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(Dhamma,desaka) Udāyī Sutta

The Udāyī Discourse (on the Dharma Teacher) | A 5.159

Theme: How to teach the Dharma

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2014

1 Sutta summary

This very short Sutta opens with Ānanda noticing the monk Udāyī giving a Dharma talk before a large congregation, and mentions this to the Buddha [§1.1-1.3]. In response, the Buddha declares that it is not easy to teach the Dharma, and then lists the “5 principles by which the Dharma should be taught to others” [§1.4].

We are not told exactly which Udāyī this is, and what each of the 5 principles exactly mean. However, we can deduce his identity and the drift of Dharma in this Sutta from related teachings in other suttas and the Commentaries, as we shall see below.

2 Which Udāyī?

2.1 We have at least two clues or hints that the teaching monk here is **Lāl’udāyī**, Udāyī the foolish.¹ The first hint is that Udāyī is not mentioned by name by the Buddha. Usually, if a monk is doing something well, the Buddha would point that monk out and praise him accordingly.² Here the Buddha is totally silent on Udāyī, but merely gives a short teaching on the 5 principles of Dharma teaching.

Secondly, from the tone of the 5 principles of Dharma teaching, that “it is not easy to teach others the Dharma” [§1.4], the Buddha seems to show some disapproval of what is going on. This is also clear from the 5 principles themselves [3]. The fourth principle, for example, is that of not teaching the Dharma for the sake of any material gain.

The Sutta also simply says “when teaching Dharma to others” (*paresaṃ...dhammaṃ desentena*), which suggests that this is not a specific reference to monastics, but to any one or any group in general. When the Dharma is taught to monastics, they are inspired to practise with greater diligence. When the laity is taught Dharma, their faith increases, so that they are not only inspired to practise Dharma, but also become generous supporters of the sangha, or the Dharma teacher who teaches or inspires them.

It is likely that Udāyī is doing just that—teaching the laity so as to inspire the faithful to be devoted to him and to support him with material offerings. Hence, all this suggests he is a monk who is neither deeply learned nor highly attained in the Dharma, and teaches it for all the wrong reasons. Hence, the Buddha lists the proper reasons or conditions for the proper teaching of the Dharma.

2.2 On at least two occasions, the Buddha censures him for his display of ignorance: once in **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136)³ and the other in a discussion on the 5 “stations of recollection” (*anussati-t,thānā*) in **Lāl’udāyī Sutta**.⁴ He is also guilty of breaking a number of Vinaya rules, especially Saṅghādisesa 1 (V 3:110-112), that of masturbation, and of encouraging Seyyasaka to do the same. However, it is possible that this Lāl’udāyī of the Vinaya is another namesake. It should be noted that “Lāl’udāyī” (“Lālā,”⁵ foolish Udāyī) is more of a nickname.

2.3 We learn much about Lāl’udāyī’s character from the Commentaries. The Majjhima Commentary gives us a graphic description of the character of **Lāl’udāyī**, Udāyī the foolish.⁶ When he wants to speak, he stretches out his neck, moves his jaws and twitches his face, and is unable to sit still, plainly before the Buddha who can see him without the need of the divine eye, mental reasoning, nor omniscience (MA

¹ The name Udāyī is a common one: see SD 24.8 (1). On the likelihood of two monks named Lāl’udāyī, see SD 24.8 (1.1.6).

² See eg the case of the monk Subhūti: (**Udāna**) **Subhūti S** (U 6.7), SD 45.1.

³ M 136,6 @ SD 4.16.

⁴ A 3:322 f; cf A 1:228.

⁵ *Lālā*, from √LAL, “to sport,” whence *laḷati* (v), “talking senselessly, silly, foolish, puerile” (J 6:360, 417).

⁶ See **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136,6/3:208), SD 4.16.

5:16 f). This suggests that he is neither a mindful nor well restrained monk, but one with nervous habits rooted in the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion).

A Dhammapada Commentary story, **the Lāl'udayi,thera Vatthu** (DhA 11.7), relates how he was “an elder who possessed the knack for saying the wrong thing,” for example, at an auspicious occasion, he would recite stanzas suitable for a funeral, and at a funeral, he would do just the opposite!⁷

Udāyī's main problem seems to have been boastfulness which often gets him into trouble (like being unable to teach Dharma when invited to do so).⁸ According to **the (Sāriputta) Nirodha Sutta** (A 5.166), his shallow knowledge neither stops him from contradicting Sāriputta thrice on one occasion, nor from intruding into profound discussions of the Buddha himself.⁹

3 The dynamics of teaching Dharma

3.1 Joy of teaching. A wise and compassionate teacher, counsellor or discussant will “instruct, inspire, rouse and gladden” his audience or client with the Dharma.¹⁰ This action sequence reflects the basic structure of **the Buddha's teaching method**:

- (1) the Dharma is shown;
- (2) the listeners are filled with enthusiasm;
- (3) they are fired up with commitment; and
- (4) filled with joy.

The Commentaries¹¹ explain that by **instructing**, the Buddha dispels the listener's delusion; by **inspiring** him, heedlessness is dispelled; by **rousing** him, indolence is dispelled; and by **gladdening**, brings the practice to a conclusion. In short, when we teach the Dharma to benefit others, we should do our best to bring instruction, inspiration, motivation and joy to the listener.¹²

3.2 Related suttas

3.2.1 Among the suttas connected with Dharma speakers and teaching the Dharma are the following:

• Teaching only Dharma	Araṇa Vibhaṅga Sutta	M 139	SD 7.8
• One true purpose of teaching Dharma	(Nibbidā) Dhamma,kathika Sutta	S 12.16	SD 46.18
• 4 kinds of Dharma speakers	(Catukka) Dhamma,kathika Sutta	A 4.139	
		= Pug 4.7	SD 46.10
• 5 principles of teaching Dharma	(Dhamma,desaka) Udāyī Sutta	A 5.159	SD 46.1
• 6 qualities of a Dharma practitioner	(Aṭṭhaka) Alam Sutta	A 8.62	SD 46.5

3.2.2 Other related teachings, especially those from later works and the Commentaries, include:

2 kinds of teachings: based on persons and on ideas	SD 44.1 (3.5.2.2)
2 kinds of teachings: conventional and ultimate	SD 44.1 (3.5.2.4)
4 analytic skills: in meaning, teaching, language, and wit	SD 28.4 (4)
4 measures: by looks, voice, strictness, and Dharma	SD 3.14 (7)
7 qualities of a spiritual friend (especially a meditation teacher)	SD 34.1 (3.1.3)

4 The 5 principles of teaching Dharma to others

4.0 The highlight of **the (Dhamma,desaka) Udāyī Sutta** (A 5.159), as the title suggests, are the principles that a Dharma-teacher (*dhamma,desaka*) should keep to. These are the “5 principles for teaching the Dharma to others,” summarized as follows, that is, we should give a Dharma talk (*kathā*):

⁷ DhA 11.7/3:123-126.

⁸ **Soma,datta J** (J 211/2:164-167), SD 50.2; **Pād'añjali J** (J 247/2:263 f); **Udāyī-t,thera Vatthu** (DhA 5.5/2:30 f), SD 24.6a; **Lāl'udayi-t,thera Vatthu** (DhA 11.7/3:125).

⁹ A 5.166/3:192-196 @ SD 47.15.

¹⁰ *Dhammiyā kathāya sandassetvā samādhapetvā samuṭṭejetvā sampahamsetvā*. These 4 qualities are, in fact, the sixth or last of the ideal skills of a Dharma speaker. See SD 11.4 (4).

¹¹ Eg D 1:126; DA 1:293; UA 242, 361, 384; cf VA 1:65; MA 2:35.

¹² On gladdening the audience, see **Skillful Means**, SD 30.8 (3.4.2.1).

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| (1) as a progressive teaching; ¹³ | <i>ānupubbī,katha</i> |
| (2) in a manner that suits the audience; ¹⁴ | <i>pariyāya,dassāvī</i> |
| (3) out of compassion; ¹⁵ | <i>anuddayataṃ paṭicca</i> |
| (4) not for the sake of material gain; ¹⁶ | <i>na āmis'antaro</i> |
| (5) without hurting oneself or others. | <i>attānaṃ ca paraṃ ca anupahacca</i> [§1.4] |

4.1 “I WILL TALK ON THE PROGRESSIVE TEACHING” (*ānupubbī,katham kathessāmīti*)

4.1.1 The progressive teaching or gradual training (*ānupubbī,kathā*) is the most common teaching model the Buddha uses to lay the foundation of our spiritual transformation. Often enough, under the right conditions, such a teaching by the Buddha even leads the listener to attain the Dharma-eye (that is, attaining at least streamwinning), as in the case of the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, as recorded in **the Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (D 3), thus:

While the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti was seated at one side, the Blessed One gave him a **progressive talk**—that is to say, he spoke on giving (*dāna*), on moral virtue (*sīla*) and on the heavens (*sagga*). He explained the danger, the vanity and the disadvantages of sensual pleasures (*kām'ādīnava*), and the advantages of renunciation (*nekkhamm'ānisamsa*).¹⁷

When the Blessed One perceived that the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti's mind was prepared, pliant, free from obstacles, elevated and lucid, then he explained to him the teaching peculiar to the Buddhas,¹⁸ that is to say, suffering, its arising, its cessation, and the path.

And just as a clean cloth, with all its stains removed, would take dye, even so did the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti, even as he was seated there, **the dust-free stainless Dharma-eye** [vision of truth]¹⁹ arose, thus: “All that is of the nature of arising is of the nature of ending.”

(D 3,2.21/1:110 f), SD 21.3

4.1.2 The 3 trainings

4.1.2.1 This gradual path comprises **the 3 trainings** in moral virtue, mental stillness and insight wisdom. The instruction begins with teachings on the cultivating of moral virtue, that is, the disciplining of the body and speech. The body here refers to disciplining our 4 postures (standing, walking, sitting and reclining), so as to keep ourselves safe, healthy and mindful.²⁰

4.1.2.2 Even more important is the moral restraint of the 5 senses (which constitute the body and speech). While meditating, we need to “let go” of our sense-experiences, that is, to do nothing about them, as it were, just letting them come, letting them go, so that the body settles down in a most relaxed

¹³ *Ānupubbī,katham*¹³ *kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo.*

¹⁴ *Pariyāyadassāvī katham kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbā.*

¹⁵ *Anuddayataṃ paṭicca katham kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo.*

¹⁶ *Na āmis'antaro katham kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo.*

¹⁷ This passage is stock: V 1:15; D 1:148; A 3:184 etc.

¹⁸ *Buddhānaṃ sāmukkamsikā dhamma,desanā.* This is an occasion when the Buddha teaches the 4 noble truths directly to the laity; for occurrences, see V 1:16 (the youth Yasa), 16 (Yasa's father, the seth houselord), 18 (to Yasa's mother and to his former wife), 19 (Yasa's five friends), 20 (Yasa's fifty friends), 23 (to the group of 30 lucky youths, *bhadda,vagga*), 37 (to 12 “myriad” (*nahuta*) of brahmin houselords of Magadha, headed by Bimbisāra), 181 (Bimbisāra's 80,000 village headmen), 226 (Belatṭha Kaccāna, between Rajagaha and Andhaka,vinda); D 3.2.21/1:110 (to Pokkhara,sāti), 5.29/1:148 (to Kūṭa,danta), 14.3.11/2:41 (to prince Khaṇḍa and Tissa the chaplain's son), 14.3.15/2:43 (a crowd of 84,000), 14.3.19/2:44 (another similar crowd); M 56.18/1:379 f (to Upāli), 91.36/-2:145 (to Brahmāyu); A 8.12.9/4:186 (to general Sīha), 8.21.5-6/4:209 (to the houselord Ugga of Vesālī), 8.22.5-6/4:213 (to the houselord of Hatthi,gāma), U 5.3/49 (to the leper Suppa,buddha).

¹⁹ *Evam eva kūṭadantassa brāhmaṇassa tasmim' yeva āsane virajam' vīta,malam' dhamma,cakkhuṃ udapādi.* Comy says that the “Dharma-eye” (*dhamma,cakkhu*) is the path of stream-winning: in **Brahmāyu S** (M 91.36/ 2:145), it refers to the 3 paths (*tiṇṇaṃ maggānaṃ*), ie culminating in non-return; in **Cūḷa Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 147.9/ 3:280), the destruction of influxes (*āsava-k,khaya*). The following sentence: “All that is subject to arising is subject to ending,” shows the mode in which the path arises. The path takes ending (nirvana) as its object, but its function is to penetrate all conditioned states as being subject to arising and ending. (MA 3:92)

²⁰ See *Sīla samūdhi paññā*, SD 21.6 esp (1).

way. When not sitting in meditation and in our daily lives, it is beneficial to be mindful of all our sense-experiences, regarding them especially as being “mind-made” and, as such, impermanent.²¹

4.1.2.3 During **meditation**, *the best speech is no speech*, that is, mindful silence. When the body is at peace, then we can more easily and directly work on the mind, letting go of thinking until our mind is free of all the mental hindrances.²² When all the hindrances have been overcome, at least temporarily, there is **mental concentration**, which is the basis for dhyana.²³

4.1.2.4 If we are able to attain dhyana, we should stay with it as long as possible, and practising to attain it as often as possible so that we are fully familiar with it.²⁴ Once we are familiar with dhyana, which is the “calm” (*samatha*) aspect of meditation, then we are ready for the “insight” (*vipassanā*) aspect.²⁵ However, even if we are unable to attain dhyana, we can still learn to simply enjoy the stillness of meditation in a natural manner, helped by the cultivation of lovingkindness²⁶ and the perception of impermanence.²⁷

4.1.2.5 When our body is calm and our mind joyfully stilled, we are ready to enter **the “wisdom training”** phase. The most basic step here is to spend time studying the suttas to understand our meditation better, and also to be familiar with the language, concepts, stories and teaching methods related to meditation experience. In practical terms, this training entails that we regularly reflect on our meditation experiences, especially the blissful states as being mind-made, and hence impermanent. What is impermanent is unsatisfactory and suffering. What is impermanent and unsatisfactory is without any essence; it is non-self.²⁸

4.1.2.6 As we progress in our wisdom training, we should deepen our experience and understanding of **the 4 noble truths**.²⁹ Here, we begin to understand that the 4 noble truths—indeed, the Buddha Dharma itself—is not merely something to know and understand. They are meant to transform our lives so that we better ourselves on the path leading to self-awakening.³⁰

4.1.3 Teaching the gradual path

4.1.3.1 **The gradual path** is at the root of early Buddhism, which, in an important way, distinguishes it from later Buddhisms, which tend to speak of “sudden enlightenment,” seeing religious experiences in more mystical, philosophical or parochial terms, and so on. When teaching the Dharma, it is vital to occasionally stress the Buddha’s teaching as the gradual path, as declared in such teachings as **the Pahārāda Sutta** (A 8.19), where it is stated,

³¹Pahārāda, just as the great ocean slopes gradually, slides gradually, inclines gradually, not abruptly like a precipice.

so, too, Pahārāda, in this Dharma-Vinaya, *the training is gradual, the task is gradual, the way is gradual*—there is no sudden penetration of final knowledge at all.³² (A 8.19,11), SD 45.18

²¹ See **Aṭṭhaka, nāgara S** (M 52,4.3 etc), SD 41.2.

²² There are 5 **mental hindrances** (*pañca, nīvaraṇa*), viz: (1) sensual desire, (2) ill will, (3) restlessness and remorse, (4) sloth and torpor, (5) doubt: see **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

²³ Dhyana is when the mind is free from the mental hindrances and is fully focused on itself, imbued with profound peace and bliss: see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4.

²⁴ On how this is done, see SD 15.1 (8.6).

²⁵ On emerging from dhyana for contemplating on the nature of mental states, see 33.1b (6.2).

²⁶ On **the cultivating of lovingkindness**, see **Karaṇīya Metta S** (Khp 9 = Sn 1,8), SD 38.3.

²⁷ On **the perception of impermanence**, see **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 1.67.

²⁸ On **the 3 characteristics**, see **Atam, mayatā**, SD 19.13 (1).

²⁹ On **the 4 noble truths**, see SD 1.1 (4-6).

³⁰ On **the gradual teaching**, further see SD **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

³¹ Quoted at Kvu 219. See Intro (2.1.3.4).

³² *Anupubba, sikkhā anupubba, kiriyā anupubba, paṭipadā na āyatakeneva aññā, paṭivedho*. Comy: There is no penetrating into arhathood all at once (*ādito va*) like a frog’s hopping, without first duly (*paṭipāṭiyā*) fulfilling moral virtue, mental concentration and wisdom (AA 4:111). See **Kiṭṭa, giri S** (M 70,22/1:479), SD 11.1.

4.1.3.2 The Commentaries, too, are clear that there is no penetrating into **arhathood** all at once (*ādito va*) like a frog's hopping, without first duly (*paṭipāṭiyā*) fulfilling moral virtue, mental concentration and wisdom (AA 4:111).³³ In other words, spiritual awakening rises from the foundations of moral virtue, mental stillness and insight wisdom.

This is like planting a fruit tree. First, the soil, climate and other conditions must be right. Then, the ground is cleared and properly prepared: this is like the moral training. When the soil is ready, the seeds are sowed, watered and protected from pests, inclement weather and so on, so that the seedling sprouts: this is like mental cultivation. In due time, the plant grows into a healthy tree, flowers and fruits: this is like wisdom training.³⁴

4.2 “I WILL TEACH SEEING [UNDERSTANDING] THE CONTEXT” (*pariyāya, dassāvī katham kathessā-mīti*)

4.2.1 *Pariyāya, dassāvī*. This is the key expression in this sentence. The Sutta commentary explains this expression as meaning “showing the various reasons for the different meanings (of the texts).”³⁵ This is not actually wrong, but it reflects only one sense or nuance of the semantically rich word *pariyāya*.³⁶ A basic sense of *pariyāya* is “a way, manner, or mode of proceeding.”³⁷ It also has the meaning of “exhortation, exposition, teaching” as in **Mūla,pariyāya Sutta** (M 1), “the discourse on the root teaching”³⁸ and **the Āditta,pariyāya Sutta** (M 26), “the discourse on the exposition on burning.”³⁹ Or, it can mean “figure, imagery,” as in **the Saṃsappanīya Pariyāya Sutta** (A 10.205), “the discourse on the figure of crawling.”⁴⁰ or, as an adverbial phrase, meaning, “relatively speaking,” as in **the Bahu,vedaniya Sutta** (M 59).⁴¹ [4.2.3]

4.2.2 *Dassāvī*. The adjective-noun *dassāvī* means “who has seen, who goes to see, attends; seeing, full of insight, perceiving” comes from the root √DRŚ, “to see.” The Sutta commentary however glosses it as *dassento*, “showing” (AA 3:293), a sense found only in the Commentaries.

In the sutta context, *dassāvī* has at least two important senses: (1) (adj) “seeing, aware of, realizing, understanding” as in *anicca, dassāvī*, “seeing impermanence,”⁴² and *ādīnava, dassāvī*, “seeing danger or disadvantage (of)”⁴³; (2) (n) “one who sees, takes notice (of), regards” as in the stock, *ariyānam dassāvī*, “who sees or has regard for the noble ones.”⁴⁴

4.2.3 *Pariyāya* as “context”

4.2.3.1 In our Sutta, *dassāvī* has the first sense of “seeing,” and *pariyāya* is best translated as “context.” So we have the translation, “seeing the context” of what we are teaching, and also clarifying the sutta context, and so on. This important sense is also found in the sentence, “the Dharma has been taught by me according to the context” (*pariyāya, desito... mayā dhammo*) **the Bahu,vedanīya Sutta** (M 59) [4.2.1] and **the Pañcak’āṅga Sutta** (S 36.19).⁴⁵

4.2.3.2 In fact, we see a good example of this kind of teaching—teaching according to the context, or speaking relatively to the audience—in these Suttas (M 59 and S 36.19), where the Buddha declares that we can speak of feelings as being of 2 kinds, or 3 kinds, or 6 kinds, or 18 kinds, or 36 kinds, or 108 kinds, depending on the context. In other words, there is no need for dispute or dissent over how we “classify” the Dharma.

³³ See **Kiṭṭhā, giri S** (M 70,22/1:479), SD 11.1.

³⁴ Further see SD 30.8 (3.4.2): Skillful means of speech.

³⁵ *Tassa tassa atthassa tam tam kāraṇam dassento* (AA 3:293).

³⁶ For a more detailed study, see ***Pariyāya nippariyāya***, SD 68.2.

³⁷ See eg Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, 1992: 135.

³⁸ M 1 @ SD 11.8.

³⁹ S 56.11 @ SD 1.3.

⁴⁰ A 10.205 @ SD 39.7.

⁴¹ M 59,5.1/1:397 + SD 30.4 (3).

⁴² S 3:1.

⁴³ M 1:173; S 2:194, 4:332; A 5:181 f.

⁴⁴ M 1:8; S 3:4.

⁴⁵ S 36.19,9.2/4:224 + SD 30.4 (3).

4.2.3.3 Another famous example is that of the Buddha adapting himself to the “8 assemblies,” that is, the large assembly of the kshatriyas, the brahmins, the householder, the recluses, the 4 great kings, the 32 gods, Māra’s assembly and the host of brahmas, recorded in **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta**, where the Buddha is reported to have declared thus:

Ānanda, I recall having approached ⟨such an assembly⟩ of many hundreds, assembled with them before, and conversed with them before, and engaged in discussion with them before.

Whatever their colour was then,⁴⁶ so was my colour, too.

Whatever was their voice then, so was my voice, too.

I instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk.

But even as I was speaking, they knew me not, wondering,

“Who could this be who speaks? A deva or a human?”

And having instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk, I disappeared.

And when I have disappeared, they wondered, “Who is this who has disappeared? A deva or a human?”
(D 16,3.21-23), SD 9

This may be said to be an important notion contributing to the concept of **Buddhist missiology**, that is, the Buddha’s skillful means of blending with the crowd and effectively communicating with his listeners at their own level.⁴⁷

4.2.3.4 This ability of a Dharma teacher to adapt his talk to the audience also includes an understanding and application of the 4 ways of answering questions, that is,

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| (1) A question which requires a direct answer | <i>pañha ekamsa vyākaraṇīya</i> |
| (2) A question that requires an explanation (or analysis) | <i>pañha vibhajja vyākaraṇīya</i> |
| (3) A question that requires a counter-question | <i>pañha paṭipucchā vyākaraṇīya</i> |
| (4) A question that requires to be rejected (as wrongly put) | <i>pañha ṭhapanīya</i> |
- (D 33,1.11(28)/3:229; A 4.42/2:46), SD 7.12 (4.3)

4.3 “I WILL TEACH THE DHARMA OUT OF COMPASSION” (*anuddayatam paṭicca, katham kathessā-mīti*).

4.3.1 Paṭicca. Here, *paṭicca* is the gerund of *pacceṭi* (*paṭi*, an indeclinable meaning “going back to” + √I, “to go”; cf BHS *pratītya*), meaning “grounded on, on account of, concerning, because (with accusative), depending or dependent (on).”⁴⁸ The best known usage of this word is in the phrase *paṭicca, samuppāda* (n) “dependent arising”⁴⁹ and its adjective, *paṭicca, samuppanna*, also translated as “dependent arising.”⁵⁰

4.3.2 Anuddayata. Hence, simply put, the sentence [4.3] means “I will teach the Dharma, moved by compassion.” The word *anuddayata* is resolved as *anu*, “frequently” + *daya*, “kindness,” literally meaning “(showing) kindness again and again.”⁵¹ Hence, it is a synonym of *karuṇā*. As we well know, compassion (*karuṇā*) is the second of the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*).⁵² Technically, compassion is the

⁴⁶ “Then,” *tattha*, lit “in that place.”

⁴⁷ Cf the 6 qualities of an ideal Dharma speaker given in **(Dhamma,desaka) Udayī S** (A 5.159/3:184), SD 46.1, **(Aṭṭhaka) Alaṃ S** (A 8.62/4:296-299), SD 46.5, and Piya Tan, *The Teaching Methods of the Buddha*, 2001 (unpublished MS).

⁴⁸ M 1:265 (*etaṃ*, “on these grounds”); S 3:93 = It 89 (*attha, vasam*); J 2:386 (= *abhisandhāya*); Sn 680, 784, 872, 1046; SnA 357; DhA I.4; PvA 64 (*maraṇam*), 164, 181 (*kammaṃ*), 207 (*anuddayam*). It appears in the phrase *paṭicca, vinīta*, meaning “trained to look for conditionality” (M 3:19).

⁴⁹ *Paṭicca, samuppāda*: V 1:5; D 2:36 f, 55; M 1:67, 190, 257; S 1:136, 156, 2:1 f, 26 f, 42 f, 70, 92 f, 144, 2:92. For etymology, see **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (1.2).

⁵⁰ *Paṭicca, samuppanna*: D 3:275; M 1:500; S 2:26, 3:96 f, 4:211 f, 214; A 5:187; Vbh 340, 362.

⁵¹ *Anuddayatā*: V 3:247, 13; S 5:169, 19; A 3:184, 20. It is found in such cpds as *kula-*, “out of compassion for the family” (V 4:235; S 2L218; Nm 2:496); *parā-*, “out of compassion for others” (It 72; Nm 386, 501; Vbh 346, 356).

⁵² On *brahma, vihāra*, see **Brahma, vihāra**, SD 38.5.

active expression of lovingkindness, and here we also have the sense of this being shown frequently and habitually.

The most vital aspect of **compassion**, however, is that it is kindness that is shown to others *even when they do not deserve it*. The point is that we do not *have* to teach the Dharma: it is sufficient that we know it for ourselves and we alone attain awakening. Indeed, this is, as a rule, the case for, say, an individual buddha (*pacceka, buddha*), who is fully awakened at a time when beings generally are unable to understand or unwilling to accept the teachings of the Dharma.

However, at a time when beings are willing and able to accept the Dharma, such as in the time of a fully-awakened Buddha (as is our own times), it would be selfish and uncompassionate if we do not teach the Dharma, especially when we have some level of wisdom and communication ability. In other words, wisdom as liberating insight and awakening, necessarily embodies compassion.

When we understand the true nature of life, we see impermanence and suffering just as they really are, and how beings are trapped and traumatized by craving and ignorance. If we are truly wise, we can see this, and we recall how we, too, have been in that unwholesome state before. Hence, it is natural that wisdom would lead to compassion, that is, we make every effort to help others gain that wisdom, too.

4.3.3 The gift of Dharma. Unlike other gifts or giving, giving the Dharma or teaching it, in the real sense of the action, is to give the wholesome best that we are. It entails not just our knowledge or wisdom, but, more so, our time, patience and effort. Above all, we must have tasted the Dharma ourselves, or at least, know the Dharma well enough to inspire, if not better, the lives of others. This way, when we give the Dharma, we give ourselves, and we give unconditionally and accept others without measuring. This is the meaning of the well known saying, “The gift of the Dharmas excels all gifts”⁵³ (Dh 354a).

Unlike the Buddha and his early saints, most of us are not arhats, or even streamwinners. Hence, what we teach is still not really Dharma, mostly our views and teachings, still somehow rooted in the 3 roots of greed, hate and delusion. With this awareness, it only behooves us to be tolerant of the opinions of others, especially when they differ from ours or disagree with us.

However, we do know some basic truths, as they are clearly stated in the suttas—such as the nature of impermanence, and of the awakening of the Buddha and the arhats as having attained the final goal. As such, we should neither reject nor dilute such truths, but declare them just as they are taught.

4.4 “I WILL TEACH THE DHARMA NOT FOR THE SAKE OF MATERIAL GAIN” (*na āmis’antaro katham kathessāmīti*)

4.4.1 A renunciant is no hireling. Teaching the Dharma for the sake of material gains means that we are treating the Dharma as a commodity to be bought and sold. This means that the preacher is earning a living by the Dharma, a salaried professional, which is wrong livelihood for monastics. This means that one is not a renunciant at all.

It is clearly stated in **the Kasi Bhāra, dvāja Sutta** (Sn 1.4), for example, that the Buddha rejects any offering that’s “sung over with verses” (*gāthā’bhigīta*).⁵⁴ In other words, he accepts no fees for his teachings and, as he himself declares, “I’m no hireling.”⁵⁵

The recipient (the sangha member or the lay Dharma worker) lives a morally virtuous and spiritually exemplary life that inspires faith in the giver or supporter. Whatever gifts or support that others give is out of faith in the Dharma reflected in the work of the monastic or the lay Dharma worker.⁵⁶

⁵³ (**Saṅgha**) **Bala S** (A 9.5,6c), SD 2.21. Also (**Dve**) **Dāna S** (It 98): “Bhikshu, there are these 2 kinds of giving: material giving and the gift of the Dharma” (It 98/3.5.9/98,1), SD 88.8; “The gift of Dharma surpasses all gifts” (*sabba, dānaṃ dhamma, dānaṃ jināti*, Dh 354a).

⁵⁴ Sn 4/1.4/12-16 = S 7.11/172 f @ SD 69.6. See also **Right livelihood**, SD 37.8 (1.4.3+1.5.1).

⁵⁵ Sn 25a. Cf (**Arahatta**) **Nanda S** (U 22) where Nanda is jocularly referred to as a “hireling” (*bhataka*) after he accepts the Buddha’s “offer” of some celestial nymphs as a reward for living the renunciant’s life (U 22,19), SD 43.7. See **Right livelihood**, SD 37.8 (1.4.3).

⁵⁶ See **Right livelihood**, SD 37.8 (1.5).

However, as the lay Dharma worker has not taken monastic vows, he can rightfully work as, say, a resident or regular teacher for an honorarium or sponsorship (traditionally known as *dakkhiṇā*) to support his work and his family.⁵⁷

4.4.2 Being worthy of alms. Buddhaghosa says that only **an arhat** takes the country’s alms as an “owner,” while a good monastic still does so as a “debtor,” because he partakes of the alms-giving as one who has not yet awakened.⁵⁸ A monastic holding a wrong view is, like a bad monastic, considered a “thief,” as in the case of Sāti in **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38).⁵⁹

A monastic or a lay Dharma worker dependent on alms and support from the laity, uses them as a constant reminder of his task of working for awakening in this life itself. Doing Dharma work—studying the suttas, teaching Dharma, and doing other Dharma-based work—are merely incidental. Of paramount importance is our own attaining of awakening in this life itself.

In the case of a monastic, he should try his best to practise meditation for the attaining of dhyana to overcome attachment to sensual pleasures, so that he is able to become an arhat, or at least a non-returner, in this life itself. However, if a monastic has difficulty with meditation, he should work towards attaining once-return, or at least streamwinning in this life itself. A lay person, too, should work towards at least once-return or streamwinning in this life itself so that there is no chance at all of falling into any of the lower realms, that is, the animal kingdom, the asura realm, the preta world or the hell-states.⁶⁰

4.5 “I WILL TEACH THE DHARMA WITHOUT HURTING MYSELF OR OTHERS” (*attānaṃ ca paraṃ ca anupahacca kathāṃ kathessāmīti*).

4.5.1 Right speech

4.5.1.1 This is surely the most difficult of all the 5 principles of teaching the Dharma to others. However, we do have guidelines from various other teachings given by the Buddha, such as that on right speech, given in the **Abhaya Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 58). In the Sutta, the Buddha gives an almost exhaustive list of “paths of speech” (*vacana,patha*)⁶¹ or speech-types, according to their truth-value, utility and pleasantness. A statement could be

- true or false *bhūta, taccha* or *abhūta, ataccha*
- useful or useless *attha,samhita* or *anatta,samhita*
- (connected with the goal or not)
- pleasant or unpleasant *paesaṃ piyā manāpā* or *paesaṃ appiyā amanāpā*

4.5.1.2 From these, we get a comprehensive set of 8 possible propositions:⁶²

				M 58 (SD 7.12)
(1) True	useful	pleasant	[§8 (6)]	He would assert such a statement at a <u>proper time</u> .
(2) ”	”	unpleasant	[§8 (3)]	He would assert such a statement at a <u>proper time</u> .
(3) ”	useless	pleasant	[§8 (5)]	He would <i>not</i> assert such a statement.
(4) ”	”	unpleasant	[§8 (2)]	He would <i>not</i> assert such a statement.
(5) False	useful	pleasant	[-]	[Unlisted = false speech.]
(6) ”	”	unpleasant	[-]	[Unlisted = harsh speech.]
(7) ”	useless	pleasant	[§8 (4)]	He would <i>not</i> assert such a statement.
(8) ”	”	unpleasant	[§8 (1)]	He would <i>not</i> assert such a statement. ⁶³

⁵⁷ See **Right livelihood**, SD 37.8 (1.5.4).

⁵⁸ MA 2:305,21; also MA 5:32; SA 2:199.

⁵⁹ M 38 (SD 7.10).

⁶⁰ See **Entering the stream**, SD 3.3; (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

⁶¹ *Vacana,patha*; cf **Kakacūpama S** (M 21,11.1/1:126). SD 38.1.

⁶² **Abhaya Rāja,kumāra S** (M 56) + SD 7.12 (3).

⁶³ See Jayatilleke 1963:351 f.

From this table, we can deduce that the Buddha and a Dharma speaker should speak only what is true, useful, whether it is pleasant or unpleasant. Even then, such teachings should be given at the proper time. He should avoid teaching or saying anything that is *useless*, whether pleasant or unpleasant, at any time.

Interestingly, he should avoid teaching anything *false*, whether useful or not, whether pleasant or not, at any time. This is an important statement on the nature of “skillful means.” Any such teaching should not be based on falsehood or wrong view. No matter how beautiful or inspiring a parable may be, for example, it should not be based on what is false or be construed as such. Then, it would be wrong view. The suttas often give stern warnings against wrong views and misrepresenting the Buddha.⁶⁴

4.5.1.3 A **skillful means**, then, must be based on what is true, useful, whether pleasant or unpleasant, and in a timely way.⁶⁵ As a rule, the “skillful means,” including the parables, of later Buddhism, such as those of the Lotus Sutra, take exception of the early Buddhist teachings. However, we can still accept these rich expressions, insofar as they help illustrate or elucidate some Buddhist teaching. In other words, we can still accept such teachings, not as Buddhist doctrine, but as Buddhist literature. This distinction is vital and skillful: it allows us to have the best of both worlds, so to speak.

4.5.1.4 Statement 2 [4.5.1], however, seems to contradict a statement in **the Subhāsita Sutta** (Sn 3.3), where it is stated “One should speak only what is pleasant” (*piya, vācam eva bhāseyya*. Sn 452a). Jayatilleke suggests that “this apparent exception holds good only in the case of the Tathāgata” (1963: 352). However, in the second half of the stanza, *piya* is broadly defined: “What one speaks without bringing bad to others is pleasant” (*yaṃ anādāya pāpāni | pasesaṃ bhāsate piyaṃ*, Sn 452cd). [4.5.2]

4.5.2 Right speech. The point is that the Buddha is *not a sweet-talker*, and we do have numerous occasions when he would rightly reprimand a foolish monk.⁶⁶ It can be argued that the Subhāsita Sutta (Sn 3.3) records the situation in the early years of the ministry (probably the first 20 years) when only those who have attained the Dharma-eye or become arhats are admitted into the order.⁶⁷

From all this, we must conclude that the saying, “**One should only speak what is pleasant**” actually refers generally to those of us who are neither awakened or saints (who would naturally be compassionate in their way of teaching. When monastic or layman, if we have not attained the spiritual state of excellence, then we should present the Dharma in a “pleasant” (*piya*) way, so as to inspire faith and wisdom. Teaching the Dharma in a *pleasant* way summarizes the teachings on the Dharma teacher given here in **the Dhamma,desaka Udāyī Sutta**.

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⁶⁴ The usual warning is that holding a wrong view brings us animal birth; communicating them to others brings us a hellish birth. See **(Ananda) Subha S** (D 10,2.33.2), SD 40.13; **(Sāla,vatikā) Lohicca S** (D 12,10 etc) + SD 34.8 (3); **Kukkura,vatika S** (M 57,3/1:388) + SD 23.11 (5.1.3).

⁶⁵ See **Skillful means**, SD 30.8.

⁶⁶ Monks who show any serious psychosocial weakness (esp wrong view and wrong conduct) are reprimanded as *mogha,purisa*, lit “empty person,” usu tr as “misguided one.” See esp **Alagaddûpama S** (M 22,6/1:132), SD 3.13. See **Pāthika S (D 24)**: 3:3×3, 4×3, 6, 7×2, 9×2, 10×2, 11, 12×2, 28×2; **Mahā Siha,nāda S (M 12)**: 1:68, 69; **Alagaddûpama S (M 22)**: 132×5, 258×5; **Mahā Taṇhā,saṅkhāya S (M 38)**: 258×2; **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S (M 63)**: 1:428; **Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga S (M 136)**: 3:208×3, 209; **Miḷhaka S (S 17.5)**: 2:229; **Siha,nāda S (A 9.11)**: 4:378; **Vinaya: V 1**:32, 58×2, 59×4, 154×3, 193×4, 216, 218×3, 250×3, 301×3, 305×3, 306×6; **2**:7, 18×3, 26×5, 118, 119×2, 165×2, 168×4, 193. On *mogha,purisa* as a syn of *asappurisa*, see **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (3.2).

⁶⁷ See SD 45.16 (0.1.4, 1.2.1).

The Udāyī Discourse (on the Dharma Teacher)

A 5.159

Ānanda sees Udāyī teaching the Dharma

1 At one time, the Blessed One was residing in Ghosita's park near Kosambī.

At that time, the venerable Udāyī was seated in the midst of a large congregation of householders teaching them the Dharma.

1.2 The venerable Ānanda saw that the venerable Udāyī was seated in the midst of a large congregation of householders teaching them the Dharma.

He approached the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side.

1.3 Seated thus at one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, the venerable Udāyī is seated in the midst of a large congregation of householders teaching them the Dharma.”

The 5 principles before teaching the Dharma

1.4 “Ānanda, it is not easy to teach others the Dharma.⁶⁸ Ānanda, before teaching the Dharma to others, one should first establish in oneself **the 5 principles by which the Dharma should be taught to others.**⁶⁹ What are the five?

(1) One should teach the Dharma to others, thinking,

“I will talk on the progressive teaching.”⁷⁰

(2) One should teach the Dharma to others, thinking,

“I will teach understanding the context.”⁷¹

(3) One should teach the Dharma to others, thinking,

“I will teach the Dharma out of compassion.”⁷²

(4) One should teach the Dharma to others, thinking,

“I will teach the Dharma not for the sake of material gain.”⁷³

(5) One should teach the Dharma to others, thinking,

“I will teach the Dharma without hurting myself or others.”⁷⁴

1.5 Ānanda, it is not easy to teach others the Dharma. Ānanda, before teaching the Dharma to others, one should first establish in oneself these 5 principles by which the Dharma should be taught to others.”

— evaṃ —

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⁶⁸ *Na kho ānanda sukaraṃ paresaṃ dhammaṃ desetun.*

⁶⁹ *Paresaṃ ānanda dhammaṃ desetena pañca dhamme ajjhataṃ upaṭṭhapetvā paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo*, lit “The Dharma, Ānanda, should be taught to others having established oneself in 5 things with which to teach the Dharma to others.”

⁷⁰ *Ānupubbī, kathaṃ kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo*. See (4.1).

⁷¹ *Pariyāya, dassāvī kathaṃ kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbā*. See (4.2).

⁷² *Anuddayataṃ paṭicca kathaṃ kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo*. See (4.3).

⁷³ *Na āmis' antaro kathaṃ kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo*. See (4.4).

⁷⁴ *Attānaṃ ca paraṃ ca anupahacca kathaṃ kathessāmīti paresaṃ dhammo desetabbo*. See (4.5).