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## (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta

The Discourse to (the wanderer) Māgandiya | M 75

Theme: The disadvantages of sensual pleasures

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006, 2010

### 1 Māgandiya the wanderer

The name Māgandiya appears in Pali literature in these two discourses of the same name:

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|--|--------------------------------|--|
| (1) <b>(Aṭṭhaka Vagga) Māgandiya Sutta</b> | Sn 47/4.9/835-847 <sup>1</sup> | Purity comes from inner peace.               |
| (2) <b>(Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta</b>   | M 75/1:501-513                 | A bliss beyond worldly and divine pleasures. |

The Māgandiya of the first discourse, **the (Aṭṭhaka Vagga) Māgandiya Sutta** (Sn 4.9) of the Sutta Nipāta, it is said, at the bidding of his beautiful but proud daughter, Māgandiyā, offers her in marriage to the Buddha, but is turned down. Māgandiyā goes on to become the villainess of the Udena cycle of stories, **the Sāmāvatī Vatthu** (DhA 2.1).<sup>2</sup> The Majjhima Commentary to the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta (M 75) says that the wanderer (*paribbājaka*)<sup>3</sup> Māgandiya is the nephew of the Māgandiya of the Sutta Nipāta.

According to Sutta Nipāta Commentary, Magandiya (the nephew) is a brahmin (SnA 543), but in a version of this discourse found in the Divyāvadāna,<sup>4</sup> where he is called Mākandika, he is also a wanderer, a fact supported by ancient Sanskrit records.<sup>5</sup> We can, therefore, surmise that he is a brahmin wanderer.

### 2 Sutta summary and highlights

#### 2.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

##### 2.1.1 The Sutta name

**The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta** (M 75) has a Chinese Āgama parallel, which agrees on the title 鬚閑提 *xūxiántí* and the venue of the discourse, that is, Kuru country.<sup>6</sup> The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta records a rare occasion when the Buddha gives a lay person, in fact, a non-Buddhist wanderer, a teaching that culminates in nirvana [§25b]. **The Hālidakāni Sutta 1** (S 22.3) cites the “Māgandiya Pañha,” that is, the (Aṭṭhaka Vagga) Māgandiya Sutta in the Sutta Nipāta, which “suggests that even though this discourse already had been allocated to a specific group of discourses, its title had not yet become fixed as the Māgandiya Sutta.”<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> SD 84.1.

<sup>2</sup> Sn 4.9/835-84/163-166; DhA 2.1/1:199-202, 210-222; see also UA 383-387; cf Divy 36/446.1-464.30 (ed Vaidya) where she is called Anūpamā.

<sup>3</sup> On *paribbājaka*, see SD 38.6 (2.1.7).

<sup>4</sup> In E B Cowell (ed), *The Divyāvadāna, a Collection of Early Buddhist Legends*, Cambridge, 1886: 515,14, or P L Vaidya (ed), *Divyāvadāna*, Darbhanga, 1999: 446,3

<sup>5</sup> Cf Skt fragment counterpart to Sn 4.9 in Hoernle 1916: 714 f, where frag II r 5 has preserved: (M)ā[ga]ndi[ka] nāma parivrā ... , & frag III r 1 reads: Māgandikasya parivrājakasya.

<sup>6</sup> MĀ 153 @ T1.26.670a26-a28, which agrees with M 75 on the title, 鬚閑提 Xū Xián Tí and the teaching venue, Kuru country. For a summary of the beginning and concluding sections of MĀ 153, see THICH Minh Chau 1991: 61 f. See also Analayo 2006: 285 n94.

<sup>7</sup> S 22.3,6/3:12,20.

### **2.1.2 Māgandiya meets Bhāra,dvāja**

The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta opens with the Buddha having his day-rest in a forest grove outside Kammāsa,damma, in Kuru country [§1]. A Bhāra,dvāja brahmin has prepared a grass-spread as resting-place for the Buddha in his fire-house [§2-4]. The wanderer Māgandiya, on learning this, remarks that the Buddha is a “destroyer of growth [progress]” (*bhūnahū*), which Bhāra,dvāja objects to, and expresses his wish to convey this disagreement to the Buddha himself [§5].

### **2.1.3 The Buddha meets Bhāra,dvāja and Māgandiya**

That evening the Buddha retires to the fire-house, where Bhāra,dvāja meets him. The Buddha, knowing through his divine hearing what has happened earlier, asks Bhāra,dvāja about it, to his great surprise [§6]. They are interrupted by Māgandiya’s arrival [§7].

### **2.1.4 The Buddha instructs Māgandiya**

The Buddha tells Māgandiya that although the sense-faculties delight after their respective sense-objects, the Buddha has tamed them all and teaches sense-restraint. Is that why he calls him a *bhūnahū*? [§8]. Māgandiya remains silent. The Buddha then asks him what would he say to a person who has previously enjoyed sensual pleasures. On seeing the true nature of sensual pleasures one is able to be free of them, so that he is inwardly still—Māgandiya replies, “Nothing, master Gotama.” [§9]

### **2.1.5 Pleasures better than sensual pleasures**

The Buddha goes on to say that he has enjoyed every sensual pleasure as the Bodhisattva. Later, on seeing their true nature, he is able to be free of them, so that he is inwardly still. This is because he has attained divine bliss (through meditation) [§10]. Using a parable, the Buddha shows how he, like a Tāvātimsa devaputra who enjoys divine bliss would not be enticed by worldly pleasures [§11]. In fact, says the Buddha, he has himself attained a wholesome pleasure that surpasses even the divine [§12].<sup>8</sup>

### **2.1.6 The leper parables**

The Buddha then uses a series of parables to stress his teachings. A person who is free of the attachment to sensual pleasures is like a healed leper who in no way envies an ailing leper who finds some relief in scratching or burning his sores [§13]. Even so, the Buddha, like the healed leper, regards worldly pleasures as low, not envying those indulging in them; for, he has attained a wholesome pleasure that transcends even the divine [§14].

Then there is the case of a healed leper, who although free of his previous sufferings, is now forced by two strong men over a pit of blazing coal, so that he still suffers pain. The point is that sensual pleasures, although appearing to be pleasant, are really painful [§15], and that this is always the case [§16].

Like a leper whose sores only worsen with scratching, even so sensual pleasures bring on more pain the more we are attached to them [§17]. Even where worldly pleasures seem to serve us, as in the case of a rajah, he is unable to feel inner bliss by it [§18].

### **2.1.7 True health**

The Buddha then exults that “health [being without disease] is the highest gain, nirvana the highest bliss” [2.2]. At once Māgandiya agrees with him, misconstruing it as referring to “nirvana here and now,” that is, bodily happiness [§19], quoting other wanderers. Using the parable of the blind man who is cheated by a dishonest trader, the Buddha charges that they are spiritually blind to think so; for, the body is suffering itself. [§§20-21]

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<sup>8</sup> On the Buddha’s enjoying divine bliss, see eg **Venāga,pura S** (A 3.63/1:180-185), SD 21.2.

### 2.1.8 Teaching to Māgandiya

Māgandiya is finally convinced but the Buddha insists that a blind person still needs to recover his sight in order to really see, meaning that the spiritual life needs to be lived under the Buddha to understand his teaching. Māgandiya confesses that he has long been fooled by the wrong teachings [§§22-23]. The Buddha teaches him on the 5 aggregates, and relates them to their interdependent arising and passing away [§§24-25]

### 2.1.9 Māgandiya joins the order

Māgandiya rejoices in the Buddha's teaching and requests to join the order [§26]. Despite being a wanderer, and due to his spiritual maturity, the Buddha allows him to be admitted right away [§27]. Then not long after going into solitary retreat, he attains arhathood [§28].

## 2.2 THE BUDDHA'S STANZA

### 2.2.1 Source of the stanza

In both the Pali and the Chinese versions of the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta, the Buddha concludes his teaching with a stanza in praise of health as the highest gain and nirvana as the highest bliss, *ārogyā paramā lābhā, nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ* (Dh 204ad), the Chinese version of which is 無病第一利, 涅槃第一樂 *wúbìng dìyī lì, nièpán dìyī lè*.<sup>9</sup> The Pali Dh 204ad parallels are in the following texts:

- (1) Dh:G 162ad of the Gāndhārā Dharmapada (Brough 2001:145);
- (2) Dh:P 76ad of the Patna Dharmapada (Cone 1989:123; or Roth 1980:104);
- (3) Uv 26.6ad in the Sanskrit and Tibetan Udāna, varga (Bernhard 1965:319; or verse 355, Nakatani 1987:73 has only preserved the second section; Beckh 1911:86); and
- (4) Chinese as the first and last line in the corresponding Chinese verses in T210 @ T4.573a27; T212 @ T4.732a13-a14 & T213 @ T4.790b26.

The Majjhima Commentary says that the full stanza was uttered by previous Buddhas seated in the midst of the fourfold assembly, which learned it as “**the salutary stanza**” (*attha, nissita gāthā*, literally, “the stanza on depending on what is good”). After the last Buddha, Kassapa, passed away, it spread amongst the wanderers, who were able to remember only the first two lines in their texts. (MA 3:219)

### 2.2.2 Two lines or four?

Māgandiya enthusiastically approves of the Buddha's stanza, the Buddha, claiming that it is also known in his tradition. This leads the Buddha to ask what Māgandiya takes to be nirvana. In both the versions, Māgandiya touches his body, proclaiming it to be health and nirvana.<sup>10</sup> According to the Pali version, he also explains his proposition by indicating that he is healthy and happy. [4.2]

Māgandiya's approval of the Buddha's stanza evidently shows that it is an ancient or popular one, that is, not an original saying of the Buddha himself. The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta records the Buddha as uttering the full quatrain the first time [§19a]. **Analayo**, in his comparative study of the Majjhima suttas, observes that in the Madhyama Āgama version, the Buddha utters only the first two half-lines (that is, Dh 204ad).

<sup>9</sup> MĀ 153 @ T1.26.672a28-a29.

<sup>10</sup> Also at MĀ 153 @ T1.672b7. This view is the first of a set of 5 on “nirvana here and now” in the 62 bases for wrong views, listed in **Brahmajāla S** (D 1) and its parallels: cf D 1/1:36,23; DĀ 21 @ T1.93b17 & Tib version in Friedrich Weller, Leipzig, 1934: 58,1, tr in Weller “Das tibetische Brahmjalsūtra,” in *Zeitschrift für Indologie und Iranistik*, Leipzig, vol 10, 1935: 33.

This MĀ statement is in fact confirmed by the Majjhima Commentary which says that the full stanza was uttered by previous Buddhas seated in the midst of the fourfold assembly, which learned it as “**the salutary stanza**” [2.2.1]. After the last Buddha, Kassapa, passed away, it spread amongst the wanderers, who remembered only the two lines as recorded in their texts. (MA 3:219)

According to the Chinese MĀ version, the Buddha utters the full quatrain only after confirming that Māgandiya has misconstrued the stanza. **Analayo** explains:

When evaluating this difference, the reference to the eightfold path would not seem to be required for the first utterance of the verse on Nibbāna as the highest happiness, which led to the discussion with Māgandiya on the nature of Nibbāna. If the Buddha had at this point already highlighted the need of the eightfold noble path in order to reach Nibbāna, one would not expect Māgandiya to self-confidently assert a type of Nibbāna that obviously does not require any such path.

At the present junction of events, however, when the Buddha’s intention is to clarify that Māgandiya’s notion of Nibbāna is mistaken, a reference to the noble eightfold path fits well, thereby indicating that a path of practice is required to attain the true Nibbāna. This hint seems to have had its effect, since in both versions Māgandiya requested the Buddha to teach him how he might get a vision of Nibbāna. This request seems to be stimulated by the fact that the Buddha had just highlighted the need of a path to Nibbāna. In view of this, the Madhyama-āgama presentation suits the progression of ideas well, in the sense that at first the Buddha only spoke a verse on Nibbāna.

When Māgandiya had given vent to his misunderstanding of the nature of Nibbāna, however, the Buddha also brought up the noble eightfold path. If this should be the more original version, then the present condition of the Pali version could easily be the result of a transmission error, as during the course of oral tradition a reciter might accidentally employ the full version of the verse at the earlier point, where originally only the lines on Nibbāna and health were required. (Analayo, 2006:288)

### 3 (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta teachings

#### 3.1 MĀGANDIYA’S LESSON

When Māgandiya has cleared his mind of wrong views, the Buddha begins a special teaching for him with these words:

“... Māgandiya, if I were to teach you the Dharma thus:

‘This is that health; this is that nirvana,’ you might know health, you might see nirvana.

Along with the arising of your vision, your desire and lust for the 5 aggregates of clinging might be abandoned. Then, this might occur to you:

‘Indeed, I have long been tricked, cheated, and fooled by this mind. For,  
when clinging, I have been clinging merely<sup>11</sup> to form,  
when clinging, I have been clinging merely to feeling,

<sup>11</sup> “Merely,” *yeva*. Comy: This emphasis implies that he is *merely* clinging to form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, wrongly viewed as “I,” “mine,” and “my self.” The earlier phrase, “with the arising of vision” (*cakkh’uppādā*) is a metaphor for streamwinning, by which the self-identity view is destroyed, and he understands the aggregates to be merely empty phenomena without any selfhood that he had erstwhile attributed to them. (MA 2:219 f)

when clinging, I have been clinging merely to perception,  
 when clinging, I have been clinging merely to formations,  
 when clinging, I have been clinging merely to consciousness.  
 With that clinging of mine as condition, there would be *existence*.

Conditioned by existence, there would be *birth*.

Conditioned by birth, there would be *decay and death*:

sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain [displeasure] and despair would come to be.

Such would be the arising of this whole mass of suffering.” [§24]

We are nothing but the 5 aggregates; we experience nothing but the 5 aggregates. Yet all these aggregates—form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness—are impermanent, suffering, and without any abiding essence. Through ignorance and craving, we cling to these aggregates as if they are objects we can hold on to, or serve as safe supports of our lives. But this is not so; and so we are only cheating ourselves as a result, and suffering follows on.

A similar teaching is given in **the Piṇḍolya Sutta** (S 22.80), thus:

**22** “There are, bhikshus, these 2 views: the view of existence and the view of extinction.<sup>12</sup>  
 Therein, bhikshus, the instructed noble disciple reflects thus:

‘Is there anything in the world that I could cling to without being blamed for it?’

**23** He understands thus:

‘There is nothing in the world that I could cling to without being blamed for it.

For, if I were to cling, it is only form that I would be clinging to, only feeling, only perception, only formations, only consciousness that I would be clinging to.

With that clinging of mine as condition, there would be *existence*.

Conditioned by existence, there would be *birth*.

Conditioned by birth, there would be *decay and death*:

sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain [displeasure] and despair would come to be.

Such would be the arising of this whole mass of suffering.”

(S 22.80/3:93 f), SD 28.9; cf M 75,24/1:511 f (SD 31.5)

Here we see the Buddha connecting clinging, which arises on the basis of the mere 5 aggregates mistakenly held to as a self. Then, with clinging as the point of departure, continues with the last portion of the dependent arising formula. In this way, present clinging is shown to be the supporting cause for the continuation of cyclic life.

In **the (Khandha) Samādhi Sutta** (S 22.5), for example, the arising of the 5 aggregates is explained as follows:

**5** Here, bhikshus, he seeks pleasure in, approves of, goes on grasping. And what is it that he seeks pleasure in, approves of, goes on grasping?

**6** He seeks pleasure in **form**, ... in **feeling**, ... in **perception**, ... in **formations**, ... in **consciousness**, approves of it, goes on grasping it. From his finding pleasure in form, ... in feeling, ... in perception, ... in formations, ... in consciousness, approving of it, going on grasping it, delight arises.

Delight in form is clinging.

Conditioned by clinging, there is existence.

Conditioned by existence, there is birth.

<sup>12</sup> See **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (S 12.15/2:16 f), SD 6.13.

Conditioned by birth, there is decay and death: sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain [displeasure] and despair comes to be.

Such is the arising of this whole mass of suffering. (S 22.5/3:14 @ SD 7.16)<sup>13</sup>

### 3.2 MODERN BUDDHISMS

**Buddhahosa**, in his commentary on the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta says that Māgandiya holds that “development and growth” should be accomplished in all the six sense-spheres by experiencing whatever we have never experienced before without clinging to those that we are familiar with. The Buddha, however, holds that there should be restraint of them.

Māgandiya’s view, as such, says **Bodhi**, “seems close to the contemporary attitude that intensity and variety of experience is the ultimate good and should be pursued without inhibitions or restrictions” (M:Ñ 1281 n740). The reason for Māgandiya’s disapproval of the Buddha is evident in §8, which is the start of the Buddha’s rebuttal of Māgandiya’s wrong view and instruction to him.

As Buddhism grows and develops in the West and becomes westernized, it faces powerful new challenges, like it has done in the countries outside India, and now it is returning to India, and at the same time becoming globalized. In such a new modern environment, dominated by science and the internet, the new Buddhists tend to see Buddhism in a “here and now” way, as the unconverted Māgandiya has done.

Many modern Buddhists, some even claiming to be full-time Buddhist workers and teachers, reject the teachings of karma and rebirth, or bowdlerize them to fit their intellectual bent. The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta is a sort of permanent reminder that there is a way out of such revisionism. It begins with understanding the nature of our physical senses and the mind.

### 3.3 THE NATURE OF PLEASURE

Although the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta centres around the nature of pleasure, that there is a pleasure greater than any human or divine pleasure, it is also telling us that what we immediately experience with our six senses are not all that there is to life. In fact, to let our senses be the measure of true reality is to obscure it and to limit ourselves to a very private and limited reality.

As we begin to understand our senses and our minds better, we see the possibility of freeing ourselves from their power. It is like looking through our spiritual microscopes and telescopes, and making sense of what we see of our inner space and outer space. And with our *psychoscope*, our mind as the tool of meditation, we will be able to experience these spaces that fill our lives.

Even a cursory look, if we do not choose to forget it, shows us an unequivocal pattern of the rising and falling away of mental events, so that nothing is really meaningful—not the past nor the future—but the present moment, where true reality lies. Yet even the present moment passes swiftly by, changing and shaping our lives.

If we watch all such passing moments, not reading into them anything more than what they really are, we will realize that we at least momentarily stand aside from it all, and stand, as it were, in the total stillness in the eye of the passing storm. In that stillness, our minds become so clear that we can understand that our every conscious action—of the body, of speech, and of mind—matter, as they mould us and affect others. And that this life is not the end of everything, and that many more lives await us, propelled by the momentum of our karma.

If our body is the vehicle to awakening, then our physical senses are the dials that give us our bearings and status, and our mind is the captain who fearlessly sails us through the floods of craving, views, existence and ignorance, until we safely reach the dry land of nirvana. Although we rely on the dials to plot our way, we cannot always rely only on them, but on our determination to keep going in the right

<sup>13</sup> See further SD 17.1a (2.3).



direction and the right speed, steering away from danger, as we single-mindedly head for our destination.

## 4 Key words

### 4.1 BHŪNAHU.

#### 4.1.1 Etymology of *bhūnahu*

The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta contains a rare, archaic<sup>14</sup> and obscure<sup>15</sup> canonical Pali term, *bhūnahu* (“a destroyer of beings; a destroyer of growth”),<sup>16</sup> found only here [§5a], in the **Kokāliya Sutta** (Sn 664, vocative)<sup>17</sup> and the **Saṅkicca Jātaka** verse (J 530, plural);<sup>18</sup> and in the form *bhūnahacca* in the **Kodhana Sutta** (A 7.60)<sup>19</sup> and the **Vessantara Jātaka** verse (J 547).<sup>20</sup> This is clearly a pejorative term, but it does not originate with Māgandiya; for, he claims that “it is handed down so in our texts” (*evaṃ hi no sutte ocarati*). [§5a]

Buddhaghosa, in his commentary on the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta explains *bhūnahu* as “a destroyer of increase, the maker of limits” (*hata,vaḍḍhino mariyāda,kāraḥassa...vaḍḍhi,hato mariyāda,-kāraḥko*). He adds that Māgandiya holds that “development and growth” should be accomplished in all the six sense-spheres by experiencing whatever we have never experienced before without clinging to those that we are familiar with. The Buddha, however, holds that there should be restraint of them. Buddhaghosa then cites the term *bhūta,hacca* (“existence-destroying”) from Miln 314 (MA 3:211). [3.2]

In brahminical literature, especially the Mahābhārata, the term *bhrūṇaha* means “embryo-killer; abortionist; causing abortion.”<sup>21</sup> Although the canonical Pali term is linked with this brahminical word, the context is different. As already noted, SED applies it to a brahmin. As such, the Pali term probably also alludes to the Buddha’s denunciation of the priestly institution of his time that glorified the brahmin.<sup>22</sup>

**Robert C Chalmers** (1926), in his translation of the Majjhima, renders it as “rigid repressionist” (M:C 1:354). As does **BC Law**, who comments that “Māgandiya...described the Buddha...as a repressionist (*bhūnahu*)” (1933: 141); **B Saksena** notes that “*būnaha* most certainly corresponds to Skt *bhrūṇahan-*, *bhrūṇaghna-* ‘the killer of an embryo, one who produces abortion’” (1936: 713). **T Vetter** explains *bhūnahuno* as meaning that “the Buddha is...a person who prevents children from being conceived” (2000: 132). All this reflects the pre-Buddhist brahminical term; however, we have at least one occasion where the Buddha uses it in a different sense.

<sup>14</sup> PED, sv *bhūnaha* refers to “the difficulty of the archaic word,” with its numerous variant readings.

<sup>15</sup> See M:ÑB 1281 n740.

<sup>16</sup> The Chinese version has: “destroyer and defeater of the stages [of progress?]” 壞敗地 *huài bài dì* (MĀ 153 @ T1.670b17).

<sup>17</sup> Sn 3.10/664: “destroyer of beings, bad, doer of bad, lowest of men, ... a hell-being” *anariya bhūnahu pāpaka dukkata,kāri | purisanta ... nerayika*. This is spoken alluding to Kokāliya, Devadatta’s accomplice, who has just died and is reborn in hell.

<sup>18</sup> J 530/5:266\*.

<sup>19</sup> Used in a negative sense for those “who do not understand, acting in anger, destroying embryos” (*bhūnahac-cāni... | karontā nāvabujjhanti | kodha,jāto*) (A 7.60,1/4:98\*). This is Be, whereas Ce Se read as *bhūtahaccāni* (“destroying beings”). *Bhūnahacca* = Skt *bhrūṇahatyā* (which SED defines as “the killing of a learned brahman,” but also defines *bhrūṇa* as “an embryo” (SED 771).

<sup>20</sup> J 547/6:579\*.

<sup>21</sup> *Mahābhārata*, ed Vishnu S Sukthankar et al, Poona, 1954: 32, 33, 78. See also Karunadasa 1971.

<sup>22</sup> See eg the discourses of the Brāhmaṇa Vagga, Majjhima Nikāya (M 91-97).

**The Kokāliya Sutta** relates the sad end of Kokāliya, Devadatta's accomplice, who has just died and is reborn in hell. One of the verses allude to him as "a non-arya [ignoble], a destroyer of beings, evil, doer of evils, lowest of men, ... a hell-being," *anariya | bhūnahu pāpaka dukkata, kāri | purisanta...nerayika* (Sn 3.10/664). The Kokāliya Sutta commentary explains *bhūnahu* as "a killer of growth, destroyer of prosperity" (*bhūti, hanaka vuddhi, nāsaka*, SnA 479). **NA Jayawickrama**, in his Sutta, nipāta translation (ad Sn 664), thinks that here *-nahu* comes from *-ghna* (the root  $\sqrt{\text{HAN}}$ ) with metathesis (Sn:J 266). The Jātaka commentary explains *bhūnahu* as "the killing of one's growth [development]" (*attano vuddhiyā hatattā bhūnahano*, J 5:266).

The rare term *bhūnahu* was first noted in modern times by **V Fausbøll** in his Pāli edition of the Jātaka (1891).<sup>23</sup> It is a dialectic form in Pāli,<sup>24</sup> where the change from retroflex – *ṇ* – > dental – *n* – is an Eastern feature in the Asokan inscriptions,<sup>25</sup> and is derived, as we have noted, from the Sanskrit *bhrūṇahan*, both translatable as "abortionist."<sup>26</sup>

Although *brūnahu*, in the Pāli texts, has a few different shades of meaning (depending on the context), it is clear from the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta that, as used pejoratively by Māgandiya, it refers to "one who has ceased to have development and growth in all the six sense-spheres" (Karunadasa 1971: 84).

As already noted, Buddhaghosa, in his commentary on the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta explains *bhū, nahu* as "a killer of growths, the maker of stringent restrictions" (MA 3:211). He adds that while Māgandiya holds that there should be development in all the sense-spheres, the Buddha holds that there should be restraint towards them. As such, **Karunadasa** notes that

It is clear, therefore, that in this particular context *bhūnahu* does not refer to the one "who has destroyed what is prosperous and glorious"<sup>27</sup> but to one whose sense-organs and mind do not hanker after their corresponding sense-data and mental states.<sup>28</sup> (1971: 84)

Curiously, adds Karunadasa, Magandiya admits that this is the meaning he himself had in his mind and maintains that it occurs in this sense in the texts of the wanderers as well (*evam hi no sutte ocarati*) [§5b]. However, for the rest of the Sutta, we see the Buddha speaking against sense-pleasures, including sexuality [§§11, 12]. In other words, the Buddha's usage of the term is closer to the brahminical sense, in that he teaches sense-restraint. Such a practice (as found amongst the monastics) discourages having children and families.

#### 4.1.2 Venayika

Like *bhūnahu*, another pejorative used by distractors to misrepresent the Buddha is the term, **vena-yika**, "one who leads astray," or "one who leads away," as used by the brahmin of Verañja (under Māra's power) against the Buddha, as recorded in the Vinaya (Pār 1.1.3). Here the term seems to have an annihilationist (*uccheda, vāda*) sense (as used by the brahmin of Verañja), who accuses the Buddha of being an ascetic (*tāpassi*) who professes non-action (*akiriya, vāda*).

<sup>23</sup> J 5:153 n3 as 153,2\*.

<sup>24</sup> Saksena, 1936; Alsdorf, *Les Études Jaina*, Paris, 1965: 46 f; cf Norman 1992: 270 (ad Sn 664).

<sup>25</sup> K R Norman, in (ed) C Caillat, *Dialectes dans les littératures indo-aryennes*, Paris, 1989: 371 (Repr in *Collected Papers* vol IV, Oxford: PTS, 1993: 49); also *A Philological Approach to Buddhism*, London: SOAS, 1997: 73.

<sup>26</sup> K R Norman, "Pāli lexicographical studies III," *Journal of the PTS* 11, 1987: 38 (Repr *Collected Papers* vol IV 1993: 163). Oberlies & Pischel, *Pāli: a grammar of the language of the Theravāda Tipiṭaka*, 83 (§14.7)

<sup>27</sup> SnA 479: *bhūti, hanaka vuddhi, nāsako*.

<sup>28</sup> *Cakkhuṃ kho māgandiya rūpa, rāmaṃ rūpa, rataṃ rūpa, sammuditaṃ, taṃ tathāgatassa dantaṃ guttaṃ rak-khitaṃ saṃvutaṃ...* mutatis mutandis with *sota* (ear), *ghāna* (nose), *jivhā* (tongue), *kāyo* (body), and *mano* (mind) with regard to their respective objects.



The Buddha replies amicably by saying that it is true that he is ascetically restrained and teaches non-action, but *the restraint* is that against greed, hate and delusion, and the *annihilation*, too, is that of these unwholesome roots.<sup>29</sup>

The pejorative term, *venayika*, is also found in **the Alagaddûpama Sutta** (M 22).<sup>30</sup> Its Commentary glosses it as *satta,vināsaka*, “a destroyer of (the individuality or essence of, *sato sattassa*) a being” (MA 2:118). In such instances, the Buddha explains how his teaching differs from those of the wanderers (*paribbājaka*) in terms of sense-pleasures.

In both these cases, *venayika* is used derogatorily by outsiders against the Buddha; but in **the Upāli Sutta** (M 56), it is used by Upāli in a complimentary sense,<sup>31</sup> meaning “one who leads away (from bad),” that is, who disciplines another (*sattānaṃ vinayaka*, MA 3:97).

#### 4.2 ĀROGYA (HEALTH)

The (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta opens with Māgandiya accusing the Buddha of being a *bhūṇahu* as he thinks that the Buddha teaches suppression of sense-pleasures. As he learns that the Buddha actually teaches sense-restraint, the removal of the “thirst” (neurotic need) for and “fever” (suffering) of sense-desires [§9], and that there are pleasures more sublime than sensual pleasures [§10], he understands that there is no longer any reason to envy those enjoying such “low” (*hīna*) pleasures, illustrated by the parables of the lepers [§§13, 15, 17].

The climax of the (Paribbājaka) Māgandiya Sutta and Māgandiya’s spiritual turning-point occur when the Buddha utters the lines, “Health is the highest gain, | nirvana the highest bliss” (*ārogya, paramā lābha | nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ*) [2.2; §19]. But Māgandiya only reflects the wrong view of the wanderers in believing that “This is that health, master Gotama; this is that nirvana—for, I, master Gotama, am now healthy and happy, nothing afflicts me” [§19e], that is, he thinks of health only in the bodily sense.

Māgandiya apparently understands the stanza in terms of the 58<sup>th</sup> basis for wrong view listed in **the Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1): “Good sir, when this self, endowed and replete with the 5 cords of sense-pleasures, revels in them, to that extent, good sir, the self has attained to the supreme nirvana here and now.” (D 1,94/1:36), SD 25.2

The Buddha compares the wanderers’ wrong view regarding “health” (*ārogya*) to the state of being born blind, so that such handicapped people are deluded and easily fall, through blind faith, for the wrong teachings of false teachers who have not experienced true health, that is, the true bliss of spiritual awakening [§20]. The person who has experienced a higher bliss, an extrasensory pleasure, will realize that bodily pleasure, by comparison, is certainly low or inferior (*hīna*). Indeed, such a person would understand why the body is “an illness, a tumour, a dart, a calamity, a disease” [§21b].

True health, in other words, is where, enjoying a bliss greater than physical pleasure, we are no more dependent on bodily pleasure. We experience such bliss inwardly, and are as such no more emotionally dependent on external stimuli, that is, things and people for our happiness. With such spiritual strength, we are in a better position to help others, as we have discovered spiritual health.

— — —

<sup>29</sup> Pār 1.1.3 = V 3:2-4. See **Arahatta S** (S 38.2) where this defines arhathood (S 38.2/4:252); also see SD 10.16 (14) on the arhat. On the 3 unwholesome roots, see **(Akusala, mūla) Añña, titthiyā S** (A 3.68/1:199-201, SD 16.4) & **Mūla S** (A 3.69/1:201-205), SD 18.2.

<sup>30</sup> M 22,37/1:140 (SD 3.13).

<sup>31</sup> M 56,29/1:385\* (v 3), SD 27.1.

## Māgandiya Sutta

### The Discourse to Māgandiya

M 75

1 Thus have I heard.

#### The wanderer Māgandiya meets Bhāra,dvāja

At one time, the Blessed One was staying among the Kurus,<sup>32</sup> on spread of grass in the fire-room<sup>33</sup> of a brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan. There was a market-town<sup>34</sup> of the Kurus called Kammāsa,damma.<sup>35</sup>

2 Then, early in the morning, the Blessed One, having dressed himself, and taking robe and bowl, entered Kammāsa,damma for alms. Then the Blessed One, having gone into Kammāsa,damma for alms, having returned from the alms-round and finished his meal, entered a certain forest grove and sat down for the midday-rest. [502]

3 Then, the wanderer Māgandiya, while walking about on a stroll,<sup>36</sup> went up to the fire-house of the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan. He saw a spread of grass prepared in the fire-house of the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan.

Seeing the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan, he said this:

“Now, for whom has this spread of grass been prepared in the master Bhāra,dvāja’s fire-house? It seems to me like a recluse’s bed.”

4 “Master Māgandiya, there is the recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyas who went forth from a Sakya clan. Concerning this Blessed One, this fair report has been spread about.<sup>37</sup>

‘So, too, is he the Blessed One:<sup>38</sup> for, he is<sup>39</sup>

<sup>32</sup> On *Kuru*, see **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1 (1.2).

<sup>33</sup> Comy says that this is the *agni,hotra*-hall (MA 3:209). An *agni,hotra* (P *aggi,hutta*) is the Vedic fire sacrifice: see **Why the Buddha hesitated**, SD 12.2 (6.2) under *uposatha*.

<sup>34</sup> “Market-town,” *nigama*, here generally refers to a trading village or town, whose main activity was the bartering or sales of commodities. A “village” (*gāma*), however, ranged from a single household of an extended family to several hundred households of many families, whose main occupation were agriculture, arts and crafts for manufacturing tools. (Gokhale 1994:51 f; Chakravarti 1987:19, 22 f)

<sup>35</sup> Comy to **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15) says: “It is said that the Blessed One was unable to find any dwelling-place at (ie near) the market-town. So leaving the market-town, the Blessed One went into the great forest, where he found a certain suitable and pleasant spot with water, and there he dwelt, making the market-town his alms-resort” (*Bhagavato kira tasmim̐ nigame vasan’okāso koci vihāro nāma nāhosi. Nigamato pana apakkamma aññatarasmim̐ udaka,sampanne ramanīye bhūmi,bhāge mahā,vana,soṇḍo ahosi tattha bhagavā vihāsi, taṃ nigamaṃ gocara,gāmaṃ katvā*) (DA 2:483). See **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss**, SD 13.1 (1.3) & (12).

<sup>36</sup> “Walking about on a stroll,” *jaṅghā,viḥāraṃ anucaṇkamāno anuvicaramāno*, lit “wandering to and fro on foot and walking up and down” (K R Norman, *Group of Discourses II*, 1992: 63). See D 1:235; M 1:108, 227, 2:118, 3:128; A 1:138, 3:76; Sn p105, p115.

<sup>37</sup> For details on this **Buddhānussati**, see SD 15.7b.

<sup>38</sup> Alt tr: “For the following reasons, too, he is the Blessed One [the Lord] ...” On the meaning of *iti pi so*, see CPD: <sup>1</sup>*iti*: ... *kitti-saddo abbhuggato*: “~ *pi so bhagavā*: *arahaṃ sammā-sambuddho* ....” (“for the following reasons, too, he is a *bhagavā*: because he is *arahaṃ*...”), V 3:1,13 = D 1:49,27 = M 2:133,22 = S 1:219,31 = A 3:312,8, qu Vism 198,4 and MahvṬ 26,11 (VA 112,4 = DA 146,5 ≠ Vism 198,8: *so bhagavā ~ pi arahaṃ ~ pi sammā,sambuddho,...iminā ca iminā ca kāraṇenā ti vuttaṃ hoti*). Translating *iti pi so* this way explains the double occurrence of

arhat,  
 fully self-awakened one,  
 accomplished in wisdom and conduct,  
 well-farer,  
 knower of worlds,  
 peerless guide of persons to be tamed,<sup>40</sup>  
 teacher of gods and humans,  
 awakened,  
 blessed.'

It is for him, master Māgandiya, that this bed has been prepared."

5 "What an unsightly sight we saw, master Bhāra,dvāja! What an unsightly sight we saw, master Bhāra,dvāja, when we see the bed of that *destroyer of growth* [*progress*],<sup>41</sup> that master Gotama!"<sup>42</sup>

5.2 "Mind your words, Māgandiya! Mind your words, Māgandiya!<sup>43</sup> For, many are the learned kshatriyas, the learned brahmins, the learned householders, and the learned recluses who have deep faith in master Gotama, who have been disciplined by him in the arya's [noble one's] right way of the wholesome truth."<sup>44</sup>

"Master Bhāra,dvāja, even if we were to see that master Gotama himself, we would say to his face that the recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth!"<sup>45</sup>

Bhagavā. See L S Cousins, "Review of *Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*," in *Journal of Buddhist Ethics* 4, 1997: 165.

<sup>39</sup> The Skt parallel to this opening reads: *Iti hi sa bhagavāṃ tathāgato*, but *tathāgato* here is missing from the Pali version. See **Dhajagga S** (S 11.3), SD 15.5 (2) & n. On this tr, see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7 (2.2) & n.

<sup>40</sup> **Purisa,damma sārathī**. Here *–damma* (adj) is grd, meaning "to be tamed or restrained," often spoken of a young bullock (M 1:225, *bala,gāvā damma,gāvā*, "the strong cattle and cattle to be tamed," ie, bulls and young steers); also of other animals: *assa,damma,sārathī*, a horse trainer (A 2:112); It 80. In *purisa,damma sārathī*, fig ("the trainer of the human steer") of unconverted persons, likened to a refractory bullocks; D 1:62 (wr *–dhamma*) = 2:93 = 3:5; M 2:38; A 2:112; Vv 17.13; cf VvA 86.

<sup>41</sup> "Destroyer of growth," **bhūnahuno**, which Comy explains as "a killer of growths," (*hata,vadḍhino*, MA 3:211). See Intro (4.1).

<sup>42</sup> *Duddiṭṭhaṃ vata, bho bhāra,dvāja, addasāma, duddiṭṭhaṃ vata, bho bhāra,dvāja, addasāma, ye mayaṃ tassa bho gotamassa bhūnahuno seyyaṃ addasāma ti*. The tense here is past (*addasāma*, aor 1 pl of *dassati*). For a positive version of this, see Sn 178

<sup>43</sup> *Rakkhass'etaṃ, māgaṇḍiya, vācaṃ; rakkhass'etaṃ, māgaṇḍiya, vācaṃ*, lit, "Take care of this speech of yours!" as at V 2:186.

<sup>44</sup> "The arya's [noble one's] right way of the wholesome Dharma," *ariye ñāye dhamme kusale*, ie, "blameless states that are the means for total purity" (*parisuddhi kārtāṇe dhamme anavajje*, MA 3: 211). Elsewhere, this phrase appears as simply *ñāya kusala dhamma*, "the right way of the wholesome Dharma" or "the right that is the wholesome truth." The term is found throughout the Nikāyas, esp **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.5.27/2:151\*), SD 9; **Sandaka S** (M 76/1:513-524 passim), SD 35.7, **Esukāri S** (M 96/2:177-184), SD 37.9, **Paṭipadā S 2** (S 45.24/5:18), SD 78.3; **Dvi Patipatti S** (A 2.1.4.9/1:69), SD 78.4; **Miln** 243. In many of these refs, the Buddha declares that right practice applies, whether we are a renunciant or a lay-person. In (**Brahma,vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99), Subha, clearly refers to the brahminical notion of *dharma*, as truth and duties as prescribed by the brahmins (M 99.4/2:197), SD 38.6. However, the orig phrase would probably be simply *ñāya,dhamma*, because *kusala* in the sense of "wholesome" is specifically Buddhist. By itself, *ñāya*, right way," refers to the noble eightfold path. For a full listing, search CSCD using a wildcard: "*ñāy\* dhamm\* kusal\**".

<sup>45</sup> The MĀ (Chin parallel) discourse gives the opposite sequence, where the brahmin first asks Māgandiya if his abusive expression may be reported to the Buddha, in reply to which Māgandiya says that he would have no qualms to repeat it himself before the Buddha (MĀ 153 @ T1.670b21).

What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts.”<sup>46</sup>

“If master Māgandiya does not mind, I will tell this to recluse Gotama.”

“Be unconcerned,<sup>47</sup> master Bhāra,dvāja. You may tell him just what have been said.”

### The Buddha meets Bhāra,dvāja and Māgandiya

6 Now, the Blessed One, with the divine ear that is purified and surpasses that of the human, heard this conversation between the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan and the wanderer Māgandiya.

Then in the evening, when the Blessed One had emerged from his solitary retreat, he went into the fire-house of the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan, and sat down on the grass-spread.

Then the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, the brahmin sat down at one side.

6.2 Sitting thus as one side, the Blessed One said this to the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan:

“Bhāra,dvāja, did you have a conversation with the wanderer Māgandiya [503] regarding this very grass-spread?”

When this was said, the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan, feeling samvega [a sense of religious urgency],<sup>48</sup> with his hair standing on ends, said this:

“That is exactly what I want to tell you! But the master Gotama has pointed out what has not been pointed out!”<sup>49</sup>

7 But this conversation between the Blessed One and the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan was interrupted halfway.

For, then, the wanderer Māgandiya, walking about on a stroll, went up to the fire-house of the brahmin of the Bhāra,dvāja clan and approached the Blessed One. Then he exchanged greetings with the Blessed One. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side.

### The Buddha instructs the wanderer Māgandiya

7.2 Seated thus at one side, the Blessed One said this to the wanderer Māgandiya:<sup>50</sup>

8 (1) “Māgandiya, the eye enjoys **a form**, delights after a form, rejoices in a form. But that has been tamed, watched, guarded, restrained by the Tathagata [thus come]; and he teaches the Dharma for its restraint.”<sup>51</sup>

Was it in connection with this, Māgandiya, that you said,

‘The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth [progress]!’<sup>52</sup> What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts’?

<sup>46</sup> *Evañ hi no sutte ocaratī.*

<sup>47</sup> *Appossuko.*

<sup>48</sup> *Saṁvega*: see **Ariya,pariyesana S** (M 26), SD 1.11 (3).

<sup>49</sup> *Anakkhātaraṃ yeva akkhāsī*, ie “You have anticipated me!”.

<sup>50</sup> Comy says that when the wanderer goes before the Buddha, his tongue is “destroyed” (*pabhinna,mukha*) as his knowledge becomes like a well ripened seed, so that he could only sit down, unable to do anything else in the Buddha’s presence. It is said that the Buddha, instead of asking the wanderer to speak, begins teaching him the Dharma at once. (MA 3:213)

<sup>51</sup> *Taraṃ tathāgatassa dantaṃ guttaṃ rakkhitaṃ saṁvutaraṃ, tassa ca saṁvarāya dhammaṃ deseti. (Saṁyojana) Koṭṭhita S* (S 35.232) says that the Buddha has all the 6 sense-organs (like us) and experiences all the 6 sense-objects (like us), but “There are no desire and lust in the Blessed One. The Blessed One is well liberated in mind” (S 35.232,8/4:164 f) + SD 28.4 (3) Does the Buddha have feelings?

(2) Māgandiya, the ear enjoys **a sound**, delights after a sound, rejoices in a sound.

But that has been tamed, watched, guarded, restrained by the Tathagata;  
and he teaches the Dharma for its restraint.

Was it in connection with this, Māgandiya, that you said,

‘The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth! What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts’?

(3) Māgandiya, the nose enjoys **a smell**, delights after a smell, rejoices in a smell.

But that has been tamed, watched, guarded, restrained by the Tathagata;  
and he teaches the Dharma for its restraint.

Was it in connection with this, Māgandiya, that you said,

‘The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth! What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts’?

(4) “Māgandiya, the tongue enjoys **a taste**, delights after a taste, rejoices in a taste.

But that has been tamed, watched, guarded, restrained by the Tathagata;  
and he teaches the Dharma for its restraint.

Was it in connection with this, Māgandiya, that you said,

‘The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth! What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts’?

(5) Māgandiya, the body enjoys a touch, delights after a touch, rejoices in a touch.

But that has been tamed, watched, guarded, restrained by the Tathagata;  
he teaches the Dharma for its restraint.

Was it in connection with this, Māgandiya, that you said,

‘The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth! What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts’?

(6) Māgandiya, the mind enjoys **a mind-object**, delights after a mind-object, rejoices in a mind-object.

But that has been tamed, watched, guarded, restrained by the Tathagata;  
and he teaches the Dharma for its restraint.

Was it in connection with this, Māgandiya, that you said,

‘The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth! What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts’?”

“It was in connection with this, master Gotama, that I have said,

‘The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth! What is the reason for this? It is handed down so in our texts.’<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> “A destroyer of growth [progress]” (*bhūnahū*), see (4.1).

<sup>53</sup> Notice here that Māgandiya gives no answer. This is an example of a rhetorical question, is, where a question is asked without any expectation of an answer. Such a question usually emphasizes a point that is contrary to the listener’s view, or it actually (ironically) proves the speaker’s point: both cases apply here.

### True nature of sensual pleasures<sup>54</sup>

9 (1) What do you think, Māgandiya?

Here, someone, [504] might have previously himself enjoyed **forms** cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

On another occasion, having understood, according to reality, the arising, and the disappearance, and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape, with regard to *forms*,

he would abandon craving for *forms*, remove fever for *forms*, dwell free from thirst, with his mind inwardly stilled.

What would you say of such a person, Māgandiya?"<sup>55</sup>

"Nothing, master Gotama."

(2) "What do you think, Māgandiya?

Here, someone, might have previously himself enjoyed **sounds** cognizable by the ear that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

On another occasion, having understood, according to reality, the arising, and the disappearance and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape, with regard to *sounds*,

he would abandon craving for *sounds*, remove fever for *sounds*, and dwell free from thirst, with his mind inwardly stilled.

What would you say of such a person, Māgandiya?"

"Nothing, master Gotama."

(3) "What do you think, Māgandiya?

Here, someone, might have previously himself enjoyed **smells** cognizable by the nose that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

On another occasion, having understood, according to reality, the arising, and the disappearance, and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape, with regard to *smells*,

he would abandon craving for *smells*, remove fever for *smells*, and dwell free from thirst, with his mind inwardly stilled.

What would you say of such a person, Māgandiya?"

"Nothing, master Gotama."

(4) "What do you think, Māgandiya?

Here, someone, might have previously himself enjoyed **tastes** cognizable by the tongue that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

On another occasion, having understood, according to reality, the arising, and the disappearance, and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape, with regard to *tastes*,

he would abandon craving for *tastes*, remove fever for *tastes*, and dwell free from thirst, with his mind inwardly stilled.

What would you say of such a person, Māgandiya?"

"Nothing, master Gotama."

<sup>54</sup> Cf **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,31-34/1:173), SD 1.11.

<sup>55</sup> *Imassa pana te, māgaṇḍiya, kim assa vacaṇīyaṇ ti?*



(5) “What do you think, Māgandiya?

Here, someone, might have previously himself enjoyed **touches** cognizable by the body that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

On another occasion, having understood, according to reality,

the arising, and the disappearance, and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape, with regard to *touches*,

he would abandon craving for *touches*, remove fever for *touches*, and dwell free from thirst, with his mind inwardly stilled.

What would you say of such a person, Māgandiya?”

“Nothing, master Gotama.”

## Pleasures that are better than sensual pleasures

### 10 THE BODHISATTVA’S SENSUAL LIFE

“Now, Māgandiya, in the past, while I lived the home life,

I myself enjoyed, was provided with, attended by forms

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

I myself enjoyed, was provided with, attended by sounds

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, like-able, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

I myself enjoyed, was provided with, attended by smells

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

I myself enjoyed, was provided with, attended by tastes

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

I myself enjoyed, was provided with, attended by touches

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

10.2 Māgandiya, I had **3 mansions** [palaces]:<sup>56</sup>

one for the hot season, one for the cold season, and one for the rains.

In the rains mansion, during the 4 months of the rains, I was waited upon by only female musicians,<sup>57</sup> and did not come down to the ground floor of the mansion<sup>58</sup> during those months.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> A *pāsāda* is prob a long storied mansion (S 51.14/5:270; VA 654; see V:H 2:16 n5, n6). Jonathan S Walters, in his journal article, “Suttas as History: Four approaches to the *Sermon on the Noble Quest* (Ariyapariyesanasutta)” (*History of Religions*, 1993) notes that the sutta “is full of startling silences: here we have no Suddhodana, no Mahāmāyā, no Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, no Yasodharā and Rāhula, no pleasure palace, no women of the harem, no four signs ...” (1993:276). The story of Suddhodana as a powerful and wealthy king is very likely a later legend: it is clear from the suttas that the Sakyas were vassals (*anuyuttā*) of king Pasenadi of Kosala (D 27,8/ 3:83). In **Pabbajjā S**, the young ascetic Siddhattha tells Bimbisāra that he (Siddhattha) is a “Kosala-dweller” (*Kosala niketino*), connoting that the Sakyas are a part of Kosala (Sn 422). Furthermore, in **Dhamma,dāyāda S** (M 89), Pasenadi tells the Buddha, “The Blessed One is a kshatriya and I am a kshatriya; the Blessed One is a Kosalan (*Kosalaka*) and I am a Kosalan” (M 89,19/2:124). **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3) gives a clear hint of the republican system of the Sakyas followed by a delightful analogy of the quail (D 3,1.13 f/1:91). See A K Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 1970: 45. As such, it is better to translate *pāsāda* as “mansion” rather than “palace.”

<sup>57</sup> “By only female musicians,” *nippurisehi turiyehi*, lit, “unmanned music,” possibly “divine music.” The Thai trs give it as ไม่นิยมบุรุษเจือปน, “with no men (or humans) involved” (BUDSIR, Dhammadāna). However, from the context of the following para [§12], it is clear that *women* (“without men”) are meant. Comy says that not only the musicians, but all duties in the mansion, incl door-keepers, were filled by women. His father had provided him with these three mansions and the harem of women hoping to keep him in the home life and distract him from any thought of renunciation. (MA 3:215 f = DA 2:455). See D:R 2:18 n1.

## 10.3 A PLEASURE THAT IS WHOLESOME

On another occasion, having understood, according to reality,  
the arising, and the disappearance, and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape,  
with regard to *sensual pleasures*,

I have abandoned *sensual lust*, removed fever for *sensual pleasure*,  
and dwelled free from thirst, with my mind inwardly stilled.”

10.4 I see other beings who are not free of the lust for sensual pleasure,  
consumed by craving for sensual pleasures,  
burning with the fever for sensual pleasures,  
indulging in sensual pleasures,  
but neither do I envy them nor do I delight therein.

10.5 What is the reason for this?

Because, Māgandiya, there is a delight other than sensual pleasure, other than unwholesome states,

[505] which surpasses even heavenly joy.<sup>60</sup>

But I have attained and dwelled in heavenly joy,<sup>61</sup> and delighting in that, neither do I envy for what is low [inferior],<sup>62</sup> nor delight therein.

### The Tāvātimsa devaputra parable

11 Suppose, Māgandiya, there is a **houcelord or houselord's son**, who is rich, with much wealth and much property,

enjoying, provided with, attended by forms

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

enjoying, provided with, attended by sounds

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

enjoying, provided with, attended by smells

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

enjoying, provided with, attended by tastes

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;

enjoying, provided with, attended by touches

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

<sup>58</sup> “Did not come down to the ground floor of the mansion,” *na heṭṭhā...pāsādam orohati*: see DPL: heṭṭhā. Alt tr “did not come down from the mansion.”

<sup>59</sup> This passage on the 3 mansions also found in the Yasa story (Mv 1.7.1 = V 1:15), SD 11.2, **Mahāpādana S** (D 14,1.38/2:21), SD 49.8; (**Paribbājaka**) **Māgandiya S** (M 75,10/1:504), SD 51.5; **Sukhumāla S** (A 3.38,1/1:145), SD 63.7. Also in **Mahāvastu** (Basak 1965: 161,11; Senart 1890 2:115,8) describes in detail the furnishings of these 3 mansions and other arrangements for the Bodhisattva's amusement. MA 153 @ T1.671a24: “I obtained the five types of sensual pleasures, which I obtained with ease, without difficulty” 得五欲功德,易不難得 (Analayo 2006). Bareau, however, in comparing this part of M 75 with MĀ 153, concludes that the Chin version offers the more original presentation (1974a:214).

<sup>60</sup> Comy: This is said in connection with the joy of the attainment of the fruit (of arhathood) of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana (*catuttha-jjhāna,phala,samāpatti,ratiṃ*) (MA 3: 216).

<sup>61</sup> *Api dibbam sukham samadhigayha tiṭṭhati*. The word *samadhigayha* comes from *sam* + *adhi* + *gaṇhāti*, ie, to fully and well (in a mental sense). Comy glosses it as “having made a distinction,” *visesetvā* (MA 3:268).

<sup>62</sup> *Hīnassa*, ie the pleasure of a low person (*hīna,jana,sukha*) and the 5 cords of human sense-pleasures (MA 3:217).

11.2 Having conducted himself well by way of the body, by way of speech, by way of the mind, <sup>63</sup> after death, when the body has broken up,

he is reborn in a heaven, a divine world, in communion with the devas of the 33.

And there, in the Nandana Grove, surrounded by a host of heavenly nymphs [of apsaras], he would enjoy, provided with, attended by the 5 cords of divine sense-pleasures.

11.3 What do you think, Māgandiya?

If that devaputra in the Nandana Grove, surrounded by a host of heavenly nymphs [of apsaras], were to see a houselord or houselord's son,

enjoying, provided with, attended by the 5 cords of human sense-pleasures,

would he envy or be enticed by such human sense-pleasures?"

"No, indeed, master Gotama.

"What is the reason for this?

Because heavenly sense-pleasures are *more excellent, more delightful than human sense-pleasures.*"

### The Buddha has gone beyond worldly pleasures

12 "Even so, Māgandiya, in the past, while I lived the home life, I myself

enjoyed, provided with, attended by forms

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust; enjoyed, provided with, attended by sounds

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust; enjoyed, provided with, attended by smells

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust; enjoyed, provided with, attended by tastes

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust; enjoyed, provided with, attended by touches

that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

12.2 On another occasion, having understood, according to reality,

**the arising, and the disappearance, and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape,** with regard to *sensual pleasures*,

I have abandoned *sensual lust*, removed fever for *sensual pleasure*, and dwell free from thirst, with my mind inwardly stilled."

12.3 I see other beings who are *not* free from the lust for sensual pleasure,

consumed by craving for sensual pleasures,

burning with the fever for sensual pleasures, [506]

indulging in sensual pleasures,

but neither do I envy them nor do I delight therein.

12.4 What is the reason for this?

Because, Māgandiya, **there is a delight other than sensual pleasure**, other than unwholesome states, which surpasses even heavenly joy.

But I have attained and dwelled in heavenly joy, and delighting in that, neither do I envy for what is lesser, nor delight therein.

<sup>63</sup> These are the 3 "doors" of karma: see **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,7-10/1:286 f), SD 5.7 esp (2.2.2)

## Parable of the healed leper

**13** Suppose, Māgandiya, there were **a leper**,  
his limbs festering with sores, all rotting away,<sup>64</sup> devoured by worms,  
scratching the scabs off the sores' openings with his nails,  
and searing [cauterizing] his body over a pit of blazing coal.<sup>65</sup>

Then his friends and colleagues, relatives and blood relations were to provide him with a doctor, a surgeon.<sup>66</sup> And that doctor or surgeon were to give him medicine.

On account of that medicine, he would be healed of the leprosy,  
and would become well, happy, free, master of himself, able to go where he likes.<sup>67</sup>

13.2 Then, he might see **another leper**,  
his limbs festering with sores, all rotting away, devoured by worms, scratching the scabs off the  
sores' openings with his nails, and searing [cauterizing] his body over a pit of blazing coal.

What do you think, Māgandiya? Would that man envy that leper for his pit of burning coal or his resorting to the medicine?"

"Not at all, master Gotama!

What is the reason for this? For, master Gotama, when there is an illness, there is need for medicine, and when there is no illness, there is no need for medicine."

## The Buddha has gone beyond worldly pleasures (refrain)

**14** "Even so, Māgandiya, in the past, **while I lived the home life**, I myself  
enjoyed, provided with, attended by forms  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;  
enjoyed, provided with, attended by sounds  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;  
enjoyed, provided with, attended by smells  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;  
enjoyed, provided with, attended by tastes  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust;  
enjoyed, provided with, attended by touches  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.

14.2 On another occasion, having understood, according to reality,  
the arising, and the disappearance, and the gratification, and the danger, and the escape,  
with regard to *sensual pleasures*,  
I have abandoned *sensual lust*, removed fever for *sensual pleasure*,  
and dwell free from thirst, with his mind inwardly stilled.

14.3 I see other beings who are *not* free from the lust for sensual pleasure,  
consumed by craving for sensual pleasures,  
burning with the fever for sensual pleasures,

<sup>64</sup> For another imagery of a body ravaged by pain, see **Cha,pāṇā S** (S 35.247,3/4:198), SD 19.15.

<sup>65</sup> *Seyyathā'pi, māgaṇḍiya, kuṭṭhī puriso arugatto pakkagatto kimīhi khajjamāno nakhehi vaṇa,mukhāni vipa-tacchamāno aṅgāra,kāsuyā kāyaṃ paritāpeyya.*

<sup>66</sup> As at **Cūḷa Mālunkya S** (M 63,5/1:429), SD 5.8, **Deva,daha S** (M 101,7/2:216), SD 18.4.

<sup>67</sup> As at **Deva,daha S** (M 101,7/2:216 f), SD 18.4.

indulging in sensual pleasures,  
but neither do I envy them nor do I delight therein.

14.4 What is the reason for this?

Because, Māgandiya, there is a delight other than sensual pleasure, other than unwholesome states, which surpasses even heavenly joy.

But I have attained and dwelled in heavenly joy, and delighting in that, neither do I envy for what is lesser, nor delight therein. [507]

### Parable of the healed leper in pain

15 Suppose, Māgandiya, there were **a leper**,  
his limbs festering with sores, all rotting away, devoured by worms,  
scratching the scabs off the sores' openings with his nails,  
and searing [cauterizing] his body over a pit of blazing coal.

Then his friends and colleagues, relatives and blood relations were to provide him with a doctor, a surgeon. And that doctor or surgeon were to give him medicine.

On account of that medicine, he would be healed of leprosy, and would become well, happy, free, master of himself, able to go where he likes.

15.2 Then two strong men would seize him by both arms, and drag him over **a pit of burning coal**.<sup>68</sup>  
What do you think, Māgandiya? Wouldn't that man twist and turn his body about?"<sup>69</sup>

"Yes, he would, master Gotama.

What is the reason for that?

Because, master Gotama, the fire is truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching."

15.3 "What do you think, Māgandiya?

Is it only now that **the fire** truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching,  
or in the past, too, the fire truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching?"

"Master Gotama, that fire is now truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching,  
and in the past, too, it was truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching.  
For, when the leper, his limbs festering with sores, all rotting away, devoured by worms,  
scratching the scabs off the sores' openings with his nails, his faculties were impaired,<sup>70</sup>  
so that though the fire was truly painful to the touch,  
he assumed the perverse perception that it is pleasant,  
that is to say, because of scratching the sores' opening."

16 "Even so, Māgandiya,

even throughout *the distant past*,

sense-pleasures are truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching, and  
in *the future*, too, they were truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching, and  
in *the present*, too, they were truly painful to the touch, terribly hot, greatly scorching.

But those beings who are not free from lust for sense-pleasures, consumed by craving for sensual lust, burning with the fever for sensual pleasures, assumed the perverse perception that it is pleasant.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> *Tam enaṃ dve balavanto purisā nānā, bāhāsu gahetvā aṅgāra, kāsuraṃ upakaḍḍheyyurū.* Cf **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,29/1:193), SD 4.9; **Putta,maṃsa S** (S 12.63/3:99 f), SD 20.6.

<sup>69</sup> As at **Potaliya S** (M 54,18/1:365), SD 43.8.

<sup>70</sup> *Upahat'indriya*, which Comy glosses as the impairment of the faculty of wisdom (*upahata,paññ'indriyā*) (MA 218).

### Parable of the leper's festering sores

**17** Suppose, Māgandiya, there were **a leper**, his limbs festering with sores,  
all rotting away, devoured by worms, scratching the scabs off the sores' openings with his nails,  
and searing [cauterizing] his body over a pit of blazing coal.  
The more he scratches the scabs off the sores' openings with his nails,  
the more he sears [cauterizes] his body over a pit of blazing coal, **[508]**  
the more foul and foetid, the more rotten it becomes.

Yet he would find a certain measure of satisfaction, a certain measure of gratification in scratching the sores' openings.

17.2 Even so, Māgandiya,  
those beings who are *not* free from lust for sense-pleasures,  
consumed by craving for sensual lust,  
burning with the fever for sensual pleasures,  
assume the perverse perception that it is pleasant, that is to say, on account of the 5 cords of sense-pleasures.

### Sense-pleasures do not really still the mind

**18** What do you think, Māgandiya?  
Have you ever seen or heard of **a rajah or a rajah's minister enjoying himself**,  
provided with, attended by the 5 cords of sense-pleasures who,  
without abandoning craving for sensual pleasure,  
without removing the fever for sensual pleasures,  
*had dwelt, or is dwelling, or will dwell*, free from thirst, with the mind inwardly stilled?"  
"No, master Gotama."

18.2 "Good, Māgandiya. I, too, have never seen or heard of a rajah or a rajah's minister  
enjoying himself, provided with, attended by the 5 cords of sense-pleasures who,  
without abandoning craving for sensual pleasure,  
without removing the fever for sensual pleasures,  
*dwelt, or is dwelling, or will dwell*, free from thirst, with the mind inwardly stilled."<sup>72</sup>

18.3 On the other hand, Māgandiya, those **recluses or brahmins**  
who *had dwelt, or are dwelling, or will dwell* free from thirst,  
with a mind inwardly stilled,  
all do so only after having understood, according to reality,  
the arising, and the disappearance,  
and the gratification, and the danger,  
and the escape, with regard to sense-pleasures,

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<sup>71</sup> "The perverse perception" (*viparīta, saññā*) here refers to the perversion of perception (*saññā, vipallāsa*), ie, perceiving what is really painful as being pleasurable. Sub-comy says sensual pleasures are painful because they arouse the painful defilements, and because they bring painful fruits in due course (MAṬ:VRI 2:105). See **Vipallāsa S** (A 4.49/2:52), SD 16.11.

<sup>72</sup> See (**Hattkaha**) **Āḷavaka S** (A 3.34), SD 4.8.



and it is after abandoning craving for sensual pleasure, having removed the fever for sensual pleasures, that they *had dwelt, or is dwelling, or will dwell, free from thirst*, with the mind inwardly stilled.”

### The Buddha’s exultation

19 Now, at that time, the Blessed One uttered this exultation [udana]:

<i>Ārogya, paramā lābhā,</i>	Health is the highest gain,	
<i>nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ</i>	nirvana is the highest bliss.	[Dh 204ad]
<i>aṭṭhaṅgiko ca maggānaṃ</i>	And of the ways, the eightfold	
<i>khemam amata, gāminan’ti</i>	is the secure way to the death-free. <sup>73</sup>	

19.2 When this was spoken, the wanderer Māgandiya said this to the Blessed One:

“It’s marvellous, master Gotama! It’s wonderful, master Gotama! How well said this is by master Gotama! that is, to say:

‘Health is the highest gain, nirvana is the highest bliss.’ [509]

19.3 We too, master Gotama, have heard this being said before by the lineage of teachers of the wanderers, that is, to say:

‘Health is the highest gain, nirvana is the highest bliss.’

So, this agrees with you, master Gotama!”<sup>74</sup>

19.4 “But, Māgandiya, as regards what you have heard being said before by the lineage of teachers of the wanderers, that is, to say:

‘Health is the highest gain, nirvana is the highest bliss’ —

what is it that is health, what is it that is nirvana?”

19.5 When this was spoken, the wanderer Māgandiya rubbed his own limbs with his hands and said,

“This is that health, master Gotama; this is that nirvana—for, I, master Gotama, am now healthy and happy, nothing afflicts me.”<sup>75</sup>

### The parable of the blind (1)

20 “Māgandiya, suppose there were **a man born blind**,<sup>76</sup>

who could see neither dark nor bright forms,

who could not see blue forms, nor yellow forms, nor red forms, nor orange forms,

who could not see what is even or uneven,

who could not see the stars, who could not see the sun or the moon.”<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup> It is likely here that the Buddha utters only the first two half-lines: see (2.2).

<sup>74</sup> *Ta-y-idaṃ, bho gotama, sametī ti.*

<sup>75</sup> *Ahañ hi, bho gotama, etarahi arogo sukhī, na maṃ kiñci ābādhātī ti:* see (4.2).

<sup>76</sup> This whole parable as at **Pāyāsi S** (D 23,11/2:328 f), SD 39.4, **(Paribbājaka) Māgandiya S** (M 75,20/1:509 f), SD 31.5; **(Brahma, vihāra) Subha S** (M 99,12/2:201), SD 38.6.

<sup>77</sup> *Seyyathā’pi, māgaṇḍiya, jacc’andho puriso; so na passeyya kaṇha, sukkāni rūpāni, na passeyya nīlakāni rūpāni, na passeyya pītakāni rūpāni, na passeyya lohitaṇḍakāni rūpāni, na passeyya mañjiṭṭhakāni rūpāni, na passeyya sama, visamaṃ, na passeyya tāraṇa, rūpāni, na passeyya candima, sūriye.* The underscored words are colours: *nīlaka* = blue, sky grey, indigo; *pītaka* = yellow, golden yellow; *lohitaṇḍaka* = red, blood red; and *mañjiṭṭhaka* = orange or crimson. The usu primary-colour pericope is: *nīla, pīta, mañjeṭṭhaka, lohitaṇḍaka*, and *odāta* (white) (M 1:509; J

He might hear a man with good eyes saying,

‘Excellent, indeed, sirs, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!’

And he would look for a white cloth.

Then a certain man would cheat him with a greasy, grimy, coarse cloth, saying,

‘This, my good man, is a white piece of cloth, beautiful, spotless and clean!’

And he would accept it, and then put it on, and being satisfied with it, word of approval, thus:

‘Excellent, indeed, sirs, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!’

20.2 What do you think, Māgandiya?

When that man born blind accepted that greasy, grimy, coarse cloth, saying,

‘This, my good man, is a white piece of cloth, beautiful, spotless and clean!’—

did he do so *knowing and seeing*, or did he do so *out of faith* in the man with good eyes?”

“Master Gotama, the man born blind would have accepted the greasy, grimy, coarse cloth, and then put it on, and being satisfied with it, word of approval, thus:

‘Excellent, indeed, sirs, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!’ [510] *out of faith* in the man with good eyes.”

21 “Even so, Māgandiya, **the wanderers of other sects** are blind, eye-less [without vision],<sup>78</sup> not knowing health, not seeing nirvana; yet they utter this stanza:

‘Health is the highest gain, nirvana is the highest bliss.’

This stanza, Māgandiya, was uttered by a past arhat [worthy] fully self-awakened one, thus:

Health is the highest gain, | nirvana is the highest bliss.

And of the ways, the eightfold | is the secure way to the death-free.<sup>79</sup>

Now it has gradually become a stanza of the common people.<sup>80</sup>

21.2 Now, Māgandiya, **this body**, even though it is an illness, a tumour, a dart, a calamity, a disease, yet you speak of this body that is an illness, a tumour, a dart, a calamity, a disease, thus:

‘This is that health, master Gotama; this is that nirvana’!

For, you, Māgandiya, do not have that noble vision [that arya eye] by means of which you would know health, would see nirvana.”

## Māgandiya’s faith in the Buddha

### The parable of the blind (2): the failed healing

22 “I have confidence in master Gotama, thus,

‘Master Gotama is capable of showing me the Dharma by which I would know health, would see nirvana’.”

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6:185; Dhs 617). See prec n. Cf **Atthi,rāga S** (S 12.64,8/2:102); **Gaddula,baddha S 2** (S 22.100,11/3:152); (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55,4.2/5:121; (**Manta**) **Saṅgārava S** (A 5.193,3/3:230).

<sup>78</sup> Also said of Pokkhara,sāti (M 99,13/2:202), SD 38.6.

<sup>79</sup> It is prob only here that the Buddha utters the full four-line stanza: see (2.2).

<sup>80</sup> Comy says that the full stanza was uttered by previous Buddhas seated in the midst of the fourfold assembly, which learned it as “**the salutary stanza**” (*attha,nissita gāthā*, lit, “the stanza on depending on what is good”). After the last Buddha, Kassapa, passed away, it spread amongst the wanderers, who were able to remember only the first two lines in their texts. (MA 3:219)

22.2 “Māgandiya, suppose there were **a man born blind**,  
 who could see neither dark nor bright forms,  
 who could not see blue forms, or nor yellow forms, nor red forms, nor orange forms,  
 who could not see what is even or uneven,  
 who could not see the stars, who could not see the sun or the moon.

Then his friends and colleagues, relatives and blood relations were to provide him with a doctor, a surgeon. And that doctor or surgeon were to give him medicine.

22.3 Yet, on account of that medicine, his sight is *not* restored, nor his vision clears up.  
 What do you think, Māgandiya, wouldn't that doctor feel his share of weariness and trouble?”  
 “Yes, master Gotama.”

22.4 “Even so, Māgandiya, if I were to teach the Dharma, thus, ‘This is that health, Māgandiya; this is that nirvana,’ yet you would neither know health nor see nirvana, it would weary me, trouble me.” [511]

### The parable of the blind (3): the healed

23 “I have faith [confidence] in master Gotama, thus,  
 ‘Master Gotama is capable of showing me the Dharma by which I would know health, would see nirvana’.”

23.2 “Māgandiya, suppose there were **a man born blind**,  
 who could see neither dark nor bright forms,  
 who could not see blue forms, or nor yellow forms, nor red forms, nor orange forms,  
 who could not see what is even or uneven,  
 who could not see the stars, who could not see the sun or the moon.

23.3 He might hear a man with good eyes saying,  
 ‘Excellent, indeed, sirs, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!’  
 And he would look for a white cloth.

Then a certain man would cheat him with a greasy, grimy, coarse cloth, saying,  
 This, my good man, is a white piece of cloth, beautiful, spotless and clean!’  
 he would accept it, and then put it on.

23.4 Then his friends and colleagues, relatives and blood relations were to provide him with a doctor, a surgeon. And that doctor or surgeon were to give him medicine, namely, emetic, purgative, collyrium, counter-ointment, nose treatment.<sup>81</sup>

By means of that medicine, **his eyes would be restored**, his vision cleared up.

And with his vision clearing up, he would abandon his desire and lust for the greasy, grimy, coarse cloth.

And he would burn with enmity and outrage towards that man, and would think of depriving him of life, thinking,

‘Long indeed, sir, have I been tricked, cheated, fooled by this man with this greasy, grimy, coarse cloth, when he told me,

“This, my good man, is a white piece of cloth, beautiful, spotless and clean!”.’

<sup>81</sup> *Uddham, virecanam adho, virecanam añjanam paccañjanam natthu, kammarā*. See V 1:203 f; D 1, 1.27/1:11 = 2, 62/1:69, 10, 1.29/1:206. *Añjana* (collyrium) is a generic term for *kāl’añjana* (black collyrium), *ras’añjana* (rasa collyrium) and *sot’añjana* (sota collyrium). V Comy says that *añjana* “comprises all.” (VA 1091). For other eye-ointment, see Mv 6.11.2 = V 1:203. Comy glosses *pacc’añjana* as “a cool ointment for quenching heat,” *nibbāpanī-yarā sītala, bhesajj’añjanam*, DA 1:98; also D 1:13 = M 1:511.

## The teaching

**24** “Even so, Māgandiya, if I were to teach you the Dharma thus:

‘This is that health; this is that nirvana,’ you might know health, you might see nirvana.

Along with the arising of your vision, your desire and lust for the 5 aggregates of clinging might be abandoned. Then, this might occur to you:

‘Indeed, I have long been tricked, cheated, and fooled by this mind.’<sup>82</sup>

For,

when clinging, I have been clinging merely <sup>83</sup> to	<u>form</u> ,
when clinging, I have been clinging merely to	<u>feeling</u> ,
when clinging, I have been clinging merely to	<u>perception</u> ,
when clinging, I have been clinging merely to	<u>formations</u> ,
when clinging, I have been clinging merely to	<u>consciousness</u> .

With that clinging of mine as condition, there would be *existence*.

Conditioned by existence, there would be *birth*.

Conditioned by birth, there would be *decay and death*:

sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain [displeasure] **[512]** and despair would come to be.

Such would be the arising of this whole mass of suffering.’”

## Māgandiya’s faith

**25** “I have confidence in master Gotama, thus,<sup>84</sup>

‘Master Gotama is capable of showing me the Dharma such that I would rise from this seat, healed of my blindness!’”

25.2 “In that case, Māgandiya, **associate with true individuals**.

When you, Māgandiya, associate with true individual,  
you, Māgandiya, will **hear the true Dharma**.

When you, Māgandiya, hear the true Dharma,

you, Māgandiya, would **practise** the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma.

When you, Māgandiya, practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma,

you, Māgandiya, will **truly know for yourself**, you will see for yourself, thus:

‘These are illnesses, tumours, darts,’<sup>85</sup> here the illnesses, tumours, darts end without remainder!

25.3 DEPENDENT ENDING

With the ending of my *clinging* for that, there is the cessation of existence.

With the ending of *existence*, there is the cessation of birth.

With the ending of *birth*, there ends decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation,  
physical pain, and mental pain.

Such indeed is the ending of this whole mass of suffering,”

<sup>82</sup> *Dīgha, rattam vata bho aham iminā cittena nikato vañcito paladdho.*

<sup>83</sup> “Merely,” *yeva*. Comy: This emphasis implies that he is *merely* clinging to form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, wrongly viewed as “I,” “mine,” and “my self.” The earlier phrase, “with the arising of vision” (*cakkh’uppādā*) is a metaphor for stream-winning, by which the self-identity view is destroyed, and he understands the aggregates to be merely empty phenomena without any selfhood that he had erstwhile attributed to them. (MA 2:219 f)

<sup>84</sup> *Evaṃ pasanno aham bhoto gotamassa.*

<sup>85</sup> That is, the 5 aggregates (MA 3:20).

## The conversion and arhathood of Māgandiya

**26** When this was said, the wanderer said this to the Blessed One,  
 “Marvellous, master Gotama! Wonderful, master Gotama! Just as 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 master Gotama.  
 I go to the Blessed Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.  
 May I receive the going-forth before master Gotama; may I receive the ordination.”

**27** <sup>86</sup>“Māgandiya, 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 4 months.<sup>87</sup> At the end of the 4 months, the monks who are satisfied<sup>88</sup> would give him the going-forth [novice initiation] and ordain him into the state of a monk [higher ordination].

However, I see a difference amongst individuals here.”<sup>89</sup>

“If, bhante, 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 4 months,

<sup>86</sup> This section is mutatis mutandis as at **Kassapa Sīhanāda S** (D 8,24/1:176), **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.28b-29), SD 9, **Acela Kassapa S** (S 12.17/2:18-22), SD 18.5, & **Sabhiya S** (Sn 3.6/p102).

<sup>87</sup> 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.

<sup>88</sup> “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).

<sup>89</sup> *Api ca m’ettha puggala, vemattatā veditā ti. Saṅkhitta S 2* (S 48.13) 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 the case of the fire-worshipping matted-hair ascetics (the 3 **Kassapa brothers**) (V 1:34 f; J 1:82, 4:180; SnA 2:436 citing V 1:71) and **Acela Kassapa** (D 8,24/2:176 f); see SnA 2:436. The wanderer **Sabhiya**, however, has to observe the 4-month probation (Sn 3.6/p102). See **Mahāparinibbāna S** (D 16,5.28b/2:152) n, SD 9 & **Acela Kassapa S** (S 12.17), SD 18.5 (4). 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 arhathood 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.

then 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 [novice initiation] and ordain me into the state of a monk [higher ordination].”<sup>90</sup>  
[513]

**28** THE FULL ARHATHOOD PERICOPE.<sup>91</sup> The wanderer Magandiya received the going-forth in the presence of the Blessed One; he received the ordination.<sup>92</sup>

And, not long after going forth, the venerable Māgandiya, dwelling alone, aloof, diligent, exertive, and resolute,<sup>93</sup>

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.

**29** THE ARHAT’S REVIEW KNOWLEDGE. He directly knew:

“Birth is destroyed,  
the holy life has been lived,  
done what is to be done,  
there is no more of this state of being.”<sup>94</sup>

And the venerable Māgandiya became one of the arhats.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>90</sup> This response is 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); Seniya the naked dog-vow ascetic (**Kukkura,vatika S**, M 57,14/1:398); 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 arhathood on the same night. See prec n.

<sup>91</sup> For details, see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,56.2+56.3), SD 7.14.

<sup>92</sup> In the Chin MĀ version, MĀ 153 @ T1.673a21, however, the Buddha himself readily ordains Māgandiya by proclaiming, “Welcome, monk, practise the holy life,” 善來比丘, 修行梵行.

<sup>93</sup> *Eko vūpakatṭho appamatto ātāpī pahit’atto viharanto* (sg). This is stock: V 2:258; M 1:177; A 2:258, 3:218; U 24. The first word, “alone” (**eka**) refers to bodily aloneness and physical solitude; “aloof” (**vūpakatṭha**) is mental solitude; often this word alone refers to a practitioner’s effort to rid the mind of sensual thoughts (M 36/1:246f = 85/2:93); “exertive” (**ātāpī**) is putting forth both physical and effort; “resolute” (**pahit’atta**), “mentally resolute” by absence of longing regarding the body or life itself (MA 1:180). (Pl) *ekā vūpakatṭhā appamattā ātāpino pahit’attā vihareyya* (V 2:258; A 3:218 (Ke Se ekeka...), 4:280). Sometimes the initial *eka* [eke] is omitted in the pericope, as in Be Se of **Cūḷa Hatthi,padōpama S** (M 27.7.7/1:177), SD 40a.5.

<sup>94</sup> On this para and the next (the attainment of arhathood), see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,56.2/1:203) n, SD 7.14.



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