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## Go,paka Moggallāna Sutta

The Discourse to Go,paka Moggallāna | M 108

Theme: The sangha as self-regulating. Not all dhyanas are praised by the Buddha

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### 1 Sutta summary and background

#### 1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND COMMENTS

##### 1.1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND TITLE

**1.1.1.1 The Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta** is about the kind of refuge that sustains harmony within the monastic community after the Buddha's death. The discourse has a parallel in the Chinese Madhyama Āgama.<sup>1</sup> The Sutta ominously opens, like the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16), with forebodings of war, as Ajāta,sattu,<sup>2</sup> the rajah of Magadha, fortifies his capital of Raja,gaha, fearing an attack from the belligerent Caṇḍa Pajjota [1.2.1.1], the rajah of Avantī [1.2.1.2].<sup>3</sup>

**1.1.1.2** The Sutta is named after the first person, that is, **Gopaka Moggallāna** [1.2.3], whom Ānanda meets in this account [§§3-4]. He asks Ānanda if there is any monk who has all the Buddha's qualities, and is answered in the negative [§5]. **Vassa,kāra**, chief minister of Magadha, then appears and interrupts their conversation [§6], and asks whether the sangha has a successor to the Buddha. Ānanda answers no and adds that "**the Dharma is our refuge.**" [§§7-9].

##### 1.1.2 Key sutta actors

**1.1.2.1** The perplexed politically minded Vassa,kāra questions further, and Ānanda explains that the Buddha has prescribed the course of training (*sikkhā*) and the Pātimokkha (monastic code), which governs the lives of the monastics [§§10-11]. When Vassa,kāra is still perplexed how a community such as the sangha could thrive without the leadership of a single person [§12], Ānanda goes on to explain how the sangha does show special regard for an elder monk with four qualities [§13-17] and the 6 superknowledges [§§18-23]. In other words, the sangha is guided not by the external power of an individual, but by *their common inner moral virtue and spirituality*.

**1.1.2.2** At this point, Vassa,kāra shares his admiration of the sangha with the general Upananda [§24]. Then, when Vassa,kāra learns that Ānanda is staying in the Bamboo Grove, he remarks that it is a place very conducive for meditators and meditation. When Ānanda says that this is because of the safety "on account of protectors and guardians such as yourselves (that is, the rajah and his court)," Vassa,kāra retorts that the place is pleasant because of the presence of meditators, adding that the Buddha praises *all kinds of meditation* [§25].

To the last remark, Ānanda diplomatically corrects him, explaining that the Buddha rejects those meditations that are attended by mental hindrances [§26], and praises **the 4 dhyanas** [§27]. Vassa,kāra then courteously takes leave [§28]. Gopaka and Ānanda then conclude their conversation [§29].

<sup>1</sup> MĀ 145 = T1.26.653c-656a, titling it after Ānanda's visitor, 瞿默目捷連 *qúmò mùqiánlián*, and giving it the same location. For counterparts to M 108/3:13,26-32 (last para of §25) in Vyākhyā,yukti (5<sup>th</sup>-cent exegetical) literature, see Skilling 2000b: 341.

<sup>2</sup> On Ajāta,sattu, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), SD 8.10 (4).

<sup>3</sup> See **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.1.1b/2:72), SD 9 nn.

## 1.2 SUTTA BACKGROUND

### 1.2.1 Canda Pajjota of Avantī

**1.2.1.1 CAṆḌA PAJJOTA** (Skt Caṇḍa Pradyota), the rajah of Avantī, was a man of violent temper (*caṇḍa*) (V 1:277). He wanted to conquer the neighbouring kingdom of Vaṃsa, but failed. The rajah of Vaṃsa, Udena, eloped with his daughter, Vāsula,datta, and married her,<sup>4</sup> so that the two kingdoms continued on friendly terms. Once when Pajjota was ill with jaundice, Bimbi,sāra, rajah of Magadha (before Ajāta,-sattu killed him), sent his personal physician, Jīvaka, to heal him.<sup>5</sup>

Bhāsa (5<sup>th</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> cent CE), one of India's best known playwright, centres his best-known play, *Svapna Vāsava,datta*, around Pajjota. In the play he is called Mahāsena ("great army") on account of his huge force and belligerent nature (5.20). As such, his full name, in Sanskrit, is Caṇḍa Pradyota Maha,sena.

Pajjota's chief queen, Gopala,mātā (mother of prince Gopāla) was a disciple of Mahā Kaccāna, and she built a stupa in Ujjenī.

**1.2.1.2 AVANTĪ** was one of the 4 great kingdoms of the Buddha's time, the other 3 being Magadha (capital, Rājagaha), Kosala (capital, Sāvattthī) and Vaṃsa or Vatsa (capital, Kosambī). All these are among the 16 great states (*mahā,janapada*) of 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE India.<sup>6</sup>

The country (covering roughly modern Malwa, in Madhya Pradesh) was divided into two regions by the Vindhya mountains, the capital of the northern part was Ujjenī (Skt Ujjayinī; modern Ujjain), and the south centred around Mahissatī<sup>7</sup> (Skt Mahiśmatī). Pajjota lived in Ujjenī.<sup>8</sup>

After Buddhism was established in Avantī, it was notably present in such well-known places as Bhār-hut, Sāñcī, and Vidiśā, all famous for their many great stupas, some of which survived to this day or have been excavated in recent times.

**1.2.1.3 BIMBI,SĀRA, PAJJOTA AND AJĀTA,SATTU.** The Majjhima Commentary says that the patricide Ajāta,-sattu was afraid that the rajah Pajjota would punish him, as the rajah Bimbi,sāra had been a friend of Pajjota (MA 4:70).<sup>9</sup> However, nowhere else do we find any mention of any close friendship between these two kings. The Chinese Āgamas, too, are silent on this point.

**The Vinaya**, however, records that once when Pajjota had jaundice.<sup>10</sup> After various famous doctors failed to heal him, he sought the help of Jīvaka, Bimbi,sāra's personal physician. The ailment could only be cured with ghee, which Pajjota abhorred. Jīvaka secretly prepared the ghee in such a way so that it has the colour, smell, and taste of an astringent (*kāsāva*) decoction, which would sicken Pajjota before he could recover.

Having had Pajjota to take the decoction, Jīvaka at once left on the king's fastest she-elephant under the pretext of gathering herbal roots. True enough, the king's messenger caught up Jīvaka with orders that he returned to Pajjota. Bimbi,sāra advised Jīvaka against doing so, saying that Pajjota was a "violent" (*caṇḍa*) man. Later, however, after recovering, Pajjota rewarded Jīvaka with a gift of two sets of exquisite Siveyyakka cloth.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> DhA 2.1.4/1:191-199.

<sup>5</sup> Mv 8.1.23-29/V 1:276-278; qu at MA 4:71; AA 1:399.

<sup>6</sup> A 1:213, 4:252, 256, 260. See **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (16a).

<sup>7</sup> D 2:235.

<sup>8</sup> V 1:276, 30; DhA 1:192; ThaA 2:107,1.

<sup>9</sup> See TW Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, 1903: 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Paṇḍu,rog'ābādha*. Cf V 1:206 where a monk has this disease. However, the cure that he was allowed differed from that given to Pajjota.

<sup>11</sup> Mv 8.1.21-29 @ V 1:276-278.

Such an account only shows that Bimbi,sāra was well aware of Pajjota's violent personality. Of course, there is a possibility that Pajjota was grateful that Bimbi,sāra had sent his own physician to heal him. A sense of grateful respect could have moved him to attack Ajāta,sattu, perhaps with the further view that a patricide should be dethroned (for Pajjota's benefit, too).

### **1.2.2 Ajāta,sattu and the Vajjīs**

**1.2.2.1** Although the Pali texts do not mention any significant connection between Ajāta,sattu of Magadha and Pajjota of Avantī [1.2.1.2], Ajāta,sattu's ambition to conquer the Vajjīs is well documented in the early suttas, especially **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), and its Chinese, Sanskrit and Tibetan counterparts.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, **the Kaliṅgāra Sutta** (S 20.8) and its Chinese parallel (SĀ 1252) record the Buddha as stating that as long as the Vajjīs dwell spartan and vigilant way, Ajāta,sattu would not overpower them.<sup>13</sup> This clearly suggests that Ajāta,sattu has plans to conquer the Vajjīs.

**1.2.2.2 Why did Ajāta,sattu want to conquer the Vajjīs?** The Vajjī confederacy, centred around Vesālī, comprised 8 clans, the most powerful of which was the kshatriya clan of Licchavīs. The well-united Vajjī even attacked Magadha during Bimbi,sāra's time. With Bimbi,sāra's marrying Callanā, the Videhā princess and daughter of the aged Ceṭaka, leader of the Licchavīs, there was peace between the two powers.<sup>14</sup>

Despite this alliance by marriage, perhaps because of it, Ajāta,sattu planned to conquer the Vajjīs. When direct confrontations failed, Ajāta,sattu resorted to machiavellian subterfuge by having Vassa,kāra to feign disloyalty, seeking asylum with the Vajjīs. Over 3 years, Vassa,kāra successfully sowed the seeds of internal strife. When, in due course, the Vajjīs were badly divided and weak, Ajāta,sattu invaded the country and conquered it.<sup>15</sup>

### **1.2.3 Go,paka Moggallāna**

**1.2.3.1** The word *go,paka* means "cattle-herd(er)," which suggests his occupation or that his wealth is in terms of cattle. The Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta says that Ānanda visits the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna "where he was working" (*kammanto*) [S4], which the Commentary says was "outside the city" (MA 4:71). They are then joined by Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, and general Upananda.

From all this, the Dictionary of Pali Proper Names surmises that Gopaka Moggallāna is "a brahmin minister of Ajātasattu, in charge of some defence works in Rajagaha" (DPPN 1:818). His forename, perhaps a nickname, *gopaka*, however, means "cattle-herd." A further clue that Gopaka could be working on the fortification with Vassa,kāra is that Gopaka, too, asks basically the same question as Vassa,kāra does.

**1.2.3.2** There is little else about Gopaka Moggallāna in the suttas, except for Ānanda's Thera,gāthā, where this verse is addressed to Gopaka Moggallāna:

*Dv-āsīti buddhato gaṇhim  
dve sahaṣṣāni bhikkhuto*

From the Buddha I grasped 82 thousand,  
from the monks another two.

<sup>12</sup> D 16.1.1-2/2:72,5, SD 9; DĀ 2 = T1.11a10, T5 = T1.160b9, T6 = T1.176a6; frag S 360 folio 151 V5-6 in Waldschmidt 1950:7 & its Tib counterpart in Waldschmidt 1951:103. Cf MĀ 143 = T1.648a26.

<sup>13</sup> S 20.8/2:267 f; SĀ 1252 = T2.344b9.

<sup>14</sup> See Akshaya Kumari Devi, *Gautama the Buddha: His life and religion*. Calcutta, 1935 (repr Delhi: Universal Voice, 2010): 115.

<sup>15</sup> See SD 55.10a (1.2); also R Choudhary 1963.

*catur'āsīti, sahaṣṣāni*  
*ye me dhammā pavattino*

Eighty-four thousand  
teachings are set going in me. (Tha 1024)

The Thera, gātha Commentary says that Gopaka Moggallāna here asks Ānanda how many of the Buddha's teachings he remembers. Ānanda answers that he remembers 84,000 teachings of the Buddha and goes on to explain this (ThaA 3:117).

### 1.2.4 Vassa, kāra

Vassa, kāra (Skt *varṣa, kāra*) is mentioned with Sunīdha in **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16).<sup>16</sup> Both are said to be "chief ministers." Apparently, he was a man of high position, even prime minister, in Magadha.<sup>17</sup>

The Majjhima Commentary on the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108) has a curious story about Vassa, kāra. It is said that once, upon seeing Mahā Kaccāna descending Mt Vulture Peak, he remarks that Mahā Kaccāna looks just like a monkey. Hearing this, the Buddha says that unless Vassakāra asks for the elder's forgiveness, he would be born as a monkey in Veḷu, vana.

Vassa, kāra, however, was more of a politician than a man of faith, and does not seek forgiveness from Mahā Kaccāna. Fearing that the Buddha's prophecy would come true, he has various fruit trees and other trees planted in Veḷu, vana, to be of use to him as a monkey in due course. After his death, he is actually reborn as a monkey who answers to the name Vassa, kāra! (MA 4:73)<sup>18</sup>

## 2 The sangha's refuge

### 2.1 "THE DHARMA IS OUR REFUGE" [§10(3)]

**2.1.1** This is the key statement in the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 108). This means that the sangha is not governed by a single person or by personal judgements of its members (that is, charisma, or a power structure), but by a consensus based on the Dharma-Vinaya (the teaching and discipline) laid down by the Buddha. This is in keeping with the Buddha's famous declaration, recorded in **the Mahā, parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), thus:

<sup>16</sup> D 16, 1.26/2:86 @ SD 9.

<sup>17</sup> *Mahāmatta* (cf Skt *mahāmātra*) = *mahā āmacca*? PED: "A king's chief minister [evidently more than one of them]." His position is of such importance, that he even ranges as a *rājā* or king (V 3:47: *rājā ... akkhadassā mahāmattā ye vā pana chejjabhejjaṃ anusāsanti ete rājāno nāma*). He was said to be prime minister, "who was the highest Officer-of-State and real Head of the Executive" (Banerjea, *Public Administration in Ancient India*, 1916). An acc sg *mahā, mattānaṃ* at A 1:154 (formed after the prec *rājānaṃ*). See V 1:74 (where 2 ranks of *mahāmacca* are given: *senā, nāyaka* ~a, the minister of defence, and *vohārika* ~a, that of law); also D 1:7, 3:88, 3:64 (here with ep *khattiya*): A 1:154, 252, 279, 3:128; V 4:224; Vism 1:21; VbhA 312 (in simile of 2 ~ā), 340; PvA 169. Cf Fick, *Sociale Gliederung* 92, 99, 101." See also VA 2:294, 5:1095; DA 2:540.

<sup>18</sup> Another well-known story in this connection is that of the seth's son, **Soreyya**, who, being physically attracted to Mahā Kaccāna, remarks that he would make a good wife for him! Soreyya at once turns into a woman, and in due course bears two children. However, on seeking the arhat's forgiveness and receiving it, returns to being a male: **Soreyya-t, therā Vatthu**, DhA 3.9/1:325-332 (Dh 43) & **Self & selves**, SD 26.9 (1.56.3). A number of suttas record how a person realizes his wrong-doing (either a wrong view or an improper conduct towards the Buddha) seeking his forgiveness ("for the sake of future restraint"), and with his forgiving, the karma is neutralized (*ahosi*), as it were. See **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2, 101/1:85), **Dhātu Vibhaṅga S** (M 140, 33/3:246), **(Taṇhā) Bhikkhuṇī S** (A 4.159, 8/2:146); **Vuṭṭha Vass'āvāsa S** (A 9.11.6/4:378). Cf the wanderer's Nigrodha's confession in **Udumbarika Siha, nāda S** (D 25, 22.1 @ SD 1.4) & Susīma's confession in **Susīma S** (S 12.70 @ SD 16.8). See also **Karma, vibhaṅga**, in Levi 1932:44, 32 or Kudo 2004:72, 5, 73, 4.

Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, it may be that you would think:

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

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

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

**2.1.2 The Gārava Sutta** (S 6.2) relates how the newly-awakened Buddha declares that the Dharma is his teacher, worthy of his reverence.<sup>19</sup> The above may be said to give the essence of the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta (D 16). The term *satthā* (teacher) is here redefined: while the Buddha lives, *he* is teacher; after his passing, the role is found in the Dharma and Vinaya.

With the Buddha’s passing, Buddhism ceases to be a cult (where the teacher or leader, or his charisma, is the final authority), and it becomes a spiritual and teaching-centred system. In this sense, it may be said that the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta is the Buddha’s last will and testament to his spiritual heirs.

**2.1.3** On the other hand, while the religious and faith-inclined might accept that the Buddha’s authority and presence have been *spiritually* transferred to the Dharma and Vinaya, they may also perceive that he is “*physically*” transferred into his relics, the stupa and the Buddha image.<sup>20</sup>

(4) “Is there, master Ānanda, a single monk whom you now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on?”

“*There is no one monk*,<sup>21</sup> brahmin, whom we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on.”<sup>22</sup> [§11.2]

After the Buddha’s passing, two powerful institutionalized religious trends developed. Those who readily accept the Buddha as a historical figure, thus accepting his death as being a natural event, tended towards dogmatizing the Dharma and ritualizing the Vinaya, as exemplified by the Mahāvihāra tradition of Sri Lanka. The other trend, which generally rejected the Buddha’s death, deified the Buddha and modified Buddhism to suit their own cultures and circumstances: this is the Mahāyāna (including the Vajrayāna).<sup>23</sup>

**2.1.4** I’m not at all inclined towards a fundamentalist approach to Buddhism, championing a “pure or pristine” form of early Buddhism, nor am I against the acculturation (assimilation into a culture) of Buddhism (which is, after all, a natural social phenomenon). However, it is to our common advantage if we have strong Buddhist roots, especially when we still have a very complete early Pali scripture and valuable ancient Āgamas preserved in Chinese translations, in Sanskrit and in other ancient languages.

A triangulated appreciation of the Pali Canon, the Āgamas, and the forest monastic tradition, will give us a good idea and taste of the spirituality of the Buddha’s teachings. When we whole-heartedly give our common spiritual legacy its proper place—at the root and core of our Buddhist lives—while

<sup>19</sup> S 6.2/1:138-140 (SD 12.3).

<sup>20</sup> See Ray 1994:348-352, 364.

<sup>21</sup> Be WT *N’atthi* [Ce Ee Se *Atthi*] *kho, brāhmaṇa, eka, bhikkhu pi yaṃ mayaṃ etarahi sakkaroma garuṃ karoma mānema pūjema; sakkatvā garuṃ katvā upanissāya viharāmā ti*. Interestingly, only Be (the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā ed) has the reading *n’atthi*: see Intro (2).

<sup>22</sup> For the laity living in dependence on a monastery, see **Mahā Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77,6/2:5), SD 49.5.

<sup>23</sup> On the issue of “death denial” and post-Buddha Buddhism, see **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (9) & **Miraculous Stories**, SD 27.5b (6.2).

celebrating the Buddhist presence culturally (and without exploiting Buddhism for worldly pursuits and gains), there is a great good that Buddhism can do for the individual, for society and for the world.

## 2.2 “THERE IS A MONK WE NOW HONOUR ...” [§11.2 (4)]

Ānanda, after telling Vassa,kāra that the sangha is not led by any individual, but depends on the Dharma [2.1], when questioned further by Vassa,kāra, tells him that **“there is a monk (*eka,bhikkhu*), brahmin, whom we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on”** (*atthi kho brāhmaṇa eka,bhikkhu pi yaṃ mayā etarahi sakkaroma garuṃ karoma mānema pūjema; sakkatvā garuṃ katvā upanissāya viharāmā ti*) [§11b(4)].

This is, in fact, the reading “*atthi*” (there is) found in the Sinhalese (Ce), Pali Text Society (Ee), and Siamese (Se) texts. Only the Chaṭṭha Saṅgīti text reads “*n’atthi*” (*there is no*). Moreover, the parallel Āgama passage in MĀ 145 *affirms* (有 *yǒu*) that there is such a monk, confirming the majority reading.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, from the context of the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta, it makes perfect sense that Ānanda would answer in the affirmative. The context of the passages that follow his answer is that of the “ten qualities inspiring faith” (*dasa pasādanīya dhamma*) in a monk [§§21-23]. The whole reading here makes less sense with *n’atthi*.

## 3 *Jhāna*: “meditation” or “dhyana”?

### 3.1 THE EARLY BUDDHIST CONTEXT

The usage of the term *jhāna* in the **Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta** (M 108) [§§25-27], especially with Ānanda’s statement, “The Blessed One, brahmin, neither praises all kinds of meditation [*dhyana*] nor not praises all kinds of meditation” [§26]. If we accept the fact that *dhyana (jhāna) arises only after all the 5 mental hindrances have been dispelled*, then it is clear, from §26, that “*dhyana*” (at least as understood in this Sutta) is a generic term for “meditation.”

§26 states that the Buddha does not praise any meditation that is tainted by any of the five mental hindrances. Such an interpretation is supported by **Analayo**, who writes:

Although *jhāna* usually refers to the attainment of deep absorption, the word occasionally retains the original meaning of meditation. The *Gopakamoggallāna Sutta*, for example, mentions a form of *jhāna* in which the hindrances still obsess the mind.<sup>25</sup> Such “*jhāna*” does not qualify as a meditative absorption, since it is the absence of the hindrances that characterize true absorption. (2003:75; see also 2006:466 n230)

The Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta adds that it is impossible to meditate properly when the mind is obsessed by sensual desire (or any other hindrances): we would only “meditate, pre-meditate, over-meditate, out-meditate” (*jhāyati pajjhāyati nijjhāyati apajjhāyati*) [§26]. The Buddha does not speak in praise of such a practice.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> MĀ 145 = T1.26.654c5.

<sup>25</sup> See Analayo’s fn here.

<sup>26</sup> M 108,26/3:13 f, SD 33.5. There is a wordplay here: *pajjhāyati* (*pa + jhāyati*), “to be in flames, to waste, decay, dry up”; fig: “to be consumed or overcome with grief, disappointment or remorse” (V 3:19, 4:5; A 2:214, 216, 3:57; J 3:534 *pajjhāti* mc); alt tr as “it burns up, he is consumed (by grief, etc)”; *nijjhāyati* means “he thinks” but also has the sense of “being consumed (by thought, etc); and *apajjhāyati* means “he is absorbed (in thoughts on account of ‘I am’-conceit).” Although we can render the words according to their prefixes’ basic senses of *pa-* (up), *ni-* (down),



In a broad way, we can associate the last three terms with the 3 unwholesome roots, thus:

“over-meditate”	<i>pajjhāyati</i>	to meditate “consumed, burned up” by <u>greed</u> ( <i>lobha</i> ) or <u>lust</u> ( <i>rāga</i> );
“under-meditate”	<i>nijjhāyati</i>	to be weighed “down” by <u>hate</u> ;
“out-meditate”	<i>apajjhāyati</i>	to be led astray or “way out” by <u>delusion</u> .

In a negative sense, *jhāyati* here, following the text, is to meditate troubled by the 5 mental hindrances. I don’t think the suttas use these terms in such a technical way, but only in a *reiterative and mnemonic sense*, simply meaning “to meditate troubled by the 5 hindrances,” which defines *jhāyati*, the first and key term here (in this context).

### 3.2 A BROADER BUDDHIST CONTEXT

Amongst the Chan traditions of Chinese Buddhism and their descendants (Zen, Sōn, Th’iên, etc), which traditionally reject the “southern” or Indian conception of *jhāna*,<sup>27</sup> opting to be guided by such teachings and traditions as this verse, attributed to Bodhidharma:

教外別傳	<i>jiào wài bié zhuàn</i>	A special [separate] transmission outside the teachings,
不立文字	<i>bú lì wén zì</i>	does not depend on written words, <sup>28</sup>
直指人心	<i>zhí zhǐ rén xīn</i>	directly points to the human mind,
見性成佛	<i>jiàn xìng chéng fó</i>	see one’s nature and become Buddha.
(See T2008.360a24-360c12 & 2008.364c9-364c24) <sup>29</sup>		

For the benefit of those who are more comfortable with such a definition, I have given a more accommodating alternate translation, parenthesized by “[dhyana],” which means meditation in general, and which also refers to its acculturated forms.

Where the Chan traditionalists and followers reject or downplay *jhāna*, as known in early Indian Buddhism, they are close to the modern tradition of Vipassana.<sup>30</sup> Both traditions admonish their practitioners to see directly into the true nature of things. However, Vipassana, in a sense is less intellectualized<sup>31</sup> as it does not make use of the *gong’an* (Jap koan).<sup>32</sup>

A final note to those keen on meditation as a means of mental cultivation or self-healing, try any method you feel would work for you, especially with the guidance of a morally virtuous, patient and experienced teacher. The best test to know whether the method is working for you or not, is that when you consistently feel a sense of inner joy and spaciousness, it is probably working for you. The next test

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and *apa-* (out), I have followed Comy, which says that the prefixes are meant to give the words increasing emphases (*upasagga, vasena vaḍḍhatāno*, MA 2:418). See **Māra Tajjanīya S** (M 50.13/1:334), SD 36.4 (pl) for details.

<sup>27</sup> Chan/Zen rejection of the Indian Buddhist conception of *jhāna* compelled them to seek an alternate way of legitimizing themselves. One key way was the idea of patriarchship, which was based on the ancient Chinese tradition of recording family lineage, where a teacher-disciple relationship replaced the father-son lineage. See SD 40b.5 (5.2.4.9) (4).

<sup>28</sup> Most trs take *wénzì* (文字) as a dvandva (“words and letters”), but the more common usage is as karmadharaya (descriptive cpd), which I follow here.

<sup>29</sup> See **How Buddhism became Chinese**, SD 40b (5.1.2).

<sup>30</sup> See **Samatha & Vipassana**, SD 41.1.

<sup>31</sup> D T Suzuki, in a light (but ironically truthful) moment, remarks: “Zen claims to be ‘a specific transmission outside the scripture and to be altogether independent of verbalism,’ but it is Zen masters who are the most talkative and most addicted to writings of all sorts.” (In his intro to Zenkei Shibayama’s *A Flower Does Not Talk*, Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1971:9). See also **How Buddhism became Chinese**, SD 40b (5.1.3.3).

<sup>32</sup> See **How Buddhism became Chinese**, SD 40b (5.1.2.7) & (5.1.3.1).

is that if you find one system works for you, it is likely that any other bona fide mindfulness method would not pose any difficulty for you. If your meditation allows you to accept yourself in a positively joyful manner and allows an inclusive space for others, too, then it is working well.<sup>33</sup>

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## Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta

### The Discourse to Gopaka Moggallāna

M 108

1 Thus have I heard.

#### Ānanda meets Gopaka Moggallāna

1.2 At one time, not long after the parinirvana [the final passing away] of the Blessed One,<sup>34</sup> the venerable<sup>35</sup> **Ānanda** was staying in the squirrels' feeding-ground in Veḷu, vana [the Bamboo Grove] near Rāja, gaha.

2 Now at that time, Ajāta, sattu Vedehi, putta [son of the lady Vedehī], the rajah of Māgadha, being suspicious of the rajah Pajjota,<sup>36</sup> was having Rāja, gaha fortified.<sup>37</sup> [§6a]

3 Then, in the morning, the venerable Ānanda, having dressed himself, taking robe and bowl, entered Rāja, gaha for alms. Then, it occurred to the venerable Ānanda,

"It is still too early to wander for alms in Rajagaha. What now if I were to visit the brahmin **Gopaka Moggallāna** while he is at work."<sup>38</sup>

4 So the venerable Ānanda went to where the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna was working.

The brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna saw the venerable Ānanda coming from afar. Seeing the venerable Ānanda, he said this to him:

"Come, master Ānanda! Welcome to the master Ānanda! It has been a long time since the venerable Ānanda found an opportunity to come here.<sup>39</sup> Please sit down, master Ānanda; there is a seat prepared."

<sup>33</sup> See further **The Buddha discovers dhyana**, SD 33.1b.

<sup>34</sup> Comy says that this was just after the distribution of the Buddha's relics, when Ānanda was at Rāja, gaha for the Dharma-Vinaya recital (*dharmā, vinaya saṅgīti*, ie "the first Council") (MA 4:70).

<sup>35</sup> *Ee* omits *āyasma*, which is found in other MSS.

<sup>36</sup> *Pajjota*, more fully, Caṇḍa Pajjota ("the fierce"), king of Avantī (capital, Ujjenī, DhA 1:192), was a friend of king Bimbisāra, who was killed by his own son, Ajāta, sattu. Ajāta, sattu thought that Pajjota might seek to avenge his friend's murder (MA 4:70). See Intro (1.2.1.1).

<sup>37</sup> This fortress was on the confluence of the Ganges and the Sōn: see Intro (1.2.2).

<sup>38</sup> "The brahmin ... while he was at work" (*brāhmaṇassa kammanto*), ie, outside the city (MA 4:71). Apparently, from the above context, DPPN surmises that Gopaka Moggallāna is "a brahmin minister of Ajātasattu, in charge of some defence works in Rajagaha" (DPPN 1:818). His forename, perhaps a nickname, *gopaka*, means "cattle-herd."

<sup>39</sup> *Cirassaṃ kho bhavaṃ ānando imaṃ pariyāyam akāsi yad idaṃ idh'āgamanāya*. See **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,5/- 1:179), SD 7.14; **Udumbarikā Sīha, nāda S** (D 25,7.1/3:39), SD 1.4; **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,4/3:7), SD 33.5. In the phrase, *pariyāyam akasi*, "made it an occasion." In the phrase, *pariyāyam akasi*, "made it an occasion," Comy glosses *pariyāya* as *vāra* ("occasion, opportunity") (UA 115). This is stock: **D** 1:90 (DA 2:369), 179 (see D:RD 1:245 n2), **2**:270, **3**:2, 39; **M** 1:252 (MA 2:300 f), 326, 481, **2**:2, 30, **3**:7; **S** 1:142; **A** 3:332 (AA 3:363), **4**:76; **U** 13 (UA 115); **J**



The venerable Ānanda sat down on the prepared seat. [8] The brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna took a certain low seat and sat down at one side.

### Gopaka Moggallāna's question

5 Sitting thus at one side, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna said this to the venerable Ānanda:

5.2 “Master Ānanda, is there **a single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the master Gotama**, the arhat [worthy one], fully self-awakened one?”<sup>40</sup>

“There is, brahmin, no single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the Blessed One, the arhat [worthy one], fully self-awakened one.

5.3 For, **the Blessed One** is the one who opens a path where there is none, who brings forth the path not yet brought forth, who points out the path that is not yet pointed out, *the path-finder, the path-knower, the path-expert*. But **his disciples** even now dwell as accomplished followers after him.”<sup>41</sup>

### Vassa,kāra's entry

6 But this conversation that the venerable Ānanda was having with the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna was interrupted.

For, then the brahmin **Vassakāra**, chief minister of Magadha, while supervising work near Rājagaha [§2],<sup>42</sup> approached the venerable Ānanda and exchanged greetings with him.

When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, he sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Master Ānanda, what is the talk you are having, sitting together here? And what is the conversation that is left unfinished?”<sup>43</sup>

6.2 “Here, brahmin, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna said thus:

‘Master Ānanda, is there a single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the master Gotama, the arhat [worthy one], fully self-awakened one?’

3:359. In **Brahma Nimantanika S** (M 49), Baka Brahmā says: “Come, sir! Welcome, sir!... (*ehi kho mārīsā, sāgataṃ mārīsā, cirassaṃ kho marīsā imaṃ pariyāyaṃ akāsi yadidaṃ idh'āgamanāya*). (M 49.3a/1:326), SD 11.7.

<sup>40</sup> *Atthi nu kho, bho ānanda, eka, bhikkhu pi tehi dhammehi sabbena, sabbam sabbathā, sabbam samannāgato yehi dhammehi samannāgato so bhavaṃ gotamo ahoṣi araham sammā, sambuddhō ti?*

<sup>41</sup> **§§5.3+6.3**: *So hi, brāhmaṇa, bhagavā anuppannassa maggassa uppādetā, asaṅjātassa maggassa saṅjanetā, anakkhātassa maggassa akkhātā, magga-ññū, magga, vidū, magga, kovidā. Maggānugā ca pana etarahi sāvakā viharanti pacchā samannāgatā ti*, M 3:8,12 = S 1:191,1 ≈ 3:66,16 (SA 2:278,5) = S 3:66,15 = Miln 217,10-219,11 = Pm 2:194,19 ≈ Ap 570,5 = ThīA 91,33\* (qu Ap). This is the uppādetā pericope: **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,5.3/-3:8), SD 33.5; **Pavāraṇā S** (S 8.7,5/1:191), SD 49.11; **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58,11/3:65 f), SD 63.11. Comys on the last 2 suttas explain the passage in both places, reflecting on their significance. Comy is silent on ***pacchā samannāgata***, but Comy on S 22.58 explains it as: “they follow after him (*sam-anugatā*, from *sam-anugacchati*) the Blessed One who has gone before them” (*paṭhama, gatassa bhagavato pacchā samanugatā*, SA 1:277): see M:H 350 n1. Here (M 108), note that Ānanda repeats this passage to Gopaka Moggallāna at the end of the sutta [§29.2]. Comy, however, is silent on §5.3. It is possible that the passage was interpolated: see Analayo 2006: 462 n206. The Chinese Āgama version, **MĀ 145**, omits §6.3.

<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere, Vassakāra and Sunidha (another chief minister, *mahāmatta*) were fortifying Pāṭali, gāma against the Vajjī (V 1:222 = D 2:86 = U 87). **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16) opens with Ajāta, sattu, king of Magadha, sending Vassa, kāra to tell the Buddha that he (Ajāta, sattu) was preparing to battle the Vajjī (D 16,1.2-5/3:72-76), SD 9.

<sup>43</sup> *Kāya nu'ttha, bho ānanda, etarahi kathāya sannisinnā, kā ca pana vo antarā, kathā vippakatā ti?* This is stock, where the person interrupting is usu the Buddha, eg, D 1,1.4/1:2; M 108,6/3:8 (the brahmin Vassa, kāra), 119,2/-3:89, U 2.2/11; J 4/1:120

When this was said, I, brahmin, said this to the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna:

*‘There is, brahmin, no single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the master Gotama, the arhat [worthy one], fully self-awakened one.*

6.3 *For, the Blessed One is the one who opens a path where there is none, [9] who brings forth the path not yet brought forth, who points out the path that is not yet pointed out, the path-finder, the path-knower, the path-expert. But his disciples even now dwell as accomplished followers after him.’*

6.4 This, brahmin, is the conversation that I’m having with the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna which is left unfinished. Then you arrived.”

## Who is the refuge of the community?

7 (1) “Now, master Ānanda, is there not a single monk that the master Gotama had appointed, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,’ and to whom you should now turn to?”<sup>44</sup>

*“There is not a single monk, brahmin, that the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, had appointed, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,’ and to whom you should now turn to.”*

8 (2) “But, master Ānanda, is there not a single monk, **chosen by the sangha**, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,’ and to whom you should now turn to?”

(3) “There is *not* a single monk, brahmin, chosen by the sangha, **appointed by a number of elder monks**, thus: ‘This one will be your refuge<sup>45</sup> after the passing of the Blessed One,’ and to whom you should now turn to.”

9 “But, master Ānanda, being thus without such a refuge, what is the cause for your **concord**?”<sup>46</sup>

*“But we are not without refuge, brahmin. We are with refuge, brahmin. The Dharma is our refuge!”<sup>47</sup>*

## Vassa,kāra is perplexed

10 (1) “Now, master Ānanda, on being asked,

‘Is there, master Ānanda, not **a single monk that the master Gotama had appointed**, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to?’  
you answered,

<sup>44</sup> Ce Ee Ke Se Atthi nu kho, bho ānanda, eka, bhikkhu pi tena bhotā gotamena ṭhapito: ayaṃ vo mam’ accayena paṭisaraṇaṃ bhavissatī ti, yaṃ tumhe etarahi paṭidhāveyyāthā (Be paṭipādeyyāthā) ti? **Paṭidhāveyyāthā** is 3 pl opt of *paṭidhāvati* (he runs back to, runs near): cf *pubbantam...* ~ (“would run back to the past,” M 1:265,1) ≈ *pubbantam...* *paṭidhāvissati* (S 2:26,27); opp *aparantaṃ ādhāveyyāthā* (“would run ahead to the future,” M 2:265,7) ≈ *aparantaṃ upadhāvissati* (vl *apadhāvissati*), S 2:26,33). **Paṭipādeyyāthā** is 3 pl opt of *paṭipajjati* (he follows): cf *pāpakassa vivāda, mūlassa āyatim anavassavāya* ~, “you should practise for the non-emergence for the evil root of dispute in the future” (V 2:89,22-24 (cf 5:92,22) = D 3:246,22...247,16 = M 2:246,9-12 = A 3:335,1-3); *navānaṃ kammānaṃ akaraṇā āyatim anavassavo*, “not doing any more new karma” (M 1:93,7 = 2:214,10 f). See Intro (2).

<sup>45</sup> **Paṭisaraṇa**, refuge, shelter, help, protection (M 1:295, *mano* as ~ of the other 5 senses); M 3:9; S 4:221, 5:218; A1:199 (*bhagavaṃ* ~), 2:148 (*sa* ~ able to be restored), 3:186 (*kamma* ~); 4:158, 351, 5:355; J 1:213, 6:398. Opp *appaṭisaraṇa*, “without shelter, unprotected” (V 2:153). Comy glosses **paṭisaraṇa** as “support” (*avassaya*, MA 4:72; also J 1:211, 2:197, 4:167; Miln 160; DhA 2:267, 4:198; PvA 5, 113).

<sup>46</sup> *Evaṃ appaṭisaraṇo ca pana, bho ānanda, ko hetu sāmaggīyāti.*

<sup>47</sup> **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16) records the Buddha as declaring that “the Dharma and the Vinaya will, at my passing, be your teacher” (D 16,6.1/2:154). See Intro (2).

‘There is not a single monk, brahmin, that the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, had appointed, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to.’

(2) On being asked,

‘But, master Ānanda, is there not **a single monk, chosen by the sangha**, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to?’

you answered,

‘There is not a single monk, brahmin, chosen by the sangha, or appointed by a number of elder monks, **[10]** thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to.’

(3) On being asked,

‘But, master Ānanda, being thus without such a refuge, **what is the cause for concord?**’ you answered,

‘But we are not without refuge, brahmin. We *are* with refuge, brahmin. **The Dharma is our refuge!**’<sup>48</sup>  
But, master Ānanda, **what does this statement mean?**’<sup>49</sup>

### Ānanda’s answer

**11** “There is, brahmin, **the course of training**<sup>50</sup> for the monks prescribed, that is, the Pātimokkha [monastic code]<sup>51</sup> laid down by the Blessed One who knows and sees, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one.<sup>52</sup>

On an **uposatha [observance] day**, those of us who live in dependence on the one and same village and field, all assemble as one. Having assembled, we ask of one another regarding what has happened.<sup>53</sup>

If any of the monks were to say that he has committed an offence or a transgression, we will deal with him **in accordance with the Dharma** (as training-rule and teaching),<sup>54</sup> in accordance with the way we have been instructed.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The sangha is not governed by a single person or personal judgements, but by the Dharma-Vinaya laid down by the Buddha. See Intro (2).

<sup>49</sup> *Imassa pana, bho ānanda, bhāsītassa katham attho daṭṭhabbō ti?* Lit, “But how, master Ānanda, is the meaning of this talk to be seen?”

<sup>50</sup> “The course of training” (*sikkhā, pada*, lit “steps of training”). Here it is taken in a general sense of “training” (as in *sikkhā, kāma*, “desirous of training,” V 1:44; D 2:101; S 5:154. 263; A 1:24, 238), rather than “training-rule, precept” (as in *sikkhā, samādāna*, “undertaking the precepts,” V 1:146; A 1:238 f, 4:15, 5:165); or with both senses, as in *sikkhā, sā, jīva*, “the course of training comprising precepts governing life (of a monastic)” (V 3:23 f; M 1:179, 267, 345, 2:162, 226, 3:33; A 2:208, 5:204; Pug 37; def at MA 2:205).

<sup>51</sup> *Pātimokkha* or *pāṭimokkha*. Formally known as Pātimokkha Sutta. A collection of precepts for the monks (totalling 227) and nuns (totalling 311), recited on *uposatha* or precept days. These rules form the basis of the Sutta Vibhaṅga & Bhikkhuṇī Vibhaṅga (V 3+4). They do not incl every rule for monastics, but serve as a summary. Many other rules and texts for formal acts (*kamma, vācā*), eg, are found in the Khandhaka, comprising the Mahā, vagga, V 1, & Culla, vagga, V 2). See (1) Oskar von Hinüber, *A Handbook of Pāli Literature*, 1996 §§15-21; (2) *The Pātimokkha*, ed W Pruitt, tr K R Norman, Oxford: Pali Text Soc, 2001.

<sup>52</sup> *Atthi kho, brāhmaṇa, tena bhagavatā jānatā passatā arahatā sammā, sambuddhena bhikkhūnaṃ sikkhā, padam paññattaṃ, pātimokkham uddiṭṭhaṃ.*

<sup>53</sup> *Te mayaṃ tad-ah’uposathe yāvatikā ekaṃ gāma, khettaṃ upanissāya viharāma te sabbe ekajjhaṃ sannipatāma; sannipatitvā yassa taṃ pavattati taṃ ajjhēsāma.*

**The worthy ones do not deal with us; the Dharma deals with us.**<sup>56</sup>

11.2 (4) “Is there, master Ānanda, a single monk whom you *now* honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on?”

“**There is a monk,**<sup>57</sup> brahmin, whom we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on.”<sup>58</sup>

### Vassa,kāra is still perplexed

12 “(1) Now, master Ānanda, on being asked,

‘Is there, master Ānanda, not a single monk that the master Gotama had appointed, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,’ and to whom you should now [then] turn to?”

you answered,

‘*There is not a single monk, brahmin, that the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the arhat, fully self-awakened one, had appointed, thus: “This one will be your refuge when I have passed on,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to.*’

(2) On being asked,

‘But, master Ānanda, is there not a single monk, chosen by the sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] turn to?’

you answered,

‘*There is not a single monk, brahmin, chosen by the sangha, appointed by a number of elder monks, thus: “This one will be your refuge after the passing of the Blessed One,” and to whom you should now [then] [11] turn to.*’

(3) On being asked,

“Is there, master Ānanda, a single monk whom you now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on?”

you answered,

“*There is a monk, brahmin, whom we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on.*”<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> “In accordance with the training-rule,” *yatha,dhamma*. I think IB Horner is right here: instead of taking *dhamma* to mean “the Dharma,” the context is in greater favour of rendering *dhamma* as “training-rule.” See M:H 3:60 n3 & V:H 4:v (indexes sv “Rule, according to the”). However, the tr “in accordance with the Dharma” is also acceptable if we incl the sense of “training rule,” too. Moreover, in the foll sentence, *dhamma* is best render as “the Dharma.” As Horner herself notes regarding *dhamma* that “The context here seems to require ‘rule’ in translation, which only shows the close inner bond of *dhamma* as teaching and *dhamma* as rule.” (M:H 3:60 n3)

<sup>55</sup> *Tasmiñ ce bhaññamāne hoti bhikkhussa āpatti hoti vitikkamo taṃ mayaṃ yathā,dhammaṃ yathā’nusiṭṭhaṃ kāremā ti.*

<sup>56</sup> *Na kira no bhavanto kārenti; dhammo no kāreti.* See Intro (2).

<sup>57</sup> “A monk” (*eka,bhikkhu*). There are 2 opposing readings: *atthi kho brāhmaṇa eka,bhikkhu pi yaṃ mayaṃ eta- rahi sakkaroma garuṃ karoma mānema pūjema; sakkatvā garuṃ katvā upanissāya viharāmā ti*: so Ce Ee Se; however Be WT has *n’atthi kho brāhmaṇa eka,bhikkhu pi...* Interestingly, only Be (the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā ed) has the reading *n’atthi*. The parallel Āgama passage in MĀ 145 = T1.26.654c5 *affirms* (有 *yǒu*) that there is such a monk, confirming the majority reading. See Intro (2.2).

<sup>58</sup> For the laity living in dependence on a monastery, see **Mahā Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77,6/2:5), SD 49.5.

<sup>59</sup> What is *not* said here is of special interest. No such individual (such as Mahā Kassapa) is named. From the passages that follow, the “one monk” (*eka,bhikkhu*) here is generic term for any monk who has the 10 qualities inspiring faith [§§13-23].

But, master Ānanda, **what does this statement mean?**"

## The 10 qualities inspiring faith

**13** "There are, brahmin, **10 qualities that inspire faith**<sup>60</sup> that have been pointed out by the Blessed One, the one who sees and knows, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one.

In whomever these qualities are found, it is him that we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on.

What are the ten?

THE 4 QUALITIES CONSTITUTING AN ELDER (*thera, karaṇa dhamma*)<sup>61</sup> [§§14-17]

**14** (1) Here, brahmin, a monk is **morally virtuous** (*sīlava*):  
he dwells restrained by the restraints of the Patimokkha, accomplished in conduct and resort,  
seeing danger even in the smallest fault,  
trains himself in the course of training [the training-rules] he has undertaken.<sup>62</sup>

**15** (2) He is **deeply learned** (*bahu-s, suta*),  
remembers what he has heard [learned], a store of learning.<sup>63</sup>  
The Teachings that are beautiful in the beginning, in the middle, in the end,  
along with its meaning and phrasing, which declare the holy life, wholly complete, utterly pure—  
these are what he is deeply learned in, he remembers, has mastered verbally,  
them in his mind, penetrated them rightly by view.

**16** (3) He is **contented** (*santuṭṭha*) regarding robe, alms-food, lodging, and medicine, support and necessities for the sick.

**17** (4) He attains at will, without trouble, without difficulty, **the 4 dhyanas**  
that constitute the higher mind (*catu jhāna ābhicetasika*), an abiding that is pleasant here and now.

THE 6 SUPERKNOWLEDGES (*cha-l-abhiññā*)<sup>64</sup> [§§18-23a]

**18** (5) He wields **the manifold psychic power**,<sup>65</sup> namely,  
Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.  
He appears, and vanishes.  
He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.

<sup>60</sup> *Dasa pasādanīya dhamma*. Cf **Mahā Sakul'udāyī S** (M 77), where Udāyī lists these 5 qualities of the Buddha—eats little, uses any kind of robe, eats any kind of almsfood, content with any kind of dwelling, and lives in seclusion—that make him worthy of respect and for living in dependence on (M 77,8/2:5 f), SD 49.5.

<sup>61</sup> These 4 qualities [§§14-17] are listed in **Uruvelā S 2** (A 4.22) and called as such.

<sup>62</sup> *Idha, brāhmaṇa, bhikkhu sīlavā hoti, pātimokkha, saṃvara, saṃvuto viharati ācāra, gocara, sampanno, aṇumat-tesu vajjesu bhaya, dassāvī, samādāya sikkhati sikkhā, padesu*. Recurs mutatis mutandis in **Sekha S** (M 53), where it is the first quality of a noble disciple (M 53,7/1:355), SD 21.14. As in **(Ti) Sikkhā S** (A 3.88/1:235), SD 24.10c. See **(Sekha) Uddesa S** (A 3.85/1:231 f), SD 3.3(2) for a fuller def of the 3 higher trainings (*ti adhi, sikkhā*), in terms of the 4 types of saints. On an ancient list of ethical rules, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,43-62/1:63-69 @ SD 8.10).

<sup>63</sup> *Bahu-s, suto hoti suta, dharo suta, sannicayo*.

<sup>64</sup> *Cha-l-abhiññā* is a late term found only in the Abhidhamma and Comys.

<sup>65</sup> Cf **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11) where the Buddha disapproves of exhibiting such powers (D 11,4-5/1:213 f), SD 1.7. See **Miracles**, SD 27.15a.

He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.  
 He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.  
 Sitting cross-legged, he goes through the air [12] like a winged bird.  
 With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.  
 He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.

**19 (6) With the divine-ear element,**<sup>66</sup>  
 purified and surpassing the human,  
 he hears both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

**20 (7) He knows the minds of other beings,** other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.<sup>67</sup>

*He knows[understands] a mind with lust as a mind with lust,  
 and a mind without lust as a mind without lust.  
 He knows a mind with aversion as a mind with aversion,  
 and a mind without aversion as a mind without aversion.  
 He knows a mind with delusion as a mind with delusion,  
 and a mind without delusion as a mind without delusion.  
 He knows a contracted mind [due to sloth and torpor] as a contracted mind,  
 and a distracted mind [due to restlessness and worry] as a distracted mind.  
 He knows an exalted mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] as an exalted mind,  
 and an unexalted mind [not developed by dhyana] as an unexalted mind.  
 He knows a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind,  
 and an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind<sup>68</sup>.  
 He knows a concentrated mind as a concentrated mind,  
 and an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind.  
 He knows a released mind as a released mind,  
 and an unreleased mind as an unreleased mind.*

**21 (8) He recollects his manifold past existence,**  
 that is to say, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred thousand births, many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion, many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus:

‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain,  
 such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.  
 There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure and pain,  
 such my life-span. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’

Thus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup> “Divine-ear element,” *dibba,sota,dhātu*, clairsaudience. See **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (5.2).

<sup>67</sup> The following section (italicized) is a list of mental states is apparently taken from **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** (D 22,12/-2:299 = M 10,34/1:59), where it fits more appropriately (Walshe, D:W 546 n131). On another def of mind-reading (4 kinds), see **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28.6/3:103 f), SD 14.14.

<sup>68</sup> Unsurpassable (*anuttaraṃ*) mind is prob synonymous with “developed” mind. See D:W 592 n667.

<sup>69</sup> This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.



**22** (9) He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],<sup>70</sup> purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-arising, and he knows how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, in the heavens, in the suffering states, faring in accordance with their karma.

**23** (10) By realizing for himself through direct knowledge, right here and now, with **the destruction of the mental influxes**, he attains and dwells in the influx-free freedom of mind, freedom by wisdom<sup>71</sup>!<sup>72</sup>

23.2 These, brahmins, are the 10 qualities that inspire faith that have been pointed out by the Blessed One, the one who sees and knows, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one.

In whomever these qualities are found, it is him that we now honour, respect, esteem, venerate, and having honoured and respected, dwell in dependence on. **[13]**

<sup>70</sup> *Dibba, cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhmma, cakkhu*) (see n in §104). Here, it is stated in brief; for the full passage, see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,97/1:82), SD 8.10. On the relationship of this knowledge to the 62 grounds for wrong views, see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.3(76.3). See prec n.

<sup>71</sup> “Liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom,” respectively, *ceto, vimutti* (or, liberation by concentration, ie through destruction of the mental hindrances) and *paññā, vimutti* (liberation through insight) (A 1:60). One who is “freed by wisdom” “may not have reached the 8 liberations (*vimokkha*) in his own body, but through seeing with wisdom, his mental influxes are destroyed” (M 70.16/1:478). All arhats are perfectly liberated in the same way from ignorance and suffering, but are distinguished into 2 types on the basis of their proficiency in concentration. Those who can attain the 8 liberations (*aṭṭha, vimokkha*), which include the 4 formless attainments and the attainment of cessation, are called “freed both ways,” ie, freed from the physical body by means of the formless dhyanas, and from all defilements by the path of arhathood. Arhats like Sāriputta and Moggallāna are “freed both ways” (*ubhato, bhāga, vimutta*). The differences between the two types of liberation are given in **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 2:70 f) and **Kiṭṭāgiri S** (M 1:477 f). For a full list of the 8 deliverances, see **Mahā Nidāna S** (D 15,35/ 2:70 f), SD 5.17. See also D 3:262, 228; **Vimokkha S**, A 8.66/4:306; also M 120,37/3:103 @ SD 3.4.

<sup>72</sup> *Āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto, vimuttiṃ paññā, vimuttiṃ diṭṭh’eva dhamme sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upa-sampajja viharati*: **Mahāli S** (D 6,13/1:156), **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16,2.7/2:92), **Cakka, vatti Sīha, nāda S** (D 26,28/3:78); **Ākaṅkheyya S** (M 6,19/1:35), **Sekha S** (M 53,24/1:358), **Saṅkhār’upapatti S** (M 120,37/3:103); **Jhānābhiññā S** (S 16.27/2:214), **Āsava-k, khaya S** (S 48.20/5:203); **Sāraṇiya S** (A 3.12/1:107), **Anusota S** (A 4.1/2:6), **Upakkilesa S** (A 5.23,11/3:19), **Āhuneyya S 2** (A 6.2,6/3:281), **Udākūpama S** (A 7.15,9/4:13), **Saddhā S 1** (A 8.71,3/4:314), **(Navaka) Assa Khaluṅka S** (A 9.22,12/4:400), **Jhāna S** (A 10.8,2/5:10 f), **Subhūti S** (A 11.15,12/5:340); **Nanda S** (U 3.2/23); **Deva Sadda S** (It 3.4.3/75). The more common pericope is this: “His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the influx of sensual desire, the influx of existence, the influx of ignorance. With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Released (am I)!’ He knows that ‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived, done is that which needs to be done. There is nothing further beyond this,’” eg, **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,99.3/1:84), SD 8.10.

“**Mental influxes**,” *āsavā*: the oldest list is perhaps the set of **3 influxes** (*āsava*)—of sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63)—which are essentially the same as the **3 graspings** (*ti, gaha*) of craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and views (*diṭṭhi*), on account of which arise, resp, the notions “this is mine,” “this I am,” and “this is my self”: see **Vatthūpama S** (M 7,18/1:38), SD 28.12. The term *āsava* comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards or inwards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, cankers, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists **4 āsavas**, which is also found in the Nikāyas: the influxes of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 16,1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). See BDict: āsava.

## General Upananda

**24** When this was said, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, addressed **general Upananda**.<sup>73</sup>

“What do you think, good general—how these worthy ones honour those to be honoured, respect those to be respected, esteem those to be esteemed, venerate those to be venerated?”

“Truly, these worthy ones honour those to be honoured, respect those to be respected, esteem those to be esteemed, venerate those to be venerated!

For, if these worthy ones were not to honour those to be honoured, respect those to be respected, esteem those to be esteemed, venerate those to be venerated, then whom would these worthy ones, having honoured, having respected, having esteemed, having venerated, dwell in dependence on?”

## Vassa,kāra praises the Buddha and meditation

**25** Then, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“Where is master Ānanda staying now?”

“Brahmin, I am now staying in **the Bamboo Grove**.”

25.2 “I hope, master Ānanda, that the Bamboo Grove is delightful, of little noise, of little sounds, sheltered from the winds, a dwelling away from humans, and conducive for solitary retreat.”<sup>74</sup>

“Truly, brahmin, the Bamboo Grove is delightful, of little noise, of little sounds, sheltered from the winds, a dwelling away from humans, and conducive for solitary retreat, *on account of protectors and guardians such as yourselves*.”

“Truly, master Ānanda, the Bamboo Grove is delightful, of little noise, of little sounds, sheltered from the winds, a dwelling away from humans, *on account of worthy meditators and those inclined to meditation*. And the worthy ones are indeed meditators and those inclined to meditation, too.”<sup>75</sup>

25.3 At one time, master Ānanda, master Gotama was dwelling in **the pinnacled hall** in the great forest [*mahā,vana*], near Rāja,gaha. Then, I, master Ānanda, went to the Pinnacled Hall in the Great Forest, near Rāja,gaha, and approached the master Gotama. And there master Gotama spoke of meditation [*dhyana*] in many different ways. Master Gotama was indeed a meditator and inclined to meditation, and *he praised all kinds of meditation [dhyana]*.”

## The kind of meditation the Buddha rejects

**26** “The Blessed One, brahmin, *neither* praises all kinds of meditation [*dhyana*] *nor* not praises all kinds of meditation [*dhyana*].”<sup>76</sup>

And, what kind [14] of meditation, brahmin, does the Blessed One *not* praise?

<sup>73</sup> **Upananda** is a *senāpati* (general, commander-in-chief). This is prob the only ref in the Pali Canon to him. DPPN (“4. Upananda”) says he is “the commander-in-chief of the Magadha kingdom.” On the name *upananda*, see MA 4:129, where it is said that there are 4 namesakes.

<sup>74</sup> *Kacci pana, bho ānanda, veḷu,vanaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ c’eva appa,saddaṃ ca appa,nigghosaṃ ca vijana,vātaṃ man-ussa,rāhasseyyakaṃ paṭisallāna,sāruppan ti*. On Vassa,kāra’s real reason for protecting the Bamboo Grove, see Intro (1.2.4).

<sup>75</sup> *Jhāyino c’eva bhavanto jhāna,sīlino ca*.

<sup>76</sup> *Na ca kho, brāhmaṇa, so bhagavā sabbaṃ jhānaṃ vaṇṇesi, n’api so bhagavā sabbaṃ jhānaṃ na vaṇṇesī ti*. On the tr of *jhāna* as “meditation” or as “dhyana,” see Intro (3).

THE 5 MENTAL HINDRANCES<sup>77</sup>

(1) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with **sensual lust**, overcome by sensual lust,

and does not know according to reality the escape from sensual lust that has arisen.

Keeping sensual lust in his heart,<sup>78</sup> he meditates, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.<sup>79</sup>

(2) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with **ill will**, overcome by ill will, and does not know according to reality the escape from ill will that has arisen.

Keeping ill will in his heart, *he meditates*, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

(3) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with **sloth-and-torpor**, overcome by sloth-and-torpor, and does not know according to reality the escape from sloth-and-torpor that has arisen. Keeping sloth-and-torpor in his heart,

*he meditates*, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

(4) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with **restlessness-and-worry**, overcome by restlessness-and-worry, and

does not know according to reality the escape from restlessness-and-worry that has arisen.

Keeping restlessness-and-worry in his heart,

*he meditates*, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

(5) Here, brahmin, a certain person dwells with the mind obsessed with **doubt**, overcome by doubt, and does not know according to reality the escape from doubt that has arisen.

Keeping doubt in his heart, *he meditates*, over-meditates, under-meditates, out-meditates.

This kind of meditation, brahmin, the Blessed One does not praise.

## The kind of meditation the Buddha praises

**27** And, what kind of **meditation**, brahmin, does the Blessed One **praise**?

THE 4 DHYANAS<sup>80</sup>

(1) Here, brahmin, a monk, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, he attains and dwells in **the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and with zest and joy born of solitude.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>77</sup> For detailed studies on the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*), see **Mental hindrances**, SD 32.

<sup>78</sup> *So kāma, rāgaṃ y'eva antaraṃ karitvā*. Comy explains **antaraṃ karitvā** as “making it the interior (the heart)” (*abbhantaraṃ karitvā*, MA 4:73; see also AA 5:79), where CPD def *abbhantara* as “including (or making it the main thing).” CPD def *antaraṃ karitvā* as “to keep in mind, to be mainly concerned with (M 3:14,4 = A 5:323,7”: CPD 1:241a). Cf NmA 2:430 & C 1.9.6. The phrase comes from *antaraṃ karoti*, lit “he makes (it) the centre,” means “he keeps in mind; he is mainly concerned with”: cf *kāma, rāgaṃ antaraṃ karitvā*, etc (used in connection with mental hindrances) at **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,26/3:14), SD 33.5 & **Sandha S** (A 11.10/5:323) [A:Be 11.9]. Used in a positive sense throughout **Sappurisa S** (M 113): “keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way” (*so paṭipadaṃ y'eva antaraṃ karitvā*) (M 113/3:37-45), SD 23.7.

<sup>79</sup> *So kāma, rāgaṃ y'eva antaraṃ karitvā jhāyati pajjhāyati nijjhāyati apajjhāyati*. On the phrase *jhāyati pajjhāyati nijjhāyati apajjhāyati* (freely rendered at M:ÑB as “meditate, premeditate, outmeditate, and mismeditate”) and its variants, see: **M 50**,13/1:334 (SD 36.4) (pl) (attacks directed at the Buddha and his monks); **108**,26-27/3:13 f (SD 33.5). **Mahā Cunda S** (A 6.46) has *pajjhāyati* (“he is consumed in meditation”) (A 6.46.2/3:355 @ SD 4.6), a wordplay (reflecting disapproval): see Intro (3.1).

<sup>80</sup> For a more detailed description of the dhyanas (*jhāna*) with similes, see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2,75-82/1:73-76 @ SD 8.10).

(2) With the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in **the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, with zest and joy born of concentration.<sup>82</sup>

(3) With the fading away of zest, he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences joy with the body. He attains and dwells in **the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

(4) With the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,<sup>83</sup> and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure, he attains and dwells in **the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>84</sup>

This is the kind of meditation, brahmin, that the Blessed One praises.”

## Vassa,kāra departs

**28** “It seems, master Ānanda, that the Buddha censured the meditation to be censured, and praised what is to be praised.

Well, then, master Ānanda, we now depart. Many are our duties, there is much to be done.”

“Please, brahmin, do as you deem fit here.”<sup>85</sup> **[15]**

Then, the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Ānanda’s words, rose from his seat and departed.

## Admonition to Gopaka Moggallāna

**29** Then, not long after the brahmin Vassa,kāra, chief minister of Magadha, had left, the brahmin Gopaka Moggallāna said this to the venerable Ānanda:

“We asked master Ānanda a question, but master Ānanda has not answered it.”

“Did we not tell you, brahmin:

<sup>81</sup> “Born of solitude,” *viveka,ja*; ie it is the result of abandoning the hindrances: on the 3 kinds of solitude, see **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “concentration” (*saṃādhi*) here, see **The layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5.

<sup>82</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṇhī,bhāva*) because within it applied thought and sustained thought (thinking and discursion, *vitakka,vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. (S 2:273); cf S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī,saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate). See **Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.-2/4:263 f), SD 24.12a.

<sup>83</sup> “Joy ... pain,” *sukha ... dukkha*: this refers to *physical* feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *domanassa ... somanassa*—refers to *mental* feelings, transcended earlier. Mental feelings must be overcome first so that the mind is not distracted by itself, as it were. Then, all the other feelings (arising from the physical sense-contacts) are transcended. On the significance of this, see **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.

<sup>84</sup> Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana—*equanimity (upekkhā)*, *mindfulness (satī)* and *one-pointedness of mind (cittassa ek’aggatā)*—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See also **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.83/1:75), SD 8.10 & **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5.4).

<sup>85</sup> *Yassa dāni tvaṃ brāhmaṇa kālaṃ maññasī ti*, lit “Please, brahmin, do what you think it is now the time to do.” This is stock: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,103/1:85 @ SD 8.10); **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,3.6/2:104 @ SD 13); **Sekha S** (M 53,3/1:354 @ SD 21.14); **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90,17/2:132 f @ SD 10.8); **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,28/3:14 @ SD 33.5); **Puṇṇ’ovāda S** (M 145,6/3:269 = S 35.88/4:62,31 @ SD 20.15); **Avassuta Pariyāya S** (S 35.243/4:183,15 + 30), SD 60.6; **Khemā Therī S** (S 44.1/4:379,29); **Vesālī S** (S 54.9/5:321,16, 17); & **Thapatayā S** (S 55.6/5:348,27). See Joy Manné, “On a departure formula and its translation,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 10, 1993:27-43.

‘There is, brahmin, no single monk who possesses all those qualities in every way as those possessed by the Blessed One, the arhat [worthy], fully self-awakened one.

29.2 For, the Blessed One is the one **who opens a path where there is none**, who brings forth the path not yet brought forth, who points out the path that is not yet pointed out, the path-finder, the path-knower, the path-expert. But his disciples even now dwell as accomplished followers after him.” [§5.3]

— evaṃ —

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