

9a

Piṇḍolya Sutta

The Discourse on Alms-collecting | S 22.80

Theme: The true purpose of the spiritual life

Translated by Piya Tan ©2009

1 Sutta history and summary

1.1 LATENESS. The **Piṇḍolya Sutta** (S 22.80) shows clear signs of being a late work, that is, a product of post-Buddha but pre-Asoka times, when the Buddhist monastic system was more settled, urbanized and populous.¹ Some of the internal evidence supporting this view is as follows:

- The Buddha is said to have “dismissed the order of monks for a particular reason” [§2] but no reason is given: the assumption is that the audience would be familiar with such dismissals;
- The Buddha is presented as performing as strange manipulative psychic wonder [2] to make the monks *sārajjamāna,rūpa* [3], that is, deferent, even “timid” [§16];
- The intercession of Brahmā [§§8-15];
- The “signless samadhi” (*animitta samādhi*) is mentioned without any elaboration, meaning that it is a well known concept, as least in theory [§21];
- It is probably a composite work inspired by such discourses as **the Sārajjā Sutta** (A 5.101) [3.1] and **the Jīvika Sutta** (It 3.5.2) [§§18b+19]; and
- The Buddha is recorded as thinking, “What now, if I were to help the order of monks now just as I have helped the order before” [§7b]; a minor point, but which adds to the weight of other internal evidence mentioned above, showing that the Buddha’s name is used legitimize a post-Buddha ecclesiastical attempt at monastic discipline and tractability.

It should be noted, however, that the Piṇḍolya Sutta has a Chinese parallel: SĀ 272² and MĀ 140*.³ Since the Chinese translation of **the Sāmyukta Āgama** began in mid-4th century, and the **Madhyama Āgama** translation in the late 4th century, it is safe to say that the Piṇḍolya Sutta was clearly composed well before that time,⁴ but probably by Asoka’s time (3rd century BCE).

1.2 SOURCES OF THE PIṆḌOLYA SUTTA. All the materials of **the Piṇḍolya Sutta** are found elsewhere in the Pali Canon. **The Jīvika Sutta** (It 3.5.2), without the verses, forms two key paragraphs of **the Piṇḍolya Sutta** (S 22.80).⁵ On account of its simplicity and brevity (and perhaps the verses, too), the Jīvika Sutta could be a very ancient text, going back to the Buddha’s time. The Piṇḍolya Sutta, on the other hand, evokes a sentiment reflective of an organized and settled monastic system that has built on the older Jīvika Sutta passage to domesticate⁶ monastics, especially new ones, so that they are deferent to elders and amenable to training. As we shall see, such an ecclesiastical organization would also be *hierarchical* as much of the monastic Buddhist system is today.⁷ [3]

The Piṇḍolya Sutta represents the Buddha as having “helped the order of monks before” [§§7b, 13]. At least two important occasions come to mind:

¹ See RM Gethin, *Foundations of Buddhism*, 1998: 95-100.

² SĀ 272 = T2.99.71c14-72b14.

³ MĀ 140* = T1.647. An asterisk * means that the parallel is either partial or uncertain.

⁴ See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80gama_\(Buddhism\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C4%80gama_(Buddhism)).

⁵ S 22.80.18b-19/3:91-94 = SD 28.9a.

⁶ Here, “domesticated” simply means “conditioning,” ie, inducing in a monastic acceptable or desirable behaviour, so as to be more acceptable or to win the favour of the laity for religious or economic reasons. For technical usages, see Ivan Strenski, “On generalized exchange and the domestication of the Sangha,” *Man* ns 18,3 Sep 1983: 163-177 & Todd T Lewis, *Popular Buddhist Texts from Nepal*, Albany, NY, 2000:4.

⁷ This is certainly of the mainstream Buddhist traditions of southeast Asia, the Mahāyāna, and the Vajrayana sects. The forest monastic traditions, as a rule, are still *centrifugal*, as in the Buddha’s time, with a respected teacher at the centre of the order, rather than at the “top.” The forest order members are given priority in terms of “rains” (*vassa*) instead of ecclesiastical status (nakayaship, sakdina, etc).

- (1) Brahmā's inviting the Buddha to teach the Dharma,⁸ and
 (2) **the Cātumā Sutta** (M 67).⁹

In fact, **the Piṇḍolya Sutta** narrative is very much a reprise of Brahmā's inviting the Buddha to teach (1), but both the similes of the young calf [§6a] and the young seedlings [§6b] also appear in **the Cātumā Sutta** (M 67.7/1:457 f), where they are used by the Sakyas of Cātumā and repeated by Brahmā.

The Majjhima Commentary explains the parables as follows: when a calf is deprived of milk, it becomes otherwise, that is, it withers and weakens away, and it changes, that is, it dies; and when the seedlings do not get watered during watering time, they become otherwise, that is, they shrivel up, and they change, that is, they dry up, becoming straw. (MA 3:175)

The Buddha, it is recorded, moved by these similes, forgives and rehabilitates the monks. **The Piṇḍolya Sutta** is arguably a composite of the well known episode of Brahmā's invitation and of the key **Cātumā Sutta** narrative [3.6]. Or perhaps they both are based on a common ancient source or urtext.¹⁰

1.3 SUTTA SUMMARY. The Piṇḍolya Sutta opens with the Buddha residing near Kapila, vatthu [§§1-2], and he has just dismissed the order of monks [§3], according to the Commentary, for quarrelling over the alms-offering at the end of the rains (SA 2:297). The Buddha is then shown as having second thoughts about this [§§4-6], and decides to admonish them, as he has done before [§7].

Brahma Sahampati appears and seconds the Buddha's intention [§§8-15]. The Buddha then, using his psychic power, not only gets the monks to appear before him individually or in pairs, but in a "deferent manner" (*sārajjamāna, rūpa*), amenable to instruction [§§16-17].

When they are assembled, the Buddha reminds them of the significance of living on alms (*piṇḍolya*), that is, for the purpose of overcoming suffering [§18]. The Buddha goes on to remind the monks that as they have abandoned the household life, they should not behave like laymen [§19]. These sections [18b-19] are also found in **the Jīvika Sutta** (It 3.5.2).¹¹ [1.1]

Then the Buddha admonishes the monks to abandon the three kinds of wrong thought (*micchā, saṅkappa*), and to cultivate the four focusses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), leading up to the signless concentration (*animitta samādhi*) [§20]. They are reminded to abandon the extreme views of existence and of extinction, and reflect on not clinging to the five aggregates [§§22-23]. Then follows the pericope on the three characteristics of the five aggregates [§§24-28]. The teaching closes with the pericope on the reflection on the universality of non-self resulting in revulsion (*nibbidā*), but just short of arhathood itself [§§29-30].

2 Why did the Buddha perform a psychic wonder?

The Piṇḍolya Sutta recounts how the Buddha, concerned with the spiritual progress of the monks, used his psychic power to make them come to him:

Then, the Blessed One, having emerged from his evening solitary retreat, went to Nigrodha's park, and sat down on the prepared seat.

While seated there, the Blessed One performed a psychic wonder such that the monks would approach him individually or in pairs, in a deferent manner. [§§16-17]

Such an episode at once suggests to careful Sutta scholars and students that the discourse, or at least, the episode, is likely to be late.

In the following major discourses, the Buddha is recorded as unequivocally speaking against the use of miracles in teaching the Dharma:

⁸ V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 2:37: see **Why the Buddha "hesitated" to Teach**, SD 12.1.

⁹ M 67.1-10/1:456-459 = SD 34.7.

¹⁰ See **Cātumā S** (M 67), SD 34.7 (5.2).

¹¹ It 91.2-3/3.5.2/89 f = SD 28.9b.

- **Kevaḍḍha Sutta** (D 11/1:211-221) The greatest miracle is *education*.
- **Pāṭika Sutta** (D 24.1.4-5/3:4 f) The spiritual life is *not* about miracles.
- **(Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava Sutta** (A 3.60/1:168-173) The greatest miracle is *education*.

One of the best examples of the miracle of education, if not its locus classicus, is that of Aṅgulimāla's conversion from being a serial killer into a liberated saint, as recorded in **the Aṅgulimāla Sutta** (M 86). Although some kind of miracle is used in the conversion, it could easily be explained in a *psychological* manner, that is, as the Buddha's communicating his thoughts to Aṅgulimāla, so that the earth seems to shift around, but it is only occurring in his mind.¹²

The (Pāṭihāriya) Mahaka Sutta (S 4.14), on the other hand, records how Mahaka, on account of his display of miraculous powers, impresses Citta the houselord, proposing to support him with his basic needs. Mahaka, however, politely rejects the offer and leaves Macchikā,saṇḍa (where Citta lives) for good. In fact, we are given the clear impression that Mahaka is embarrassed by the incident.¹³

The fact remains that in early Buddhism, especially before the codification of the Vinaya,¹⁴ certainly before the rise of the Abhidharma tradition,¹⁵ *miracles do not figure very much* in the teachings of the Buddha and his immediate awakened disciples. Miraculous stories and accounts of miracles grew especially during the Vinaya and commentarial periods. The reasons for this have been discussed elsewhere.¹⁶

3 Sārajja and its various forms

3.1 THE SARAJJA SUTTA (A 5.101). Before we examine the forms and usages of *sārajja*, let us first look at **the Sārajja Sutta** (A 5.101):

SD 28.9a(3)

Sārajja Sutta

The Discourse on Fearfulness | A 5.101/3:127

Traditional: A 5.3.1.1 Aṅguttara 5, Pañcaka Nipāta 3, Tatiya Paṇṇāsaka 1, Phāsuvihāra Vagga 1

Theme: The five qualities of moral courage for a learner

- 1 Bhikshus, these five are the states that bring intrepidity¹⁷ in a learner. What are the five?
- 2 Here, bhikshus, a monk has faith, is morally virtuous, greatly learned, asserts effort, is wise.
- 3 (1) Bhikshus, what is **fearfulness** (*sārajja*) for *the faithless*, is not so for the faithful.
As such, this is a quality that brings intrepidity for a learner.
- 4 (2) Bhikshus, what is fearfulness for *the immoral*, is not so for the morally virtuous.
As such, this is a quality that brings intrepidity for a learner.
- 5 (3) Bhikshus, what is fearfulness for *the one of little learning*, is not so for the greatly learned.

¹² M 86/2:97-105 = SD 5.11.

¹³ S 4.14/4:288-291 = SD 27.2.

¹⁴ From scholarly deliberations, we can safely say that the Pali Vinaya as we have it today, was compiled some 100 years after the Buddha (c485-c405 BCE), ie, from 50-100 AB, but the Parivāra (V 5), a technical resumé of the rest of V, was composed in Sri Lanka around 1st cent CE. See R Gombrich, *Theravāda Buddhism*, 1988: 88-90.

¹⁵ The Abhidhamma was not mentioned in accounts of the 1st Council (c405 BCE = 0 AB), but prob compiled btw 200BCE and 200 CE (E Frauwallner, "Abhidharma-Studien IV. Der Abhidharma der anderen Schulen," *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunde Südasiens* 15 1971: 106).

¹⁶ See **Miracles**, SD 27.5a & **Piṇḍola Bhāradvāja**, SD 27.6a; see also **Arhats Who Became Bodhisattvas**, SD 27.6b.

¹⁷ "**Intrepidity**" (*vesārajja*), which basically means "free from *sārajja*"; but is grammatically an abstract formation from *visārada*, often referring to the Buddha's or an arhat's perfect self-confidence or intrepidity, which are detailed in **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12.22-28/1:71 f). There are the 4 confidences, viz: (1) highest knowledge, (2) the state of having all the influxes destroyed; (3) recognizing of obstacles, and (4) recognition and teaching the way to awakening: see also D 1:110; M 1:380; A 2:13, 3:297 f, 4:83, 210, 213; Pm 2:194; Nc 466; DA 1:278; KhpA 104; VvA 213; J 2:27; DhA 1:86. See also **Sārajja S** (A 5.101/3:127), SD 28.9a(3).

As such, this is a quality that brings intrepidity for a learner.

6 (4) Bhikshus, what is fearfulness for *the lazy*, is not so for the industrious [who asserts effort]. As such, this is a quality that brings intrepidity for a learner.

7 (5) Bhikshus, what is fearfulness for *the poor in wisdom*, is not so for the wise. As such, this is a quality that brings intrepidity for a learner.

8 These, bhikshus, are the five states that bring intrepidity in a learner.

— evaṃ —

From the Sutta, we can infer that this is “social fearfulness.” The Commentary on **the Sārajja Sutta** (A 5.101) says that ““(There) is *sārajja*’ means there is an unpleasant mental state” (*Sārajjaṃ hotī ti domanassam hoti*, AA 3:278).

Another discourse that gives us a good idea of the meaning of *sārajja* is **the Nandaka Sutta** (A 9.4). It is said that once when Nandaka is giving a very long discourse, the Buddha, not wishing to interrupt, stands by the door to the hall and waited until it is over. As a result, the Buddha’s has a back-ache, and later, at the end of Nandaka’s discourse, when the Buddha tells him about this, Nandaka is embarrassed (*sārajjamāna,rūpa*). The Buddha, however, then praises him and discourses to him on how to perfect his own practice, that is, by cultivating faith, mental calm, insight wisdom to perfection.¹⁸

In summary, while the Sārajja Sutta says that there is no fearfulness, clinging or obsequiousness for *the faithful, the morally virtuous, the greatly learned, the industrious and the wise*,¹⁹ the Nandaka Sutta teaches that we should cultivate faith, mental calm, insight wisdom to perfection. These are the contributing factors to the learner’s *intrepidity* (*vesārajja*),²⁰ that is, they are aspects of the spiritual character-building that makes us true individuals.

3.2 OCCURRENCES AND USAGE.

3.2.3 Related discourses (*sārajjamāna,rūpa* as “fearing”). The term *sārajjamāna,rūpa* [§§16+17] is a culturally pregnant term that it is unlikely any non-Asian translator might understand, unless he is familiar with the finer points of traditional Asian sentiments. The form *sārajjamāna,rūpa* is rare, found perhaps only in these texts or their commentaries:

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| • Piṇḍolya Sutta | S 22.80.16-17/3:92 | monks made to approach the Buddha deferently; |
| • Piṇḍolya Sutta comy | SA 2:300 | defined as “fearing on account of moral fear”; ²¹ |
| • Nandaka Sutta | A 9.4.3/4:359 | Nandaka shows deference to the Buddha; |
| • Nandaka Sutta comy | AA 4:167 | defined as “showing moral shame and moral fear”; ²² |
| • Jīvika Sutta | comy: ItA 2:111 | reprimanded monks deferent to the Buddha. |

The form *sārajjamāna* is found in the following places:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---|
| • Sunīta Thera Tha | comy: ThaA 2:262 | the outcaste Sunīta feels “embarrassed” on seeing the Buddha and the order on account of birth. |
|---------------------------|------------------|---|

¹⁸ A 9.4.2/4:359 = SD 73.4.

¹⁹ Cf the 5 “qualities for the growth of wholesome states” (*kusala,dhamma vuḍḍhi,dhamma*): faith, moral shame, moral fear, effort, and wisdom (A 10.67/5:122-125)

²⁰ On the Buddha’s 4 intrepidities, see **Mahā Siha,nāda S** (M 12,22-28/1:71 f), SD 49.1.

²¹ *Sārajjamāna,rūpā ti ottappamāna,sabhāvā bhāyamānā*. (SA 2:300)

²² More fully, *sārajjamāna,rūpo ti harāyamāno ottappamāno*. *Domanassa,sārajjaṃ n’atthi*, “Sārajja means showing moral shame and moral fear. But there is no timidity on account of unpleasant mental state.” (SA 2:30). Cf Comy on **Sārajja S** (A 5.101/3:127): ““(There) is *sārajja*’ means there is an unpleasant mental state” (*Sārajjaṃ hotī ti domanassam hoti*, AA 3:278).

- **Sānuvāsī Thera Pv** comy: PvA 179 possible meaning of “embarrassed”,²³
The word *sārajja* and related forms²⁴ are more common, and is found in these texts:
- **Mahā Sihanāda Sutta** M 12.30/1:72 ×2 the Buddha show neither *bhaya* nor *sārajja*;
- **Sārajja Sutta** A 5.101//3:127 only the faithless, immoral, etc, show *sārajja* [above];
- **Milinda,pañha** Miln 275 Jāli, the Bodhisattva’s son, is “overcome with fear” (*sārajjam upagate*) when the Bodhisattva binds him (to be given to the brahmin at J 547/6:548.
- **Vibhaṅga** Vbh 379,4 The 5 fears: Fear of livelihood, of disapproval, of embarrassment before assemblies (*parisa,sārajja,-bhaya*), of death, and of unhappy rebirth; defined:
- **Sammoha,vinodanī** VbhA 505 Fear of assemblies (*parisa,sārajja,bhaya*) is defined: an evil-doer feel embarrassed before a crowd.

3.2.3 Related discourses (*sārajjamāna,rūpa* as “deferently”). Let us now look at the context of *sārajja* in the Piṇḍolya Sutta:

Then, the Blessed One, having emerged from his evening solitary retreat, went to Nigrodha’s park, and sat down on the prepared seat.

While seated there, the Blessed One performed a psychic wonder such that the monks would approach him alone or in pairs, in a deferent manner (*sārajjamāna,rūpa*).²⁵

Then those monks approached the Blessed One individually or in pairs, in a deferent manner. Having approached the Blessed One, they saluted him and then sat down at one side. [§§16 f]

The Sutta Commentary notes: Why did the Buddha perform such a feat? Out of concern for their welfare (*hita,patthānāya*). For, if they had come in groups, they would neither have shown respect to the Buddha nor would they be able to receive a Dharma teaching. But when they approach *deferently* (or *fearfully*), filled with moral shame, alone or in pairs, they would show reverence and would receive teachings. (SA 2:300).

The Nandaka Sutta (A 9.4), too, uses the same expression, *sārajjamāna,rūpa*, to describe the elder Nandaka’s attitude when he approaches the Buddha.²⁶ The Commentary to both the Suttas explain that *sārajjamāna,rūpa* in the same way, meaning, “in a state of showing deference, showing fear” (*sārajjamāna,rūpā ti ottappamāna,sabhāvā bhāyamānā*, SA 2:300 = AA 4:167).

3.3 PROBLEM OF TRANSLATING *SĀRAJJANAMĀNA,RŪPA*. The better known translations of the Sāmyutta have given the following translations of the expression, *sārajjamāna,rūpa*:

²³ “His mother and father, however, would not approach him since they were *embarrassed* at the thought, ‘This is the one we formerly cast out of our home’...” (PvA:M 190 ad PvA 179).

²⁴ It should be noted that the vb *sārajjati* (*sañ + √rañj*, “to delight”) means “he delights in, lusts after”; Comy: “*Sārajjati* means “he lets lust arise” (*sārajjati ti rāgam uppādeti*, MA 2:311; = “with lust,” *sārāgo*, DhsA 253); eg **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 38.30/1:266); **Mātā,putta S** (A 5.55.3/3:67); pl *sārajjanti* (V 2:108; S 2:172, 3:30, 4:10; A 1:260, 3:251); as *sāreyyuni*: **No Ce’daṃ S** (S 14.33/2:172 f), **Assāda S 3** (S 22.28/3:29-31), **No Ce Assāda S 1+2** (S 35.17+18/4:10-12), **Assāda S 2** (A 3.102/1:260), V 2:262, MA 2:342. This form, very common in the texts, often referring to sense-experience, is different from *sārajja*, meaning “deference,” which is the abstract n of *sārada* (Skt *sārada*), “autumnal, of the latest harvest, fresh” (D 3:354; A 3:404); often fig. “unripe, inexperienced, immature”; opp *visārada* (der *vesarajja*), “wise, experienced, confident” or *vita,sārada* (A 2:4; It 123). Sometimes *sārajja* is synonymous with “greed” (*lobha*), as *sārajjitatta* (Nm 2:251; Dhs 79; ItA 2:177; DhsA 253). See also PED, svv *sārajja*, *sārada*.

²⁵ For vll, see text below.

²⁶ A 9.4.3/4:359.

F L Woodward	“the brethren came to the Exalted One...with <u>timid mien</u> ”	(1925)
Bodhi	“the bhikkhus would come to him... <u>in a timid manner</u> ”	(2000)
Thanissaro	“the monks approached the Blessed One... <u>contritely</u> ” ²⁷	(2005)

F L Woodward was from Australia;²⁸ Bhikkhu Bodhi²⁹ and Bhikkhu Thanissaro,³⁰ both Americans, are practitioner monks and accomplished translators.³¹ It can be seen from here that *sārajjamāna,rūpa* is not an easy word to translate into English, especially for western translators who have little or no experience of oriental culture, as they are not certain on the social context of *sārajjā*.

It is problematic to say that the Buddha, using his psychic power [2], made the monks come to see him, “individually or in pairs,” *with timid mien*, or *in a timid manner*, or *contritely*. We can find no support from any of the early Canon where the Buddha would use his psychic power to manipulate others to show “timidity” to him. This is simply out of the Buddha’s character. The point is that the Buddha could have easily summoned the monks, *without the need of any psychic power!*³²

Furthermore, it is difficult to find a Pali word meaning “timid” (as rendered by Woodward and by Bodhi). A possible near-synonym is *bhīru* (adj “fearful”), which however is usually used in negative sense (eg Pv 2.4.1, describing a preta as “fearful to behold,” *bhīru,dassana*). In fact, in **the Padhāna Sutta** (Sn 3.2), the Buddha declares *bhīru* (n “fear”) to be the “sixth army” of Māra (Sn 437).³³

Thanissaro renders *sārajjamāna,rūpa* as “contritely” probably to reflect the fact that the Buddha has earlier dismissed the monks for their disorderly behavior [1]. However, “contrite” would be an acceptable translation of the rather common word, *vippaṭisārī*.³⁴ Furthermore, if we are to follow the Commentaries, none of their glosses support this rendition, which is conjectural and too free.

However, of the two translations of *sārajjamāna*, “timid” would be closer to the context, but “fearful” would be even closer (as we shall see) [3.6]. But this is only *one* aspect or sense of the pregnant expression *sārajjā*, as we shall soon see. Let us now examine various other forms and usages of the expression.

3.4 SĀRAJJAMĀNA,RŪPA HAS TO DO WITH “FACE.”

3.4.1 The changing face of the monastery. I have rendered *sārajjamāna,rūpa* as “showing deference,” because my understanding is that the narrator is telling us how the Buddha wishes to ensure that the monks are ready for and receptive of his instructions (SA 2:300). But in the Piṇḍolya Sutta context, I think, *sārajjamāna,rūpa* has a much broader sense, reflected in the alternate translation of “[fearful].” In fact, it is even more probable that this latter meaning is the intended one by the compilers of the Piṇḍolya Sutta. We will now examine the significance of this.

I have mentioned that the strong likelihood that the Piṇḍolya Sutta is a late work, that is, a product of post-Buddha but pre-Asoka times, when the Buddhist monastic system was more settled, urbanized and populous [1.1]. Under such circumstances, the monasteries were likely to be large and affluent (like many of the monasteries, temples and centres in Singapore and Malaysia today). The urbanized monasteries and centres are more *Vinaya-centred* than they were Sutta-centred, that is, to say centralized control of monastics and a good public image are vital for the success of such institutions.³⁵

²⁷ <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.080.than.html>.

²⁸ <http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A120636b.htm>.

²⁹ Born Jeffrey Block (1944-) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhikkhu_Bodhi.

³⁰ Born Geoff DeGraaf, <http://halfsmile.org/buddhadust/www.buddhadust.org/images/bhk.thanissaro.htm>.

³¹ I only found one other discussion on *sārajjā*, as part of a comment on “the four *vaiśāradyas*” in Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, London, 1932: 20 f.

³² M 70.6/1:474 f = SD 11.1; S 16.6/2:204 f; U 3.3.6/24 = SD 28.9c.

³³ Sn 437 (= “fear,” *utrāsa*, SnA 390).

³⁴ Adj of *vippaṭisāra* (remorse, regret, repentance); S 3:125, 4:133, 320 f, 359 f; A 3:165 f, 4:244, 390; J 1:200.

³⁵ This is not saying that one emphasis is better than the other: they are both essential to the holy life. What is alluded to here is the tendency to merely externalize the Vinaya, by brahminizing it into a purification and empowering ritual, rather than as a support for the Dharma and spiritual liberation.

Being Vinaya-centric means that external appearances and legalistic understanding of ecclesiastical operations are vital for maintaining a viable monastic workforce, managing finances and assets, and keeping the flow of donations and income. To have all this, the monastic community must be in good order: juniors should respect seniors, and the abbot or monastic leader must be given full, even unquestioned, respect and obedience. A particular institution must at least be seen to be exceptionally disciplined and “pure” monastically so that it is well patronized and respected.

Not only are the junior monastics expected to show *deference* to seniors, but the laity must be domesticated to be *deferent* to, if not *fearful* of, senior or titled monastics. Unlike the Buddha’s times, when the laity plays a vital role in the introduction of many Vinaya rules, this is no more the case when the monasteries became large institutions of great prestige and wealth. The Buddhist monastery has become a *church*, complete with its own abbacy, lineage, hierarchy, rules, rituals, and parish, and a *corporation*, with its administrative officers, and financial system.

3.4.2 The monastic “face.” In such an urbanized and affluent monastic situation [3.4.1], the “face” matters very much. This becomes easy to understand when we are familiar with any large Buddhist institution, especially a monastic-run one, in Asia today. We are now dealing with the well known Asian conception of “face,” here manifesting itself in the post-Buddha Indian situation.

This Asian notion of “face” is pregnant in the word *sārajja* and its various forms [3.2.3]. On a simple level (probably its earliest usage), *sārajja* refers to what we today would regard as being “nervous” in the company of others. Related to this psychological trait is the social trait of being unable to say “no,” that is, of being *obsequious*, or at least *obliging*. In other words, *sārajja* has a predominant sense of fearfulness.

The Mahā Niddesa, commenting on Sn 923d of **the Tuvaṭṭaka Sutta** (Sn 4.14), gives an example of “fear” (*bherava*) as “the fear of timidity before a crowd” (*parisāya sārajja, bhayaṃ*, NmA 2:371), that is, stage-fright or social awkwardness. The expression *sārajja, bhaya* is also found in the Commentary to **the Mā Puñña Bhaya Sutta** (It 1.3.2), it is implied that all beings, earthly or divine, experience two kinds of fear (*duvidha bhaya*), that is, fear arising from knowledge and fear on account of timidity (*ñāṇa, bhayaṃ, sārajja, bhayan ti*) (ItA 73 f).

As an example of “fear arising from knowledge” (*ñāṇa, bhaya*), the Commentary quotes **the Sīha Sutta 1** (S 22.78 = A 4.33), where the knowledge of impermanence strikes terror even in the gods,³⁶ and “fear on account of timidity” is exemplified in **the Mahā Govinda Sutta** (D 19), where it is said that “there was simply fear, there was stiffness [paralysis], there was hair-standing, at such a sight unseen before.”³⁷ (ItA 73). The second kind of fear, clearly arises from the unknown or unfamiliar.³⁸

We can generally assume that the dvandva “timidity and fear” (*sārajja, bhaya*) refers to these two kinds of fear (eg ThīA 290 f). *Sārajja* clearly has a sense of “timidity” or “fearfulness,” that is, a fear of something known, such as loud and fearsome noises, as the word is used in **the Vidhūra Paṇḍita Jātaka** (J 545), where the yaksha Puṇṇaka simply fails to terrify the Bodhisattva in every way he could think of (J 545/6:305).

We also see *sārajja* used with the sense of “nervous, obsequious” as in the description of the monk **Lāl’udāyī**.³⁹ In **the Soma, datta Jātaka** (J 211), the monk **Lāl’udāyī** is said to be a very nervous or obsequious (*sārajja, bahula*) person, who was unable even to remember properly a single stanza after a year’s

³⁶ S 22.78/3:85 = A 4.33/2:33 = SD 42.10.

³⁷ D 19.44/2:240.

³⁸ Cf def at Comy on **Pāvāya S** (U 1.7): “**Fear** (*bhaya*) is terror in the heart (*citt’utrāsam*). **Paralysis** (*chambhitata*) is a state of bodily stiffness in the form of paralysis of the thighs (*ūru-t, thambhaka, sarīrassa chambhita, bhāvaṃ*). **Hair-standing** (*loma, haṃsa*) is a state where the hair bristle with excitement (*lomānaṃ pahaṭṭha, bhāvaṃ*). It is simply the arising of fear that he indicates by means of all these three words. (UA 66)

³⁹ He is Lāl’udāyī (1) or better (Sārajja) Lāl’udāyī. However, it should be noted that there are a number of monks called Udāyī, even those prefixed *Lāla*. However, one of these Udāyī clearly shows a trait of *sārajja*. See (**Anussati-ṭ, thāna**) **Udāyī S** (A 6.29), SD 24.8 (1), esp (1.3).

coaching.⁴⁰ A shorter version of this story is found in **the Lāl'udāyī Thera Vatthu 2** of the Dhammapada Commentary.⁴¹

The Khaluṅka Sutta (A 8.14) is a very important and interesting text in the study of a psychological aspect of the settled monastics in terms of *sārajjā*. The discourse lists eight kinds of wrong conduct of a monk who has been accused of an offence, but refuses to admit it. In fact, he is neither repentant nor contrite, and is generally *defensive* of all his misdeeds. The Buddha compares the accused monk's negative reactions to those of eight kinds of "restive" (*khaluṅka*) horses, reflecting a lack of training and domestication.⁴² Evidently, *khaluṅka*, as described here, is contrary to the trait of *sārajjā*. The Thera.gāthā Commentary explains *khaluṅka* ("restive"), thus: "they neither fear nor show deference to preceptors" (*upajjhāyā-cariye na bhāyanti na sajjhanti*, ThaA 3:89).

3.4.3 The social politics of "face"

(1) THE VINAYA AND SOCIAL CONTROL. In every social system, there must be some kind of control, that is, some concentration of power in a group (especially the government) or an individual (the rajah, president, or dictator). In a social system, such as that outlined in **the Aggañña Sutta** (D 27), a morally virtuous individual is set aside by society and supported by it, so that he could maintain law and order: in other words, a sort of *social contract*.⁴³

However, when society becomes more rigidly defined in terms of *birth* (instead of occupation or moral action), then wealth, status and power become more concentrated in an elite class. Society becomes *a class or caste system*, organized on a feudalistic hierarchy of lords, priests, warriors, labourers and outcasts. From the Pali discourses, we know that this was the case in the Indian society of the Buddha's time. The Buddha often speaks against this, and his monastic order is a classless community of spiritually-visions individuals.⁴⁴

The situation dramatically changed after the Buddha passing, especially for the monastic community diversified in a forest tradition (comprising anchorites and eremites) and urbanized settlements. The urbanized monastics (the cenobites) diligently compiled the Vinaya, not so much for as a tool for building up moral virtue for promoting mental cultivation, but as *legalistic codes* and *hierarchy* to legitimize power in an ecclesiastical hierarchy based on ritual purity: this is the brahminization of the Buddhist monastic system.

The forest monks, too, keep to the Vinaya, but minus the clever legal manoeuvring and lip-service that peaked with the Mahāvihāra tradition of Sri Lanka (3rd century BCE-13th century CE), but that continues to this day in many urbanized nikayas. Understandably, for example, we today rarely see Sinhalese monks seriously observing the Vinaya. The emphasis has shifted to ecclesiastical status (especially nayakaship), and deference (*sārajjā*) is expected to be shown to them and to those of higher status.⁴⁵ *Sārajjā*, in other words, is the predominant trait in such a subtle scheme of social control.

(2) THE "FACES" OF A CHINESE. The conception of *sārajjā* as "deference" worked very well in the hierarchical society of feudal China, and is still prevalent—as a sort of time-capsuled reality—in the migrant overseas Chinese communities. The traditional respect and deference shown by a Chinese Buddhist to a Chinese monastic is strongly evocative of the Confucianist 仁 *rén*, a mutually benevolent relatedness between humans, especially in terms of social status.

⁴⁰ J 126.8/2:165 = SD 50.2(3).

⁴¹ DhA 11.7/3:123-126 = SD 50.2(2).

⁴² A 8.14/4:190195 = SD 7.9.

⁴³ D 27.20-21/3:93 = SD 2.19. It should be noted here that Aggañña S (D 27) is at pains to stress, in its conclusion, that it is moral virtue that keeps society healthy and possible in a productive and spiritual way (D 27.26-32/3:95 f).

⁴⁴ See eg (**Samudda**) **Uposatha S 1** (A 8.20/4:204-208) = U 5.5/51-56, SD 59.2.

⁴⁵ Nayakaships are usually conferred by a Nikāya or sect headquartered in Sri Lanka (mainly by the predominantly caste-conscious Siyam Nikaya, and to a lesser extent, the Amarapura and the Ramañña Nikayas) to the sect's monks who have a local centre overseas. However, it can be confusing when, at the time of writing, for example, Singapore has at least three Sangha Nayakas "of Singapore"! Such title however easily inspire the *sārajjā* or deference of amenable faith-inclined devotees. In short, such titles are of great name-card marketing strategy and fund-attracting value.

As 顏回 Yán Huí (514-483 BCE), Confucius' favourite disciple, puts it: “See nothing improper, hear nothing improper, say nothing improper, do nothing improper.” To do otherwise would be embarrassing, to say the least, that is, it would be a “loss of face.” So historically ingrained is this notion of “face.” However, we need to be aware of two forms of the Chinese “face” in social relations, that is,

- 面子 *miànzi*, that is, social perceptions of a person's status or prestige;
- 臉 (simplified 脸) *liǎn*, that is, the confidence of society in a person's moral character.

In a traditional Chinese social relationship, it is important for a person to maintain “face” because it translates into *power and influence*, and affects goodwill. A loss of *liǎn* would result in a loss of trust within a social network, while a loss of *miànzi* would likely result in a loss of authority. To illustrate the difference, gossiping about someone stealing from a temple donation box would cause a loss of *lian* but not *miànzi*. Repeatedly interrupting a monk as he is talking may cause the boss a loss of *miànzi* in the monk, but not *liǎn*.

However, should the monk thus interrupted show his anger, he is likely to lose his *liǎn*. A common way of getting out of such a potentially confrontational situation, the savvy monk might joke about it. The blame, as it were, is then transferred to the questioner. Such a socially savvy speaker may well be working to market himself that the teaching. As such, we are admonished by the Buddha, for example, in **the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta** (M 47), to “investigate” (*vīmaṃsati* or *parivīmaṃsati*) a teacher, even the Buddha himself, to make sure that he is of sterling moral character.⁴⁶

(3) AVOIDING SOCIAL CONFLICT. When trying to avoid conflict, the Chinese in general will avoid causing another person to lose *mianzi* by not bringing up embarrassing facts in public. Very often, to prevent any chance of others making a cultured or self-conscious traditional Chinese, he might *self-efface* himself. For example, a layman expert in Buddhist languages and scriptures might self-efface himself by saying that he is only a “beginner” in Buddhism, and if you make a fool of yourself talking away about a certain point in his area of expertise, he is unlikely to correct you, probably for fear you might lose your *miànzi*.

Unfortunately, such a situation is not very helpful for learning (assuming that the empty vessel is simply speaking his mind in the absence of proper information). Indeed, should this empty vessel later discover that he has been talking his mouth off before an expert, he is likely to experience a loss of face, anyway! As such, if the expert is wise and compassionate, he would skillfully respond to the babblers with some helpful answer.

(4) PROPRIETY AND MORAL SHAME. The Chinese conception of “face” works over almost every aspect of social relationship. A cultured Chinese, for example, would invariably welcome a guest at his house to sit and have a drink (usually “tea”), or even a meal, if he is having one. The guest would generally respond by ritually rejecting the offer, and only after a couple of such rejections, would accept the offer.

In fact, the guest is likely to often utter the colloquial expression, 歹勢 (simplified 歹势) POJ⁴⁷ *phái-sè* [Pinyin *dǎishì*], which is Hokkien or Fujianese (or technically, Mǐnnán).⁴⁸ When used as an interjection, it has the sense of “Excuse me!” or “Pardon!”; as an adjective, “(to feel) embarrassed, ill at ease.” The Mandarin version of this expression would be 坏势 *huài shì*.⁴⁹ More formally, there is the expression, 懷

⁴⁶ M 47/1:317-320 = SD 35.6.

⁴⁷ POJ (Pèh-ōe-jī, 白話字, 白话字) is an orthography (spelling method) in the roman alphabet created and introduced to Taiwan by Presbyterian missionaries in the 19th cent. POJ is a popular orthography for the Taiwanese language, and Minnan in general.

⁴⁸ <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%E6%AD%B9%E5%8B%A2>.

⁴⁹ One website explains: “坏势” 闽南语是 “不好意思、难为情” 的意思。(“Huàishì” Mǐnnán yǔshì “Bùhǎoyìsi, nánwéiqíng” de yìsi, “In Fujianese, huàishì means ‘bad idea,’ that is, ‘an embarrassment’”): <http://pu.sin80-com.cn/Pu/Mzgg/200812/sin80cn24358.html> which explains the terms in a Taiwanese Hokkien song. (I thank Mt & Mrs Wong Weng Fai for this information, May 2009.)

慚愧色 *huáicánkuisè* (T2.99.72a4) (“feel ashamed, embarrassed by kindness, uneasy, regretful”).⁵⁰ This is, in fact, the Chinese translation for *sārajjā* in the Saṃyukta Āgama parallel of the Piṇḍolya Sutta [1.1].⁵¹

(4) THE SIAMESE “FACE.” Siamese or Thai society, too, is characterized by a predominance of “face.” Thai children are taught to be เกรงใจ (*kreng.jai*) or เกรงกลัว (*krēng.klooă*)⁵² towards parents, elders, monks, and authority figures. To be เกรงใจ *krēng.jai* is being extremely careful with what one says and does so as not to offend, upset, or annoy others, or cause them to เสียนหน้า (*siia.naa*), “lose face.” Although *krēng.jai* applies to everyone that a Thai knows, it particularly applies towards those of higher in rank, social status, or age.

The importance of *kreng.jai* in Thai social interaction is related to two factors. The first is the desire to ensure smooth social interaction and avoid conflict, and the importance of หน้า (*naa*), “face.” Many writers have argued that one of the central values in Thai society is that of *conflict avoidance* and the importance of *face*. Indeed, **Neils Mulder**, in his book *Inside Thai Society: An Interpretation of Everyday Life*, argues that the Thai person is *socially defined*, and derives his sense of self from their presentation to others. To cause someone to lose face is to violate his self-esteem. The second factor is the extremely hierarchical nature of Thai society (which is clearly reflected in the Thai language, too).⁵³

What is said here of Thai society also applies to many other Asian communities, especially where its members place a high premium of the approval of others. It is important in Buddhist work and living to understand the difference between depending on others’ approval and reaching out to others. The former is emotional dependence, which is unhealthy, suggesting a serious lack of self-confidence and personal integrity. The latter, however, is about skillful means, such as those described in **the Araṇa,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 139).⁵⁴ Moreover, the minimum goal in the Buddhist training is that of *emotional independence*.⁵⁵

3.5 SĀRAJJA, SĀRADA, VESĀRAJJA, VISĀRADA. Here we shall very briefly examined *sārajjā*, its adjective *sārada*, and their antonyms in some depth. *Sārajjā* (n) as “deference, fearfulness” is the abstract noun of *sārada* (Skt *śārada*) (adj), “autumnal, of the latest harvest, fresh” (D 3:354; A 3:404), and is often used figuratively, meaning, “unripe, inexperienced, immature.” Its opposite is *visārada* (derived from *vesarajja*)⁵⁶ or *vīta,sārada*,⁵⁷ both literally meaning “with *sārajjā* removed,” that is, “wise, experienced, confident, knowing how to conduct oneself.” The Commentary to **the Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta** (M 12.22/1:71), explains *vesārājja* (“intrepidity”), thus: “Here it is the opposite of timidity [obsequiousness], *sārajjā*” (*vesārājjanī ti ettha sārajjā,paṭipakkho*, MA 2:33; AA 2:33, 45, 3:7).

3.6 RELATED SUTTAS

3.6.1 Sārajjā Sutta (A 5.101). From such texts as **the Sārajjā Sutta** (A 5.101) [3], it is clear that *sārajjā* (“deference, fearfulness”) is not always a wholesome spiritual quality, nor does it always contribute to our spiritual wellbeing. **The Sārajjā Sutta** (A 5.101) clearly attest that *sārajjā*, in the sense of fearfulness and related emotions are *not* found in the wisely faithful, the morally virtuous, the truly learned, the spiritually assertive, and the wise [3.1]. Indeed, these five qualities—wise faith, moral virtue, spiritual assertion, and wisdom—are conducive to *intrepidity*, courageousness, or more specifically, moral courage (*vesārājja*), the opposite of “fearfulness” (*sārajjā*).⁵⁸

⁵⁰ <http://humanum.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Lexis/Lindict/> sv 慚愧.

⁵¹ On the Chinese conception of “face,” see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face_\(social_custom\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Face_(social_custom)); also HO, Yau-Fai David, “On the Concept of Face,” *American Journal of Sociology*, 81,4 1976: 867–84. On a modern conception of “Face” (Sarah Rosenberg, 2004), see <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/face/>.

⁵² See Neils Mulder, *Inside Thai Society: Religion, Everyday Life, Change*, Chiangmai: Silkworm Books, 2000.

⁵³ Cf *apakassa* (“holding back”) and *apagabbha* (“unobtrusive”) in **Candūpama S** (S 16.3,2/2:196 f) & SD 38.2 (3.1.2).

⁵⁴ M 139/3:230-236 = SD 7.8.

⁵⁵ See eg **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

⁵⁶ D 1:175, 2:86; S 1:181, 4:246; A 2:8, 3:183, 203, 4:310, 314 f, 5:10 f; M 1:71, 386.

⁵⁷ A 2:4; It 123.

⁵⁸ A 5.101/3:127 = SD 28.9a(3).

3.6.2 Yasoja Sutta (U 3.3). There is another discourse—the **Yasoja Sutta** (U 3.3)—which sheds instructive light upon our understanding of the Piṇḍolya Sutta (S 22.80). Both the Piṇḍolya Sutta and the Yasoja Sutta record the Buddha as dismissing the monks—the former does not mention the reason, while the latter specifies it. In the Piṇḍolya Sutta, the Buddha is recorded as using his psychic power to make to monks amenable to instruction. In the Yasoja Sutta, however, the monks themselves make an effort to gain arhathood during the rains retreat, and successful do so. Then they meet the Buddha, who approves of them.⁵⁹

From a comparative of these three discourses—the Sārajja Sutta (A 5.101), the Yasoja Sutta (U 3.3) and the Piṇḍolya Sutta (S 22.80)—we can safely surmise that the teaching method reported in the last is out of character of the Buddha. As in the Yasoja Sutta, the Buddha could have easily summoned the monks and admonished them. However, the Piṇḍolya Sutta’s sentiments probably reflect the sense of urgency that its compilers responded with in the face of the undesirable conduct of certain groups of monastics, or of some negative trend in a settled monastic environment, so that such a text needed to be produced.

3.6.3 Cātumā Sutta (M 67). The two parables of the the Piṇḍolya Sutta—those of the young seedlings [§§6a, 11a] and the young calf [§§6b, 11b]—are again used by the Buddha in Cātumā Sutta (M 67.-7+9) where he similarly dismisses 500 young newly ordained monks led by the Sāriputta and Moggallāna at Cātumā (a village in Sakya country). They were noisily greeting the resident monks as they kept their bowls and robes, and their quarters were being prepared. In this case, the Buddha dismisses them telling them not to reside near him.⁶⁰

The Sakyas, out of compassion for the monks, interceded on their behalf, and tell the Buddha the two parables. Brahma Sahampati, too, intercedes and repeats the two parables. Responding to their pleas, the Buddha recalls the monks and instructs them four fears or dangers (*bhaya*) to avoid so that they grow in their holy lives.⁶¹ [1.2]

3.6.4 Piṇḍa,pātika Sutta (U 3.8). The Piṇḍa,pātika Sutta (U 3.8) closes with the Buddha’s inspired utterance (*udāna*), which reminds us of the true monastic:

*Piṇḍa,pātikassa bhikkhuno
atta,bharassa anañña,posino
devā pihayanti tādino⁶²
no ce sadda,siloka,nissita*

For the alms-gathering monk,
self-supporting, not supporting another—
the devas love such a one;
but not if he depends on the sound of praise.⁶³ (U 3.8/31)

— — —

⁵⁹ U 3.3/24-27 = SD 28.9c.

⁶⁰ M 67.5/1:457 = SD 34.7.

⁶¹ M 67.6-9/1:457-459 = SD 34.7.

⁶² Cf Dh 95. On *tādino*, see **Sabba Kamma Jaha S** (U 3.1.12/21) + SD 39.3 (1.4).

⁶³ I have translated according to the context. Comy explains *sadda* as “praise to one’s face” and *siloka* as simply “widespread fame” (UA 204).

The Discourse on Alms-collecting

S 22.80

1 At one time the Blessed One was staying amongst the Sakyas, in Nigrodha's park, near Kapila-vatthu.

The Buddha dismisses the order

2 Then, the Blessed One, having dismissed the order of monks for a particular reason,⁶⁴ dressed in the morning, and taking robe and bowl, entered Kapila,vatthu for alms.

3 Having walked on his almsround in Kapila,vatthu, and having taken his almsfood, he went to the Great Forest [Mahā,vana] for his midday-rest. Having plunged into the Great Forest, he sat under a young beluva tree for his midday rest.

4 Now while the Blessed One was in his solitary retreat, this thought arose in his mind, thus:

5 "The order of monks has been dismissed by me."⁶⁵

There are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma and Vinaya [Teaching and Discipline]. If they do not see me, they might otherwise, they might change [fall away].⁶⁶

6a PARABLE OF THE YOUNG CALF.⁶⁷ Just as when a **young calf** does not see its mother, might become otherwise [become uncertain], might change [weaken away].

even so, there are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma and Vinaya. If they do not see me, they might become otherwise [become uncertain], they might change [fall away].

6b PARABLE OF THE YOUNG SEEDLINGS. Just as when **young seedlings** do not get water, might become otherwise, might change [wilt away].

7a even so, there are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma and Vinaya. If they do not see me, they might otherwise [become uncertain], they might change [fall away].

7b What now, if I were to help the order of monks just as I have helped the order before."⁶⁸

Brahmā Sahampati

8 Then brahma Saham,pati, having known with his own mind the reflection in the Blessed One's mind, just as a strong man might stretch his arm out or bend it back, brahma Sahampati disappeared from the brahma world and reappeared before the Blessed One. [92]

9 Then brahma Sahampati, having arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee on the ground, raised his palms lotus-wise towards the Blessed One, and said this to him:

⁶⁴ Comy says that the Buddha, after his retreat in Sāvathī, arrives in Kapila,vatthu with a large order of monks. When they arrive, the Sakyas come to see him with many gifts for the order. A noisy quarrel, however, breaks out amongst the monks over their distribution, so that they sound like a fish market! It is for this reason that the Buddha dismisses them. The idea is to teach them that it is not for the sake of such material things as robes, etc, that they have gone forth, but for the sake of arhathood. (SA 3:298). For a similar incident, see **Yasoja S** (U 3.3), where, however, the dismissed monks are reported as making special effort towards spiritual attainments so that "the Blessed One might be joyful at heart (*attamana*)."⁶⁵ (U 3.3/25).

⁶⁵ For a more detailed account, see **Yasoja S** (U 3.3/24-27), SD 28.9c.

⁶⁶ *Tesaṃ mamaṃ apassantānaṃ siyā aññathattaṃ siyā vipariṇāmo*. On "uncertain," *aññathatta*, see **Cātumā S** (M 67.7b/1:457), SD 34.7.

⁶⁷ Both these similes are found in **Cātumā S** (M 67.7/1:457 f, given in reverse sequence), where they are used by the Sakyas of Cātumā and repeated by Brahmā. The Buddha, it is recorded, moved by these similes, forgives and rehabilitates the monks. See Intro (1.2) above.

⁶⁸ See Intro (1.2).

“So it is, Blessed One! So it is, Sugata [well-farer]! Bhante, the order of monks has been dismissed by the Blessed One.

10 There are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma and Vinaya [Teaching and Discipline]. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might otherwise, they might change [fall away].

11a Just as when a young calf does not see its mother might become otherwise [become uncertain], might change [weaken away].

even so, there are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma and Vinaya. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might otherwise, they might change [fall away].

11b Just as when young seedlings do not get water, might become otherwise, might change [wilt away].

12 even so, there are monks here who are newly ordained, not long gone forth, only recently come to this Dharma and Vinaya. If they do not see the Blessed One, they might become otherwise [become uncertain], they might change [fall away].

13 Let the Blessed One, bhante, rejoice in the order of monks! Let the Blessed One, bhante, admonish the order of monks!

Just as the Blessed One has helped the order of monks before,⁶⁹ let the Blessed One help the order now!”

14 The Blessed One consented by his silence.

15 Then, brahma Saham,pati, having known the Blessed One’s consent, pays homage to the Blessed One, keeping him to the right, and disappeared right there.⁷⁰

The Buddha assembles the order

16 Then, the Blessed One, having emerged from his evening solitary retreat, went to Nigrodha’s park,⁷¹ and sat down on the prepared seat.

While seated there, the Blessed One performed a psychic wonder so that the monks would approach him individually or in pairs, in a deferent [timid] manner.⁷²

17 Then those monks approached the Blessed One individually or in pairs, in a deferent manner. [93] Having approached the Blessed One, they saluted him and then sat down at one side.

18a When they were seated down at one side, the Blessed said this to the monks:

18b ⁷³‘This, bhikkhus, is the lowest of livelihood, that is to say, alms-gathering.⁷⁴ This is an abusive term in the world: ‘You scrap-collector! You wander about with bowl in hand!’⁷⁵

⁶⁹ See Intro (1.2).

⁷⁰ V 1:7; M 1:170; S 1:138; D 2:39 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:318; cf. S:B 1:233 n372; also Sn 1146c.

⁷¹ It is interesting here that the Buddha is in the Mahā,vana when he reflects on the future conditions of the monks, and then goes to Nigrodha’s Park to address them. As it were, this is symbolic of the Buddha of the “forest tradition” teaches Dharma to the monks of the “settled monastic tradition.”

⁷² Be Ee *Nisajja kho bhagavā tathā,rūpaṃ iddhābhisaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkhāsi* [Ke Se *abhisaṅkhāresi*; Ee *abhisāṅkhāyi*; Ke *abhisāṅkharoti*] *yathā te bhikkhū (eka,dvīhikāya sārājja,māna,rūpā yenāham [yena bhagavā?] ten ’upa-sāṅkameyyuṃ)*: bracketed section not in Ce Se Ke. Comy: *Eka,dvīhikāyā ti ek’eko c’eva dve dve ca hutvā. Sārājja-māna,rūpā ti ottappamāna,sabhāvā bhāyamānā.* (SA 2:300). Comy adds: Why did the Buddha perform such a feat? Out of desire for their welfare. For, if they had come in groups, they would neither have shown respect to the Buddha nor would they be able to receive a Dharma teaching. But when they approach deferently, filled with moral shame, alone or in pairs, they would show reverence and would receive teachings. (id). *Sārājjamāna,rūpa* is also found at A 9.4.3/4:359 (Comy: *Sārājjamāna,rūpo ti harāyamāno otappamāno. Domanassa,sārājjam pan’assa n’atthi.* AA 4:167), ItA 2:111.

⁷³ §§18a-19 form **Jīvika S** (It 3.5.2/89 f), SD 28.9b, but which also has concluding verses.

⁷⁴ *Antam idaṃ, bhikkhave, jīvikānaṃ yad idaṃ piṇḍolyaṃ* = It 89,10 qu at DA 1:103,10 & Satta,nīti 360,27 = *lāmakam*.

And yet, bhikshus, sons of family intent on the goal, take it up for a good reason; not by the fear of rajahs, nor from the fear of thieves, nor on account of debts, nor for the sake of livelihood.

18c But rather they do so, thinking,

‘I am immersed in birth, decay, death, sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain, and despair; overwhelmed by suffering, overcome by suffering.

Perhaps, there is a making an end of this whole mass of suffering to be found!’⁷⁶

The parable of the funeral firebrand

19a In this way, bhikshus, this son of family is one who has gone forth, but he is covetous, strongly lusting after sense-pleasures, with a mind of ill will, with a mind of corrupted intentions,⁷⁷ muddle-headed, without full awareness, lacking concentration, scatter-brained, loose in faculty.⁷⁸

19b Bhikshus, just as a firebrand of a funeral pyre, lit on both ends, and smeared with dung in the middle, cannot be used as firewood in the village, nor in the forest,⁷⁹

in just the same way, bhikshus, do I speak of this person—he has abandoned his household wealth, and yet does not fulfill the purpose of asceticism.⁸⁰

Overcoming the three unwholesome thoughts

20 Bhikshus, there are these three unwholesome thoughts:⁸¹

- (1) thought of sense-pleasures (*kāma, vitakka*),
- (2) thought of ill will (*vyāpāda, vitakka*), and
- (3) thought of violence (*vihimsā, vitakka*).

And how do these three unwholesome thoughts cease without remainder?

When one dwells with the mind well established in the four focuses of mindfulness or when one dwells having cultivated signless samadhi.⁸²

21 For, bhikshus, this signless samadhi, whenever cultivated, is well worth it. Bhikshus, when the signless is well developed, there is great fruit, great benefit.

The two views

22 There are, bhikshus, these two views: the existence view and the extinction view.⁸³ [94] Therein, bhikshus, the instructed noble disciple reflects thus:

⁷⁵ *Abhisāpōyam, bhikkhave, lokasmim piṇḍolo vicarasi pattapāṇi ti.* Comy glosses *abhisāpa* with *akkosa* (“he scolds”). It adds: “For, when people are angered, they abuse their antagonist by saying, ‘You should put on a monk’s robe, get yourself an skull-bowl (*kapāla*), and roam about seeking alms!’” (SA 2:300). Here, instead of the usual *patta* (almsbowl), *kapāla* is used, indicating a kind of bowl used by non-Buddhist ascetics: this seems to have a pejorative sense.

⁷⁶ As at **Nalaka, pāna S** (M 68.5e/1:463), SD 37.4.

⁷⁷ “With a mind of corrupted intentions,” *paduṭṭha, mana, saṅkappa*.

⁷⁸ *Abhijjhālu kāmesu tibba, sārāgo, byāpanna, citto paduṭṭha, mana, saṅkappa, muṭṭha-s, sati asampajāno asamāhito vibbhanta, citto pākat’indriyo.* For a longer list of terms describing a deviant monk, see **Jantu S** (S 2.25/1:61) & its comy: see also S:B 392 n176.

⁷⁹ Comy says that the Buddha uses the funeral-pyre fire-brand parable not referring to immoral monks, but in reference to totally virtuous persons who are lazy (*alasa*) and as such are destroyed by such faults as covetousness, etc (SA 2:302).

⁸⁰ §§18b-19b form **Jivika S** (It 3.5.2/89 f), SD 28.9b.

⁸¹ These 3 are “wrong thought” (*micchā, diṭṭhi*), the opp of “right thought” (*sammā, diṭṭhi*): the thought of renunciation (*nekkhamma, saṅkappa*), the thought of non-malice (*avyāpāda, saṅkappa*), and the thought of harmlessness (*avihimsā, saṅkappa*): see **Sacca, vibhaṅga S** (M 141.25/3:251), SD 11.11.

⁸² Comy: “The signless samadhi” (*animitta samādhi*), is insight concentration (*vipassanā samādhi*); so called because it removes the signs of permanence, etc (SA 2:302; MA 4:153). See **Animitta Ceto, samādhi Pañha S** (S 40.9-/4:268 f), SD 24.19 (2).

‘Is there anything in the world that I could cling to without being blameworthy?’

23 He understands thus:

‘There is *nothing* in the world that I could cling to without being blameworthy.

For, if I were to cling, it is only form that I would be clinging to.

If I were to cling, it is only feeling that I would be clinging to.

If I were to cling, it is only perception that I would be clinging to.

If I were to cling, it is only formations that I would be clinging to.

If I were to cling, it is only consciousness that I would be clinging to.

With that clinging of mine as condition, there would be existence.

Conditioned by existence, there would be birth.

Conditioned by birth, there would be decay and death—

sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain [displeasure] and despair would come to be.

Such would be the arising of this whole mass of suffering.’⁸⁴

The 3 characteristics of the aggregates⁸⁵

24 What do you think, bhikshus, is **form** permanent or impermanent?’

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory [suffering] or satisfactory?’”⁸⁶

“Unsatisfactory [suffering], bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’?”⁸⁷

“No, bhante.”

25 “Now, what do you think, bhikshus, is **feeling** permanent or impermanent?’

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory or satisfactory?’”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’?”

“No, bhante.”

26 “Now, what do you think, bhikshus, is **perception** permanent or impermanent?’”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory or satisfactory?’”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’?”

“No, bhante.”

⁸³ These are the 2 extreme views prevalent in the world, ie, existence and non-existence: see **Kaccāya)na,gotta S** (S 12.15/2:16 f), SD 6.13. Comy: The existence view (*bhava,diṭṭhi*) is eternalism (*sassata,diṭṭhi*); the extinction view (*vibhava,diṭṭhi*) is the annihilation view (*uccheda,diṭṭhi*). This passage is to introduce to show that the signless meditation removes not only the 3 wrong thoughts, but also eternalism and annihilationism (SA 2:303).

⁸⁴ Here the Buddha connects clinging (*upādāna*), which arises when the aggregates are taken to be a self, with the last section of the dependent arising formula, “thus showing present clinging to be the sustaining cause for the continuation of the round of existence.” (S:B 1075 n126). See parallel at **Māgandiya S** (M 75.24/1:511 f).

⁸⁵ §§15-18 form an important stock = **Anatta,lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59.12-22/3: 67 f), SD 1.2.

⁸⁶ *Dukkhaṃ vā sukhaṃ vā*, lit “suffering or happiness?”

⁸⁷ The notion “this is mine” arises through craving (*taṇhā*); the notion “this I am,” through conceit (*māna*); the notion “this is my self,” through views (*diṭṭhi*). These **3 graspings** (*ti,gaha*) are essentially synonymous with **the 3 influxes**, respectively, sense-desire (*kāṃ ’āsava*), existence (*bhav ’āsava*) and ignorance (*avijjāsava*): see **Vatthūpa-ma S** (M 7.18/1:38), SD 28.12. For the opp (non-ownership) formula, see §29 below. See also Peter Harvey, *The Selfless Mind*, 1995:32 f.

27 “Now, what do you think, bhikshus, are **formations** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory or satisfactory?”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’?”

“No, bhante.”

28 “Now, what do you think, bhikshus, is **consciousness** permanent or impermanent?”

“Impermanent, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent unsatisfactory or satisfactory?”

“Unsatisfactory, bhante.”

“Is what is impermanent, unsatisfactory and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self.’?”

“No, bhante.”

Universality of non-self

29 “Therefore, bhikshus, any kind of **form** whatsoever, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near⁸⁸—all forms should be seen as they really are with right wisdom thus:

‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’⁸⁹

Therefore, bhikshus, any kind of **feeling** whatsoever, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—all feelings should be seen as they really are with right wisdom thus:

‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

Therefore, bhikshus, any kind of **perception** whatsoever, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—all perceptions should be seen as they really are with right wisdom thus:

‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

Therefore, bhikshus, any kind of **formations** whatsoever, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—all formations should be seen as they really are with right wisdom thus:

‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

⁸⁸ See S 22.48/3:47. This “totality formula” for the aggregates is explained in detail in the Vibhaṅga and briefly in the Visuddhi, magga: “**internal**” = physical sense-organs; “**external**” = physical sense-objects; “**gross**” = that which impinges (physical internal and external senses, with touch = earth, wind, fire); “**subtle**” = that which does not impinge (mind, mind-objects, mind-consciousness, and water); “**inferior**” = unpleasant and unacceptable sense-experiences [sense-world existence]; “**superior**” = pleasant and acceptable sense-experiences [form & formless existences]; “**far**” = subtle objects (“difficult to penetrate”); “**near**” = gross objects (“easy to penetrate”) (Vbh 1-13; Vism 14.73/450 f; Abhs 6.7). “Whether or not the details of the Vibhaṅga exposition are accepted as valid for the *nikāyas*, it seems clear that this formula is intended to indicate how each *khandha* is to be seen as a class of states, manifold in nature and displaying a considerable variety and also a certain hierarchy” (Gethin 1986:41).

⁸⁹ *N’etaṃ mama, n’eso ’ham asmi, na mēso attā ti*. This threefold formula is the contrary of “the 3 graspings” (*ti, vidha gāha*) [§24], that is, of view (*diṭṭhi*), of craving (*taṇhā*), of conceit (*māna*) (MA 2:111, 225): here applied to the 5 aggregates [17-21]. A brief version, “There can be no considering that (element) as ‘I’ or ‘mine’ or ‘I am’” (*ahan ti vā maman ti vā asmī ti vā*) is found in **Mahā Hatthi, padōpama S** (M 28/1:184-191 §§6b-7, 11b-12, 16b-17, 21b-22). These 3 considerations represent respectively the 3 kinds of **mental proliferation** (*papañca*) of self-view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*), of craving (*taṇhā*) and of conceit (*māna*) (Nm 280; Vbh 393; Nett 37 f). In **Anatta, lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59.12-16/3:68), the formula is applied to the 5 aggregates & in **Pārīleyya S** (S 22.81/ 3:94-99) to the 4 primary elements. See also **Rāhula S** (A 4.177/2:164 f). See **Pārīleyya S**, SD 6.16 (5).

Therefore, bhikshus, any kind of **consciousness** whatsoever, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—all consciousness should be seen as they really are with right wisdom thus:

‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

30 THE ARISING OF REVULSION. “Therefore, bhikshus, seeing thus, a well-taught noble disciple becomes revulsed⁹⁰ with form, revulsed with feeling, revulsed with perception, revulsed with mental formations, revulsed with consciousness.

Being (thus) revulsed, (his lust) fades away.

Through the fading away (of lust) [that is, dispassion], (his mind) is liberated.

When it is liberated, there comes the knowledge: ‘It is liberated.’

He directly knows: ‘Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, done what had to be done, there is no more of this state of being.’⁹¹

— evaṃ —

090519; 090527; 090912 DS; 091112; 100904; 111210; 120625; 130908

⁹⁰ On revulsion, see *Nibbidā*, SD 20.1.

⁹¹ Although this pericope does not end with the well known statement: “⟨So-and-so⟩ became one of the arhats” (*Aññataro ca pana...arahatam ahoṣī ti*), Comy states at the end of the discourse, 500 bhikshus attained arhathood together with the analytic skills (*paṭisambhidā*) (SA 2:303). According to **Yamaka S** (S 22.85) Comy, at the end of this instruction [§§12-13], Yamaka becomes a streamwinner (S 22.85.14-20/3:111), SD 21.12. (SA 2:309)