

Sappurisa Sutta

The Discourse on the True Individual | M 113/3:37-45

Theme: The true individual and the false person

Translated by Piya Tan ©2008

1 Sutta summary

1.1 The Sappurisa Sutta (M 113) contrasts the detached and Dharma-centred attitude of the true individual (*sappurisa*) with the conceit and self-praise of the false person (*asappurisa*). The sutta has three Chinese parallels, one found in the Madhyama Āgama, another in the Ekottara Āgama, and a third, an individual translation.¹

The Sappurisa Sutta gives a list of 26 occasions when a false person (*asappurisa*) shows conceit (*māna*) on account of his religious state, and 27 occasions a true individual (*sappurisa*) practises correctly and beneficially. The 26 occasions for conceit are as follows (given in sets):

(A) On account of status (family, property, etc), namely:²

- (1) high birth (*uccā kulā*), that is, a kshatriya or a brahmin family (MA 4:98);³
- (2) a great family (*mahā, kula*), that is, a kshatriya, brahmin or vaishya family (MA 4:98);
- (3) a very wealthy family, that is, on account of one's great wealth (*mahā, bhoga, kula*);
- (4) a fabulously rich family, that is, on account of one's great wealth and power (*uḷāra, bhoga, -kula*);
- (5) a well known and famous family, that is, on account of fame (*ñāto hoti yasassī*);
- (6) gains, that is, on account of what one has (property) (*lābhī hoti cīvāra, piṇḍapāta, senāsana, -gilāna, paccaya, bhesajja, parikkhārānam*) [§8];

(B) On account of knowledge, namely:

- (7) learning, that is, taking knowledge as a measure of success (*bahussuta*);
- (8) being a Vinaya expert, that is, taking one's knowledge of the Vinaya as a measure of success or power (*vinaya, dhara*);
- (9) being a Dharma speaker, that is, taking one's knowledge of the Dharma as a measure of success or power (*dhamma, kathika*);

(C) On account of practice (the ascetic practices or *dhutaṅga*), namely:⁴

- (10) being a forest dweller (*ārañṇika*), for example, looking down on Dharma learning;
- (11) being a dust-heap robe user (*paṃsu, kūlika*), for example, hoping to attract charisma because of this;
- (12) being as alms-eater (*piṇḍa, pātika*), for example, hoping to attract charisma because of this;

¹ MĀ 85 = T1.561a-562a; EĀ 17.9 = T2.585a-c; T 48 = T1.837c-838c, all of which agree with M 113 in locating the discourse in Jeta's Grove, near Sāvattihī. MĀ 85 also agrees with M 113 on the title (真人), while T 48 has the title, 佛說是法非法經, "the discourse spoken by the Buddha on what is Dharma and what is not Dharma." T 48 was tr by Anshigao (安世高), btw 148 and 170 CE, based on an original from a Madhyama Āgama collection, 出中阿含 (a specification not recorded in the 宗, 元 and 明 eds). EĀ 17.9 has been tr by THICH Huyen-Vi & Pasadika, 1994: 157-160. See Analayo 2007 under M 3:37 nn.

² The Chinese versions (translations) do not mention such a range of "families." It might be either they have been conflated, taking *uccā, kulā, mahā, kulā, mahā, bhoga, kulā* and *uḷāra, bhoga, kulā* to be somewhat synonymous, and as such redundant, but the Pali redactors maintained the list for the sake of completeness. Indeed, the import of the Sutta is that the practitioner should not measure others in any way. As such, it is better to overstate the problem, than to understate it.

³ Cf V 4:6 where these two are regarded as *ukkaṭṭhā jāti* ("distinguished births").

⁴ Only 9 ascetic practices are listed here. A total of 13 ascetic practices are mentioned in the Pali Canon but never together in one place (except in the Parivāra, a late work).⁴ Some of them are given in the Vinaya, the Nikāyas and the Commentaries.⁴ The 13 practices are discussed in some detail in **Visuddhi, magga** (Vism 2/59-83). The 4 ascetic practices not mentioned above are: the three-robe user (*te, cīvārika*), the house-to-house farer (*sapadāna, cārika*), the alms-bowl user (*patta, piṇḍika*) and the further-food refuser (*khalu, pacchā, bhattika*). See **Bakkula S** (M 124) & its Intro (2).

- (13) being a tree-foot dweller (*rukka,mūlika*), that is, living under a tree;
- (14) being a charnel-ground dweller (*sosānika*), that is, living near corpses or in a cemetery;
- (15) being an open-air-dweller (*abbhokāsika*), that is, live in the open;
- (16) being a continual sitter (*nesajjika*), that is, not lying down to sleep;
- (17) being an any-bed user (*yathā,sathathika*), that, not being particular about one's lodging or shelter (rough living);
- (18) being a one-session eater (*ek'āsanika*), that is, taking only one meal a day in one sitting;

(D) On account of dhyana experience, namely:

- (19) being a first-dhyana attainer;
- (20) being a second-dhyana attainer;
- (21) being a third-dhyana attainer;
- (22) being a fourth-dhyana attainer;

(E) On account of formless-attainment experience, namely:

- (23) being an attainer of the base of infinite space;
- (24) being an attainer of the base of infinite consciousness;
- (25) being an attainer of the base of nothingness; and
- (26) being an attainer of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

In each of these cases, the false person (*asappurisa*) is one who considers that he is accomplished in that state and looks down on or belittles others who are unlike him or have not attained his state. The point is that such a person is filled with **conceit** (*māna*), which is a hindrance to arhathood.⁵ As such, the false person is not a true practitioner, or at best, one who needs to overcome his conceit, in order to progress spiritually.

The true individual (*sappurisa*), on the other hand, is one who *does not regard his family, property, status, or ascetic practice as a measure of his spiritual attainment* [§§3-20]. For, none of these things have to do with the destruction of the three unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion). However, for such a person, even if one lacks these things, but **“is practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma,...practising what is right,...keeps to the Dharma [one is a follower of the Dharma],”** one is worthy of honour and praiseworthy.

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way,⁶ he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of (family, property, status, or ascetic practice). [§3b etc]

1.2 Similarly, even when the true individual has attained any or all of the four dhyanas or the four formless attainments [§§21-28], he does not use these as a measure of success against others who have not attained any of them. While all the first 18 statements concerning the *false person*—that on account of his status knowledge, or practice, he praises himself and belittles others—these last eight statements concerning the true individual [§§21-28], *who are experienced in the form dhyanas or the formless attainments*, each have a different refrain:

⁵ Conceit (*māna*) is one of **the 10 fetters** (*dasa samyojanā*), which are: (1) self-identity view (*sakkāya,diṭṭhi*), (2) spiritual doubt (*vicikicchā*), (3) attachment to rituals and vows (*sīla-b,bata,parāmāsa*), (4) sensual lust (*kāma,rāga*), (5) repulsion (*paṭigha*), (6) greed for form existence (*rūpa,rāga*), (7) greed for formless existence (*arūpa,rāga*), (8) conceit (*māna*), (9) restlessness (or remorse) (*uddhacca*), (10) ignorance (*avijjā*) (S 5:61; A 5:13; Vbh 377). In some places, no 5 (*kāma,rāga*) is replaced by illwill (*vyāpāda*). The arhat has broken all the 10 fetters.

⁶ *So paṭipadam yeva antaram karivā*. The phrase **antaram karivā** comes from *antaram karoti*, lit “he makes (it) the centre,” means “he keeps in mind; he is mainly concerned with”: cf *kāma,rāgam antaram karivā*, etc (used in connection with the mental hindrances) at **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108.26/3:14) = SD 33.5, & **Saddha S** (A 11.10/5:323.). Comy glosses it as *abbhantaram katvā*, “making it the interior (the heart)” (MA 4:73; see also AA 5:79).

‘The Blessed One has spoken of the non-identification (*atammayatā*) with the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception, too. *For, in whatever they conceive, it turns out to be something else.*’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of non-identification with the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception, he neither praises himself nor belittles others. [§21b etc]

Here, the Buddha defines “the true individual” or spiritually evolved person (*sappurisa*) as one who avoids indulging in the eight dhyanas⁷ but transcends them through “non-identification (*atammayatā*). Thus, there is liberation from the mental influxes,⁸ which is arhathood. The Buddha is reminding us that final liberation cannot be found in the temporary peace and bliss of the dhyanas, much less in any conditioned thing, state or being. *Atammayatā* transcends even the most sublime of unawakened states. No other state, no matter how sublime or spiritual, except *atammayatā*, can bring us liberation.

The Sappurisa Sutta further advises the practitioner to go beyond the yearning for liberation by cultivating the joy of insight contemplation. In due course, the practice leads to equanimity (*upekkhā*). **Equanimity** is the highest of the seven awakening factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*). When the seven factors are developed successfully, they lead to the penetration of the object on which they are focused. **Penetration**, or direct spiritual experience, means awakening to and deeply realizing the true nature of things.

Yet, the Sappurisa Sutta tells us that *atammayatā* takes the practitioner beyond even *upekkhā*. The Buddha is saying that even *upekkhā* is a state that can be clung to, thus hindering liberation. *Atammayatā* frees *upekkhā*, as well as the other six awakening-factors and any wholesome *dhamma* that aids liberation, from clinging. Even in relation to such attainments, “the Blessed One has spoken of non-identification (*atammayatā*), as in whatever way one may conceive (about the attainment), it turns out to be otherwise.”⁹

1.3 The arhat is called *atammayo* in the sense that he does not identify himself with anything: he is no longer “made of that.”¹⁰ The key sentence “**in whatever way they conceive it, it turns out to be otherwise**” (*yena yena hi maññanti, tato taṃ hoti aññatha ti*)¹¹ [§21b etc] refers to the process of conception (*maññana*) explained in detail in **the Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1), and which is fully understood by the arhat.¹² This important line recurs elsewhere,¹³ such as **the Sutta Nipāta** (which expresses the delusion of permanence):

*Yena yena hi maññanti
tato taṃ hoti aññatha
etadiso vinā,bhavo
passa lokassa pariyāya*

For, however they conceive [think] it to be,
it turns out to be otherwise;
such is the difference:
look at the way of the world! (Sn 588)

⁷ Ie the 4 form dhyanas (*jhāna*) and the 4 formless attainments (*samāpatti*): see **Dhyana** = SD 8.4.

⁸ “**Mental influxes**,” *āsava*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow”) comes from *ā-savati*, meaning “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as cankers, taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corrupt ions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists **4 influxes**: (1) of sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) of (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) of views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) of ignorance (*avijjāsava*) (D 16.1.12/2:82, 16.2.4/2:91, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). *The influx of existence* is the attachment and desire for the realm of form and of formlessness, and as such, is the craving for the dhyanas, on account of *the false views* of eternalism and annihilationism. As such, *the influx of view* is subsumed under the influx of existence (MA 1:67). The list of **3 influxes** (omitting that of views) is probably older and is found more frequently in the suttas (**D 33.1.10-**(20)/3:216; **M 9.70/1:55**, **121.12/3:108**; **A 3.58.5/1:165**, **3.59.4/1:167**, **6.63.9/3:414**). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: *āsava*.

⁹ *Atammayatā vutta bhagavatā, yena yena hi maññanti tato taṃ hoti aññatha* (M 113/3:42,28).

¹⁰ Nānananda 2005:316 f.

¹¹ See UA 209 f = UA:M 504 f.

¹² M 1.51-146/1:4-6 = SD 11.8.

¹³ U 3.10/32,30; Sn 757.

Delusion arising from a self-notion can be illustrated by the following two quotes. The first is from **the Loka Sutta** (U 3.10), thus,

<i>Ayam loko santapa,jāto phassa,pareto rogam vadati attato yena hi maññati tato tam hoti aññatha</i>	This world is subject to torment, afflicted by touch, it is called a disease on account of self. For, however one conceives it to be, it turns out to be otherwise. (U 3.10/32)
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The second verse is from **the Sutta Nipāta**,

<i>Yena yena hi maññanti tato nam hoti aññatha tam hi tassa musā hoti mosa,dhammam hi ittaram</i>	For, however they conceive [think] it to be, it turns out to be otherwise— for, it is false to him; for, the fleeting is by nature false. (Sn 757)
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The mind of *atammayatā* is neither constructed by nor does it rest in any state of mind, all of which are impermanent, undependable, oppressive, uncontrollable, and unknowable, that is, void of self.¹⁴

2 The cessation of perception and feeling

Finally, *only* the true individual is said to be one who has transcended even the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and goes on to fully experience “the cessation of perception and feeling” (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*), that is, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha,samāpatti*).¹⁵ The false person is never able to attain the state of cessation. According to **the Kathā,vatthu Commentary**, the attainment of cessation is of two kinds:¹⁶

the merely mundane (*lokiya*), practised by the worldling, and the supramundane (*lok’uttara*), practised by the saints. While mundane cessation conduces to rebirth in the sphere of non-conscious beings (*asañña,satta*), the supramundane does not. (KvuA 155; see Kvu:AR 300)

The absolute necessary preconditions to this attainment are said to be the perfect mastery of all the eight dhyanas. And in the case of the supramundane cessation, the meditator should have already attained the paths of non-return or of arhathood. In other words, only an arhat or a non-returner, and only those who have already mastered the eight attainments (dhyana and formless attainments) can experience this cessation (of the supramundane kind).¹⁷

On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainment, that is, there arises the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi,phala*) in the non-returner, and the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*) in the arhat.¹⁸ “It is thus one possible route to experiencing Nibbāna.” (Harvey 1993:10 digital ed).¹⁹

¹⁴ M 113.21/3:42 f = SD 29.6. See **Atammayatā** = SD 19.13.

¹⁵ S 14.11/2:151. This anomalous state, fully described in **Visuddhi,magga** (Vism 23.16-52/702-709), is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight where all mental states temporarily shut down (Vism 23.43/707 f).

¹⁶ *Iti dve saññā,vedayita,nirodha,samāpattiyo lokiyā ca lok’uttarā ca. Tattha lokiyā puthujanassa asañña,sattupikā hoti, loku’ttarā ariyānaṃ, sā na nāsañña,sattupikā.*

¹⁷ A 5.166/3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/708.

¹⁸ Vism 23.49/708; PmA 1:41, 321.

¹⁹ See **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43) = SD 30.2 Intro (3).

3 Sappurisa, the true individual

3.1 MEANINGS AND USAGES OF SAPPURISA. The term *sappurisa* is resolved as *sat* (= *sant*) (“good”) + *purisa* (“person”);²⁰ so literally or on a simple level, it means “good person, true man”²¹ and idiomatically a “virtuous person, true individual.” In the Suttas, however, the sense of *sappurisa* has to be teased out from its context. It refers to a true lay practitioner (A 8.37-38), to a true practitioner (M 110, 113), or to the saints of the path, except the arhats (S 45.26; A 4.201), or generally to all saints, including the arhats (A 4.240). In other words, *sappurisa* can refer to unawakened practitioners, or to the saints, whether they are monastics or lay, depending in the context.

First, let us look at *sappurisa* as a true lay individual. **The (Saṅkhitta) Sappurisa Dāna Sutta** (A 8.37) briefly defines the true lay follower as a true giver, that is, one who gives alms that is pure, choice, at the right time, what is allowable, repeatedly, discriminately [after careful examination]; while giving, his mind is radiant with faith, and after the giving he is happily satisfied.²² **The (Mahā,meḡha) Sappurisa Sutta** (A 8.38) declares that a true lay individual arises for the good of all beings: the family, society, religion, and even the gods.²³

Sappurisa in the sense of a true practitioner is found in the Majjhima Nikāya. **The Cūḷa Puṇṇama Sutta** (M 110) defines the *sappurisa*²⁴ as one who is morally virtuous, learned, energetic, wise, and holds right view.²⁵ Similarly, **the Sappurisa Sutta** (M 113) says that he is one who understands the true purpose of renunciation and the holy life, so that there is nothing he would identify with.²⁶ In other words, he is a good worldling (*kalyāṇa, puthujjana*).²⁷

The Sappurisa Dāna Sutta (A 5.148) lists the five qualities of a true individual’s giving and their benefits, that is,

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| (1) He gives with faith | (<i>saddhāya dānaṃ deti</i>). |
| (2) He gives with respect | (<i>sakkaccaṃ dānaṃ deti</i>). |
| (3) He gives at the right time | (<i>kālena dānaṃ deti</i>). |
| (4) He gives with a hospitable heart | (<i>anuggahita, citto danaṃ deti</i>). ²⁸ |
| (5) He gives without harming himself or others | (<i>attānañ ca parañ ca anupahacca dānaṃ deti</i>). ²⁹ |
- (A 5.148/3:172 f = SD 22.15)

The Saṅgīti Sutta (D 33), **the Das’uttara Sutta** (D 34) and **the Dhammaññū Sutta** (A 7.64) give a technical definition of a *sappurisa*, as one having these seven qualities:

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| (1) he knows the Dharma [the teaching and truth] | (<i>dhammaññū</i>); |
| (2) he knows the meaning and purpose of the Dharma | (<i>atthaññū</i>); |
| (3) he knows himself [the nature of the self] | (<i>attaññū</i>); |
| (4) he knows moderation | (<i>mattaññū</i>); |
| (5) he knows the time | (<i>kālaññū</i>); |

²⁰ The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit (BHS) form *satpuruṣa* is resolved in the same way, and translated as “(lit) worthy or true man.” In the BHS texts, the term usually refers to the bodhisattvas (Saddharma, puṇḍarīka Ś 3.10), but may also include monks (Rāṣṭrapāla, pariprechā 2.3).

²¹ For this level of def, see **Kalyāṇa, mitta Appamāda S** (S 3.18) = SD 34.3 (2.1.1.1(1)).

²² A 8.37/4:243 f.

²³ A 8.38/4:244 f @ SD 30.10 (3.2).

²⁴ M:ÑB translates *sappurisa* here as “true man,” and *asappurisa*, as “untrue man.” These literal trs sound all right as long as we do not misconstrue them to refer to manliness or lack of it, or even a man who is faithful to his spouse as against one who is not. Some however may take this tr to be sexist.

²⁵ M 110/2:20-24 = SD 45.4

²⁶ M 113/3:37-45 = SD 23.7.

²⁷ On *puthujjana*, see **Nakula, pitā S** (S 22.1) = SD 5.4 Intro (3). See also **Dhammaññū S** (A 7.64/4:113-117) = SD 30.10 Intro (2.3); **Udakūpama S** (A 7.15/4:11-13) = Intro (1.1 3)).

²⁸ *Anuggahita, citto dānaṃ deti*.

²⁹ *Anupahacca dānaṃ deti*.

- (6) he knows the group [understands the crowd] (*parisaññū*); and
 (7) he knows (the difference in) individuals (*puggalaññū* or *puggala.parovaraññū*).
 (D 33.2.3(6)/3:253 = D 34.1.8(7)/3:283; A 7.64/4:113 (SD 30.10))

The true individual, in other words, is one who knows himself and others and, above all, he knows true reality, at least in some measure. In fact, he is one who contributes greatly to the common good, even if he is still unawakened, but he consequently brings even greater general good if he is awakened.

In the **Aṅkura Peta, vatthu** (Pv 2.9), Aṅkura sings:

<i>Aho vatāre aham eva dajjāṃ</i>	Ah truly, sir! I would rather give,	
<i>santo hi maṃ sappurisā bhajeyyāṃ</i>	may the good and true individuals associate with me	
<i>megho 'va ninnāṃ hi pūrayanto</i>	like the cloud filling the lowlands	
<i>santappaye sabba, vanibbakānaṃ</i>	would satisfy all the wayfarers.	(Pv 2.9.46/26)

The **Asappurisa Sutta 2** (S 45.26) and the **(Sappurisa) Sikkhā, pada Sutta** (A 4.201) speak of the true individual as one who keeps the precepts, and the false person as one who habitually breaks it. Someone “better than the true individual” (*sappurisa, tara*) is one who himself keeps to the precepts, and *encourages others to do so, too*.³⁰ In the **Vinaya**, the Buddha tells Sāriputta that “a certain brahmin” (namely, the elderly Rādhā) who has given Sāriputta a ladleful of rice as a *sappurisa*, so that he is one who is suitable as a candidate for going forth.³¹ The **Dhammapada** praises the *sappurisa* in this verse:

<i>Na puppha, gandho paṭivātam eti</i>	The fragrance of flowers blows not against the wind,
<i>na candanaṃ tagara, mallikā vā</i>	nor does sandalwood, nor tagara, nor jasmine,
<i>satañ ca gandho paṭivātam eti</i>	but the fragrance of the good blows against the wind:
<i>sabbā disā sappuriso pavāti</i>	the true individual sweetens every quarter. (Dh 54)

The opposite of the true individual (*sappurisa*) is “the false person” (*asappurisa*), that is, one “who is evil, empty, confused, a fool blinded by ignorance.”³² The **(Sappurisa) Sikkhā, pada Sutta** (A 4.201), defines the false person as *one who breaks the precepts*, and one who is “worse than the false person” or “even more false person” (*asappurisa, tara*) as *one who breaks the precepts and encourages others to do so*.³³ A late term for the false person is *kā, purisa*, which may be translated as “bad individual,” or more simply, “bad person.”³⁴ In the *Sutta Nipāta Commentary*, the false person is also said to be “ignoble” (*an-ariya*, SnA 479).³⁵

The term *sappurisa* sometimes refers to the saint of the path, as in the **Sappurisa'ānisaṃsa Sutta** (A 4.240), where the true individual would be sure to enjoy these four benefits, that is,

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| (1) he grows in the noble moral virtue | (<i>ariyena sīlena vaḍḍhati</i>); | |
| (2) he grows in the noble concentration | (<i>ariyena samādhinā vaḍḍhati</i>); | |
| (3) he grows in the noble wisdom | (<i>ariyena paññāya vaḍḍhati</i>); and | |
| (4) he grows in the noble liberation | (<i>ariyena vimuttiyā vaḍḍhati</i>). | (A 4.240/2:239) |

A true individual (*sappurisa*) may refer either to *a saint of the path* (other than the Buddha), or to *a true practitioner* (that is, one aspiring for awakening in this life).³⁶

³⁰ S 45.26/5:20 = SD 47.3a; A 4.201/2:217 = SD 47.3b.

³¹ Mv 1.28 = V 1:54 f; VA 5:983; DhA 6.1/2:104-108; AA 1:328 f; cf Ap 518; ThaA 2:12, 3:101.

³² *Asappurisan ti lāma, purisaṃ tuccha, purisaṃ mūlha, purisaṃ avijjāya andhī, katam bālam* (AA 3:209).

³³ A 4.201/2:217 = SD 47.3. See **Veḷu, dvāreyya S** (S 55.7), where it is stated that we should keep the precepts and encourage others to do so, too, and to speak in praise of such acts (S 55.7.5-12/5:353-355) = SD 1.5.

³⁴ V 2:188 = 154 = 2:241 = A 2:73 (qu at ThaA 2:279); S 1:91; Tha 124 = 1053, 1018; J 2:42, 44, 4:58; Pv 287; ThaA 2:274. See Jan Nattier, *A Few Good Men* 2003:223 n.

³⁵ For further discussion, see **Dhammaññū S** (A 7.64) = SD 30.10 Intro (2.3).

³⁶ On *sappurisa* and *ariya*, see **Dhammaññū S** (A 7.64) = SD 30.10 Intro (2).

The *sappurisa* is also mentioned in **the Dhamma,saṅgāṇī** (Dhs 1003 = 1255) in the definition of “self-identity view,” where the ignorant person ignores the “true individual,” which the Commentary defines as the pratyeka-buddhas and the disciples of the Buddha.³⁷ In **the Sabb’āsava Sutta** (M 2), the *sappurisa* is said to be the same as a “noble one” (*ariya*).³⁸

3.2 TRANSLATION OF SAPPURISA. The term *sappurisa* has been variously translated as “good man,” “true man,” “true person,” or “virtuous person,” and the like [3.1]. “Good man” or “good person” are literal translations of *sappurisa*, but are too narrow to encompass all the textual senses and usages of the term. Moreover, the word “good” is too general and unclear. In the Suttas, the key terms related to “good” are *puñña* and *kusala*.

While *puñña* is often translated as “good, merit, etc.,” the senses of *kusala* cover “good, skillful, wholesome, etc.” In simple terms, *puñña* connotes a more worldly “merit,” often connected with the desire for heavenly birth, while *kusala* sometimes simply means “skillful” (as in some kind of trade) or “wholesome.” *Sappurisa* as a rule is better qualified by “wholesome” (*kusala*), although “meritorious” (*puñña*) may sometime apply in a broad sense.³⁹

“True man” unfortunately has a strong sexist, even sexual, overtone, which clearly excludes “true women.” “True man” also connotes a “false man,” which does not translate *asappurisa* very well: does it mean to say that one is not *really* a man?

“True person” looks like a better translation, except that “person” can denote some kind of self-identity view (*sakkāya, diṭṭhi*). If we take *asappurisa* in a poetic sense as “hollow man” or “empty person,” that is, as a synonym of *mogha, purisa*,⁴⁰ then *sappurisa* would connote a “full” man, that is, a spiritually “fulfilled” person. But these are poetic senses which are best only applied in certain contexts, especially verses.

My proposal is to translate *sappurisa* as “true individual” for a number of good reasons. Although “true” is an acceptable translation of the prefix *sat* or *sant*: for example, “true teaching” is a good translation of *saddhamma*. Although “individual” is often used to translate *purisa, puggala*,⁴¹ it is here an acceptable translation of either *purisa* or *puggala*.

The word “individual” is helpful because it suggests an “undivided,” that is, “unified” being, even one who stands above others.⁴² The *sappurisa* is a spiritually individuated person,⁴³ that is, he is one working towards emotional independence, or one endowed with it.⁴⁴ Such a person is a **true individual**.

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³⁷ DhsA 349; MA 1:121.

³⁸ M 2.9-10/1:8 f = SD 30.3.

³⁹ For a fuller discussion, see **Beyond Good and Evil** = SD 18.7.

⁴⁰ See **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22.6/1:132) = SD 3.13 n on “hollow man.”

⁴¹ See eg **Aṭṭha, puggala S 1** (A 8.59.2b/4:292) = SD 15.10a.

⁴² On the differences btw “individual” and “individualist,” see **Atammayatā** = SD 19.13(7.6).

⁴³ On individuation, see **Me: The Nature of Conceit** = SD 19.2a(1.2).

⁴⁴ On emotional independence, see **Atammayatā** = SD 19.13 (7.6).

The Discourse on the True Individual

M 113/3:37-45

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika's Park in Jeta's Grove near Sāvaththī. Then the Blessed One addressed the monks thus:

“Bhikshus!”

“Bhante!” the monks answered to the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this:

Spiritual practice is not based on status

2 “Bhikshus, I shall teach you **the nature of a true individual [a good person] and the nature of a false person [a bad person]**. Listen well, pay close attention. I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the monks answered the Blessed One in assent.

The Blessed One said this:

3a “And, bhikshus, what is the nature of **a false person**?”

(1) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF HIGH BIRTH. Here, bhikshus, a false person is one gone forth from a high family.⁴⁵ He reflects thus:

‘I am one who has renounced from a high family, but these other monks have not renounced from high families.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his high family.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

3b But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of one's coming from a high family that the states of *greed* are destroyed, or that the states of *hate* are destroyed, or that the states of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he may not have renounced from a high family, if he is practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma, if he is practising what is right, if he keeps to the Dharma [he is a follower of the Dharma]— [38]

for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way,⁴⁶ he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his high family.

This is the nature of a true individual.

4 (2) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF A GREAT FAMILY. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one gone forth from a great family.⁴⁷ He reflects thus:

‘I am one who has renounced from a great family, but these other monks have not renounced from great families.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his great family.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

⁴⁵ *Uccā kulā*. Cf V 4:6 where *ukkaṭṭhā jāti* (“distinguished births”) is used. See Intro (1)(A) n.

⁴⁶ *So paṭipadaṃ y'eva antaraṃ karitvā*. The phrase **antaraṃ karitvā** comes from *antaraṃ karoti*, lit “he makes (it) the centre,” means “he keeps in mind; he is mainly concerned with”: cf *kāma, rāgaṃ antaraṃ karitvā*, etc (used in connection with the mental hindrances) at **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108.26/3:14) = SD 33.5, & **Saddha S** (A 11.10/5:323). Comy glosses it as *abbhantaram katvā*, “making it the interior (the heart)” (MA 4:73; see also AA 5:79).

⁴⁷ *Mahā, kula*. See Intro (1.1).

‘It is not on account of one’s coming from a great family that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not one from a great family, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his great family.

This is the nature of a true individual.

5 (3) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF A VERY WEALTHY FAMILY. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one gone forth from a very wealthy family.⁴⁸ He reflects thus:

‘I am one who has renounced from a great family, but these other monks have not renounced from great families.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his very wealthy family.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of one’s coming from a very wealthy family that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not from a very wealthy family, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his very wealthy family.

This is the nature of a true individual.

6 (4) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF A FABULOUSLY RICH FAMILY. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one gone forth from a fabulously rich family.⁴⁹ He reflects thus:

‘I am one who has renounced from a fabulously rich family, but these other monks have not renounced from fabulously rich families.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his fabulously rich family.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of one’s coming from a fabulously rich family that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not from a fabulously rich family, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his fabulously rich family.

This is the nature of a true individual. [39]

7 (5) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF A WELL KNOWN AND FAMOUS FAMILY. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one gone forth from a well known and famous family.⁵⁰ He reflects thus:

‘I am one who has renounced from a well known and famous family, but these other monks have not renounced from well known and famous families.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his well known and famous family.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of one’s coming from a well known and famous family that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not from a well known and famous family, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his well known and famous family.

⁴⁸ *Mahā, bhoga, kula*. See Intro (1.1).

⁴⁹ *Uḷāra, bhoga, kula*. See Intro (1.1).

⁵⁰ *Ñāto hoti yasassī*. See Intro (1.1).

This is the nature of a true individual.

8 (6) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF GAINS. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is a recipient of robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicine and support for the sick.⁵¹ He reflects thus:

‘I am a recipient of robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicine and support for the sick, but these other monks are not recipients of robes, almsfood, lodging, and medicine and support for the sick.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his gains.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of gains that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not from a well known and famous family, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his gains.

This is the nature of a true individual.

Spiritual practice is not based on knowledge

9 (7) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF LEARNING. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is deeply learned.⁵² He reflects thus:

‘I am learned, but these other monks are not deeply learned.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his deep learning.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of deep learning
that the states of *greed* are destroyed, or
that the states of *hate* are destroyed, or
that the states of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not deeply learned,
if he is practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma,
if he is practising what is right,
if he keeps to the Dharma [one is a follower of the Dharma]—

for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his deep learning.

This is the nature of a true individual.

10 (8) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A VINAYA EXPERT. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a Vinaya expert.⁵³ He reflects thus:

‘I am a Vinaya expert, but these other monks are not Vinaya experts.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a Vinaya expert.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a Vinaya expert [40] that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a Vinaya expert, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a Vinaya expert.

This is the nature of a true individual.

⁵¹ *Lābhī hoti cīvāra,piṇḍapāta,senāsana,gilāna.paccaya.bhesajja.parikkhārānam.* See Intro (1.1).

⁵² *Bahussuto.* See Intro (1.1).

⁵³ *Vinaya,dhāro.* See Intro (1.1).

11 (9) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A DHARMA SPEAKER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a Dharma speaker.⁵⁴ He reflects thus:

‘I am a Dharma speaker, but these other monks are not Dharma speakers.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a Dharma speaker.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a Dharma speaker that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a Dharma speaker, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a Dharma speaker.

This is the nature of a true individual.

Spiritual practice is not based on asceticism⁵⁵

12 (10) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A FOREST DWELLER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a forest dweller.⁵⁶ He reflects thus:

‘I am a forest dweller, but these other monks are not forest dwellers.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a forest dweller.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a forest dweller
that the states of *greed* are destroyed, or
that the states of *hate* are destroyed, or
that the states of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a forest dweller,
if he is practising the Dharma in accordance with the Dharma,
if he is practising what is right,
if he keeps to the Dharma [he is a follower of the Dharma]—

for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a forest dweller.

This is the nature of a true individual.

13 (11) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A DUST-HEAP ROBE USER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a dust-heap robe user.⁵⁷ [41] He reflects thus:

‘I am a dust-heap robe user, but these other monks are not dust-heap robe users.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a dust-heap robe user.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a dust-heap robe user that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a dust-heap robe user, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a dust-heap robe user.

This is the nature of a true individual.

⁵⁴ *Dhamma,kathiko*. See Intro (1.1).

⁵⁵ See Intro (1.1)(C).

⁵⁶ *Āraññiko*. See Intro (1.1).

⁵⁷ *Paṃsu,kūliko*. See Intro (1.1).

14 (12) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING AN ALMS-EATER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is an alms-eater.⁵⁸ [41] He reflects thus:

‘I am an alms-eater, but these other monks are not alms-eaters.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an alms-eater.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being an alms-eater that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not an alms-eater, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being an alms-eater.

This is the nature of a true individual.

15 (13) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A TREE-FOOT DWELLER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a tree-foot dweller.⁵⁹ He reflects thus:

‘I am a tree-foot dweller, but these other monks are not tree-foot dwellers.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a tree-foot dweller.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a tree-foot dweller that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a tree-foot dweller, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’ [42]

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a tree-foot dweller.

This is the nature of a true individual.

16 (14) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A CHARNEL-GROUND DWELLER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a charnel-ground dweller.⁶⁰ He reflects thus:

‘I am a charnel-ground dweller, but these other monks are not charnel-ground dwellers.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a charnel-ground dweller.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a charnel-ground dweller that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a charnel-ground dweller, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a charnel-ground dweller.

This is the nature of a true individual.

17 (15) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING AN OPEN-AIR DWELLER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is an open-air dweller.⁶¹ He reflects thus:

‘I am an open-air dweller, but these other monks are not open-air dwellers.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an open-air dweller.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being an open-air dweller that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

⁵⁸ *Piṇḍa, pātiko*. See Intro (1.1).

⁵⁹ *Rukkha, mūliko*. See Intro (1.1).

⁶⁰ *Sosāniko*. See Intro (1.1).

⁶¹ *Abbhokāsiko*. See Intro (1.1).

Even though he is not an open-air dweller, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being an open-air dweller.

This is the nature of a true individual.

18 (16) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A CONTINUAL SITTER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a continual sitter.⁶² He reflects thus:

‘I am a continual sitter, but these other monks are not continual sitters.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a continual sitter.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a continual sitter that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a continual sitter, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a continual sitter.

This is the nature of a true individual.

19 (17) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING AN ANY-BED USER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is an any-bed-user.⁶³ He reflects thus:

‘I am an any-bed user, but these other monks are not any-bed users.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an any-bed user.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being an any-bed user that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not an any-bed user, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being an any-bed user.

This is the nature of a true individual.

20 (18) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF BEING A ONE-SESSION EATER. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person** is one who is a one-session eater.⁶⁴ He reflects thus:

‘I am a one-session eater, but these other monks are not one-session eaters.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being a one-session eater.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

But **a true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘It is not on account of being a one-session eater that the states of *greed*..., or...of *hate*..., or...of *delusion* are destroyed.

Even though he is not a one-session eater, *if he is a Dharma practitioner*—for that, he should be honoured; for that, he should be praised.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of the way, he neither praises himself nor belittles others on account of his being a one-session eater.

This is the nature of a true individual.

Spiritual practice is not based on dhyana

21a (19) CONCEIT ON ACCOUNT OF DHYANA ATTAINMENT. Furthermore, bhikshus, **a false person**,⁶⁵ quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, attains and dwells in

⁶² *Nesajjiko*. See Intro (1.1).

⁶³ *Yathā,santhatiko*. See Intro (1.1).

⁶⁴ *Ek’āsaniko*. See Intro (1.1).

the **first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude.⁶⁶ He reflects thus:

‘I am an attainer of the first dhyana attainment, but these other monks are not attainers of the first dhyana attainment.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an attainer of the first dhyana attainment.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

21b But a true individual, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘The Blessed One has spoken of the non-identification with the first dhyana attainment, too. For, in whatever they conceive, it turns out to be something else.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of non-identification with the first dhyana attainment, he neither praises himself nor belittles others.

This is the nature of a true individual.

22 (20) And furthermore, bhikshus, a false person, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind, he attains and dwells in the **second dhyana**, free from initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.⁶⁷ ...

23 (21) ...and with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and experiences happiness with the body. He attains and dwells in the **third dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’⁶⁸ ...

24a (22) ...and with the abandoning of joy and pain—and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure—he attains and dwells in the **fourth dhyana**, that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.⁶⁹

He reflects thus:

‘I am an attainer of the fourth dhyana attainment, but these other monks are not attainers of the fourth dhyana attainment.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an attainer of the fourth dhyana attainment.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

24b But a true individual, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘The Blessed One has spoken of the non-identification with the fourth dhyana attainment, too. For, in whatever they conceive, it turns out to be something else.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of non-identification with the fourth dhyana attainment, he neither praises himself nor belittles others.

This is the nature of a true individual.

Spiritual practice is not based on formless attainment

25a (23) THE BASE OF INFINITE SPACE. And furthermore, bhikshus, a false person, having completely transcended perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of resistance, through non-

⁶⁵ Asappurisa, see Intro (1.1).

⁶⁶ *Vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkam savicāram vivekajam pīti,sukham paṭhamam jhānam upasampajja viharati.*

⁶⁷ *Vitakka,vicārānam vūpasamā ajjhattam sampasādanam cetaso ekodi,bhāvam avitakkam avicāram samādhi,jam pīti,sukham dutiyam jhānam upasampajja viharati.*

⁶⁸ *Pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati sato ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti. Yam tam ariyā ācikkhanti: upekkhako satimā sukhavihārī ti, tatiyam jhānam upasampajja viharati*

⁶⁹ *Sukhassa ca pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā pubb’eva somanassa,domanassānam atthaṅgamā adukkham asukham upekkhā,sati,pārisuddhim catuttham jhānam upasampajja viharati.*

attention to perceptions of diversity, contemplating, “Infinite space,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite space.⁷⁰

He reflects thus:

‘I am an attainer of the attainment of the base of infinite space, but these other monks are not attainers of the attainment of the base of infinite space.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an attainer of the attainment of the base of infinite space.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

25b But a true individual, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘The Blessed One has spoken of the non-identification with the attainment of the base of infinite space, too. For, in whatever they conceive, it turns out to be something else.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of non-identification with the attainment of the base of infinite space, he neither praises himself nor belittles others.

This is the nature of a true individual.

26a (24) THE BASE OF CONSCIOUSNESS. And furthermore, bhikshus, a false person, having completely transcended the base of infinite space, contemplating, “Infinite consciousness,” attains and dwells in the base of infinite consciousness.⁷¹

He reflects thus:

‘I am an attainer of the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness, but these other [44] monks are not attainers of the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an attainer of the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

26b But a true individual, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘The Blessed One has spoken of the non-identification with the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness, too. For, in whatever they conceive, it turns out to be something else.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of non-identification with the attainment of the base of infinite consciousness, he neither praises himself nor belittles others.

This is the nature of a true individual.

27a (25) THE BASE OF NOTHINGNESS. And furthermore, bhikshus, a false person, having completely transcended the base of infinite consciousness, contemplating, “There is nothing,” attains and dwells in the base of nothingness.⁷²

He reflects thus:

‘I am an attainer of the attainment of the base of nothingness, but these other monks are not attainers of the attainment of the base of nothingness.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an attainer of the attainment of the base of nothingness.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

27b But a true individual, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘The Blessed One has spoken of the non-identification with the attainment of the base of nothingness, too. For, in whatever they conceive, it turns out to be something else.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of non-identification with the attainment of the base of nothingness, he neither praises himself nor belittles others.

This is the nature of a true individual.

28a (26) THE BASE OF NEITHER-PERCEPTION-NOR-NON-PERCEPTION. And furthermore, bhikshus, a false person, having completely transcended the base of nothingness, contemplating, “This is peaceful; this is sublime,” attains to the base of neither perception nor non-perception.⁷³

⁷⁰ *Sabbaso rūpa,saññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭigha,saññānaṃ atthaṅgamā nānatta,saññānaṃ amanasikārā ananto ākāso ti ākāśānañcāyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

⁷¹ *Sabbaso ākāśānañcāyatanam samatikkama anantam viññānaṃ ti viññānañcāyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

⁷² *Sabbaso viññānañcāyatanam samatikkamma n’atthi kiñcī ti ākiñcaññāyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

He reflects thus:

‘I am an attainer of the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception, but these other monks are not attainers of the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception.’

So he praises himself and belittles others on account of his being an attainer of the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception.

This, bhikshus, is the nature of a false person.

28b But a **true individual**, bhikshus, reflects thus:

‘The Blessed One has spoken of the non-identification with the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception, too. For, in whatever they conceive, it turns out to be something else.’

So, keeping at heart [keeping in mind] only the practice of non-identification with the attainment of the base of neither perception nor non-perception, he neither praises himself nor belittles others.

This is the nature of a true individual. [45]

Spiritual practice leading to cessation

29 (27) THE CESSATION OF PERCEPTION AND FEELING. And furthermore, bhikshus, a **true individual**, having completely transcended the base of neither perception nor non-perception, attains and dwells in the cessation of perception and feeling.⁷⁴

And his mental influxes are exterminated by his seeing with wisdom.

This monk does not conceive <i>anything</i>	<i>na kiñci maññati;</i>
he does not conceive <i>about</i> anything;	<i>na kuhiñci maññati;</i>
he does not conceive <i>in any way</i> .	<i>na kenaci maññatī.</i>

The Blessed One said this. The monks joyfully approved of the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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⁷³ *Sabbaso ākiñcaññāyatanam samatikkama santam etaṃ paññitam etan ti n’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatanam upasampajja viharati.*

⁷⁴ *Sabbaso n’eva’saññā,nāsaññ’āyatanam samatikkamma saññā,vedayita,nirodham upasampajja viharati.*

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