> V 1:45,29; D 3:244,17; M 1:469,9; A 3:331,21\*; Vv 16.12; VvA 86,1 f; Tha 589; J 2:348,15\*, 4:283,3; Ap 329,13; Vism 36,4\*. DP says that *sugāraṇam* at VA 1101,31 (Ee Se) is wr, which should be read *mama ca tumhesu gāraṇam janayittha* (foll Be Ce).

<sup>15</sup> (n) V 5:92,1 f; D 3:244,12 f; Tha 966; J 5:437,15; DA 1934,35; MA 1:110,35. (adj) D 3:244,12; M 1:469,11, 2:245,28-32; A 3:7,20; Tha 953; J 5:436,12\*; Dhs 1325. Cf *anādariya*: **Abhabba Tayo,dhamma S** (A 10.76.18/5:146), SD 2.4.

<sup>16</sup> Most common in the canon itself are the simple forms *gāraṇa*, *gāraṇam* and *gāraṇe*. Cpds are more common and found in Comys.

<sup>17</sup> This is confirmed by a global search using *\*gāraṇ\** (the asterisk \* stands for a wildcard, representing any letter or none) in the CSCD.

some cultural root of ours, and as such needs to be reinvigorated for the sake of our own social health and maturity.

**1.2.2.3 SELF-REGARD** is **moral fear**, a fear of evil, that is, an understanding and acceptance of moral accountability. Our actions (words and actions) have moral consequences upon ourselves. If we are to arouse greed, hate or delusion, we are in some way responsible, even when done unintentionally or through a lapse of mindfulness.

We are especially blamable if we allow the effects of our negative actions to proceed and propel the other party. In other words, we should, if possible, at once make amends to negate or lessen the unwholesome results; if not, we need to work at correcting this unwholesome karmic act in due course. In a sense, we are not doing this for the good of others, but that we are also morally accountable.

In real life, we are highly unlikely to consider whether moral shame or moral fear are in action, whether other-regard or self-regard are moving us. The reality is that both these “world protectors” work together, so that we have the gut feeling, as it were, we naturally *feel* that such an action is proper or improper. Being a healthy individual or a wholesome member of society, in short, is to have a natural sense of what is for the common good.<sup>18</sup>

**1.2.3 Spiritual dimension of respect.** In Buddhism, **respect** has a broader meaning of “unconditionally accepting oneself and others as they are.” This is in fact an expression of **lovingkindness** (*mettā*). We may not be able to change the world: no one has ever done this. For, the world is the past, the present, and the future, and it is changing every moment. However, we can clear our hearts of all negative thoughts towards others, indeed, towards all beings, by unconditionally accepting them, as we accept ourselves. In other words, we are habituating ourselves to *feel* positively towards ourselves and others.

In the face of less fortunate others, we direct our **compassion** (*karuṇā*) to them so that their misfortune or difficulties are removed or abated. In such circumstances, our compassion should move us into wholesome and wise action, even when others do not deserve it. This is the nature of compassion: it is both giving and forgiving. Yet it is tempered with wisdom. For those to whom our compassion is directed should be given the strength, skill and opportunity to stand on their own feet, as it were, to self-reliant in due course. Otherwise, they would remain dependent on others. Compassion should be empowering and liberating. This is a vital aspect of respect for others.

We show our **gladness** (*muditā*) in those who are generally better off than us. We rejoice in the happiness of others; when others are happy, we feel happy, too. We joyfully appreciate the Buddha, for example, for revealing to us the true nature of suffering and its effective ending, so that we do not have to start from scratch, as it were, to work at our own personal freedom or liberation. The more happy people and beings there are around us, the easier it is for us to act in goodness and enjoy it, thus raising the true quality of social life.

And we maintain **equanimity** (*upekkhā*) towards all, especially when things go their own way, even after we have put in our best efforts. If we have tried our best, we should not blame ourselves even when a lot more remains undone, or even when some of our efforts are undone. It is not helpful to blame others, too, as there is no single cause for any problem or situation. If anything is to take the blame, it must be *conditions*, all those things that work together to bring about the problem.

When we understand these conditions, we also will find ways to work with them so that they are removed, or rearranged, resulting in *wholesome conditions* leading to personal growth and social progress. In other words, this is a respect for the nature of things, and in this way, respect finds its fullest expression as the 4 divine abodes.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> On the relationship of respect to priorities (*ādhipateyya*), see **Ādhipateyya S** (A 3.40) @ SD 27.3 (2.2).

<sup>19</sup> For a description of the divine abodes with similes, see **Te,vijja S** (D 13,76-79/1:251), SD 1.8.

## 2 The teaching is above the teacher

**2.1 RESPECTING THE TEACHING.** The Sutta records how the Buddha reflects over his need of a spiritual teacher to show deference to. If a proper teacher cannot be found, then, he reflects, the Teaching should be respected. This theme is also in the last teachings of the Buddha, where he admonishes us to “take the Dharma as refuge.”<sup>20</sup>

In showing respect to the Dharma, the Buddha is, in a historical sense, keeping to an ancient tradition of the great Vedic rishis who venerate (*payirupāsati*)<sup>21</sup> the Vedic texts. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad, for example, relates how the rishis Aṅgiras, Bṛhaspati and Ayāśya are said to venerate the “high chant” (*Udgītha*) as the breath within the mouth. The text then reveals the hidden etymologies of the rishis’ names so that they identify with the breath (ChU 1.2.10-13).

In the case of the Buddha, he venerates **the Dharma**, that is, the realization of true reality, which makes him buddha, fully self-awakened. Indeed, he is no different from that true reality, that is to say, he is awakened to true reality, with nothing more to identify with in reality. As such, it is simply natural that the Buddha would respect what he really is.

On a simpler level, when we venerate (say, bow down to) a teacher or a religious symbol, we connect with the spiritual qualities of the teacher or the symbol, pointing to true reality. If we do this mindfully, at that moment of veneration, we *are* that true reality, but only for that moment. With Dharma freedom or spiritual liberation, we are permanently linked with true reality, or at the highest level (having realized the nature of non-self), we *become* that true reality.

**2.2 THE SUN IMAGERY.** Another important term in this connection is *bandhu*, which usually means a relative or kin, “but when one thing is said to be a *bandhu* of another, the meaning is that the former is connected to or is a counterpart of the latter.”<sup>22</sup> In the Upaniṣads, such a connection with the universe is a hierarchical one, with reality right at the top; however, such connections are always hidden.<sup>23</sup> The secret knowledge of the Upaniṣads, tapped through the teacher, is what liberates the pupil.

In early Buddhism, the word *bandhu* is found in *ādicca,bandhu*, “the kinsman of the sun,” a common epithet of the Buddha.<sup>24</sup> While it is true that the Buddha has discovered the *secret* of true reality, he then shares this knowledge and **opens it to all who would learn**: he does not have the hidden “fist of a guru” (*ācariya,muṭṭhi*).<sup>25</sup> Just as the sun shines on all and sundry, the Buddha’s compassion reaches out to all who are willing and ready for the Dharma.

<sup>20</sup> Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16,4.2 f/2:122 f, 16.6.1/2:154), SD 9.

<sup>21</sup> “Venerate,” *payirupāsanti* (pl), *payirupāsati*, “he attends on (acc), honours, pays homage, worship” (D 1:47, 2:257; M 2:117; S 1:146; A 1:124, 126, 142, 4:337; Dh 64, 65; Tha 1236; J 6:222 (PED); def as *punappunam upasāṅkamati* (VbhA 457); from *pari-upa vās*, “to sit” (with metathesis as in *payirudāharati*) (Geiger 47.2) = Skt *pary-upatiṣṭhati*, from *pary-upa + vSTHA*, “to stand” (SED): see **Caṅkī S** (M 95.20/2:173), SD 21.15 & **Kīṭā,giri S** (M 70,22-24/1:479 f), SD 11.1.

<sup>22</sup> See P Olivelle (tr), *Upaniṣads*, 1996: lii.

<sup>23</sup> See eg ChU 1.1.10, 1.13.4.

<sup>24</sup> V 1:145, 2:296 = A 1:54, V 5:145, 177, 210, 212, 215; D 2:287, 3:197; S 1:192 = Tha 1237d, S 1:186 = Tha 1212; A 4:228; Sn 915a, 1128; Tha 417.

<sup>25</sup> *Ācariya,muṭṭhi*: **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.2.25a/2:100), SD 9. Comys: “The teacher’s fist is found amongst outsiders who do not tell certain things to their pupils when they are still boys (*dahara,kāle*), who keep certain teachings for their beloved and favourite pupils, telling it to them only at the last moment from their deathbed. The Tathāgata does not hold back anything, keeping a closed fist, thinking, ‘I will teach this in my old age, at the last moment.’” (DA 2:548 = SA 3:203 f)

In the ancient Vedic tradition, the sun (Sūrya, Āditya) is the supreme light (ṚV 1.50.10), gives life to everything else (ṚV 1.50.4),<sup>26</sup> and possesses the highest knowledge, benefitting all beings (ṚV 5.81.2). The early Upaniṣads, especially the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka and the Chāndogya, again and again allude to the Sun as a deity, giver of life and of light, and worthy of the highest worship.<sup>27</sup> Understandably, the early Buddhists give the highest place in the universe to the Buddha, whose wisdom shines even beyond the sun, that is, because the Buddha has realized nirvana, which is beyond all words and thought, yet experiential.

**2.3 THE SUPREME WORSHIP.** It is very significant that the message that the Teaching is above the teacher, that the Dharma is above the person, is stressed by the Buddha at the beginning of this Buddha-life (as recorded in **the Gāraṇa Sutta**, S 6.2), but is also an integral part of the Buddha's last instructions, as recorded in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16):

“Ānanda, it may be that you would think:

‘Gone is the Teacher’s word! We have no teacher.’

It should not be seen thus, Ānanda, for **the Dharma-Vinaya** [the Teaching and the Discipline] that I have taught and explained to you, will, at my passing, be your teacher.”

(D 16,6.1/2:154), SD 9

Later, in the same Sutta, it is recounted that as the Buddha lies lion-like between the twin-sal trees, they blossom forth out of season, and fall on his body; heavenly flowers and sweet sandalwood fall from the sky upon him; heavenly music wafted in the air in his homage. In response to these manifestations, miraculous as they are, the Buddha declares that this is *not* the way to worship him.

The “**supreme worship**” (*paramā pūjā*) is that *we should practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, properly practising, dwelling in accordance with the Dharma.*<sup>28</sup> An important part of this supreme worship is, of course, meditation. Even as we close our eyes and calm ourselves in the bliss of meditation, we are truly worshipping the Buddha, as it were. For, such a worship preserves and propagates the Dharma, which even the Buddha places above himself.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> The whole of ṚV 1.50 is in praise of Sūrya.

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting, as recorded in **Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja S** (Sn 3.4), that the Buddha, when questioned by Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja whether he (the Buddha) is a brahmin or not, responds by asking Sundarika about the Sāvitrī (or Gāyatrī) (ṚV 3.62.10) (**Sn 457**), the best known of the Vedic verses invoking Savitr (the deity associated with the stimulating power of the sun) “in its 3 lines and 24 syllables.” See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri\\_Mantra](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri_Mantra). Comy thinks that the Buddha good-naturedly plays a pun (paronomasia) on the brahmin, and refers to “the Sāvitrī of the noble ones” (*ariya,sāvitti*), ie the 3 refuges (*ti,saraṇa,gamana*) formula—*buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchami, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchami, saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchami*—which also has 3 lines and 24 syllables (SnA 403)!

<sup>28</sup> D 16,5.2-3/2:138 + SD 9(7b). On the story of Dhamm’ārāma [14]. Cf **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35), where in a similar connection, the arhat is said to be accomplished in the 3 supremacies (*anuttariya*) (M 35,26.2/1:235), SD 26.5.

<sup>29</sup> See **Gāraṇa S** (S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3. See also **The teacher or the teaching?** SD 3.14; also **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1), SD 24.11 (1.3).

### 3 The 5 dharma-aggregates

**3.1 DEFINITION OF THE DHARMA AGGREGATES.** The key teaching of the **Gāraḥa Sutta** is the set of the 5 dharma-aggregates or “groups of qualities” (*pañca dhamma-k,khandha*) [3.3; §§3-7], which are, namely,

	<u>meaning</u>
(1) the aggregate of moral virtue,	<u>right</u> speech, action, livelihood
(2) the aggregate of concentration,	<u>right</u> effort, mindfulness, concentration
(3) the aggregate of wisdom,	right, intention [thought]
(4) the aggregate of freedom, and	the supramundane path (the 4 saints)
(5) the aggregate of the knowledge and vision of freedom.	review knowledge (mundane)

The 5 dharma-aggregates constitute the 3 trainings (*sikkhā*), which is the path (*magga*), and the last two factors—freedom and the knowledge and vision of freedom—which constitute the result or fruition (*phala*) of the path, that is, they are to be realized (*sacchikatatta*).<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the 5 dharma-aggregates are listed in full as the 10 “right states” (*sammattā*), that is, the noble eightfold path (*ariya’atthāṅgika magga*) along with right knowledge (*sammā,ñāṇa*) and right freedom (*sammā,vimutti*).<sup>31</sup>

However, according to the Saṃyutta Commentary, these dharma-aggregates are both mundane and supramundane (*lokiya,lokuttara*), except for the fifth, the knowledge and vision of freedom, which is mundane (*lokiya*) only, since it is review knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa,ñāṇa*) (SA 1:204).

In the case of the Buddha’s reflection on the 5 dharma aggregates, as recorded in the **Gāraḥa Sutta** (S 6.2), it is not that his awakening is incomplete in a spiritual sense: after all, he is *fully self-awakened* (*sammā,sambuddha*). Dharma (reality) does not exist in itself, but as the direct experience of living beings. As a matter of course, the awakened mind would seek to see if there are others *more* awakened, a mental event that occurs only once in the Buddha’s life.<sup>32</sup>

### **3.2 THE DHARMA-AGGREGATES AS AN ADEPT’S QUALITIES**

**3.2.1 The Sīla,sampanna Bhikkhu Sutta** (A 5.107) records the Buddha as stating that a monk endowed with these 5 qualities, namely, that

(1) he is endowed with moral virtue,	<i>sīla,sampanno hoti</i>
(2) he is endowed with concentration,	<i>samādhi,sampanno hoti</i>
(3) he is endowed with wisdom,	<i>paññā,sampanno hoti</i>
(4) he is endowed with freedom, and	<i>vimutti,sampanno hoti</i>
(5) he is endowed with the knowledge and vision of freedom,	<i>vimutti,ñāṇa.dassana,sampanno hoti</i>

is “worthy of offerings (*āhuneyyo*), worthy of hospitality (*pāhuneyyo*), worthy of gifts (*dakkhineyyo*), worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms (*añjali,karaṇiyo*), a supreme field of merit for the world (*anuttaraṃ puñña-k,khettaṃ lokassā ti*).”<sup>33</sup> (A 5.107/3:134)

<sup>30</sup> Pm 1:35.

<sup>31</sup> D 3:271, 292; M 1:42; A 5:212. It is interesting that the noble eightfold path is listed not in **Aṅguttara** Book of Eights (*atthaka nipāta*) but in Book of Tens (*dasaka nipāta*) (A 10.103/5:212), where they are called “rightness, right states” (*sammattā*), ie, the eightfold path plus right knowledge (*sammā,ñāṇa*) and right freedom (*sammā,vimutti*). In fact, this latter forms the complete path of training and freedom. See SD 43.15 (3).

<sup>32</sup> For further discussion, see SD 10.16 (9.3).

<sup>33</sup> On these 9 qualities of the noble sangha, see **Dhajagga S** (S 11.3/1:218-220), SD 15.5.

**3.2.2** The discourse that follows—the **(Pañcaka) Asekha Sutta** (A 5.108)—declares that those with these 5 qualities of the non-learner or adept (*asekha*), too, are “worthy” in the same manner, that is, regarding those endowed with **these 5 qualities of an arhat** or an “adept’s dharma aggregates” (*\*asekha dhamma-k,khandha*), namely,

- (1) he is endowed with the moral virtue of an adept (*asekhena sīla,sampanno hoti*),
- (2) he is endowed with the concentration of an adept (*asekhena samādhi,sampanno hoti*),
- (3) he is endowed with the wisdom of an adept (*asekhena paññā,sampanno hoti*),
- (4) he is endowed with the freedom of an adept (*asekhena vimutti,sampanno hoti*), and
- (5) he is endowed with the knowledge and vision of freedom of an adept (*asekhena vimutti,ñāṇa.dassana,sampanno hoti*). (A 5.108/3:134)

It is obvious that these two suttas refer to the same kind of person, that is, the arhat.

**3.2.3** Similarly, there are three other very short discourses—the **Upasampādetabba Sutta** (A 5.251), **the Nissaya Sutta** (A 5.252), and **the Sāmaṇera Sutta** (A 5.253)—which state that those with these same 5 aggregates of dharma *of an adept (asekha)* is one who “should be ordained” (*upasampādetabbaṃ*), “tutelage should be given” (*nissayo dātabbo*) by him, and is “a novice who should attend” (*sāmaṇero upaṭṭhāpetabbo*) to him (A 3:217).

The same statements in the form of monastic rules are found in the Mahāvagga:

Bhikshus, a monk endowed with 5 factors should be ordained; should be given **tutelage**; should have a novice attend (to him), that is to say,

- (1) he is endowed with the moral virtue of an adept,
- (2) he is endowed with the concentration of an adept,
- (3) he is endowed with the wisdom of an adept,
- (4) he is endowed with the freedom of an adept,
- (5) he is endowed with the knowledge and vision of freedom of an adept.

Bhikshus, a monk endowed with these 5 factors should be ordained; should be given tutelage; should have a novice should attend (to him).

*Pañcahi bhikkhave aṅgehi samannāgatena bhikkhunā upasampādetabbaṃ, nissayo dātabbo, sāmaṇero upaṭṭhāpetabbo.*

*Asekhena sīlakkhandhena samannāgato hoti,  
asekhena samādhikkhandhena samannāgato hoti,  
asekhena paññākkhandhena samannāgato hoti,  
asekhena vimuttikkhandhena samannāgato hoti,  
asekhena vimuttiñāṇadassanakkhandhena samannāgato hoti.*

*Imehi kho bhikkhave, pañca-h-aṅgehi samannāgatena bhikkhunā upasampādetabbaṃ,  
nissayo dātabbo, sāmaṇero upaṭṭhāpetabbo.* (Mv 1.36/1:62 f)

**3.2.4** The best explanation for this is that these Vinaya rules provide for the ordination of those who have become arhats, that they still need to be given “**tutelage**” (*nissaya*), that is, trained in conventional the rules and nature of monastic life. This tutelage does not reflect any lack in the arhat (as he is already a awakened saint like the Buddha), but is a sort of “coaching,” so that he would always act right and ready when others, especially the unawakened, can benefit by his teaching or example.

On account of an arhat’s awakening and non-attachment to the world, he is quite contented to be by himself, as his spiritually journey is completed. He is untroubled even if he does not get any of his basic supports (food, clothing, shelter and health), even if this means that he would peacefully die as a result from such lack.



In other words, the arhat is the diametrical opposite of the career monk. On account of his deep spirituality, he would be a truly beneficial teacher and example for others. Hence, the Buddha says here that a novice should attend to him, so that he is not deprived of any of these physical supports for the rest of his natural life. Here, too, the Vinaya acts as a framework within which arhats (and other saints, and monastics) live their spiritual lives, which would also benefit the world.

### 3.3 OCCURRENCES OF THE DHARMA-AGGREGATES SET IN THE SUTTAS

**3.3.1** The key term in **the Gāraḥa Sutta** is *dhamma-k,khandha*, here translated as “dharma aggregate(s)” or “groups of qualities” (*guṇa*), that is, their “fruits” (*phala*).<sup>34</sup> However, the terms and teachings of the Gāraḥa Sutta, a text of the first period of the Buddha’s ministry, clearly means that they are non-technical.

Even if the text was compiled *later*, it reflects an early phase in the Buddha teaching when, as clear from the Sutta context, the aggregates refers to **the training** (*sikkhā*). In fact, this is the Sutta’s key purpose—to highlight the priority that we should accord the training—which would assure the purity and continuity of the teaching for the benefit of posterity.

**3.3.2** The 5 dharma-aggregates are listed in the following suttas and in **the Paṭisambhidā,magga**:

<b>Saṅgīti Sutta</b>	D 33,1.6(10)/3:3:278
<b>Issatta Sutta</b>	S 3.24/1:99 f
<b>Gāraḥa Sutta</b>	S 6.2,3-7/1:139 = A 4.21/2:20
<b>Cunda Sutta</b>	S 47.13.7/5:162 (qualities attributed to Ānanda)
<b>Anātha,piṇḍika Sutta 1</b>	S 55.26.18-19/5:384 (qualities attributed to Anātha,piṇḍika)
<b>Vaccha,gotta Sutta</b>	A 3.57/1:159
<b>Uruvelā Sutta 1</b>	A 4.21/2:20 = S 6.2.3-7/1:139
<b>Asekha Sutta</b>	A 5.108/3:134
<b>Upasampādetabba Sutta</b>	A 5.251/3:271
<b>Nissaya Sutta</b>	A 5.252/3:271
<b>Sāmaṇera Sutta</b>	A 5.253/3:271
<b>Pañc’aṅga Sutta</b>	A 10.12/5:16
<b>Sīla,sampanna Sutta</b>	It 4.5/108
<b>Paṭisambhidā,magga</b>	Pm 2:193

The first 4 dharma-aggregates (*cattāro dhamma-k,khandhā*) are separately listed in **the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta** (D 16),<sup>35</sup> **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33),<sup>36</sup> and **the Uruvela Sutta 1** (A 4.21).<sup>37</sup> This set of 4 dharma-aggregates is found in **the Sāra Sutta** (A 4.150), where they are known as the four “essences” (*sāra*).<sup>38</sup>

### 3.4 PROBLEM PASSAGES INVOLVING THE DHARMA AGGREGATES

**3.4.1** From the citations of the list of 5 dharma-aggregates [3.2], it evidently, as a full set, refers to the qualities of an arhat, or the Buddha, as in **the Gāraḥa Sutta** (S 6.1). The passage here does not constitute an anomaly at all. It refers to a different set of teachings, that is, the 3 trainings. freedom and the know-

<sup>34</sup> DA 3:1022. Here “dharma” (*dhamma*) has no technical sense but is prob is a wordplay suggesting that the Dharma as “teaching” should be respected as being above even the teacher, following the Buddha’s example.

<sup>35</sup> D 16,4.2-3/2:122 f.

<sup>36</sup> D 33,1.11(25)/3:229.

<sup>37</sup> A 4.21/2:20 f (SD 12.3).

<sup>38</sup> A 4.150/2:141; Nett 56; DhA 1:114.

ledge and vision of freedom. Although this set seems to have some similarity with part of the formula of the 7 stages of purification (*satta visuddhi*), as given in the relatively late **Ratha Vinīta Sutta** (M 24),<sup>39</sup> they clearly differ.

The Saṃyutta Commentary glosses “**freedom**” (*vimutti*) as “supermundane,” meaning that it refers to any of the stages of sainthood, and “**knowledge and vision of freedom**” (*vimutti, ñāṇa, dassana*) as being mundane review knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa, ñāṇaṃ, taṃ lokiyam eva*, SA 3:223). We can surmise then that *vimutti* here is a broad term for the “freedom” that is sainthood, and which encompasses streamwinning, besides the other levels of awakening.

**3.4.2** However, in **the Cunda Sutta** (S 47.13), Ānanda (then still a streamwinner) is ascribed with the 5 dharma aggregates, *including the last two*:

[Cunda Samaṇ’uddesa:] Why, Ānanda, when Sāriputta attained final nirvana,  
 did he take away your aggregate of moral virtue,  
 did he take away your aggregate of concentration,  
 did he take away your aggregate of wisdom,  
 did he take away your aggregate of freedom,  
 did he take away your aggregate of knowledge and vision of freedom?

*Kin nu te Ānanda Sāriputto*

*sīla-k, khandhaṃ vā*

*samādhi-k, khandhaṃ vā*

*paññā-k, khandhaṃ vā*

*vimutti-k, khandhaṃ vā*

*vimutti, ñāṇa. dassana-k, khandhaṃ vā*

*ādāya parinibbuto,*

*ādāya parinibbuto,*

*ādāya parinibbuto,*

*ādāya parinibbuto,*

*ādāya parinibbuto’ ti. (S 47.13/5:162)<sup>40</sup>*

**3.4.3** It is possible that Cunda is asking a rhetorical question, so that Ānanda’s affirmative answer makes perfect sense. However, in **the Anātha, piṇḍika Sutta 1** (S 55.26), the ailing Anātha, piṇḍika, who is still a streamwinner then, is told to reflect on these 5 dharma-aggregates (*which he is expressly said to have*) within himself (S 55.26/5:384). In this case, we can only conclude that the set here has a more limited sense as referring to streamwinning. This is possible in the early suttas, where technical terms are rare.<sup>41</sup>

— — —

<sup>39</sup> M 24 (SD 28.3).

<sup>40</sup> See SD 10.16 (9.3.2.).

<sup>41</sup> See SD 10.16 (9.3.3).

# Gāraṇa Sutta

## The Discourse on Respect

S 6.2

### The Buddha's reflection

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed One was staying at the foot of the goatherd banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā river at Uruvelā, just after the full self-awakened.<sup>42</sup> [139]

2 Then, when the Blessed One was alone in retreat, this reflection arose in his mind:

“One dwells in suffering if one dwells without respect, without deference.<sup>43</sup> Now what recluse or brahmin may I, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on?”<sup>44</sup>

### The 5 dharma-aggregates

3 Then, it occurred to the Blessed One:

“(1) For the fulfilment of any unfulfilled **aggregate of moral virtue** (*sīla-k,khandha*) of mine, may I, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on another recluse or brahmin.

However, in this world, with its gods, with its maras and its brahmas,<sup>45</sup> this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers<sup>46</sup> and people,

I do not see any ascetic or brahmin more accomplished in moral virtue than myself, whom I might, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on.

4 (2) For the fulfilment of any unfulfilled **aggregate of concentration** (*samādhi-k,khandha*) of mine, may I, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on another recluse or brahmin.

*However, in this world, with its gods, with its maras and its brahmas, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,*

*I do not see any ascetic or brahmin more accomplished in concentration than myself, whom I might, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on.*

5 (3) For the fulfilment of any unfulfilled **aggregate of wisdom** (*pañña-k,khandha*) of mine, may I, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on another recluse or brahmin.

<sup>42</sup> “Just after the full self-awakening,” *pañhamābhisambuddho*, lit “when he first became fully awakened.” Note the idiomatic Pali here: SD 55.8 (1.1.2).

<sup>43</sup> *Dukkhaṃ kho agāraṇo viharati appaṭiṣso* (S 1:139 = A 2:20; qu at MA 2:136; also V 2:89 = D 3:244 = M 2:245 = Vbh 381).

<sup>44</sup> *Kaṇ nu khvāhaṃ samaṇaṃ vā brāhmaṇaṃ vā sakkatvā garukatvā upanissāya vihareyyan'ti*.

<sup>45</sup> Comys explain *sa,devaka* as referring to the 5 sense-world (ie the devas, humans, ghosts, animals and hell beings); *sa,māra* (pl -ke) as referring to Māra who predominates the sense-world (ie the 10-11 sense-worlds and Māra's own realm, Para,nimmita, vasavatti) [SD 1.7 App]; and *sa,brahmaka* (pl -ke) as the form worlds (DA 1:175 = MA 2:201 f; SA 1:203; SnA 1:229; PmA 2:431; NmA 2:229 f); all the 3 worlds, ie, sense world, form world and formless worlds are included in the term *sa,devaka* (AA 2:287, 3:25; ItA 2:188 f; VA 1:126).

<sup>46</sup> *Deva*, here in the sense of “devas by convention” (*sammati,deva*), ie kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti,deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi,deva*), ie the buddhas, pratyeka buddhas and arhats (Nc 307 KhA 123).

*However, in this world, with its gods, with its maras and its brahmas, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,*

*I do not see any ascetic or brahmin more accomplished in wisdom than myself, whom I might, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on.*

**6** (4) For the fulfilment of any unfulfilled **aggregate of freedom** (*vimutti-k,khandha*) of mine, may I, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on another recluse or brahmin.

*However, in this world, with its gods, with its maras, with its brahmas, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,*

*I do not see any ascetic or brahmin more accomplished in freedom than myself, whom I might, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on.*

**7** (5) For the fulfilment of any unfulfilled **aggregate of knowledge and vision of freedom** (*vimutti,-ñāṇa.dassana-k,khandha*) of mine, may I, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on another recluse or brahmin.

*However, in this world, with its gods, with its maras and its brahmas, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,*

*I do not see any ascetic or brahmin more accomplished in knowledge and vision of freedom than myself, whom I might, honouring, respecting, dwell dependent on.<sup>47</sup>*

## Respecting the Dharma

**8** “Let me then honour, respect, and dwell in dependence only on **this very Dharma** to which I have fully awakened.”<sup>48</sup>

**9** Then, **Brahmā Sahampati**, having known with his own mind the reflection in the Blessed One’s mind,<sup>49</sup> just as a strong man might stretch his arm out or bend it back, Brahmā Sahampati disappeared from the Brahmā world and reappeared before the Blessed One.

**10** Then, Brahmā Sahampati, having arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee on the ground, raised his palms lotus-wise towards the Blessed One, and said this to him: **[140]**

**11** “So it is, Blessed One! So it is, Sugata [well-farer]!”

11.2 Bhante, those who were the arhats, the fully self-awakened ones, in **the past**, too, honouring, respecting, this very Dharma, *dwelt* dependent on it.

11.3 Those who will be the arhats, the fully self-awakened ones, in **the future**, too, honouring, respecting, this very Dharma, *will* dwell dependent on it.

11.4 May the Blessed One, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, **now**, too, honouring, respecting, this very Dharma, *dwell* dependent on it.”

<sup>47</sup> On these **5 dharma aggregates**, see Intro (3). This fifth item is not found in **Uruvelā S 1** (A 4.21/2:20 f), whose Comy however identifies it with “reviewing knowledge” (*paccavekkhaṇa,ñāṇa*), ie the knowledge with which one ascertains that one’s mind is fully liberated (AA 3:25).

<sup>48</sup> *Yaṃ nūnāhaṃ yvāyaṃ\* dhammo mayā abhisambuddho, tam eva dhammaṃ sakkatvā garukatvā upanissāya vihareyyan’ti.* Be *yvāyaṃ*; Ce Ee Ke Se *yo’pāyaṃ*.

<sup>49</sup> Another occasion when Sahampati reads the Buddha’s mind is in **Cātumā S** (M 67,8/1:458), SD 34.7.

Brahma Saham,pati's verses

12 This is what **Brahmā Sahampati** said. Having said that, he added:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>13 <i>Ye ca atītā<sup>50</sup> sambuddhā<br/>ye ca buddhā anaāgatā<br/>yo c'etarahi sambuddho<sup>51</sup><br/>bahunnam<sup>52</sup> soka,nāsano</i>      S 562<sup>53</sup></p> | <p>The self-awakened ones of the past,<br/>the buddhas of the future,<br/>and the self-awakened one now,<br/>who removes the sorrow of many:</p>  |
| <p>14 <i>sabbe saddhamma,garuno<br/>viharṃsu<sup>54</sup> viharanti ca<sup>55</sup><br/>atho'pi<sup>56</sup> viharissanti<br/>esā buddhāna dhammatā</i>      [S 563]</p>            | <p>With respect for true Dharma,<br/>they all dwelled and they now dwell,<br/>and they will dwell, too—<br/>this is the nature of the buddhas.</p>  |
| <p>15 <i>Tasmā hi attha,kāmena<br/>mahattam abhikaṅkhatā<br/>saddhammao garuno,kātabbo<br/>saram<sup>58</sup> buddhāna,sāsanam'ti</i>      [S 564]<sup>59</sup></p>                 | <p>Therefore, one <u>desiring the good</u> [one's own good],<sup>57</sup><br/>yearning for greatness,<br/>should revere the true Dharma,<br/>recollecting the Buddhas' teaching.<sup>60</sup></p> |

[<sup>61</sup>]

— evaṃ —

50419 071206 080927 090519 101214 111127 120625 131005 141116 160913 170701 181111 191006 200601

<sup>50</sup> Be Ee Se ye ca atītā; Ce ye c'abbhatītā. Se gives the same reading (ye ca atītā) in **Gāraḥa S** (S 6.2), SD 12.3. Ce reading is closer to Skt version: *abbhatīta* (Skt *abhy-atīta*), "what has passed," Tha 1035. See CPD: sv.

<sup>51</sup> Notice the singular number in this line, which is plural in the Skt counterparts: see SD 55.8 (2.6).

<sup>52</sup> Be *bahūnam*; Ce Ee Ke Se *bahunnam*.

<sup>53</sup> For these Saṃyutta verse parallels, see **Gāraḥa S** (S 6.2,13-15), SD 12.3

<sup>54</sup> Be Ce *viharṃsu*; Ee Ke Se *vihariṃsu*.

<sup>55</sup> All MSS *viharanti ca*. Se *vihāti ca* in **Uruvelā S** (A 4.21), SD 55.8.

<sup>56</sup> Be Ce Ee *atho'pi*; Se *athāpi*.

<sup>57</sup> Ce A 4:91,1 *attha,kāmena*; Be Se Ee *atta,kāmena*, "desiring one's own good." For *attha,kāma* (desirous of one's good): V 1:302,32 = A 3:143,24; D 3:164,1; M 1:117,31; A 1:44,2, 197,8 ≈ U 7,2; (pursuing the highest goal, cf *atta,kāma*, *att'attha.kāma*, *att'atthiya*): S 1:140,150\* = A 2:21,23\* (Ee *atta-°*) = 4:91,1\* (vl *atta-°*); U 32,15\* (UA); A 1:231,19 (qu MA:Ee 2:219,19), 4:227,25\*. On *atta,kāma* confounded with *attha,kāma*, see S 1:75,27\*, 140,15\* = A 2:21,23\* = 4:91,1\* (vl *attha,kāma*); Vv 951; cf A 1:231,21 (= *attano hita,kāmā*, Com); C 3:4,6. See CPD: *atta-kāma* 1 + *attha-kāma*.

<sup>58</sup> *Saram*, glossed by Comy as *sarantena* (SA 1:204,24), which is prob a truncation of instrumental, *anusaran-tenam* "by following." But there is the form *anussaram* (J 4:172,20\*), which Comy takes = *anussaranto*, "following" (JA 4:173,26): CPD sv *anu-sarati*. Norman however thinks that it could be a *ṇamul* type absolutive (Tha:N n ad Thī 26): see also S:B 406 n235. See foll n.

<sup>59</sup> This verse recurs in (**Sattaka**) **Mettā S** (A 7.58a,13/4:91,1 f), SD 2.11a.

<sup>60</sup> Alt tr: "by recollecting ...": see prec n. *Buddhāna* is pl for *buddha*. It is possible that the cpd or phrase *buddhāna,sāsanam* is a corruption of *buddhānusāsanaṃ*, "the Buddha's instruction," which would preserve the sg form.

<sup>61</sup> **Uruvelā S 1** adds here a concluding paragraph (A 4.21/2:20 f), SD 55.8, which is prob late.