

7

(Vaṅgīsa) Aratī Sutta

The (Vaṅgīsa) Discourse on Discontent | S 8.2
 or, **Anabhirati Sutta** The Discourse on Non-delighting
 Theme: Self-counselling a lustful mind
 Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2009, 2018

1 Sutta highlights

1.1 VAṄGĪSA

1.1.1 Sutta summary. The **Aratī Sutta** (S 8.2) is a short instructive study on how the elder **Vaṅgīsa**, without any help from his preceptor, by his own mental effort, wisely works to overcome his feelings of dissatisfaction, and arouses in himself a sense of satisfaction.

1.1.2 Vaṅgīsa's verses. For his reflection, Vaṅgīsa spontaneously utters 5 beautiful verses, displaying his poetic prowess and mastery of the Dharma.

In the 1st verse [S 712 = Tha 1214], he looks inwardly into his own heart. [2.1]

In the 2nd verse [S 713 = Tha 1215], he reflects on the nature of true reality everywhere. [2.2]

In the 3rd verse [S 714 = Tha 1216], he speaks of the true sage (*muni*), here meaning an arhat. [2.3]

In the 4th verse [S 715 = Tha 1217], he muses on the nature of a true monk (*bhikkhu*). [2.4]

In the 5th verse [S 716 = Tha 1218], he reflects on death. [2.5]

1.1.3 Origins. Vaṅgīsa came from a brahmin family and was proficient in the Vedas. He became famous as a skull-tapper: by tapping his finger-nails on a skull, he could tell where the skull's owner had been reborn. Upon meeting the Buddha, he is given an arhat's skull to tap, and learns nothing about the destiny of its owner! He becomes a monk to learn the secret of that skull.¹

1.1.4 Arhathood

1.1.4.1 Vaṅgīsa is ordained by **Nigrodha,kappa** [1.2] but as a monk, he is constantly troubled by lustful thoughts. This is not surprising because he has the powerful emotions and wit of a good poet. We are told that the Buddha teaches him the meditation on **the 31 parts of the body**² (AA 1:269,23).

1.1.4.2 His practice of the "body-parts" meditation and its ensuing result, his attainment of arhathood, are mentioned in **the Aṅguttara Commentary** (AA 1:269 f) and **the Vaṅgīsa-t,thera Vatthu** (DhA 26.37).³ He reports his arhathood to the Buddha, after which he reflects with joy on his awakening, composing a canticle praising the Buddha and rejoicing in his arhathood, as recorded in **the (Arahatta)**

¹ Further see SD 16.12 (1).

² See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,10/1:57), SD 13.3; **Kāya,gata,sati S** (M 119,7/3:90) + SD 12.21 (5).

³ Comy gives this as **the "32-fold cycle"** (*dva-t,timś'ākāra*): DhA 26.37/4:226-228) ad Dh 420 f. Cf DhA 26.30b. This account (DhA 36.37) is the source of **the Thera,gātha Comy** account on Vaṅgīsa (ThaA ch 70, the last ch = ThaA 3:180-209). Cf AA 1:266-270; 3:211. For a Skt parallel, see S F R Hoernle, *journal of the Royal Asiatic Soc* 1916:709 ff (5th frag),

Vaṅḡisa Sutta (S 8.12 containing Tha 1253-1262).⁴ On account of this, the Buddha declares him to be the foremost of the monks with keen wit (*paṭibhāṇa, vantānam*, A 1:24; AA 1:270,13).

1.2 NIGRODHA, KAPPA

1.2.1 Resident solitarian. His name was **Kappa**, and was called **Nigrodha** because he awakened under a banyan tree (SnA 1:346). The Saṃyutta Commentary says he was so called also because he dwelled under a banyan tree (SA 1:268). As a resident solitarian (*vihāra, garuka*), he places importance (*garuka*) on keeping to his cell. As soon as he returns from his almsround, he would enter his cell and not emerge until evening or the next day.

1.2.2 Vaṅḡisa's disaffection. On account of not seeing his preceptor, Nigrodha, kappa, Vaṅḡisa feels disaffected—as recorded in **the Aratī Sutta** (S 8.2), but he quells it through self-admonition (S 1:186; SA 1:169 f). He also has doubts about Nigrodha, kappa's awakening as he has seen him sleeping with his arms moving about involuntarily (*hattha, kukkucā*). Generally this is unbecoming of an arhat, but in his case it is an old habit (of no new karmic consequence). (ThaA 3:198)

1.3 AGG'ĀḶAVA CETIYA

1.3.1 The Agg'āḷava Shrine (*agg'āḷava*) was the chief shrine of Āḷavī (SnA 314), originally dedicated to the worship of yakshas⁵ and nagas.⁶ It was later converted into a vihara (monastic residence) but retained its old name.⁷ The Buddha resided here a number of times in the course of his ministry.

1.3.2 The Jātaka Commentary remarks that many lay-women and nuns flocked to the Shrine by day to listen to the Buddha, but none of them were there when he taught in the evenings (J 1:160). It was during one such evening when the monks slept in the Dharma-hall together with the unordained (lay-followers and novices), who then saw the monks in various indecorous postures. This prompted the Buddha to introduce a Vinaya rule restricting monks from sleeping in the same room as an unordained “for more than 2-3 nights” (Pāc 5 @ V 4:16; J 1:160).

2 Commentary on Vaṅḡisa's verses

2.1 S 712 = Tha 1214

2.1.1 (S 712a) “Having abandoned dislike and delight” (*aratiñ ca ratiñ ca pahāya*) [= Tha 1214a]

2.1.1.1 This line means that we should habitually see both our liking and disliking as arising from how we evaluate or “value-add” our present experience. Instead of seeing our present moment of experience as it is, we habitually project our reaction to some past events onto it. When we find a present experience desirable, it is likely because we have liked a similar one before; when we find a present experience undesirable, it is likely that we have disliked a similar one in the past. When a present experience seems to arise for *the first time*, we may not know how to react to it and so feel bored about it.

⁴ For a list of suttas related to Vaṅḡisa, see SD 16.12 (1.3).

⁵ Yakshas (*yakkha*) were nature spirits of ancient Indian folklore: SD 21.3 (4.2); SD 51.11 (3.1.1.1).

⁶ Nagas (*nāga*) were serpent-spirits of ancient Indian folklore: SD 27.5a (6.2.0) n.

⁷ SnA 344 f = SA 1:268 ad S 1:185.

2.1.1.2 We should mindfully regard what we see as pleasant or desirable as being impermanent, and imbue what we see as unpleasant or undesirable with lovingkindness. When we feel bored with a certain experience, it is probably a “new” experience which elicits neither our like nor dislike. Then, we may either see its rising and falling—as being impermanent—or we direct lovingkindness to it, or we switch to watching a suitable object such as the calm breath.

2.1.2 (S 712b) “and all thoughts of the household life” (*sabbaso gehasitañ ca vitakkam*) [Tha 1214b]

2.1.2.1 A renunciant may keep thinking about his life as a lay person, before he is a renunciant—that is, he is still caught up with the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*pañca kāma,guṇa*), those of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body.⁸ When such thoughts are of pleasant memories or pleasures of lay worldly moments, they may be symptoms that we are not keeping to proper practice or not spending enough effective time in practice. We should mindfully examine our thoughts for the “triggers” that have con-jured up such distractions, and deal with those triggers, as above [2.1.1.2].

2.1.2.2 Often enough—we may not even know it—some painful past lay experiences or memories of them could be burdening or distracting us with some present unwholesome attitude or activity. For example, some unresolved past pain may provoke negative emotions of anger or annoyance at the slightest trigger or association of mental objects in the present. These are symptoms of “the danger of waves” (*ūmi,bhaya*) that the Buddha warns us about in **the Cātuma Sutta** (M 67).⁹

2.1.3 (S 712c) “one should not create a craving-forest of anything” (*vanatham na kareyya kuhiñci*) [= Tha 1214c]

2.1.3.1 Often enough, we may have turned to the monastic life because of some difficulties in lay life—an unhappy family, a difficult marriage, crushing poverty, some sexual problem, joblessness, or a sense of narcissism. We may or may not be think much of such difficulties, but our initial drive is that perhaps a life of renunciation may be a good new start, that is, “not to create a craving-forest of anything.” [2.1.4.1]

However, as we grow more familiar with the life of the cloth, we begin to notice, or choose to notice, weaknesses and deficiencies in our colleagues and teachers. We may then rationalize, but more usually be unconsciously driven by our past karma forces by way of contempt, to use the status of the cloth (the generosity and respect, even adoration of the faithful) to take advantage of them.

We may, for example, use teaching-sessions to impress on others the “power” of our teaching. When we have won the audience’s faith, we go on to raise funds or take advantage of them in various ways. The Buddha warns us here of “the danger of whirlpools” (*āvaṭṭa,bhaya*) may swallow us up and drown us. Or, we may fall in “the danger of crocodiles” (*kumbhīla,bhaya*), that is, gluttony. Or, we enjoy courting “the danger of river dolphins” (*susukā,bhaya*), the lust for sexuality (whether with the opposite sex or the same sex).¹⁰

Such a person—caught in these dangers—says **the Dhammapada**—is like one who has been freed from the undergrowth but is caught in the forest! This is Vaṅgīsa’s first poetic image—that of a “forest” (*vanatha*) [2.1.4.2], which the Commentary glosses as “the great forest of defilements” (*kilesa,mahā-vanam*, SA 1:269,26). The second imagery is *nibbanatha* [2.1.4] in the following line [S 712d], which means “the forest of defilements” (SA 1:269,27).

⁸ See **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22,8.3), SD 3.13; SD 6.11 (2).

⁹ M 67,16 (SD 34.7).

¹⁰ See **Cātumā S** (M 67,14) + SD 34.7 (5.3.).

2.1.3.2 These are symptoms that tend to appear on renunciants who are “ronins”¹¹ or “loose canons” —those who, after receiving the cloth, wear them and then renege on their vows and training. They wander away into their own self-propelled orbits of narcissism—like “wanderers” (*paribbājaka*) of our days.¹² It is for this reason that the Buddha introduced the minimum 5-year period of **tutelage** (*nissaya*) for all renunciants. Indeed, a good teacher may keep his students under tutelage as long as he sees that they are not ready to go forth on their own as exemplary renunciants of the Buddha.¹³

The spiritual dynamism of the tutelage is in its **spiritual friendship** (*kalyāṇa mittatā*) between the teacher and his pupil. The teacher himself sets a good example of moral virtue, and instructs the pupil in mental cultivation. Often, such a training will also include an appropriate amount of sutta study—and a familiarity, even mastery, of Pali for the more capable.

In this way, the pupil is well grounded in both the theory and the practice of the Dharma, ready to be an effective teacher and exemplar for others, Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Hence, *nissaya* is also translated as “**dependence**,” that is, being weaned off worldliness to become a renunciant, monastic and brahmachari (who lives the celibate holy life) who is worth his salt.

2.1.4 (S 712d) “a monk is one who delights not in desire’s forest” (*nibbanatho arato sa hi bhikkhu*) [= Tha 1214d]

2.1.4.1 This verse is especially significant to Vaṅḡsa because of his inclination to be burdened with thoughts of lust [§4]. He uses the poetic term: **nibbanatha** = *ni*, prefix meaning “down” + *vana*, “forest” + *tha*,¹⁴ locative suffix,¹⁵ which then means “a place bogged down by forest,” figuratively meaning “defilements” [2.1.3.1]. The poetic forest term, **vanatha** (*vana* + *tha* (Skt *stha*), literally, “forest place,” DhA 2:424), metaphorically refers to “defilements (especially lust and craving),” as found in the 1st verse (S 217c) [2.1.3.1].

We see a pun on both senses of *vanatha* in at least two **Dhammapada** verses (Dh 283+284):¹⁶

<i>Vanam chindatha mā rukkham vanato jāyati bhayaṃ chetvā vanañ ca vanathañ ca nibbaṇā hotha bhikkhavo</i>	(Dh 283) ¹⁷	Cut down the forest but not the tree. From the forest arises fear. Having cut down the forest and growths, O bhikshus, you are forest-free!
<i>Yāvaṃ hi vanatho no chijjati aṇumatto’pi narassa nārisu</i>		For, as long as the forest of passion, even a mote, of a man for a woman, is uncut,

¹¹ A “**ronin**” (浪人 “drifter, wanderer”) was a samurai without a master during the feudal period (1185-1868) of Japan. A samurai became ronin from the death or fall of his master, or after the loss of his master's favour or privilege. In modern Japan, the term refers to an unemployed salaryman (corporate worker) or a middle-school student studying outside the system for admission into high-school, or a student not yet admitted into university.

¹² See **Wanderers of today**, SD 24.6b.

¹³ On monastic tutelage, see esp Mv 1.32.1 (V 1:60), 1.53.4 (V 1:80); also SD 40a.8 (4.2.2.3).

¹⁴ See DP: tha².

¹⁵ See S 1:180 (v696) (*svāham vane nibbanatho visallo*); Tha 526; Dh 344.

¹⁶ For a pun on *vana* and *vanatha*, see also the verse at **Sa, gāthā S** (S 14.16). Norman, commenting on **Tha 338**, wrongly thinks that there is “no example in the canon of any pun upon the two meanings, ‘wood’ and ‘desire, craving,’ to match the pun upon *vana*” (Tha:N 183 n338). Dh 283 f + 344 below are verses that play just that pun on *vanatha*! However, in **Dh:N** 131 n283, he does note the pun in Dh 283+344.

¹⁷ See SD 10.6 (5.3).

paṭibaddamano va tāva so so long indeed is his mind bound up
vaccho khīra,pako'va mātari (Dh 284) like a suckling cow to its mother.

Where the Dhammapada has *nārisu* (Dh 284b), **the Patna Dharmapada** reads *ñātīsu*, “in relatives,” and **the Udāna,varga** has *bandhuṣu*, “in kinsmen.” If we take the simile strictly—a calf being attached to its mother for her milk—then, it supports these alternate readings, so that we have: “**even a mote (of attachment), of a man to his relatives, is uncut**” (Dh 284b). However, the presence of “man” (*narassa*) in the Dhammapada clearly suggests his sensual attraction to a woman; hence, *nārisu* is the best reading after all.

2.1.4.2 A related verse from the Dhammapada—**Dh 344**—puns on both senses of *vana*: as “wood, forest” and as “defilements” [2.1.4.1] thus:

Yo nibbanatho vanādhimutto Who, free from the undergrowth is caught in the forest,
vana,mutto vanam eva dhāvati who, free from the forest, runs back to the forest—
taṃ puggalam eva¹⁸ passatha¹⁹ just look at that person:
mutto bandhanam eva dhavati (Dh 344) freed, he runs back into bondage!

To be “free from the undergrowth” means that we have left home, renounced the world or given up some bad habit, but “is caught in the forest”: we are burdened with a worse habit or something worse. Out of the frying pan, we fall into the fire!

According to Buddhaghosa, a religious teacher or student outside the teaching (a non-Buddhist) who falls from his training or faith, only falls away from a mundane training—like one falling from a donkey and is only covered in dust. However, for one who violates the Buddhist training in the holy life (with its paths, fruits and nirvana), that is, who consciously violates the precepts, it is a great loss—like one falling from an elephant, incurring great suffering, even death. (MA 4:165).²⁰

Here, the imagery of **the forest** (*vana*) is not that of a refuge for the meditative solitary monk. It is a negative imagery of a forest of darkness and danger, where one can easily be lost—this is the forest of craving. A morally virtuous and mentally cultivated monk emerges from the forest of craving for *the space of nirvana* (Tha 526).

2.1.4.3 At **S 712d**, for *arato*, “lust-free,” the Saṃyutta PTS version reads *anato* (literally, “not bent”), “without inclination.”²¹ *Anato* (*a* + *nata*) means “without preconceptions or misconceptions.” *Nata* (m) is the same as *nati* (f), “inclination, habit (usually negative).”²²

2.1.4.4 There is a wordplay on *nibbanatha* [2.1.4.1]—literally, “a place (*tha*) that is forest-free,” or as we say, “out of the woods.” Here, “forest” is a metaphor for defilements (*kilesa*) in general, or craving and sensual desire specifically. We can also see that the embedded word is *nibbana* (*ni*, “out (of)” + *vana*, “forest”).²³ Idiomatically, “out of the wood(s)” means “without craving” (*nikkāmo nibbano*, Sn 1131; *nib-*

¹⁸ I follow Ee DhA 4:53,5+11 (*eva* in verse, but *evam* in gloss); other MSS *etha*. On *eva/etha*, see Dh:CP 498 n13 (ad Dh 344); Dh:N 146 n344.

¹⁹ Udāna,varga: *taṃ paśyatha pudgalaṃ tv imarā* (Uv 2.5); but Gāndhārī Dh is incomplete.

²⁰ SD 8.1 (4.2(4) n).

²¹ On *anata*, see SD 50.2 (1.1.1 + 1.1.4.4).

²² On *nati*, see SD 50.2 (1.1.4.4).

²³ KhpA 151,26; J 3:358.

banā, plural, Dh 283); free from the “forest of defilements” (*nikkilesa,vano*) (SA 1:260). **Nibbana** (“out of the woods”) is often taken as a variant reading for *nibbāna*.²⁴

We see this “out of the woods” sentiment beautifully expressed by the Buddha in **the Nava,kammika Sutta** (S 7.17), thus:

*Na me vanasmim̃ karaṇīyam atthi
ucchinna,mūlam̃ me vanam̃ visūkam̃
svāham̃ vane nibbanatho visallo
eko rame aratim̃ vippahāyāti*

There is for me nothing to be done in the forest.
Cut down at the root, my wood is dried up.
I’m one out of the wood,²⁵ dart removed:²⁶ in the forest
alone I delight, having abandoned discontent.

(S 7.17,7), SD 50.34

2.2 S 713 = Tha 1215

*Yam idha pathaviñ ca vehāsam̃
rūpa,gatañ ca jagat’ogadham̃
kiñci parijiyati sabbam̃ aniccam̃
evam̃ samecca caranti mutattā²⁷*

S 713

Whatever there is here on the earth or in the sky,
the form-based, and immersed in the world:
all impermanent, subject to decay—
the wise fare on understanding this.

2.2.1 This verse is straightforward—everything in this world is impermanent. In **line a** “earth” and “the sky” are synecdoches (shorthands) for the world and the heavens, respectively. It refers to beings that inhabit the earth, in or on it, and the skies, both in our atmosphere and in the heavens and outer space—animals, humans, non-humans, aliens and gods—they are all impermanent. Whatever exists must change: they arise and then pass away. This is a statement of a basic and universal truth—the first of the 3 universal characteristics: impermanence, suffering and non-self.²⁸

2.2.2 In **line b**, the sense of *rūpa,gata* can be teased from its context. The “sense-world” is already mentioned by way of “**on earth and in the sky**” [**line a**]. Hence, *rūpa,gata*, literally “gone to form,” refers to the “form-world,” that is, those related to the 4 dhyanas. In the same line, “**caught in the world**,” would be the “formless world. So, we have here all the 3 worlds, those of the senses, of form and of formlessness.²⁹

Buddhaghosa gives a narrow gloss of *jagat’ogadha*: “immersed in or plunged into the world,” into the earth, such as the naga realms.³⁰ Dhammapāla is more helpful: *jagat’ogadha* means “of the world, conditioned, comprising the 3 existences” (*jagat’ogadham̃ lokikam̃ bhava-t,taya,pariyāpannam̃ saṅkhataṃ*, ThaA 3:190,6 f). Following Dhammapāla, then, *jagat’ogadha* is an all-encompassing term for all the 3 worlds.

2.2.3 “[T]he wise fare on understanding this.” “The wise” is a translation of *mut’attā*, which the Commentary explains as “the wise who fully understands all self-states” (*mutattā’ti pariññātā,attabhāvā*

²⁴ See SD 50.2 (1.1.4.3+1.1.5.3). See SD 50.34 (1.2.1).

²⁵ “Out of the wood” (*nibbanatha*): a wordplay on *vana*, “forest, wood.” **Nibbanatha** (*ni*, “out” + *vanatha*, “the wood(s)”) lit, “without forest, wood-free”

²⁶ “Dart removed,” *visallo*, ie free of the dart of craving and so on (*vīta,rāg’ādi,sallo*, ThaA 2:220 = PvA 230).

²⁷ Comy: “**Mut’attā** means the wise whose state is a mind of full understanding” (*mutattā’ti pariññātā,atta,bhāvā paṇḍitā*, ThaA 3:190,10).

²⁸ On the 3 characteristics, see SD 1.2 (2); SD 18.2 (2.2).

²⁹ See **Viññāṇa-ṭ,ṭhiti**, SD 23.14; SD 29.6a (5.2); SD 29.6b (7.2).

³⁰ *Jagatiyā ogadham̃, anto,paṭhaviyam̃ nāga,bhavana,gatan’ti attho*, SA 1:270,3). This explanation is too restrictive, leaving out the formless world.

paṇḍitā, ThaA 3:190,10). Or, we can read it as *atta,bhava*, thus: “the wise is one who understands all existences by himself.” That is to say, he wisely understands them to be impermanent. This will make him at least a streamwinner.³¹

2.3 S 714 = Tha 1216

2.3.1 (S 714a) “People are bound to their acquisitions” (*upadhīsu janā gadhitā*) [= Tha 1216a]

2.3.1.1 The term *upadhi* is derived from *upa* (prefix meaning “with”) + √DHĀ, “to put,” hence, literally means, “that on which something is laid or rests; basis, foundation, substratum,”³² with a secondary sense of “adding, addition, increase,” hence, “acquisitions (pl),” serving as the foundation or paraphernalia of existence.

Upadhi is the only technical term in the whole poem. It is as if the whole poem plays on a tension between *upadhi* and its opposite, *nibbāna*, and the tension between the two is *vanatha* (“the forest-place,” the world [S 712c], and to abandon *upadhi* is to get “out of the forest,” *nibbanatha* [S 712d].

2.3.1.2 Hence, the Commentary defines *upadhi* as “the acquisitions of aggregates and so on” (*khandh’upadhi, ādīsu*).³³ **Buddhaghosa** lists these 4 kinds of *upadhi*: the acquisitions of sensuality (*kāmūpadhi*), of the aggregates (*khandhūpadhi*), of defilements (*kilesūpadhi*), and of karma-formations (*abhisāṅkhārūpadhi*).³⁴ **Dhammapāla** lists the 4 kinds as those of the aggregates, the defilements, the formations and the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*pañca, kāma, guṇūpadhi*, ItA 2:64).

The **Cūḷa Niddesa** mentions a set of 10 acquisitions (*dasa upadhī*), that is, those (1) of craving (*taṇhūpadhi*), (2) of views (*diṭṭhūpadhi*), (3) of defilements (*kilesūpadhi*), (4) of karma (*kammūpadhi*), (5) of misconduct (*duccaritūpadhi*), (6) of nutriment (food) (*āhārūpadhi*), (7) of sense-impressions (*paṭighūpadhi*), (8) of the derivations of the 4 elements (*catasso upādinna, dhātuyo upadhī*), (9) of the 6 internal sense-bases (*cha ajjhakkāni āyatanāni upadhī*), (10) of the 6 groups of consciousness (*cha viññāṇa, kāyā upadhī*), all of which are acquisitions that are suffering or fruiting in suffering, Nc:Be 69). Understandably, they include wholesome conditions (*kusal’ādi, abhisāṅkhārā cetanā*, NcA 26,29), since they all are the cause of birth of the cycle of suffering (*vaṭṭa, dukkhassa jāti, kāraṇa*, NcA 22,13)

In simple terms, *upadhi* should be understood in two ways:

- (1) objectively, *upadhi* refers to all that we have and all that we are—our *being* and *having*’
- (2) subjectively, *upadhi* refers to the *mind*, the intention, conceptions, perceptions and feelings connected to our having and being, that is, a mind rooted in ignorance and craving.

Upadhi is probably only second to the word *dhamma* in its comprehensiveness of senses.

2.3.1.2 *Upadhi* is often confused with *upādi*, both of which share the sense of “birth-bases,” the fuel of rebirth and redeath. There is a subtle but significant difference. *Upadhi* is the diachronic (“daily, this moment”) collecting of acquisitions; *upādi* is the synchronic (“over time”) expending—the insatiable shopping around for more acquisitions—that keeps us going life after life.³⁵

Upadhi is the “kinetic karmic energy”—those activities and their fruits in our daily activities spurred on by greed, hate and delusion—to *be* this and that, to *have* this and that: to acquire things; hence, they are called **acquisitions**, the action of accumulating being and having. These acquisitions keep us mindlessly

³¹ See (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

³² CPD: *upadhi*; cf etym (SnA 44,27).

³³ SA 1:190,13, 2:119; ThaA 3:51.

³⁴ SA 1:31; SnA 1:44, 2:436.

³⁵ But first see their synchronic and diachronic functions: SD 53.5 (4.2.3.2).

“going” moment-to-moment, day after day in this life, rolling the Sisyphus rock up the hill and running after it downhill, again and again, priding in what an accomplishment this is! It is the “being” (activities) and the “having” (their fruits) of our existential burden here and now.³⁶

Upādi is the “potential karmic energy”—that existential battery that keeps us going, whether we like it or not (we usually think we like it). Hence, *upādi* is often taken to refer to the 5 aggregates—where it functions as the “clinging,” making them *upādāna-k, khandha*, “the aggregates of clinging,” which keeps us in the samsaric cycle.³⁷

2.3.2 (S 714b) “to what is seen, heard, sensed and touched” (*diṭṭha, sute paṭighe ca mute ca*) [= Tha 1216b]

2.3.2.1 *Upadhi* acquires its burden of being and having [2.3.1.2] through “**what is seen, heard, sensed and touched**” [S 714b]. This is the sum of all our experiences—the “all” of our lives, as famously declared by the Buddha in **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23).³⁸ The “*seen, heard, sensed and touched*” are part of the *all* that we can know. We can only *know* what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch and think (the “sensed” includes “smell, taste, touch”).³⁹

2.3.2.2 In translating *mute* as “(the) touched” [S 714b], I follow Buddhaghosa rather than Dhammapāla.⁴⁰ Line a of **S 714** says that “People are bound to their acquisitions,” which most likely refers to material possessions in terms of the 5 senses. Moreover, the psychological acquisitions are dealt with in the following verse [S 715a] as “the 60.” [2.4.1].

2.3.2.3 These acquisitions are all “empty” passing things, states and events. They are empty in the sense that none of these acquisitions—these “things”—have any essence or lasting reality. They only make sense in their movement, arising, changing and passing away. When we fail to see this—and think of them as being more than this—they become a burden, “acquisitions” to us.

2.3.2.4 The Buddha, through his awakening, has unraveled the mystery of suffering, and how to rise above that suffering. In essence, the only way to unburden oneself of all acquisitions is to practise **the Bāhiya teaching**,⁴¹ which essentially runs thus:

In the seen	there will only be the seen;	<i>diṭṭhe</i>	<i>diṭṭha, mattaṃ bhavissati;</i>
in the heard	there will only be the heard;	<i>sute</i>	<i>suta, mattaṃ bhavissati;</i>
in the sensed	there will only be the sensed;	<i>mute</i>	<i>muta, mattaṃ bhavissati;</i>
in the known	there will only be the known.	<i>viññāte</i>	<i>viññāta, mattaṃ bhavissati.</i>

(U 1.10,16), SD 33.7⁴²

³⁶ On “being and having,” see **Loṇa, phala S** (A 3.99), SD 3.5; **Esukāri S** (M 96/2:177-184), SD 37.9; **Kuṭa, danta S** (D 5), SD 22.8.

³⁷ Further see SD 28.11 (3.2).

³⁸ S 35.23 (SD 7.1).

³⁹ See **Diṭṭha muta suta viññāta**, SD 53.5.

⁴⁰ Buddhaghosa says that *paṭigha*, “the sensed,” comprises smell and taste, while *muta* is touch (tactile objects) (SA 1:270,10 f). Dhammapāla reverses the list: *paṭigha* is touch, and *muta* is smell and taste (ThaA 3:190,14-20).

⁴¹ See **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10/8), SD 33.7.

⁴² This teaching is also given to Māluṅkya,putta, where here, **(Arahatta) Māluṅkya,putta S** (S 35.95,12/4:73) + SD 5.9 (3). Having heard this teaching, it is said that Bāhiya becomes an arhat, while Māluṅkya,putta attains arhatood during his ensuing solitary retreat. On the Bāhiya teaching, see **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10,15-17) + SD 33.7 (1).

2.3.3 (S 714c) “Who here, having rid of desire, unshaken” (*ettha vinodaya chandam anejo*) [= Tha 1216c]

2.3.3.1 Where there is no thought, there is no lack; where there is no lack, no want; where there is no want, no desire. Where there is no desire, there is living the moment. Living the moment means we feel the event, every event, as it arises, changes and fades away. It is a direct experience; nothing to know, but all to feel—without a thought as it were, just as it is. Like watching a sunset or sunrise.

It is our knowledge, our desire, that projects its will onto the moment, so that we only see what it wills, and miss the moment. We exist in the knowing, but we never live in the feeling. Without this true taste of life, we know no freedom. We are but the creature of the Creator, our thoughts.

2.3.3.2 Clearly, we cannot live with knowledge alone. We do and must *think* about our experiences, even *think* before we act, as the saying goes. But here, knowledge must be the servant of **wisdom**. **Knowledge** comes from the dead past or an idea of the future which never comes; it is someone else’s experience. Wisdom is when we look into this very moment of reality and see the truth and beauty of what is really before us.

We see the pattern of change with such familiarity and insight that we are no more fooled by change, seeking eternity in a grain of sand. We just let the sands of time flow and smile knowingly and joyfully at it. We are joyful because we are free, “**rid of desire, unshaken**” by change and what we make of change. Desire dictates, wisdom liberates. Wisdom, then, is the right feel of things so that we feel right.⁴³ [2.3.3.1]

2.3.4 (S 714d) “he is called a sage who clings to nothing here” (*yo ettha na limpati taṃ munim āhu*) [= Tha 1216d]

2.3.4.1 The sage (*muni*)⁴⁴ is truly wise, unburdened by knowledge, living the moment, like the breath he takes in and then frees back to whence it comes. There is nothing here—in the **all** there is, was or will be. All that is now *was*; all that will be now *is*—it’s the way we know and think. There’s nothing to cling to, but *all* to give away in joy and peace.

2.3.4.2 This is the antidote to the burden of seizing the moment, of making the day—by letting go of the moment, letting go the day. The poet frees his heart by unburdening his feeling to be the words of his poem. The artist creates beauty by leaving the colours from his brush or finger on the canvas. The musician breathes music by freeing his heart to be his instrument. The dancer moves his body without a thought beyond time and space. The meditator takes in a breath and joyfully returns it to whence it comes.

Beauty comes from letting go: that’s the truth. Now we know why early Buddhism is indeed **truth and beauty**.

2.4 S 715 = Tha 1217**2.4.1 (S 715a) “Then, they, full of thoughts, are dependent on the 60”** (*atha saṅṅhi, nissitā sa, vitakkā*) [= Tha 1217a]

2.4.1.1 This is a difficult verse. The Commentary tries to explain it as follows: “Then, many unhealthy [undhamma] thoughts based on the 6 sense-objects have settled on the people” (*atha cha arammaṇa,*

⁴³ On feeling as direct experience, see SD 36.1 (1.6.0.2).

⁴⁴ The *muni* is “silent sage” (whose mind is silent of all views), and is the earliest kind of saint in early Buddhism: see **Muni S** (Sn 1.12), SD 49.20; SD 44.1 (1.4.1); SD 40a.1 (1.3.1).

nissitā puthū adhamma, vitakkā janatāya niviṭṭha, SA 1:270,14 f). The two key commentators—Buddhaghosa and Dhammapāla—give differing interpretations of this verse.

Buddhaghosa, in his Saṃyutta Commentary explanations on this verse, takes *vitakkā*, “thoughts,” as the subject (SA 1:270,13). But it should actually be *sa, vitakkā*, an adjectival compound (bahuvrihi) referring to those “full of thoughts.” The prefix *sa-* here represents *saha*, “with, containing.” The latter sense, “containing,” fits well here, meaning, they are “full of” thoughts, mired in thought-proliferation (*papañca*).⁴⁵

Furthermore, rather oddly, Buddhaghosa reads *saṭṭhi, sitā* as *cha, nissitā*, taking “sixty” (*saṭṭhi*) to be “six” (*cha*) (SA 1:270,13). It is possible that he takes the number 60 as simply symbolic—for example, in the 1st verse of **the Nālaka Sutta** (Sn 3.11), the gods of the 33 (*tāva, timsa*) are poetically referred to as “the host of 30” (*ti, dasa, gana*).⁴⁶

It is possible that Buddhaghosa sees the “60” poetically, with the “6” referring to the 6 sense-bases, and the “0” implying their emptiness, that is, impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and nonself. The problem is that Buddhaghosa does not clearly say so. [2.4.1.2]

On the other hand, **Dhammapāla**, in his Thera, gāthā Commentary, commenting on *saṭṭhi, sitā*, notes that “some” (*keci*) elders say that it is an allusion to the 62 bases of wrong views (ThaA 3:190,28-34), mentioned in **the Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1) [2.4.1.2]. This explanation actually fits quite well with the context of the verse.

2.4.1.2 From what information we can glean from the Sutta, other suttas and the commentaries, it seems that we have to surmise the “**the 60**” (*saṭṭhi*)—following Dhammapāla [2.4.1.1]—is a synecdoche for the 62 bases of wrong views, as listed in **the Brahma, jāla Sutta** (D 1), where it is said towards the end: “They [those with views] are all caught within this net. When they emerge, they emerge caught in this net” (*sabbe te imeh’eva dvā, saṭṭhiyā vatthūhi anto, jālī, kata, ettha sitā va ummujjāmānā ummujjum*).⁴⁷

There is another, more likely, explanation for the meaning of “60” in S 715a. Very likely, it refers to **the 60 “delightful and pleasurable ‘forms’”** (*piya, rūpa sātā, rūpa*), comprising the following sets:

(1) the 6 internal sense-bases;	<i>ajjhattik’āyatana</i>
(2) the 6 external sense-objects;	<i>bāhir’āyatana</i>
(3) the 6 consciousnesses;	<i>viññāṇa</i>
(4) the 6 sense-contacts;	<i>samphassa</i>
(5) the 6 feelings;	<i>vedanā</i>
(6) the 6 perceptions;	<i>saññā</i>
(7) the 6 volitions;	<i>sañcetanā</i>
(8) the 6 cravings;	<i>taṇhā</i>
(9) the 6 thoughts;	<i>vitakka</i>
(10) the 6 ponderings;	<i>vicāra</i>

The “6” in each of the 6 headings refers to the 6 sense-bases (the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) to which each of the headings is applied, for example, the “6 feelings” (*vedanā*) refers to feeling arising from the eye (seeing), the ear (hearing), the nose (smelling), the tongue (tasting), the body (tactile feeling) and the mind (mental states, including emotions).

This set of 60 “pleasant and pleasurable forms” are listed in **the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22) as defining “suffering” and as defining the “ending of suffering,” that is, the abandoning of these 60 pleas-

⁴⁵ On *papañca*, see **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18), SD 6.14 (2).

⁴⁶ **Nālaka S** (Sn 679), SD 49.18.

⁴⁷ D 1,146/1:45,25-27 (SD 25.2).

ant and pleasurable forms.⁴⁸ This set of 60 pleasant and pleasurable forms fit the context of the “60” in S 715a very well.

2.4.1.3 The meaning of **S 715a**, then, is that the worldly, the unawakened, are all caught up with thoughts. Instead of examining things as they are, feeling the moment of true reality as it arises, people habitually are inclined to project their memories and images of the past and hopes of the future onto their present moments. With nothing left of the present, they “feel” nothing of the precious moment.

There is no present for them. They merely exist as the past (which is gone) or the future (which does not come)—they do not live the present; hence, they do not live at all. Existence seeks its own time, its own kind. It loathes change, and seek permanence and eternity, to fixed ideas and dogmas. They try to fix such ideas around a self they imagine to be fixed and abiding. But the self that learns is a changing self—hence, they do not learn, cannot learn; they can only *think* and *know*.

They *think* that their lives are empty, they only *know* a profound sense of lack, and *see* an existential abyss, which they try to fill with what they try to measure of what others seem to have or to be. Hence, they are caught in the thick (*puthu*) of the crowd (*vagga*), running after one another, hoping to sap some soul or success from others [2.4.2]—piling up a growing burden of acquisitions (*upadhi*). Instead, we should be examining our own self, discovering our potential for truth and beauty, and realizing them in this life itself. [2.3.1]

2.4.2 (S 715b) “the people of the crowd, fixed on the false” (*puthū janatāya adhammā niviṭṭhā*) [= Tha 1217b]

The Commentary only gives a psychological explanation of **S 715b**, that is, we should not join the faction or crowd of defilements (*kilesa, vagga*) (SA 1:270,16 f)—which is, of course, wise advice. Besides this *prescriptive* interpretation, we should also examine the *descriptive* reality of crowd conduct and wrong views, which bring on and feed crowd conduct and a crowded mind.

2.4.3 (S 715c) “Who falls not at all for their groups [tribes]” (*na ca vagga, gat’assa kuhiñci*) [= Tha 1217c]

There is also a social explanation for S 715b, and this is related to **Sn 371b**, where we find the expression *vagga, gates na vagga, sari dhīro*:

<i>Saddho sutavā niyama, dassī</i>		Faithful, learned, with vision of the way, ⁴⁹
<i>vagga, gatesu na vagga, sari dhīro</i>		not flowing with the factious crowd, the wise,
<i>lobhaṃ dosaṃ vineyya paṭighaṃ</i>		having pushed away greed, hate, repulsion,
<i>sammā so loke paribbajeya</i>	(Sn 371)	would rightly renounce in the world.

The wise sage has faith in the 3 jewels⁵⁰ and is learned in the teachings and truth.⁵¹ With that faith and wisdom, he does not fall for views, no matter how popular, complex or convincing. He is not caught and carried away but the crowd or current of popular ideas or beliefs, no matter how big the crowd, especially those of a big crowd, a tribal cult. They are all caught in the perfect net of the 62 bases of

⁴⁸ **D 22**, 19.5/2:308 f + 20/2:309 (SD 13.2) respectively.

⁴⁹ Seeing the rightness of the noble eightfold path, ie, reaching the path as a saint (SnA 365,18).

⁵⁰ On faith in the 3 jewels, see **Buddhānussati**, SD 15.7; **Dhammānussati**, SD 15.9; **Saṅghānussati**, SD 15.10a; also **The one true refuge**, SD 3.1.

⁵¹ On learning the Dharma, see **Levels of learning**, SD 40a.4.

wrong views (SnA 365,21-24) [2.4.1.2]. Having overcome all the negative emotions, he is a true renunciant in the world.

Avoiding both the psychological and social wildernesses, the wise diligently move with faith and wisdom towards the path of awakening. Even if he has to go alone, he walks the path of self-reliance heading for self-awakening in this life itself, as taught, for example, in **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1).⁵²

2.4.4 (S 715d) “nor is ever wicked in speech—he is a monk” (*no pana duṭṭhulla,bhāṇī sa bhikkhu*) [= Tha 1217d]

2.4.4.1 The Porāṇa Ṭikā (the ancient subcommentary) on the Sutta explains “wicked speech” (*duṭṭhulla,vacanāṃ*) as talk connected with sensuality (*kāma,paṭisaṃyutta,kathā*).⁵³ The Majjhima Porāṇa Ṭikā on the Sandaka Sutta (M 76) equates this kind of talk as “talk related to the household life” (*geha-s-suta,katha*).⁵⁴ Of course, “talk” (*kathā*) can be broadly taken as “language,” in the sense of any kind of media or manner that relates to the worldly ways of the householder, which would distract the renunciant from the holy life, and the dharmafarer from his practice.

2.4.4.2 The Vaṅgīsa Thera,gāthā (Tha 1217d) reads instead ***no pana duṭṭhulla-g,gāhī***, “one grasps not at the corrupt.” Its commentary explains this as the taking up of wrong views (ThaA 3:191,4). We see an interesting development here, where both readings are right and applicable. In the case of **the (Vaṅgīsa) Aratī Sutta** (S 715d), Vaṅgīsa, speaking from his own experience, advises us to avoid talk about the household life, especially with a renunciant. In his **Thera,gāthā**, he reminds the monks specifically, and to the laity generally, not to fall into wrong views.

It is helpful to remember that the Buddha or the arhats may—and perhaps often do—speak the same teachings a number of times to different audiences. The monks preserve such teachings as they have heard them. Hence, often enough we may have slightly different versions of what we see as the same sutta, verse or teaching. What we are looking at or listening to here are *not* scribal text but a dynamic **oral tradition**. Anyway, no matter how the Buddha or the arhats present their teachings, they all keep to the drift of the Dharma (*dharm’advaya*).⁵⁵

2.5 S 716 = Tha 1218

2.5.1 (S 716a) “Worthy, long delighting in a settled mind” (*dabbo cira,ratta,samāhito*) [= 1218a]

2.5.1.1 The word ***dabba***, “worthy,” is not often used as an adjective in the suttas.⁵⁶ *Dabba* (cognate with Sanskrit *dravya*, “thing”) means “fit (for), able, worthy, good.”⁵⁷ In English idiom, we may imagine

⁵² S 25.1 (SD 16.7).

⁵³ SAPṬ:Be 1:283.

⁵⁴ MAPṬ:Be 2:108.

⁵⁵ **Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16,1.17), SD 9; **Sampasādanīya S** (D 28,2) + SD 14.14 (2.3.2). Doctrinally, this quality is the 5th of the 5 natural orders; see *pañca,niyama*, SD 5.6 (2).

⁵⁶ It is the name of an arhat, **Dabba Malla,putta** of Anupiya, son of a Malla rajah (UA 430; VA 3:576), who becomes a monk at 7 years old. He is the foremost of monks who appoint lodgings (*senāsana,paññāpakānaṃ*, A 1:24; VA 3:576). He is called Dabba because he is said to be born of his mother while she was being cremated. When the flames were extinguished, the child was found lying on one of the posts of the pyre (*dabba-t,thambhe*) (AA 1:274,-13; ThaA 1:43,13 f). But this is the other meaning of *dabba*, “wood,” ie, a different word although sounding the same.

⁵⁷ S 1:187 = Tha 1218; eg *~jātika*, “of good material, fit for, able” (M 1:114; A 1:254; Vism 196); *~sambhāra*, a gift worth giving (J 4:311, 5:48, 6:427; DhA 1:321, 2:114; PvA 114 for *samhāra*).

such a worthy person to be “a man of substance,” who works for the greater good, who holds supreme what’s right and good, who accepts personal responsibility, who has a heart of boundless love and beauty, who sees the best in others, and above all is at peace with himself and the world.

2.5.1.2 The phrase *cira,ratta,samāhito* [S 716a] is glossed by the Commentaries as “one whose mind has been stilled for a long time.”⁵⁸ This means that *ratta* is taken as “night,” which in *cira,ratta*, “long night” is a Pali expression meaning for a significantly long time.⁵⁹

However, we can also take *ratta* as the past participle of *rajjati* or *rañjati*, “to delight in” (usually in a negative sense but may be positive in this context). Hence, we can construe *cira,ratta,samāhita* as “one who has long delighted in mental stillness or samadhi.”⁶⁰

2.5.2 (S 716b) “not deceitful, wisely careful, longing-free” (*akuhako nipako apihālu*) [= Tha 1218b]

2.5.2.1 If the arhat Vaṅgīsa says this, clearly he is referring to some social realities of his day. When the Buddha and his monastic sangha became well-respected and well-supported, it aroused the jealousy and ire of other sectarian communities and teachers who saw their own status and wealth diminishing.⁶¹ A growing number of dissemblers joined the sangha to parasitise the Buddhist goodwill.⁶²

2.5.2.2 The word *nipaka* has the same derivation as the term in Sanskrit (both Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit and Sanskrit). It is a tatsama, a term which means the word is the same both in Pali and in Sanskrit; hence, we can learn much of the Pali word from the Sanskrit. *Nipaka* comes from Sanskrit *nipa*, “chief, master, leader” + the adjectival suffix *-ka*; hence, “like a (good) leader.” Its dictionary meaning is “clever, intelligent, wise, prudent.”⁶³

Nipaka is one of the many near-synonyms for “wise”—like *dhīmā*, *dhirā*, *paññavā*, *paṇḍita*, *matima*, *medhāvī*, *vidū*, *viññū*, *sappaññā* and *buddhimā*. Such adjectives can also function as nouns, and often do, such as *paṇḍita*, “a wise or learned man.” In the case of *nipaka*, it also has a sense of carefulness or prudence; hence, it is helpful to translate it as something like “wisely careful” or “prudent,” depending on the context. The arhat or the saint is “wisely careful, prudent.” [S 716b]

An example of someone who is “not prudent” (*anipaka*) would be the monk **Sāti**, as recorded in **the Mahā Tanhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 38). Despite the Buddha’s teaching on impermanence, conditionality and non-self, Sāti holds on to his previous essentialist Upanishadic view of “this same consciousness, not another, that runs and flows through the rounds of births.” In other words, he believes that there is an abiding soul. (SD 7.10)

2.5.2.3 The word *apihālu*, “longing-free” or “not covetous,” is rare in the suttas.⁶⁴ It is formed thus: *a* (negative prefix) + *pihā* (“longing, desire, envy”)⁶⁵ + adjectival suffix (*ā*)*lu* (Sadd 790,18), “undesirous,

⁵⁸ *Cira,ratta,samāhito*’ti dīgha,rattam samāhita,citto (SA 1:270,19); “who is mentally focused from a long time past” (*cira,kālato paṭṭhāya samāhito*, ThaA 3:191,8).

⁵⁹ For an interesting example, see Sn 1071.

⁶⁰ A similar case can be made of *ratta* in *bhadd’eka,ratta*, a tr of which may be “one who delights in the blessed ones (of mind)”: see SD 8.9 (1.4+1.5).

⁶¹ See eg **Sundarī S** (U 4.8), SD 49.23; **Bāhitika S** (M 88), SD 49.12.

⁶² See eg SD 11.1 (3.1).

⁶³ V 1:350,4 = Sn 45; D 2:267,5*; A 3:24,10; It 28,1*; Tha 85; Vbh 426,11*. See DP sv.

⁶⁴ Sn 852; S 1:187,6* = Tha 1218.

⁶⁵ **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44) says “with longing as condition, there is grief” (*pihā,paccayā domanassam*, M 44/-1:304,1). See also J 1:197; Vism 392.

unenvious” (CPD). The Commentary glosses *apihālu* as “craving-free” (*nittaṇho*, SA 1:270,21).⁶⁶ As such, it is a simple non-technical Pali word.

An example of a *pihālu* person, one “filled with craving or longing” is **Ariṭṭha**, as related in **the Alagaddūpama Sutta** (M 22). Ariṭṭha holds the wrong view that sensual pleasures (including sexuality) are not a stumbling-block to the holy life. He thinks that *one can enjoy sensual pleasure without sensual desire*. Despite the Buddha’s exhortation, Ariṭṭha holds on to his wrong view. (SD 3.13)

2.5.3 (S 716c) “the sage who has won the peaceful state” (*santaṃ padaṃ ajjhagamā muni paṭicca*) [= Tha 1218 c]

The sage (*muni*) is clearly an arhat, fully self-awakened one like the Buddha, since he “**has won the peaceful state**.” “The peaceful state” (*santaṃ padaṃ*) is nirvana (*nibbāna*) (SA 1:270,21). The Commentary explains: “On account of nirvana, fully quenched by the nirvana of defilements, he awaits the time of his parinirvana⁶⁷ (ie, the nirvana-element without residue).⁶⁸”

2.5.4 (S 716d) “by which, fully quenched, he bides his time” (*parinibbuto kaṅkhati kālaṃ*) [= Tha 1218d]

An arhat’s death is the final one, where, with the body’s breaking up, there is no more rebirth for him. An arhat has neither lust for life nor love for death—he lives the moment happily to the very last. Of this, the arhat **Sāriputta** sings:

I delight not in death, nor do I delight in life; | I shall cast aside this body fully aware and mindful.
I delight not in death, nor do I delight in life; | I await my time as a servant his wages. (Tha 1002 f)⁶⁹

— — —

(Vaṅgīsa) Aratī Sutta

The (Vaṅgīsa) Discourse on Discontent

S 8.2

1 Thus have I heard.

Nigrodha,kappa

At one time, the venerable Vaṅgīsa was staying with his preceptor, the venerable Nigrodha,kappa, in the Agg’ālava shrine outside Āḷavi.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ For philological details of *apihālu*, see Sn:N 354 n852.

⁶⁷ *Paṭicca parinibbuto kaṅkhati kālaṃ*’ti nibbānaṃ paṭicca kilesa,parinibbānena parinibbuto parinibbāna,kālaṃ āgameti (SA 1:270,23-25).

⁶⁸ *Anupādisesa,nibbana,kālaṃ*, SAPṬ:Be

⁶⁹ Further see SD 48.2 (3.8.2.1).

⁷⁰ *Ekam samayaṃ āyasmā vaṅgīso āḷaviyaṃ viharati aggālave cetiye āyasmatā nigrodha,kappena upajjhāyena saddhiṃ*.

2 Now, at that time, the venerable Nigrodha,kappa, upon returning from his almsround, after his meal, would enter his dwelling, and would come out only in the evening or on the following day.⁷¹

3 At that time, the venerable Vaṅgīsa became dissatisfied. Lust had polluted his mind.⁷²

Vaṅgīsa’s lamentation

4 Then, it occurred to the venerable Vaṅgīsa:⁷³

“What a loss for me!⁷⁴ This is no gain for me!⁷⁵ Not a gain is this for me!⁷⁶ Not easy is gain for me!⁷⁷

That dissatisfaction should have arisen in me; that lust has polluted my mind!⁷⁸

5 How can anyone ever dispel my dissatisfaction here and give rise to satisfaction?⁷⁹

How now shall I myself dispel my dissatisfaction, so that satisfaction would arise?⁸⁰

Vaṅgīsa’s lion-roar

6 Then, the venerable Vaṅgīsa, having by himself dispelled his dissatisfaction, giving rise to satisfaction, on that occasion, uttered these verses:

7 *Aratiñ ca⁸¹ ratiñ ca pahāya*

sabbaso gehasitañ ca vitakkaṃ

vanathaṃ na kareyya kuhiñci

nibbanatho⁸² arato⁸³ sa hi bhikkhu

(S 712)

Having abandoned dislike and delight,

and all thoughts of the household life,

one should not make a craving-forest of anything.

The lust-free [without any inclination] is out of lust’s

woods—he is indeed a monk.

= Tha 1214⁸⁴

⁷¹ *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmā nigrodhakappo pacchābhataṃ piṇḍapātaṭṭikkanto vihāraṃ pavisati, sāyaṃ vā nikkhamati aparajju vā kāle.*

⁷² Whole line: *Tena kho pana samayena āyasmato vaṅgīsassa anabhirati uppannā hoti, rāgo cittaṃ anuddhamseti.*

⁷³ **Vaṅgīsa’s lamentation(s)** form one of the most moving passages in Buddhist literature evoking the spiritual struggle of a man of creative powers to overcome his negative emotions, esp lust.

⁷⁴ *Alābhā vata me.* Vaṅgīsa laments not able to regularly learn from his teacher.

⁷⁵ *Na vata me lābhā.* Reflecting on his dissatisfaction, he sees neither benefit (*attha*) nor profit (*lābha*) from it.

⁷⁶ *Dulladdham vata me.* Noting the lust in his mind, he sees it as potentially harmful.

⁷⁷ *Na vata me suladdham.* He is determined to work to rid himself of both the dissatisfaction and the lust: see next 3 sentences.

⁷⁸ *Alābhā vata me, na vata me lābhā; dulladdham vata me, na vata me suladdham; yassa me anabhirati uppannā, rāgo cittaṃ anuddhamseti.*

⁷⁹ *Tañ kut’ettha labbhā, yaṃ me paro anabhiratiṃ vinodetvā abhiratiṃ uppādeyya.*

⁸⁰ *Yan nūnāhaṃ attanā’va attano anabhiratiṃ vinodetvā abhiratiṃ uppādeyyan’ti.*

⁸¹ Ee *aratiṃ* (omits *ca*).

⁸² Comy on **Nava,kammika S** (S 7.17,7), SD 50.34, glosses *nibbanatha* as “out of the forest of defilements” (*nikkilesa,vano*, SA 1:264,27).

⁸³ So Be Ce Ee Tha:Ee *avanatho*, “free of desire’s forest”; S:Ee Se *anato* [2.1.4.2; CPD: a-nata]; SA 1:269,27 (lemma) *araṇo*, “without conflict” [M 139,2 n, SD 7.8]. Comy glosses, “*arato* means without lust or delight” (***arato tanhā,-rati,rahito***, SA 1:269). All the variant readings give the same sense of being free from defilements.

⁸⁴ Also tr at SD 50.2 (1.1.5.1) with variant readings.

- 8 *Yam idha pathaviñ ca vehāsam
rūpa,gatañ ca jagat’ogadham⁸⁵
kiñci pariñiyati sabbam aniccam
evam samecca caranti mutattā⁸⁸* (S 713) Whatever there is here on earth or in the sky,
made of form, caught in the world,
it⁸⁶ is all impermanent, it will decay⁸⁷—
the wise fare on understanding this. = Tha 1215
- 9 *Upadhīsu janā gadhitā⁸⁹
diṭṭha,sute paṭighe ca mute ca
ettha vinodaya chandam anejo
yo ettha na limpati tam munim āhu.* (S 714) People are bound to their acquisitions [things],⁹⁰
to what is seen, heard, sensed and touched.
Who here, having rid of desire, unshaken,
—he is called a sage who clings to nothing here. [187]
= Tha 1216
- 10 *Atha saṭṭhi,sitā⁹¹ sa,vitakkā⁹²
puthu,janatāya⁹³ adhamma,niviṭṭhā⁹⁴
na ca vagga,gatassa kuhiñci
no pana duṭṭhulla,bhāñī⁹⁵ sa bhikkhu.* (S 715) Then, they, full of thoughts, are dependent on the 60,
the people of the crowd, fixed on the false.
Who falls not at all for such groups [tribes],
nor is ever wicked in speech—he is a monk.
= Tha 1217
- 11 *Dabbo cira,ratta,samāhito
akuhako nipako apihālu
santam padam ajjhagamā muni paṭicca
parinibbuto kañkhati kālan ti.* (S 716) Worthy, long delighting in a settled mind,
not deceitful, wisely careful, longing-free—
the sage who has won the peaceful state,
by which, fully quenched, he bides his time.
= Tha 1218

— evam —

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⁸⁵ Comy tales *jagat’ogadham* to mean what exists *inside* the earth, such as the naga realms (SA 1:270,3), which is culturally dated. Dhammapāla gives a broader explanation, as the world-bound, conditioned, encompassed in the 3 “existences” (the sense-, form- and formless worlds) (*jagat’ogadham lokikam bhava-t,taya,pariyāpannam sañkhatam*, ThaA 3:190,4 7).

⁸⁶ “It” stands for *kiñci* which correlates with *yam* in line a.

⁸⁷ Comy says that this refers to the 3 universal characteristics and is the elder’s “great insight” (*mahā,vipassanā*) (SA 1:190,8-10).

⁸⁸ See comy [2.2.3].

⁸⁹ Be ThA (text & lemma) *gadhitāse*.

⁹⁰ Or “rebirth-bases.” See SD 28.11 (3.2); SD 51.24 (2.5.2.3 (3) n) acquisitions. [2.3.1]

⁹¹ Be *saṭṭhi,nissitā*; Ce Ee2 Se *saṭṭhi,sitā*; Ee *saṭṭhita,sitā*.

⁹² Ee *vitakkā*.

⁹³ Only Be *puthū janatāya*.

⁹⁴ Be Ce Ee *adhammā niviṭṭhā*; Ce Ee2 Se *adhamma,niviṭṭhā*.

⁹⁵ Tha *duṭṭhulla-g,gāhī*, “(not) grasping at the corrupt,” ie, taking up wrong views (ThaA 3:191,4).