

## Paṭhama (Nānā,kaṛaṇa) Mettā Sutta

(Nānā,kaṛaṇa) Mettā Sutta 1

### The First Discourse on (the Diversity in) Lovingkindness

A 4.125/2:128 f

Theme: Going to heaven can end up in being reborn in the hells

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#### 1 Danger of eternalism

The (Nānā,kaṛaṇa) Mettā Sutta 1 (A 4.125) is about how the cultivation of the four “divine abodes” (*brahma, vihāra*) [2]—lovingkindness, compassion, appreciative joy, and equanimity—can result in heavenly rebirths. The meditator of these divine abodes can be reborn in the corresponding planes of the brahma world, where they may live in celestial bliss and glory for as long as 500 world cycles (or even longer).

There is, however, a karmic catch to all this. Heaven is our own making, fuelled by karma, and lasts only as long as our wholesome karma. When the karmic momentum wears out, and this always happens, we will fall (*cavati*)—and we always “fall” from such karmic heavens—we will land in the subhuman realms: the hells, the animal kingdom, or the preta realm [S1c etc].

This sutta, as such, highlights the special problem posed by eternalist views, such as that we have an eternal soul, which goes to an eternal heaven or an eternal hell after death, and so on. Such view might motivate some meditators “to attain states of deep meditative bliss, which they interpret as union with divine reality or realization of an eternal self.”<sup>1</sup>

From the perspective of the Buddha’s teaching, however, such attainments merely generate the kind of consciousness that characterizes those heavens. The mental states we are habitually familiar with tend to follow us beyond the grave. Such meditative attainments, in other words, generate rebirth in a corresponding realm in the form or the formless worlds. While many religions teach eternal heavenly life as the final goal of their believers, and the best, even only, way out of the human condition, the Buddha’s teaching regard whatever exists as being impermanent, including the heavens.

Whatever exists can only do so in impermanence, and are as such subject to its vagaries. The notion of a heaven of eternal bliss is imaginatively simplistic, as it fails to understand that pleasure only exists in opposition to pain. They are relative to one another, and can only felt in opposition to one another. On a light note, we might even say that it is not that the evil do not go to heaven. Due to their habitual unheavenly ways, they would find heaven profoundly boring. Informed Buddhists, however, are not attracted to heavenly life because such states are karmic structures and, even if lasting for aeons, they still end, with disastrous aftermaths.

Practising Buddhists knows that they can reject heaven and avoid hell, too—by keeping to the middle way. This middle way is the growing understanding that everything that exists is impermanent. In accepting the true reality of existence, we blissfully harmonize with it. In due course, we have a fuller vision of how we create our own worlds and inhabit them. When we realize the way to rise above such existential creativity, we also end our existential destructivity. This is nirvana.

#### 2 The divine abodes

The Buddha has very important reasons for teaching the (Nānā,kaṛaṇa) Mettā Sutta 1 (A 4.125). Firstly, the divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*)<sup>2</sup> a pre-Buddhist practice that the Buddha has adopted as it is not against his teachings. Secondly, the divine abodes help in the cultivation of inner stillness and wholesome social emotions. Thirdly, they can bring about rebirth in the heavens, but they are nor forever. [1]

<sup>1</sup> Bodhi, *In the Buddha’s Words*, Boston, 2005:190.

<sup>2</sup> On the 4 divine abodes, see *Brahma, vihāra* = SD 60.1.

The refrain at the end of each of the four passages on the divine abodes [§1b etc], shows how each abode becomes fully developed. In simple terms, the phrase “above, below, across, everywhere” (*uddham adho tiriyaṃ sabbadhī*) refers to the directional radiating (*pharivā*) of the divine abode. This divine quality should be cultivated “to everyone as well as to himself” (*sabb’attatāya*): the quality is only total and boundless when it also includes oneself. For, one cannot pervade the universe (meaning both the world of beings and one’s awareness of that world) if one does not have that quality oneself.<sup>3</sup>

The phrase “a mind...vast, great, boundless, free from enmity, free from ill will” (*cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamaṇena averena avyāpajjhena*) [§1b etc] describes a meditator who is *fully focussed*. The word “vast” or “bountiful” (*vipula*) means he has attained samadhi or full concentration, and as such is “great” (*mahaggata*), that is, free (least temporarily) of all the mental hindrances,<sup>4</sup> and thereby attained to dhyana. Only such a mind can truly be “boundless” or “measureless” (*appamana*) because, at least momentarily, going beyond conceit, the meditator *does not measure anyone but sees all beings as they really are*, without regarding anyone as a stranger or an enemy, or harbouring any negative thought: he is “free from enmity, free from ill will” (*averena avyāpajjhena*).

### 3 Related suttas

3.1 DHYANA AND HEAVENLY REBIRTH. The (Nānā,karaṇa) Mettā Sutta 1 (A 4.125) parallels the (Nānā,karaṇā) Puggala Sutta (A 4.123)<sup>5</sup> in presenting the potentiality of meditators for rebirth in heavenly realms. While the former refers to the model of the four divine abode (*brahma, vihāra*), the latter uses the framework of the four dhyanas. Both suttas warn that worldly devas (that is, those who are not saints of the path), after death, *immediately* fall from their celestial lives into the subhuman states<sup>6</sup> [§1d etc].

Another interesting about these two suttas is that they show the respective correspondences between four dhyanas and the four divine abodes, that is, lovingkindness = the first dhyana; compassion = the second dhyana; appreciative joy = the third dhyana; and equanimity = the fourth dhyana. The Visuddhi-magga, however, says that all the first three divine abodes can bring us up to the third dhyana, thus:

• lovingkindness	}	1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> dhyana	
• compassion			
• appreciative joy			
• equanimity	—	4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana	(Vism 3.104-133/110-112) <sup>7</sup>

### 3.2 DHYANA, DIVINE ABODES, FORMLESS ATTAINMENTS, LIBERATION.

3.2.1 The progressive abodes and the divine abodes. **The Aṭṭhaka,nāgara Sutta** (M 52),<sup>8</sup> also preserved as the Dasama Gaha,pati Sutta (A 11.17,<sup>9</sup> takes the cultivation of the progressive abodes a step further, by inserting the four divine abodes after the four form dhyanas, and just before the first three formless attainments (that is, omitting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception).

Having attained any of the four form dhyanas, he then reflects on it, thus: “This dhyana is conditioned and volitionally constructed. But whatever is conditioned and volitionally constructed is impermanent,

<sup>3</sup> On how this practice can lead to spiritual liberation, see **Brahma,vihāra S** (A 10.208/5:299) = SD 2.10.

<sup>4</sup> See Intro 5.3(2)n.

<sup>5</sup> A 4.123/2:129 f) = SD 23.8a.

<sup>6</sup> See (Nānā,karaṇā) Puggala S 1 (A 4.123) = SD 23.8a Intro (3.3) (Do all devas fall right into the subhuman planes?).

<sup>7</sup> See esp Vism 3.107/111. See also Gethin, *Foundations of Buddhism*, Oxford, 1998:178 (Table 4) & H Gunaratana, *The Path of Serenity and Insight*, Delhi, 1985:219-221 (App 3).

<sup>8</sup> M 52.8-14/1:351 f) = SD 41.2.

<sup>9</sup> A 11.17.5-6/5:344 f) = SD 32.9.

subject to cessation.”<sup>10</sup> If he is steadfast in this reflection, he will attain arhathood. If he fails to do so, that is, “because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,”<sup>11</sup> he will attain non-return.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, having attained any of the four divine abodes, the meditator then reflects, thus: “This liberation of mind is through (lovingkindness, etc) is conditioned and volitionally constructed. But whatever is conditioned and volitionally constructed is impermanent, subject to cessation.”<sup>13</sup> If he is steadfast in this reflection, he will attain arhathood. If not, that is, “because of that desire in dharmas [states], that delight in dharmas,” he will attain non-return.

Finally, having attained any of the first three formless attainments, the meditator then reflects, thus: “This attainment of (the base of infinite space | the base of infinite consciousness | the base of nothingness) is conditioned and volitionally constructed. But whatever is conditioned and volitionally constructed is impermanent, subject to cessation.”<sup>14</sup> If he is steadfast in this reflection, he will attain arhathood. If not, that is, “because of that desire in dharmas, that delight in dharmas,” he will attain non-return.

In other words, any of the progressive abodes (*anupubba, vihāra*)—except for the last two<sup>15</sup>—or any of the four divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), may be cultivated, and with its attainment we could go on to see it with insight. If we successfully persist in doing this, we would attain arhathood, but if we still show some attachment to any of the mental states (*dhamma*), we would attain non-return.

**3.2.2 Divinity, brahmahood, imperturbability, aryahood.** Another relatively short discourse puts together four kinds of spiritual states. **The (Saṅgha) Uposatha Sutta** (A 4.190) records the Buddha as declaring that the community of monks, sitting in noble silence, are a field of merit, worth meeting even if we have to travel from afar with only a backpack—for four reasons. That is, there are amongst such saints those

- (1) who have attained to divinity (*deva-, patta*) or deva states, that is, they are attainers of the form dhyanas;
- (2) who have attained to brahmahood (*brahma-p. patta*) or brahma states, that is, they have mastered the four divine abodes;
- (3) who have attained to imperturbability (*ānejjā-p. patta*) or the unshakable states, that is, they have mastered the four formless attainments; and
- (4) who have attained to aryahood or true nobility (*ariya-p. patta*), that is, they have truly understood the four noble truths, the arhats. (A 4.190.4/2:184) = SD 15.10b

**3.3 DEMYTHOLOGIZATION.** There are many other discourses that treat the four divine abodes, often giving us new insights into their benefits. The Tevijja Sutta (D 13), for example, adds the parable of the conch-blower (*saṅkha, dhama*) after describing each of the four abodes, thus:

<sup>10</sup> *Idam pi kho* (ākāśānañc’āyatanam | viññāṇ’añc’āyatanam | ākiñcaññ’āyatanam) *abhisāṅkhatam abhisañcetaṅgāyitam. Yam kho pana kiñci abhisāṅkhatam abhisañcetaṅgāyitam, tad aniccaṃ nirodha, dhamman ti.*

<sup>11</sup> “Desire...delight in dharmas” (*dhamma, rāga dhamma, nandī*), as at **Aṭṭhaka, nagara S** (M 52.4/1:350), where Comy explains that these 2 terms refer to the desire and lust (*chanda-rāga*), here meaning simply “attachment,” with respect to calm and insight. If one is able to let go of all attachment to calm and insight, one becomes an arhat. If one cannot discard them then one becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Pure Abodes (MA 3:14). *Dhamma* here clearly does not mean “teaching” or “Teaching,” but meditative states; as such, it is best rendered as “dharma.”

<sup>12</sup> See (**Āsava-k, khaya**) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36.2d/4:423) = SD 33.8: see §2d etc.

<sup>13</sup> *Idam pi kho* (mettā | karuṇā | muditā | upekkhā) *ceto, vimutti abhisāṅkhatam abhisañcetaṅgāyitam. Yam kho pana kiñci abhisāṅkhatam abhisañcetaṅgāyitam, tad aniccaṃ nirodha, dhamman ti.*

<sup>14</sup> *Idam pi kho* (mettā | karuṇā | muditā | upekkhā) *ceto, vimutti abhisāṅkhatam abhisañcetaṅgāyitam. Yam kho pana kiñci abhisāṅkhatam abhisañcetaṅgāyitam, tad aniccaṃ nirodha, dhamman ti.*

<sup>15</sup> There are 9 progressive abodes: the 4 form dhyanas, the 4 formless dhyanas, and the cessation of perception and feeling. The two abodes omitted here are the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and cessation. These last two abodes are too subtle to be contemplated on. See (**Āsava-k, khaya**) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36) = SD 33.8 Intro (2).

Just as a mighty conch-blower, Vāseṭṭha, might with little difficulty make a proclamation to the four quarters, so by this cultivation, Vāseṭṭha, by this liberation of the mind through appreciative joy, any limited karma that was done neither remains nor persists there.

This, Vāseṭṭha, is the way to fellowship with Brahmā. (D 13.76-79/1:250 f) = SD 1.8

Here, in the Tevijja Sutta, the Buddha is addressing two brahmin youths, teaching them the cultivation of the divine abodes, a teaching they are familiar with. For the brahmins believe that through their chants and prayers, they could actually be reborn in the presence of Mahā Brahmā. The Buddha here teaches that we need not do this posthumously, but we can right here and now, through the cultivation of the divine abode, beginning with lovingkindness (*mettā*), attain to such a boundless level of consciousness that we can *internalize* those very godly qualities that make Mahā Brahmā. We don't have to go to God, as it were, we can cultivate "Him" in our very being. God is not out there; He is *in* here (our hearts).

This kind of teaching approach is called "demythologization" by some scholars. Demythologization is effort to see beyond a specific cultural definition of religion or ethics. Its intention is not so much to debunk narrow biases, as to discern a deeper, timeless truth beneath the cultural and mythical layers. It is an effort at unpacking, or repackaging, of religion to open a window of insight into the living spirit of truth and liberation that would otherwise be missed or misread by the masses.<sup>16</sup>

3.4 LIMITING OF KARMIC EFFECTS. The Tevijja Sutta (D 13),<sup>17</sup> the Saṅkha(dhama) Sutta (S 42.-8)<sup>18</sup> and the (Karaja,kāya) Brahma,vihāra Sutta (A 10.208)<sup>19</sup> contain an interesting technical term, "karma done in a limited way" or "limited karma" (*pamāṇa,katariṇi kammaṇi*), which the Aṅguttara Commentary says refers to sense-sphere karma (*kāmmāvacara,kamma*)" (AA 5:78), and that "unlimited karma" (*appamāṇa,katariṇi kammaṇi*) refers to form-sphere karma (*rūpāvacara,kamma*). It is called "unlimited" because it is done by transcending the limit, for it is developed by way of specified, unspecified and directional pervasion."<sup>20</sup>

The Commentary on the Saṅkha(dhama) Sutta explains that "When (simple) lovingkindness is said, this can be interpreted either as access concentration<sup>21</sup> or as dhyana, but when it is qualified as 'liberation of mind' (*ceto,vimutti*) it definitely means dhyana (*jhāna*)" (SA 3:105). The point is that if a person masters the "liberation of mind by lovingkindness" at the level of dhyana, the karmic potential of this dhyana attainment will take precedence over sense-sphere karma and will generate rebirth into the form realm.<sup>22</sup>

3.5 OTHER RELATED SUTTAS. The following is a list of discourses and texts that lists the cultivation of the four divine abodes (*brahma,vihāra*)

The Mahā Sudassana Sutta (D 17.2.4/2:187). An ancient king Mahā Sudassanā cultivates the four divine abodes. (SD 36.12)

The Mahā Govinda Sutta (D 19.59/2:250). Mahā Govinda, the purohit of king Reṇu, cultivates the abodes. (SD 63.4)

The Udumbarika Sīha,nāda Sutta (D 25.17/3:49 f). The Buddha instructs Nigrodha and the wanderers on the abodes, as part of the Buddha's training for the monks. (SD 1.4)

<sup>16</sup> See Sigāl'ovāda S (D 31) = SD 4.1 Intro (3).

<sup>17</sup> Tevijja S (D 13.77/1:251) = SD 1.8.

<sup>18</sup> S 42.8.17/4:322. It also has the parable of the conch-blower, like Tevijja S (D 13.76-79/1:250 f) = SD 1.8.

<sup>19</sup> A 10.208.1/5:299 = SD 2.10.

<sup>20</sup> DA 2:406; MA 3:450; SA 3:105; ItA 1:92.

<sup>21</sup> In commentarial terms, there are 3 levels of mental images (*nimitta*): (1) the preparatory image (*parikamma nimitta*) or the meditation object perceived at the start of one's meditation. (2) When this image has reached some degree of focus, albeit still unsteady and unclear, it is called the acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*). (3) On greater mental focus, an entirely clear and immovable image arises, and becomes the counter-image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*). As soon as this image arises, the meditator has attained access (or neighbourhood) concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). It is also by means of the counter-image that one gains full concentration (*appanā samādhi*). See *Nimitta* = SD 19.7 (3), & Dhyana = SD 8.4 (7) (What happens what one reaches dhyana).

<sup>22</sup> See Vism 9.49-58/309-311; also S:B 1149 n346; A:B 315 n73.

**The Cakka,vatti Sīha,nāda Sutta** (D 26.28/3:78). The divine abodes are called “the wealth of a monk.” (SD 36.10)

**The Saṅgīti Sutta** (D 33.1.11(6)/3:224) lists the abodes as the four “boundless states” or “illimitables” (*appamañña*).

The Vatthūpama Sutta (M 7.13-16/1:38). The abodes as a means inner baptism or purification instead of ritual washing in a sacred river. (SD 28.12)

**The Cūḷa Assa,pura Sutta** (M 40.9-13/1:283 f). The abodes as a mean of attaining inner peace. (SD 41.8)

The Mahā Vedalla Sutta (M 43.31/1:297). The abodes are called “the immeasurable liberation of mind” (*appamāṇā ceto,vimutti*). (SD 35.1)

The Māra Tajjaniya Sutta (M 50.14-15/1:335). The four divine abodes keeps out Māra’s influence on the monks’ minds. (SD 36.4)

**The Jivaka Sutta** (M 55.6-11/1:369 f). The Buddha and the monks cultivate the four divine abodes to those on whom they live in dependence, but without making any demands. (SD 43.4)

The Makhā,deva Sutta (M 83.5-10/2:76-78, 17-19/2:81 f). On noticing grey hairs on his head, king Makhā,deva renounces the world and cultivated the abodes, doing so right to the end of his life. (SD 60.8)

The Dhānañjāni Sutta (M 97.32-35/2:195). Sāriputta instructs the dying Dhānañjāni to cultivate the four divine abodes. (SD 4.9)

The Subha Sutta (M 99.24-27/2:207 f). The Buddha teaches the brahmin youth Subha, son of Tod-eyya, the true to “companionship with Brahmā” (*brahmā,sahavyatā*). (SD 38.6)

The Anuruddha Sutta (M 127.7/3:146). Anuruddha explains to the carpenter Pañcak’āṅga the difference between “the immeasurable liberation of mind” (*appamāṇā ceto,vimutti*) and “the exalted liberation of mind” (*mahaggaṭā ceto,vimutti*). (SD 54.10)

The Go,datta Sutta (S 41.7/4:296 f). Citta the householder explains to the monk Go,datta that the proper cultivation of the four divine abodes as “the immeasurable liberation of mind” (*appamāṇā ceto,-vimutti*). (SD 60.4)

The Pāṭaliya Sutta (S 42.13/4:350-356). The Buddha explains to the headman Pāṭaliya how when the divine abodes are properly cultivated, such a concentration helps us abandon spiritual doubt; hence, it is called “Dharma samadhi.”<sup>23</sup> (SD 65.1)

The Mettā Sahagatā Sutta (S 46.54/5:115-121). The Buddha explains how his teaching on the liberation by the divine abodes is different from the non-Buddhist version. (SD 10.11)

The Venāga,pura Sutta (A 3.63.6/1:183). The Buddha explains to Vaccha,gotta, the brahmin of Venāga,pura, that his (the Buddha’s) clear and radian complexion is not account of resting well on “high and great couches” (*uccā,sayana mahā,sayana*), but his “couch” is the four divine abodes. (SD 21.1)

The Kesa,puttiya Sutta (A 3.65.15/1:192). The Buddha explains that the four divine abodes gives four self-assurances of true happiness, notwithstanding there is an afterlife or not, or that negative karma takes effect or not. (SD 35.4a)

The Sālha Sutta (A 3.66.13/1:196). The monk Nandaka explains to Sālha how the cultivation of the divine abodes can bring mental focus with which to examine and clear away one’s defilements, and so “become perfect” (*brahma,bhūta*).<sup>24</sup> (SD 43.6)

The (Catukka) Metta Sutta 1 (A 4.125/2:129). The divine abodes bring about rebirth in the heavens. (SD 33.9)

The (Catukka) Metta Sutta 2 (A 4.126.2/2:130). The divine abodes bring about rebirth in the Pure Abodes, that is, the attainment of non-return. (SD 33.10)

**The Doṇa Brāhmaṇa Sutta** (A 5.192.3/3:225). The Buddha explains to the brahmin Doṇa that through cultivating the four divine abodes, one becomes “equal with brahma” (*brahma-sama*). (SD 36.14)

<sup>23</sup> Comy however gives different interpretations of this term: see SD 65.1.

<sup>24</sup> PED: “divine being, most excellent being, said of the Buddha” (D 3:84; M 1:111, 3:195, 224; S 4:94; A 5:226; It 57); said of arhats (A 2:206; S 3:83).

**The Nav'aṅ'uposatha Sutta** (A 9.18.10/4:390). Cultivating the divine abodes on an uposatha day is to live like arhats. (SD 60.7)

**Paṭisambhidā, magga** (Pm 5.20/2:39). Chapter on *Vimokkha*: an analysis of the divine abodes.

**Vibhaṅga** (Vbh 13/272-282). Chapter on *Appamañña*: an analysis of the divine abodes.

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## The First Discourse on (the Diversity in) Lovingkindness

A 4.125/2:128 f

1a Bhikshus, there are these four persons to be found in the world. What are the four?

### Lovingkindness and the Brahma,kāyika devas

1b (1) Here, bhikshus, a certain person, with a heart of lovingkindness, dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing the whole world with lovingkindness that is vast, exalted, boundless, without enmity, without ill will.

He relishes it, longs for it, and finds joy in it.<sup>25</sup> He remains therein, intent upon it, dwells much in it, without falling from it.

1c When he dies, he is reborn in the company of **the Brahma,kāyika devas** [the high gods].<sup>26</sup>

Bhikshus, the life-span of the Brahma,kāyika devas is *an aeon* [a world cycle].

The worldling, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, having spent all of the lifespan of devas there, goes to hell, or to the animal kingdom, or to the preta realm.<sup>27</sup>

1d But the Blessed One's disciple, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, and having exhausted it all up, attains nirvana in that very state.

This, bhikshus, is the distinction, this is the disparity, this is the difference, of the learned noble disciple from the unlearned worldling, that is to say, with regard to destination and rebirth.<sup>28</sup>

### Compassion and the Ābhassara devas

2a (2) Furthermore, bhikshus, here, a certain person, with a heart of compassion, dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing the whole world with compassion that is vast, exalted, boundless, without enmity, without ill will.

He relishes it, longs for it, and finds joy in it. He remains therein, intent upon it, dwells much in it, without falling from it.

2b When he dies, he is reborn in the company of **the Ābhassara devas** [the devas of streaming radiance].<sup>29</sup>

Bhikshus, the life-span of the Ābhassara devas is *two aeons* [two world cycles]. The worldling, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, having spent all of the lifespan of devas there, goes to hell, or to the animal kingdom, or to the preta realm.

<sup>25</sup> *So tad assādeti, tam nikāmeti, tena ca vittim āpajjati:* A 3.114/1:267,7+22, 268,5, 4.123/2:126,20, 127,4, 4.125/2:129,5, 7.47/4:54,17.

<sup>26</sup> *Brahma,kāyika* lit tr “one of perfect body,” ie a body of pure light; alt tr “Brahma’s host,” a generic term for the whole of the 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana brahma realm, which should not be confused with the more specific “Brahma’s Retinue” (*brahma,pārisajja*). See (**Nāna,karaṇā**) Puggala S 1 (A 4.123) = SD 23.8a Intro (3.2.1).

<sup>27</sup> *Tattha puthujjano yāvat āyukaṃ thatvā yāvatakaṃ tesam devānam āyu-p,pamāṇam tam sabbam khepetvā nirayam pi gacchati, tiracchāna,yonim pi gacchati, petti,visayam pi gacchati,.* This passage seems to suggest that worldling devas (that is, those who are not saints of the path), after death, *immediately* fall from their celestial life into the subhuman states; see (**Nāna,karaṇā**) Puggala S 1 (A 4.123) = SD 23.8a Intro (3.3).

<sup>28</sup> On one’s choice of rebirth by aspiration, see (**Nāna,karaṇā**) Puggala S 1 (A 4.123) = SD 23.8a Intro (4).

<sup>29</sup> “Ābhassarā,” a celestial world, one of the form worlds of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana, is populated by luminescent beings who live on zest (*pīti*) and emanate lightning-like radiance. When the physical universe devolves or “contracts” (*samvaṭṭati*) due to “fire,” it reaches up to Ābhassara (CA 11; Vism 13.41/416 f). See Aggañña S (D 27.10/3:84 f) = SD 2.19.

2c But the Blessed One's disciple, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, and having exhausted it all up, attains nirvana in that very state.

This, bhikshus, is the distinction, this is the disparity, this is the difference, of the learned noble disciple from the unlearned worldling, that is to say, with regard to destination and rebirth.

### Appreciative joy and the Subha,kiṇha devas

3a (3) Furthermore, bhikshus, here, a certain person, with a heart of appreciative joy he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing the whole world with appreciative joy that is vast, exalted, boundless, without enmity, without ill will.

He relishes it, longs for it, and finds joy in it. He remains therein, intent upon it, dwells much in it, without falling from it.

3b When he dies, he is reborn in the company of **the Subha,kiṇha devas** [devas of radiant glory].<sup>30</sup> Bhikshus, the life-span of the Subha,kiṇha devas is *four aeons* [four world cycles].

The worldling, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, having spent all of the lifespan of devas there, goes to hell, or to the animal kingdom, or to the preta realm.

3c But the Blessed One's disciple, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, and having exhausted it all up, attains nirvana in that very state.

This, bhikshus, is the distinction, this is the disparity, this is the difference, of the learned noble disciple from the unlearned worldling, that is to say, with regard to destination and rebirth.

### Equanimity and the Vaha-p,phala devas

4a (4) Furthermore, bhikshus, here, a certain person, with a heart of equanimity, he dwells suffusing one quarter, the second, the third, the fourth. Thus above, below, across, everywhere and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing the whole world with equanimity that is vast, exalted, boundless, without enmity, without ill will.

He relishes it, longs for it, and finds joy in it. He remains therein, [128] intent upon it, dwells much in it, without falling from it.

4b When he dies, he is reborn in the company of the **Vaha-p,phala devas** [the devas of abundant fruit].<sup>31</sup>

Bhikshus, the life-span of the **Vaha-p,phala devas** is *500 aeons* [500 world cycles].

The worldling, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, having spent all of the lifespan of devas there, goes to hell, or to the animal kingdom, or to the preta realm.

4c But the Blessed One's disciple, having dwelled there for a whole lifespan, and having exhausted it all up, attains final nirvana in that very state.

This, bhikshus, is the distinction, this is the disparity, this is the difference, of the learned noble disciple from the unlearned worldling, that is to say, with regard to destination and rebirth.

These, bhikshus, are the four kinds of individuals existing in the world.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>30</sup> On the Subha,kiṇha brahmas, see (Nānā,kaṛaṇa) Puggala S 1 = SD 23.8a Intro (3.2.4).

<sup>31</sup> On the Vaha-p,phala brahmas, see (Nānā,kaṛaṇa) Puggala S 1 = SD 23.8a Intro (3.2.5).