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Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja Sutta

The Discourse to Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja | Sn 3.4 (Sn 455-486)

Theme: Who is truly worthy of offerings?

Translated by Piya Tan ©2006

1 The Bhāra,dvājas

1.1 The Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja Sutta is named after its protagonist, Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja. “**Sundarika**” is probably his toponym or sobriquet, following the name of the river Sundarikā, beside which he lives and performs the Agni,hotra [fire sacrifice]. He is the 3rd Bhāradvāja to appear in the Sutta Nipāta—the other two are Kasi Bhāra,dvāja (Sn 1.4) and Aggika Bhāra,dvāja (Sn 1.7) [see below].

Bhāradvāja is the name of an ancient brahmin clan.¹ About twenty individuals of the Bhāra,dvāja clan are mentioned in the Piṭakas. Nearly two-thirds of them are mentioned in **the Brāhmaṇa Saṃyutta**, thus:

S 7.2	Akkosaka Bhāradvāja (S 7.2/1:161-163; MA 3:452; SA 1:177 f; DhA 4:163)	SD 84.2
S 7.3	Asurindaka Bhāradvāja, said to be the youngest (S 7.3/1:163 f; SA 1:178; MA 3:452)	SD 97.7
S 7.4	Bilaṅgika Bhāradvāja (S 7.4/1:164; DhA 4:163)	SD 50.10
S 7.5	Ahimsaka Bhāradvāja (S 7.5/1:164 f)	SD 50.21
S 7.6	Jatā Bhāra,dvāja (S 7.6/1:165)	SD 50.22b
S 7.7	Suddhika Bhāradvāja (S 7.7/1:165 f)	SD 50.23
S 7.8	Aggika Bhāra,dvāja (S 7.8/1:166); Vasala Sutta (Sn 1.7/21-25)	SD 22.9
S 7.9	(Suddhika) Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja (S 7.9/1:167 f ≈ Sn 3.4/79-86)	SD 22.3
S 7.10	Bahu,dhītara Bhāradvāja (with 7 daughters) (S 7.10/1:170 f)	SD 50.24
S 7.11	Kasi Bhāradvāja (S 7.11/1:172 f = Sn 1.4/12-16) ²	SD 69.6
S 7.17	Nava,kammika Bhāradvāja (S 7.17/1:179 f)	SD 50.34
S 7.18	Kattha,hāra Bhāra,dvāja, “a certain brahmin of the Bhāradvāja clan” (S 7.18/1:180 f)	SD 50.38
S 7.21	(Udaka Suddhika) Saṅgārava (S 7.21/1:182 f; cf M 2:209 ff)	SD 50.41

1.2 The best known of the Bhāradvāja clan is that of Rājagaha. During the Buddha’s time, the eldest of the family (unnamed) is married to a brahminee of the Dhanañjāni clan, who is a stream-winner.³ She has the habit of uttering an *udāna* (verse of uplift), *Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā, sambuddhassa* (“Homage to him, the Blessed One, arhat, the perfect self-awakened one!”) whenever she sneezes, coughs or stumbles. Her husband, greatly annoyed by this pious habit of hers, decides to worst the Buddha in an argument but is converted and later becomes an arhat himself. The eldest Bhāradavāja’s younger brothers are:

Akkosaka	S 7.2/1:161-163; MA 3:452; SA 1:177 f; DhA 4:163,
Bilaṅgika or Piṅgala(ka)	S 7.4/1:164; DhA 4:163,
Saṅgārava	M 100/2:209-213; cf S 7.21/1:182 f), and
Asurindaka, ⁴ said to be the youngest	S 7.3/1:163 f; SA 1:178; MA 3:452).

1.3 The Dhammapada Commentary says that **Sundarika** is a younger brother of Bhāra,dvāja family (DhA 4:163). It is interesting that while the eldest brother is unnamed, all the younger brothers are. Could it be

* This citation is given as *ch.sutta no/verses/pages*.

¹ Even today, there are north Indians with the family name, Bhāradvāja; in modern times, it is often spelt Bharadwaj.

² At Sn 1.4, however, near the end, adds the “sputtering cakes” wonder of S 7.9.

³ S 1:160 f; DhA 4:161.

⁴ MA:Ee 3:452 gives Sundarika-, with vl Asundarika-, both of which are prob wr.

that he is “Sundarika,” perhaps Sundarika I, of the Majjhima (M 1:39) who habitually performs purification baths? [3.2]

2 Two Sundarika Bhāradvājas?

2.1 THE SUNDARIKA BHĀRA,DVĀJA SUTTA (Sn 3.4) of the Sutta Nipāta gives an ancient list of the Tathagata’s qualities that makes him worthy of offerings. The Commentary calls it **the Pūraḷāsa Sutta** (the discourse on the sacrificial cake) (SnA 2:400) after the religious offering made by the brahmin.

The Sundarika Bhāradvāja Sutta opens with a meeting between the Buddha and the brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja. The brahmin is called “Sundarika” because he has the habit of offering sacrifices to the fire-god Agni by the Sundarikā, a river in Kosala, reputed to be efficacious in washing away evil—this is also mentioned in **the Vatthūpama Sutta** (M 7).⁵ [3]

2.2 THE (SUDDHIKA) SUNDARIKA SUTTA (S 7.9). The prose account of the meeting between the Buddha and Bhāra,dvāja as recorded in **the (Suddhika) Sundarika Sutta** of the Saṃyutta Nikāya⁶ follows almost verbatim that of the Sutta Nipāta, but the Sundarika Sutta has only five stanzas, whose partial concordance is as follows [an asterisk, *, denotes verse]:

Sn 462	=	S *638,	
Sn 463ab	=	S *639ab,	
Sn 480 f	=	S *641 f	= Sn 81 f (Kasi Bhāra,dvāja Sutta).

Apparently, the stanzas of these two suttas—the Sundarika Bhāradvāja Sutta (Sn 3.4) and the Sundarika Sutta (S 638-647)⁷—originally formed *a root text*, but somehow were separated to form two suttas, or alternatively, the Khuddaka reciters (of the Sutta Nipāta) and the Saṃyutta reciters each had separate memories of the same discourse and recorded them so. A third possible alternative is that the two suttas record two separate meetings, but some of the details were normalized in both suttas. Some further study is needed to decide which of the two suttas is the earlier of the sequel. By way of mere conjecture, it is possible that the Saṃyutta version, because it has fewer stanzas (only 10), could have preceded the Sutta Nipāta version (which has 32 stanzas).

2.3 THE SUNDARIKA BHĀRADVĀJA SUTTA (SN 3.4) records that when the brahmin asks the Buddha, “Sir, what is your descent?” (*kiṃ jacco bhavaṃ*),⁸ the latter answers in verse, the first seven of which are missing from the Sundarika Sutta (S 7.9) which shares only stanzas S 638-639ab and 641-642 (as mentioned above), that is, beginning with “Ask me not about class [descent], but ask me about conduct...” (Sn 462ab = S v638ab), but the Sundarika Sutta also omits Sn 463cd-479 (that is, all the other admonitory stanzas).

In essence, however, the discussion is the same in both suttas—the nature of true sacrifice—differing only in the details. Each of the two suttas has a number of stanzas not found in the other. **The (Suddhika) Sundarika Sutta** of the Saṃyutta, for example, contains these beautiful early verses not found in the Sutta Nipāta:

644 I have given up the burning of wood, brahmin!
I kindle only the light within,
The eternal fire of the ever well-focussed mind—
Worthily I live the holy life.

⁵ **Vatthūpama S** (M 7,20/1:39), SD 28.12.

⁶ S 7.9/1:167 f.

⁷ S 7.9/638-647/1:168.

⁸ Identical in both suttas.

- 645** For conceit is your (wooden) shoulder-yoke, brahmin;
 Anger is the smoke; the fault of falsehood the ashes.
 The tongue is the sacrificial spoon; the heart the fire altar.
 A well-trained mind is a person's light. (S 644 f/7.9/1:169)

It is probable that each of these suttas was based on a common older core (which attests the awakening of Bhāradvāja) but incorporated their own oral traditions in due course. The oldest common core between the two suttas is this verse:

- 8** Ask me not about class [descent], but ask me about “conduct.”⁹
 Indeed, from wood arises fire.
 A sage, resolute, though of low descent,
 Is a thoroughbred, restrained by moral shame. Sn 462 = S 638
- 9** One tamed by truth, endowed with taming (of the self),
 A knowledge-master, who has lived the holy life— Sn 463ab = S 639ab

However, this does not mean that these six lines are *the* oldest in either suttas. The other possible explanation is that the “Bhāradvāja” in both the suttas are not the same person, but there is apparently no evidence to support this notion.

2.3 PROSE DETAILS AND SIMPLICITY. The Sundarika Sutta (S 7.9) of the Saṃyutta has more prose details than the Sundarika Bhāradvāja Sutta (Sn 3.4) of the Sutta Nipāta, which suggests that as a whole the Saṃyutta prose version is later than the Sutta Nipāta discourse, which has a continuous coherent verse in the form of a dialogue ballad.¹⁰ Most of the prose details of the Saṃyutta sutta (especially the later sections, such as the section describing the miraculous nature of the food) are also found elsewhere (for example, at the close of **the Kasi Bhāradvāja Sutta**, Sn p15 f).¹¹ Such stereotype prose accounts are usually regarded as late additions.¹²

The older Sundarika Bhāradvāja Sutta (Sn 3.4) is remarkable in its *narrative and doctrinal simplicity*. The Buddha meets Sundarika, who initially is unsure of the Buddha's spiritual status, but is soon convinced on listening to the Buddha's wise words. What is even more remarkable about the Buddha's admonition to Sundarika is that it does not mention any well known doctrines (such as the four noble truth or the five aggregates), nor any technical terms. It is as if the Buddha were singing, Vedic style, some Buddhist hymns, which understandably Sundarika would easily relate to, and which he does. He converts, becomes a monk, and, in due course, an arhat.

3 The Vatthūpama Sutta (M 7)

3.1 The Vatthūpama Sutta (M 7) records the brahmin Sundarika's meeting with the Buddha at Jetavana. The topic of discussion there is spiritual purification. Sundarika asks the Buddha if he (the Buddha) has, for the benefit of auspicious purification, washed himself in *the holy river Bāhukā* before. The Buddha explains that rivers do not wash away one's evil deeds, but

⁹ *Carāṇa*, although here tr in the Buddhist sense, for the brahmins, it refers to a Vedic school or branch. Monier-Williams (SED: *śākhā*) says that “although the words *carāṇa* and *śākhā* are sometimes used synonymously, yet *carāṇa* properly applies to the sect or collection of persons united in one school, and *śākhā* to the traditional text followed, as in the phrase *śākhām adhite*, he recites a particular version of the Veda.” (SED 1062c). I take “conduct” here as pregnant with both senses.

¹⁰ Two famous examples of dialogue ballads are **Dhaniya S** (Sn 1.2) and **Kasi Bhāradvāja S** (S 1.4).

¹¹ Sn 4/1.4 @ SD 69.6.

¹² Cf Pande, *Origins of Buddhism*, 1974:52.

<i>suddhassa ve sadā phaggu</i>	For the pure it is truly auspicious (<i>phaggu</i>) always!
<i>suddhass' uposatho sadā</i>	For the pure it is always a precept day (<i>uposatha</i>)! ...
<i>kiṃ kāhasi Gayāṃ gantvā</i>	What need is there to go to Gayā,
<i>udapāno pi te Gayā ti</i>	For any well is your Gayā! (M 7,20/1:39; DA 1:139), SD 28.12

The Buddha exhorts the brahmin to “bathe only in this,” that is, the purity of karma (*suci,kamma*).¹³

At the conclusion of the discourse, Sundarika requests the Buddha to admit him into the order. A short while later in the same account we find that Sundarika becomes an arhat. This presents us with a *historical problem* because our Sutta Nipāta account, too, contains a description of the awakening of Sundarika. It is possible that the events of this sutta occur after (or sometime after) those of Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja Sutta—or, vice versa—but they are separately recorded by the Khuddaka Reciters (or those who compiled the Sutta Nipāta) and by the Majjhima Reciters.

3.2 It is possible that the “Sundarika Bhāradvāja” of the Vatthūpama Sutta—we shall call him Sundarika 1—is a different person from his namesake (Sundarika 2) in the Sutta Nipāta sutta. Sundarika 1, however, is said to have got his name from his habit of “washing away evil deeds” in the river Sundarikā.¹⁴ Sundarika 2 is so called because of his offering sacrifices by the river Sundarikā.¹⁵ [1.3]

The Discourse to Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja

Sn 3.4

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed One was staying on the bank of the Sundarikā river in Kosala.

Who shall partake of the sacrificial remains?

2 Now at that time, the brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja was making an offering to the fire, performing the Agni-hotra [the fire offering],¹⁶ on the bank of the Sundarikā river. Then, having made the offering to the fire and performed the Agni-hotra, the brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja rose from his seat and looked around in the four directions, thinking:

“Who now might partake of this sacrificial remains?”¹⁷

¹³ ib; cf Dh 24; MA 1:179 where the phrase refers to the Buddha’s teaching.

¹⁴ MA 1:177 = Se 1:244.

¹⁵ SnA 401; S 1:167 & Comy.

¹⁶ *Aggim juhati aggi,hutam paricarati. Juhati* (Skt *juhoti*) is a tt “for those sacrificial ceremonies to which √HU (not √YAJ) is applied” (SED: *juhoti*). *Aggi,hutta* (Skt *agni,hotra*), is the sacred fire offering. The sacred fire (Agni), where the Vedic fire god, Agni, was believed to reside, was placed in the altar (*vedi*). It was kindled at a person’s birth and subsequently maintained (*paricarati*) for life (*nitya agni,hotra*). There was also the optional fire-offering (*kamya agni,hotra*). In Vedic times, the fire altar was a trench of varying shape, dug in the earth. Some had the shape of fāl-cons, two triangles, etc, which were built up of earth. The offering, ahuti (or, “sacrifice, oblation”), ie *homa* (SnA 291; cf SnA 175), was a libation (drink-offering) made with ghee (clarified butter, etc) and poured into the sacred fire as an offerings to the gods (cf Sn 14.11c, 30.21b). *Homa* offerings were a characteristic part of Vedic sacrifice (*yajña* or *bāli*) which included the recitation of mantras. The ceremony spread to China and Japan (in Japanese it is called *goma*), where it was adopted by many of the older Buddhist sects. See Ency Bsm: *bāli*; EB Micro: *homa, yajña*.

¹⁷ “Sacrificial remains,” *havya,sesa*. Comy to **Sundarika S** (S 7.9): He thought, “The portion of milk-rice (*pāyā-sa*) cast in the fire has been eaten by Mahā Brahmā. If this remainder is given to a brahmin, one born from Brahmā’s

3 The brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja then saw [80] the Blessed One not far away sitting at the foot of a tree, with his head covered (by his robe).¹⁸ When he saw him, he took the sacrificial remains in the left hand and his water-pot¹⁹ in the right hand, and went up to the Blessed One.

4 The Blessed One, upon hearing the brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja's footfall, uncovered his head.²⁰ Then the brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja thought,

“The good man²¹ is shaven-headed! This good man is a shaveling!”²² and so wanted to turn back. Then he thought, “Now there are some brahmins here who are shaven-headed. What now if I were to approach him and ask him about his descent [jāti].”²³

5 Then, the brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja approached the Blessed One. Having approached the Blessed One, he said:

“Good sir, what is your descent [birth] (*jacca*)?”²⁴

Then, the Blessed One replied the brahmin Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja in verse, thus:²⁵

THE BUDDHA IS BEYOND CLASS

- 1 No brahmin am I, nor a royal prince,
nor a vaishya [merchant], nor anyone else.²⁶

mouth, my father and son will be pleased (*santappita*), and the path to the Brahmā world well-purified (*suvisodhita*).” (SA 1:233). Sundarika's concern about the Buddha's caste [§§4-5] is explained by Paul Deussen, *Sixty Upaniṣads of the Veda*, 1978), thus: “The residue (*ucchiṣṭam*) of the offering, ie, what remains in the ladle, in the saucepan, or vessel, is to be eaten only by a brāhmaṇa, not in his own house; no kṣatriya or vaiśya is to eat it.” (1:148).

¹⁸ Comy says that the Buddha is sitting there, covered from head to foot in his robe, neither because of snowfall or the cold wind, for he has the power of a thunder-bolt (*nārāyana, saṅghāṭa, bala*), nor because he is looking after his body, by simply because he knows the brahmin would then approach him, when he would remove the head covering. If the brahmin had first seen his shaven head, he might be reluctant in approaching (SnA 401). The *nārāyana, saṅghāṭa, bala* was said to be the strength of 10 six-tusked (*cha-d, danta*) elephants (VbhA 397 f): see VbhA:Ñ 2:214 n5. The real reason, I think, is a less supernatural one, but has to do with monastic decorum, namely, **Sekhiya 24** says: “I shall not sit with the head covered in an inhabited area: this is a training to be done” (*na oḅuṅṅhitā antara, ghare nisīdissānī ti sikkhā karaṇīyā* (V 4:189,9 f). This rule apparently also applies to the presence of the laity and non-monastics.

¹⁹ *Kamaṇḍalu*, a vessel containing water serving as the water of dedication (*dakkhin'odaka*), ie, a gesture of giving or concluding a contract.

²⁰ **Sekhiya 24** says: “I shall not sit with the head covered in an inhabited area: this is a training to be done” (*na oḅuṅṅhitā antara, ghare nisīdissānī ti sikkhā karaṇīyā* (V 4:189,9 f). This rule apparently also applies to the presence of the laity and non-monastics.

²¹ *Bhavaṃ*, a general polite reference to equals amongst the brahmins, usu in voc *bho* (good sir!), roughly same as English “I say!”

²² “Shaveling,” *muṇḍaka*, like *samaṇaka* (“little ascetic”), is not a complimentary term. Here the brahmin does not seem to use it in a pejorative sense, but simply showing his surprise.

²³ “Jāti [descent],” *jāti*, lit “birth,” or social class. K R Norman uses “descent,” Sn:N 48. Some tr *jāti* as “caste,” which is closer to *vaṇṇa* (lit “colour”). *Jāti* is cognate with Latin *genus* (pl *genera*), usu tr as “class,” and Skt *gotra* with Latin *gens* (a common family line, usu honouring the same ancestor), sometimes tr as “clan.” The term “caste” comes from the Portuguese *casta*, first used to describe this ancient Indian social feature, but “caste” can refer to either *jāti* or *vaṇṇa*, depending on the context. See A L Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, London 1967: ch V & Piyasilo, *Life of the Buddha*, 1987d:252-258 (App II).

²⁴ *Kim jacca bhavaṇ ti*, ie of what social class are you? *Jacca = jāti + tya*

²⁵ On additional verse here from (**Suddhika**) **Sundarika S** (S 7.9/1:168 = vv 638-640), SD 22.3 (2.2).

²⁶ The Buddha means that, as one awakened, he belongs to none of the 4 classes, ie, *brāhmaṇa* (brahmins or priests), *kṣatriya* (P *khattiya*, warriors or nobles), *vaiśya* (P *vessa*, merchants), or *sūdra* (P *sudda*, menial workers). These are the 4 Indian castes (*varṇa*: lit “colour”), into which the ancient brahminical and later traditional brahminical Indians are divided. As stated in **Paharāda S** (A 8.19), those who go forth into the sangha lose their caste status to become equals (A 8.19/4:202,7), SD 45.18 (SnA 2:402,18). See (**Pada**) **Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2:37-39), where the Buddha answers the brahmin Doṇa in a similar way, declaring that he (the Buddha) “would not become” (*bhāvissati*) or should

- Having fully understood the clan of the worldlings,
I wander the world as a mentor²⁷ with nothing. (Sn 455)
- 2 As a houseless robe-wearer I wander about
with hair shorn off, with the mind [the self] quenched,
clinging to no humans (*māṇava*)²⁸ here.
You have asked me an improper question, brahmin, about clan! (Sn 456)
- [81] 3 [Brahmin:]
Indeed, sir, brahmins ask amongst brahmins, “Is the good sir a brahmin?”²⁹
- [Blessed One:]
If you call yourself a brahmin, but call me a non-brahmin,³⁰
then, I ask you about the Sāvitrī,³¹ with its 3 lines and 24 syllables. (Sn 457)
- 4 [Brahmin:]
Depending on what have seers, humans, kshatriyas and brahmins,
many of them, in this world, offered sacrifices to the deities?
- [Blessed One:]
One who has gone to the end (of the world), a knowledge-master³²
should receive an offering at the time of sacrifice from anyone:
then, his sacrifice is successful, I say.³³ (Sn 458)
- [Brahmin:]
5 Surely then his sacrifice is successful, said the brahmin,
since we have seen one like you, a knowledge-master.³⁴

not be considered to be a deva, a gandharva [heavenly minstrel], yaksha, or even a human being—that, being awakened, he is simply and uniquely “Buddha”: see SD 36.13.

²⁷ “Mentor” (*manta*) or “wise advisor” is the English cognate of Skt *mantar*, “one who thinks,” L *monitor*, “one who admonishes.” causative of Indo-European base **men-* “to think.” First appeared in English around 1750, from Gk *Mentor*, a character in the Odyssey, friend of Odysseus, adviser of Telemachus (often actually Athene in disguise).

²⁸ Learned brahmins (esp youths) are called *māṇava* (literally, “manikin,” “brahmin youth”), which means “descended from Manu” (the progenitor of man, that is, the first king of the earth, and the ideal man), the mythological ancestor of all humans (see eg Mahābharata bk 1: Ādi Parva: Sambhava Parva: Section 75). Here the term generically refers to all brahmins, and indirectly to mankind. The Buddha’s wordplay is clear: he has nothing to do with the brahmins or the world. See **Caṅkī S** (M 95/2:164-177), SD 21.15 (2.1).

²⁹ Ee gives this in prose but places it in §457. Be treats it as an independent duad (2 lines). Ce Se take it as part of the verse. See Sn:N 255 n457.

³⁰ While the brahmins regard brahminhood as hereditary or biological, and as a social status, the Buddha takes it in its ancient generic sense of “one who keeps away from evil” (*pāpake akusale dhamme bāhentī ti...brāhmaṇā*): see **Aggañña S** (D 27.23/3:95), SD 2.19.

³¹ P *Sāvitti*, ie Ṛg,veda 3.62.10, is an ancient initiatory Vedic hymn, which has great importance in Brahmanism and later, Hinduism, as **Sāvitrī Mantra** or **Gāyatrī Mantra**: 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 gacchāmi, dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi, saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi*—which also has 3 lines totalling 24 syllables (SnA 403)!

³² “A knowledge-master,” *ved’anta,gū*, lit “one who has reached the end of knowledge” [*veda + anta + gū*] ie one who has obtained perfection in wisdom (Sn 463; V 1:3). Syn *veda,gū*, one who has attained the highest knowledge, an epithet of the Buddha (Sn 322, 458, 529, 749, 846, 947, 1049, 1060)

³³ Sn 458g || S 1:13, 165.

³⁴ Sn 459b || Sn 479.

- For, if I had not seen those like you,³⁵
another man would have eaten the sacrificial cake! (Sn 459)³⁶
- 6 [Blessed One:]
Therefore, brahmin, you seek a spiritual goal,³⁷
approach then and ask:
Perhaps there is one here³⁸ who is at peace, free from anger's fumes,
without affliction, without desire, deeply wise. (Sn 460)

THE BUDDHA TEACHES BHĀRA,DVĀJA THE DHARMA

- 7 [Brahmin:]
I delight in sacrifice, good Gotama, I desire to sacrifice,
I do not know—instruct me, good sir— **[82]**
where an offering is successful, tell me this!

[Blessed One:]
Therefore, brahmin, give ear. I shall teach you the Dharma.³⁹ (Sn 461)
- 8 **Ask me not about birth [descent], ask me about conduct.**⁴⁰
Fire, indeed, arises from any wood.⁴¹
A sage, though of low birth, who is resolute,
restrained by moral shame, is a thoroughbred.⁴² (Sn 462) = S 638
- 9 **One tamed by truth, endowed with self-taming,**⁴³
who has found knowledge's end, who has lived the holy life⁴⁴—
let the sacrificer wearing the sacred thread invoke him,⁴⁵
sacrifice the timely gift to him.⁴⁶ (Sn 463)⁴⁷

³⁵ Sn 459c || Sn 1048; S 1:141; Pv 4:1:34.

³⁶ Sn 459 || S 7.9.10/1:168 = v640.

³⁷ Sn 459c || Sn 1048; S 1:141; Pv 4:1:34.

³⁸ Sn 460c “here,” *iha*, a rare form = *idha*, cf Sn 1048c.

³⁹ Be Ee treat this line as a prose statement. Ce Se take it as a separate verse.

⁴⁰ Sn 462 || S 1:168. *Carāṇa*, although here tr in the Buddhist sense, for the brahmins, it refers to a Vedic school or branch. Monier-Williams (SED: *sākhā*) says that “although the words *carāṇa* and *sākhā* are sometimes used synonymously, yet *carāṇa* properly applies to the sect or collection of persons united in one school, and *sākhā* to the traditional text followed, as in the phrase *sākhām adhite*, he recites a particular version of the Veda.” (SED 1062c). I take “conduct” here as pregnant with both senses.

⁴¹ *Kaṭṭhā have jayati jātavedo*. Sn 462b || J 6:206. “Fire,” *jāta,veda* (Vedic = Agni), an ancient name for fire (Sn 462; S 1:168; U 93).

⁴² On this whole verse, Saṃyutta Comy explains: It is not true that fire produced only from a pure type of wood, such as sal-tree wood, can function as fire, but not fire from the wood of a dog's trough, etc. Rather, because of its flame, etc, fire produced by any kind of work can function as fire. So you should not think that only one born of a brahmin family is worthy of offerings, but not one born of an outcaste (*caṇḍāla*) family, etc. Whether from a low family or a high one, an arhat sage is a thoroughbred, resolute, restrained by moral shame. (SA 1:234). See the arguments in **Kaṇṇakattala S** (M 90.12/2:129 f = SD 10.8) & **Assalāyana S** (M 93.11/2:151-153).

⁴³ *Saccena danto damasā upeto*. Sn 463a, cf Dh 9c; see CPD: *apeta*. Sn 463ab || S 1:168; MA 5:85; SA 1:26, 2:374.

⁴⁴ *Vedanta, gū vūsita, brahma, cariyo*. Sn 463b || V 1:3; S 1:62, 4:157; A 2:6; U 3; It 115.

⁴⁵ *Yaññūpanīto tam upavhayetha*. Here *yaññūpanīto* (“the sacrificer wearing the sacred thread”) is clearly related to the Skt *yajñopavīta*, which means “the investiture of youths of the three twice-born castes with the sacred thread or (in later times) the thread itself (worn over the left shoulder and hanging down under the right; orig put on only during the performance of sacred ceremonies but its position occasionally changed)” (SED). “Let (him) invoke,” *upavhayetha*, pot med 3, from *upavhayati* (Skt *upahvayate*).

- 10 Those who, having abandoned sense-pleasures, wander homeless,⁴⁸
with the self well-restrained, straight as a shuttle—
bestow upon them a timely offering:
the brahmin looking for merit should sacrifice thus. (Sn 464)
- 11 Those who are without lust, the faculties well composed,
well released like the moon from Rāhu’s grasp [an eclipse]—
bestow upon them a timely offering:
the brahmin looking for merit should sacrifice thus. (Sn 465)
- 12 They wander the world unattached,
always mindful, having abandoned the idea of “mine”⁴⁹—
bestow upon them a timely offering:
the brahmin looking for merit should sacrifice thus. (Sn 466)

THE TATHAGATA IS WORTHY OF THE SACRIFICIAL CAKE

- 13 Having abandoned sense-pleasures, he wanders victorious;⁵⁰
he knows the end of birth and death, [83]
utterly quenched, cool as a pool of water⁵¹—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 467)
- 14 Equal to his equals, far from the unequals,⁵²
the Tathagata has endless wisdom.
Undefined here or in the next world—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 468)
- 15 Neither illusion nor conceit dwells in him,
his lust is gone, he is without selfishness, without desire.
He has pushed aside anger, the self completely quenched.
That brahmin has abandoned the stain of grief—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 469)
- 16 He has abandoned the mind’s house,
for him there are no possessions at all,
not grasping here nor in the next world⁵³—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 470)

⁴⁶ Sn 463d, cf Dh 108b.

⁴⁷ Sn 463ab = S 639ab.

⁴⁸ Sn 465a || Sn 214; A 3:373: note that this is pl. Sn 465b || S 1:50, 51; Thī 2; J 4:330, 5:34. Sn 465ab || Sn 498; J 1:183.

⁴⁹ Sn 466ab || U 4.

⁵⁰ Sn 467ab || S 1:48.

⁵¹ Sn 467c || J 5:84.

⁵² *Samo samehi visamehi dūre*. Comy gives a technical gloss, comparing (*tulya*) the Buddha to the qualities of past buddhas, beginning with Vipassī, being of equal realization as them, and so on: *Samo ’ti tulyo, samehīti vipassi, ādhihi buddhehi te hi paṭivedha.samattā samā ’ti vuccanti* (SnA 2:407,27), and the disciples are comparable to the pratyeka (or individual) buddhas: *visamehi dūre ’ti na samā visamā pacceka, buddhādayo ... ko pana vādo sāvaka’ādisu* (SnA 2:408,29 f). Suttawise, we can relate this line to **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58), where the Buddha declares that both he and the arhats attain the same awakening; only that the Buddha discovers the path and declares it—the only difference is that “his disciples now dwell as followers of that path, accomplishing it afterwards [after him]” (S 22.58), SD 49.10. In short, the Buddha is only the first amongst equals.

⁵³ Sn 470c || Dh 20

- 17 Concentrated, he crosses the flood,⁵⁴
through supreme vision, he has understood the truth,
with cankers destroyed, bearing the last body⁵⁵—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 471)
- 18 His cankers of existence and harsh speech have ended,
burnt up, gone away, not existing;⁵⁶
he is a knower, released in every way⁵⁷—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 472)
- 19 Amongst those with attachment, he has none,
amongst those attached to conceit, he is unattached to it. [84]
Having thoroughly known suffering together with its field and its ground⁵⁸—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 473)
- 20 Not dependent on hope [desire], he sees solitude,⁵⁹
gone beyond the views known by others.
For him there are no bases (for rebirth)⁶⁰ at all—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 474)
- 21 He has understood all states, above and below,⁶¹
they are destroyed, gone away, not existing.⁶²
At peace, released, with the ending of clinging—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 475)
- 22 He has seen the ending of the fetters of birth and death.
He has utterly turned away from the path of lust.
Pure, faultless, stainless, spotless⁶³—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 476)

⁵⁴ Sn 471a || U 74. Here “flood” (*ogha*) refers to the cankers (*āsava*), ie fourfold flood, ie, those sense-desires (*kām’ogha*), of existence (*bhav’ogha*), of views (*diṭṭh’ogha*), and of ignorance (*avijj’ogha*) (D 3:230, 276; S 5:59; Vbh 374). One who has crossed the floods (*ogha,tiṇṇa*) is the arhat (D 3:54; S 1:3, 142; Sn 178, 823, 1082, 1101, 1145).

⁵⁵ Sn 471c || S 1:14, 53; It 32, 40, 50; Thā 468; B 1:2; Ap 146:4; J 1:183.

⁵⁶ Sn 472b || Sn 475; A 4:157; S 4:210.

⁵⁷ *Vidhūpitā attha, gatā na santi*, Sn 472c || Sn 176; Ap 306:1. *Vidhūpitā ti dadḍhā*, “*Vidhūpitā* means ‘consumed (by fire)’” (SnA 209). “Gone away” (*attha, gatā*), also used of the sun “setting.” Here “not existing” (*na santi*) means there is no worldly or heavenly category that could be used to define the Buddha.

⁵⁸ “Its field and its ground,” *sa, khetta, vatthuṃ* (Sn 769, cf 858; D 2:164, 3:165; M 2:160; S 2:41; A 5:137), ie the conditions for their arising (*hetu, paccaya*) and their nature as karmic defilements (*kamma, kilesa*) (SnA 409). Here used metaphorically to denote karma as moral causation and their resultant supportive defilements. Cf A 1:162, 223: “Karma is the field, consciousness is the seed, craving the moisture.” In its normal usage, *khetta* (lit “field”) is often a mark of wealth (ie possession), eg D 3:93 (in def of *khattiya*). In the same sense it is connected with *vatthu* (ground, land), to denote objects of trade, etc (D 1:5 expl at DA 1:78 as “*khetta* is where the ‘first cereals’ [ie natural grain] grow, and *vatthu* where the other cereals [ie prepared grain] grow, *khetta nāma yasmī pubb’añña rūhati*, *vatthu nāma yasmī apar’añña rūhati*). The “first cereals” (*pubb’añña*) was a name given to the 7 kinds of grain (= field, *khetta*), viz: rice (*sāli*), padi (*vīhi*), kidney-bean (*mugga*), barley (*yava*), wheat (*godhūma*), sesame (*tila*) (Nm 248).

⁵⁹ Here “solitude” = nirvana (SnA 410). See Sn 474, 772, 814, 822, 851, 915, 1065.

⁶⁰ “Bases (for rebirth),” *ārammaṇā*, Sn 474 (*paccayā punabbhava, kāraṇāni*, SnA 2:410), 506 (object of thought; SnA 2:417), 945 (sense-object; *dummuñcaṭṭhena*, Nm 429; SnA 2:568), 1069 (object of meditation; = *nissaya*, Nc 22; SnA 2:593).

⁶¹ Sn 475a || NcA 54; PmA 57. Sn 475ab || A 2:6.

⁶² Sn 475b || Sn 472.

⁶³ Sn 476c || J 2:418; alt tr: Not clinging to people here.

- 23 Who see not as the Self in himself,⁶⁴
mentally concentrated, straight, steady in mind,
he is indeed without lust, without mental barrenness,⁶⁵ doubt-free—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake. (Sn 477)
- 24 At no moment whatever, is he in the midst of delusion,⁶⁶
but a seer with knowledge into all states:⁶⁷
he is bearing his last body.⁶⁸
Having attained to the supreme happiness of self-awakening⁶⁹—
to this extent is the yaksha's purity⁷⁰—
the Tathagata is worthy of the sacrificial cake.” (Sn 478)
- 25 [Brahmin:]
“Then, let my offering be a true offering,
since I have found one accomplished in knowledge like you.
For, Brahmā [God] is my witness: Let the Blessed One take this!⁷¹
May the Blessed One partake of this sacrificial cake!”⁷² (Sn 479)
- 26 [Blessed One:]⁷³
What is sung over with verses should not be taken by me;⁷⁴

⁶⁴ Ee *Yo attanā attānam nānupassati*. Be *Yo attano attānam* Ce Se *Yo attanā'ttānam* ... (which support Ee). The former “self” is a conventional mode of address (a linguistic or grammatical sense), while the latter is a meta-physical notion (that of an unchanging entity, such as that of the brahmins). Comy: He does not regard the 5 aggregates as the “self” (ie, as an abiding entity) (SnA 410). See SD 49.20 (1.3.2.1).

⁶⁵ “Without mental barrenness” (*akhila*), ie “free from the hardness or harshness of mind, produced by the passions (*rāga, dosa, moha*), or by the five ‘hindrances’ (*pañca nīvaraṇāni = pañca ceto,khilā*)” (CPD), Sn 212, 477, 1059, 1147; D 2:261; S 1:188, 4:118; A 2:23. See (**Majjhima**) **Ceto,khila S** (M 16/1:101-104), SD 32.14, also **The Ceto,khila Ss**, SD 51.10.

⁶⁶ “In the midst of delusion,” *moh'antarā*, lit “having delusion in between (ie inside),” (personal) quality of bewilderment (Sn 478; SnA 411 takes it as “cause of delusion,” ie causes of delusion (*moha,kāraṇā*), supports for delusion (*moha,paccayā*). It is a name for all the defilements (SnA 411).

⁶⁷ Sn 478b, cf Sn 161d.

⁶⁸ Sn 478c || S 1:60, 2:278, 279, 285; It 36; Tha 1022, 1166; Thi 7, 10, 56, 65; Vv 5:12; Ap 9:13.

⁶⁹ Sn 478d || D 2:267; S 1:181, It 72, 73, 117, 118; Tha 335; B 5:3; J 1:39; Ap 387:31, 542:4, 2:24:4.

⁷⁰ Sn 478e || Sn 875. *Yakkha*, Skt *yakṣa*, Vedic Skt “quick ray of light,” from √YAKṢ, to move quickly, press on. SED: “a living supernatural being, spiritual apparition, ghost, spirit.” It is possible to tr it as “a restless one”; cf the converse relationship of English “spirit” to “sprightly,” ie, brisk, stirring; and cf Walter Scott’s “restless sprite” (Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader* 1884:221e). Comys derive the popular etym from √YAJ, to sacrifice: a being to whom a sacrifice (of expiation and propiation) is given (VvA 224, 333). On *yaksha* suttas, see **Yakkha Saṃyutta** (S 10.1-12/1:206-215). See PED: *yakkha*.

⁷¹ *Brahmā hi sakkhi*. Sn 479c || J 4:476.

⁷² *Paṭigaṇhatu me bhagavā, bhuñjatu me bhagavā pūrālasam*. Ee lists this as prose; Be Ce Se as verse. Norman is uncertain of the metre (Sn:N 250 n479)—it is possible that it is simply prose.

⁷³ Sn 480 f = (**Suddhika**) **Sundarika S** (S *641 f = 7.9/1:168), SD 22.3, = **Kasi Bhāra,dvāja S** (Sn 81 f), SD 69.6, = **Aggika S** (S *636 f = 7.8/1:67 f), SD 22.9 (the Buddha does not accept offerings by way of “singing gathas”). [1.1]

⁷⁴ Comy to **Aggika Bhāradvāja S** (S 7.8 = *636 f), SD 22.9, paraphrases their significance thus (as the Buddha’s arrièrè pensée): “Though I have stood for such a long time waiting for alms, you would not give even a spoonful; but now that I have revealed all the Buddha-qualities to you as though spreading out sesamum seeds on a mat, you wish to give. This food has been gained, as it were, by singing a song (*gāyanena gāyitvā*). Therefore, as it has been ‘chanted over with verses’ (*gāthā bhigīta*) it is not fit to be eaten by me. Since there is the Dharma (*dharme satī*), out of respect for the Dharma, established in the Dharma, the Buddhas sustain their life. This is their rule of conduct, this is their way of livelihood (*esā vutti ayam ājīvo*). Such food should be discarded and only what is properly gained should be eaten.” (SA 1:232). See Miln 228-232. CPD (*abhigīta*) defines it as “spoken over with mantras,”

- O brahmin, this is not the way of those who see.⁷⁵
Buddhas reject what is gained by the singing of verses;
when there's Dharma, brahmin, this is the rule.** (Sn 480) = S 641
- 27 **But with other food serve a fully-accomplished great seer,
the canker-destroyed, whose misconduct is calmed:
serve him with food and drink—
this is the field for those looking for merit.** (Sn 481) = S 642
- 28 [Brahmin:]
Sadhu [excellent], Blessed One, that I should know thus
as to who could partake of a gift such as mine,
seeking someone at the time of sacrifice,
and having received your teaching. (Sn 482)
- [Blessed One:]
29 For whom violence is gone,
whose mind is undisturbed [not turbid],⁷⁶
freed from sense-desires,
whose sloth is cast away;⁷⁷ (Sn 483)
- 30 The remover of limiting boundaries,⁷⁸
wise knower⁷⁹ of birth and death,
the sage endowed with sagehood,⁸⁰
such a one has come to the sacrifice; (Sn 484)
- 31 Removing the brow's frown,⁸¹
honour him with joined palms [añjali],⁸²

suggesting that the Buddha rejects the offering by the brahmin because he has chanted over it with the sacrificial hymns. However, **Bodhi** thinks that “it is doubtful that the Buddha would reject food for such a reason. Further, according to [SED], *gāthā* is not used with reference to the verses of the Vedas, and thus here the word likely refers to the Buddha's own verses” (S:B 446 n446).

⁷⁵ “Those who see,” *sampassatāṃ*, “that those who has seen the true goal and the Dharma would think that such food should be eaten: this is not natural (or such a state does not exist) (*atthañ ca dhammañ ca sampassatānaṃ* “*eva, rūpaṃ bhojanaṃ bhujjītabban ti esa dhammo na hoti*, SA 1:232).

⁷⁶ “Undisturbed,” *anāvilaṃ* < *na* + *āvila* (mfn), not turbid, clear; undisturbed (said of water, and the *citta*, mind) (Sn 160 f, 483, 515, 637 = Dh 413; Sn 1039).

⁷⁷ Sn 483b || S 3:83.

⁷⁸ Comy explains “limiting boundaries” (*sīm'anta*) as “defilements” (*kilesa*), that divide beings up into those tractable by the Buddha (*Buddha, veneyya*), ie those who can become saints, and the worldlings (*puthujjana*) (SnA 412).

⁷⁹ “Wise knower,” *kovidā* [*ku* + √*VID*, to know] (Sn 484, 627 = Dh 403; Sn 653), one who has right wisdom (with ref to Dharma, the path or noble truth); closely related to *medhavī* and *paṇḍita*. Ant *a-kovidā*, ignorant of true wisdom (Sn 763; S 1:162, 4:287 = Nc:Be 186 on *attā'nudīṭṭhi*).

⁸⁰ Cf Ap 1:165.

⁸¹ “Frown,” *bhakuṭṭim* (f), superciliousness (Sn 485; J 3:99; Vism 26; SnA 412; also spelt *bhākuṭṭim* (f) (M 1:125; J 5:296); der *bhākuṭṭika*, frowning continuously (V 2:11 = 3:181), a quality of the “angry type” (*dosa, carita*) of person-ality (Vism 105). →PED sv. The significance here is that a gift should be happily or joyfully made for maximum benefit: see (**Sumana**) **Dāna S** (A 6.37), SD 22.1.

⁸² Sn 485b || J 3:305. “With joined palms” Ee *pañjalikā*; Be *pañcalikā*; (*pañjalikā* = *pa* + *añjali* + *ka*), ie holding up (to the forehead) the hands, palms together, in respectful salutation or in solicitation (D 3:180; S 1:226; Sn 485, 598; J 5:174 x2); also *pañjali* (Sn 1031); also *pañjali, kata* (Sn 566, 573; Tha 460; J 6:501), cf *añjali, añjalikā, añjali, kata, añjali, karaṇīya, añjali, kamma*; cf BHS *prāñjalī, kṛta* (Mvst 2:257, 287, 301), always following *ekāṃsī, kṛta* =

worship him with food and drink—
in this way, the gift is successful.⁸³

(Sn 485) [86]

[Brahmin:]

- 32 The Buddha, good sir, deserves the sacrificial cake:
he is the supreme field of merit,⁸⁴
the sacrifice recipient⁸⁵ for all the world.⁸⁶
What is given to the good sir is of great fruit!⁸⁷

(Sn 486)

Sundarika goes for refuge

6 “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! Master Gotama!

Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned,
were to reveal what was hidden,
were to show the way to one who was lost, or

were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,
in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by the Blessed Gotama.

I go to the Blessed Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.
May the Blessed Gotama give me the going-forth, give me the ordination.”⁸⁸

Sundarika becomes an arhat

And, the venerable Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja, not long after was ordained,
dwelling alone, aloof, diligent, exertive, and resolute,
having right here and now realized for himself through direct knowledge,
after attaining it, dwelt in the supreme goal of the holy life,
for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

He directly knew:

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

And the venerable Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja became one of the arhats.

— evaṃ —

ekamsaṃ uttarā,saṅgaṃ karoti (“putting his upper robe on one side (ie the left shoulder“), as gesture of respect (SdhpS 100.4; Mvst 1.98.1). SED however def *prāñjali* as “joining and holding out the hollowed open hands (as a mark of respect and humility or to receive alms),” and one might add “to receive blessings.” This is still a common practice amongst Hindus, but not practised by Buddhists. But both senses apply in the Canon: see CPD: *añjali*.

⁸³ Sn 485d || S 1:175.

⁸⁴ Sn 486b || S 1:220; A 2:35, 3:36; It 88; Tha 1177; Thi 287; Ap 6:18, 23:23, 43:2, 43:4, 169:2, 308:2; passim; 2:10:2.

⁸⁵ “The sacrifice recipient,” *āyāga*, also means “offering to a deity, sacrificial fees.”

⁸⁶ Sn 486c || Tha 565. Be Ee *sabba-lokassa*; Sb *sabba-lokasmim* (“in all the world”).

⁸⁷ Sn 486d || S 1:175; A 3:41, 4:292; Dh 356-9.

⁸⁸ Cf **Vatthūpama S** (M 7) where Sundarika Bhāra,dvāja, too, joins the order: are there two Sundarikas? See Intro (3).

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