

3

Gārava Sutta

The Discourse on Respect | S 6.2

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

Theme: Even the Teacher respects the teaching

Translated by Piya Tan ©2004

1 Sutta significance

1.1 RELATED SUTTAS. Like the **Āyācana Sutta** (S 6.1),¹ the Gārava Sutta is one of the familiar canonical episodes in the life of the Buddha. Both events—Brahmā’s request and Brahmā’s appearance here—occur at the same venue: the goatherd banyan tree beside the Nerañjarā river at Uruvelā, that is, in the fifth week after the Buddha’s awakening.² This sutta is nearly identical to **the Uruvelā Sutta 1**,³ by way of a narrative by the Buddha, which however omits the fifth dharma aggregate [3.3; §7] but has an additional closing paragraph [§13].

There are two Chinese Āgama versions of this Sutta, both entitled 尊重經 (Zūnzhòng jīng), that is,⁴

SĀ 1188 = T99.44.321c18-322a27;

SĀ2 101 = T100.5.410a3-410b9.

These two Chinese versions are closely identical, but they locate the venue as being under the Bodhi tree and not at the Goatherd’s Banyan Tree as the Pali versions do [§1].⁵

1.2 MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE OF GĀRAVA

1.2.1 Gārava as respect. The title Gārava Sutta reflects its theme. The word *gārava*, both a noun (also as *gāravatā*)⁶ as well as a verb,⁷ meaning “respect, reverence, esteem,” sometimes literally, “heaviness.”⁸ There is also the form *sa,gārava*, “respectful, showing respect.”⁹ The opposite is *agārava*.¹⁰ Both forms come from the adjective *garu*, meaning “heavy.”

It should be noted that although *gārava* appears often enough throughout the Nikāyas,¹¹ most of its references (as *gārava* and its various forms) are overwhelmingly more common in the Commentaries.¹² The reason for this is probably, and understandably, that the issue of respect is more real and urgent after the Buddha, when the monastic community became more established and more populated.

The English word, **respect**, comes from the Latin cognate, which is derived from *respicere*, “to look (back) at, regard, consider.” It is ordinarily taken, especially in traditional societies or religious groups, to

¹ S 6.1/1:136-138 = SD 12.2.

² SA 1:203: see **Dhamma & Abhidhamma**, SD 26.1 (5), 5th week.

³ A 4.21/2:21 f.

⁴ The Chinese Āgama versions are listed under A 4.21 in R S Bucknell’s *Pali-Chinese Sutra Correspondences* (draft, 2004).

⁵ See Etienne Lamotte, “The Gāravasutta of the Saṃyuttanikāya and its Mahāyānist developments,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 9 1981:127-144

⁶ (n) V 2:168,34, 92,4; D 3:284,25; A 4:97,5; Sn 265; Tha 278; J 1:465,11; Ap 389,15, 438,11.

⁷ (adj) V 5:161, 31*; VA 1362,28; M 3:6,23 (*tibba,gārava*).

⁸ (“heaviness”) Vism 636,1; NdA 2:106,18; PmA 589,37 (*gāravatā*).

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

¹⁰ (n) V 5:92,1 f; D 3:244,12 f; Tha 966; J 5:437,15; DA 1934,35; MA 1:110,35. (adj) D 3:244,12; M 1:469,11, 2:245,28-32; A 3:7,20; Tha 953; J 5:436,12*; Dhs 1325. Cf *anādariya*: **Abhabba Tayo,dhamma S** (A 10.76.18/5:-146), SD 2.4.

¹¹ Most common in the canon itself are the simple forms *gāravo*, *gāravam* and *gārave*. Cpds are more common and found in Comys.

¹² This is confirmed by a global search using **gārav** (the asterisk * stands for a wildcard, representing any letter or none) in the CSCD.

mean a show of deference to “the master,” that is, one of greater power or greater learning, or those who are “elders,” the senior members of a family or community or society.

1.2.2 Social dimension of respect

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

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

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

For example, traditional Asians, especially Buddhists, generally show great tolerance for the faith and beliefs of others, such ensuring that shared with them are halal or kosher. Sadly, this Asian traditional other-respect is often taken as a weakness or an opportunity for Christian evangelists to force their beliefs on them. This persistent disrespect for others, in an important way, is slowly rotting this wholesome cultural root of ours, and as such needs to be reinvigorated for the sake of our own social health and maturity.

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

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

In real life, we are highly unlikely to consider whether moral shame or moral fear are in action, whether other-regard or self-regard are moving us. The reality is that both these “world protectors” work together, so that we have the gut feeling, as it were, we naturally *feel* that such an action is proper or improper. Being a healthy individual or a wholesome member of society, in short, is to have a natural sense of what is for the common good.¹³

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

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

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

¹³ On the relationship of respect to priorities (*ādhipateyya*), see **Ādhipateyya S** (A 3.40) @ SD 27.3 (2.2).

are around us, the easier it is for us to act in goodness and enjoy it, thus raising the true quality of social life.

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

When we understand these conditions, we also will find ways to work with them so that they are removed, or rearranged, resulting in *wholesome conditions* leading to personal growth and social progress. In other words, this is a respect for the nature of things, and in this way, **respect** finds its fullest expression as the 4 divine abodes.¹⁴

2 The teaching is above the teacher

2.1 RESPECTING THE TEACHING. The Sutta records how the Buddha reflects over his need of a spiritual teacher to show deference to. If a proper teacher cannot be found, then, he reflects, the Teaching should be respected. This theme is also in the last teachings of the Buddha, where he admonishes us to “take the Dharma as refuge.”¹⁵

In showing respect to the Dharma, the Buddha is, in a historical sense, keeping to an ancient tradition of the great Vedic rishis who **venerate** (*payirupāsati*)¹⁶ the Vedic texts. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad, for example, relates how the rishis Aṅgiras, Bṛhaspati and Ayāsyā are said to venerate the “high chant” (*Udgītha*) as the breath within the mouth. The text then reveals the hidden etymologies of the rishis’ names so that they identify with the breath (ChU 1.2.10-13).

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

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

2.2 THE SUN IMAGERY. Another important term in this connection is **bandhu**, which usually means a relative or kin, “but when one thing is said to be a *bandhu* of another, the meaning is that the former is connected to or is a counterpart of the latter.”¹⁷ In the Upaniṣads, such a connection with the universe is a hierarchical one, with reality right at the top; however, such connections are always hidden.¹⁸ The secret knowledge of the Upaniṣads, tapped through the teacher, is what liberates the pupil.

In early Buddhism, the word *bandhu* is found in *ādicca, bandhu*, “the kinsman of the sun,” a common epithet of the Buddha.¹⁹ While it is true that the Buddha has discovered the *secret* of true reality, he then shares this knowledge and *opens* it to all who would learn: he does not have the hidden “fist of a guru”

¹⁴ For a description of the divine abodes with similes, see **Te, vija S** (D 13,76-79/1:251), SD 1.8.

¹⁵ **Mahāparinibbāna S** (D 16,4.2 f/2:122 f, 16.6.1/2:154), SD 9.

¹⁶ “Venerate,” *payirupāsanti* (pl), *payirupāsati*, “he attends on (acc), honours, pays homage, worship” (D 1:47, 2:257; M 2:117; S 1:146; A 1:124, 126, 142, 4:337; Dh 64, 65; Tha 1236; J 6:222 (PED); def as *punappunam upa-saṅkamati* (VbhA 457); from *pari-upa √ās*, “to sit” (with metathesis as in *payirudāharati*) (Geiger 47.2) = Skt *pari-upatiṣṭhati*, from *pari-upa + √STHA*, “to stand” (SED): see **Caṅkī S** (M 95.20/2:173), SD 21.15 & **Kiṭṭhā, giri S** (M 70,22-24/1:479 f), SD 11.1.

¹⁷ See P Olivelle (tr), *Upaniṣads*, 1996: lii.

¹⁸ See eg ChU 1.1.10, 1.13.4.

¹⁹ V 1:145, 2:296 = A 1:54, V 5:145, 177, 210, 212, 215; D 2:287, 3:197; S 1:192 = Tha 1237d, S 1:186 = Tha 1212; A 4:228; Sn 915a, 1128; Tha 417.

(*ācariya, muṭṭhi*).²⁰ Just as the sun shines on all and sundry, the Buddha’s compassion reaches out to all who are willing and ready for the Dharma.

In the ancient Vedic tradition, the sun (Sūrya, Āditya) is the supreme light (RV 1.50.10), gives life to everything else (RV 1.50.4),²¹ and possesses the highest knowledge, benefitting all beings (RV 5.81.2). The early Upaniṣads, especially the Bṛhad Āraṇyaka and the Chāndogya, again and again allude to the Sun as a deity, giver of life and of light, and worthy of the highest worship.²² Understandably, the early Buddhists give the highest place in the universe to the Buddha, whose wisdom shines even beyond the sun, that is, because the Buddha has realized nirvana, which is beyond all words and thought, yet experienceable.

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

“Ānanda, it may be that you would think:

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

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

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

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

The “supreme worship” (*paramā pūjā*) is that *we should practise the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, properly practising, dwelling in accordance with the Dharma.*²³ An important part of this supreme worship is, of course, meditation. Even as we close our eyes and calm ourselves in the bliss of meditation, we are truly worshipping the Buddha, as it were. For, such a worship preserves and propagates the Dharma, which even the Buddha places above himself.²⁴

3 The fivefold dharma aggregates

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

²⁰ *Ācariya, muṭṭhi*: **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.2.25a/2:100), SD 9. Comys: “The teacher’s fist is found amongst outsiders who do not tell certain things to their pupils when they are still boys (*dahara, kāle*), who keep certain teachings for their beloved and favourite pupils, telling it to them only at the last moment from their deathbed. The Tathāgata does not hold back anything, keeping a closed fist, thinking, ‘I will teach this in my old age, at the last moment.’” (DA 2:548 = SA 3:203 f)

²¹ The whole of RV 1.50 is in praise of Sūrya.

²² It is interesting, as recorded in **Sundarika Bhāra, dvāja S** (Sn 3.4), that the Buddha, when questioned by Sundarika Bhāra, dvāja whether he (the Buddha) is a brahmin or not, responds by asking Sundarika about the Sāvitrī (or Gāyatrī) (RV 3.62.10) (**Sn 457**), the best known of the Vedic verses invoking Savitrī (the deity associated with the stimulating power of the sun) “in its 3 lines and 24 syllables.” See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gayatri_Mantra. Comy thinks that the Buddha good-naturedly plays a pun (paronomasia) on the brahmin, and refers to “the Sāvitrī of the noble ones” (*ariya, sāvitti*), ie the 3 refuges (*ti, saraṇa, gamana*) formula—*buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchami, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchami, saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchami*—which also has 3 lines and 24 syllables (SnA 403)!

²³ D 16,5.2-3/2:138 & SD 9(7b). On the story of Dhamm’ārāma, see Intro (14). Cf **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35), where in a similar connection, the arhat is said to be accomplished in the 3 supremacies (*anuttariya*) (M 35,26.2/1:235), SD 26.5.

²⁴ See **Gāraṇa S** (S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3. See also **The teacher or the teaching?** SD 3.14; also **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1), SD 24.11 (1.3).

- (1) the aggregate of moral virtue (*sīla-k,khandha*),
- (2) the aggregate of concentration (*samādhi-k,khandha*),
- (3) the aggregate of wisdom (*paññā-k,khandha*),
- (4) the aggregate of liberation (*vimutti-k,khandha*) and
- (5) the aggregate of the knowledge and vision of liberation (*ñāṇa,dassana-k,khandha*).

The 5 dharma aggregates constitute the 3 trainings (*sikkhā*), which is the path (*magga*), and the last two factors—liberation and the knowledge and vision of liberation—which constitute the result or fruition (*phala*) of the path, that is, they are to be realized (*sacchikatabba*).²⁵ Similarly, the 5 dharma aggregates are listed in full as the 10 “right states” (*sammattā*), that is, the noble eightfold path (*ariy’atṭhaṅgika magga*) along with right knowledge (*sammā,ñāṇa*) and right liberation (*sammā,vimutti*).²⁶

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

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

3.2 THE DHARMA AGGREGATES AS AN ADEPT’S QUALITIES

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

- (1) he is endowed with moral virtue (*sīla,sampanno hoti*),
- (2) he is endowed with concentration (*samādhi,sampanno hoti*),
- (3) he is endowed with wisdom (*paññā,sampanno hoti*),
- (4) he is endowed with liberation (*vimutti,sampanno hoti*), and
- (5) he is endowed with the knowledge and vision of liberation (*vimutti,ñāṇa.dassana,sampanno hoti*),

is “worthy of offerings (*āhuneyyo*), worthy of hospitality (*pāhuneyyo*), worthy of gifts (*dakkhiṇeyyo*), worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms (*añjali,karaṇīyo*), a supreme field of merit for the world (*anuttaram puñña-k,khetam lokassā ti*).”²⁷ (A 5.107/3:134)

3.2.2 The discourse that follows—**the Asekha Sutta** (A 5.108)—declares that those with these 5 qualities of the non-learner or adept (*asekha*), too, are “worthy” in the same manner, that is, regarding those endowed with these 5 qualities, namely,

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

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

3.2.3 Similarly, there are three other very short discourses—**the Upasampādetabba Sutta** (A 5.251), **the Nissaya Sutta** (A 5.252), and **the Sāmaṇera Sutta** (A 5.253)—which state that those with these same 5 aggregates of dharma *of an adept* (*asekha*) is one who “should be ordained” (*upasampāde-*

²⁵ Pm 1:35.

²⁶ D 3:271, 292; M 1:42; A 5:212. It is interesting that the noble eightfold path is not listed in **the Aṅguttara** Book of Eights (*aṭṭhaka nipāta*), but in its Book of Tens (*dasaka nipāta*) (A 10.103/5:212), where they are called “rightness, right states” (*sammattā*), ie, as the eightfold path plus right knowledge (*sammā,ñāṇa*) and right liberation (*sammā,vimutti*). In fact, this latter forms the complete path of training and liberation. See SD 43.15 (3).

²⁷ On these 9 qualities of the noble sangha, see **Dhajajga S** (S 11.3/1:218-220), SD 15.5.

tabbam), “tutelage should be given” (*nissayo dātabbo*) by him, and is “a novice who should attend” (*sāmaṇero upaṭṭhāpetabbo*) to him (A 3:217).

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

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

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

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

Pañcahi bhikkhave aṅgehi samannāgatena bhikkhunā upasampādetabbam, nissayo dātabbo, sāmaṇero upaṭṭhāpetabbo.

*Asekhena sīlakkhandhena samannāgato hoti,
asekhena samādhikkhanadhena samannāgato hoti,
asekhena paññākkhandhena samannāgato hoti,
asekhena vimuttikkhandhena samannāgato hoti,
asekhena vimuttiñānadassanakkhandhena samannāgato hoti.*

Imehi kho bhikkhave, pañcahaṅgehi samannāgatena bhikkhunā upasampādetabbam, nissayo dātabbo, sāmaṇero upaṭṭhāpetabbo. (Mv 1.36/1:62 f)

3.2.4 The best explanation for this is that these Vinaya rules provide for the ordination of those who have become arhats, that they still need to be trained in the rules and nature of monastic life, and that they should be attended to by novices. The non-necessity for further learning of the non-learner (*asekha*) refers only to his spiritual state, which is fully accomplished.

3.3 OCCURRENCES OF THE DHARMA AGGREGATES SET IN THE SUTTAS. The key term in the **Gāra-va Sutta** is *dharmā-k,khandha*, here translated as “dharma aggregate(s)” or “groups of qualities” (*guṇa*), that is, their “fruits” (*phala*).²⁸ The 5 dharma aggregates are listed in the following suttas and in the Paṭisambhidā,magga:

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

²⁸ DA 3:1022. Here “dharma” (*dharmā*) has no technical meaning, but is prob used as a wordplay suggesting that the Dharma as “teaching” should be respected as being above even the teacher, following the example set by the Buddha himself.

The first 4 dharma aggregates (*cattāro dhamma-k,khandhā*) are separately listed in **the Mahāparinibbāna Sutta** (D 16),²⁹ **the Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33),³⁰ and **the Uruvela Sutta 1** (A 4.21).³¹ This set of 4 dharma aggregates is found in **the Sāra Sutta** (A 4.150), where they are known as the four “essences” (*sāra*).³²

3.4 PROBLEM PASSAGES INVOLVING THE DHARMA AGGREGATES. From the citations of the list of 5 dharma aggregates [3.2], it evidently, as a full set, refers to the qualities of an arhat, or the Buddha, as in **the Gāraḥa Sutta** (S 6.1). However, in **the Cunda Sutta** (S 47.13), Ānanda (then still a streamwinner) is ascribed with the 5 dharma aggregates, *including the last two*:

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

<i>Kin nu te Ānanda Sāriputto</i>	
<i>sīla-k,khandham vā</i>	<i>ādāya parinibbuto,</i>
<i>samādhi-k,khandham vā</i>	<i>ādāya parinibbuto,</i>
<i>paññā-k,khandham vā</i>	<i>ādāya parinibbuto,</i>
<i>vimutti-k,khandham vā</i>	<i>ādāya parinibbuto,</i>
<i>vimutti,ñāṇa.dassana-k,khandham vā</i>	<i>ādāya parinibbuto’ ti. (S 47.13/5:162)</i>

It is possible that Cunda is asking a rhetorical question, so that Ānanda’s affirmative answer makes perfect sense. However, in **the Anātha,piṇḍika Sutta 1** (S 55.26), the ailing Anātha,piṇḍika, who is still a streamwinner then, is told to reflect on these 5 dharma aggregates (*which he is expressly said to have*) within himself (S 55.26/5:384).

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The Discourse on Respect

S 6.2

The Buddha’s reflection

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying at the foot of the Goatherd Banyan Tree on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at Uruvelā, just after he had become fully self-awakened.³³ [139]

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

“One dwells in suffering if one is without respect, without deference (to others).³⁴ Now what ascetic or brahmin can I, honouring, respecting, dwell in dependence on?”

²⁹ D 16,4.2-3/2:122 f.

³⁰ D 33,1.11(25)/3:229.

³¹ A 4.21/2:20 f (SD 12.3).

³² A 4.150/2:141; Nett 56; DhA 1:114.

³³ “Just after he had become fully awakened,” *paṭhamābhisambuddho*, lit “when he first became fully awakened.”

³⁴ *Dukkham kho agāraḥo viharati appatisso* (S 1:139 = A 2:20; qu at MA 2:136; also V 2:89 = D 3:244 = M 2:245 = Vbh 381).

The 5 dharma aggregates

3 Then it occurred to the Blessed One:

“(1) For the sake of fulfilling an unfulfilled aggregate of moral virtue, I, honouring, respecting another ascetic or brahmin, should dwell in dependence on him.

However, in this world, with its gods, with its Māra, with its Brahmās,³⁵ this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers³⁶ and people,

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

4 (2) For the sake of fulfilling an unfulfilled aggregate of concentration, I should, honouring, respecting, another ascetic or brahmin, dwell in dependence on him.

However, in this world, with its gods, with its Māra, with its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,

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

5 (3) For the sake of fulfilling an unfulfilled aggregate of wisdom, I should, honouring, respecting, another ascetic or brahmin, dwell in dependence on him.

However, in this world, with its gods, with its Māra, with its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,

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

6 (4) For the sake of fulfilling an unfulfilled aggregate of liberation, I should, honouring, respecting, another ascetic or brahmin, dwell in dependence on him.

However, in this world, with its gods, with its Māra, with its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,

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

7 (5) For the sake of fulfilling an unfulfilled aggregate of knowledge and vision of liberation, I should, honouring, respecting, another ascetic or brahmin, dwell in dependence on him.

However, in this world, with its gods, with its Māra, with its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people,

I do not see any ascetic or brahmin more accomplished in moral virtue than myself, whom I, honouring, respecting, should dwell in dependence on.³⁷

Respecting the Dharma

8 What now, if I, honouring, respecting this very Dharma, to which I have fully awakened, were to dwell in dependence on it?”

9 Then Brahmā Sahampati, having known with his own mind the reflection in the Blessed One’s mind,³⁸ just as a strong man might stretch his arm out or bend it back, Brahmā Sahampati disappeared

³⁵ Comys explain *sa,devaka* as referring to the 5 sense-world (ie the devas, humans, ghosts, animals and hell beings); *sa,māraka* (sg) as referring to Māra who predominates the sense-world (ie the 5 sense-worlds and Māra’s own realm, Para,nimmita, vasavatti); and *sa,brahmaka* (sg & pl) as the form worlds (DA 1:175 = MA 2:201 f; SA 1:203; SnA 1:229; PmA 2:431; NmA 2:229 f); all the 3 worlds, ie, sense world, form world and formless worlds are included in the term *sa,devaka* (AA 2:287, 3:25; ItA 2:188 f; VA 1:126).

³⁶ *Deva*, here in the sense of “devas by convention” (*sammati,deva*), ie kings. The other 2 types of *deva* are “gods by rebirth” (*upapatti,deva*) and “gods by purification” (*visuddhi,deva*), ie the Buddhas, Pratyeka Buddhas and arhats (Nc 307 KhA 123).

³⁷ On these 5 dharma aggregates, see Intro. This fifth item is not found in **Uruvelā S 1** (A 4.21/2:20 f), whose Comy however identifies it with “reviewing knowledge” (*paccavekkhaṇa,ñāṇa*), ie the knowledge with which one ascertains that one’s mind is fully liberated (AA 3:25).

³⁸ Another occasion when Sahampati reads the Buddha’s mind is in **Cātumā S** (M 67,8/1:458), SD 34.7.

from the Brahmā world and reappeared before the Blessed One.

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

11 “So it is, Blessed One! So it is, Sugata [well-farer]! Those who were the arhats, the fully self-awakened ones, in the past, too, honouring, respecting, this very Dharma, dwelt in dependence on it.

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

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

Brahma Sahampati’s verses

12 This is what the Brahmā Sahampati said. Having said that, he further said this:

562 The Buddhas of the past,³⁹
the Buddhas of the future,
and he who is Buddha now,
removing the sorrow of the many—

563 All have dwelled, they (now) dwell,
and they will dwell, too,
deeply revering the true teaching—
for this is the nature of the Buddhas.

564 Therefore, one desiring (one’s own) good,⁴⁰
aspiring to spiritual greatness,
should revere the true teaching,
recollecting⁴¹ the teaching of the Buddhas.

Conclusion

[13 Bhikshus, Brahmā Sahampati spoke thus. Having spoken this, he saluted me, and making a right-wise circumambulation, disappeared right there.

Then, bhikshus, having known Brahmā’s request, and that it is also proper for myself, I, honouring, respecting, this very Dharma, fully awakened to by me, dwell in dependence on it.⁴²

Moreover, bhikshus, since the Order has been endowed with greatness, I hold the Order, too, in deep respect.]⁴³

— evaṃ —

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³⁹ *Ye ca aṭṭhā sambuddhā; vī ye c’abbhatṭhā sambuddhā.*

⁴⁰ “One desiring...good,” *attha, kāmēna* (A 2:21,23, Ce, PTS 1884); *vī attha, kāmēna* (A 4:91,1, Be, PTS 1998)

⁴¹ *Saram*, “probably a truncated instrumental” (S:B 433 n375), glossed by Comy as *sarantēna* (SA 1:204). Norman however thinks that it could be a *ṇamul* type absolute (Tha:N n ad Thī 26): see also S:B 406 n235.

⁴² *Tam eva dhammāṃ sakkatvā garukatvā upanissāya vihāsitāṃ*, lit “I, having honoured, having respected, dwelt dependent this very Dharma.” I have rendered this passage in the simple present.

⁴³ This concluding para is found only in **Uruvelā S 1** (A 4.21/2:20 f). Comy to Uruvelā S 1 says that the final remark regarding honouring the Sangha is made when Mahā Pajāpati has offered a set of robes to the Blessed One [M 3:253], who then says: “Give them to the order, Gotamī. If you do so, both the order and I will be honoured.” (AA 3:26). This last remark is clearly a late interpolation as it does not fit well with the context here nor is it found anywhere else.