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Candûpama Sutta

The Discourse on the Moon Parable | S 16.3/2:197-199

Theme: Impure and pure ways of teaching the Dharma

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1 Sutta highlights

1.1 SUTTA ESSENCE. The **Candûpama Sutta** (S 16.3) is a short but important discourse on teaching the Dharma “in accordance with the Dharma” (*dhammânudhamma*), a term often used to describe proper practice,¹ but equally relevant to the theoretical aspects preceding and underlying the practice. Monastics are admonished not to socialize with families, but to be like the moon shining in the distance [§2] and to follow the example of Mahā Kassapa [§3].

When approaching families, monastics should do so unobtrusively [1.2] and without greed [§§4-7]. At the same time, they should have a heart of gladness or appreciative joy (*muditā*) towards fellow monastics [§§8-9].

Similarly, when teaching the Dharma, monastics (or whoever teaches the Dharma) should not do so out of greed or to promote oneself: such a teaching is impure (*aparissuddha*) [§§10-13]. The Dharma should be taught for what it really is, with all its virtues [§14]. Mahā Kassapa is such an exemplar [§15] and should be emulated [§16].

1.2 FIGURES FOR SOCIAL DISTANCE. The Sutta opens with the Buddha admonishing monastics not to be too familiar with families: they should be like the moon [2], brightening things up, but is distant, gentle and unobtrusive (*appagabbha*) [§2], that is, holding back both body and mind, just as we would “look down into a run-down well, or over a ragged cliff, or into a river difficult to access” [§3.1]. “Holding back the body” (*apakass’eva kāyam*) [3.1] means keeping a social and physical distance, and not frequenting families.” Holding the mind” (*apakassa cittaṃ*) means not to be mentally attached to families, especially for the sake of socializing, patronage or pleasure.

A monastic should not socialize with families, but be like one, “holding back his body, holding back his mind, would look down into a run-down well, or over a ragged cliff, or into a river difficult to access” [§3.1]. These are “height” parables, that is, figures of one falling from a height into certain danger or death. They are, as such, figures for social distance for monastics, that is, not socializing with families.

We should carefully hold back body and mind when looking down “a run-down well” (*jar’udapāna*) so that we do not fall into it should the ground slip or the parapet give way. We should be careful in body and mind when looking over “a ragged cliff” (*pabbata,visama*), so that we do not fall over the edge to certain death. And we should be very mindful when looking into “a river difficult to access” (*nadī,vidugga*), probably one with a steep or slippery bank or slope, lest we slip into the waters and get washed away. These are all warnings to monastics against socializing with families and the laity, which could lead the former to fall for sensual pleasures, become emotionally dissatisfied and give up the training.²

1.3 PERPETUAL NEWCOMER. The Sutta has a very interesting figure, that is, that of being “ever a newcomer” (*nicca,navaka*) [§§2, 3.1], a perpetual guest. This is clearly a reminder by the Buddha that monastics should keep a social and psychological distance from families and the laity, holding back both body and mind [1.2]. Each time a monastic visits a family for alms or to give teachings or counselling, he does not conduct himself as if he is on intimate terms with it, but comes as a guest with a spiritual purpose.

Another sense of the “perpetual newcomer” or “first-time visitor” figure is that the monastic does not presume anything whenever he meets a lay-person. He is neither judgemental of his past nor hopeful of the future (such as thinking of personal benefits): the monastic accepts the lay person unconditionally and

¹ See **Dhammânudhamma Paṭipanna S** (It 3.4.7/81 f) = SD 73.13; also D 2:214, 215; M 1:512; S 4:260, 262, 5:347, 404, 411, 413; A 1:36, 3:176, 177, 4:391, 392; Sn 317; Pm 2:189; Pug 63.

² Cf **Cātumā S** (M 67) where the Buddha, using 4 “river” parables—the fears (or dangers) of waves (anger and despair), of crocodiles (gluttony), of whirlpools (sensual pleasures), and of river dolphins (lust for women)—warning that these are likely to lead to their giving up their training (M 67.14-20/1:459-461) = SD 34.7.

responds to him with a lovingkind heart, instructing him in the Dharma. This means teaching him in a manner that is spiritually beneficial to him, including answering questions he has asked before, regarding difficult topics, and being patient when he seems to have difficulty understanding or accepting any teaching.³

1.4 THE HAND IN THE AIR

1.4.1 A visual parable. The Candūpama Sutta is unique in recording the Buddha presenting a parable by way of a hand-gesture:

Then, the Blessed One waved his hand in the air,⁴ saying:

“Bhikshus, just as this hand is not caught up in space, grasps it not, is not bound by it,⁵ even so, bhikshus, when a monk approaches families, his mind is not caught up in the family, grasps it not, is not bound to it, thinking:

‘May those desiring gains, obtain them! May those desiring merit, make merit!’⁶ [§6]

The last line means that monastics who approach families should be free from greed and envy. A monastic, far from being envious at the gains of others, should indeed rejoice, that is, show gladness (*muditā*),⁷ when other monastics receive gifts and support from the laity: “Just as he approves of his own gains, happy with them, he approves of the gains of others, happy with them” [§8].

At the same time, a true renunciant would not exploit the faith, gullibility, delusion or ignorance of the laity, such as claiming that the giving would generate merit (*puñña*) for the giver, and that’s about all there is to it.⁸ As this is greed-based on the part of the monastics, and at least delusion-based on the part of those who give, the whole conduct would effectively be wrong livelihood, an impure act, for the monastic.⁹

As well-trained renunciants who are morally virtuous and filled with lovingkindness, we would naturally feel glad at the success, happiness and goodness of others. We are happy when others, monastic or lay, are happy. Our lives are ever more unconditionally inclusive of others as we are ourselves selfless. We do not discriminate between rich and poor, powerful and humble, pleasant or unpleasant, nor in terms of class, work, race, or religion. We are mentally spacious and ungrasping, as illustrated by the Buddha’s waving his hand in the air, showing how it is “not caught up in space, grasps it not, is not bound by it.” [§6]

The Commentary explains the Buddha’s gesture: “Like twin lightnings in the blue sky, he waves his hand on both sides, above and below”¹⁰ (SA 2:159). The Tīkā (Subcommentary) adds that the Buddha points two of his fingers up skywards¹¹ (SAṬ 159). The Commentary notes that this gesture or visual parable of the Buddha is a hapax legomenon or unique phrase (*sambhinna, pada*) in the Buddha Word (SA 2:169), that is, it is found nowhere (SAṬ:Be 2:159).

³ On the Buddha’s teaching even those who do not convert, see **Udumbarika S** (D 25) @ SD 1.4 (2.3).

⁴ *Ākāse pāṇim cālesi*.

⁵ *Seyyathā’pi, bhikkhave, ayam ākāse pāṇi na sajjati na gayhati na bajjhati*.

⁶ *Labhantu lābha, kāmā, puñña, kāmā karontu puññānīti*. These thoughts reflect the desire of those desiring to receive gifts from the laity who, in doing so, as it were, “make merits.” On the other hand, good monastics, far from being envious in the gains of others, show gladness (*muditā*) in such benefits.

⁷ This is the 3rd of the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*), ie lovingkindness (*mettā*), compassion (*karuṇā*), gladness (*muditā*) and equanimity (*upekkhā*): see **Brahma, vihāra** = SD 38.5.

⁸ With moral virtue (*sīla*), giving (*dāna*) is a helpful in expediting our spiritual practice, esp meditation: see **Sam-bādh’okāsa S** (A 6.26/3:314 f) = SD 15.6; **Cāgānussati** = SD 15.12; also **Mā Puñña Bhāyi S** (It 22/15) = SD 2.11b.

⁹ On wrong livelihood, see **Right livelihood** = SD 37.8 (1.3-1.4).

¹⁰ *Nīle gagan’antare yamaka, vijjutam cārayamāno viya heṭṭhā, bhāgam upari, bhāgam ubhato, passesu pāṇim sañ-cāresi* (SA 2:159).

¹¹ *Aṅgulīhi nikkhanta, pabhā ākāsa, sañcalanena diguṇā hutvā ākāse vicarimsu* (SAṬ 2:159).

1.4.2 A renunciant is not for hire. The Buddha goes on to emphasize that monastics who approach families should be free from greed and envy [1.4.3]. When collecting or receiving alms, monastics should reflect, “May those desiring gains, obtain them! May those desiring merit, make merit!”¹² [§6]. This is a reflection of gladness or rejoicing when others receives gifts or make merit.¹³ In short, a good monk, worthy of going to families for alms are those who are capable of joyful contentment, ever thinking, “May people get what they want, be it support or merits.”

Even with such a mind of gladness, a good monk would only accept offerings that are proper, and not as a fee for services rendered. The Buddha himself rejects any gift that hints of any form of exchange, that the laity offers alms to the monastics *because of* the teachings or religious services rendered. This is very clear from the teachings of such discourses as **the Kasi Bhāra, dvāja Sutta** (Sn 1.4).¹⁴ The renunciant is not for hire; a monastic should not be economically or gainfully employed in any way.¹⁵ [3.3]

As such, it is clear, from both the Dharma (such as the sutta teachings here) and the Vinaya,¹⁶ that a monastic, by definition is a celibate renunciant who does not earn a living in any way. His task is the contemplative life, working for awakening in this life itself. If anyone who claims to be a monastic but, say, is gainfully employed in some form of business or receives some kind of remuneration, he would in fact be a lay person, and should live accordingly. This is one clearly vital way of preventing the laicization of the sangha or monastic order.

1.4.3 Families not to be approached. Even though the Buddha advises that monastics who approach families should be free from greed and envy, all monastics are *admonished against approaching certain kinds of family*. The first kind of family to be avoided is one that is hostile or lacks respect for the sangha. No monastic should approach a family that has no respect for the three jewels, for Dharma training, for heedfulness, or for hospitality (in short, who are hostile to Buddhism). **The (Upagantabba) Kula Sutta** (A 9.17) calls this set of qualities, the six kinds of respect (*gāraṇa*).¹⁷

The second kind of family that monastics should not approach for alms are those who are very poor, *so as not to exploit them*. No Vinaya-abiding monastic would approach the families of those declared by the sangha to be “learners” (*sekha*).¹⁸ According to the third Pāṭidesaniya rule, there are those families “elected as learners” (*sekkha, sammata*) by the sangha.

Any monk, not previously invited, or not sick, who accepts food from such a family, and consumes it, should confess this before another monk, saying, “Avuso, I have fallen into a blameworthy state, unbecoming, which should be confessed: I confess it” (*Gārayham āvuso dhammam āpajjam asappāyam pāṭidesaniyam tam patidesemi*).¹⁹ The purpose here is clearly to ensure that such families at least do not have further hardship by imposing on them to give alms.

2 The moon parable

The Saṃyutta Commentary elaborates on the parable of the moon as follows. The moon, sailing across the sky, does not have any intimacy, affection, or attachment for anyone, nor shows fondness,

¹² *Labhantu lābha, kāmā, puñña, kāmā karontu puññānīti*. See §6 n.

¹³ S:B takes this line in a negative sense: see §6 n below.

¹⁴ Comy calls it **Pūraḷāsa S**, “the discourse on the sacrificial cake” (SnA 400,7).

¹⁵ See **Right livelihood** = SD 37.8 (1.4).

¹⁶ See **Right livelihood** = SD 37.8.

¹⁷ A 9.17/4:387 f = SD 37.11. Cf Tha 124, 494, 495, 1052. They are called “conditions for non-decline” (*aparihāniya dhamma*) in **Aparihāna S 1** (A 6.32/3:330 f) = SD 72.8 & **Aparihāna S 2** (A 6.33/3:331) = SD 72.9. For other sets of 6 conditions for non-decline, see Vbh 381 (2 sets), the 1st set expl at VbhA 507. For the well known 5 sets of 7 conditions, and 1 set of 6 conditions, found in **Mahā, parinibbāna S**, see D 16.1.6-11/2:76-81 & SD 9 (10a).

¹⁸ Technically, a “learner” (*sekha* or *sekkha*) is any of the saints, short of the arhat: see SD 11.1 (5) Types of saints. Here, it is used in an extended sense to refer to a family with great faith (like a streamwinner) in the three jewels. This declaration is done by a formal act (*saṅgha, kamma*), performed by an assembled conclave (similar to an act of parliament), consisting of a motion and a single proclamation, after which it is carried (*ñatti, dutiya kamma*) (Pāṭd 4.1 @ V 4:180,21-24).

¹⁹ For monks: Pāṭd 3 (V 4:180,22-27). On confession (monastic), see SD 8.10 (5.1).

longing, or obsession with anyone, and yet it is loved by the multitude who find it pleasant. The meaning is that monastics, too, should not form any intimacy, affection or attachment, etc, for anyone, whether they are kshatriyas, or from any of the other classes. Yet, like the moon, they should approach families like the moon, loving and pleasant to the multitude. Furthermore, just as the moon dispels darkness and radiates light, so, too, they will dispel the darkness of defilements and radiate the light of wisdom (SA 2:165).

The Saṃyutta Ṭīkā (Subcommentary) adds that the qualities listed as “holding back the body, holding back the mind, unobtrusive, ever a newcomer amongst families” refer to the parable of the moon. The moon benefits the world by keeping to its orbit, and marking the various seasons.²⁰ Even so, a monk, moving in whichever quarter, benefits the families (SAṬ:Be 2:157 f).²¹

The moon parable and the example of Mahā Kassapa are quoted by Buddhaghosa in his **Visuddhi-magga** as exemplifying the true renunciant who follows the ascetic practice of the “house-to-house seeker” (*sapadāna, cārik’āṅga*).²² Here he quotes two untraced verses (or he might have composed them himself) on such a monk:

*Candūpamo nicca,navo kulesu
amaccharī sabba,samānukampo
kulūpak’ādīnava,vippamutto
hotīdha bhikkhu sapadāna,cārī*

*Loluppa,cāraṅ ca pahāya tasmā
okkhitta,cakkhu yuga,matta,dassī
ākaṅkhamāno bhuvi seri,cāraṃ
careyya dhīro sapadāna,cāran’ti*

Like the moon, ever a newcomer amongst families,
without envy, compassionate to all alike,
free from the dangers of being dependent on houses,
a monk is here a house-to-house alms-seeker.

As such, forsaking the self-indulgent conduct,
he wanders about with eyes downcast a plough-length,
without a wish, he freely roams the world,
he would wisely live by the house-to-house alms.

(Untraced: Vism 2.34/68)

3 Key words and terms

3.1 APAKASSA. The Suttas’ teachings open with the words, “Bhikkhus, approach families like the moon, holding back (*apakassa*) the body, holding back the mind...”²³ [§2]. The word *apakassa* is an absolute²⁴ of the transitive verb *apakassati*, “he draws away, puts away, removes.”²⁵ Here, this means figuratively that a monastic should keep a social and emotional distance from families, not to be attached to them in any way—like the moon [2]. Simply, it means that a monastic should be restrained in both body and mind, especially with approaching families.

The Saṃyutta Ṭīkā (Subcommentary), too, explains that “holding back,” *apakassa*, is an absolute, just like *apakassivā*, and glossed it as *apanetvā* (SA 2:165) as “having pulled away.” The commentator, Buddhaghosa, however, gives a technical explanation: a non-forest dweller who thinks of sensual pleasures holds back neither the body nor the mind.

²⁰ The moon courses through 3 regular seasons: the dry season or “goat’s course” (*aja,vīthi*) is from the months of Citta to Āsāḷha (Mar-Jul), the rains or “naga’s course” (*nāga,vīthi*) (Jul-Nov), and the cold season or “cow’s course” (*go,vīthi*) (Nov-Mar) (SAṬ:BE 2:157). On the Indian months, see SD 1.1 (1).

²¹ *Cando lokānuggahena aja,vīthi,ādīkā nānā,vīthiyo paṭipajjati, evaṃ bhikkhu taṃ taṃ disaṃ upagacchati kulā-nuddayāya. Yathā cando kaṅha,pakkhato sukka,pakkhaṃ upagacchanto kalāhi vaḍḍhamāno hutvā nicca,navo hoti, evaṃ bhikkhu kaṅha,pakkhaṃ pahāya sukka,pakkhaṃ upagantvā guṇehi vaḍḍhamāno lokassa vā pāmojja,pāsāṃ-saṭṭho nicca,navatāya canda,sama,citto adhun’upasampanno viya ca nicca,navo hutvā carati.* (SAṬ:Be 2:157 f)

²² On the 13 ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*), see SD 3.15 (2).

²³ *Candūpamā, bhikkhave, kulāni upasaṅkamatha—apakass’eva kāyam, apakassa cittam.*

²⁴ An absolute is a n or pron that is not the subj or obj of any vb or the obj of any proposition, but is attached to a participle or an infinitive, eg, “*Having eaten*, he returned to the monastery,” “Let’s vote for it, *majority to lead*.” It is a construction which, as a whole or in part, is *not* grammatically linked to the rest of the sentence.

²⁵ See S 2:197,29 (qu Miln 389,10); Sn 281 = A 4:172,7* (qu M 2119,27*). See CPD: apa-kassati.

If he is a forest-dweller, then he is only holding back his body, but not the mind. A monk who dwells outside a village (*gām 'ante*) who does not think sensual thoughts holds back his mind, but not his body. A forest-dweller who does not have sensual thoughts holds back both body and mind (SA 2:165).

The Ītkā, however, adds that whether a monk lives in a forest (*araññe*) or outside a village (*gām 'ante*), he should hold back the mind, that is, refrain from sensual thoughts and other unwholesome mental states (SAT:Be 2:158). [1.2]

3.2 APPAGABBHA

3.2.1 Basic definition. The Candûpama Sutta says that a monastic should be “unobtrusive,” *ap,pa-gabbha* (Skt *a,pragalbha*), like the moon [§2]. Sometimes, in late works, it is spelt as *a,pagabbha*, “timid, lacking boldness.”²⁶ [1.2]. Like the moon, which makes its presence felt by its gentle light without being obtrusive, a monastic, too, when approaching families is present, but not obtrusive: he is well restrained in body and mind. Its opposite is *pagabbha*, “impudent, not importunate, modest” (CPD).²⁷

3.2.2 Examples of “impudence.” The Khuddaka,pāṭha Commentary gives a detailed and broad explanation of impudence, listing actual cases, which are also breaches of monastic discipline.

(A) The 8 types of **bodily impudence**

- (1) One sits lolling with hands clasped round one’s knees or with the feet crossed, and so on in the presence of the order.
- (2) One sits in the same manner in the midst of a chapter (*gaṇa*) of monastics or a fourfold assembly (of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen).
- (3) One sits in the same manner in the presence of seniors.
- (4) In the refectory, one does not give a seat to seniors, one prevents novice monks (ie those of less than 5 years’ seniority) from getting a seat (cf V 2:162 f, 274).
- (5) One behaves in the same manner in the hot-bath house (cf V 1:47 2:220), and one has fires lit, etc, without asking seniors about it (cf V 2:220).
- (6) In the bathing-place, one disregards what others say and jostles seniors and novice monks without waiting one’s turn.
- (7) On the path for gathering alms, one goes in front of seniors, bumping their arms, in order to get the best seat, the best water, the best almsfood.
- (8) In going among houses, one enters before the seniors and plays physical games with children, and so on.

(B) The 4 types of **verbal impudence**

- (1) In the presence of the order, one teaches the Dharma uninvited; when asked by the people there, one answers them without asking a senior if one may do so.
- (2) In the presence of a chapter, one teaches the Dharma uninvited, etc.
- (3) In the presence of a senior, one teaches the Dharma uninvited, etc.
- (4) When amongst houses, one speaks thus: “You, so-and-so, what is there? Is there any rice-gruel or anything to eat or chew? What will you give me? What shall we eat today? What shall we drink?”

(C) What is called **mental impudence**

In its many instances this is unwholesome thinking, namely, thought of sense-desire, of ill will, and of cruelty, etc (KhpA 243 f).

3.2.3 Applied sense. At the start of **the Metta Sutta** (Khp 3.3 = Sn 1.8), the word *appagabbha* famously appears in the phrase: “unobtrusive, not being greedy after families” (*appagabbho kulesu ananu-*

²⁶ Skt *a,pragalbha*, “not importunate, modest” (Sn 144 = Khp 9.2; also refs in foll n), Cf Skt *apa-galbha*, abortive: see CPD: *apa-gabbha*. See also DP sv.

²⁷ S 2:198,2 f (qu at Miln 389,11); Sn 852, 941; A 3:433,12; Dh 245 ≠ Jtkm 98,23*.

giddho),²⁸ A monastic must show lovingkindness towards the families that have been offering him alms and have faith in the three jewels. Like the moon that shines its gentle light on all alike, the monastic should radiate his lovingkindness to all alike, too.

The parable of the moon, given in the Candūpama Sutta, has another interesting facet: “**like the moon ...ever a newcomer...**” (*candūpamaṃ...nicca,navakā*) [§2]. Just as the moon goes through its various cycles of a new moon and then a full moon, coming and going, but always keeping its distance brightly, even so a monastic comes at the proper times for alms, but always keeping his social and emotional distance. It is such a worldly separation or space that powerfully inspires inner peace in both the monastic and the laity. The peaceful demeanour of a disciplined monastic speaks for itself.²⁹

3.3 PASANNĀ, KĀRA

3.3.0 Definition & usages. The moral tone of the phrase *pasannā, kāraṃ kareyyuṃ*, “would show faith” [§13.2], whether it is pure or impure, depends on its context. The Saṃyutta Commentary explains the expression as “doing whatever should be done out of faith, they give the four supports (of life)” (*pasannehi kattabb’ākāraṃ karonti, cattāro paccaye denti*, SA 2:231). The Saṃyutta Tīkā (Subcommentary) similarly explains it as “a task to be done through faith” (*pasannehi kātabba, kiriyam*) such as “one would give the basic supports of robes and so on” (*cīvar’ādayo paccaye dadeyyuṃ*, SAT:Be 2:158).

As such, this expression is, as a rule, used only in reference to the relationship between monastics and the laity. As a rule, from the sutta context, we would be able to tease out the moral purity or impurity of the monastics concerned.

Here, in the Candūpama Sutta, *pasannā, kāra* is used in the impure or unwholesome sense, since the monk desires that the laity “would show faith in me” (*me pasannā, kāraṃ kareyyuṃ*). A monastic who teaches the Dharma, or a semblance of the Dharma, spurred by the desire for gifts or gains, gives an *impure* teaching, creating bad karma for himself, and directly or indirectly encouraging his listeners to follow impure teachings. [4]

The word *pasannā, kāra* has three senses:

- (1) the faith or confidence that a laity shows in a monastic;
- (2) gifts or services given to the monastic as a result of that faith or confidence; or
- (3) gifts or services given as a gesture of appreciation.

These senses are negative or positive, that is, wholesome or unwholesome, depending on the context.³⁰

3.3.1 “Faith-inspiring.” The first sense of *pasannā, kāra* can be literally rendered as “faith-making,” or better, “faith-inspiring.” This is the sense found in **the Candūpama Sutta** [§1.3.2] (negative sense), **the Danta Bhūmi Sutta** (M 125)³¹ (positive sense), and **the Bhūmija Sutta** (M 126)³² (positive sense). This is in fact the most common usage of the phrase *pasannā, kāraṃ kareyyuṃ*, that is, in simply meaning an *emotion*, a feeling of faith in a person.

3.3.2 Faith and acts of faith. The second sense has both the senses of faith as an *emotion* and the *action* resulting from it. This is clearly implied in, for example, **the Nāga Sutta** (S 20.9),³³ where it is said that the wise elder monks give Dharma teachings, arouse faith in their audience, who, in turn, give appro-

²⁸ Khp 3.3 /9.2 = Sn 1.8/145.

²⁹ See eg the case of Assaji: see *Upāya* = SD 30.8 (2.2.6.4).

³⁰ *Pasanna* has 3 senses: (1) to be clear, bright (“clear eyes,” ~*netta*, Sn 550); (2) to be happy, gladdened, reconciled, pleased (J 1:151, 307); (3) confident, trusting, have faith in, pious, virtuous (S 1:34, 5:374; Dh 368; J 2:111); often with *saddhā* (having faith) (V 2:190; PvA 20, 42); in cpd, ~*citta*, faith in the heart (V 1:16; A 6:209; Sn 316, 403, 690; Pv 2.1.6; ~*manasā*, with a mind of faith (Sn 402; VvA 39; PvA 67); cf *pasannena manasā* (S 1:206; Dh 2). See also PED: *abhippasanna* & *vippasanna*. *Pasanna* is the pp of *pasādati*: (1) To become bright, brighten up (PvA 132); (2) to be purified, pleased, reconciled; to be calm and clear; to be peaceful at heart; to be satisfied; to have faith (in): D 2:202; S 1:98, 2:199; A 3:248; Sn 356, 434, 563; see also PED: *pasādeti* & *vippasixidati*. On *pasāda* (n), see SD 34.7 (3.1.2.3).

³¹ M 125.11/3:131,30-31 = SD 46.3.

³² M 126.19/3:144,18-19 = SD 73.14.

³³ S 20.9.7+10/2:269,24+33 = SD 69.12.

priate offerings. These elders “use their gains without being tied to them, uninfatuated by them, not blindly absorbed in them, seeing the danger in them and understanding the escape.”³⁴

The unmindful new monks, on the other hand, imitating the worldly or unwise elders, teach the Dharma and accumulate offerings, wealth and property, but “they use their gains being tied to them, infatuated by them, blindly absorbed in them, not seeing the danger in them and not understanding the escape.”³⁵

The Nāga Sutta Commentary glosses the word *pasannā,kāra* as the four supports (of almsfood, robes, lodging and medical support) in the sense of material benefits (SA 2:231).

3.3.3 Unacceptable acts of faith. The third sense of *passanā,kāra* is a negative one. **The Kasi Bhāra,dvāja Sutta** (Sn 1.4) [1.4.2] records a very interesting situation where, at first, the ploughman Kasi Bhāra,dvāja has no faith in the Buddha. He tells the Buddha that he works for a living, and demands to know what work the Buddha does to earn the alms. After the Buddha gives him a beautiful discourse using agrarian figures, Bhāra,dvāja is impressed, and filled with faith, makes an offering. The Buddha, however, turns it down, explaining that

Whatever is sung over with verses is not proper to be taken by me—
this is not the way, brahmin, of those who truly see.

Buddhas reject what has been sung over with verses:

where there is Dharma, brahmin, this is the livelihood.

(Sn 81 = 480)³⁶

Simply put, the Buddha is saying that he is not for hire. A gift made to him, or any other monastic, is proper, only when it is given out of joyful faith (*pasāda*) or wise faith (*avecca,pasāda*).³⁷ Giving in joy generates, reinforces and increases the joy in the giver, serving as a helpful basis for his meditation practice. If the recipient is a virtuous person, the giver benefits even better karmic fruits, serving as the wholesome basis for his spiritual practice and daily life.

On the other hand, a wise giver would not freely give to someone who is not virtuous. For, although the giver would generate good karma for himself, he would be encouraging the recipient to accumulate bad karma. However, if the giver is wise and skillful, he would make his offerings in such a way that the recipient would reflect wisely on the reality of the situation and, being inspired by the giver’s faith and wisdom, turn over a new leaf.³⁸

4 Dharma teaching, impure and pure

4.0 The Candûpama Sutta, in its second half, describes the proper way of teaching, distinguishing between impure Dharma teaching (*aparissuddhā dhamma,desanā*) [§13] and pure Dharma teaching (*parissuddhā dhamma,desanā*) [§14]. Although this instruction is given to monks, who are the Buddha’s incidental audience, it applies to all who teach the Dharma.

4.1 IMPURE DHARMA TEACHING. One who teaches Dharma with the notion, “Oh, let them listen to my Dharma [listen to the Dharma from me], and having heard it, be faith-inspired, and being inspired, they would show faith in me!” gives an impure teaching [§§13.2-3]. A monastic who teaches the Dharma, or a semblance of the Dharma, spurred by the desire for gifts or gains, gives an *impure* teaching, creating bad karma for himself, and directly or indirectly encouraging his listeners to follow impure teachings.

This approach is seriously wrong because we are treating the Dharma merely as a tool for personal and worldly gains. We are using the Dharma merely to draw credit and profit to ourselves: the Dharma has become merely a product to be marketed. As such, we have no respect for the Dharma at all. We neither understand nor accept the true nature of the Dharma as a mean of personal cultivation and liberation.

³⁴ *Te taṃ lābham agadhitā amucchitā anajjhāpannā ādīnava,dassāvino nissaraṇa,pañña paribbhuñjanti.*

³⁵ *Te taṃ lābham gadhitā mucchitā ajjhāpannā anādīnava,dassāvino anissaraṇa,pañña paribbhuñjanti.*

³⁶ Sn 1.4/77-82. Comy calls it **Pūraḷāsa S**, “the discourse on the sacrificial cake” (SnA 400,7). See **Right livelihood** = SD 37.8 (1.4.3).

³⁷ On **faith**, see **Vassa S** (S 55.38/5:396) = SD 45.10 & **Upanisā S** (SD 12.23) @ SD 6.12 (3).

³⁸ On proper ways of giving, see **Sappurisa Dāna S** (A 5.148) & SD 22.15 (2).

In this sense, we are also hindering the growth of the Dharma, that is, preventing others from benefitting from the Dharma.

4.2 PURE DHARMA TEACHING

4.2.1 Teaching the Dharma as it is. Pure Dharma teaching is presenting the Dharma for the sake of personal development, that is, for the renunciation of unwholesome bodily action and speech, of mental defilements, and of wrong views. Conversely, this entails the three trainings of cultivating moral virtue, of mental concentration and of insight wisdom. Such a practice is said to be in keeping with the Dharma (*dhammānudhamma,paṭipatti*). [§14]

The Candūpama Sutta defines the pure Dharma teaching as follows:

14.1 Bhikshus, a monk who teaches the Dharma to others with such a thought,
‘Well-taught is the true teaching [the Dharma] of the Blessed One,
visible here and now,
immediate,
inviting one to come and see,
accessible,
to be personally known by the wise.’

14.2 ‘Oh, let them listen to *the Dharma* from me, and having heard it, may they *understand* the Dharma, and having understood, may they practise accordingly!’

14.3 Thus he teaches the Dharma to others on account of the Dharma’s true goodness.

14.4 He teaches the Dharma to others out of compassion, out of concern, moved by kind concern. (S 16.3.14.1-3/2:199) = SD 38.2

4.2.2 Qualities of the Dharma. §14.1 gives the six virtues or qualities of the Dharma. Briefly, the Dharma is well-taught (*svākkhata*) because it is complete in its spiritual training of moral virtue (harmonizing the body and speech), mental concentration (freeing the mind) and wisdom (liberation from ignorance and suffering). The Dharma is visible here and now (*sandiṭṭhika*), meaning that we can find true happiness in this life itself by properly practising the Dharma.

That the Dharma is immediate (*akālika*) means that in this life itself, we can taste the spiritual liberation if we choose to. The Dharma is for anyone to come and see (*ehi,passika*): it is open to anyone with an open mind, seeking self-understanding and liberation, no matter what religion we belong to or none. The Dharma is accessible (*opanayika*), meaning that it is to be realized by looking within oneself, and not through any outside agency (God, gods, spirits, luck, etc).

The Dharma is to be personally known by the wise (*paccattam veditabbo viññūhi*) means that we must first (at least temporarily) let go of all religious dependencies, superstitions and views, and just feel the peace within, which is best done through properly guided meditation.³⁹ This is also means that we all have the potential for inner peace and freedom through personal spiritual effort.⁴⁰

4.2.3 Proper way of teaching the Dharma. If we are properly teaching the Dharma, we try to do just that without imposing upon it too much of our personal views [§14.2]. As long as we are unawakened, we are likely to express our views despite our best intentions to present the Dharma as it is, as found in the texts and teachings. Ultimately, however, we should ensure that our listeners are able to access the suttas and teachings themselves, and taste the true Dharma for themselves.

A Dharma teacher’s task is “instruct, inspire, rouse and gladden”⁴¹ others in the Dharma. The Commentaries explain that by instructing, the Buddha dispels the listener’s **delusion**; by inspiring him, **heed-**

³⁹ Once we are certain of the instructions and have a good grasp of the practical process, we can go on to meditate by ourselves. On peractical meditation, see *Bhāvanā* = SD 15.1.

⁴⁰ For details of the 6 qualities of the Dharma, see *Dhammānussati* = SD 15.9.

⁴¹ V 1:18; D 1:126, 149, 2:86, 98, 109, 110, 127, 3:27, 209; M 1:209, 354, 2:139, 3:155; S 2:215, 3:95, 4:183, 5:155; A 3:380, 4:67, 118, 307 (x2), 5:122, 125; U 39, 82, 87.

lessness is dispelled; by rousing him, **indolence** is dispelled; and by gladdening him, brings the practice to a **conclusion**. In other words, when teaching the Dharma we, more or less, keep to these four stages:

- (1) The Dharma is shown (*sandasseti*), that is, the text is explained as clearly as possible so that wrong views are identified and corrected.
- (2) The audience is inspired, fired with enthusiasm (*samādapeti*), by being reminded not to be heedless, not taking personal development for granted.
- (3) They are admonished to rise above indolence, filled by commitment (*samuttejeti*) to practise.
- (4) Throughout the teaching or at least at the end, they should be moved with joy (*sampahamseti*), such as being instructed on how they can be liberated in this life itself.

In short, when we teach Dharma to benefit others, we should do our best to *instruct, inspire, enthruse and incite* the listener in the Dharma, or, more simply, **teach, stir, rouse and move** the audience.⁴² These four qualities, as a set, are, in fact, the sixth or last of the ideal skills of a Dharma speaker.⁴³

4.2.4 The Dharma's true goodness. Next, we are reminded to teach “the Dharma to others on account of the Dharma's true goodness” [§14.3]. The best way to present the Dharma is *just the way it is*, as if we have heard it directly from the Buddha himself. This was the case in the times when the Buddha is still living. The next best way is to master the teachings through the Tipiṭaka, especially its Dharma and Vinaya, that is, what the Buddha himself has taught to the early saints, and by how the early saints themselves live the holy life.

Since this is still possible today through the Pali Canon, the Chinese Āgamas and related texts, we should ensure that we have mastered such teachings, especially the suttas. There are a lot of academic and philosophical studies of Buddhism today, and where these help us understand the Buddha's teachings better, they could be used.

The rule of thumb for effective Dharma teaching and study is that it is for the purpose of understanding the Buddha's teachings on moral virtue and mental cultivation. With a good understanding of the texts and proper instructions from living teachers, we should progress quite well with our own inspiration and meditation.

Our theoretical knowledge acts as a guide to looking straight at the Dharma, whose spirit become clearer as our minds grow calmer. Such texts and truths then serve as the tools for effective dissemination of the Dharma and meditation for others. Above all, understanding the teachings and practising meditation or mindfulness inspire us with the assurance of liberation, at least as streamwinners, in this life itself.⁴⁴ Such is the Dharma's true goodness.

4.2.5 Teaching the Dharma out of compassion. The Buddha teaches the Dharma out of his great and wise compassion. He could have simply spent the whole of his awakened life in meditation and spiritual bliss without teaching anyone. Unlike the brahmins, who jealously guarded their Vedic mantras and learning, teaching only their teaching to the initiated of their own kind, the Buddha openly teaches the Dharma to all alike, from the lowliest to the highest in the land, to humans as well as to divine beings, who would listen or benefit from his teaching and conduct.

As soon as there were 60 arhats, the Buddha sends them out for the benefit of the world, with the words of the great commission:

Go forth, O bhikshus, on a mission for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good and happiness of the gods and humans.

(Mv 11.1/V 1:21 = (Māra) Pāsa S 2, S 4.5/1:105 f; Mvst 3:415 f); see SD 11.2

With this gesture, and the fact that the Buddha's teaching is still with us even after 2500 years, makes Buddhism, as a living religion, the world's first missionary faith.

⁴² DA 1:300; UA 242; SnA 446.

⁴³ (Dhamma Desaka) Udāyi S, A 5.159/3:184 = SD 46.1.

⁴⁴ See **Entering the stream** = SD 3.3.

On a more personal level of actually teaching the Buddha Word, Dharma teachers are always aware of the various challenges that face them. Every concerned Dharma teacher, at some point in life, faces the challenge that the Buddha himself faces soon after his awakening. A number of texts record this crucial moment in Buddhist history, reflecting the Buddha's thoughts:

I have discovered the truth with difficulty:
Enough with declaring it!
For it will never be easily understood [be easily awakened to]
By those lost in lust and hate.

It goes against the current,
Profound, deep, hard to see, subtle—
Those dyed in lust will not see it, nor (will it be seen)
By those wrapped in massive darkness.⁴⁵

Considering thus, monks, my mind inclined to inaction rather than to teaching the Dharma.
(V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 2:37 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:315)

Legend has it that Brahmā himself comes down from his heaven to beseech the Buddha to teach the Dharma. Fearing that the world might perish through not hearing the Dharma, he entreats the Buddha to teach the Dharma, as there are

...beings with little dust in their eyes who are falling away because they do not hear the Dharma. There will be those who will understand the Dharma. (V 1:5-7 = M 1:169 = S 1:138 f)

Besides our Buddha, Sakyamuni, other Buddhas, too, each in their own time, are said to go through the same hesitation to teach, not from lack of compassion, but from the great challenges that such an effort entails. Nevertheless, all Buddhas teach the Dharma and so that countless beings benefit from it. Indeed, what seems to us as "hesitation" is really the Buddha's reflection and preparation on the nature of the society and humans, and how the Dharma can benefit them.

Teaching the Dharma is no easy task, as people often find it difficult to get out of their comfort zones and long-held views, even fear, superstition and ignorance. Understandably, the Buddha constantly admonishes us to be prepared for such difficulties, and to see failure as a learning and honing process. **The Saḷ-āyatana Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 137) is an important sutta in this connection. It gives us valuable insight into the Buddha's feeling (and by extension, those of the arhats, too) in connection with teaching the Dharma.

In the Sutta, the Buddha states that there are three qualities that "a noble one (*ariya*) cultivates, which make him a teacher worthy of instructing the masses."⁴⁶ These qualities are the three foundations of mindfulness (*ti satipaṭṭhāna*), that is, to say, a teacher teaches the Dharma out of compassion,

- (1) his disciples do *not* listen to him, "As such, the Tathagata [thus come] is not pleased, but although not feeling pleased, *he dwells untroubled, mindful and fully aware*;"⁴⁷
- (2) *some* of his disciples listen to him, "As such, the Tathagata is pleased, but although feeling pleased, *he dwells untroubled*,"⁴⁸ *mindful and fully aware*;"
- (3) his disciples *listen* to him, "As such, the Tathagata is pleased, but although feeling pleased, *he dwells untroubled, mindful and fully aware*." (M 137.21-24/3:222) = SD 29.5

⁴⁵ V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 2:37 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:315.

⁴⁶ *Yad-ariyo sevamāno satthā gaṇam-anusāsītum-arahaṭi ti.*

⁴⁷ *Tatra, bhikkhave, tathāgato na ceva anattamano hoti, na ca anattamanataṃ paṭisaṃvedeti, anavassuto ca viharati sato sampajāno.* Here, "untroubled," *anavassuta*, means not overcome by repulsion (*paṭigha*) (MA 5:27).

⁴⁸ Here, "untroubled," *anavassuta*, means "not overcome by lust" (*rāga*) (MA 5:27).

In short, the Buddha himself, as a teacher, *feels* for his audience (and for us), but his mind is nevertheless always at peace, unaffected by success or failure.⁴⁹ Similarly, when we teach the Dharma, we do not measure its result like some business or worldly activity. Our task is to plant the Dharma-seeds and let them grow when the conditions are right. Our task is to make the true Dharma available to anyone with an open mind and ready heart, or a desire to rise above their sufferings. Hence, it is said of the Buddha that “he teaches the Dharma to others out of compassion, out of concern, moved by kind concern.” [§14.4]

5 Mahā Kassapa

5.1 The elder Mahā Kassapa is one of the Buddha’s most eminent disciples, chief among those who conscientiously uphold the observances of asceticism (*dhuta, vādānam*).⁵⁰ In the **Candûpama Sutta**, the Buddha declares that Mahā Kassapa is like the moon (*candûpama*): “holding back the body, holding back the mind, unobtrusive, ever a newcomer amongst families” [§2, 3.2]. He teaches the Dharma without any desire for gain, and rejoices in the gains of others [§7.2]. He always teaches others out of compassion [§§15.1-16].

The Dhammapada Commentary alludes to the parable of the moon, quoting Mahā Kassapa as declaring that his “practice is like conduct of the moon, the conduct of the noble lineage” (*cand’opama-p,paṭi-padañ c’eva ariya,vaṃsa-p,paṭipadañ ca*).⁵¹ The second phrase (on the noble lineage) can be taken as glossing the preceding parable of the moon. The teaching of “the noble lineage” (*ariya,vaṃsa*), found in the **Ariya Vaṃsa Sutta** (A 4.28) refers to a monk’s contentment with any kind of robe, or almsfood, or lodging, and rejoices in letting go unwholesome states and cultivating wholesome states, and is, as such, not conceited. In doing so, the monastic is true to the noble lineage.⁵²

5.2 The Buddha regards Mahā Kassapa as being his equal in exhorting the monastics to lead those who are zealous in their practice,⁵³ and constantly holds him up as an example of one with great contentment.⁵⁴ Kassapa’s lack of any attachment, the Buddha tells the monks, is due to his past aspiration for that attainment, so that “he has no attachment to requisites or households or monasteries or cells; but is like a royal swan that goes down into a lake and swims there, yet the water does not adhere to his body”⁵⁵ (DhA 7.2/2:168-170).

The Sutta closes with the Buddha’s saying, “Bhikshus, through Kassapa, I will admonish you, or through someone like Kassapa.⁵⁶ Thus admonished, you should practise accordingly!” [§16]. By this, the Buddha holds up Mahā Kassapa as an ideal teacher, and those like him. But the significance is not so much in the person, the teacher, as it is in the teaching. Hence, the significance of this Sutta now centres around the Dharma, while of course including the notion of the ideal Dharma teacher.⁵⁷

⁴⁹ On how the Buddha (and arhats) feel, see **Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga S** (M 137.21-24/3:221 f) = SD 29.5; see also **How the saints feel** = SD 55.6.

⁵⁰ *Dhuta, vāda* lit “doctrine of shaking off,” but here *vāda* has the sense of *vata*, “duty, routine,” ie, practice: see ege DhA 6:165. On *dhuta, vāda*: S 2:156; A 1:23 (qu at MA 2:247; SA 2:140; AA 1:163; ThaA 3:121; ApA 265; BA 50); Miln 380; UA 201; DhA 2:30; ThaA 1:69, 3:135; Vism 80. Def at AA 1:161-163.

⁵¹ DhA 1:170; see also DA 3:1009; AA 3:45.

⁵² A 4.28/2:27-29 = SD 71.1. This Sutta is an example of a teaching of Buddha that is “self-disposed” (*att’ajjhā-saya*), meaning that it is given out of the Buddha’s own inclination: for a list of such suttas, see SD 28.12 (3.1.1). The Sutta’s teaching is also given at D 33.1.11(9)/3:224.

⁵³ (**Kassapa**) **Ovāda S 2** (S 16.7/2:205) = SD 88.4.

⁵⁴ **Santuṭṭha S** (S 16.1/2:194 f) = SD 69.13.

⁵⁵ *Mama puttassa kassapassa paccayesu vā kulesu vā vihāresu vā pariveṇesu vā laggo nāma natthi, pallale otarivā tattha carivā gacchanto rājahamso viya katthaci alaggoyeva mama puttōti* (DhA 2:170).

⁵⁶ Cf **Ovāda S 3** (S 16.8) where the Buddha echoes a similar sentiment: either he himself should teach, or Mahā Kassapa should (S 16.8/2:208-210) = SD 1.10. I have tr this passage as it is, understanding that the Buddha is holding up Mahā Kassapa as an ideal teacher, and those like him. Hence, this Sutta’s significance now centres around the *Dharma*, while including the notion of the ideal Dharma teacher. The general tone of **Kassapa Samyutta** (S 16.1-13), esp (**Kassapa**) **Ovāda Ss 1-3** (S 16.6-8/2:203-210) confirms this.

⁵⁷ For more on Mahā Kassapa, see **Beggars can be chooser** = SD 71.2.

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The Discourse on the Moon Parable

S 16.3/2:197-199

1 (The Blessed One was) residing near Sāvattthī.

Parable of the moon

2 “Bhikshus, approach families like the moon, [197] holding back⁵⁸ the body, holding back the mind, unobtrusive, ever a newcomer amongst families.⁵⁹

3.1 Bhikshus, just as a person would, *holding back his body, holding back his mind*, look down into a run-down well, or over a ragged cliff, or into a river difficult to access,⁶⁰

even so, bhikshus, approach families like the moon: *holding back the body, holding back the mind, unobtrusive, ever a newcomer amongst families.*⁶¹

3.2 Kassapa, bhikshus, approaches families *like the moon,*⁶² *holding back the body, holding back the mind, unobtrusive, ever a newcomer amongst families.*

How monastics should approach families

4 What do you think, bhikshus, what kind of monk is worthy of approaching families?”

5 “Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, has the Blessed One as refuge. It would be good indeed if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the monks would remember it.”⁶³

6 Then, the Blessed One waved his hand in the air,⁶⁴ saying:

“Bhikshus, just as this hand is not caught up in space, grasps it not, is not bound by it,⁶⁵

even so, bhikshus, when a monk approaches families, his mind is not caught up in the family, grasps it not, is not bound to it. But he thinks:

‘May those desiring gains, obtain them! May those desiring merit, make merit!’⁶⁶

⁵⁸ “Holding back,” *apakassa*, abs of *apakassati*, “he draws away, holds back, puts away, removes,” here meaning “restraint” in body and mind: see Intro (3.1).

⁵⁹ *Candūpamā, bhikkhave, kulāni upasaṅkamatha—apakass’eva kāyaṃ, apakassa cittaṃ, nicca,navakā kulesu appagabbhā. Cf Metta S (Khṃ 3.3 = Sn 1.8): “unobtrusive, not being greedy after families” (appagabbho kulesu anugiddho, Khṃ 3.3 /9.2 = Sn 1.8/145). On apakassa, see Intro (3.1). On appagabbha, see Intro (3.2). On the moon parable, see Intro (2).*

⁶⁰ *Seyyathā’pi, bhikkhave, puriso jar’udapānaṃ vā olokeyya pabbata,visamaṃ vā nadī,viduggaṃ vā.*

⁶¹ Conversely, on a family that is worth being approached by such a monk, see (Upagantabba) Kula S (A 9.17/-4:387 f) = SD 37.11. Cf Tha 124, 494, 495, 1052. See Intro (1.4.3).

⁶² Alluded to at DhA 2:170: see Intro (5).

⁶³ *Bhagavaṃ mūlakā no bhante dhammā Bhagavaṃ nettikā Bhagavaṃ paṭisaraṇā. Sādhu vata bhante Bhagavantaṃ yeva paṭbhātu etassa bhāsitaṃ attho. Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressaṅṅi ti, at Mahā Dhamma,samādāna S (M 46.2/1:309 f), Vīmaṃsaka S (M 47.3/1:317), Naḷaka,pāna S (M 68.8/1:465), Mahā Suññata S (M 122.19/-3:115) = SD 11.4; Bālena Paṇḍita S (S 2:24) = SD 21.1, Parivīmaṃsanā S (S 12.51/2:81) = SD 11.5, Candūpama S (S 16.3/2:199), Sammā,sambuddha S (S 22.58/3:66), Sall’atthana S (S 36.6/4:208) = SD 5.5, Ānanda S 2 (S 36.16/4:221); Añña Titthiya S (A 3.68/1:199), Loka Dhamma S 2 (A 8.6/4:158), (Aṭṭhaka) Mūlaka S (A 8.-83/4:338), Sambodha S (A 9.1/4:351), (Dasaka) Mūlaka S (A 10.58/5:106), Samādhi S 2 (A 11.20/5:355).*

⁶⁴ *Ākāse pāṇiṃ cālesi.* See Intro (1.4).

⁶⁵ *Seyyathā’pi, bhikkhave, ayaṃ ākāse pāṇi na sajjati na gayhati na bajjhati.* It recurs in §11.

7.1 Just as he approves of his own gains, happy with them, he approves of the gains of others, happy with them.

Such a monk, bhikshus, is worthy of approaching families.

7.2 Bhikshus, when Kassapa approaches families, *his mind is not caught up in the family, grasps it not, is not bound to it*. But he thinks:

‘May those desiring gains, obtain them! May those desiring merit, make merit!’

8 Just as he approves of his own gains, happy with them, he approves of the gains of others, happy with them.

9 Such a monk, bhikshus, is worthy of approaching families.⁶⁷ [199]

Impure teaching

10 What do you think, bhikshus, how is a monk’s Dharma teaching impure and how is his Dharma teaching pure?⁶⁸

11 “*Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, has the Blessed One as refuge. It would be good indeed if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the monks would remember it.*”⁶⁹

12.1 “Then, listen well, bhikshus, pay careful attention, I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the bhikshus replied to the Blessed One.

12.2 The Blessed One said this:

13.1 “Bhikshus, a monk who teaches the Dharma to others with such a thought,

13.2 ‘Oh, let them listen to *my* Dharma [listen to the Dharma *from* me],

and having heard it, be faith-inspired, and being inspired, they would show faith in *me!*’⁷⁰

13.3 The Dharma teaching of such a monk, bhikshus, is impure.

Pure teaching

14.1 Bhikshus, a monk who teaches the Dharma to others with such a thought,

‘Well-taught is the true teaching [the Dharma] of the Blessed One,

visible here and now,

immediate,

inviting one to come and see,

accessible,

to be personally known by the wise.’⁷¹

14.2 ‘Oh, let them listen to *the Dharma* from me,⁷²

aho vata me dhammam suṇeyyūṃ

⁶⁶ *Labhantu lābha,kāmā, puñña,kāmā karontu puññānīti*. Both F L Woodward (S:W 2:133) and Nyanaponika & Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, Boston, 1997:122 f) treat this as a *positive* statement, which makes sense if we read the foll sentence. S:B 664, however, takes it as being *negative*, saying that “this is a self-serving thought” (S:B 779 n274): this is highly improbable. See Intro (1.4.1).

⁶⁷ This line only in Ce.

⁶⁸ *Tam kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, katham,rūpassa bhikkhuno aparissuddhā dhamma,desanā hoti, katham,rūpassa bhikkhuno parisuddhā dhamma,desanā hotīti?*

⁶⁹ This refrain is a “defilement catcher” for those who only look at the surface of words, thinking that the Sutta or the monks are “mechanically” repeating itself. If we look deeper into what the Sutta is pointing to, what is recorded here is the audience’s eagerness to hear out the Buddha rather than expressing any opinion. Anyway, this is also a marker for a rhetorical question, which is followed by an important teaching. It first occurs in §5.

⁷⁰ *Aho vata me dhammam suṇeyyūṃ, sutvā ca pana dhammam pasādeyyuṃ, pasannā ca me pasannā,kāram kareyyun’ti*. Here “show faith (in me),” *pasannā,kāra*, in used in a negative sense: see Intro (3.3). Ee readings often split the word into *passanā kāram*, which is wr.

⁷¹ For explanations of these 6 virtues of the Dharma, see *Dhammānussati* = SD 15.9.

⁷² This line is the same as §13.2a, but where *me* taken as genitive is tr as “my,” while here *me* taken as dative. The dative case also applies here, but fits §13.2a better. The genitive, however, does not fit here.

and having heard it, may they *understand* the Dharma,
and having understood, may they practise accordingly!’

sutvā ca pana dhammaṃ ājāneyyūṃ
ājānitvā ca pana tathattāya paṭipajjeyyūṃ

14.3 Thus he teaches the Dharma to others on account of the Dharma’s true goodness.⁷³ He teaches the Dharma to others out of compassion, out of concern, moved by kind concern.⁷⁴

14.4 The Dharma teaching of such a monk, bhikkhus, is pure.

Kassapa the exemplary teacher

15.1 Kassapa, bhikkhus, teaches the Dharma to others with such a thought,
‘Well-taught is the true teaching [the Dharma] of the Blessed One,
visible here and now,
immediate,
inviting one to come and see,
accessible,
to be personally known by the wise.’

15.2 ‘Oh, [200] let them listen to the Dharma from me, and having heard it, may they understand the Dharma, and having understood, may they practise accordingly!’

15.3 Thus he teaches the Dharma to others on account of the Dharma’s true goodness. He teaches the Dharma to others out of compassion, out of concern, moved by a kind concern.

16 Bhikkhus, through Kassapa, I will admonish you, or through someone like Kassapa.⁷⁵ Thus admonished, you should practise accordingly!⁷⁶

— evaṃ —

120204; 120211; 120402 LEG; 120803; 120822a

⁷³ *Iti dhamma, sudhammataṃ paṭicca paresaṃ dhammaṃ deseti.*

⁷⁴ *Kāruṇṇaṃ paṭicca anuddayaṃ paṭicca anukampaṃ upādāya paresaṃ dhammaṃ deseti.* Comy glosses **anudda-****yā** (Be Ce) or *anudayā* (Ee Se) as “a state of protecting” (*rakkhaṇa, bhāva*), **anukampā** with “tender-heartedness” (*mudu, cittatā*), and says that both are synonymous with **kāruṇṇa** (SA 2:169). The contracted form *anuddā* (n) is found at Dhs 1056, along with other abstract nn, *anuddāyanā* and *anuddāyitattaṃ* (care, forbearance, consideration); DhsA 362 gives it as a vb: *anudayatīti anuddā*. CPD gives –dd- as *anuddayā, anuddā*, etc; DP gives both: *anudayanā, anuddayanā & anudayā, anuddayā*.

⁷⁵ I have tr this passage as it is, understanding that the Buddha is holding up Mahā Kassapa as an ideal teacher, and those like him. Yet, the significance of this Sutta now centers on the Dharma, while including the notion of the ideal Dharma teacher.

⁷⁶ *Kassapena vā hi vo, bhikkhave, ovaḍissāmi yo vā paṇ’assa kassapa, sadiso, ovaḍitehi ca pana vo tathattāya paṭipajjitabban’ti.*