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Kukkura,vatika Sutta

The Discourse on the Dog-vow Ascetic | M 57

Theme: As you act, by that you are reborn

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008,2026

1 Introduction

1.1 ATTACHMENT TO RITUALS AND VOWS

1.1.0 The Kukkura,vatika Sutta (M 57) is a humorous discourse on “animal piety” (the notion that behaving like a dog or a cow is religious) with a serious note that we tend to become how we behave. The two proponents of the discourse are the young Koliya, **Puṇṇa**, a cow-vow ascetic (wearing horns and a tail),¹ and the naked ascetic [acelaka], **Seṇiya**, a dog-vow ascetic (behaving in a dog-like manner).²

There is another well known case of dog asceticism, that of the naked ascetic [acela] Kora-k,khattiya the dog-ascetic, recorded in the **Pāṭika Sutta** (D 24). The faithless Sunakkhatta, erstwhile monk and an attendant of the Buddha, disappointed by his notion that the Buddha could not perform miracles, switches his allegiance to the dog-ascetic, Kora-k,khattiya, regarding him as an arhat. Despite the Buddha’s admonitions, he remains stuck in his false views.³

The Kukkura,vatika Sutta (M 57) and the Pāṭika Sutta (D 24) centre around “clinging to rituals and vows” (*sīla-b, bat’upādāna* or *sīla-b.bata, parāmāsa*). Here *sīla* can mean “conduct, nature,” as in the common phrase, “by this ritual or vow or asceticism or holy life, I will become a god or some lesser god” (*iminā ‘haṃ sīlena vā vatena vā tapenā vā brahmacariyena vā devo vā bhavissāmi dev’aññatara vā*).⁴

Here “ritual” refers to a *ritualistic* way of keeping the precepts or making our practice merely as a routine, “observance.” By *vata* is meant some kind of vow, aspiration, prayer, etc, that we do not or cannot really put into practice, or which is not really beneficial.⁵ The **Dhamma,saṅgāhī** says, “Clinging to rituals and vows is the view of recluses and brahmins outside the religion that purification is achieved by rituals and rules” (Dhs §1222). An example of such a view is “the dog ritual, dog vow” (*kukkura,sīla kukkura,vata*) described here in **Kukkura,vatika Sutta** (M 57).⁶

1.1.1 The ascetics’ questions

The discourse opens with the young Koliya, **Puṇṇa**, a cow-vow ascetic and the naked ascetic [acela-ka], **Seṇiya**, a dog-vow ascetic, visiting the Buddha, each asking the Buddha of the other’s destiny or future birth. The Buddha characteristically refuses to answer such questions [§§2, 4], as they would be rather negative and troubling.⁷

¹ Comy says that he wore horns on his head, tied a tail behind him, and went about eating grass with the cows (MA 3:100).

² Comy says that he exhibited all the actions typical of a dog, and the both of them were play-mates (*saha, parṃ-sakīlikā sahayakā*) (MA 3:100).

³ D 24,1.7-10/3:6-9 @ SD 63.4.

⁴ See eg **Ceto,khila S**, M 16,12/1:102 @ SD 51.4.

⁵ See **Itṭha S** (A 5.43/3:47-49), SD 47.2.

⁶ M 57,2/1:387 @ SD 23.11. Cf S:B 726 n5. See **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8 (5).

⁷ In cases where the question is “unanswerable” (*avyākata*) or not related to spiritual development, he would remain silent, ie not answer them at all, as in **Cūḷa Mālunkya,putta S** (M 63), SD 5.8 (2), & **Aggi Vaccha,gotta S** (M 72), SD 6.15: see Intro, esp (2).

An interesting situation of the two bestial ascetics is that one is inquiring about the other's destiny. Neither the text nor its commentary explains this, except to give us the impression that both of them are very devoted, each to their own practice.

Puṇṇa questions the Buddha first, asking about Seniya's dog asceticism, stating that he "is one who does what is hard to do. He eats his food when it is thrown to the ground. He has for a long time fully observed the dog vow" [§2bcd]. After being pressed thrice, the Buddha answers that if one regularly and completely behaves like a dog, *he would be reborn as a dog*, or reborn in hell or in the animal realm if he has wrong view! [§3]. Seniya weeps with remorse at his own fate [§4]..

Seniya then asks the Buddha about Punna's cow asceticism, the Buddha, as before, thrice hesitates to answer [§4.2-5]. Finally, the Buddha replies that if Puṇṇa persists in his cow asceticism, *he would be reborn as a cow*, or reborn in hell or in the animal realm if he has wrong view! [§5]. Puṇṇa, too, weeps with remorse at his own fate [§6].

1.1.2 The ascetics' remorse and realization

In both cases, the Buddha explains that *a false ascetic practice has less severe consequences when it is undertaken without wrong view than when it is accompanied by wrong view* [§§3, 5]. **Bodhi** here remarks that "[a]lthough few nowadays will take up the dog-duty practice, many other deviant lifestyles have become widespread, and to the extent that these are justified by a wrong view, their consequences become that much more harmful" (M:ÑB 1260 n601).

Both the ascetics, after realizing their ill-fated posthumous destinies weep, "not because the Blessed One spoke thus to me," but that their false asceticism "has been fully observed for a long time" [§§4.2, 6.2]. Apparently, this means that they are not upset at the Buddha has said, but realize, after all, that the bestial conduct not only has no religious merit, but would bring them future pain.

Puṇṇa then declares his faith in the Buddha and that both of them would like to abandon their wrong practices [§6.3]. The Buddha admonishes them on the 4 types of karma [§7-11] [2]. At the end of the teaching, Puṇṇa takes refuge [§12], Seniya joins the order, and in due course becomes an arhat [§13-15].

1.2 RELATED TEACHINGS AND SUTTAS

1.2.1 Related suttas

Already mentioned is another case of dog asceticism, that of the naked ascetic [acela] Kora-k-khattiya the dog-ascetic, as recorded in **the Pāṭika Sutta** (D 24) [1.1].

There are at least six suttas that open with the Buddha's dealing with "the 4 types of karma that I have realized through direct knowledge" (*cattāri ... kammāni mayā sayam abhiññāya sacchikatvā paveditāni*), namely,

(Saṅkhitta) Kamma Sutta	(A 4.231/2:230)	the 4 types of karma in brief;	
(Vitthāra) Kamma Sutta	(A 4.232/2:230-232)	see [2.2];	SD 4.13
Sikha Moggallāna Sutta⁸	(A 4.233/2:232 f)	the efficacy of karma;	SD 18.7 (9.3.4)
Sikkhā,pada Sutta 1	(A 4.234a/2:233 f)	the 5 precepts;	SD 89.14
Sikkhā,pada Sutta 2	(A 4.234b/2:234 f)	the 5 heinous deeds & precepts;	SD 89.14
Ariya,magga Sutta	(A 4.235/2:235 f)	the noble eightfold path;	SD 50.18
(Kamma) Bojjhaṅga Sutta	(A 4.236/2:236 f)	the 7 awakening-factors.	SD 50.34

The list is also found in **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 31),⁹ and quoted in later works.¹⁰

⁸ Also called Soṇak'āyana S.

1.2.2 Related teachings

The key passage of the Kukkura,vatika Sutta concerns the karma that is neither dark nor bright, with neither dark nor bright result, that brings about the ending of karma¹¹ [§11], that is, the abandoning of all kinds of karma, both bad and good, and which refers to the state of the saints, especially the arhat [2.1]. The Sutta defines “**the karma that ends karma**” as the volition (*cetanā*), that is, conscious mental effort, in abandoning both good and bad karma, both good and bad results.¹²

This statement of the Buddha’s on *the karma that ends karma* is in diametrical contrast to the Jain view that we should “exhaust past bad karma through severe and painful austerities, and restraining our body, speech and mind right here and now, as mentioned in **the Cūḷa Dukkha-k,khandha Sutta** (M 14).¹³

2 The 4 types of karma

2.1 QUALITIES AND RESULTS OF KARMA

2.1.1 The (Tamo,joti) Puggala Sutta (S 3.21)¹⁴ and other discourses¹⁵ give a similar list of 4 kinds of persons in terms of spiritual progress or of regress. The Sutta lists the following 4 types of persons in terms of karmic progress, thus:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) One in darkness faring into darkness, | or, from darkness to darkness | (karmic stagnation); |
| (2) One in darkness faring into light, | or, from darkness to light | (karmic progress); |
| (3) One in light faring into darkness, | or, from light to darkness | (karmic descent); and |
| (4) One in light faring into light, | or, from light to light | (karmic ascent). |

The first and second karmic types of the Kukkura,vatika Sutta (M 57) overlap with the first and fourth types of person of the Puggala Sutta (S 3.21), respectively:

*the one with the dark karma and dark result may also refer to the one in light faring into darkness;
the one with bright karma with bright result may also include the one in light faring into light.*

The remaining two in either Sutta are different categories of karmic persons.

2.1.2 Comparisons

2.1.2.1 The Kukkura,vatika Sutta (M 57) and **the (Vitthāra) Kamma Sutta** (A 4.232) classify karma into four categories according to their quality and result.¹⁶ **Martin Adam**, instructively discusses this classification in his paper, “Groundwork for a metaphysic of Buddhist morals: A new analysis of *puñña* and *kusala*, in the light of *sukka*” (2005), that is, the topic of the four kinds of karma according to their

⁹ D 31.11(29)/3:230.

¹⁰ Such as Nett 98, 159; DhsA 89.

¹¹ *Kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhāsukkaṃ akaṇhāsukka,vipākaṃ kammaṃ kamma-k,khayāya saṁvattanti.*

¹² For a study, see **Beyond Good and Evil**, SD 2.7 esp (9).

¹³ M 14,17/1:93 (SD 4.7).

¹⁴ S 3.21/1:93-96 (SD 18.6); see also A 4.85/2:85 f where the list of the 4 kinds of persons is very briefly stated.

¹⁵ See also **Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33,1.11(49)/3:233); (**Saṅkhitta**) **Puggala Sutta** (A 4.85/2:85 f), SD 82.11; **Puggala Paññatti** (Pug 4.19/51 f); **Bāla,paṇḍita Sutta** (M 129,25/3:169 f), SD 2.22; **Cha-l-ābhijāti Sutta** (A 6.57/3:384-387), SD 23.5.

¹⁶ M 57,7-11/1:389-391 (SD 23.11) & A 4.232/2:230-232 (SD 4.13). A difference btw these two Suttas is that M 57 concludes its exposition of the first 3 types of karma with a general statement on the relation of karma to re-birth, indicating that beings are heirs to their karma, a statement that is missing from A 4.232.

results. From my own understanding of the Pali Canon and Adam’s discussion, I have worked out this schema to give us a better understanding of the subject:

karma type	<i>kusala/akusala</i>	<i>puñña/apuñña</i>	ideal types
1 dark karma with dark result	<i>akusala</i> (unwholesome)	<i>apuñña</i> (bad)	“blind” ordinary people (<i>andha puthujjana</i>)
2 bright [white] karma, with bright [white] result	<i>kusala</i> (wholesome)	“instrumental”: <i>puñña</i> (good) rebirth & fortune in this world	“good” ordinary people (<i>kalyāṇa puthujjana</i>) living deva-like lives: instrumentally <i>kusala</i> & teleologically <i>puñña</i>
3 both dark and bright karma with dark and bright result	mixed	mixed	“good” ordinary people, some humans, some devas, some hell-beings
4 neither dark nor bright karma with neither dark nor bright result	<i>kusala</i> : practicing of the noble eightfold path	“teleological”: ¹⁷ <i>puñña</i> preparing one for liberation (nirvana)	the learners of the path (<i>sekha</i>): instrumentally <i>puñña</i> & teleologically <i>kusala</i> (the karma that ends all karmas) ¹⁹
[5] beyond karma	“ <i>kusala</i> ”	<i>puñña, pāpa, pahīna</i> (having abandoned both good and bad) ¹⁸	the arhats (<i>arahata</i>): awakened activity

Table 2. Karma types, their fruits and the arhat (See also SD 18.7 (9.2))

2.1.2.2 Let me elaborate on the 4 categories by way of expanding on Table 2. In the following categories, according to **the Kukkura, vatika Sutta** (M 57), the term “dark” or “black” (*kaṇha*) refers to “afflictive” (*sabyāpajjha*) bodily, verbal and mental formations,²⁰ and “bright” or “white” (*sukka*) as “unafflictive” (*abyāpajjha*) formations [§§7-11].

2.1.2.3 The afflictive formations are the volitions behind the 10 courses of unwholesome action, as explained in **the Sammā Diṭṭhi Sutta** (M 9.4), thus:²¹

¹⁷ **Velez de Cea** gives this valuable conceptual distinction: “By instrumental actions I mean actions leading to favourable conditions for cultivating nirvāṇic virtues and by teleological I mean actions actually displaying nirvāṇic virtues or virtues characteristic of the Buddhist ideal of sainthood” (2004:128). In simpler terms, “teleological” means relating to a purpose (in life or spiritual attainment); here, it means connected to the goal of attaining nirvana. See (2.3) here for their interrelationship.

¹⁸ For Sutta refs, see SD 18.7 (8.1).

¹⁹ **Kukkura, vatika S** (M 57,11/1:391), SD 23.11.

²⁰ *Kāya, saṅkhāra, vaci saṅkhāra, mano, saṅkhāra*; here a formation is *abhisāṅkhāra*: see **Saṅkhāra**, SD 17.6 (5.6).

²¹ M 9,4/1:47 (SD 11.14).

Afflictive formations

bodily afflictive formations
 verbal afflictive formations
 mental afflictive formations

Unwholesome courses of action²²

killing, stealing, sexual misconduct;
 false speech, slander, harsh speech, frivolous talk;
 covetousness, ill will, wrong view.

2.1.2.4 These afflictive formations, in other words, are the underlying volition of our unwholesome or “dark” actions, and are conditioned by the three unwholesome roots: greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*). Their opposites are the unafflictive formations, that is, the motivational roots underlying wholesome or “bright” states: generosity (*dāna*), lovingkindness (*mettā*) and wisdom (*paññā*).²³

2.1.2.5 In fact, as Martin Adam points out, these are the *determinants* of the “brightness” of an action, and he is careful to define the term *determinant*:

Now the notion of some factor *being a determinant* for something else is importantly ambiguous. It can mean “that which determines” as well as “that which one uses to determine.” Here it is understood in the former sense. Clearly the two senses are not equivalent. The criteria by which we judge an action to be good or bad do not necessarily constitute the causes of the action’s *being* good or bad. Indeed more usually they are the effects as, for example, is arguably the case with regard to the injury or non-injury an action actually does to others. These indicators are more readily observed than the mental state of the agent. We may judge an action as morally bad, based on our observation of the injury it does. But from a Buddhist perspective we would have to modify our judgment upon learning that the results were accidental. We would then say that the action was “regrettable,” or give it some other description with no implication of *moral* judgment upon the action itself. This point needs to be borne in mind when evaluating the arguments of scholars assessing the nature of Buddhist morality. The distinction is not always recognized; the criteria actually employed for judgment are often confused with the causal factors in virtue of which the action *is* good or bad. An analogy here would be illness. We do not confuse a fever, which is an effect, with its cause. A person has a fever because of their underlying condition of illness. A person is not ill because they have a fever. The fever is an indicator of the illness, not a causal determinant.

(Adam 2005:6)

2.1.2.6 Dark karma, then, has unpleasant (*dukkha*) present and future effects on the doer, and it also constitutes actions that are unwholesome (*akusala*), rooted in mental afflictions that block the mind from insight into its own true nature. Bright karma, on the other hand, brings about only pleasant (*sukha*) present and future states, and it constitutes wholesome (*kusala*) actions, rooted in unafflicted mental states that conduce to insight into reality and to liberation.

2.2 THE 4 CATEGORIES OF KARMA

According to **the (Vitthāra) Kamma Sutta** (A 4.232), the 4 categories of karma *in terms of quality and result* are as follows (incorporating details discussed thus far):

²² *Akusala kamma, patha.*

²³ On the roots (*mūla*), see **Mūla S** (A 3.69/1:201-205), SD 18.2.

(1) Dark [black] karma with dark [black] result (*kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇha, vipākam*). “Dark” (*kaṇha*) karma are unwholesome (*akusala*) and bad (*apuñña = pāpa*), and as such generate unpleasant and unfortunate present and future states and experiences. This category refers to bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions that are unwholesome, such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants. Such actions go against the 5 precepts, that are the basic code of moral conduct for a harmonious society, and which a practitioner constantly reminds himself to abide by.

(2) Bright [white] karma with bright [white] result (*kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukka, vipākam*). “Bright” (*sukka*) karma are wholesome (*kusala*) and good (*puñña*), and as such generate pleasant and fortunate present and future states and experiences. This category refers to bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions which are not harmful, such as practicing in accordance with the ten bases for skillful action, that is, abstaining from killing, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, from slander, from harsh (or abusive) speech, from frivolous talk, from covetousness, from ill will and from wrong view. The Sutta says that “When he is touched by such contacts free from ill will, he enjoys feelings free from ill will that are extremely pleasurable—like the Subha, kiṇhā devas.”²⁴

(3) Dark and bright karma with dark and bright results (*kammaṃ kaṇha, sukkaṃ kaṇha, sukka, vipākam*). These are bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions which are partly unwholesome, partly not. As examples of beings with such karma, the Sutta mentions “humans or some devas²⁵ or some hell-beings.”²⁶

(4) Neither dark nor bright karma with neither dark nor bright result (*kammaṃ akaṇham-āsukkaṃ akaṇha, asukka, vipākam*), which leads to the cessation of karma, that is, to arhathood. **The Sikha Mogallāna Sutta** (A 4.233) says that this kind of karma “leads to the cessation of karma.”²⁷ **The Ariya, magga Sutta** (A 4.235) explains this in terms of the development of the noble eightfold path,²⁸ while **the (Kamma) Bojjhaṅga Sutta** (A 4.236) speaks in terms of the development of the 7 awakening factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*).²⁹

The Commentary says that it is the volition present in the 4 supramundane paths leading to the end of the cycle of life and death (AA 3:213). In short, this is the intention—that is, the mind of the saints of the path—to transcend the three kinds of karma mentioned above. The point is clear: “a mind that is pure is naturally open to the possibility of self-understanding and spiritual freedom.” (Adam 2005: 6)

²⁴ The Subha, kiṇhā devas inhabit the 3rd dhyana form sphere. Although (**Nānā, karaṇa**) **Puggala S 1** (A 4.123/-2:127), SD 23.18a, states that their lifespan is 4 aeons, Comy (AA 3:126) actually states that it is 64 aeons to conform with later Theravāda cosmology. See A:ÑB 293 n55.

²⁵ Comy: The devas of the sense-world who are happy in their own sphere, but unhappy when they observe the still greater happiness of the higher devas (AA 3:213).

²⁶ Comy: Pretas with divine mansions (*vemānika petā*), and also nagas (terrestrial serpent beings), harpies (*supaṇṇā*, half-human half-bird), elephants, horses, etc, who are sometimes happy, sometimes suffering (AA 3:213). The nagas and harpies are traditional enemies, often at war against one another (they are of course mythical beings). For an interesting example, see the case of the Sāvattī seth in **Aputtaka S 2** (S 3.20/1:91-93), SD 23.12. See also **Karma**, SD 18.1(5.3.2).

²⁷ A 4.233/2:233.

²⁸ A 4.235/2:235 f.

²⁹ A 4.236/2:236 f.

2.3 THE TYPES OF KARMA IN THE SANSKRIT TEXTS

2.3.1 Analayo, in his comparative study of the Majjhima Nikāya (2005), notes that the list of four types of karma is also quoted in **Śamatha,deva**'s commentary on the Abhidharma,kośa,bhāṣya, extant in Tibetan.³⁰ The quotation appears to be close especially to the first three types of karma as listed in the Kukkura,vatika Sutta.

2.3.2 The Chinese **Saṅgīti,paryāya**—阿毘達磨集異門足論 (T1536 = T26.396a05)³¹—further comments on these four types of karma as listed in the Pali and Sanskrit versions of the Saṅgīti Sutta.³² The Saṅgīti,-paryāya explicitly mentions Puṇṇa, one of the two protagonists of the Kukkura,vatika Sutta, and notes that he is a cow-vow ascetic. It however says that the Buddha gives this exposition on the four types of karma to Pūrṇa (P, Puṇṇa), 圓滿, the practitioner of the cow-vow, 牛戒. As such, although no parallel of the Kukkura,vatika Sutta has been preserved in the Chinese Āgamas, the compilers of the Saṅgīti,paryāya were acquainted with a version of this discourse. In this connection, Analayo makes an interesting note:

The present instance, then, serves to reinforce the point already made in relation to the Jīvaka Sutta [M 55],³³ namely, that conclusions based on the absence of a discourse from the Chinese Āgamas need to be made with considerable precaution. (2005: M 57)

3 We are our karma

3.1 The essence of the Buddha's instruction to the young Koliya, Punna, the cow-vow ascetic (and to the naked ascetic, Seniya, the dog-vow ascetic) is that our karma depends on our conduct through the three doors of action, namely, the body-door, the speech-door and the mind-door, that is, physical action, speech and thoughts. The Buddha then declares that "beings are the heirs of karma, I say!" (*kamma-s,-sakā*) [§8].

This important sentence is elaborated in a variety of other ways. **The Cūḷa Kamma,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 135), for example, states:

Beings are owners of karma, heirs to karma, born in karma, bound to karma, have karma as their refuge. It is karma that differentiates beings, that is to say, by way of inferiority and excellence.

*Kamma-s,sakāsattā kamma,dāyādā kamma,yonī kamma,bandhū kamma-p,paṭisaraṇā.
Kammaṃ satte vibhajati, yad idaṃ hīna-p,panītatāyā ti.*

(M 135,4+20/3:202, 206 @ SD 4.15; Miln 65)

3.2 The **(Abhiṇṇa,paccavekkhitabba) Ṭhāna Sutta** (A 5.57) and the **Pabbajita Abhiṇṇa Sutta** (A 10.48) make a similar statement of karma, but the closing sentence (underscored) advises us to constantly reflect on how we are the heirs to our karma, that is, we should remember that we are responsible for our own actions:

³⁰ Tr in Peter Skilling, 1979:88 f.

³¹ See http://w3.cbeta.org/cgi-bin/goto.pl?linehead=T26n1536_p0396a05.

³² D 33,11(29)/3:230 & Skt in Stache-Rosen, *Dogmatische Begriffsreihen im Älteren Buddhismus II: Das Saṅgīti-sūtra und sein Kommentar Saṅgītiparyāya*, vol 1, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1968a:113.

³³ See **Jīvaka S** (M 55), SD 43.4 Intro.

Beings are owners of karma, heirs to karma, born in karma, bound to karma, have karma as their refuge. Whatever I do, good or bad, I will be its heir (*yaṃ kammaṃ karissāmi, kalyāṇaṃ vā pāpakaṃ vā, tassa dāyādo bhavissāmi ti*). (A 5.57/3:71 f @ SD 5.12; A 10.48/5:88; Kvu 522)

The Āghāta Paṭivinaya Sutta 1 (A 5.161) makes the same statement, but in *the third person future singular*, thus:

Beings are owners of karma, heirs to karma, born in karma, bound to karma, have karma as their refuge. Whatever one does, good or bad, one will be its heir (*yaṃ kammaṃ karoti, kalyāṇaṃ vā pāpakaṃ vā, tassa dāyādo bhavissati*). (A 5.161,6/3:186 @ SD 1.23)

The same admonition is made in **the Saṃsappanīya Pariyāya Sutta** (A 10.205), but in *the third person indicative plural*, that is, by way of a general truism, thus:

Beings are owners of karma, heirs to karma, born in karma, bound to karma, have karma as their refuge. Whatever they do, good or bad, they are its heir (*yaṃ kammaṃ karonti, kalyāṇaṃ vā pāpakaṃ vā, tassa dāyādā bhavanti*). (A 10.205/5:288, 291)

The essence of all such statements of karma is that we are responsible for our actions: we are what we do, say and think. “As he acts, by that is he reborn” (*yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati*) [§§8-11].

— — —

Kukkura,vatika Sutta

The Discourse on the Dog-vow Ascetic

M 57

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was dwelling among the Koliyas.³⁴ There was a town of the Koliyas named Halidda,vasana.³⁵

Puṇṇa Koliya,putta the cow-vow ascetic and Seniya, the dog-vow ascetic

2 Then the young Koliya, Puṇṇa, a cow-vow ascetic,³⁶ and the naked ascetic [acelaka], Seniya, a dog-vow ascetic,³⁷ approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One, the young Koliya, Puṇṇa, the cow-vow ascetic, saluted the Blessed One, and then sat down at one side.

³⁴ The Koliyas were a tribe neighbouring on the east of the Sakyas, both of whom were separated by the river Rohinī (Tha 429). The Koliyas had two main towns, Rāmagama (the capital; identified with Rampur Deoriya in the district of Basti in Oudh) and the other Devadaha (Mahā Māyā’s hometown).

³⁵ It is also at Halidda,vasana that the Buddha gives the teachings of **Metta,sahagata S** (S 46.54/5:115-121), SD 10.11. Comy explains that the town was so called because at the time of its building, people wore saffron coloured garment (*halidda,vattha,vatthā*) to celebrate a festival (*nakkhatta*) (MA 3:100). *Vasana* can mean either “clothing” or “habitat.”

³⁶ Comy says that he wore horns on his head, tied a tail behind him, and went about eating grass with the cows (MA 3:100)

2.2 The naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, too, having approached the Blessed One, exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side, curled up like a dog.³⁸

The Buddha refuses to answer Puṇṇa's question

2.3 Seated thus at one side, the young Koliya, Puṇṇa, the cow-vow ascetic, said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, this naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, is one who does what is hard to do. He eats his food when it is thrown to the ground. He has for a long time fully observed the dog vow. What is his destiny? What is his future state?”

“Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be! Don't ask me that.”³⁹

2.4 For a second time, the young Koliya, Puṇṇa, the cow-vow ascetic, said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, this naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, is one who does what is hard to do. He eats his food when it is thrown to the ground. He has for a long time fully observed the dog vow. What is his destiny? What is his future state?”

“Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be! Don't ask me that.”

2.5 For a third time, the young Koliya, Puṇṇa, the cow-vow ascetic, said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, this naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, is one who does what is hard to do. He eats his food when it is thrown to the ground. He has for a long time fully observed the dog vow. What is his destiny? What is his future state?”

2.6 “Surely, Puṇṇa, I'm not getting through to you⁴⁰ when I say, ‘Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be! Don't ask me that.’ But still, I will answer you.

Seniya the dog ascetic's destiny

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>3 Here, Puṇṇa, a certain person
cultivates the dog vow,
he cultivates the habits of a dog,⁴¹
he cultivates the mind of a dog,⁴²
he cultivates the practices of a dog,⁴³</p> | <p>fully and without break [uninterruptedly];
fully and without break;
fully and [388] without break;
fully and without break.</p> |
|---|--|

³⁷ Comy says that he exhibited all the actions typical of a dog, and the both of them were play-mates (*saha, paṃ-sakīlikā sahayakā*). (MA 3:100)

³⁸ Comy: He sat nearby as if in the master's presence. Having scratched the ground, with his two feet, he sat down curled up, and greets the Blessed One, thinking, “I will do what a dog does.” Then, having scratched the ground with his two hands, shaking his head, he barks “Woof! Woof!” [“Bow wow!”] (*bhun bhun ti katvā*), and folding up his hands and feet, he sat down like a dog. (MA 3:100 f)

³⁹ *Alaṃ puṇṇa tiṭṭhat'etaṃ mā maṃ etaṃ pucchī ti*.

⁴⁰ *Aḍḍhā kho tyāhaṃ [= te ahaṃ], puṇṇa, na labhāmi*. This cautious response lit tr something like “I cannot get the way to you,” or fig, “You don't seem to get it!” On a number of other occasions, the Buddha similarly hesitates to answer such questions: see **Tāla,puṇṇa S** (S 42.2.5/4:305 f) + SD 20.8 n; **Yodh'ājīva S** (S 42.3/4:308 f), SD 23.3; **Ass'āroha S** (S 42.5/4:310); by a brahmin youth: **Assalāyana S** (M 93.4.7/2:148), SD 23.11.

⁴¹ “The habits of a dog,” *kukkura,sīla* = “the conduct of a dog,” *kukkur'ācāra* (MA 3:101).

⁴² “The mind of a dog: *kukkura,citta*. Comy: “It comes to his mind, thus: ‘I will do today by wanting to do what a dog must do’ (*ajja paṭṭhāya kukkurehi kātabbhaṃ karissāmi*, AA 3:101). Clearly, this refers to the thoughts or intentions of a dog.

⁴³ “The practices of a dog,” *kukkura,kappa*. See CPD: ⁴kappa. Comy: In his manner of standing, walking, sitting, lying down, and baring his teeth when seeing real dogs (MA 3:101). This refers to the intentions or actions of a dog.

Fully and without break, having cultivated the dog-vow, having cultivated the habits of a dog, having cultivated the mind of a dog, having cultivated the practices of a dog,

he would, after death, with the body's breaking up, be reborn in the company of dogs!

3.2 But if he has such a view as this:

‘By this moral virtue, or this vow, or this asceticism, or this celibacy,⁴⁴ I will become a deva or one amongst them⁴⁵—this view of his is wrong view, he is one with wrong view.

3.3 Puṇṇa, there are two destinies for one with wrong view, I say: either hell or the animal realm!⁴⁶

As such, Puṇṇa, if his dog vow is fulfilled [succeeds], it takes him to **the company of dogs**; if it is unfulfilled, it takes him to **hell!**”

4 When this was said, the naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, cried out and burst into tears. Then the Blessed One said this to the young Koliya, Puṇṇa, the cow-vow ascetic:

“So, Puṇṇa, I’ve not got through to you when I say, ‘Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be! Don’t ask me that.’”

The Buddha refuses to answer Seṇiya’s question

4.2 [Seṇiya:] “Bhante, I’m not weeping because the Blessed One spoke thus to me. But, bhante, my dog vow has been fully observed for a long time.

And, bhante, this young Koliya, Puṇṇa, the cow-vow ascetic, too: his cow-vow has been fully observed for a long time. What is his destiny? What is his future state?”

“Enough, Seṇiya, let it be! Don’t ask me that.”

4.3 For a second time, the naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, this young Koliya, Puṇṇa, is a cow-vow ascetic: his cow-vow has been fully observed for a long time. What is his destiny? What is his future state?”

“Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be! Don’t ask me that.”

4.4 For a third time, the naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, this young Koliya, Puṇṇa, is a cow-vow ascetic: his cow vow has been fully observed for a long time. What is his destiny? What is his future state?”

4.5 “Surely, Seṇiya, I’m not getting through to you when I say, ‘Enough, Puṇṇa, let it be! Don’t ask me that.’ But still, I will answer you.

Puṇṇa the cow ascetic’s destiny

5 Here, Seṇiya, a certain person

cultivates **the cow vow**,

he cultivates the habits of a cow,

he cultivates the mind of a cow,

he cultivates the practices of a cow,

fully and without break;

fully and without break;

fully and without break;

fully and without break.

⁴⁴ “Or (by) celibacy,” *brahma, cariyena vā = methuna, virati attho* (MA 3:101); but it can also refer to the “holy life” in general.

⁴⁵ “A deva or one amongst them” (*devo vā bhāviṣṣāmi dev’aññatara vā*). Comy explains a **deva** such as “the like of Sakra, Suyāma, etc” (MA 1:101), ie, a celestial lord (another good example is Mahā Brahmā), and **dev’aññatara** refers to “second or third levels, etc (of devas)” (MA 1:102), ie, a lesser member of any heavenly host (*deva, nikāya*). Cf S 35.241/4:180; A 9.72/4:461.

⁴⁶ Qu at Kvū 14.8.3/505. Bodhi: “It should be noted that a wrong ascetic practice has less severe consequences when it is undertaken without wrong view than when it is accompanied by wrong view. Although few nowadays will take up the dog-duty practice, many other deviant lifestyles have become widespread, and to the extent that these are justified by a wrong view, their consequences become that much more harmful.” (M:NB 1260 n601). Cf **Tala,puṭa S** (S 42.2/4:307 @ SD 20.8), where it is applied to the wrong view that actors and performers are reborn amongst the “Laughing Devas.”

*Fully and without break, having cultivated **the cow-vow**,
 having cultivated the habits of a cow,
 having cultivated the mind of a cow,
 having cultivated the practices of a cow,*

he would, after death, with the body's breaking up, be reborn in the company of cows!

5.2 But if [389] he has such a view as this:

'By this moral virtue, or this vow, or this asceticism, or this holy life [celibacy], I will become a deva or one amongst them'—this view of his is wrong view, he is one with wrong view.

Seniya, there are two destinies for one with wrong view, I say: either hell or the animal realm!

5.3 As such, Seniya, *if his cow-vow is fulfilled, it takes him to **the company of cows**; if it is unfulfilled, it takes him to **hell!***"

6 When this was said, the young Koliya, Punna, the cow-vow ascetic, cried out and burst into tears.

Then the Blessed One said this to the naked ascetic, Seniya, the dog-vow ascetic:

"So, Seniya, I've not got through to you when I say, 'Enough, Seniya, let it be! Don't ask me that.'"

Punna the cow ascetic's faith in the Buddha

6.2 [Punna:] "Bhante, I'm not weeping because the Blessed One spoke thus to me. But, bhante, my cow vow has been fully observed for a long time.

6.3 I, bhante, have faith in the Blessed One thus,

'The Blessed One is capable of teaching me the Dharma with which I can abandon this cow-vow, and this naked ascetic, Seniya, the dog-vow ascetic, can abandon that dog vow.'"

6.4 "In that case, Punna, listen, pay careful attention, I will speak."

"Yes, bhante," the young Koliya, Punna, the cow-vow ascetic, answered the Blessed One in assent.

The 4 types of karma

6.5 The Blessed One said this:

7 "Punna, there are these **4 types of karmas** that I have realized through direct knowledge. What are the four?⁴⁷

- (1) Punna, there is dark karma with dark result,
- (2) Punna, there is bright karma with bright result,
- (3) Punna, there is dark-and-bright karma with dark-and-bright result,
- (4) Punna, there is karma that is neither dark nor bright, with neither dark nor bright result, that brings about the ending of karma.

Dark karma with dark result

8 (1) And what, Punna, is **dark karma with dark result?**

8.2 Here, Punna, a certain person

creates⁴⁸ afflictive bodily formations,⁴⁹

creates afflictive verbal formations,

creates afflictive mental formations.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ This list of 4 types of karma is found in a number of other places: see Intro (1).

⁴⁸ "Creates," *abhisankharoti*, ie "confer potential energy to something" (CPD), "arrange, prepare."

⁴⁹ "Bodily formations," *kāya,saṅkhāra* = *kāya,kamma* (bodily karma).

8.3 Having created *afflictive* bodily formations,
 having created *afflictive* verbal formations,
 having created *afflictive* mental formations, he arises in an afflictive world.

8.4 When he is born into an afflictive world, afflictive contacts⁵¹ touch him.⁵²

When he is touched by such afflictive sense-contacts,
 he suffers afflictive feelings⁵³ that are extremely painful—just as [390] the hell-beings.⁵⁴

8.5 Such it is, Puṇṇa, **a being's rebirth is due to the being [his past]: as he acts, so he is reborn.**⁵⁵
 When reborn, sense-contacts touch him.⁵⁶

Thus, Puṇṇa, *beings are the heirs of karma, I say!*⁵⁷

This, Puṇṇa, is called dark karma with dark result.

Bright karma with bright result

9 (2) And what, Puṇṇa, is **bright karma with bright result?**

9.2 Here, Puṇṇa, a certain person
 creates unafflictive bodily formations,
 creates unafflictive verbal formations,
 creates unafflictive mental formations.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ "Afflictive," *sa,vyāpajjhaṃ*, "connected with suffering." Comy glosses *sa,vyāpajjhaṃ lokan ti sa,dukkhaṃ lokam uppajjanti*, "an afflictive world means they are reborn in a world of suffering (lit, "with suffering")" (AA 3:212), referring to any of the four "underworlds": the animal kingdom, the pretas, the asuras and the hells. Here, in the three clauses (*sa,vyāpajjhaṃ kāya,saṅkhāraṃ...vacī,saṅkhāraṃ...mano,saṅkhāraṃ abhisāṅkhāroti*): "afflictive bodily formations" may be taken to be the volition behind the 3 courses of unwholesome *bodily* action; "afflictive verbal formations" as the volition behind the 4 courses of unwholesome *verbal* action; and "afflictive mental formations" as the volition behind the 3 courses of unwholesome *mental* action. On the unwholesome courses of conduct, see **Sammā,diṭṭhi S** (M 9,4/1:47), SD 11.14.

⁵¹ "Contacts," *phassā*, ie dependent on the sense-organ and sense-object, sense-consciousness arises: the meeting of the three is contact (**Madhu,piṇḍika S**, M 18,16/1:111 f), SD 6.4. In short, these contacts are sense-experiences.

⁵² "Contacts ... touch him," *phassā phusanti*, ie he is troubled by various afflictive acts.

⁵³ "He suffers afflictive feelings," *sa,vyāpajjhaṃ vedanaṃ vediyati*. Comy: He suffers feelings connected with illness (*s'ābādham*) (AA 3:212). The word *ābādha* has a range of meanings: pain, affliction, trouble, illness, sickness, disease, distress (CPD).

⁵⁴ "Just as hell-beings," *seyyathā pi sattā nerayikā*. Bodhi: "In this passage (and the counterparts below) we can discover several of the main links in the formula of dependent origination: volitional formations bring about rebirth into an appropriate world (which is ultimately a constellation of consciousness and name-and-form), and once rebirth is established, contact gives rise to feeling. The sutta establishes that the world in which we arise, and the affective quality of our experience within that world, reflect the nature of our actions in previous existences." (A:B 296 n86). In other words, one need not actually fall into "hell" (as a place beyond here and now) to suffer hellish pains.

⁵⁵ *Iti kho Puṇṇa bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti, yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati*. This is the Sutta's key sentence. Comy glosses thus: *bhūta,kammato bhūtassa sattassa upapatti hoti idam vuttam hoti*, "This is said to be the rebirth of beings that have come into being on account of existing karma" (MA 3:104). Comy to **Saṃsappanīya Pariyāya S** (A 10.205 @ SD 39.7) explains *bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti ti bhūtaṃ sabhāvato vijjamāna,kammā sattassa nibbatti*, "~~ means the existing karma that is the constitution (*nibbatti*) of a being on account of the inherent nature in the being" (AA 5:75). Cf *bhūte bhūtato sañjānāti*, "he perceives beings as beings" (M 1,7/1:2), SD 11.8. Detailed teachings on this are found in **Cūḷa Kamma,vibhaṅga S** (M 135/3:203-206), SD 4.15 and **Mahā Kamma,-vibhaṅga S** (M 136/3:207-215), SD 4.16. See **Saṃsappanīya Pariyāya S** (A 10.205) @ SD 39.7 (2).

⁵⁶ *Upapannam enaṃ phassā phusanti*. This whole para see §8 n.

⁵⁷ *Kamma,dāyādā sattā ti ahaṃ vādāmi*. See Intro (3).

9.3 Having created *unafflictive* bodily formations,
 having created *unafflictive* verbal formations,
 having created *unafflictive* mental formations, he arises in an unafflictive world.⁵⁹

9.4 When he is born into an unafflictive world, unafflictive sense-contacts touch him.

When he is touched by such unafflictive contacts,
 he enjoys unafflictive feelings that are extremely pleasurable—
 just as the Subha,kiṇhā devas.⁶⁰

9.5 Such it is, Puṇṇa, **a being's rebirth is due to the being [due to the past]: as he acts, so he is re-born.**⁶¹ When reborn, sense-contacts touch him.⁶²

This, Puṇṇa, is called bright karma with bright result.

Dark-and-bright karma with dark-and-bright result

10 (3) And what, Puṇṇa, is dark-and-bright karma with dark-and-bright result?

10.2 Here, Puṇṇa, a certain person

creates bodily formations, *both afflictive and unafflictive*,
 creates verbal formations, *both afflictive and unafflictive*,
 creates mental formations, *both afflictive and unafflictive*.⁶³

10.3 Having created bodily formations, *both afflictive and unafflictive*,
 having created verbal formations, *both afflictive and unafflictive*,
 having created mental formations, *both afflictive and unafflictive*,
 he arises in a world that is both afflictive and unafflictive.

10.4 When he is born into a world that is both afflictive and unafflictive,
 afflictive contacts and unafflictive contacts touch him.

10.5 When he is touched by such afflictive sense-contacts or such unafflictive sense-contacts,
 he feels feelings that are afflictive or that are unafflictive, that are mixed and varied,
 painful and pleasurable—like the humans, or some devas,⁶⁴ or some hell-beings.⁶⁵

10.6 Such it is, Puṇṇa, **a being's rebirth is due to the being [due to the past]: as he acts, so he is re-born.** When reborn, sense-contacts touch him.

Thus, Puṇṇa, *beings are the heirs of karma, I say!*

This, Puṇṇa, is called dark and bright karma with dark and bright result.

⁵⁸ This refers to the volitions behind the 10 courses of wholesome actions [§8n], and the volitions of the dhyana. On the wholesome courses of conduct, see **Sammā,diṭṭhi S** (M 9,6/1:47), SD 11.14.

⁵⁹ "Unafflictive world" (*avyāpajjhaṃ lokam*), a heavenly world, or better, a worldly environment conducive to spiritual development.

⁶⁰ The Subha,kiṇhā devas inhabit the 3rd dhyana form sphere. Although (**Nānā Karaṇa**) **Puggala S 1** (A 4.123/-2:127), SD 23.8a states that their lifespan is 4 aeons, Comy (AA 3:126) actually states that it is 64 aeons to conform with later Theravāda cosmology. See A:ÑB 293 n55.

⁶¹ *Iti kho, puṇṇa, bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti. Yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati.* See foll n.

⁶² *Upapannam enaṃ phassā phusanti.* This whole para see §8 n.

⁶³ Bodhi: "Strictly speaking, no volitional action can be simultaneously both wholesome and unwholesome, for the volition responsible for the action must be either one or the other. Thus here we should understand that the being engages in a medley of wholesome and unwholesome actions, none of which is particularly dominant." (M:ÑB 1261 n607)

⁶⁴ Comy: The devas of the sense-world who are happy in their own sphere, but unhappy when they observe the still greater happiness of the higher devas (AA 3:213).

⁶⁵ Comy: Pretas with divine mansions (*vemānika petā*), and also nagas (terrestrial serpent beings), harpies (*supaṇ-ṇā*, half-human half-bird), elephants, horses, etc, who are sometimes happy, sometimes suffering (AA 3:213). The nagas and harpies are traditional enemies, often at war against one another (they are of course mythical beings).

The karma that ends karma

11 (4) And what, [391] Puṇṇa, is karma that is **neither dark nor bright, with neither dark nor bright result, that brings about the ending of karma?**

11.2 Therein, Puṇṇa, whatever volition there is
 to *abandon* the dark karma with dark result,
 to *abandon* the bright karma with bright result,
 to *abandon* both dark and bright result—

This, Puṇṇa, is called karma that is neither dark nor bright karma, with neither dark nor bright result, that brings about the ending of karma.⁶⁶

11.3 Puṇṇa, these are the 4 types of karma that I have declared, having realized them personally through direct knowledge.

Puṇṇa takes refuge

12 When this was said, the young Koliya, Puṇṇa, the cow-vow ascetic, said this to Blessed One:

“Excellent, bhante! Excellent! Bhante!

Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned,

or were to reveal what was hidden,

or were to show the way to one who was lost,

or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,

in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by the Blessed One.

I go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge, from this day forth, for life.”

Seniya joins the order and becomes an arhat

13 The naked ascetic, Seniya, the dog-vow ascetic, too, said this to Blessed One:

“Excellent, bhante! Excellent! Bhante!

Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned,

or were to reveal what was hidden,

or were to show the way to one who was lost,

or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,

in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by the Blessed One.

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

May I receive the going-forth before the Blessed One; may I receive the ordination.”

14 ⁶⁷“Seniya, anyone who was previously a follower of an outside teaching and wishes to go forth in this Dharma and Vinaya, and wishes for the ordination, has to go on a probation of four months.⁶⁸

At the end of the 4 months, the monks who are satisfied⁶⁹ would give him the going-forth [novice initiation] and ordain him into the state of a monk [higher ordination].

⁶⁶ Comy: This is the volition of the 4 supramundane paths culminating in arhathood (MA 3:105). The arhat’s actions are non-karmic, ie, they do not bring about new existence or produce results even in the present existence. See Intro (2.1) above.

⁶⁷ This section is *mutatis mutandis* as at **Kassapa Sīhanāda S** (D 8,24/1:176), **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.28.2-5.29), SD 9, **Acela Kassapa S** (S 12.17/2:18-22), SD 18.5, & **Sabhiya S** (Sn 3.6/p102).

⁶⁸ This rule and procedure are found at Mv 1.38 (V 1:69); see also D 1:176; M 1:494, 512; S 2:21; Sn p101 f.

However, I see a difference amongst individuals here.”⁷⁰

14.2 “If, bhante, those who were previously followers of an outside teaching and wish to go forth in this Dharma and Vinaya, and wish for the ordination, *have to go on a probation of 4 months. At the end of the 4 months, the monks who are satisfied would give them the going-forth and ordain them into the state of a monk. I will take that probation for 4 years!*

At the end of *the 4 years*, let the monks who are satisfied give me the going-forth and ordain me into the state of a monk.”⁷¹

15 THE FULL ARHATHOOD PERICOPE⁷²

Then the naked ascetic, Seṇiya, the dog-vow ascetic, received the going-forth and the ordination before Blessed One [from the Blessed One himself].

15.2 And, the venerable Seṇiya, dwelling alone, aloof, [392] diligent, exertive, and resolute, in no long time at all, right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge, attained and dwelled in the supreme goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

15.3 THE ARHAT’S REVIEW KNOWLEDGE

He directly knew:

“Birth is destroyed,

⁶⁹ “Satisfied,” *āraddha,citta*, ie satisfied that the probate has fulfilled all conditions as stipulated at Mahāvagga 1.38 = V 1:69 (VA 5:990; DA 2:363; MA 3:106; SA 2:37; SnA 2:436).

⁷⁰ *Api ca m’ettha puggala,vemattatā veditā ti. Saṅkhitta S 2* (S 48.13), SD 73.12 explains that “the difference in individuals” (*puggala,vemattatā*) is due to one’s level in cultivating the 5 spiritual faculties (*indriya*)—faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom—“Thus, monks, due to a difference in the faculties there is a difference in the fruits; due to a difference in the fruits, there is a difference among individuals” (S 48.13/5:200). In other words, the Buddha takes exception of him, as he does in these cases: the fire-worshipping matter hair ascetics (the 3 **Kassapa brothers**) (V 1:34 f; J 1:82, 4:180), **Acela Kassapa** (D 8,24/2:176 f); **Seniya**, the dog ascetic, **Kukkura,vatika S** (M 57,14-15/3:391), SD 23.11; and the wanderer **Sabhiya** (Sn 3.6/p102), who is ordained at once (SnA 2:436 citing Mv 1.38.11 @ V 1:71). On Subhadda, see **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.28.2/2:152) n, SD 9. See also Lily de Silva, *Pali Buddhist Review* 3,3 1978: 134-136.

The Buddha knows whether a non-Buddhist convert needs probation or not (DA 2:362; MA 3:106), and **Subhadda** does not, apparently because his 5 spiritual faculties are well developed. Comy says that after the Buddha has granted Subhadda permission to join the order, Ānanda takes him aside, pours water over his head, teaches him the “meditation with skin as fifth” (*taca,pañcaka kammaṭṭhāna*), then shaves off his hair and beard, clads him in the saffron robes, and then administers to him the three refuges. Then he leads him back to the Buddha who gives him a meditation subject. Subhadda immediately goes into solitary practice, walking in meditation and wins arhat-hood that same night, and comes down to sit beside the Buddha (DA 2:590). Subhadda’s ordination is said to be the Buddha’s last act before his parinirvana (KhA 89).

Comy notes that in the case of **Seniya** here, the Buddha thinks, on account of his keen desire, he does not merit probation. His “the going-forth” (*pabbajjā*) is mentioned here only figuratively (*vacana,sīlittatā,vasema*). The reality is that Seniya receives the going-forth before the probationary period, and then goes through the probation of four months before being entitled to have full ordination (*upasampadā*). Like Subhadda, he is not ordained by the Buddha himself by the “Come O monk!” (*ehi bhikkhu*) formula. He is received into the order by a monk instructed by the Buddha, and then brought before him. (MA 3:106). Apparently, Seniya has the 5 spiritual faculties. See foll n.

⁷¹ This response is also recorded of the foll people: Acela Kassapa (**Mahā Sīha,nāda S**, D 8,24/ 2:176 f); the wanderer Subhadda (**Mahā,parinibbāna S**, D 16,5.29/2:152 @ SD 9); the wanderer Vacchagotta (**Mahā Vaccha,gotta S**, M 73,16/1:494); and Māgandiya (**Māgandiya S**, M 75,27/1:512). However, Subhadda’s case is unique in that he wins arhat-hood on the same night. See prec n.

⁷² For details, see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,56.2+56.3), SD 7.14.

the holy life has been lived,
 done what is to be done,
 there is no more of this state of being.”⁷³
 And the venerable Seniya became one of the arhats.

— evaṃ —

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⁷³ On this para and the next (the attainment of arhathood), see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9.56.2/1:203) n, SD 7.14.