

## 3

**(Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta**

The Discourse on Mahānāma (on the fruition-attainer) | A 6.10

Theme: The 6 recollections of the saints

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006

*Dedicated to**Bhikkhu Soorakkulame Pamaratana of Sri Lanka<sup>1</sup>***1 Recollection and its benefits**

**1.1 MEANING OF ANUSSATI.** In Pali, the recollection of the Buddha is called *Buddhānussati*, where “recollection” is *anussati*, resolved as *anu-*, a prefix here meaning, “repeatedly” and “following after” (in the sense of intentness), plus *sati*, “memory” or “mindfulness.” The connotation of *sati* as “memory” is especially central in the practice of the 6 recollections, that is, the recollections of the Buddha, of the Dharma, of the Sangha, of one’s moral virtue, of one’s charity, and of deities.<sup>2</sup>

On a higher level, recollection occurs in the connection with “direct knowledge” (*abhiññā*) gained through deep concentration, that is to say, the recollection of past lives. In **the (Saṅgha) Uposatha Sutta** (A 4.190), on the spiritual benefits of being a noble disciple, the Buddha declares of the monks in his order, thus:

Bhikkhus, there are monks in this community of monks who dwell having attained the state of devas ... the state of brahmas ... the imperturbable<sup>3</sup> ... the state of noble ones.

(A 4.190.3-6/2:184) = SD 15.10b

What is interesting here is that these monks are *not* reborn into those states, but they are dwelling in those divine states in their present lives as monks. This is the great benefit of the recollections: they help on attain to higher mental states in this life itself, and which facilitate one’s mental training towards liberation.

**1.2 FOLLOWING THE SAINTS’ EXAMPLE.** However, even if one is not yet a saint, one can still emulate them. This is exactly the message of **the (Tadah’) Uposatha Sutta** (A 3.70), where the Buddha exhorts the lady Visākhā to keep the eight precepts, just as the saints do, taking this as her inspiration:

(1) As long as they live, the arhats, giving up harming any living being, abstaining from harming any living being, having laid aside rod and sword, conscientious, kind, dwell compassionate towards all living beings.

Today I, too, for this night and this day, giving up harming any living being, abstaining from harming any living being, having laid aside rod and sword, conscientious, kind, dwell compassionate towards all living beings.

I will emulate the arhats in this manner and the observance will be kept by me.

(A 3.70.9/1:211) = SD 4.18

This is reflected in similar manner for the other seven precepts:

- (2) giving up taking the not-given;
- (3) giving up incelibacy;
- (4) giving up false speech;

<sup>1</sup> This work is gratefully dedicated to **Ven Soorakkulame Pamaratana** of Sri Lanka, who requested me to research into the terms *attha, veda dhamma, veda*, that led to this sutta study. May there be more such renunciants to inspire us into Sutta study and Dharma practice.

<sup>2</sup> Besides (Agata,phala) Mahānāma S (A 6.10), see also Vism 197-228 & Devendra 1985:25-45.

<sup>3</sup> The “imperturbable” (*anīṅjita*) is a canonical term for the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana and the 4 formless attainments. See **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122.9d/3:112), SD 11.4 Intro (3.1) & **Laṭukikôpama S** (M 66.22-34/1:454-456), SD 28.11; also MA 3:171.

- (5) giving up strong drinks, distilled drinks, fermented drinks, that which causes heedlessness;
- (6) eating only one meal a day;
- (7) abstaining from dancing, singing, music,<sup>4</sup> watching unseemly shows, and from wearing and adorning themselves with garlands, scents and cosmetics;<sup>5</sup> and
- (8) giving up high and luxurious beds.

Such a practice is very conducive to mindfulness and meditation. Here, one's life is cleared of many distractions, and happily reduced to essentials, so that one can easily direct to spiritual training.

**1.3 BENEFICIAL USE OF THE PAST.** In mindfulness and meditation practices, especially in the breath meditation,<sup>6</sup> we are often told to keep our minds in “the present moment.” Earlier on,<sup>7</sup> we noted how the unawakened mind is often ruled by latent tendencies, which are effectively the continuing “presence” of past karma that reinforces itself. In other words, this kind of mind is ruled by the past: one tends to miss the past, or to regret it, or to be depressed because of it, look at others as we knew them in the past, or simply live in the past. Spiritual evolution, however, entails that we learn from our past in not making the same mistakes again and not continuing to reinforce an unwholesome life-style.

The past can benefit the present, especially when the past is a wholesome one, that is, when one's memory is rooted in a wholesome subject. This is the basis of the recollections, which are not exercises in reminiscing the past but of keeping in mind wholesome qualities that help one to brighten up with faith and joy that are conducive to mental focus. Such recollection exercises are especially effective and beneficial for those meditating or doing mindfulness exercises who are faith-inclined.

## 2 The 6 recollections

**2.1 Chapter 7 of the Visuddhi, magga,**<sup>8</sup> on the 6 recollections [§§2-7], alludes to the (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta at least ten times.<sup>9</sup> The conclusion to the same chapter<sup>10</sup> mentions a number of discourses related to these practices, and as such should be studied with **the (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta** (which, in fact, is the main text alluded to in that chapter). The suttas mentioned (besides the (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta) are as follows:

<b>Gedha Sutta</b> (A 6.25/3:312)	<u>The 6 recollections</u> helps remove attachment [cupidity] ( <i>gedha</i> ), a term for <i>the 5 cords of sensual pleasure</i> . This discourse is also known as <b>the (Saṅkhitta) Anussati Sutta</b> , since it only briefly lists the 6 meditations, which are explained in detail in <b>the (Vitthāra) Anussati Sutta</b> (A 6.25/3:312-314). <sup>11</sup>
<b>Sambādh'okāsa Sutta</b> (A 6.26/3:314 f)	“It is marvellous how the attainment of ‘ <u>the open</u> ’ ( <i>okāsa</i> ) in the stifling [closed] ( <i>sambādha</i> ) <sup>12</sup> has been discovered by the Blessed One ... ” (spoken by Mahā Kaccāna).
<b>(Tad'ah') Uposatha Sutta</b> (A 3.70/1:206-211) = SD 4.18	The benefits of keeping <u>the precept day</u> . All of the 6 recollections, except <i>cāgānussati</i> , are mentioned. With these recollections, “This soiled mind, Visākhā, is cleansed in a proper way ... ” Parables are given in each case.

<sup>4</sup> “Music,” *vādita*.

<sup>5</sup> “Cosmetics,” *vilepana*.

<sup>6</sup> **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118/3:77-88), SD 7.13.

<sup>7</sup> **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1(6).

<sup>8</sup> Vism 7/197-228.

<sup>9</sup> Vism 7.2/198, 7.65/212, 7.68/213, 7.85/217, 7.87/217, 7.89/218, 7.111/223 f, 7.115/225, 7.122/226 (by name), 7.124/227.

<sup>10</sup> Vism 7.119-128/226-228.

<sup>11</sup> See **(Anussati-ṭ, ṭhāna) Udāyī S** (A 6.29), SD 24.8 (2.2).

<sup>12</sup> That is, the lay or household life.

**(Anussati) Mahānāma Sutta**      The 5 spiritual faculties (faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom) are the preconditions for the successful practice of the 6 recollections.  
(A 11.12/5:328-332)

**2.2** The section then closes with an account of how a meditating monk in ancient Sri Lanka, on seeing the Buddha figure conjured up by Māra, reflects:

How beautiful (*sobhati*) this appears, despite its having greed, hate and delusion! How more beautiful is the Blessed One himself: for he is quite without greed, hate and delusion!

(Vism 7.128/228)

Reflecting thus, zest arises in him, and in due course, cultivating insight, he attains arhathood.

**2.3** The (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta is very close to **the Sambādh’okāsa Sutta** (A 6.26).<sup>13</sup> Here, in the (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta, the teacher is the Buddha himself, addressing the layman Mahānāma. In the Sambādh’okāsa Sutta, the teacher is Mahā Kaccāna, addressing the monks. Besides these discourses, there are also other recollection-related texts, such as **the Dhajagga Sutta** (S 11.3), where the Buddha explains the recollection on the 3 jewels.<sup>14</sup>

### 3 The recollections and dhyana

**3.1 THE STRAIGHT MIND.** For each of the 6 recollection exercises [2], it is said here that when the practitioner (“noble disciple”) has (even temporarily) overcome greed, hate and delusion through the recollection, “his mind is straight” (*uju,gata,cittam*), fully focussed on the meditation object, and the following stages are then stated in this refrain:

Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
gains inspired knowledge of the meaning (*attha,veda*),  
gains inspired knowledge of the Dharma (*dhamma,veda*),  
gains gladness connected with Dharma (*dhammūpasanihita pāmuja*);  
when he is gladdened, zest (*pīti*) is born;  
when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil (*kāyo passambhati*);  
the tranquil body feels happy (*sukham vediyati*);  
when one is happy, the mind becomes concentrated (*samādhiyati*). [§§2-7]

**3.2 FOR THE FAITH-INCLINED.** As this passage shows, reflection on the Buddha and the other meditation objects culminates in mental concentration, yet the nature of this concentration is not stated by way of the dhyana formula. In the Nikāyas, such recollection practices are never shown to have the efficacy of inducing dhyana. The Commentaries clearly say that because such meditation objects involve intense use of discursive thought (*vicāra*), they can lead only as far as access concentration (*upacāra,samādhi*).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> A 6.26/3:314-317 (SD 15.7a).

<sup>14</sup> S 11.3/1:218-220 (SD 15.5).

<sup>15</sup> Comys speak of 3 kinds of “concentration” (*samādhi*) or “cultivation” (*bhāvanā*) in connection with 3 kinds of “sign” or “image” (*nimitta*). Here, *nimitta* refers to a mental image or mental reflex obtained in meditation. The meditation object perceived at the beginning of meditation is called the “preparatory image” or “counterpart sign” (*parikamma nimitta*). At a preliminary level of concentration, the mind sees an unsteady and unclear image, called the “acquired image” (*uggaha nimitta*). With a higher degree of concentration, the “counter-image” (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) appears. As soon as this arises, in certain meditation, one is said to have attained “access (or neighbourhood) concentration” (*upacāra samādhi*), which is also called “access cultivation” (*upacāra bhāvanā*), so called because it is approaching but not yet attained the first dhyana. The mental focus present during dhyana is called “attainment concentration” (*appanā samādhi*). The 3 kinds of “sign” (*nimitta*) are: (1) preliminary sign (*parikamma nimitta*); (2) acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*); and (3) counter-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) (Abhs 9.5/197; Vism 125). The 3 kinds of concentration or samadhi are: (1) momentary Samadhi (*khaṇika samādhi*), (2) access samadhi (*upa-*

It thus seems that the type of concentration typically available to a lay noble disciple at the stage of stream-entry or once-returning is access concentration. This, of course, does not mean that stream-enterers and once-returners don't attain the *Jhānas*, but only that the standard doctrinal structure does not ascribe the *Jhānas* to them as essential equipment. (Bodhi 2001:53 f)

**3.3 THE INSPIRING MEDITATIONS. The 6 recollections** do not bring the meditation to the level of dhyana because the mental objects of these meditations are “static,” in the sense that we recall or visualize some quality of, say, the Buddha. It can easily be a discursive exercise, somewhat like a mentally focused form of prayer. This works well for those whose spiritual faculty is predominantly that of faith (*saddhā*).

For such practitioners, such a meditation easily evokes pious joy (*veda*) or even zest (*pīti*), and perhaps some depth of samadhi, but no dhyana. Even then, this can be quite a profound religious experience for those who have not tasted dhyana, or who would like to try a simpler meditation practice than the more demanding one leading to dhyana.

In fact, the joy evoked by any of the 6 recollections can well serve as a springboard, for those inclined to do so, to a deeper meditation as a basis for dhyana, or simply as a means of overcoming any mental hindrances. For this vital reason, this set of 6 recollections is popularly known as “**the inspiring meditations.**”

#### 4 Attha,veda and Dhamma,veda

##### 4.1 COMMENTARIAL EXPLANATIONS

**4.1.1 The (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta** (A 6.10), contains a puzzling pair of terms—*attha,veda* and *dhamma,veda*—in this context:

*Uju,gata,citto kho pana Mahānāma ariya,sāvako  
labhati attha,vedam,  
labhati dhamma,vedam,  
labhati dhammūpasamhitam pāmujjam ...*

[A noble disciple who practises any of the 6 recollection “straightens” his mind, that is, keeps it directly focussed on the meditation object.]<sup>16</sup>

Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
gains inspired knowledge in the goal (*attha,veda*),<sup>17</sup>  
gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma] (*dhamma,veda*),  
gains gladness connected with Dharma; ... (A 6.10,2/3:285,11-12, 27, etc)

**4.1.2** The Aṅguttara Commentary is equally, if not more, puzzling, with these explanations:

*Attha,vedan ti aṭṭhakatham nissāya uppannam pīti,pamojjam.  
Dhamma,devan ti pālīm nissāya uppannam pīti,pamojjam.*

*Attha,veda* means the zest and gladness arising on account of the Commentaries [sic].

*Dhamma,veda* means the zest and gladness arising on account of the Texts (*pāḷi*) [sic].  
(AA 3:337)

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*cāra samādhi*), and (3) attainment samadhi (*appanā samādhi*) (DhsA 117; Vism 144). The 3 kinds of cultivation (*bhāvanā*)—preparatory cultivation (*parikamma bhāvanā*), access cultivation (*upacāra bhāvanā*) and attainment (or absorption) cultivation (*appanā bhāvanā*)—are given at Abhs 9.4/197. On the lay practitioner and dhyana, see SD 8.5(6).

<sup>16</sup> Cf **Vatthūpama S** (M 7), where these 3 recollections are similarly mentioned, and a fourth, a recollection on renunciation (M 7,8-11/1:37 f), SD 28.12.

<sup>17</sup> On the meaning of these 2 lines, see Intro (3).

Understandably, this one-sidedly academic statement, clearly out of character with early Buddhism, reflects the mood of Buddhaghosa's Mahāvihāra mediaeval scholasticism that tends to place the study and protection of scripture as *text*, above its spirit, practice and realization. This tradition seems to persist to this day in Sinhala Buddhism, especially amongst its clergy.

#### 4.2 FAITH AND WISDOM

4.2.1 The terms *attha,veda* and *dhamma,veda* also appear in **the Vatthûpama Sutta** (M 7),<sup>18</sup> whose commentary is more helpful. The Majjhima Commentary here explains *veda* as the joy and knowledge connected with that joy, saying:

... *Attha,veda ti avecca-p,pasādam paccavekkhato uppannam vuttappakāram eva vedam.*  
*Dhamma,vedan ti avecca-p,pasādassa hetum odhiso kilesa-p,pahānam paccavekkhato uppannam vuttappakāram eva vedan ti evam pi ettha attho veditabbo.*

... *Attha,veda* is the inspired knowledge (*veda*) arisen in one who reviews his wise faith; *dhamma,veda* is the inspired knowledge arisen in one who reviews the abandonment of the defilements in part (*odhiso*), the cause of that wise faith. The meaning here should be known thus.

(MA 1:173 f)

4.2.2 The term *veda* means “text or scripture” (*gantha*) in the brahminical sense,<sup>19</sup> and “spiritual knowledge” (*nāṇa*) in the Buddha sense.<sup>20</sup> Here (in the compounds *attha,veda dhamma,veda*), however, *veda* has both the cognitive and the affective connotations, hence “inspired knowledge,” or even “joyful knowledge.” Of course, the terms “cognitive” and “affective” refer to modern western academic categories, but suffice it to say here that this spiritual knowledge encompasses both the experiential or knowing (sense-based) aspects as well as the positive feeling aspects by way of wholesome joy.<sup>21</sup>

Hence, *attha,veda* refers to the clear understanding of the *attha*—the purpose and the benefit—of the spiritual life, an understanding resulting from a “straight mind” (*uju,gata,citta*), that is, we are easily directed to the meditation object and a mindfulness trained on the path to liberation. All this generates an unshakable faith rooted in some level of direct seeing of reality, and as such describes the main quality of a faith-follower (*saddhā'nusārī*) streamwinner.<sup>22</sup>

In the same context, we see *dhamma,veda* as referring to a deep understanding of the Dharma as wisdom (seeing the true nature of existence). While *attha* here refers to a faithful's vision and discovery of the path towards liberation, feeling quite content just to begin journeying on it, the *dhamma* refers to our careful examining and analysis of the terrain and structure of this path, even mapping it. Hence, *dhamma,-veda* refers to the main quality of a truth follower (*dhammānusārī*) streamwinner.<sup>23</sup>

4.2.3 **The (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1) declares these two individuals—the faith follower and the Dharma follower—as potential streamwinners, having

<sup>18</sup> M 7,8/1:37,30-31, 34-35, 1:38,1-3; but its Comy adds a third sense: mental joy (*somanassa*) (MA 1:173).

<sup>19</sup> Eg “one well versed [an expert] in the Three Vedas,” *tiṇṇam vedānam pāragū* (D 1:88, 114, 120 f, 123, 130, 138, 141; M 2:133 f, 141 f, 550, 2:147 (x2), 165, 168, 210; A 1:183; A 1:163, 166, 3:223 (x2); Sn p105).

<sup>20</sup> Eg “That brahmin known as ‘accomplished in knowledge’ (*veda,gū*), has nothing, is unattached to sense-desire and existence,” *yam brāhmaṇam vedagum-ābhijaññā, akiñcanam kāma,bhāve asattam* (Sn 1059).

<sup>21</sup> Cf *veda,jāta*, “blissful, thrilled, filled with enthusiasm, overcome with awe” (A 2:63 = *tuṭṭhi,jātā*, “full of bliss,” AA 3:97; Sn 995, 1023; B 2.39/8 = *sañjāta,somanassam*, “full of joy,” BA 85; Kvu 554 = Vv 34,27 = *jāta,somanassā*, “full of joy,” VvA 156; J 1:11; Miln 297). See Vism 7.119 (tr) at SD 15.13.4 (**Devatānussati**).

<sup>22</sup> One who is filled with resolution (*adhimokkha*) and, in considering the formations as *impermanent*, gains the faculty of faith, at the path-moment of streamwinning, is called faith follower (Vism 21.74-78/659 f).

<sup>23</sup> One who is filled with wisdom (*paññā*) and, in considering the formations as *not self*, gains the faculty of wisdom, at the moment of streamwinning, is called a truth (or Dharma) follower (Vism 21.74-78/659 f).

... entered the fixed course of rightness, entered the plane of superior persons,<sup>24</sup> gone beyond the plane of the worldlings.<sup>25</sup>

He is incapable of doing any intentional deed by which he might be reborn in hell, or in the animal birth, or in the ghost realm. He is incapable of dying without attaining the fruit of stream-winning.<sup>26</sup> (S 25.1/3:225 = SD 16.7)

### 4.3 CANONICAL CLUES

**4.3.1** The two terms—*attha,veda* and *dhamma,veda*—appear in at least four other suttas in very similar context, that of using the recollections of the Buddha or the 3 Jewels as meditation practice:

#### 4.3.1.1 The Mahā Gopālaka Sutta (M 33):

*Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu Tathāgata-p,pavedite dhamma,vinaye desiyamāne  
labhati attha,vedam,  
labhati dhamma,vedam,  
labhati dhammūpasamhitam pāmujjam ...*

Here, bhikshus, a monk, when the Dharma-Vinaya [the doctrine and the discipline] of the Tathagata is being taught,  
gains inspired knowledge in the goal,  
gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
gains gladness connected with Dharma; ... (M 33.10/1:221,80, 33.22/1:224,2-3)

#### 4.3.1.2 The Kosambiya Sutta (M 48):

*Balatā esā bhikkhave diṭṭhi,sampannassa puggalassa yaṃ Tathāgata-p,pavedite dhamma,vinaye  
desiyamāne  
labhati attha,vedam,  
labhati dhamma,vedam,  
labhati dhammūpasamhitam pāmujjam ...*

This, bhikshus, is the strength of that person endowed with vision [right view]: when the Dharma-Vinaya [the doctrine and the discipline] of the Tathagata is being taught,  
gains inspired knowledge [inspiration] in the goal,  
gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
gains gladness connected with Dharma; ... (M 48.14/1:325,18)

<sup>24</sup> “True persons,” *sappurisa*, also “superior persons,” also “virtuous person,” “ideal person”; often syn with “noble disciple,” *ariya,sāvaka*, but here clearly includes those, although not yet on the path, but assure of it, viz the faith-follower and the truth-follower. The qualities of the *sappurisa* are given at D 33.2.2(6)/3:252, 34.1.8(7)/3:283; M 113; A 7.64/4:113, 8:38/4:144 f & at M 110.14-24/3:23 f.

<sup>25</sup> “Worldling,” *puthujjano*, ie “born of the crowd”; more fully called “uninstructed worldling,” one unskilled (*akovidā*), ie, lacks theoretical knowledge of the Dharma, and is undisciplined (*avinīta*), and also lacks practical training in the Dharma. He is not a “seer of the noble ones” (*ariya,dassavī*), ie, of the Buddha and the noble disciples (the saints), because he lacks the wisdom-eye that discerns the truth they have seen. “Noble ones” (*ariya*) and “true persons” (*sappurisa*) are synonymous. Cf “instructed noble disciple” at §11. MA 1:20-25; SA 2:98-101, 2:251 f; AA 1:61-63; Nc 75-78; Pm 2:445-449; DhsA 348-354.

<sup>26</sup> *Abhabbo taṃ kammaṃ kātuṃ yaṃ kammaṃ katvā nirayaṃ vā tiracchāna,yoniṃ vā petti,visayaṃ vā uppajjeyya. Abhabbo ca tāva kālaṃ kātuṃ yāva na sotāpatti,phalaṃ sacchikaroti.* This is the sutta’s key statement and clearly refers to what, after the Buddha’s time, is referred to as a “lesser streamwinner” (*culla,sotāpanna, cullaka,sotāpanna*). See **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3 (6).

4.3.1.3 **The (Anussati) Mahānāma Sutta** (A 11.12):

... *Tathāgataṃ ārabha, uju,gata,citto kho pana mahānāma ariya,sāvako  
labhati attha,vedaṃ,  
labhati dhamma,vedaṃ,  
labhati dhammūpasamhitam pāmujjam ...*

... the noble disciple, Mahānāma, having directed his mind to the Tathagata, his mind that is straight

gains inspired knowledge in the goal,  
gains inspired knowledge in the truth [Dharma],  
gains gladness connected with Dharma; ... (A 11.12/5:329,20, 330,4 f)

4.3.2 **Veda,jātā**

4.3.2.1 The term *veda*, with the same sense as used in *attha,veda dhamma,veda*, is found in the sentence *ye veda,jātā vicaranti loke*, and found in these two discourses:

**Suppavāsa Sutta** (A 4.57/2:63): “... and gladsome roam the world” (A:W 2:72);

**Daddaḷha Vimāna Vatthu** (Vv 34.26/50): “Those who fare in the world with joy arisen” (Vv:H 71).

4.3.2.2 The Commentaries gloss *veda.jātā* invariably as “filled with bliss” or “blissful”: *tutti,jātā* (AA 3:97), *sañjāta,somanassam* (BA 85), *jāta,somanassā* (VvA 156). The Saṃyutta Commentary explains it as *hāsa,bahulo, pāmojja,bahulo*, “much laughter, much gladness” (SA 1:120).<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, in **the Sarakāni Sutta 1** (S 55.24), the Buddha describes an arhat in this manner:

Here, Mahānāma, a certain person has wise faith<sup>28</sup> in the Buddha, in the Dharma and in the Saṅgha. He is one of joyous wisdom (*hasa,paññā*), of quick wisdom,<sup>29</sup> and liberated.

(S 55.24,7/5:376), SD 3.6

4.3.2.3 Here, “joyous wisdom,” *hāsa,paññā*, can also be translated as “laughing wisdom” (*hasa* means “laughter, mirth, joy”). “Here one with much joy [laughter], mirth, contentment and gladness perfects the virtues: this is joyous wisdom” (Pm 21.17/ 2:199 f). The Commentaries speak of the arhat’s wisdom as “joyous wisdom” (*hasa,paññā*), “quick wisdom” (*javana,paññā*), sharp wisdom (*tikkha,paññā*, as it cuts off all defilements), and “penetrating wisdom” (*nibbedhika,paññā*) by which one maintains dispassion toward all formations.<sup>30</sup>

4.3.2.4 The “inspired knowledge” (*veda*) mentioned in the above contexts is no ordinary or worldly knowledge, but one arising as a result of meditation and mindfulness, that is to say, “the wisdom of cultivation” (*bhāvanā,mayā paññā*).<sup>31</sup> This cultivation wisdom is closely connected with the *attha,veda dhamma,veda* passages, as evident in **this Vatthūpama Sutta** (M 7) passage:

<sup>27</sup> Cf the smile-producing consciousness or “mirth-producing consciousness” (*hasit’uppāda,citta*), mentioned in **Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha**, referring to a kind of functional consciousness independent of karma, found only in arhats (Abhs:BRS 1.10, 2.28, 3.17, 18, 21, 4.27; Abhs:SR 86 n1, 162; Abhs:WG 25, 85, 86, 91, 105, 109, 113, 115, 116, 117, 156, 239, 240, 306).

<sup>28</sup> “Wise faith,” *avecca-p,pasāda*, ie faith or confidence through understanding. See sutta §1 def of faith.

<sup>29</sup> “Of quick wisdom,” *javana,paññā*. This refers to one who quickly understands that the five aggregates are all impermanent, suffering and not self (Pm 21.18/2:200). See prev n.

<sup>30</sup> DA 3:391-393, 4:84-86; MA 4:84; SA 1:120-123, 2:85 f; AA 2:85; ThaA 3:106 f; NmA 1:231 f; cf PmA 3:640 on *hasa,paññā*.

<sup>31</sup> **The 3 kinds of wisdom** (*paññā*) are: (1) the wisdom of reflection (*cintā,mayā paññā*) or philosophical knowledge; (2) the wisdom of hearing (*suta,mayā paññā*, lit “wisdom heard”), or academic knowledge; and (3) the wisdom of cultivation (*bhāvanā,mayā paññā*), or spiritual insight (D 3:219; Vbh 324). Apparently they are not mentioned anywhere else in the Canon, and the Comys list *suta,mayā paññā* first. The set however is found in Buddhist Skt works, eg Abdhk 334. **Vibhaṅga** defns the wisdom of reflection as receptivity [openness] to knowledge not gained

*So Buddhhe ... dhamme... saṅghe avecca,p,pasādena samannāgato 'mhī ti  
labhati attha,vedanī,  
labhati dhamma,vedanī,  
labhati dhammūpasamhitān pāmujaṃ ...*

When that monk is endowed with wise faith in the Buddha, ... in the Dharma, ... in the Sangha,  
he gains inspired knowledge in the goal,  
he gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
he gains gladness connected with Dharma; ...

(M 7,8/1:37,30-31, 34-35, 1:38,1-3), SD 28.12

4.3.2.5 Here, wise faith (*avecca-p,pasāda*) leads to “inspired knowledge” (*veda*) in the spiritual goal and the Dharma. As stated below,<sup>32</sup> “wise faith” is inspiration or confidence, based on some level of understanding or wisdom (*avecca*), and characterized by lucid joy (*pasāda*).

#### 4.4 THE UPANISĀ SUTTA

4.4.1 This assertion is further supported by **the Upanisā Sutta** (S 12.13) in its formula of the spiritual or supramundane cycle, thus:

faith (*saddhā*) is the immediate cause of joy,  
joy [gladness] (*pāmojja*) is the immediate cause of zest,  
zest (*pīti*) is the immediate cause of tranquillity,  
tranquillity (*passaddhi*) is the immediate cause of happiness,  
happiness (*sukha*) is the immediate cause of concentration,  
concentration (*samādhi*) is the immediate cause of knowledge and vision of things as they really are,  
knowledge and vision of things as they really are is the immediate cause of revulsion,  
revulsion [disenchantment] is the immediate cause of dispassion,  
dispassion [letting go of craving] is the immediate cause of release,  
release is the immediate cause of the knowledge of the destruction [of the cankers]. (S 12.23.26/2:31)

4.4.2 Here we see faith (*saddhā*) heading the list,<sup>33</sup> followed by zest (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), happiness (*sukha*) and concentration (*samādhi*). All the underscored terms are found in **the (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta** in their verb form, thus:

#### The Upanisā Sutta (S 12.13)

joy [gladness]	<i>pāmojja</i>
zest	<i>pīti</i>
tranquillity	<i>passaddhi</i>
happiness	<i>sukha</i>
concentration	<i>samādhi</i>

#### The (Agata,phala) Mahānāma Sutta (A 6.10)

“he gains gladness ( <i>pāmuja</i> ) connected with Dharma ...”
“when he is gladdened, zest is born” ( <i>pamuditassa pīti jāyati</i> )
“when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil” ( <i>pītimanassa kāyo passambhati</i> )
“the tranquil body feels happy” ( <i>passaddha,kāyo sukhaṃ vediyati</i> )
“when one is happy the mind becomes concentrated” ( <i>sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati</i> )

4.4.3 In the *attha,veda dhamma,veda* formulas, we find in its place, the practice of the recollections, which understandably generates faith in the practitioner, by way of leading him to “the wisdom of culti-

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through hearing from another (*khantim...parato assutvā paṭilabhati*); the wisdom of hearing as receptivity to knowledge gained by hearing from another (*khantim...parato sutvā paṭilabhati*); and the wisdom of cultivation as all the wisdom of one who has spiritual attainment (*sabbā pi samāpannessa paññā*) (Vbh 325 = DA 3:1002; VbhA 410-412 = DAṬ 3:272-274). See Gethin 2001:222 f. On *khanti* as “receptivity,” see BHSD: *kṣānti*.

<sup>32</sup> See sutta §1 def of faith.

<sup>33</sup> In the full formula, faith is in turn inspired by “suffering,” *dukkha*.



vation” (*bhāvanā, mayā paññā*), that goes on to instill him with gladness, zest, and so on until finally spiritual release through the destruction of the mental cankers (as shown in the Upanisā Sutta formula here).

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## The Discourse on Mahānāma (on the fruition-attainer)

A 6.10

### The 4 limbs of the streamwinner

**1** At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Nigrodha’s Park at Kapilavatthu.

Then Mahānāma the Sakya approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down at one side. Seated thus as one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, how does a noble disciple continuously dwell when he has attained the fruit and understood the teaching?”<sup>34</sup>

“Mahānāma, when a noble disciple [285] has attained the fruit and understood the teaching, he continuously dwells in this way:

**2** (1) FAITH<sup>35</sup> IN THE BUDDHA.<sup>36</sup> Here, Mahānāma, a noble disciple recollects the Tathagata, thus: ‘The Blessed One is such: he is<sup>37</sup>

arhat,  
fully self-awakened one,  
accomplished in wisdom and conduct,  
well-farer,  
knower of worlds,  
peerless guide of persons to be tamed,<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Yo so bhante ariya, sāvako āgata, phalo viññāta, sāsano, so katamena vihārena bahulam viharatī ti.* Comy: “Has attained the fruit” (*agata, phala*) means that he has realized the threefold training (in moral virtue, mental concentration, and wisdom). He asks about the streamwinner’s living in dependency (tutelage) (*nissaya, vihāra*), ie his habitual spiritual practice (AA 3:337 f). See **Puññābhisaṅga S** (A 4.52/2:56 f), on the 4 limbs of a streamwinner (*sotāpannaṅga āngāni*): see also D 3,1.11(14)/3:227 + SD 3.3(4).

<sup>35</sup> This is the streamwinner’s “wise faith” (*avecca-p, pasāda*). This is a syntactical cpd with *avecca* (Skt *avetya*) absolutive of \**aveti*, “he undergoes, knows, experiences.” [On syntactical cpds, see K R Norman, 1991a:3.] There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlika, saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati, saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8, 401,23). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Gethin** speaks of 2 kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective (eg ERE: Faith & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963: 387): “Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith in its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or confidence towards something or somebody...the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.” (Gethin 2001:107; my emphases). The streamwinner’s faith is defined in **Vīmaṅsaka S** (M 47) as “his faith is strong, supported by reasons, rooted in vision” (*ākāra, vatī saddhā dassana, mūlikā dalhā*, M 47,16/1:320).

<sup>36</sup> Commented on at Vism 7.1-67/197-213. See **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7.

<sup>37</sup> Here begins the nine virtues of the Buddha (*navāraha, guṇa*) (M 1:37; A 3:285).

<sup>38</sup> **Purisa, damma sārathī**. Here *-damma* (adj) is grd, meaning “to be tamed or restrained,” often spoken of a young bullock (M 1:225, *bala, gāvā damma, gāvā*, “the strong cattle and cattle to be tamed,” ie bulls and young

teacher of gods and humans,  
awakened,  
blessed.’

2.2 Mahānāma, when the noble disciple recollects the Tathagata thus, his mind is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by hate, not obsessed by delusion. At that time, his mind is straight,<sup>39</sup> inspired by the Tathagata.

2.3 Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
gains inspired knowledge in the goal [the meaning of Dharma],  
gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
gains gladness connected with the Dharma;  
when he is gladdened, zest is born;  
when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil;  
the tranquil body feels happy;  
when one is happy the mind becomes concentrated.<sup>40</sup>

2.4 This, Mahānāma, is called a noble disciple (*ariya, sāvaka*):<sup>41</sup>  
he dwells impartial (*sama-p, patta*) amongst partial [vicious] people;  
he dwells unafflicted (*avyāpajjha*) amongst afflicted people;  
as one who has entered upon the Dharma stream,<sup>42</sup> he cultivates the recollection of the Buddha.

3 (2) FAITH IN THE DHARMA.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Mahānāma, the noble disciple recollects the Dharma, thus:

‘Well-taught is the True Teaching [the Dharma] of the Blessed One,  
visible here and now,  
immediate,  
inviting one to come and see,  
accessible,  
to be personally known by the wise.’

3.2 Mahānāma, when the noble disciple recollects the Dharma thus, his mind is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by hate, not obsessed by delusion. At that time, his mind is straight, inspired by the Dharma.

3.3 Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
gains inspired knowledge in the goal [the meaning of Dharma],  
gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
gains gladness connected with the Dharma;  
when he is gladdened, zest is born;  
when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil;  
the tranquil body feels happy;  
when one is happy the mind becomes concentrated.

3.4 This, Mahānāma, is called a noble disciple:  
he dwells impartial amongst partial [vicious] people;

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steers); also of other animals: *assa, damma, sārathī*, a horse trainer (A 2:112); It 80. In *purisa, damma sārathī*, fig (“the trainer of the human steer”) of unconverted persons, likened to a refractory bullocks; D 1:62 (wr *-dhamma*) = 2:93 = 3:5; M 2:38; A 2:112; Vv 17.13; cf VvA 86.

<sup>39</sup> “His mind is straight” (*uju, gata, cittaṃ*), ie “his mind goes directly (*ujukam eva*) to the meditation on the recollection of the Buddha” (AA 3:337).

<sup>40</sup> On this *attha, veda* passage, cf the *nīvaraṇa, pahīna* passage at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,76/1:73), SD 8.10n for other refs.

<sup>41</sup> “Noble saint” refers to any of the 4 kinds of aryas, viz, the streamwinner (*sot’āpanna*), the once-returner (*sāka-dāgāmī*), the non-returner (*anāgāmī*) and the arhat. Here the streamwinner is meant. On the saints, See **Kīṭṭagiri S** (M 70), SD 11.1(5).

<sup>42</sup> “The Dharma stream,” *dhamma, sota*. Obviously here, the Buddha is referring either to streamwinning or one on the way to become one. For details, see SD 3.2 (A 5.202) n & SD 3.14 (A 6.44) n.

<sup>43</sup> Commented on at Vism 7.68-88/213-218. See **Dhammānussati**, SD 15.9.

he dwells unafflicted amongst afflicted people; [286]  
as one who has entered upon the Dharma stream, he cultivates the recollection of the Dharma.

4 (3) FAITH IN THE SANGHA.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, Mahānāma, the noble disciple recollects the Sangha, thus:

‘The Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the good way;  
the Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the straight way;  
the Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the true way;  
the Blessed One’s community of disciples keeps to the proper way.

These are the 4 pairs of persons, the 8 individuals:<sup>45</sup>

*this* Blessed One’s community of disciples is  
worthy of offerings,<sup>46</sup>  
worthy of hospitality,  
worthy of gifts,<sup>47</sup>  
worthy of salutation with the lotus-palms,  
an incomparable field of merit for the world.’

4.2 Mahānāma, when the noble disciple recollects the Sangha thus, his mind is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by hate, not obsessed by delusion. At that time, his mind is straight, inspired by the Sangha.

4.3 Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
gains inspired knowledge in the goal [the meaning of Dharma],  
gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
gains gladness connected with the Dharma;  
when he is gladdened, zest is born;  
when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil;  
the tranquil body feels happy;  
when one is happy the mind becomes concentrated.

4.4 This, Mahānāma, is called a noble disciple:  
he dwells impartial amongst partial [vicious] people;  
he dwells unafflicted amongst afflicted people;  
as one who has entered upon the Dharma stream, he cultivates the recollection of the Sangha.

### Other practices of the streamwinner

5 (4) RECOLLECTION OF MORAL VIRTUE.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, Mahānāma, the noble disciple recollects his own moral virtue, as being<sup>49</sup> **unbroken, untorn, unmixed, spotless, liberating, praised by the wise, untarnished, giving rise to concentration.**<sup>50</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Commented on at Vism 7.89-100/218-221. See **Saṅghānussati**, SD 15.10a.

<sup>45</sup> On who “These four pairs of persons...” are, see **Aṭṭha, puggala S 1** (A 4:292 = D 33.3.1(3)/3:255), SD 15.10a-(1). See also SD 15.5(3): Saṅghānusmṛti & Saṅghānussati.

<sup>46</sup> *Āhuneyyo*. That is, worthy of receiving sacrifices or offerings. The Skt cognate *āhavanīya* refers to that which was offered as an oblation as in *āhuneyy’aggī*, one of the 3 brahminical sacrificial fires (the one in the east).

<sup>47</sup> *Dakkhiṇeyyo*. Specifically refers to offerings made for the benefit of the departed by way of dedication of merits to them.

<sup>48</sup> Commented on at Vism 7.101-106/221 f. See **Silānussati**, SD 15.11.

<sup>49</sup> “Virtues dear to the noble ones” (*ariya, kantāni sīlāni*), found in the stock passage elsewhere (eg **Pañca Vera, bhaya S**, S 12.41/2:69 = SD 3.3(4.2) & **Cundi S**, A 5.32/3:36), is omitted here; maybe rightly so, as the meditator is probably not yet an arya (saint of the path). These virtues are explained at Vism 7.101-106/221 f. SA says that the noble ones do not violate the five precepts; hence, these virtues are dear to them (SA 2:74).

<sup>50</sup> “Unbroken, ...giving rise to concentration,” *akhaṇḍehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññūpa-saṭṭhehi aparāmatṭhehi samādhi, samvattanakehi*. See prec n. Cf UA 268. For details, see Vism 1.143-161/51-58, 7.101-106/221 f.

5.2 Mahānāma, when the noble disciple recollects his own moral virtue thus, his mind is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by hate, not obsessed by delusion. At that time, his mind is straight, inspired by moral virtue.

5.3 Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
 gains inspired knowledge in the goal [the meaning of Dharma],  
 gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
 gains gladness connected with the Dharma;  
 when he is gladdened, zest is born;  
 when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil;  
 the tranquil body feels happy;  
 when one is happy the mind becomes concentrated. [287]

5.4 This, Mahānāma, is called a noble disciple:  
 he dwells impartial amongst partial [vicious] people;  
 he dwells unafflicted amongst afflicted [violent] people;<sup>51</sup>  
 as one who has entered upon the Dharma stream, he cultivates the recollection of moral virtue.

6 (5) RECOLLECTION OF CHARITY.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Mahānāma, the noble disciple recollects his own charity, thus:

‘Truly it is a gain for me, a true gain for me,  
 that amongst people obsessed by the stain of avarice,  
 I dwell at home with a heart free from the stain of avarice,  
 devoted to charity,  
 open-handed,  
 delighting in giving,  
 devoted to alms-giving,  
 delighting to have a share in giving.’<sup>53</sup>

6.2 Mahānāma, when the noble disciple recollects charity thus, his mind is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by hate, not obsessed by delusion. At that time, his mind is straight, inspired by charity.

6.3 Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
 gains inspired knowledge in the goal [the meaning of Dharma],  
 gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
 gains gladness connected with the Dharma;  
 when he is gladdened, zest is born;  
 when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil;  
 the tranquil body feels happy;  
 when one is happy the mind becomes concentrated.

5.4 This, Mahānāma, is called a noble disciple:  
 he dwells impartial amongst partial [vicious] people;  
 he dwells unafflicted amongst afflicted people;  
 as one who has entered upon the Dharma stream, he cultivates the recollection of charity.

7 (6) THE RECOLLECTION OF DEITIES.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, Mahānāma, the noble disciple cultivates the recollection of the deities.

7.2 Here, Mahānāma, the noble disciple recollects the devas, thus:

<sup>51</sup> Cf Dh 29.

<sup>52</sup> Commented on at Vism 7.107-114/223-224, esp §§111-113. See *Cāgānussati*, SD 15.12.

<sup>53</sup> This passage also in **Nakula,māta S** (A 8.48/4:268 f), SD 5.1; cf **Vata,pada S** (S 11.11/1:228). At **Dīgha,jānu S** (A 8.54.14/4:284 = SD 5.10), this serves as the def for “the accomplishment in charity” (*cāga,sampadā*). Commented upon at Vism 7.101-106.

<sup>54</sup> Comy at Vism 7.115-118/225 f. See *Devatānussati*, SD 15.13.

‘There are the devas of the heaven of the Four Great Kings (*cātum, mahā, rājikā*);  
 there are the devas of the heaven of Tāvātimsa [the heaven of the 33 devas];  
 there are the devas of the heaven of Yāma;  
 there are the devas of the heaven of Tusita [the contented];  
 there are the devas of the heaven of Nimmāṇa, ratī [those who delight in creating];  
 there are the devas of the heaven of Para, nimmita, vasavattī [those who lord over the creation of others],<sup>55</sup>  
 there are the devas of the heaven of Brahma’s Hosts;<sup>56</sup>  
 (and) there are the devas beyond these.<sup>57</sup>

### 7.3 THE FIVEFOLD NOBLE GROWTH.<sup>58</sup>

- (1) The faith that those devas are endowed with because of which,  
 when they pass away from this world, they were reborn there,  
 that kind of faith is found in me, too.
- (2) The moral virtue that those devas are endowed with because of which,  
 when they pass away from this world, they were reborn there,  
 that kind of moral virtue is found in me, too.
- (3) The learning<sup>59</sup> that those devas are endowed with because of which,  
 when they pass away from this world, they were reborn there,  
 that kind of learning is found in me, too.
- (4) The charity that those devas are endowed with because of which,  
 when they pass away from this world, they were reborn there,  
 that kind of charity is found in me, too.
- (5) The wisdom that those devas are endowed with because of which,  
 when they pass away from this world, they were reborn there,  
 that kind of wisdom is found in me, too.’ [288]

7.4 Mahānāma, when the noble disciple recollects his own faith, and moral virtue, and learning, and charity, and wisdom, and those of the devas thus, his mind is not obsessed by lust, not obsessed by hate, not obsessed by delusion. At that time, his mind is straight, inspired by the devas.

7.5 Mahānāma, a noble disciple whose mind is straight  
 gains inspired knowledge in the goal [the meaning of Dharma],  
 gains inspired knowledge in the truth [the Dharma],  
 gains gladness connected with the Dharma;  
 when he is gladdened, zest is born;  
 when the mind is zestful, the body is tranquil;  
 the tranquil body feels happy;  
 when one is happy the mind becomes concentrated.

7.6 This, Mahānāma, is called a noble disciple:  
 he dwells impartial amongst partial [vicious] people;

<sup>55</sup> Māra the bad one is said to reside in this heaven, lording over a part of it (MA 1:33 f). The ruler of this realm here is called Vasa, vattī (D 1:219; A 4:243). Māra is also called Vasa, vattī (but distinct from his namesake) because he is “lord with great power over the 6 Sense Realms” (*māro mahānubhāvo cha, kāmāvar’issaro vasavattī*, MA 2:201). Māra is also called Pajā, patī, “the lord of creation,” because he lords over this “generation” (*pajā*) of living beings (M 1.9/1:2; MA ad loc).

<sup>56</sup> “Brahma’s hosts,” *brahma, kāyikā*. See n on this section’s header.

<sup>57</sup> “Beyond this,” *tad’uttarim*, lit “higher than these.” The “devas beyond these” are those of the form world and the formless world.

<sup>58</sup> “Fivefold noble growth” (*ariya, vuḍḍhi*, A 3:80); cf the 5 virtues conducive to growth (*vuḍḍhi, dhamma*, A 5.-246/2:245); see & **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3(1) etc; **Sambadh’okāsa S** (A 6.26.8/3:316), SD 15.7a; **Pañca Vaḍḍhi S 1** (A 5.63/3:80); **Pañca Vaḍḍhi S 2** (A 5.64/3:80).

<sup>59</sup> “Spiritual learning,” *suta*, lit “listening,” ie “one who has heard much Dharma,” cognate with today’s “well-read, learned”, but in spiritual matters.

he dwells unafflicted amongst afflicted people;  
as one who has entered upon the Dharma stream, he cultivates the recollection of the deities.<sup>60</sup>

7.7 Mahānāma, a noble disciple who has attained the fruit and understood the teaching continuously dwells in this way.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>60</sup> In (Tad’ah)Uposatha S (A 3.70), here follows “the fivefold growth,” where the practitioner recollects that he, too, has the faith, moral virtue, learning, generosity and wisdom that the devas have, because of which they have won birth in the heavens (A 3.70(8b)/1:210), SD 4.18.