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**Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta**The Discourse to Prince Bodhi | **M 85**

Theme: Happiness cannot really come from suffering

Translated &amp; annotated by Piya Tan ©2008, 2013, 2019

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A collation of parallel sutta accounts of **the Buddha's life from the renunciation to teaching the 5 monks** can be found in **Table 7** of SD 49.4 (7.1.3).

**1 Sutta texts, summary and significance****1.1 SUTTA SOURCES AND RELATED TEXTS****1.1.1 Sources**

**1.1.1.1 The Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85), "the discourse to Prince Bodhi," records a meeting between the Buddha and prince Bodhi. The account of the Buddha's arrival at the newly built Kokanada palace [§§2-9] recurs in **the Vinaya** in the preamble to the rules regarding monastics stepping on white cloths spread out by the laity for purposes of gaining blessings.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cv 5.21.1-3 @ V 2:127,15-129,37: see **Cela,pattikā V** (SD 55.8).

**1.1.1.2** Besides the Vinaya [1.1.1.1], stories related to prince Bodhi are found in the Dhammapada Commentary as **Bodhi,raja.kumāra Vatthu**, “the story of prince Bodhi” (DhA 12.1). We are told that after the fabulous Kokanada palace was built, prince Bodhi thought of killing its architect so that no other similar palaces would be built. He confided his cruel plan to Sañjikā,putta. Troubled by this injustice and cruelty, Sañjika,putta secretly warned the builder, who then surreptitiously built a sort of wooden bird-plane and escaped with his family into the Himalayas.

This story also mentions Bodhi’s covering the palace floor with white cloths down to the last step of the palace stairway, and inviting the Buddha to bless the palace as its first occupant [1.2.1]. The Buddha then relates a story of the past, explaining why Bodhi and his queen were unable to have children. At the story’s close, he admonishes him to value life and be vigilant all the time. [SD 55.9].

**1.1.1.3** Although this discourse does not have a Chinese parallel, there is the Chinese cognate for his name **bodhi** given in the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya (T1421),<sup>2</sup> that is, 菩提 *pú tí*. It corresponds to the Pali as given in the parallel passage in the Pali Vinaya (V 2:127,20).

Parts of a version of it have been preserved in **the Sanskrit Dīrgha Āgama**.<sup>3</sup> Although at least one Sanskrit fragment (SHT IV 160 fol 20Rc), gives the prince’s name as *bodhi*, most **Sanskrit** fragments refer to him as “prince Bodha.”<sup>4</sup> This variant could have arisen from loss of the final *-i-* vowel (which is often just a tiny mark attached to *-dh-*) so that we are only *bodh*, which is read with the inherent vowel as *bo.dha*.

**1.1.1.4** The colophon (*uddāna*)<sup>5</sup> in folio 299V3 (Hartmann 2004b:123), for example, reads *bodhaḥ*, suggesting the title *Bodhaḥ-sūtra*. It is possible that the *uddāna* may have abbreviated the title, which by way of analogy to the Pali version may have fully been *Bodha,raja.kumāra-sūtra*. In fact, there are newly discovered **Sanskrit fragments** of this text, most likely belonging to a manuscript of the Sarvāstivādins of Central Asia, where the text is called the *\*Bodharājakumārasūtra*.<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2 SUTTA INTRODUCTION [§§1-9]

**1.2.1 Bodhi wishes for a child.** The **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85) records the events around a meal-offering by prince Bodhi to the Buddha [§§1-6] on the occasion of the house-blessing of his new palace, the Kokanada. Bodhi has the palace floor covered with white cloths right down to the very lowest step of the palace stairway. He is childless and wishes for one: thus, he hopes that the Buddha’s stepping on the

<sup>2</sup> T1421 (T22.74b13).

<sup>3</sup> Folios 342-343 in Hartman 2004b:129-131; a complete version is in folios 340-344 in Silverlock 2009. Other fragments are found in the Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden (SHT): see Analayo 2011:478 n187.

<sup>4</sup> See eg SHT IV 33 fol 21V3, SHT IV 180 fol 1R3, SI B/14 2A3 (Bongard-Levin 1989:510); fol 342V3 (Hartmann 2004b:129).

<sup>5</sup> Technically, *uddāna* means “the binding, stringing together; a set of things strung together,” thus: (1) a string or bundle (of fish); (2) a list of items, captions, titles strung together, esp a (versified) table of contents, summary. Here, the 2<sup>nd</sup> is meant by “colophon” (the traditional sense).

<sup>6</sup> Grigorij M Bongard-Levin, “Three new fragments of the *Bodhirājakumārasūtra* from Eastern Turkestan,” in JAOS 109 1989:509-512, quoted in J-U Hartmann, “Sanskrit fragments from the *Āgamas* (I): The *Aṅgulimālasūtra*,” *Indologica Taurinensia* 23-24 1997-98:352. Other fragments are SHT III 997 B (p259), SHT IV 33 fol 17-28 + 35 (pp 162-170, 174, the last identified in SHT VIII p162; see also SHT VIII p161-162 + SHT IX p369), SHT IV 165 fol 20-24 (pp194-198, see also SHT IX p378), SHT IV 180 fol 1-2 (pp211-213, see also SHT VII p247), SHT VI 1361 (pp96 f), SHT VI 1373a (p103), SHT IX 2063d (p80), SHT XI 4573, Hoernle frag 149/280, ed as no 12 (Hartmann 1991:77), corresponding to Or 15009/106 (Kudo 2009:172 f), frag SI B/14 1-3 (Bongard-Levin 1989), Hoernle fragment Or 15004/-76 (Wille 2009:91), Or 15009/187 (Melzer 2009:220).

cloths will grant his wish [§7.2]. This is, of course, a superstition common in ancient India, and, understandably, desperation amongst the childless desiring for a child.<sup>7</sup> [1.2.2]

**1.2.2 Bodhi's wrong view.** Upon arriving at the palace entrance (the bottom of the stairway), the Buddha stops and remains silent, despite Bodhi's inviting him to step on the cloths [§7.3-7.7]. Ānanda, understanding the Buddha, asks Bodhi to have the cloths removed, which he does. The meal-offering proceeds as planned. [§8]. At the end of the meal-offering [§9.1], Bodhi makes a statement reminiscent of Jain teaching: "**Happiness [Pleasure] is not to be found through pleasure; happiness is to be found through pain.**" [§9.2]

### 1.3 THE NOBLE QUEST AND THE DHARMA: TEACHINGS TO PRINCE BODHI

#### 1.3.1 A summary

**1.3.1.1** The Buddha reassures Bodhi that he (the Buddha), too, held this very same view just before his awakening [§10]. The bulk of the rest of the Sutta [§§11-57] presents the Buddha's account of **his quest and awakening** as a lesson for Bodhi [§§10-42]. These accounts are found elsewhere and serve as a valuable canonical source on the Buddha's biography.<sup>8</sup>

**1.3.1.2** When the Buddha concludes his main teaching, Bodhi asks how long it would take for one who takes the Buddha as a "discipline master" (*vinayaka*) to attain the goal (awakening) [§55]. The Buddha reassures Bodhi that happiness and pleasure are incompatible. Starting with **the parable of elephant training** [§§55-57], which Bodhi is very familiar with [2.5], the Buddha then teaches him how happiness arises from **the 5 limbs of striving**: faith, health, honesty, energy and wisdom [§58].

**1.3.1.3** The Buddha then tells Bodhi, in answer to his question [§55] that a renunciant training in the Dharma, vinaya may take up to 7 years, or, with proper instruction, may take only just half-a-day [§59]. Bodhi exults at the quickness of one's attaining awakening [§60].

When Bodhi's confidant, the brahmin youth **Sañjikā,putta** [4], loudly wonders why Bodhi does not go for refuge [§61], Bodhi replies that he has done so twice before (when he is still in his mother's womb, and as a young boy) [§§62 f]. The Sutta closes with Bodhi going for refuge the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. [§64]

#### 1.3.2 Pleasure does *not* come from pain [§§10-57]

**1.3.2.1** The Buddha's teachings in **the Bodhi Rāja, kumāra Sutta** (M 85) are given in response to prince Bodhi's remark that pleasure comes from pain, or, as he puts it: "**Happiness [Pleasure] is not to be found through pleasure; happiness is to be found through pain**" [§10]. This wrong view is a key tenet in Jainism. However, it is unlikely that Bodhi was influenced by Jainism since we are told that he has twice gone for refuge in the 3 jewels before this meeting with the Buddha: the first time was while he was still in his mother's womb [§62] and the second time as a young boy [§63].

It is possible that prince Bodhi's wrong view—that happiness comes from pain—is what we today would call "reverse psychology." He feels that he should be happy even though he is unable to have a child. As for himself, he is a royal prince (*raja, kumāra*), the son of king Udena and queen Vāsula, dattā, and his maternal grandfather is Caṇḍa-p, pajjota, king of Avantī. And now he has a fabulous palace, Koka-nada. He should be happy!

<sup>7</sup> For a longer discussion, see **Cela, pattikā V** (SD 55.3 (1.2)).

<sup>8</sup> For a collation table of sutta sources of this account, see SD 49.4, Table 7.

**1.3.2.2** From the story of prince Bodhi given in **the Bodhi Rāja, kumāra Vatthu** (DhA 12.1), it is said that he is so impressed with his newly built Kokanada palace that he does not want anyone else to have such luxury—he plans to kill its architect! This dark trait of his suggests that he finds delight in the lack of others, such as those who do not have the grandeur of the likes of his fabulous palace.

**1.3.2.3** In response to Bodhi’s wrong view that pleasure comes from pain, the Buddha tells him that when he was still an unawakened bodhisattva seeking awakening, he, too, held the same view. Then, he gives an autobiographical review of his life from his renunciation up to the awakening of the 5 monks [see Contents for a list of episodes].

**1.3.2.4** The key account in this connection is, of course, that of the Bodhisattva’s **self-mortification** [§§18-28]. This account of his bodily deprivation is preceded by **the parable of the fire-sticks** [§§15-17], that reflects the necessity of moral virtue in spiritual growth, thus:

- (1) A sappy stick soaked in water when rubbed with an upper stick will never start a fire. This represents those who *think* sensual thoughts and *bodily* indulge in them. They lack the moral ground for the mind to free itself from the senses to attain dhyana to calm and clear the mind for higher cultivation.
- (2) A sappy stick left on dry ground, far away from water, when rubbed with an upper fire-stick will still not produce fire. This is like one who does not *bodily* indulge in sensual pleasures but still *thinks* about them. Their mind is still not free from the senses to attain dhyana to calm and clear the mind for higher cultivation.
- (3) A dry stick on dry land far away from water, when rubbed with an upper fire-stick will start a fire and produce heat. Even so, only when both the body and mind are free from sensual indulgence will it be able to attain dhyana to calm and clear the mind for higher cultivation.

**1.3.2.5** The Bodhisattva has earlier on mastered the 2 highest meditations humanly or divinely possible. From Ājāra Kālāma<sup>9</sup> he learns the formless attainment of **the base of nothingness**<sup>10</sup> [§12], and from Uddaka Rāma,putta, he learns the formless attainment of **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**<sup>11</sup> taught by Uddaka’s late father, Rāma.<sup>12</sup> Despite attaining the highest meditations, the Bodhisattva is unable to realize awakening. This then is as far as the mind is able to transcend the body in meditation.

Despite mastering the mind, he fails to open the doors of liberation. Could it be, then, that he should conquer **the body**? With this rationale that the body must be purged of all pleasures, he embarked on self-mortification for 6 long years! As stated in **the Satta Vassa Sutta** (S 4.24), Māra shadows the Buddha throughout this period but is unable to find any fault in the Bodhisattva, and even a year after that, he is unable to see any wrong in the Buddha.<sup>13</sup>

**1.3.2.6** The Bodhisattva at that time views (wrongly) that liberation, or at least happiness and pleasure, must surely come from pain. This is not just physical pain; it is *a self-deprivation* of all bodily pleasures. He describes the first and simplest of his self-mortifications, thus: “Suppose, **with my teeth clenched and my tongue pressed against my palate**, I beat down, hold back, and crush the mind with

<sup>9</sup> See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 16,15), SD 1.11.

<sup>10</sup> See **Ākiñcaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.7), SD 24.17.

<sup>11</sup> See **N’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana Pañha S** (S 40.8), SD 24.18.

<sup>12</sup> See **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 16,16), SD 1.11.

<sup>13</sup> S 4.24/1:122-124 (SD 36.5 (1.1.3)); SA 1:185.

mind.” [§18]. Great pain arose in him but it “did not invade my mind and remain.” This is because he is already a master of dhyana, as we have noted [1.3.2.5].

His next self-mortifying practice is that of holding the breath, the very support of life itself: “... I stopped my in-breaths and out-breaths through my mouth, nose and ears.” [§20 etc]. He describes the excruciating pains that attend such practices, but, as before he is able to withstand them [§§19-24].

Finally, he decides to deprive himself of food, such as, taking only a periodic handful of pulse soup. This deprivation leaves his body literally with only skin and bone, and rotting away at the very hair root! His whole body turns unhealthily dark. And when he squatted to do his toilet, he falls over on his face on account of his weakness [§26.3]. He has reached the extreme limits of physical endurance but is no nearer the path of salvation.

### **1.3.3 Renunciation is the path to true happiness** (§10)

**1.3.3.1** Prince Bodhi believes that pleasure comes from pain. To correct this wrong view the Buddha relates how **he renounces the world**—he leaves behind all his family, friends, servants and worldly possessions—to be on his own, living on daily almsfood as a monk. If pain and hardship were to bring pleasure, surely such a life of renunciation would bring greater happiness than that of a prince with a fabulous palace!

**1.3.3.2** An interesting point to note here is that the account of the Bodhisattva’s renunciation found in **the Bodhi Rāja, kumāra Sutta** (M 85) only mentions that Gotama leaves home “**while still young, a black-haired young lad endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life**” right before his grieving parents<sup>14</sup> [§11]. There is no hint of Gotama being a royal prince like Bodhi. We only know that Gotama comes from the kshatriya clan, which, however, would place him in the same social class as Bodhi. But that’s about all we know from the suttas of Gotama’s social background. Anyway, from what is described of Gotama in **the Sukhumāla Sutta** (A 3.38), we can be certain that he comes from a family of means.<sup>15</sup>

### **1.3.4 Full awakening** (§§29-43)

**1.3.4.1** The turning-point in the Bodhisattva’s quest is his realization of **the middle way**. It is like we are travellers lost in a desert, all parched, thirsty, hungry and weak. Then, we discover that we have been moving around in a circle. Then, we see a bluff which we carefully climb and, from its top, look around. We see an oasis not too far away. Now we know where we should head for.

That “oasis” is **the dhyana meditation** that the 7-year-old child Gotama did under a jambul tree during the ploughing festival of the Sakyas. In fact, Gotama attained the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana on that occasion. Recalling this experience after 6 years of self-mortification is like the darkest night suddenly becomes clear when the clouds move away and the full moon beams in the sky.

All this while, Gotama has been painfully striving with wrong views, and suffering for them, because he thinks that *all* pleasures are bad and must be avoided. It then occurs to him: “**I fear not the pleasure that has nothing to do with sensual desires and unwholesome states!**” [§30.2].

This pleasure is, of course, that of **dhyana** (*jhāna*): **the 4 dhyanas**, to be exact. However, in order to progress spiritually, he has to gain some bodily strength and regain his health: he takes some proper

<sup>14</sup> Also at **D 4,6/1:115 = 5,6/1:129 = M 26,14/1:163 = 36,13/1:240 = 85,11/1:93 = S 1.20,4/1:9**; further see SD 49.18 (1.2.1.3); SD 51.15 (1.3.1.1 f).

<sup>15</sup> A 3.38/1:145 f @ SD 5.16(19.4.2) (abr), SD 63.7 (full).

food [§31.2]. Since Gotama is already an accomplished meditator, he easily gets into the dhyanas [§§32-35].

Emerging from them, he finds his mind supremely calm and clear, so that he is able to effectively direct it to **the 3 knowledges** of recalling his own past lives [§36], reviewing the arising and passing away of beings [§38], and, most importantly, gains the “knowledge of the destruction of the influxes” [§40], that is, he is freed from craving, from existence and from ignorance. With this, he gains true knowledge, that is, the 4 noble truths [§40.2], and so becomes **the Buddha**, the fully self-awakened [§42.2].

**1.3.4.2** We should recall here that the Buddha is recounting his spiritual quest to prince Bodhi to correct his wrong view that pleasure comes from pain [1.3.2]. The Bodhisattva’s struggle with self-mortification clearly shows that we cannot be free from suffering by indulging in it. No pleasure arises from this bodily torment. Spiritual pleasure, on the other hand, is healing and instructive; it calms and clears the mind. **Dhyanic bliss** is the foundation for a clear mind that is able to see the path of awakening and reach nirvana.

### **1.3.5 The Dharma’s depth** (§§44-54)

**1.3.5.1** The newly awakened Buddha in no way looks like any of the sacred images that conventionally depict him in some heroic Indian form or some ideal local figure or some quaint ethnic avatar. Historically, he should be depicted as **an emaciated skin-and-bone meditating figure**, of which we have today some 20 ancient sculptures, especially those from Pakistan and Afghanistan.<sup>16</sup>

**1.3.5.2** Considering his severely emaciated body, the newly awakened Buddha would spend some time deep in dhyanic bliss to rest and recover from the effects of his 6 punishing years of self-mortification. It is said that he actually spends **7 straight weeks**, following the great awakening, meditating in various postures, taking only a short weekly break to stretch and refresh himself.<sup>17</sup>

It is at this time, too, that the Buddha reflects on **the Dharma’s depth**, thus:

“This Dharma I have realized is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, unattainable through discursive thought (or logic) ... (For) this generation revels in attachment, delights in attachment, rejoices in attachment, this state of reality is hard to see, that is to say, specific conditionality and dependent arising. ... if I were to teach the Dharma, and if others would not understand me, that would be tiresome and troubling for me.” [§43.1]

These are the natural passing thoughts of a physically exhausted and recovering newly awakened one.

**1.3.5.3** But this seeming inaction of the Buddha abiding in the bliss of meditation alarmed **Mahā Brahmā** (Sahampati), who construes this as a refusal on the Buddha’s part to declare his awakening to the world of gods and humans for their benefit. After all, Brahmā Sahampati, dwelling in his form heaven, just beyond the grasp of sensual pleasures, has boundless compassionate concern for the well-being and

<sup>16</sup> The most famous of which is the 2<sup>nd</sup>-cent CE Gandhara-style 84-cm high schist statue from Sikri, now in the Lahore Museum, Pakistan [SD 49.4, Fig 28]: [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/bce\\_499\\_400/thebuddha/fasting/fasting.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00routesdata/bce_499_400/thebuddha/fasting/fasting.html). Also <https://artmuseum.indiana.edu/online/highlights/view/entries/166>.

<sup>17</sup> On the Buddha’s 7 weeks after the great awakening, see **Bodhi Ss 1-3** (U 1.1-3), SD 83.13-15; **Nigrodha S** (U 1.4), SD 58.6; V 1:2 f; Comys: VA 5:951-960; MA 2:183-185; UA 51-53; BA 289-290; J 1:77-80; DhsA 12-15. Further see SD 26.1 (5).

spiritual progress of heaven and earth. Brahmā knows, too, that the Buddha is himself both wise and compassionate. Hence, he supplicates the Buddha to declare the Dharma to the world and for posterity, that is, for our sakes. (BA 13)

Or, perhaps, Brahmā is profoundly excited at the arising of the Buddha in this universe. As a 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana brahma, his lifespan is 1 aeon long (the duration of a world-cycle).<sup>18</sup> Passing away in Kassapa Buddha's time [1.3.5.5], he arises as Mahā Brahmā. This means that he has seen the end of Kassapa's dispensation, and now joyfully anticipates the advent of Gotama's dispensation. [1.3.5.6]

**1.3.5.4 The Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** mentions that the Buddha, after his awakening, reflects on **the Dharma's depth** [§43], mentioned above [1.3.5.2], adding that "it was discovered with difficulty ... " and which "**goes against the current** (*paṭisotā,gāmī*) ... profound, hard to see, subtle," that is, the Dharma teaches what is against the grain of the world, "dyed in lust ... shrouded in massive darkness" [§43.7]. The profoundly joyful but utterly exhausted Buddha thought, "My mind (is) inclined to living at ease, rather than teaching the Dharma." [§43.8].

These words are echoed in **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26),<sup>19</sup> **the Āyācana Sutta** (S 6.1)<sup>20</sup> and **the Vinaya**, which adds that this universe-changing event occurs while the Buddha is staying at the foot of the goatherd banyan (*aja,pāla nigrodha*).<sup>21</sup> This event also features in the life of Vipassī Buddha, whose biography is given in great detail in **the Mahā'padāna Sutta** (D 14);<sup>22</sup> and also in the Sanskrit **Mahāvastu**.<sup>23</sup>

**1.3.5.5 Brahmā Sahampati** was an elder monk named Sahaka under Kassapa Buddha,<sup>24</sup> when he attained the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana and mastered it. Upon dying, he is reborn into the 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana Brahma-world as Mahā Brahmā with a lifespan of 1 aeon<sup>25</sup> (BA 12,4-9). The Sutta Nipāta Commentary adds that he (later) arises as **a non-returner** in the pure abodes (SnA 2:476,12-17). This means that he attains non-returning while in the brahma-world, and, with non-returning, has access to the pure abodes, too.<sup>26</sup>

Brahmā Sahampati is also said to be "**the lord of the world**" (*lokādhipati*).<sup>27</sup> By his great moral virtue and the fact that he is a 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana brahma, and, later, a non-returner with access to the pure abodes, he is naturally the "highest" being in terms of moral virtue, living just beyond the sense-world. For this reason, too, he feels a sense of responsibility for the spiritual well-being of both heaven and earth ("gods and humans," *deva,manussa*).

**1.3.5.6** Reading the Buddha's mind [1.3.5.4], Sahampati only perceives the musings of a recuperating meditator who has not yet surveyed the world of beings. Out of profound faith in good and active con-

<sup>18</sup> Since the end or collapse of the sense-world affects neither the form-world nor the formless world, the lifespans of the beings therein are independent of the actual duration of the universe. The "aeon" (*kappa*) that is their lifespan is simply a period of time different from the cosmic aeon.

<sup>19</sup> M 26,19/1:169 (SD 1.11).

<sup>20</sup> S 6.1,3-5/1:136 (SD 12.2).

<sup>21</sup> V 1:5,29-35. See esp SD 12.1 (2).

<sup>22</sup> D 14,3.2/2:37 (SD 49.8a).

<sup>23</sup> Mvst 3:315.

<sup>24</sup> On Kassapa Buddha, see SD 49.3 (2.1).

<sup>25</sup> On the various realms of beings, see SD 1.7 (App).

<sup>26</sup> This idea that Sahampati, while still in the 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana brahma-world, "has access" to the pure abodes (prob the lowest of them, ie, Avihā) is based on the understanding that since Sahampati has mastered dhyana, he is able to further cultivate it up to the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, through which he is able to visit the pure abodes. See SD 49.3 (1.5.2.3).

<sup>27</sup> It is famously said of Sahampati that he is: "Brahmā Sahampati, lord of the world(s)" (*brahmā ca lokādhipati sahampati*) (B 1).

cern for the welfare of sentient beings, Brahmā Sahampati, along with Sakra, Suyāma, Santusita and Paranimmita Vasavatti, the lords of the sense-world heavens, appear before the meditating Buddha.<sup>28</sup> As the seniormost amongst these gods, Sahampati humbly beseeches the Buddha to declare the Dharma to the world. [§44.3]

Immediately responding to **Sahampati's supplication**, the Buddha surveys the world, and envisions it to be like a **lotus-pool**: some lotuses are submerged deep in the dark depths; some are already standing tall in the bright sun; then, there are those numerous lotuses that are just on the surface ready to rise and open as soon as the sun shines. The Buddha's teaching is that radiant sun. [§45]

**1.3.5.7** Tradition has it that the Buddha is simply waiting for Mahā Brahmā, the highest of the Vedic gods, whom the world honours most. If he were to beseech the Buddha to teach, this will only legitimize and promote the Buddha Dharma, so that the world will widely and fully accept it (SA 1:198,25-32).

This is probably pious wishful thinking on the part of Buddhaghosa the commentator. We have no sutta to support this interesting notion. All the same, Sahampati's invitation works to the Buddha's advantage and the world's benefit.<sup>29</sup> In teaching the Dharma for our universal and common good, the Buddha is worthily respected as the "teacher of gods and humans," *satthā deva,manussānaṃ*.<sup>30</sup>

**1.3.5.8** How does this story of Sahampati and the Buddha's declaring the Dharma for our benefit relate to **correcting prince Bodhi's wrong view** that "pleasure comes from pain"? Firstly, the Buddha's awakening arises not from his pains, not even after 6 long years of sustained self-mortification. Upon recalling **the bliss of the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana** he experienced as a 7-year-old boy, he realizes how to rise away from both bodily pain and worldly pleasure. He discovers the "**middle way**" of a pleasure that is not to be feared. For, this is dhyanic pleasure: it calms and clears our mind so that we are able to directly see true reality, which brings the highest bliss—that of awakening itself.

The newly awakened Buddha rejoices for 49 days in this pleasure "not to be feared." At the end of that period, Brahmā Sahampati becomes concerned that the world will not benefit from this higher pleasure and remain fettered and mired by **worldly pleasure** that only brings pain. Sahampati invites the Buddha to teach the Dharma, as an act of teaching us how to live our lives in spiritual pleasure, true happiness, as we work to reach the path of awakening.

#### 1.4 THE CONCLUSION: BODHI'S AFFIRMATION [§§55-64]

##### 1.4.1 Awakening here and now

**1.4.1.1** The Buddha ends the account of his quest of awakening by mentioning how the group of 5 monks themselves attain the "supreme goal," that is, arhathood. Prince Bodhi then asks about when one take the Buddha as one's "guide" (*vinayaka*) [§55.1], how long it will take for him to awaken. The Buddha replies by giving **the parable of the elephant trainer** [2.5.2], which Bodhi is very familiar with since he is a master in the art of elephant training.

Elephant training demands 5 qualities of the apprentice, that is, **the 5 limbs of striving**: he must have *faith, health, honesty, industry and wisdom* [2.6]. Similarly, a pupil to be trained under the Buddha must have these 5 limbs of striving. In such a case, the training may take 7 years. Then, by a scale of "diminishing duration for accomplishment," he may taste the fruit of awakening even within just *half-a-day* [2.7].

<sup>28</sup> BA 10,3 f.

<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the exasperated brahmins ostracized Mahā Brahmā so that almost no brahmin nor their followers worship him henceforth. See SD 49.8b (9.2.2.3).

<sup>30</sup> On the Buddha as teacher of gods and humans, see SD 15.7 (3.7).



**1.4.1.2** Prince Bodhi is simply impressed with the prospect of a pupil under training who is able to awaken in just “half-a-day.” He exults, **praising the 3 jewels** [§60]. When the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta wonders aloud why Bodhi does not **go for refuge**, too [§61], Bodhi replies that he has done so twice before: the first time while still in his mother’s womb [§62], the second time as a young boy [§63], and now, he declares, he himself goes for refuge in the 3 jewels for a third time [§64]. The Sutta concludes here. [1.4.2]

### **1.4.2 Prince Bodhi’s refuge-going**

**1.4.2.1** Near the conclusion of **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85), Bodhi himself relates how, while he is still in the womb of his mother, **Vāsula,dattā** [3.1.1], she visits the Buddha at the Ghosit’ārāma outside Kosambī, and declares that the child, whether a boy or a girl, goes to the 3 jewels as refuge (M 85,62-/2:97). Since Bodhi is not really an independent person yet, we can say this is at best a “vicarious” refuge-going done by the mother on his behalf.

For Bodhi, this vicarious refuge-going is actually the fruit of some past good karma—that he is able to go for refuge in the Buddha even before he is born into this world. Significantly, this is like our going to refuge ritually in a famous monastic or teacher. We have not really understood the Dharma yet; so, we are yet unborn in it, so to speak. Such a refuge-going is more the fruit of some past good karma than a present good deed of ours. For, when we understand the true significance of refuge-going, it is the Dharma that we take as refuge, not a person.<sup>31</sup> Even the Buddha puts the Dharma above himself, as his refuge—as shown in **the Gārava Sutta** (S 6.2), SD 12.3.

**1.4.2.2** Later, after Bodhi’s birth, while still **a child**, his nurse takes him to the Buddha at Bhesakalā,vana and makes a 2<sup>nd</sup> declaration of refuge-going on his behalf (M 85,63). As a child, Bodhi was probably unaware that he was meeting such a special person who is the Buddha. This 2<sup>nd</sup> refuge-going, too, probably meant little or nothing to him.

When he *himself* visits the Buddha, and he *himself* goes to the Buddha for refuge for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. By this time, he is a mature man, and most importantly, he goes for refuge on his own accord. However, we may still regard this as merely a pious gesture to gain merit. Hence, it remains to be seen whether Bodhi’s conduct (body, speech and mind) is up to the moral quality of one who has truly gone for refuge in the Dharma.

**1.4.2.3** Bodhi declares that now he himself goes to the 3 jewels as refuge—**for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time** [§63]. Since this act occurs at the end of an inspiring Dharma teaching from the Buddha himself, and Bodhi does this with great joy and understanding, this refuge-going is the most significant of the 3 refuge-goings in his life.

It is interesting that **Sañjikā,putta** seems to intercede at the right time, hinting that Bodhi should not merely exult in the Dharma, but dedicate himself to it, too. Although the brahmin youth, Sañjikā,putta, is only Bodhi’s confidant, a mere servant, he has the courage, even faith in the Dharma, too, to remind Bodhi of responding fully and properly to this rare conjunction of wholesome karmic conditions. As a spiritual friend, he reminds Bodhi to properly go for refuge, to do so by himself, before the Buddha as witness. [4.4.1]

**1.5 THE SUTTA’S SIGNIFICANCE:** See SD 55.5 (3.1.3).

<sup>31</sup> See **The one true refuge**, SD 3.1 (3); SD 3.14 (14).

## 2 Sutta highlights

**2.1 KOKANADA PALACE.** **Kokanada** (“red lotus”) was the name of the fabulous palace that Bodhi had built in Sumsumāra,giri, Bhagga country, where he lived. Buddhaghosa tells us that it had auspicious towers that were lotus-shaped (*paduma,saṅṭhāno*)<sup>32</sup> with lotus-shaped windows; hence, it was called *kokanada*<sup>33</sup> (MA 3:321). From **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85), we also know that there was a flight of stairs leading up to the palace [§5]. **The Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Vatthu** (DhA 12.1) says that the palace seemed to float in the air (in other words, it seems to hang mid-air).<sup>34</sup>

### 2.1.2 Prince Bodhi’s dark side

**2.1.2.1** The story of **the Kokanada palace** also reveals a dark side of prince Bodhi. The Commentaries tell us that when its building was near completion, the palace was so magnificent that Bodhi considered killing the architect or blinding him<sup>35</sup> so that he could never again design and build such a palace for anyone else. He confided his plan to Sañjikā,putta, who, showing a more human quality, quietly warned the architect.

**2.1.2.2** The architect, on a pretext of needing special wood for the palace, used it to fashion a “giant garuda bird” (*garuḷa,sakuna*)<sup>36</sup> large enough to hold him, his wife and their children. When it was ready, he flew it through the palace window and escaped with his family to the Himalayas. There, he founded a kingdom and came to be known as king Kattha,vahana (wooden vehicle).<sup>37</sup>

## **2.2 THE BUDDHA’S SILENCE**

**2.2.1 The Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85) opens with prince Bodhi inviting the Buddha and the monks for a meal-offering as the auspicious first occupants of the newly built Kokanada palace. Prince Bodhi further hopes that the Buddha will step on the white cloths he has ordered to be spread all over the palace floor, with the belief that if the Buddha does so, Bodhi will have a child he dearly wishes for. [§7]

**2.2.2** When the Buddha and his sangha arrive at the foot of the stairways to the palace, the Buddha stops. He remains standing despite being invited thrice by prince Bodhi to step on the cloths. The Buddha then signals to Ānanda who instructs prince Bodhi to remove the white cloths. This curious act of the Buddha has its significance, which we will more fully examine later. [2.4]

<sup>32</sup> VA 4:894,12.

<sup>33</sup> *So ca maṅgala,pāsādo olokanaka,padumaṃ dassetvā kato, tasmā kokanado’ti saṅkham labhi* (MA 3:321,17-19).

<sup>34</sup> DhA 3:134,5-7. Kokanada reminds us of the “hanging gardens of Babylon,” after which it may have been modelled, with “overhanging” trees growing on the palace terraces:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanging\\_Gardens\\_of\\_Babylon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanging_Gardens_of_Babylon).

<sup>35</sup> **Vena,sākha J** (J 353) relates that Bodhi actually blinded the architect. It is said that even in the past, as Brahma,datta, prince of Bārānasi, blinded the 1000 kings. As a result, he himself became blind, died in pain and was re-born in hell. The Buddha tells this story as a warning to Bodhi not to harm any builder or anyone else. (J 353/3:157-161)

<sup>36</sup> It is likely that this vehicle is a manoeuvrable glider. On *garuḷa* (Skt *garuḍa*), see **Magha V** (DhA 2.7,92), SD 54.22.

<sup>37</sup> DhA 12.1/3:134-139 (SD 55.9).

## 2.3 THE WHITE CLOTHS

### 2.3.1 Karmic past

**2.3.1.1** The Majjhima Commentary explains one of the reasons for **the Buddha's silence** and refusal to step on the white cloths covering the palace floor as being that he knew Bodhi's thoughts, thus: "If I am to have a son, the Buddha will step on this carpet; if not, he will not."<sup>38</sup> The Buddha knew, too, that Bodhi lacks the good karma to have a child. **His childlessness** is karmic: in a past life, after a shipwreck and while marooned on an island, *both* Bodhi's avatar and wife habitually killed birds and ate them.<sup>39</sup>

**2.3.1.2** The Dhammapada Commentary says that while living as castaways on an island, they had killed and eaten young chukars (a kind of Indian partridge), and also eaten their (fertilized) eggs.<sup>40</sup> Hence, they had killed both the young and the adults. In either case, then, Bodhi is told, he and his wife lacked **the respect for life**, which is the theme of their story as related in **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Vatthu** (DhA 12.1), SD 55.8.

### 2.3.2 The Buddha's response

**2.3.2.1** Prince Bodhi, we are told, invites the Buddha and the monks to his newly built Kokanada palace for an alms-offering as its first auspicious occupants [2.1.2]. When the Buddha arrives, Bodhi welcomes him at the bottom of the stairway of the palace entrance. He thrice invites the Buddha to step on the white cloths spread out all over the palace floor, but the Buddha remains where he is, at the bottom of the stairs.

**2.3.2.2** After the third invitation, the Buddha signals to Ānanda, who, then, instructs Bodhi to remove the cloths, saying, "**The Buddha regards posterity with compassion**" (*pacchimarā janatarā tathāgato apaloketi*) [§7.8]. Usually, *apaloketi*<sup>41</sup> (*apa-* "towards, back" + *√LOK*, "to look": at §7.7, *apalokesi*, "looked at") has the sense of looking (with regard) "for permission or approval, consulting or giving notice." The Burmese reading, however, has *anukampati*, "to show compassion," instead of *apaloketi*. It makes good sense to accept both together, which gives us: "The Buddha regards posterity *with compassion*."<sup>42</sup> [2.4]

## 2.4 THE BUDDHA'S TASKS

### 2.4.1 Samsara

**2.4.1.1** We see the phrase *janatarā anukampamāno* (present participle) [2.4.1] in **the Bhaya Bherava Sutta** (M 4) and **the Arañña Vana,pattha Sutta** (A 2.3.9). In both cases, the Buddha gives 2 reasons why he resorts to "secluded dwellings in the wilds of the forests and jungles" (*arañña,vana,patthāni*

<sup>38</sup> MA 3:322,3-14.

<sup>39</sup> *Pubbe kira so ekasmim dīpe vasamāno cakora,sakuṇa,potake khadi* (MA 3:322,11 f). *Cakora* is the Indian chukar, chukar partridge or simply, chukar (*Alectoris chukar*): <https://indianbirds.thedynamicnature.com/2014/12/chukar-partridge-alectoris-chukar.html>.

<sup>40</sup> DhA 3:137,8-14. For the full story, see DhA 12.1(1c), SD 55.8.

<sup>41</sup> This is the Ce Ee Se reading; only Be reads *anukampati*.

<sup>42</sup> The reading *janatarā anukampati* is affirmed by **Bhaya Bherava S** (M 4), where it is said that the Buddha lives a solitary life, "being compassionate to posterity" (*janatarā anukampamāna*, M 4,34/1:23), SD 44.3. On *pacchimā janatā* (§7.7), for a scholarly discussion, see V:H 1:66 n1.

*senâsanāni*): “Seeing for myself a pleasant abiding here and now, and **being compassionate towards posterity** (*janatam̐ anukampamāno*).”<sup>43</sup>

**2.4.1.2** How does this relate to our present M 85 passage? The Buddha, as a practitioner and teacher of world renunciation, of freeing beings from the world—he has nothing to do with bringing them into this world. It is as clear and simple as that. In stressing this vital point, the Buddha is only keeping to his own teaching—“**As he speaks, so he does; as he does, so he speaks**” (*yathā, vādī tathā, kāri, yathā, kāri yathā, vādī*).<sup>44</sup>

## **2.4.2 Karma**

**2.4.2.1** One may ask: Wouldn’t it be sufficient for the Buddha to simply not step on the white cloths, considering that the Buddha knows it is the karma of Bodhi and his queen to be childless? Understandably, this would result in a bad start to a good day since Bodhi may attribute his childlessness to the Buddha’s refusal to perform this **ritual or premonitory act**. In short, he may blame the Buddha.

**2.4.2.2** On the other hand, the Buddha could have stepped on the cloths in good faith, and then perhaps get, say, the doctor Jīvaka to assist Bodhi’s queen in having a child. This is just what the Buddha is trying to avoid: he does not want to be seen as a child-giver, to be regarded as one who has brought another or others into samsara. His noble task is clearly that of **freeing beings from samsara**.<sup>45</sup>

**2.4.2.3** We can see a subtle hint in the white cloths and the Buddha stepping on them as suggesting some kind of karmic purification, even the negation of some negative past karma by some kind of external ritual, such as some holy men stepping on the cloth that one has spread out on the ground. Such practices are rejected by the Buddha.

In the **Vatthūpama Sutta** (M 7), for example, the Buddha famously declares that external purification such as by bathing in sacred rivers does not work: we are purified only by our internal purification of the mind. He further stressed that a place is sacred not by tradition, not even history, but by our own acts of purity and wholesomeness.<sup>46</sup>

**2.4.2.4** Sinhala scholar, Witanachchi, criticizes the commentarial explanation that the Buddha did not step on the cloth “because he knew that the prince’s wish for a child will not be fulfilled, seems to be completely off the mark. If that were so, there was no reason for the Buddha to have laid down a rule

<sup>43</sup> M 4,34/1:23,35 = A 2.3.9/1:61,1 (SD 44.3) + (4.6). The form *anukampamāna* is middle present participle of *anukampati*: see Oberlies §96. The suffix *-māna* derived from Skt middle present participle, here with an active sense. “Middle”(voice) means the subject both performs and receives the action of the verb.

<sup>44</sup> D 2:224, 229, 3:135; M 1:108, 109; A 2:24; It 122; Sn 357 (Nigrodha,kappa); J 326/3:89; see 29.6a (7.3.2). Interestingly, the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya (unlike the Pali Vinaya), does *not* relate the “white cloth” episode to any rule about cloth-stepping. Instead, it explains the problem as arising from the monks making a mess when partaking of the alms-offering by prince Bodhi (T1421/T22.75c9). For a scholarly discussion, see Analayo 2011:479 f.

<sup>45</sup> In **Uttarā Upāsika Vatthu** (DhA 17.3 on Dh 223), the lay disciple Uttarā tells the courtesan Sirimā that while her (Uttarā’s) father, the seth Puṇṇa, is “the father who brought me into the round of suffering (*mama vaṭṭe janaka, pitā*),” the Buddha is her father “bringing me out of the round ... (*te vivaṭṭe janaka, pitā*)” (DhA 17.3,4.4/3:312,1-3), SD 3.8 (4).

<sup>46</sup> M 7,20/1:39,13 (SD 28.12) and its parallels MĀ 93 (T1.575c23), SĀ 1.185 (T2.321b4), SA2 98 (T2.408c3), EĀ 13.5 (T2.574c15), and T51 (T1.844a21).

restraining his disciples from following the practice.” (2005b:549)<sup>47</sup> The point is that the Buddha actually relaxed this rule, and *allowed* monastics (they have the choice), when requested by faithful laity seeking blessing, to step on such a cloth-spread—as clearly evident from **the Cela,pattikā Vatthu** (Cv 5.21.4a).<sup>48</sup>

For argument’s sake, we could assume, for example, that the Buddha could have advised Bodhi to consult the famous doctor Jīvaka to resolve his *fertility* issue: it is, after all, a medical problem. Or, perhaps, could have used his special powers to correct, even reverse, Bodhi’s karma (as believed even today by many Tibetan Buddhists). But this is neither the issue nor the Buddha’s task: he has a higher, spiritual, purpose as a teacher of liberating Dharma [2.4.1].

In this case, it helps that we see the Buddha’s teaching as being strongly characterized by **virtue ethics** rather than *a consequentialist ethics*. We have discussed this important point elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

## 2.5 ELEPHANT-TRAINING

### 2.5.1 Origin of prince Bodhi’s elephant skills

**2.5.1.1** After the Buddha’s long and inspiring account of his Dharma quest and teaching it [1.3], Bodhi is very impressed. Near the Sutta’s end, Bodhi then asks **how long will an apprentice of the Buddha take to awaken**, right here and now [§55]. Before answering, the Buddha relates a parable of elephant-riding, with which Bodhi is very familiar.

**2.5.1.2** The purpose of this parable is to show Bodhi that to be successful in winning the spiritual goal, the apprentice—the one to be instructed by the “guide” (*vinayaka*) [§55]—like the trainee for elephant-riding, must have **the 5 limbs of striving**, that is, those of faith, health, honesty, industry and wisdom [§5.7]. These are the very same 5 limbs of striving (*padhāniy-aṅga*) that the spiritual apprentice must have, too, to expedite his awakening [2.6].

### 2.5.2 Bodhi’s elephant skill

**2.5.2.1 The Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85), nears its ending, recounts the Buddha using **the parable of elephant-riding** to show prince Bodhi the need for personal discipline—the “5 limbs of striving” (which is a metaphor for the 3 trainings).<sup>50</sup> The actual Sutta term used here is “**the art of the goad for elephant-riding**” (*hatth’ārūyha añkusa,gayha sippa*, §55.2), or literally, “the art of riding an elephant by holding a goad.” The term here is narrower than “elephant-training,” and specifically refers to “elephant-riding,” which may well include the elephant as warring vehicle. [2.5.2]

**2.5.2.2** Prince Bodhi learned **elephant-riding skills** from his father, **king Udena**, the protagonist of **the Sāmā,vatī Vatthu** (DhA 2.1), the longest story-cycle in the Dhammapada Commentary.<sup>51</sup> Parantapa (Bodhi’s grandfather) was then king of Kosambī. While Parantapa’s queen was bearing Udena, a giant bird carried her away into the Himalayan forests. There she was saved by the ascetic Allakappa (himself an erstwhile king), who knew “**the elephant charm and the 3-string veena spells**” (*hatthi,kanta,vīṇā*

<sup>47</sup> Further discussion on the significance of the Buddha’s gesture of not stepping on the white cloths as a teaching for “posterity” (*pacchimā janatā*), see the notes to **Cela,pattikā Vatthu** (Cv 5.21.1-4), SD 55.3 (2).

<sup>48</sup> Cv 5.21.4a (V 2:129,6-17), SD 55.3.

<sup>49</sup> On virtue ethics in M 85, see SD 55.5 (2.2).

<sup>50</sup> The 3 trainings (*sikkha-t,taya*) are those in moral virtue, in mental concentration and in wisdom: see **Sīla samādhi paññā**, SD 21.6.

<sup>51</sup> DhA 2.1/1:161-231.

*c'eva hatthi,kanta,manta ca*), or, briefly, “the elephant-veena charms.”<sup>52</sup> The veena, it is said, was given by Sakra himself to Allakappa so that he could manage the wild elephants that were troubling him (MA 3:325,3).

**2.5.2.3** When Udena came of age, Parantapa died in Kosambī. Bodhi’s mother instructed him to claim his throne (which was rightly his anyway). To his advantage, the ascetic Allakappa taught him **the elephant-veena charms**. By striking the 1<sup>st</sup> veena string and uttering the mantra, one was able to rout even fierce elephants (what more the war-elephants of the enemy); by striking the 2<sup>nd</sup> string, the fleeing elephants would look back for instructions; and the 3<sup>rd</sup> string will induce the herd leader to come and offer his back (to lead the herd for one’s purpose). He gave the veena to Udena for using to regain his kingdom.<sup>53</sup>

Udena mastered the elephant-veena charms, and with a thousand elephants returned to Kosambī, and was enthroned. In due course, when **prince Bodhi** was born, he was taught these charms, too (MA 3:224).

### **2.5.3 A necessary skill**

**2.5.3.1 “Elephant-riding”** was clearly a necessary skill of ancient kings. Although the horse is faster and more manoeuvrable, the elephant, on account of its size, intelligence and stamina goes further, both in battle and travel, not to mention in public parades loved by the populace, and which feeds the king’s royal charisma. While horses formed the ancient king’s cavalry, the elephants were like his “tank forces.” Indeed, in 326 BCE, king Porus’ warriors on elephants were a decisive factor in preventing Alexander’s armies from advancing beyond the Beas (the Hyphasis of the Greeks) in central Himachal Pradesh into the Gangetic plains.<sup>54</sup>

**2.5.3.2 The Sanskrit version** of M 85 (we have only fragments of it) mentions other abilities that prince Bodhi could have mastered besides elephant-riding: horse-riding, chariot-driving, fencing and archery, as well as writing and (ac)counting.<sup>55</sup> Such a variety of skills fittingly show that the task of leading a student to liberation entails training in various abilities, especially in proper conduct, concentration and insight,<sup>56</sup> just as a prince must not only be good at riding an elephant, but also in riding a horse, driving a chariot, fencing and archery.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>52</sup> DhA 2.1/1:163,16 f.

<sup>53</sup> DhA 2.1/1:167.

<sup>54</sup> See SD 52.1 (2.2.1.17).

<sup>55</sup> Folio 342V6 (Hartmann 2004b:129; Silverlock 2009:78): *hastigrīvāyām aśvapṛṣṭhe rathe sarau dhanuṣy ... lipigaṇananyasanasamkhyāmudrāyām* (SHT IV 180 folio 1V1). Cf SHT VII p247: *(hastigrīvā)[y](ā)m-aśvapṛṣṭe rathe sarodhanuṣi*, and SHT IV 33 folio 23R1: *lipigaṇanasam[kh]y*. **Gaṇaṇa** prob has a broad sense of both “counting” and “accounting” (keeping counts and accounts). The former is simply about learning numbers, while the latter has more to do with keeping account in business. In the prince’s early education, *gaṇana* prob simply means “counting,” incl arithmetic, as known to the ancient Indians. In the longer *sīla* lists of D 1-13, *gaṇana* must mean “accounting” since it is related to commerce.

<sup>56</sup> The figure of an elephant to illustrate spiritual training appear in **Danta,bhūmi S** (M 125,12/3:132,2), SD 46.3, which compares the gradual path to an elephant-trainer who catches and trains a wild elephant. The image in M 125 differs from §55, where the task is only to teach someone how to ride an elephant. To ride an elephant suggests that it would have already been tamed and trained by someone else, and this would clearly be less demanding than having to catch and tame a wild elephant.

**2.5.3.3** In the case of writing and counting, it is less straightforward. Other Pali passages indicate that counting was a specific profession in ancient India. Some skill in counting would surely be appropriate for a king who hopes to benefit from commerce.<sup>58</sup> In fact, **the Lalita,vistāra**,<sup>59</sup> **the Mahā,vastu**, and **the (Mūla)Sarvāstivāda Vinaya** include the art of writing in a prince's curriculum,<sup>60</sup> but in this context the Madhyama Āgama does not mention writing or counting.<sup>61</sup>

## 2.6 THE 5 LIMBS OF STRIVING

**2.6.0 The 5 limbs of striving** (*pañca padhāniy'aṅga*) have been discussed in some detail in **SD 51.14** (1-6). Here, we will only examine some textual background to them.

### 2.6.1 Surprising quality of goodness

**2.6.1.1** Both the Pali and the Sanskrit versions of **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** agree that, in reply to the Buddha's exposition of the "5 reasons for failure in training" [§56], prince Bodhi remarks that even the presence of *any* of these qualities would prevent one from learning.<sup>62</sup> Both the Pali and the Sanskrit versions reprise their passage on the positive case of an apprentice who is faithful, healthy, honest, energetic and wise. Both versions record prince Bodhi as remarking that even just *one* of these 5 positive qualities [§57] will make it easy to teach such a person.<sup>63</sup>

This statement stands directly in positive contrast to the earlier negative statement than even one of the negative qualities would prevent the apprentice from learning. Logically, however, in the positive case, not just *one* quality, but all 5 positive qualities—all **the limbs of striving**—are required for being able to learn; that is, we should not only be faithful, for example, but must also be free from deceit, laziness and stupidity. To effectively learn we need faith, health, honesty, energy and wisdom.

<sup>57</sup> **Raṭṭha,pāla S** (M 82) gives a list of a king's abilities which includes, besides elephant-riding: horse-riding, chariot-driving, archery and fencing (M 82,38/2:69,8), SD 92.5. This list recurs in **Patthāna S 1** (A 5.135/3:152,29), where they are given as the skills in a prince's training (SD 51.22).

<sup>58</sup> **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1) mentions *muddā, gaṇanā*, and *saṅkhāna* as forms of livelihood (D 1,25/1:11,10), SD 25.2. **Vinaya** includes *gaṇanā* and *muddā* (V 4:7,5; V:Se 2:166,4: *muddhā*) in a list of various types of craft. On *gaṇanā* and *muddā*, see also Franke 1913a:18 nn9+10 and D:RD 1:21 n4 + 22 n1. See also above n on "(ac)counting."

<sup>59</sup> **Lalita,vistāra** (Hokazono 1994:526,13; Lefmann 1902:126,2; Vaidya 1958b:88,13) lists various types of scripts, incl the script of the devas, etc, which are absent from a list of Indian scriptures given in **Mahā,vastu** (Basak 1963a:160,6; Senart 1882a:135,5); on the significance of this listing, see also comments in Harrison 2003:115-116.

<sup>60</sup> **Maha,vastu** (Basak 1965:570,14; Senart 1890: 423,15, and Senart 1897:184,6; Basak 1968:112,27), a (**Mūla**)-**Sarvāstivāda Pravrajyā,vastu** fragment (folo 2r2: Vogel 1992:71), and **Saṅghabhedavastu** (Gnoli 1977:58,2; 1978a:119,30 + 179,11); see also **Divyāvadāna** (Cowell 1886:58,16; Vaidya 1999:35,24). For Gandharan sculptures: depicting the Bodhisattva at school, holding a writing slate: Dehejia 1997:203; with 3 monks holding writing scrolls: plate IIb, Taddei 1983; further, on this and others, see Salomon 1999:103 f.

<sup>61</sup> MĀ 72 (T1.534a5).

<sup>62</sup> **§56** (M 2:94,28) and Skt folio 342V8 + 343R1 (Hartmann 2004b:130; Silverlock 2009:78 f). A minor difference between the 2 versions is that while in **§56** the Buddha presents *all* 5 qualities and asks prince Bodhi if such a person would be able to learn, but in Skt fragment, the Buddha asks the same question after each of the 5 qualities, and prince Bodhi replies each time such a person would not be able to learn.

<sup>63</sup> **§57.3**: *Ekam ekena pi bhante aṅgena samannāgato so puriso mama santike ... sippaṃ sikkheyya, ko pana vādo pañcaḥ'aṅgehīti* (M 2:95,12; M:Be 2:298,22: *ekenā*), folio 343R5-6 (Hartmann 2004b:130; Silverlock 2009:79: *ekai-kena tāvad bhadanta ito'ṅgena samanvāatena tena puruṣeṇa sukaraṃ mamāntikād anyatamānyatamacchilpa-sthanakarmasthāna samanvāgamayituruṃ, kaḥ punar vādaḥ sarvair*; see also SHT IV 33 folio 24V2-3 and fragment SI B/14 3A3 (Bongard-Levin 1989:511).

**2.6.1.2** Although this seems to be the logical development, clearly, the Sutta surprises us—even inspires us—with the understanding that we *don't* need to have all the 5 limbs of striving to begin with if we are sincere in practising the Dharma, especially when we have a good teacher. We must have at least *one* of these: faith, health, honesty, energy or wisdom.

After all, we do not become competent first and then undergo spiritual training. It is spiritual training that makes us muster together all these wholesome qualities so that we are able to better ourselves progressively as we practise the Dhamma. For example, we can humbly begin our training with mere faith. The other wholesome qualities will then build up in us.

**2.6.1.3** The Pali M 85 illustrates the 1<sup>st</sup> positive limb of striving—**faith**—with the stock passage on the recollection of the 9 virtues of the Buddha, using this as a definition for our acceptance of the Buddha as one who is fully self-awakened [§58(1)]. The Sanskrit fragment speaks instead of a noble disciple whose faith is firmly established so that it cannot be shaken by anyone in the world.<sup>64</sup>

The Pali and the Sanskrit versions agree in explaining that to be energetic is to make a steadfast effort to develop what is wholesome. To this the Sanskrit fragment adds the determination not to slacken in energy even if the flesh and blood of the body should dry up and only skin, sinews, and bones remain.<sup>65</sup>

**2.6.1.4** Note that, in all the 4 accounts relating to prince Bodhi—M 85, the Vinaya, DhA 12.1 and J 353<sup>66</sup>—**the 5 limbs of striving** (*pañca padhāniya'āṅga*) [2.6.0] are mentioned *only* here in **the Bodhi Rāja, -kumāra Sutta** (M 85). This attests to the fact that the Sutta account centres on Dharma-teaching. M 85 also presents fully the Buddha's instructive autobiography to correct Bodhi's wrong view about pleasure coming from pain.

**The Cela, pattikā Vatthu** (Cv 5.21.1-4) understandably deals with Vinaya rules regarding cloth-stepping by monastics. **The Bodhi Rāja, kumāra Vatthu** (DhA 12.1) gives a fuller account of prince Bodhi's past karma and how he outgrew it. Finally, **the Vena, sākha Jātaka** (J 353) is a dramatic account of how

<sup>64</sup> Skt folio 343R7-8 (Hartmann 2004b:130; Silverlock 2009:79) describes that the noble disciple's faith has become "rooted and established" (*mūla, jātā pratiṣṭhitā*). Elsewhere, such unshakeable faith is a quality of the streamwinner: eg, **Aggañña S** (D 27,9.3) states that those with firm faith (*mūla, jātā patiṭṭhitā*) can claim to be "born from the mouth" of the Blessed One (*mukhato jāto*) (D 3:84,21), SD 2.19, an expression, Comy explains, which means that they have won the paths and fruits (*magga, phalesu patiṭṭhitattā oraso mukhato jāto*, DA 3:865,7). **Vīmaṃsaka S** (M 47,15.3) speaks of the same firm faith on account of having "through direct knowledge come to a conclusion in regard to a certain teaching among the teachings" (*abhiññāya idh'ekaccaṃ dhammaṃ dhammesu niṭṭham agama*) (M 1:320,12; M:Se 580,6: *niṭṭhaṅgamam*), SD 35.6. Comy explains that the firm faith of streamwinning is meant here: *mūla, jātā'ti sotāpatti, magga, vāseṇa sañjāta, mālā* (MA 2:388,23). **Kiṭṭā, giri S** (M 70,19.1) qualifies the "faith-liberated (*saddha, vimutta*), a person who is at least a streamwinner, to be endowed with such firm faith (*saddhā niviṭṭhā hoti mūla, jātā patiṭṭhitā*) (M 1:478,32), SD 11.1. **Uṇṇābha Brāhmaṇa S** (S 48.42,12) records the brahmin Uṇṇābha as reaching firm faith (*saddhā niviṭṭhā mūlajātā patiṭṭhitā*), followed by noting that he will not be reborn in this world (S 5:219,2), SD 29.3, which Comy explains implying that he is a streamwinner and a dhyana-attainer (SA 3:246,24). These passages refer to "firm faith" as implying at least streamwinning. The same, however, does not apply to the Skt version, as this will imply that merely being taught the path will automatically bring fruition.

<sup>65</sup> Skt folio 343V4-5 (Hartmann 2004b:131; Silverlock 2009:80): *kamam tvak snāyiv asthi cāvatiṣṭhatām pariśuṣyatu śarīran māmsaṣoṇitum*. While **(Duka) Atapaniya S** (A 2.1.4/1:50,8) relates this type of determination to the Buddha's breakthrough to awakening (A 1:50,8), SD 51.4a, other suttas use the same expression in the context of a general definition of determined practice, eg: **Kiṭṭā, giri S** (M 70,27(1)/1:481,1), SD 11.1; **Dasa Bala S 2** (S 12.22/2:28,23), SD 63.15; **Ghaṭa S** (S 21.3/2:276,11, SD 64.4, and **(Aṭṭhaka) Assājāniya S** (A 8.13/4:190,8), SD 112.3, in a manner similar to the Skt fragment.

<sup>66</sup> **Bodhi Rāja, kumāra S** (M 85), SD 55.2; **Cela, pattikā V** (Cv 5.21.1-4), SD 55.3; **Bodhi Rāja, kumāra V** (DhA 12.1), SD 55.4; **Vena, sākha J** (J 353), SD 55.5.



Bodhi commits bad karma through the bad counsel of his purohit—it highlights the dangers of bad friendship.<sup>67</sup>

## **2.7 THE DIMINISHING DURATION FOR AWAKENING**

### **2.7.1 How long does it take to fully awaken?**

**2.7.1.1 The Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** continues by specifying the duration within which a student will “arrive at distinction” (*visesam adhiḡamissati*) or awakening, ranging from 7 years at most to a single night-and-day at least [§59].<sup>68</sup> Instead of listing progressively shorter durations, the Sanskrit version only explains that awakening can be reached “quickly.”<sup>69</sup> A sequence of durations within which awakening can be attained is also found in the two **Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas** (D 22; M 10) and in **the Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda Sutta** (D 25), which, however, stipulate a minimum of 7 days for reaching full awakening.<sup>70</sup>

**2.7.1.2** The Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta and the Sanskrit fragments agree that prince Bodhi **exults** in hearing that for some, awakening may be attained in just *half a day*. He goes for refuge [§64].<sup>71</sup> Both versions note that he had vicariously gone for refuge when he was in his mother’s womb and when he was a young boy (we are not told his age, except that he was carried by his nurse on her hips) [§63].<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> There is a hint of good friendship in **M 85**, where near the Sutta’s conclusion, we see Bodhi’s assistant Sañjikā,-putta apparently reminding or suggesting that Bodhi should go for refuge [§61].

<sup>68</sup> §59,1-15 lists the possibility of attaining the goal ranging from 7 years to a single “night-and-day” (*eka rattin,-divarā*) (M 2:96,16). Finally, the Buddha declares [§59,16] that one “may arrive at distinction” (*visesam adhiḡamisati*) in only half a day: on being instructed in the evening, one awakes the following morning; on being instructed in the morning, one awakes the same evening (M 85/2:96,19). This proclamation regarding practice leading to realization in only half-a-day (12 hours) seems to be unique to **M 85** on account of its shortness. A similar position, however, is found in 2 unrelated Chinese texts: SĀ 703 (T2.189a24) and SĀ 1121 (T2.297c19).

<sup>69</sup> Skt folio 343V8 (Hartmann 2004b:131; Silverlock 2009:80): *kṣipram*. The two versions also differ on the reason for prince Bodhi’s appreciation of the Buddha’s teaching: according to §60, it is the ability of the Dharma to lead to distinction within only half-a-day (M 2:96,23), but according to Skt fragment, Bodhi is impressed by the ability of the 5 limbs of striving to quickly destroy the influxes (ie, bring arhathood) (folio 344R2: Hartmann 2004b:131; Silverlock 2009:80).

<sup>70</sup> **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,22/2:314,11), SD 13.2, = **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,46/1:62,35), SD 13.3, and **Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S** (D 25,22.2/3:55,21), SD 1.4, give durations that range from 7 years to 7 days for reaching awakening. The Chin parallel of **M 10** passage found in MĀ 98 (T1.584b24), corresponds to **M 85** in seeing awakening (via satipaṭṭhana) as arising from within 7 years down to a single day-and-night, followed by mentioning even with practice from morning to evening or from evening to morning, “progress,” 昇進 *shēng jìn*, can be won (Hirakawa 1997:596 gives *parā*-VKRAM, to stride, and *ā*-VKRAM as possible cognates for 昇進, as in a similar passage found in fragment 421r7 of Pṛṣṭhapāla Sūtra in Melzer 2006:274, speaks of reaching *viśeṣa* (distinction) with practice done from evening to morning or from morning to evening. (**Arahatta**) **Bāhiya S** (U 1.10,18) records a case of awakening just by listening to the Buddha, ie, the case of Bāhiya Dāru,cīriya, an outside ascetic, who, reaches full awakening during his first meeting with the Buddha, while listening to a short teaching (U 1.10/10/6-9), SD 33.7.

<sup>71</sup> According to Skt fragments, prince Bodhi uses a golden pitcher when taking refuge, apparently pouring out water in a ceremonial gesture; he may be pouring “water of merit-dedication,” *dakṣiṇ’odaka* (P *dakkhiṇ’odaka*) after the auspicious event: folio 344R8 (Silverlock 2009:80; SHT IV 33 folio 28V4; SHT IV 165 folio 24V5-6). Saṅghabhedavastu mentions occasions when a golden pitcher is used: at the end of a meal-offering to Kaśyapa Buddha (Gnoli 1978a:25,39); the king invites the Buddha and the monks for the rains-residence (Gnoli 1977:166,10); king Bimbisāra offers the squirrels’ feeding ground (Gnoli 1978a:25,39); and Anāthapiṇḍada offers Jeta’s Grove to the Buddha. In such cases, the water-pouring signifies giving.

<sup>72</sup> §62 records, when Bodhi’s mother was pregnant with him, she had Bodhi go for refuge when visiting the Buddha in Ghosit’ārāma at Kosambī (M 2:97,2), and, later on, when he was a young boy, his nurse did the same thing

### 2.7.2 Awakening just happens

**2.7.2.1** The progressive durations for **satipatthana** to bear fruit suggest that breakthrough into awakening—often termed “distinction” (*visesa*) [2.7.2.1]—can happen *at any time* with proper practice. When mindfulness (*sati*) is well established (*supatitthita*), the moment all the defilements are fully destroyed, the mind awakens liberated.

**2.7.2.2** In an important sense, the point of **awakening**, as it were, is a moment of irony. We cannot *will* it to happen. When we *do*, then, thoughts will fill and flow through the channels of the senses, keeping the mind busy and hazy. Even when we *feel* a desire for awakening, it is only a false alarm: the mind has a self-created object to which it transfers itself—this is existential transference, projecting our deepest hopes, even fears, so that we imagine we have found our goal.

**2.7.2.3** The Dharma-spirited practitioner first moves with **renunciation**—leaving behind the world of people and things; then, he moves through renouncing the way we think, our views; moving and removing, until we are but *an empty vessel* ready to be filled. Yet, when the moment comes, even the vessel is not there. We have arrived at the death-free, the life-free, the time-free, the unconditioned—**nirvana**.

### 2.7.3 Awakening is immeasurable

**2.7.3.1** All this is interesting, but it raises the question of how far this spiritual path of awakening is actually **gradual progress**. The moment of awakening seems to be *sudden*; indeed, awakening seems to be but a moment. This idea misleads those who have only *heard* of the wonders of awakening, or who have only *speculated* on its possibility to be something unexpected, or who hold fixed or fashionable views, and thus perceive it as being “sudden.”<sup>73</sup>

**2.7.3.2** The suttas (and common sense) tell us that it is impossible to measure the quantity of defilements removed during a day of practice, just as a carpenter cannot measure the extent to which the handle of his adze has worn out after a day of toil.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, after repeated use, a carpenter will know that the handle has worn out. So, too, will a meditator, after sustained practice, notice that his defilements are weakening and are no more there. This simile indicates a gradual, but not precisely measurable, progress towards awakening.

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before the Buddha in Bhesakaḷā forest at Suṃsumāra, giri [§63] (the same location as M 85) (M 2:97,10). The Skt fragments give one location of refuge-going as the Ghoṣitārāma in Kauśambī: folio 344R5 (Silverlock 2009:80; SHT IV 33 folio 24R6a; SHT IV 165 folio 24V2) and the Hoernle fragment 149/280R6 no 12 (Hartmann 1991:77). The other location is Badarikārāma, Badārikārāma, or Batarikārāma: folio 344R7 (Silverlock 2009:80; SHT IV 33 folio 24R4, SHT IV 180 folio 1R6); Hoernle fragment 149/280R4, no 12 (Hartmann 1991:77); compared to M 85, SHT IV 33 folio 24 and Hoernle fragments refer to these two locations in the opposite sequence. This forest is where Ghosit’ārāma is located, or is nearby, as in **Khemaka S** (S 22.89,17) reports a discussion between the monk Khemaka and a group of monks by way of exchanges of messages by a messenger shuttling between these two places (S 3:126-132), SD 14.13.

<sup>73</sup> On whether awakening is “gradual” or “sudden,” see Gethin 1992:132, 246, and Nanayakkara 1993b:581. Pensa relates this distinction to the difference between peak and plateau-experiences (1977:335).

<sup>74</sup> **Vāsi,jaṭa S** (S 22.101,18+19/3:154 f) = **Bhāvanā S** (A 7.67/4:127), SD 15.2.

## 2.8 AWAKENING IS GRADUAL

### 2.8.1 Parables of gradual progress

**2.8.1.1** THE GOLD-PURIFYING PARABLE. The Buddha often speaks on **the gradual nature of spiritual progress**.<sup>75</sup> The suttas often explain that our Dharma practice develops gradually just as the ocean deepens gradually.<sup>76</sup> The **Paṃsu,dhovaka Sutta** (A 3.100a) shows how we purify ourself gradually—like how a goldsmith carefully refines gold: first, he removes the gross impurities; then, the not-so-gross ones, and, finally, the finer impurities. Similarly, in mental cultivation, we first work to remove our gross impurities; only then, we will be able to clear away the subtler ones.<sup>77</sup>

**2.8.1.2** THE FARMER PARABLE. Another parable compares the practice of the 3 trainings in moral virtue (*sīla*), mental concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) to **a farmer** who has to plant and water his crop in due time.<sup>78</sup> Neither the farmer nor a practitioner of the threefold training has the magical power to say: “Let my effort ripen now and bear fruit,” yet their constant effort will bring about the desired results. This parable shows that progress to awakening is as naturally gradual as the growth of plants in nature.

### 2.8.2 The parable of the brooding hen

**2.8.2.1** Another well-known sutta parable clarifying the spiritual progress is that of **a hen brooding on her eggs**. Over time, the hen patiently incubating her eggs will lead to the hatching of the chicks; even so, in due course, our determined efforts will awaken us.<sup>79</sup> The chicks’ apparently sudden emergence from their shells depends on a slow gradual process of inner development with the hen incubating the eggs.

**2.8.2.2** Similarly, the seemingly sudden breakthrough into nirvana depends on a gradual process of mental cultivation and inner development. Just as the hen cannot directly cause the chicks to pierce their shells and break out—the chicks have to mature and break the shell themselves from the inside—the breakthrough to nirvana cannot be directly made to happen, neither by any external agency (such as a guru) nor by any external means (such as prayers). The hen’s brooding on her eggs refers to our **self-effort** in disciplining our body and cultivating our mind.

**2.8.2.3** The teaching that **we can and must exert ourself** should not be misconstrued that we have no way of helping others spiritually, or have no beneficial effect in the spiritual progress of *others*. There are at least 2 significant points here. The first is that we can do our best to teach others on the whole-some, how to meditate, and so on; but the person must be able and willing to make the effort himself.

<sup>75</sup> That spiritual progress is gradual is mentioned in these suttas, eg **M 70**,22/1:479 (SD 11.1); **M 107**,3/3:2 (SD 56.3); **A 3.57**/1:162\* (SD 22.12). See also Strenski 1980:4, 8.

<sup>76</sup> Just as the great ocean deepens gradually (the 1<sup>st</sup> of 8 similes): **Pātimokkha Ṭhapana Khandhaka** (V 2:238,18-24), SD 59.2c; **Pahārāda S** (A 8.19,11/4:200 f), SD 45.18; (**Samudda**) **Uposatha S 1** (A 8.20/4:207), SD 59.2a; (**Samudda**) **Uposatha S 2** (U 5.5/54), SD 59.2b—see esp SD 45.18 (1.2 + 2.1).

<sup>77</sup> **Paṃsu,dhovaka S** (A 3.100a/1:254), SD 19.11. Cf Dh 239.

<sup>78</sup> **Accāyika S** (A 3.91/1:240), SD 56.16.

<sup>79</sup> (**Majjhima**) **Ceto,khila S** (M 16,27/1:104), SD 32.14; **Sekha S** (M 53,19/1:357), SD 21.24; **Vāsi,jaṭa S** (S 22.101,-14-17/3:154) = **Bhāvanā S** (A 7.67/4:126), SD 15.2. This simile has a slightly humorous undertone, since in a way it relates a meditator engaged in intensive practice to a hen on her eggs, both of whom spend much of their time sitting.

**2.8.2.4** This brings us to the second point: our problems, whatever is hindering us from personal happiness and spiritual growth, ultimately depends on how we think and feel—our views and emotions. In significant ways, how we think and feel may be influenced by *external conditions*. However, when we open our minds and calm our hearts, we are more likely to decide rightly and wholesomely how to free ourselves from such influences.

**2.8.2.5** This is where having **spiritual friends** (*kalyāṇa, mitta*) as mentors and healers, teachers who are Dharma-spirited and Dharma-wise, can be a great help to us. Even then, we can bring a horse to water but we cannot make it drink. Spiritual growth is not about being faithful to a religion, believing in something, or depending on some power outside of oneself. Perhaps, as far as faith and belief go, we can say that confidence and trust in our own goodness and ability to help oneself is the beginning of true spiritual development.

The worst thing that can happen to us is to be told that we can never help ourselves, and that we should put all our faith and effort in another—this is simply putting our remote into the hands of another! When we do not want to help ourselves, who is there who can really help us? Only we can be our own master on the spiritual path (Dh 160, 380).<sup>80</sup>

### **2.8.3 Reports of streamwinning**

**2.8.3.1** These passages on **the progressive path of Dharma growth** clearly show that the path of awakening is gradual. However, on the other hand, we often hear from Dharma teachers or see in the suttas cases of those who attain **streamwinning**, the first true step on the path of awakening. Such attainments often arise, it seems, from those who attentively or at the right time listen to the Dharma. [2.8.4]

**2.8.3.2** Such occasions of attaining streamwinning recorded in the suttas seem to occur rather “suddenly,” usually while one is listening to a teaching given by the Buddha. Based on such reports, it seems as if **merely hearing a teaching**—often this arises from *hearing* a teaching rather than meditating—were sufficient for awakening, apparently without any need for the gradual cultivation of the mind or steady engagement of insight.

This may well be so: the Buddha’s task is not only to inspire us to move up the path of awakening, but, where possible, to *facilitate* it, makes it easily possible for us. After all, what is the point of the Buddha making all his efforts to teach the Dharma at every opportune moment—if it is not for our benefit in gaining the path?

**2.8.3.3** Then, there is controversy whether we can and should translate *sotāpanna* as “ear-entry,” that is, where *sotā* means “hearing” rather than “stream.”<sup>81</sup> This means that breakthrough into the path arises through *hearing* a teaching. **The (Sotāpatti) Sāriputta Sutta 2** (S 55.5), for example, lists “listening to the Dharma” as one of the factors of streamwinning.<sup>82</sup>

However, the very same sutta also clearly defines that “**stream**” (*sotā*) refers to the noble eightfold path, and that a “streamwinner” is one who is fully accomplished in the path. Further, the “stream” image comes up again in **the Pācīna Sutta 1** (S 45.91/5.38), where the noble eightfold path is compared to the Gaṅges river, since it leads towards nirvana just as the Gaṅges flows towards the sea.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> On self-reliance, see SD 26.9 (2.1.2.4).

<sup>81</sup> Amongst those who propose this are Peter Masefield (1987:134) and Dhammavuddho (1990:10).

<sup>82</sup> S 55.5/5:347 (SD 16.5).

<sup>83</sup> **Pācīna S 1** (S 45.91/5.38).

**2.8.3.4** Finally, there is a Pali term for receiving the Dharma “by hearing,” that is, *sotānugata* (literally, “following the stream”), not *sotāpanna*.<sup>84</sup> This is a rare and beautiful Pali term denoting spiritual inclination and its benefits. An opposite term that comes to mind is *paṭisotāgāmī*—where the prefix *anu-* in *anugata* means “following after, to be with,” *paṭi-* means “against, away from.” Hence, *paṭisotāgāmī* means “going against the stream,” a description of the Buddha teaching, that is, it goes against the powerful worldly currents of lust, hate and delusion.<sup>85</sup>

## **2.8.4 The merits of listening to the Dharma**

**2.8.4.1** Note that when someone has attained **streamwinning** while meditating alone or living in seclusion, this does not seem to occasion a sutta or teaching, and does not seem to have been recorded later.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, when someone attains arhathood, even in the remoteness of solitude, it is highlighted in the suttas.

One reason is probably that the attaining of streamwinning does not need deep meditation, and may arise even without meditation<sup>87</sup>—it only needs some mindfulness, especially that connected with the reality of impermanence.<sup>88</sup> The attaining of arhathood clearly needs a mind of that is fully detached from worldliness—it needs physical and mental solitude; streamwinning does not.

**2.8.4.2** However, when someone gains streamwinning while listening to the Buddha, this occasion is significant enough to be reported and recorded. Clearly, this is to inspire others to practise for awakening or at least to diligently listen to the Dharma. The same suttas, however, do record the potential for insight cultivation to lead to the attaining of streamwinning. Such reports or statements would be meaningless if streamwinning were to depend *solely* on listening to a teaching.<sup>89</sup>

Besides, if simply listening to a teaching and understanding it were sufficient for realization, the Buddha would not so frequently and urgently exhort us to meditate or be mindful of impermanence.<sup>90</sup> The Buddha’s emphasis on meditation is because it is part of the 3 trainings: those in moral virtue, mental

<sup>84</sup> **Sotānugata Sutta** (A 4.191/2:185), SD 58.2. See also **Anusota S** (A 4.5/2:5) = Pug 4.27/62.

<sup>85</sup> See **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.2.3 = 3.5.3/2:36,17 = 38,5), SD 49.8a = **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19/1:168,7), SD 1.11 = **Āyācana S** (S 6.1/1:136,22), SD 12.2; **Anusota S** (A 4.5/2:5,13+18 etc), SD 78.15 = Pug 4.27/62. See also SD 29.6a (1.5.2); SD 34.5 (3.1).

<sup>86</sup> We see only the realization of arhathood as being significant enough to be reported to the Buddha (*aññā vyākaraṇa*) or recorded in the suttas. See eg (**Arahatta**) **Māluṅkya,putta S** (S 35.95,17+18/4:76), SD 5.9.

<sup>87</sup> On that dhyana is not needed for attaining streamwinning, see SD3.3 (0.3).

<sup>88</sup> See eg (**Anicca**) **Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

<sup>89</sup> **Sīlavanta S** (S 22.122), eg, states that reflection on the impermanent, unsatisfactory and nonself nature of the 5 aggregates brings fruit of streamwinning (S 22.122/3:167), SD 47.4; (**Ekaka**) **Kāya,gatā,sati S 1** (A 1.21.27) presents well-developed mindfulness of the body as being capable of leading to streamwinning (A 1.21.27/1:44) = (A 1.596); and (**Chakka**) **Anicca S** (A 6:98) states that contemplating all formations as impermanent (A 6.98/3:441 f), SD SD 12.13. See also **D 33**,2.1,25/3:241 and **Vimutt’āyatana S** (A 5.26/3:21), where listening to the Dharma constitutes one out of 5 occasions for awakening, the others being teaching the Dharma, reciting it, reflecting on it, and meditation (SD 21.5).

<sup>90</sup> Cf the Buddha’s admonition: “Meditate ... be not heedless!”: **Sallekha S** (M 8/1:46), SD 51.11; **M 19**/1:118 (SD 61.11); **M 106**/2:266; **M 152**/3:302; **S 35.146**/4:133; **S 43.1-11**/4:359-361; **S 43.12-44**/4:368-373; **S 47.10**/5:157; **A 5.73**/3:87; **A 5.74**/3:88; **A 5.114**/4:139; **A 9.19**/4:392); or the stock passage on a meditator going into seclusion for intensive practice: **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,67/1:71), SD 8.10; **D 10**,2.5/1:207; **D 19**,46/2:242; **D 25**,16/3:49; **M 27**,12/1:181; **M 38**,32/1:269; **M 39**,12/1:274; **M 51**,18/1:346; **M 65**,14/1:440; **M 94**,20/2:162; **M 101**,40/2:226; **M 107**,8/3:3; **M 112**,23/3:35; **M 122**,22/3:115; **M 125**,20/3:135; **A 4.198**/2:210; **A 5.75**/3:92; **A 5.76**/3:100; **A 9.40**/4:436; **A 10.99**/5:207).

concentration (meditation) and wisdom. Proper meditation frees the mind from the fetter of sensual pleasure so that the mind is ready for non-returning, if not arhathood itself.

On the other hand, when we are not ready for such spiritual distinction, then, we can at least take our first step on the path of awakening—that is to attain streamwinning in this life itself. Even though this is a longer journey, it is better than being caught in the crowd or getting lost down a road less taken. Streamwinning, then, is a more gradual path—it may be slow, but is sure and steady.

### **2.8.5 The lay practitioner’s gradual way**

**2.8.5.1** The suttas record a poignant case of the pleasure-loving layman **Ugga** of Hatthi, gāma, who, despite being a drunk, benefitted from the exposition of an abbreviated version of **the gradual path** (A 8.22). In the Sutta, Ugga himself tells us how, even while drunk, seeing the Buddha in the distance and for the first time, **faith** arises in him and he turns sober! This is, in fact, only the 1<sup>st</sup> of his 8 amazing qualities. The 8<sup>th</sup> and last of these qualities is, of course, that he attains **non-returning**.<sup>91</sup>

In this particular case, the impact of personally meeting the Buddha is clearly so powerful that breakthrough occurs in spite of the fact that just a few moments earlier he was drunk.

**2.8.5.2** A similar case is that of **Sarakāni**, who takes to drinks (*majja, pānam apāyi*), although we are not told that he is actually a drunk, but merely one “weak in his training” (*sikkhā, dubbalyam āpādi*). He is said to have long gone for refuge and lives keeping the 5 precepts.<sup>92</sup> However, he is unable to abstain from the 5<sup>th</sup> precept, that is, he takes to drinks.

Yet after he dies, the Buddha declares that he has **died a streamwinner**. The Buddha explains that he has taken refuge for such a long time and “kept to the training at the time of his death.”<sup>93</sup>

From the Sutta context, it seems that this layman has earlier progressed to a level as a faith-follower or a truth-follower, where he is certain to attain streamwinning in this life itself, if not certainly in his dying moment—despite the fact that he is reported to have been “a drinker.”<sup>94</sup>

**2.8.6** What we understand as “**sudden**” **awakening** in the suttas, however, can bring about arhathood. The best known of such a case is clearly that of the ascetic **Bāhiya**, who fully awakens while listening to the Buddha giving a short but penetrating lesson during their first meeting, as recorded in **the (Arahatta) Bāhiya Sutta** (U 1.10).<sup>95</sup>

Bāhiya is the classic case of “sudden” awakening as we understand it in the suttas; and **the (Arahatta) Bāhiya Sutta** (U 1.10) is its locus classicus. Considering the manner of Bāhiya’s awakening, it is clear that his gradual spiritual development must have occurred before he meets the Buddha. This must be

<sup>91</sup> **Ugga S 2** (A 8.22/4:213), SD 45.15. Analayo, in 2003:254 f, seems uncertain about this Sutta. He does not mention Ugga by name and says that he becomes a streamwinner (which is not the case). In fact, he attains non-returning, which is the last of his 8 amazing qualities.

<sup>92</sup> S 55.34,6/5:375 (SD 3.6).

<sup>93</sup> **Sarakāni S 1** (S 55.24/5:375-377), SD 3.6. This statement is made by the Buddha at the very end of the Sutta (§13.2).

<sup>94</sup> **Sarakāni S 2** (S 55.25/5:380), SD 77.8, the 2<sup>nd</sup> account about Sarakāni, closes by saying that, at the time of dying, he “fulfilled the training” (*sikkhāya paripūrakāri*) (S 5:380,16). This shows that Sarakāni attains streamwinning at that time. Both Sarakāni Ss 1 + 2 used the same stock passages defining the “truth-follower” (*dhammānusārī*) and the “faith-follower” (*saddhā’nusārī*), also found in **Kitā, giri S** (M 70,20+21/1:479), SD 11.1. It is prob that he has been such a “follower” and is thus bound to attain streamwinning certainly by the moment of dying at the latest. See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), which states that it is impossible for a truth-follower or a faith-follower to pass away without having attained the fruit of streamwinning (S 25.1/3:225), SD 16.7).

<sup>95</sup> See **(Arahatta) Bāhiya S** (U 1.10/8), SD 33.7.

due to his past karma (he was a monk in his past life)<sup>96</sup> and present conditions (his spiritual inclination) —and, of course, being taught by the Buddha himself. The Buddha, apparently, only needs to give a suitable essential teaching to trigger, as it were, Bāhiya’s readiness for awakening.<sup>97</sup>

**2.8.7** Not only is it impossible to know the exact moment of awakening but, in terms of practice, even the gradual progress towards awakening does not necessarily flow evenly. Most practitioners will experience cycles of progression and regression, swinging amongst focus, distraction, uncertainty, and, often enough, stagnation.<sup>98</sup> With diligence, these same recurrent cycles are usually the dynamics of a slow but steadily gradual development with a growing likelihood to culminate in a sudden attainment of nirvana.

### 3 Prince Bodhi

#### **3.1 PRINCE BODHI’S BACKGROUND**

##### 3.1.1 Prince Bodhi and his family

**3.1.1.1** Prince Bodhi (*bodhi,rāja.kumāra*) was the son of **Udena**, king of Kosambī,<sup>99</sup> and his mother was **Vāsula,dattā**,<sup>100</sup> the daughter of Caṇḍa-p,pajjota “the fierce,” king of Avantī (whose capital was Ujjenī). Their story-cycle (but not Bodhi’s) is given in **the Sāmā,vatī Vatthu**<sup>101</sup> (DhA 2.1). Apparently, **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85) is the only sutta account of prince Bodhi that we have.

**3.1.1.2** The canonical account about him is found only in the Vinaya [SD 55.8], but which is regarded as “late canonical.” Details about prince Bodhi are also found in **the Majjhima Commentary** on M 85 MA 321-327). There is also **the Vena,sākha Jātaka** (J 353), told in connection with prince Bodhi’s cruelty.<sup>102</sup>

##### 3.1.2 Bodhi meets the Buddha

**3.1.2.1** When the Buddha is staying in the Bhesakalā forest outside Sumsumāra,giri in Bhagga country, prince Bodhi who lives nearby has just completed building a new palace called **Kokanada** [§2]. He

<sup>96</sup> Comys relate that in Kassapa Buddha’s time, **Bāhiya** was one of 7 monks who together took a vow to awaken in that life itself. They left for the forest and lived on a mountain, vowing never to leave until they awaken. Only the 1<sup>st</sup> attained arhathood; the 2<sup>nd</sup> gained non-returning. The other 5—king Pukkusāti, Kumāra Kassapa, Bāhiya, Dabba Malla,putta and Sabhiya—failed to win any distinction and were reborn in Gotama Buddha’s time. (DhA 8.2a/2:210 f; UA 1:80 f)

<sup>97</sup> (**Arahatta**) **Bāhiya S** (U 1.10) opens by telling us that Bāhiya is a respected “bark-robed” (*dāru,cīriya*) ascetic living on the sea-shore at Suppāraka (§2) (modern Sopāra, near Mumbai). Comys tells us on his 8<sup>th</sup> voyage to SE Asia, he is shipwrecked but survives. Losing all his clothes, he dresses himself in tree-bark. He is mistaken by locals for a devout ascetic. At first, he rejects their piety and generosity. In due course, he accepts his new life and even thinks that he is an arhat. However, when he is told of the Buddha, he at once journeys to meet him. So eager is he to learn from the Buddha that meeting him on his alms-round, he insists that the Buddha teaches him. And so the Buddha does, uttering the famous **Bāhiya’s teaching** [U 1.10,15-17 + SD 33.7 (1)]. He becomes an arhat but before he can find his robes and bowl for ordination, he is gored to death by a fierce cow or goat (the fruition of his past karma). (DhA 2/2:212-216; UA 1:81-98)

<sup>98</sup> Debes 1994:204, 208; Kornfield 1979:53.

<sup>99</sup> For his story, **Udena Vatthu** (the Udena story-cycle, DhA 2.1), the longest in Dh Comy, see DhA 2.1/1:161-231.

<sup>100</sup> We know of Vāsula,dattā’s name from: DhA 1:192,24, 195,3, 199,3; MA 3:325,18-24; PmA 3:673,2.

<sup>101</sup> Also called **Udena Vatthu** (DhA 2.1/1:161-231).

<sup>102</sup> Be Ce Se **Vena,sākha J** (J 353/3:157-161), SD 55.6; called **Dhona,sākha J** only in Ee.

sends a message through the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta [4], inviting the Buddha and the monks for an alms-offering in the palace as its first auspicious occupants.

The Buddha consents. At dawn the following day, he arrives at the bottom of the palace entrance stairway. The whole palace floor is covered with white cloths. Prince Bodhi hopes that with Buddha stepping on the white cloths, he will have a dearly wanted child. However, even after thrice inviting the Buddha to step on the cloths, the Buddha remained standing in silence.

**3.1.2.2** The Buddha then looks at Ānanda, who thereupon asks that the white-cloth covering be removed. The Buddha's refusal to step on the white cloths, explains Ānanda, should serve as an example to future generations [2.4.2]. In other words, the Buddha does not want to set a precedent by his action, the significance of which will be discussed with his introduction of a **Vinaya rule** regarding this.<sup>103</sup>

**3.1.2.3** After the meal, Bodhi tells the Buddha of his view that "Happiness is not to be found through pleasure; happiness is to be found through pain" [§9.2]. To correct Bodhi's **wrong view**, the Buddha relates how he, too once had that wrong view of Bodhi's, and relates **his noble quest** up to the awakening of the 5 monks [1.3].

## 4 The brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta

### **4.1 SAÑJIKĀ,PUTTA MĀṆAVA**

#### **4.1.1 Jātaka story**

All that we know about **the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta** (*sañjikā,putta māṇava*) is in connection with the story of prince Bodhi. Even then, he is mentioned only in **the Bodhi Rāja.kumāra Sutta** (M 85) and in **the Vinaya** regarding the rule about monastics stepping on white cloths spread out by the laity.<sup>104</sup> He is also mentioned in **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Vatthu** (DhA 12.1),<sup>105</sup> but not in **the Dhona,sākha Jātaka** (J 353), SD 55.5.

#### **4.1.2 Origins of māṇava**

**4.1.2.1** From his name—**Sañjikā,putta Māṇava**—we can deduce a couple of things. Sañjikā,putta is a metronymic, meaning "son of Sañjikā"—he is named after his mother, **Sañjikā**; and that's all we know. **Māṇava** usually refers to a Vedic student; hence, it is often translated as "brahmin student."<sup>106</sup> However, since the word is often more broadly used without signifying whether they are still students, the translation, "brahmin youth" generally fits better.<sup>107</sup>

**4.1.2.2** Such an appellation usually stays with the person for good; hence, Sañjikā,putta may be a *māṇava*, but we are certain of his age. Anyway, "youth" here should be understood as reminding us of the word's etymology as "descendent of Manu (archetypal man)" or "Manu's generation," according to brahminical mythology. In this sense, *māṇava* simply means "human being."<sup>108</sup>

<sup>103</sup> See **Cela,pattikā V** (Cv 5.21.1-4) + SD 55.3 (2.1.1).

<sup>104</sup> Cv 21.1 (V 2:127,20 etc), SD 55.8.

<sup>105</sup> DhA 12.1/3:134,14 etc (SD 55.9).

<sup>106</sup> On various related terms, see SD 38.6 (2.1). The spelling *māṇava* occurs at Sn 456, 589, Pv 1.8,7/7.

<sup>107</sup> See Sn 1022, 1027, 1028; J 4:391; DA 1:36.

<sup>108</sup> SnA 403,7 f. See Thī 112: *māṇavā* (pl), "men."



The best known of the elders with the epithet *māṇava* are, clearly, the 16 youths, followers of Bāvarī, whose 16 questions are recorded in **the Pārāyana,vagga** (Sn 1031-1123).<sup>109</sup> Of the 16 “youths,” the last, Bāvarī’s nephew, Piṅgiya, is 120 years old.<sup>110</sup>

## 4.2 SAÑJIKĀ,PUTTA’S HUMANENESS

### 4.2.1 The prince’s cruelty

**4.2.1.1** Both **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Vatthu** (DhA 12.1) and **the Vena,sākha Jātaka** (J 353) present a dark inhumanly violent side of prince Bodhi. In the Dhammapada story, he confides in Sañjikā,putta that he plans to have the architect, “killed, cut off his hands and feet, or tear out his eyes” so that he does not build a similarly fabulous palace for another king!<sup>111</sup> [1.1.12].

**4.2.1.2** We see here Sañjikā,putta’s **humaneness**. He secretly informs the architect of Bodhi’s plans of killing him—putting their friendship in jeopardy, even endangering his own life. With this, too, the story takes its own uniquely fabulous turn: the architect builds a flying machine and escapes with his family. The king, on account of his inhumanity and treachery, has lost a brilliant and innovative builder, who, it is said, later becomes a king in his own right by the name of Kaṭṭha,vāhana [SD 55.9].

### 4.2.2 Priestly bad influence

**4.2.2.1** **The Jātaka story** (J 353) makes no mention of Sañjikā,putta. Apparently, its purpose is to highlight prince Bodhi’s violently cruel streak. Here, Bodhi must be a young and impressionable prince. Despite being warned of the karmic consequences of violent cruelty by his own great teacher, he falls for the evil schemes of his purohita (family priest), Piṅgiya.

**4.2.2.2** **Piṅgiya** proposes that Bodhi conquers all the lands of India under him, and Piṅgiya will be the only purohita. Bodhi succeeds in conquering a thousand kings, but is unable to seize Takka,silā. Following the dastardly ideas of Piṅgiya, Bodhi blinds the 1000 kings and offers their innards as a sacrifice to a banyan guardian deity. In an ironic turn, a yaksha blinds Bodhi’s right eye, and a vulture accidentally blinds the left! Only then, when it is too late, Bodhi laments, recalling his teacher’s words. (J 353), SD 55.5.

## 4.3 SAÑJIKĀ,PUTTA THE WISE COMPANION

**4.3.1** In **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85) and **the Vinaya** (V 2:127 f), we see Sañjikā,putta as a kind of wise companion and servant of prince Bodhi. We do not see any of prince Bodhi’s cruelty. Instead, we see him as a family person desperately desiring a child. The only unwise aspect of Bodhi is his notion that he would get a child if the Buddha steps on the white cloths he has spread out on the floor of his new palace, Kokanada [2.2].

<sup>109</sup> This is ch 5 of Sn, its last chapter, which together with the prec ch 4, **Aṭṭhaka,vagga** (Sn 766-975) are said to be the oldest of the early Buddhist texts.

<sup>110</sup> Sn 1120; SnA 2:413,23.

<sup>111</sup> DhA 12.1,4/3:134 (SD 55.4).

**4.3.2** Prince Bodhi dispatches Sañjikā,putta to invite the Buddha to Kokanāda palace [§3]. Prince Bodhi addresses him as an intimate, as “dear Sañjikā,putta” (*samma sañjikā,putta*),<sup>112</sup> to which Sañjikā,putta replies with “sir” (*bho*), a polite brahminical mode of address amongst social equals. From this, it is clear that this is not merely a master-servant relationship, but a more intimate companionship.

**4.3.3** The otherwise compliant, even servile, Sañjikā,putta reacts rather surprisingly just after Bodhi exults at the Buddha’s teaching. He loudly wonders why Bodhi exults in the Dharma but does not go for refuge! [§61]. The Commentary gives no explanation: we do not know whether Sañjikā,putta is sternly reminding Bodhi of the right thing to do, or he is deeply inspired by the occasion and jubilantly goads Bodhi to seize the moment.

Bodhi responds by recalling how he has vicariously gone for refuge *twice* before: the first time at Ghosita’s park monastery, outside Kosambī, through his mother when he is still in her womb, and the other in the Bhesakalā forest, through his own nurse carrying him on her hip. And now, for the third time, Bodhi himself goes for refuge, thus closing the circle of a happy cycle—before the Buddha himself and with Sañjikā,putta as his witness. [§§62-64]

#### 4.4 SAÑJIKĀ,PUTTA, DEUTERAGONIST OR TRITAGONIST?

##### 4.4.1 The Buddha as protagonist

**4.4.1.1** If we take the Buddha as the main “character” or primary “actor” in the suttas or stories where he appears, such as in **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85), then, Bodhi is the deuteragonist, the secondary actor, with whom the Buddha engages directly and the most often. In this case, Sañjikā,putta would be the tritagonist, the tertiary actor or “sidekick” of popular literature.

In sutta teachings, where the *deuteragonist* is the target of the teaching (for wholesome or unwholesome reasons), the *tritagonist* acts as a better alternative who reminds us of our own position in real life as reflected in the teaching. Here are some such suttas and their key actors (other than the Buddha):

	<u>deuteragonist</u>	<u>tritagonist</u>	
• <b>Ambaṭṭha Sutta</b> (D 3)	brahmin youth Ambaṭṭha <sup>113</sup>	his teacher Pokkharasāti	(SD 21.3)
• <b>Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S</b> (D 25,1.3)	the wanderer Nigrodha	the layman Sandāna <sup>114</sup>	(SD 1.4)
• <b>Cūḷa Hatthi,padōpama S</b> (M 27)	the brahmin Pilotikā <sup>115</sup>	the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi <sup>116</sup>	(SD 40a.5)
• <b>Kāraṇa,pālī Sutta</b> (A 5.194)	the brahmin Piṅgiyānī <sup>117</sup>	the brahmin Kāraṇa,pālī <sup>118</sup>	(SD 45.11)

**4.4.1.2** In the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta, **Sañjikā,putta** acts literally or physically as the link between prince Bodhi and the Buddha. As a tritagonist, Sañjikā,putta, is most significant at the close of the Sutta, where he asks the exulting prince Bodhi [§60] why he does not take refuge in the 3 jewels [§61]. In doing so, he brings the spiritual best out of Bodhi.

<sup>112</sup> M 85,8 etc; V 2:127,21 etc.

<sup>113</sup> On Ambaṭṭha, see SD 21.3 (1.3.2).

<sup>114</sup> See esp Sandhāna’s retort to Nigrodha (D 25,21), SD 1.4.

<sup>115</sup> On Pilotikā’s faith, see SD 40a.5 (1.3.3, 2).

<sup>116</sup> In **M 27**, the two persons have almost equal significance as the protagonists (the original protagonist, the Buddha, is absent). Pilotikā is said to be the deuteragonist on account of his greater faith in the Buddha which inspires Jāṇussoṇi.

<sup>117</sup> On Piṅgiyānī, see SD 45.11 (2.1).

<sup>118</sup> On Kāraṇa,pālī, see SD 45.11 (2.1).

In this role, Sañjikā,putta is like **Brahmā Sahampati** when he invites the newly awakened Buddha to declare the Dharma to the world. Even without Brahmā inviting the Buddha, he would have taught the Dharma; but it is the tradition in all the buddha-narrative that Brahmā invites him to teach.

**4.4.1.3** The Buddha's "**hesitation**" and Brahmā's **invitation** not only celebrates the arrival of the Buddha Dharma in this universe, but also highlights its supreme value and utility. Earth and heaven, as it were, are brought together in our practice of that Dharma. Just as Brahmā comes down before the Buddha, so, too, heaven arises in us through the Dharma.

Perhaps, even without Sañjikā,putta's "invitation," prince Bodhi would have gone for refuge the 3<sup>rd</sup> time. Sañjikā,putta's intercession highlights not prince Bodhi, but **the 3 jewels** to which we go for refuge as practitioners. Sañjikā,putta the tritagonist (and Brahmā in his invitation) [4.4.1.2] reminds us of the supremacy of the Dharma as highlighted by the Buddha in **the Gāraṇa Sutta** (S 6.2), that the Dharma is above even the Buddha himself.<sup>119</sup>

#### **4.4.2 What is the sutta's chorus?**

**4.4.2.1** Often when we speak of a sutta's "**protagonist**" or main character we do not think of the Buddha but rather the person who benefits the most from his teaching or the person highlighted in that context. In **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85), then, we can take prince Bodhi as the protagonist, the main actor and benefactor of the Sutta.

Traditionally, in ancient Greek drama, we have the protagonist, the deuteragonist, the tritagonist and the chorus. What is the role of **the chorus**? According to A W Schlegel, German poet, translator and critic: "It mitigates the impression of a heart-rending or moving story while it conveys to the actual spectator a lyrical and musical expression of his own emotions, and elevates him to the region of contemplation."<sup>120</sup>

**4.4.2.2** In many of these plays, the chorus expresses to the audience what the main characters could not say, such as their secrets or fears. The chorus often provides characters in a dramatic piece with the insight. For us, then, the chorus provides with **the context, links** and fuller background of the sutta text.

In the suttas, especially narrative ones, like **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta**, the chorus is the sutta narrator (who is sometimes the "council elders"). The most common role of the sutta chorus or narrator is to give us especially the following:

- "time tags": the opening "at one time" [§1], "now at that time" [§2], "then" [§§3, 4.2, 8.2, 9 etc], "when it was dawn" [§6], "when this was said ... " [§60, 61] etc;
- an actor's location or situation: "sitting at one side" [§3.4]; "going up to ... " [§4.3];
- the speaker: "The Blessed One ... " [§4]; 'Prince Bodhi ... " [§8];
- significant actions: "the Blessed One looked at Ānanda" [§7.7].

The sutta's narrator is not always apparent, since he seamlessly links up the various parts of the narrative where otherwise there would have been hiatuses. He also helpfully informs us regarding the narrative context so that we have a clear picture of the dialogue or teaching. Basically, the narrator facilitates our understanding of the sutta as a whole: story and teaching.

<sup>119</sup> S 6.2/1:138-140 (SD 12.3).

<sup>120</sup> August Wilhelm Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, 1846. Tr M Carlson, *Theories of the Theatre*, 1993:179. See also Luigi Battezzato, "Lyric," *Blackwell Companion to Greek Tragedy*, 2005:154.

### 4.4.3 The Buddha as chorus

**4.4.3.1** In the **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta**, the Buddha is himself a narrator: he tells or re-tells us the story of his noble quest, awakening and his first Dharma teaching [§§10-54]. He is also the chorus by seamlessly linking up the various parts of the narrative where otherwise there would have been hiatuses. More importantly, in such a narrative, the Buddha makes us the “omniscient audience”: he tells us his thoughts, especially behind his actions, and informs us of developments, for example:

- “ ... dissatisfied with that Dharma, revulsed with it, I left.” [§§12.16, 13.16];
- “And then ... 3 similes, unheard before, spontaneously occurred to me” [§15];
- “But ... such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain” [§18.6];
- “ ... when the devas saw me, some said ... ” [§24];
- “ ... it occurred to me, ‘I fear not the pleasure that has nothing to do with sensual pleasures ... ” [§30.2];
- He describes the 4 dhyanas [§§32-35]; and so on.

**4.4.3.2** After all, the Buddha is “always present,” as it were, in the suttas—Gotama’s awakening is the same as the buddhas of the past, and future buddhas will speak the same Dharma of renunciation and awakening, of compassion and wisdom. In this sense, the Buddha is the chorus of the sutta. The protagonist, the deuteragonist, the tritagonist may change, but the chorus is always present with the same message.

In this sense, the Buddha is always present in the suttas when we study them, reflect on them, recite them, teach them. The sutta is the unbroken thread that goes back to the Buddha, to the chorus of Dharma that is the teaching and the seeing. Hence, when we see the Dharma, we see the Buddha.

— — —

## Bodhi Raja,kumāra Sutta

### The Discourse to Prince Bodhi

M 85

**1** Thus have I heard.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>122</sup>At one time, the Blessed One was staying in the deer park<sup>123</sup> in Bhesakalā Forest<sup>124</sup> at Sumsumāra,-giri<sup>125</sup> in the Bhaggā country.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>121</sup> This account (M 85,1-9.1/2:91,2-93,11) recurs, with minor variations, in **Cela,pattikā V** (Cv 5.21.1-3 at “... sat down as one side.”) = V 2:127,13-128,37 (SD 55.3).

<sup>122</sup> From here up to §4.4 found in these Skt fragments: SHT III 997B, SHT 33 IV fol 17-18, SHT IV 165 fol 20-22, SHT VI 1361, SHT VI 1373a, SHT XI 4573, Hoernle frag Or 15004/76, Or 15009/187 + frag SI B/14 1B. See (1.1.1.4) n.

<sup>123</sup> “Deer park,” *miga,dāya*, the best known of which is this one outside Benares (S 5:421), where the 1<sup>st</sup> discourse is given, as recorded in **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,1/4:420), SD 1.1; another in Bhesakalā forest, near where Nakula,pitā and Nakula,mātā live: see **Anumāna S** (M 15,1/1:95) SD 59.3; **Māra Tajjanīya S** (M 50,1/-1:332), SD 36.4; **Nakula,pitā S** (S 22.1/3:1), SD 5.4; **Sama,jīvi S** (A 4.55,1/2:61), SD 5.1; **Nakula S** (A 6.16/3:295), SD 5.2; **Nakula,mātā S** (A 8.48,1), SD 5.3; and another outside Nādikā [Ñātikā]: see **Cūla Gosiṅga S** (M 31,1), SD 44.11, **Mahā Gosiṅga S** (M 32,1), SD 44.12. For other refs, search CSCD using “migadāy\*”.

## Prince Bodhi invites the Buddha to Kokanada<sup>127</sup>

2 Now, a palace named **Kokanada**<sup>128</sup> had been recently built by prince Bodhi,<sup>129</sup> and it had not yet been inhabited by any recluse or brahmin or any human.

3 Then, prince Bodhi addressed the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta:<sup>130</sup>

“Come, now, dear Sañjikā,putta, go to the Blessed One and bow your head at the Blessed One’s feet on my behalf, and ask after his health, that he has good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and comfort;<sup>131</sup> saying:

‘Bhante, prince Bodhi bows his head at the Blessed One’s feet, and asks after your health, that you have good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and comfort.’<sup>132</sup>

3.2 Then say:

‘Bhante, let the Blessed One together with the sangha of monks consent to accept tomorrow’s meal from prince Bodhi.’”

3.3 “Yes, sir,” replied the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta, and he went to the Blessed One and exchanged friendly words and cordial greetings<sup>133</sup> with him. When the friendly greetings were concluded, the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta sat down at one side.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>124</sup> Skt *bhīṣaṇaka* or *bhīṣaṇika*. So called because it is the home of the yakshini Bhesakaḷā (SA 2:249). Nearby is the house of Nakula, pitā and Nakula, mātā: **Nakula, mātā S** (A 8.48), SD 5.3.

<sup>125</sup> *Sumsumāra, giri* (Skt *śiśumāra*): see SD 5.4 (1).

<sup>126</sup> Bhagga was not amongst the 16 great states, for which see (**Tad-ah’**) **Uposatha S** (A 3.70), SD 4.18 Appendix. On Bhagga country, see **Nakula, pitā S** (S 22.1/3:1), SD 5.4; B C Law, *Tribes in Ancient India*, 1943:292 f.

<sup>127</sup> Bodhi’s invitation of the Buddha recurs (with some varying details) at V 2:127-129 (SD 55.3), DhA 3:136; Chin version at T1421 (T22.74bc); Skt versions at SHT IV 33 fol 17V2 and R6, SHT IV 165 fol 20Vc and folio 22V7, and folio 340R2-3 (Silverlock 2009:73).

<sup>128</sup> Be Ce Ee *kokanado*; Se *kokanudo*. **Kokanada**, the red lotus (flower): also at S 1:81,13\* = A 3:239,23\* = J 1:116,12\*; MA 3:321.

<sup>129</sup> Prince Bodhi (*bodhi raja, kumāra*) is the son of king Udena of Kosambī and his mother, the daughter of king Caṇḍa Pajjota of Avantī [3.1.1.1]. The account of the Buddha’s arrival at the palace [§§2-9] recurs in the Vinaya (Cv 5.21.1-3) as the preamble to the introduction of the rule about monastics stepping on a white cloth. (V 2:127,15-129,37), SD 55.8.

<sup>130</sup> *Sañjikā,putta māṇava*.

<sup>131</sup> The sentence up to this point: *ehi tvaṃ samma sañjikā,putta yena bhagavā ten’upasaṅkama, upasaṅkamtivā mama vacanena bhagavato pāde siraṣā vanda* [only here *vanda*; all other stocks, *vandāhi*], *appābādham appātaṅkaṃ lahuṭṭhānaṃ balaṃ phāsuvihāraṃ puccha*, lit “ask (if) he is free from sickness, free from illness, in a state of lightness, having strength, dwelling in comfort.” This is stock: see foll n.

<sup>132</sup> This is stock: **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16,1.2/2:72), SD 9 (king Ajāta, sattu to Vassa, kāra); **Bodhi Rāja, kumāra S** (M 85,3/2:91), SD 55.2; **Piya, jātika S** (M 87,6/2:108), SD 84.11 (queen Mallikā to brahmin Nāḷi, jaṅgha); **Kaṇṇaka-ṭṭhala S** (M 90,2.2/2:125), SD 10.8 (king Pasenadi to a man); (**Sattaka**) **Vassa, kāra S** (A 7.20/4:17), SD 72.14; **Suppavāsa S** (U 15). See prec n.

<sup>133</sup> *Sammodimsu sammodaniyaṃ kathāṃ sārāṇiyaṃ vītisāretvā*, lit “they greeted (the Blessed One); having exchanged complimentary talk that gladdens ...” The phrase *sammodimsu sammodaniyaṃ kathāṃ sārāṇiyaṃ vītisāreti* is stock: D 1:52, 90, 118, 152; M 1:16 (*anussariyamāna, sukhatō sārāṇiyaṃ*, “gladdening,’ on account of recollecting happiness,” MA 1:110); A 1:55, 281, 2:42; Sn 419; (cf BHS *saṃmukhaṃ saṃmodaniṃ saṃrañjanīṃ vividhāṃ kathāṃ vyatisārya*, Divy 43.8, 47.19, 96.26, 318.16; *saṃmodaniṃ saṃrañjanīṃ vividhāṃ kathāṃ vyatisāryaikānte ’sthāt*, Avdś 1.229, 2:140); *sārāṇiyaṃ kathāṃ katheti*, DhA 1:107.4:87; (cf BHS *saṃrañjanīyaṃ dharmāṃ samādāya*, Divy 260.7).

<sup>134</sup> On this stock, see **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3,1.9), SD 21.3.

## The Buddha consents

3.4 Sitting at one side, the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta said to the Blessed One:

“Master Gotama,<sup>135</sup> prince Bodhi, bows his head at the Blessed One’s feet, and asks after your health, that you have good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and comfort.

And he says thus:

‘Bhante, may the Blessed One together with the sangha of monks consent to accept tomorrow’s meal from prince Bodhi.’<sup>136</sup>”

4 The Blessed One consented by his silence.<sup>137</sup>

4.2 Then, the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta, knowing that the Buddha has consented, rose from his seat and approached prince Bodhi.

4.3 Going up to prince Bodhi, he said:

“It has been conveyed to the Blessed One that *prince Bodhi [92] bows at master Gotama’s feet and asks after his health, that he has good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and comfort.*”<sup>138</sup>

4.4 And when this was said:

‘May the Blessed One together with the sangha of monks consent to accept tomorrow’s meal from prince Bodhi,’ the recluse Gotama consented.

## The Buddha arrives at the palace

5 <sup>139</sup>With the passing of the night, Prince Bodhi had prepared exquisite food, hard and soft, in his own residence, had Kokanada palace spread with white cloths down to the last step of the stairway.<sup>140</sup>

5.2 Then, he addressed the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta:

“Come, now, dear Sañjikā,putta, go to the Blessed One and announce the time:

‘It’s time, bhante, the meal is ready.’”

5.3 “Yes, sir,” replied the brahmin youth Sañjikā,putta.

He approached the Blessed One and announced the time:

‘It’s time, bhante, the meal is ready.’”

6 When it was dawn, the Blessed One, having dressed himself, taking robe and bowl, went to prince Bodhi’s residence.

## The Buddha’s silence

7 At that time, prince Bodhi was standing at the porch of the outer gateway, waiting for the Blessed One.

He saw the Blessed One coming from afar. Seeing him, he went out towards the Blessed One, saluted him. Then, he let the Buddha go before him, and head for Kokanada palace.

7.2 But the Blessed One stopped at the lowest step of the stairway.

<sup>135</sup> Be *bodhi kho gotama raja,kumaro*; Ce Ee Ke Se *bodhi bho gotama raja,kumāro*.

<sup>136</sup> *Adhivāsetu kira bhavaṃ gotamo bodhissa rāja,kumārassa svātanāya bhattaṃ saddhiṃ bhikkhu,saṅghenāti*.

<sup>137</sup> *Adhivutṭhañ ca pana samaṇena gotamenāti*, lit, “And consent (was given) by the recluse Gotama.”

<sup>138</sup> As at (**Majjhima**) **Subha S** (D 10,1.2/1:204 etc), SD 40a.13; (**Majjhima**) **Lohicca S** (D 12,4+5/1:225), SD 34.8.

<sup>139</sup> Bodhi’s alms-offering is described in Skt fragments SHT IV 33 fol 21-22 + SHT IV 165 fol 23. See (1.1.1.4) n.

<sup>140</sup> “... had Kokanada palace ... of the stairway,” *kokanadañ ca pāsādaṃ odātehi dussehi santharāpetvā yāva pacchimā sopāna,kaḷevarā* [V 2:128,7 (§12) *sopāna,kaliṅgarā*, SD 55.3].

7.3 Prince Bodhi then said to the Blessed One:

“May the Blessed One step on<sup>141</sup> the cloths, bhante!<sup>142</sup> May the Welcome One [Sugata] step on the cloths, for my good and happiness for a long time!”

7.4 When this was said, the Blessed One remained silent.

7.5 For a second time, *Prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One:*

“*May the Blessed One step on the cloths, bhante! May the Welcome One [Sugata] step on the cloths, for my good and happiness for a long time!*”

*When this was said, the Blessed One remained silent.*

7.6 For a third time, *Prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One:*

“*May the Blessed One step on the cloths, bhante! May the Welcome One [Sugata] step on the cloths, for my good and happiness for a long time!*”<sup>143</sup>

7.7 Then, the Blessed One turned and looked<sup>144</sup> at the venerable Ānanda.<sup>145</sup>

7.8 Then, [93] the venerable Ānanda said to prince Bodhi:

“Noble prince, let the cloths be removed. The Blessed One will not step on the cloth-spread.<sup>146</sup> **The Tathagata regards posterity with compassion.**”<sup>147</sup> [2.3]

## The Buddha in Kokanada palace

8 Prince Bodhi, having accordingly had the cloths removed, had seats prepared on the upper floor of Kokanada palace.

Then, the Blessed One, along with the community of monks, ascended Kokanada palace and sat on the prepared seats.

8.2 Prince Bodhi served with his own hands, foods hard and soft, and satisfied the community of monks with the Blessed One at the head.

<sup>141</sup> “May ... step on,” Be *abhiruhatu*; Ce Ee Se *abhirūhatu*; V 2:128,22+26 *akkamatu*. At M 2:93,2, all MSS read *cela(t)tikam akkamissati* [§7.7]. **Abhirūhatu**, imp of *abhirūhati* (less commonly, *abhiruhati*), to ascend, mount; to step upon (M 1:149,5, 2:92,24; Tha 271; J 3:122,29). **Akkamatu**, imp of *akkamati* (*ā* + √KRAM, to go), “to step or tread upon” (M 2:93,2 ≈ DhA 3:136,21; J 3:374,7’, 4:206,9\*, 5:433,30, 6:126,10\*). See CPD: *abhirūhati*; *akkamati*. See foll n.

<sup>142</sup> *Abhirūhatu bhante bhagavā dussāni abhirūhatu sugato dussāni*. Instead of *abhirūhatu*, **V 2:128,23** (§18) has *akkamatu* [SD 55.3 (2.2)]. See prec n.

<sup>143</sup> On the significance of this moment, see (2.2.2.1).

<sup>144</sup> “Turned and looked at,” *apalokesi* (all MSS + V 2:128,27), ie, “turned (the head or body and) looked at”; DhA 12.1/3:136,9 has only *olokesi*, “looked (at).” Cf *nāgāpalokitam*, “looked with an elephant gaze” (ie, turned his whole body to face the other): **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,4.1/2:122,5) n, SD 9; of Kakusandha Buddha (at Dūsi Māra) (M 50,21/1:337,3), SD 36.4. Also see **Mahā Rāhu’ovāda S** (M 62,3) + SD 3.11 n.

<sup>145</sup> **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra V** (DhA 12.1) states: “The elder at once knew the look to be a sign that the Teacher did not wish to tread on the cloths.” (DhA 12.1,23), SD 55.4.

<sup>146</sup> *Samharatu rāja,kumāra dussāni, na bhagavā cela,paṭīkam* [Be Se so; Ce Ee V 2:128,29 DhA 3:136,11 *cela,patīkam*] *akkamissati*.

<sup>147</sup> Ce Ee Se *pacchimarā janatarā tathāgato apaloketi* (only M:Be 2:279,8 *anukampati*): M:Ce 2:482,23; M:Ee 2:93,3; M:Se 2:442,19. Although *anukampati* (“has pity or compassion towards”) seems to be a better reading, the older or original reading is prob *apaloketi*, since this is the more “difficult” reading—lectio difficilior potior [SD 54.6 (2.3.3.2)]. DhA 3:136,12 *oloketi* (he looks) (SD 55.4). However, M 4 & A 2.3.9, with a similar reading confirms *janatarā ... nukampati* as the better reading [2.3.2.2]. V 2:138,30 (SD 55.3) *pacchimarā janatarā tathāgato nukampati*, with similar reading in Skt fragment 341v8 (Silverlock 2009:76): *paścima[m] janatam nukampamāno*, and in T1421 (T22.74b29): 愍後世故 *mǐn hòushì gù*, “... out of compassion for future generations.”

9 When the Blessed One had finished his meal, and washed his bowl and hands,<sup>148</sup> prince Bodhi, taking a low seat, sat down at one side.<sup>149</sup>

9.2 Sitting at one side, prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, it occurred to me thus:

‘**Happiness [Pleasure] is not to be found through pleasure; happiness is to be found through pain.**’<sup>150</sup>”

## THE BUDDHA’S NOBLE QUEST, AWAKENING AND DHARMA-TEACHING

§§10-54<sup>151</sup>

### I. From renunciation to awakening

§§10-42

From: Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26,14-17/1:163,27-167,8), SD 1.11

#### Leaving home

10 “Here, noble prince, before my self-awakening, when I was still only an unawakened bodhisattva, this, too, occurred to me:

‘**Happiness is not to be found through pleasure; happiness is to be found through pain.**’

11 [M 26,14] After some time, noble prince, while I was still young, a black-haired young lad endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life,<sup>152</sup>

though my mother<sup>153</sup> and father wished otherwise, and wept with tearful faces,

<sup>148</sup> *Atha kho bodhi rāja, kumāro bhagavantam bhuttāvim onīta, patta, pāṇim.* “Washed his bowl and hands,” *onīta, patta, pāṇim*, stock signifying the end of a monk’s almsmeal: D 16/2:88,24, 97,32; M 35/1:236,31, 58/1:393,30, 81/2:50,20, 85/2:93,10, 92/2:146 (=Sn p111,8), 127/3:145,25; S 35.133/4:122,19, 123,27, 55.26/5:384,19; A 4.57/-2:63,3, 5.33/3:37,10, 7.53/4:64,23, 8.12/4:188,10; U 4.3/38,34, 8.6/89,16; Sn 3.7/p111,8. It is sometimes tr as “(having) withdrawn his (the Buddha’s) hand from the bowl,” esp when preceded by *dhota, hattham*, as in V 1:244: *bhagavantam dhota, hattham onīta, patta, pāṇim*, “the Blessed One washed his hands, and withdrew his hand from the bowl” (V 1:244 §13.2 @ SD 45.7b). It is understood that he would have put aside his bowl. See important long n at Sn:N 281 ad Sn p111 (§25.4); also S:B 1418 n135. See CPD: *onīta-patta-pāṇi* & DPL: *onīta*.

<sup>149</sup> Hereon, **the V account** (Cv 5.21.3: §26) @ V 2:128,37, continues differently (SD 55.3).

<sup>150</sup> *Na kho sukkena sukham adhigantabbam, dukkhena kho sukham adhigantabbanti.* *Sukha* means both “happiness” and “pleasure,” and both senses apply here. *Adhigantabbam* (M 1:93,36; It 104,17\*; Miln 243,17; Vism 219,6) is fut pass part of *adhigacchati*, “to get to, attain, acquire; understand.” Bodhi’s question has 2 angles: (1) happiness [pleasure] arises (only) from pain; (2) we appreciate happiness or pleasure (only) when we have suffered. (1) is a basic teaching of the Jains (**Cūḷa Dukkha-k, khandha S**, M 14,20/1:93 f), SD 4.7. While it is likely that Bodhi is expressing a Jain belief, it is possible that he is also musing on his own inability to have a child to the Buddha, perhaps even disappointed that the Buddha, too, is unable to favor him in this misfortune. Hence, his statement becomes the wrong view, the thesis, that the Buddha corrects in the rest of the Sutta.

<sup>151</sup> Ee gives only an abbreviated account (with *peyyālā*) citing M 26 (M 1:163-173), SD 1.11, + M 36 (M 1:240-249), SD 49.4. These passages are, however, given in full in Be Ce Se: M:Be 2:279-297, M:Ce 2:484-508 and M:Se 2:443-470. The Skt fragment, too, does not give a full account, indicating that the hiatuses should be supplied by Kāya, -bhāvanā Sūtra (parallel to M 36): fol 342R7 (Hartmann 2004b:129; Silverlock 2009:77). For a collation table of sutta sources of this account, see SD 49.4, Table 7.

<sup>152</sup> “In the prime of life,” ie, the first of the stages of life (*tiṇṇam vayanam paṭhama, vayena*, DA 1:253), ie, the 1<sup>st</sup> 30 years (MA 2:51 = AA 2:141). Presumably, the 3 stages of life are (1) youth (0-39), (2) middle age (40-79), and (3) senility (80-100+).



I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robe, and went forth from the household life into the homeless life.<sup>154</sup>

## THE 2 TEACHERS

(§§12-14) **M 26,15-16/1:163,31-166,34** (SD 1.11)

### Ālāra Kālāma

**12** [M 26,15] Having gone forth in this way, noble prince, in quest of what is wholesome, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace,<sup>155</sup>

I went to **Ālāra Kālāma**<sup>156</sup> and said to him:

‘Avuso [Friend] Kālāma, I want to lead the holy life in this Dharma-Vinaya [Dharma and Discipline].’

12.2 Noble prince, when this was spoken, Ālāra Kālāma said this to me:

‘The venerable one may stay here. This Dharma is such that a wise man [M 26/1:164] can soon attain and dwell in it, realizing for himself through his own direct knowledge his own teacher’s doctrine.’

(1) MASTERING THE TEXTS<sup>157</sup>

12.3 Noble prince, within a short time, I quickly learned that Dharma [ancient lore].<sup>158</sup>

Noble prince, as far as mere lip-reciting and rehearsal<sup>159</sup> of his teaching went, I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,<sup>160</sup> and I claimed, ‘I know and see,’ and there were others who did likewise.

12.4 Noble prince, I thought thus:

‘It is not through mere faith alone that Ālāra Kālāma declares:

“By realizing through my own direct knowledge, I attain and dwell in this Dharma.”

<sup>153</sup> This is Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī, Mahā Māyā’s sister and the Buddha’s foster mother. The Buddha’s uterine mother, Mahā Māyā (**Mahā’padāna S**, D 2:7, 52, 53; ApA 18; J 1:15; DhA 4:89; ThaA 2:225; CA 39) passed away a week after the Buddha was born (Tha 534 f; DA 2:431). See Analayo 2012:23-26.

<sup>154</sup> *So kho ahaṃ rāja,kumāra aparena samayena daharo’va samāno susukāḷa,keso bhadrana yobbanena saman-nāgato, paṭhamena vayasā akāmakānaṃ mātā,pitūnaṃ assu,mukhānaṃ rudantānaṃ kesa,massuṃ ohāretvā kā-sāyāni vatthāni acchādetvā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajim.* This same statement is repeated mutatis mutandis by Soṇa,daṇḍa (**Soṇa,daṇḍa S**, D 4,6/1:115), SD 30.5, by Kūṭa,danta (**Kūṭa,danta S**, D 5,7/1:131), SD 22.8(7a) and by Caṅkī (**Caṅkī S**, M 95,9/2:167), SD 21.15), all of which say that Gotama is “from a high family” (*uccā kulā*). A stock passage speaks of the Buddha as “the recluse Gotama, a Sakya son who went forth from the Sakya clan” (*samaṇo ... gotamo sakya,putto sakya,kulā pabbajito*): **Mv 22.2** @ V 1:35; **D 4,2/1:111, 13,7/1:236; M 41,2/1:285; S 55,7.2/5:352; A 3.63,1/1:180; Sn p103**. See SD 52.1 (8.2.4.2).

<sup>155</sup> *Bhikkhave kiṃ,kusala,gavesī anuttaraṃ santi,vara,padaṃ pariyesamāno.*

<sup>156</sup> Buddhaghosa says that **Ālāra** was also called Dīgha,piṅgala; **Kālāma** was his family name (DA 2:569 = MA 2:-171). The story of the Bodhisattva’s first 2 teachers [§§15-16] is found in several places in the early Canons: **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36/1:240); **Saṅgarāva S** (M 100/2:212); **Madhyam’āgama** of the Sarvāstivāda (T26.776b5-777a4; **Vinaya** of the Dharmaguptakas (T1428.780bt-c19); cf J 1:66; DhA 1:85; ApA 71; BA 6; DhsA 34; Mahvṣṭ 66. “No word is said about the Buddha’s relationship to these two people, nor indeed do we hear what these men had been or done. This would be hard to explain if the training of the Bodhisattva under them had been related at that time a few pages earlier as it is now.” (Bronkhorst 1993:85 f; see n to §§22-23 on “The first listeners” below).

<sup>157</sup> On this section (1) and the following two (2-3), see SD 1.11 (5): The 3 trainings.

<sup>158</sup> *So kho ahaṃ rāja,kumāra na,cirass’eva khippam eva taṃ dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇim.*

<sup>159</sup> “Mere lip-reciting and rehearsal,” *oṭṭha,pahata,mattena lapita,lāpana,mattena*, “merely moving the lips and reciting what had been recited” (Thomas 1949:62)

<sup>160</sup> “I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,” *ñāṇa,vādaṃ ca therā,vādaṃ ca*. Here, *therā,vāda* is used in a non-technical sense. The term *therā,vāda* as used of a school is a late post-canonical term.

12.5 Certainly, Ālāra Kālāma dwells knowing and seeing this Dharma.<sup>161</sup>

12.6 Then, noble prince, I went to Ālāra Kālāma and asked him:

‘Avuso Kālāma, in what way do you declare that by realizing for yourself through your own direct knowledge you attain and dwell in this Dharma?’

Noble prince, he declared that it was **the base of nothingness**.

(2) THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

**12.7** Noble prince, I thought thus:

‘Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>faith</u> ,	I, too, have	faith.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>energy</u> ,	I, too, have	energy.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>mindfulness</u> ,	I, too, have	mindfulness.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>concentration</u> ,	I, too, have	concentration.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>wisdom</u> ,	I, too, have	wisdom. <sup>162</sup>

12.8 What now if I endeavour to realize the Dharma that Ālāra Kālāma declares he dwells in, having attained and realized direct knowledge for himself?’

Noble prince, I too, in no long time, having quickly realized direct knowledge for myself, attained and dwelled in that Dharma.

12.9 Then, I went to Ālāra Kālāma and asked him:

‘Avuso Kālāma, is it in this way that you declare for yourself that you, realizing direct knowledge for yourself, have attained this Dharma?’

‘That is the way, avuso, that I declare for myself that I, realizing direct knowledge for myself, have attained this Dharma.’

‘That is the way, avuso, that I, too, realizing direct knowledge for myself, have attained and dwell in this Dharma.’

12.10 ‘It is a great gain for us, avuso, that we see<sup>163</sup> such a venerable one as a fellow brahmachari [as our companion in the holy life].<sup>164</sup>

12.11 The Dharma that I proclaim I have attained through realizing direct knowledge for myself, you yourself dwell in that Dharma, having attained it through realizing direct knowledge for yourself.

[M 16/1:165] The Dharma that you dwell in, having yourself attained realizing direct knowledge for yourself, I too proclaim it, having attained it through realizing direct knowledge for myself.

12.12 Thus, the Dharma that I know, you too know that same Dharma; the Dharma that you know, I too know that same Dharma.

Thus, as I am, so you are; as you are, so am I.<sup>165</sup>

12.13 Come now, avuso, let the two of us lead this community!’ [§13.13]

<sup>161</sup> *Addhā ālāro kālāmo imam dhammaṃ jānaṃ passaṃ viharatīti*. Note the present tense here and at §12.7, whereas the parallel account for Rāma [§§13.5 + 13.7] they are in the past. While Rāma has died, Ālāra still lives at this time.

<sup>162</sup> On these 5 faculties, see SD 17.2a (9.2).

<sup>163</sup> *Passāma*.

<sup>164</sup> From here until “as you are, so am I”: *iti yāhaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja pavedemi, taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharasi; yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharasi, tam ahaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja pavedemi. Iti yāhaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi, taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi; yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, tam ahaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi. Iti yādiso ahaṃ, tādiso tvaṃ; yādiso tvaṃ, tādiso ahaṃ.*

<sup>165</sup> *Iti yādiso ahaṃ, tādiso tvaṃ; yādiso tvaṃ, tādiso ahaṃ*. Cf similar sentence at §16.3 in connection with Rāma.

## (3) MASTERING THE MIND

12.14 Thus, noble prince, Āḷāra Kālāma, my teacher, placed me, his pupil, on an equal footing with himself and accorded me the highest honour.

12.15 But it occurred to me: ‘This Dharma does not lead to revulsion (with the world), to cessation (of suffering), to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana, but only to rebirth<sup>166</sup> in the base of nothingness.’<sup>167</sup>

12.16 Noble prince, dissatisfied with that Dharma, revulsed with it, I left.

Uddaka Rāma,putta

13 [M 26,16] Noble prince, as one in quest of what is wholesome, still seeking the supreme state of sublime peace,

I went to **Uddaka Rāma,putta** and said to him:

‘Avuso,<sup>168</sup> I want to lead the holy life in this Dharma-Vinaya [Dharma and Discipline].’

13.2 Noble prince, when this was spoken, Uddaka Rāma,putta said this to me:

‘The venerable one may stay here. This Dharma is such that a wise man can soon attain and dwell in it, realizing for himself through his own direct knowledge his own teacher’s doctrine.’

(1) MASTERING THE TEXTS<sup>169</sup>

13.3 Noble prince, within a short time, I quickly learned that Dharma [ancient lore].

Noble prince, as far as lip-reciting and rehearsal of his teaching went I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,<sup>170</sup> and I claimed, ‘I know and see,’ and there were others who did likewise.<sup>171</sup>

<sup>166</sup> §12.4+10 (= M 36,14.4+9, SD 49.4): The Bodhisattva’s reflection here indicates that what Āḷāra Kālāma teaches is the full-fledged attainment of the base of nothingness, as this attainment is specified to lead to rebirth in the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññ’āyatanūpapatti*). Āḷāra’s ability to attain profound levels of concentration is confirmed in the Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16), according to which he was able to enter such deep concentration that he did not even notice 500 carts passing by close to him (D 16/2:130,11 @ SD 9) and its parallels DĀ 2 (T1.19a12), T5 (T1.168b3), T6 (T1.183c15), T7 (T1.197c13, only 50 chariots), and the Skt version (S 360 folio 190V2 in Waldschmidt 1950: 27); not all Chin versions, however, clearly identify him as Āḷāra Kālāma.

<sup>167</sup> “Base of nothingness,” *ākiñcaññ’āyatana*. Comy: Āḷāra taught him the 7 attainments (of calmness meditation) ending with the base of nothingness, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 4 formless attainments. Though these states are spiritually exalted, they are still mundane and do not in themselves lead to nirvana, but merely to rebirth in the realm of nothingness. The lifespan there is 60,000 aeons (world-cycles) but at the end of which one returns to a lower world. As such, one is still caught in Death’s trap (MA 2:172). However, see SD 1.11 (4.1). Note here that “realm” (*āyatana*) is a cosmological or ontological term (a place of rebirth); but where *āyatana* is used in a meditative sense, it is rendered as “base.” See DEB: āyatana. On the interesting point that this is not dhyana, see SD 1.11 (4.1).

<sup>168</sup> Be adds this n: *āvuso rāma* (Ce Ke Se) *mahā,satto rāma,puttam eva avoca, na rāmaṃ, rāmo hi tattha gaṇ’ācariyo bhavēyya, tadā ca kālāṅkato asanto. Ten’ev’ettha rāmāyattāni kriya, padāni atīta,kāla,vasena āgatani, uddako ca rāma,putto mahā,sattassa sa, brahma,cāritv-eva vutto, na ācariyo ti. Tīkāyaṃ ca “Pāḷiyaṃ rāmass’eva samāpat-ti,lābhītā āgatā, na uddakassā ti ādi pacchā,bhāge pakāsītā* [D:Be 1:221]: The Great Being said, “Friend Rāma,” but Rāma,putta replied, “I’m not Rāma. Rāma was the community teacher (*gaṇ’ācariya*) but he has passed on and is no more. For this reason, sentences relating to Rāma are in the past tense, and so Rāma,putta was a co-religionist with the Great Being, not his teacher. Similarly, the Tīkā notes that the formless attainments in the text (Pāḷi) refer to Rāma, not to Uddaka (and so on).”

<sup>169</sup> On this section (1) and the following two (2-3), see SD 1.11 (5): The 3 trainings.

<sup>170</sup> “I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,” *ñāṇa,vādaṅ ca therā,vādaṅ ca*. Here, *therā,vāda* is used in a non-technical sense. The term Theravāda as used of a school is a late post-canonical term.

13.4 Noble prince, I thought thus:

‘It is not through mere faith alone that **Rāma** declared:

“By realizing through my own direct knowledge I entered upon and dwelled in this Dharma.”

13.5 Certainly, Rāma *dwelled* knowing and seeing this Dharma.<sup>172</sup>

13.6 Then, noble prince, I went to Uddaka Rāma,putta and asked him:

‘Avuso, in what way did Rāma declare that by realizing for himself through his own direct knowledge he entered upon and dwelled in this Dharma?’

Noble prince, Uddaka Rāma,putta declared that it was **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.<sup>173</sup> [§13.11]

## (2) THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

**13.7** Noble prince, I thought thus:

‘Not only Rāma *had faith*, [M1:166] I, too, have faith.

Not only Rāma *had energy*, I, too, have energy.

Not only Rāma *had mindfulness*, I, too, have mindfulness.

Not only Rāma *had concentration*, I, too, have concentration.

Not only Rāma *had wisdom*, I, too, have wisdom.

13.8 What now if I endeavour to realize the Dharma that Rāma declared he dwelled in, having attained and realized direct knowledge for himself?’

Noble prince, I too, in no long time, having quickly realized direct knowledge for myself, attained and dwelled in that Dharma.

13.9 Then, I went to Uddaka Rāma,putta and asked him:

‘Avuso, was it in this way that Rāma declared for himself that he, realizing direct knowledge for himself, had attained this Dharma?’

‘That was the way, avuso, that Rāma declared for himself that he, realizing direct knowledge for himself, had attained this Dharma.’

‘That is the way, avuso, that I, too, realizing direct knowledge for myself, have attained and dwell in this Dharma.’

13.10 ‘It is a great gain for us, avuso, that we see<sup>174</sup> such a venerable one as a fellow brahmachari [as our companion in the holy life].

13.11 The Dharma that Rāma proclaimed to have attained through realizing direct knowledge for himself, you yourself, too, dwell in that Dharma, having realized direct knowledge for yourself.

The Dharma that you dwell in, having yourself attained it through realizing direct knowledge for yourself, Rāma, too, proclaimed it, having attained it through realizing direct knowledge for himself.

13.12 Thus, the Dharma that Rāma knew, you too know that same Dharma; the Dharma that you know, Rāma too knew that same Dharma.

<sup>171</sup> *So kho ahaṃ raja,kumāra tāvataken’eva oṭṭha,pahata,mattena lapita,lāpana,mattena ñāṇa,vādañ ca vadāmi theravādañ ca. Jānāmi, passāmi ti ca paṭijānāmi ahañ c’eva aññe ca.*

<sup>172</sup> *Addhā rāmo imam dhammañ jānañ passañ vihāsīti.* Note the past tense here and at §13.7, whereas the parallel account for Ālāra [§§12.5 + 12.7] they are in the present. While Rāma has died, Ālāra still lives at this time.

<sup>173</sup> “Neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” *n’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana*. This is the name for the 4<sup>th</sup> of the formless spheres (*arūpāvacara*), a quasi-conscious state that is surpassed only by the state of complete suspension of consciousness called the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*): M 26,42 (SD 1.11) n.

<sup>174</sup> *Passāma.*

Thus, as Rāma was, so you are; as you are, so Rāma was.<sup>175</sup>

13.13 Come now, avuso, lead this community!<sup>176</sup> [§12.13]

(3) MASTERING THE MIND

13.14 Thus, noble prince, Uddaka Rāma,putta, my companion in the holy life, **placed me in the position of a teacher** and accorded me the highest honour.

13.15 But, noble prince, it occurred to me: ‘This Dharma does not lead to revulsion (with the world), to cessation (of suffering), to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana, but only to rebirth in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.<sup>177</sup>

13.16 Noble prince, dissatisfied with that Dharma, revulsed with the Dharma, I left.<sup>178</sup>

URUVELĀ

M 26,17/1:166,35-167,8 (SD 1.11)

**14** [M 26,17] Noble prince, still in quest of what is wholesome, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I walked in stages through Magadha until eventually I arrived at **Senā,nigama** near Uru,velā. [M 26/1:167]

14.2 There I saw a pleasant spot, **a delightful forest grove** where a river flowed through a pleasant ford, with smooth banks of white sand, and villages all around for alms-resort.<sup>179</sup>

14.3 Noble prince, I thought:

‘This is a pleasant spot, a delightful forest grove where a river flows through a pleasant ford, with smooth banks of white sand, and villages all around for alms-resort.

This will indeed serve well for the striving of a clansman intent on spiritual effort.’

14.4 I sat down there, noble prince, thinking: ‘This is sufficient for spiritual striving.’<sup>180</sup>

<sup>175</sup> *Iti yaṃ dhammaṃ rāmo aññasi taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi taṃ dhammaṃ rāmo aññasi. Iti yādiso rāmo ahoṣi tādiso tuvaṃ, yādiso tuvaṃ tādiso rāmo ahoṣi:* cf the similar sentence in ref to Ālāra above at §12.8. These sentences here are crucial in showing “**Rāma**,” ie Uddaka’s father, is referred to, and *not* Uddaka himself. Note further the past tense *ahoṣi* used in connection with Rāma. Bodhi: “Both Horner in [*Middle Length Sayings*] and Ñ[āṇamoli] in MS err in their translations of the account of the Bodhisatta’s meeting with Uddaka Rāma,putta by assuming that Uddaka is identical with Rāma. However, as his name indicates, Uddaka was the son (*putta*) of Rāma, who must have already passed away before the Bodhisatta arrived on the scene. It should be noted that all references to Rāma are in the past tense and the third person, and that Uddaka in the end places the Bodhisatta in the position of teacher. Though the text does not allow for definite conclusions, this suggests that he himself had not yet reached the fourth immaterial attainment.” (Bodhi, 2001:1217 n303). See SD 1.11 (4.2).

<sup>176</sup> *Ehi dāni āvuso, tvaṃ imaṃ gaṇaṃ pariharāti.* Note here Uddaka is asking the Bodhisattva to *himself* lead the community. Cf §12.3 where Ālāra invites the Bodhisattva, “Let the two of us lead this community!” (*Ubho va santā imaṃ gaṇaṃ pariharāmi ti*).

<sup>177</sup> “Neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” *n’eva,saññā,nāsaññā’āyatana* [§16.2 n]. On why Rāma could not gain awakening through this attainment, see **Aṭṭhaka,nāgara S** (M 52) @ SD 41.2 (3.2.3). The fact that the Bodhisattva is able to reach either this formless attainment or the 3<sup>rd</sup> one [§§14.4+9] implies that he has mastered the 4 dhyanas, but still lacks the right view regarding their significance: see SD 49.4 (1.2.5) Remark 2. On the view that Ālāra did *not* teach dhyana, see SD 1.11 (4.1).

<sup>178</sup> For the Bodhisattva’s conclusion that dhyana is a pleasure “not to be feared,” which leads to his subsequent meditation and full awakening, see **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,31-32/1:246 f), SD 1.12 (excerpts) + SD 49.4 (full tr).

<sup>179</sup> *Tatth’addasaṃ ramaṇiyaṃ bhūmi,bhāgaṃ, pāsādikañ ca vana,saṇḍaṃ, nadiñ ca sandantiṃ setakaṃ supatitthaṃ ramaṇiyaṃ samantā ca gocara,gāmaṃ.*

<sup>180</sup> *Alam idaṃ padhānāyāti. Mahā Saccaka S* (M 36,20-31), SD 49.4, picks up from here with graphic details of the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification (see App). This account, however, seems to be an abridgement of a longer ac-

## SEEKING THE PATH OF PURITY

§§15-17

From: Mahā Saccaka Sutta (M 36,17-44/1:241,29-249,21), SD 49.4

Moral purity: The parable<sup>181</sup> of the fire-sticks<sup>182</sup>

15 [M 36,17] <sup>183</sup>And then, noble prince, **3 similes**, unheard before, spontaneously occurred to me.<sup>184</sup>  
(1) A SAPPY STICK IN WATER.

15.2 Suppose, noble prince, there were a **stick wet with sap left in water**,<sup>185</sup> and then a man were to come holding an upper fire-stick,<sup>186</sup> thinking, ‘I will start a fire. I will make some heat.’

15.3 What do you think, noble prince? Could the man, holding an upper fire-stick and rubbing against the stick wet with sap that was left in the water, start a fire, or make any heat?”

“No, bhante.

15.4 Why is that so?

Bhante, it is because *the stick is wet with sap, [M 36/1:241] and it has been left in water*. If he went on trying, he would only meet with weariness and disappointment.”

15.5 “Even so, noble prince, whichever recluses or brahmins who neither bodily nor mentally<sup>187</sup> dwell aloof from sense-pleasures,<sup>188</sup>

and for whom sensual desire in sensual pleasures, love for sensual pleasures, infatuation with sensual pleasures, thirst for sensual pleasures, fever for sensual pleasures, have neither been fully abandoned nor well appeased internally,<sup>189</sup>

15.6 even if these good recluses and brahmins were to *feel* painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, they are *incapable* of knowledge, vision and supreme awakening,<sup>190</sup>

count given in **Mahā Sīhanāda S** (M 12,44-61/1:77-82), SD 49.1. On overcoming fear in solitary ascetic practice: **Bhaya Bherava S** (M 4/1:16-24), SD 44.3.

<sup>181</sup> A parable is a short narrative (usually a terse story) that shows a tacit but detailed analogy between or amongst its components and the intended thesis or lesson. Here, the parable of the fire-sticks comprises 3 similes. A simile is a figure of speech in which one thing is said to be “like” another, by way of comparing a familiar quality (“wet sticks will not burn”) to an intended idea (“one with sensual desires cannot awaken”).

<sup>182</sup> On the significance of the parable of the fire-sticks, and its natural narrative location preceding the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification (pace Bodhi), see SD 49.4 (4).

<sup>183</sup> From here on until §42, as at (**Deva**) **Saṅgārava S** (M 100,14-41), SD 10.9. For collation table, see SD 10.9 (3.2).

<sup>184</sup> *Api-ssu maṃ raja,kumāra tisso upamā paṭibhaṃsu anacchariyā pubbe assuta,pubbā.*

<sup>185</sup> *Allaṃ kaṭṭhaṃ sasnehaṃ udake nikkhittaṃ.*

<sup>186</sup> “Upper fire-stick” (*uttarāraṇī*, ts) (M 1:140,34, 2:93,23 repeat of passage, 152,4, 3:95,5, 142,1, 143,34; Miln 53,29); opp, “lower fire-stick” (*adharāraṇī*, ts): MA 2:91,9; SA 3:241,21; Vism 489,20.

<sup>187</sup> “Bodily,” *kāyena* (Ce Ee Se throughout), but only Be has “Neither bodily nor mentally,” *kāyena c’eva cittena ca ... (avūpakaṭṭha)*, which fits the context better here [§15.5 n ad loc]. See also §16.5.

<sup>188</sup> *Evam eva kho raja,kumāra ye hi keci samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā kāyena c’eva cittena ca kāmehi avūpakaṭṭhā viharanti*. This sentence, which underlies each of the 3 similes mutatis mutandis, is crucial to their import, ie, we need to be “free from sense-objects connected with sense-defilement” (*kilesa,kāmena vatthu,kāmato nissaṭa,pug-galā*) (MA 2:288,2).

<sup>189</sup> *Yo ca nesaṃ kāmesu kāma-c, chando kāma, sneho kāma, mucchā kāma, pipāsā kāma, pariḷāho so ca ajjhataṃ na supphāno hoti na suppaṭippassaddho.*

<sup>190</sup> *Opakkamikā cepi te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā dukkhā tippā kharā kaṭukā vedanā vedayanti, abhabbāva te ñāṇāya dassanāya anuttarāya sambodhāya.*

and even if these good recluses and brahmins were *not* to feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, they are *still* incapable of knowledge, vision and supreme awakening.<sup>191</sup>

This, noble prince, was **the 1<sup>st</sup> simile**, unheard before, that naturally occurred to me.<sup>192</sup>

(2) ) A SAPPY STICK ON DRY GROUND

**16** [M 36,18] Furthermore, noble prince, **the 2<sup>nd</sup> simile**, unheard before, naturally occurred to me.

16.2 Suppose, noble prince, there were a stick wet with sap left on dry ground, far away from water,<sup>193</sup> and then a man were to come along holding an upper fire-stick, thinking, ‘I will start a fire. I will make some heat.’

16.3 What do you think, noble prince? Could the man, holding an upper fire-stick and rubbing it against *the stick wet with sap left on dry ground, far away from water*, start a fire, or make any heat?”

“No, bhante.

16.4 Why is that so?

Bhante, it is because, although the stick is left on dry ground, *it is still wet with sap*. If he went on trying, he would only meet with weariness and disappointment.”

16.5 “Even so, noble prince, whichever recluses or brahmins who do not bodily<sup>194</sup> dwell aloof from sense-pleasures,<sup>195</sup>

*and for whom sensual desire in sensual pleasures, love for sensual pleasures, infatuation with sensual pleasures, thirst for sensual pleasures, fever for sensual pleasures, have neither been fully abandoned nor well appeased internally,*

16.6 *even if these good recluses and brahmins were to feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, they are incapable of knowledge, vision and supreme awakening,*

*and even if these good recluses and brahmins were not to feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, they are still incapable of knowledge, vision and supreme awakening.*

This, noble prince, was the second simile, unheard before, that naturally occurred to me.

(3) A DRY, SAPLESS STICK ON DRY GROUND<sup>196</sup>

**17** [M 36,19] Furthermore, noble prince, **the 3<sup>rd</sup> simile**, unheard before, naturally occurred to me. [M 36/1:242]

17.2 Suppose, noble prince, there were **a dry, sapless stick, lying on dry ground far away from water**,<sup>197</sup> and then a man were to come along holding an upper fire-stick, thinking, ‘I will start a fire. I will make some heat.’

<sup>191</sup> Cf **Sāḷha S** (A 4.196), where the Buddha declares that “those recluses and brahmins whose bodily, verbal and mental conduct are impure, and whose livelihood is impure, are incapable of knowledge, vision and supreme awakening (A 4.196/2:200), SD 65.17.

<sup>192</sup> *Ayaṃ kho maṃ, raja,kumāra, paṭhamā upamā paṭibhāsi anacchariyā pubbe assuta,pubbā.*

<sup>193</sup> *Allaṃ kaṭṭhaṃ sasnehaṃ ārakā udakā thale nikkhattaṃ.*

<sup>194</sup> “Bodily,” *kāyena* (Ce Ee Se throughout), but only M:Be1:308,21 has “Neither bodily nor mentally,” *kāyena c’eva cittena ca ... (avūpakaṭṭha)*, which would *not* fit the second simile here; see also Dutoit 1905:32. The corresponding passage in fragment 336r5 (Liu 2009:57), in fact, reads *kāyena vyapakṛṣṭ(ā) viharanti [na] vi[tt]([e][n](a))*; (cf Liu 2009: 110 n1+3), although then frag 336v1 in Liu 2009:58 repeats the same formulation for the 3<sup>rd</sup> simile, where, says Analayo, judging from the context, we would expect the reading *na vyapakṛṣṭā viharanti cittena ca* (2011:235). See §§18.4+19.4. See also SD 49.4 (2.1).

<sup>195</sup> *Evam eva kho raja,kumāra ye hi keci samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā kāyena c’eva kāmehi vūpakaṭṭhā viharanti* (Be Ce Se so). Ee wrongly reads *avūpakaṭṭhā* (as at §17.4), as noted by Trenckner (M ed 1888:550,21), Bodhi (M:ÑB 1995:1229 n386, & Analayo (2011:235 n152).

<sup>196</sup> Skt parallel of §§17-31 (M 1:242,1-247,1) found in SHT 3.931. **§§17.1-3 simile of the dry, sapless stick** recurs in **Kāya,gata,sati S** (M 119,24/3:95). **Khīra Rukkha S** (S 35.190) compares tree-sap to lust (S 35.190/4:161), SD 84.17.

17.3 What do you think, noble prince? Could the man, holding an upper fire-stick and rubbing it against *the dry, sapless stick, lying on dry ground far away from water*, start a fire, or make any heat?"

"Yes, bhante.

17.4 Why is that so? Bhante, it is because *the stick, dry and sapless, is left on the dry ground, far away from water.*"

17.5 "Even so, noble prince, whichever recluses or brahmins who **both bodily and mentally**<sup>198</sup> dwelt aloof from sense-pleasures,

and for whom sensual desire in sensual pleasures, love for sensual pleasures, infatuation with sensual pleasures, thirst for sensual pleasures, fever for sensual pleasures have been fully abandoned and well appeased internally,

17.6 *even if these good recluses and brahmins were to feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, they are capable of knowledge, vision and supreme awakening;*

*and even if these good recluses and brahmins were not to feel painful, racking, piercing feelings due to exertion, they are still capable of knowledge, vision and supreme awakening.*

This, noble prince, was **the 3<sup>rd</sup> simile**, unheard before, that naturally occurred to me.

These, noble prince, are the 3 similes, unheard before, that naturally occurred to me.

## THE BODHISATTVA'S SELF-MORTIFICATION<sup>199</sup>

§§18-28

(M 36,20-33/1:242,13-247,16), SD 49.4

### Clenched teeth, tongue pressed against the palate

**18** [M 36,20] Noble prince, it occurred to me,

'Suppose, with my teeth clenched and my tongue pressed against my palate, I beat down, hold back, and crush the mind with mind.'<sup>200</sup>

18.2 So, with my teeth clenched and my tongue pressed against my palate, I beat down, held back, crushed the mind with mind. While I did so, sweat ran from my armpits.

18.3 It was just as if a strong man, holding a weaker man by the head or shoulders, were to restrain, subdue, and attack him;

<sup>197</sup> *Sukkhāṃ kaṭṭhāṃ koḷāpaṃ ārakā udakā thale nikkhittāṃ.*

<sup>198</sup> "Bodily," *kāyena* (Ce Ee Se throughout), but only M:Be1:308,21 has "Neither bodily nor mentally," *kāyena c'e-va cittena ca ... (avūpakaṭṭha)*, which would not fit the context here. See M 36,17.4+18.4 (SD 49.4).

<sup>199</sup> Here, the Buddha begins the account of his self-mortification [§§18-31], that of his extreme pains—highlighting its pain and uselessness, which is then contrasted with the foll section on his profound joy [§§32-45], leading to his full awakening. We may surmise that the Bodhisattva turns to self-mortification after his tutelage with the 2 teachers because he is then left with no more religious options except for the ascetic (tāpasa) tradition of self-denial.

<sup>200</sup> *Yan nūnāhaṃ dantebhi dantamādhāya, jivhāya tāluṃ āhacca, cetasā cittaṃ abhiniggaṇheyyaṃ abhinippīleyaṃ abhisantāpeyyaṃ'ti.* Cf **Vitakka Saṅṭhāna S** (M 20), where this is given as the last method of overcoming a distracted mind (M 20,7/1:120 f), SD 1.6. In **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,20/1:242), SD 49.4, **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,-19/2:93), SD 55.2, **Saṅgārava S** (M 100,17/2:212), and **Jātaka,nidāna** (J 1:67), it forms the initial practice of the Bodhisattva's self-mortification, and as it is the *least* severe of them, it is recommended as the *last* of the 5 methods: see J Bronkhorst, "Self and meditation in Indian Buddhism," 1998:12. **Purisa Thāma S** (A 2.1.5/1:50) teaches us not to be content with wholesome mental states, and to be unremitting in our "personal effort" to win the spiritual goal. See **Vitakka Saṅṭhāna S** (M 20), SD 1.6 (1).



18.4 even so, *with my teeth clenched and my tongue pressed against my palate, I beat down, held back, and crushed the mind with mind, and sweat ran down my armpits.*

18.5 But although I exerted tireless energy, and unremitting mindfulness was established in me, my body was overstrained [M 36/1:243] and lacking calm,<sup>201</sup> because I was exhausted by the painful striving.<sup>202</sup>

18.6 But, noble prince, such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.<sup>203</sup>

### Breathless meditation<sup>204</sup>

19 [M 36,21] (1) Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Suppose I practise **the breathless meditation.**<sup>205</sup>

19.2 So I stopped my in-breaths and out-breaths through my mouth and nose.

While I did so, there was a loud sound of winds coming out from my ear-holes, just like the loud sound of winds from a smith’s bellows.<sup>206</sup>

19.3 *But although I exerted tireless energy and unremitting mindfulness was established in me, my body was overstrained and lacking calm, because I was exhausted by the painful striving.*

19.4 *But, noble prince, such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.*<sup>207</sup>

20 [M 36,22] Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Suppose I **practise further the breathless meditation.**’

So I stopped my in-breaths and out-breaths through my mouth, nose and ears.

### PARABLE OF THE STRONG MAN (1)<sup>208</sup>

20.2 While I did so, violent winds cut through **my head**, just as if a strong man were splitting my head open with a sharp sword.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>201</sup> “Over strained and lacking calm,” *sāraddho ... appaṭṭipassaddho.*

<sup>202</sup> *Āraddham kho pana me raja,kumāra vīriyam hoti asallīnam, upaṭṭhitā sati asammuttā, sāraddho ca pana me kāyo hoti appaṭṭipassaddho ten’eva dukkha-p, padhānena padhānābhittunnassa sato.* One of the sutta students, an erstwhile inner-circle member of the Maharishi Mahesh cult, commented that these symptoms described by the Buddha reminded him of the bizarre mental breakdowns he personally saw amongst Mahesh’s disciples practising TM (Transcendental Meditation), and they were “not even straining themselves” like the Bodhisattva!

<sup>203</sup> *Eva,rūpā pi kho me raja,kumāra uppannā dukkhā vedanā cittaṃ na pariādāya tiṭṭhati.* This refrain found at the end of every para in this section [§§20.6, 21.4, 22.4, 23.4, 24.4, 25.4], marks the answer to the second of Saccaka’s two questions [§11]. This refrain [§§20-25] is not found in **Saṅgārava S** (M 100,17-20), SD 10.9 parallels. Apparently, the earliest canonical example of the 2 kinds of pain (bodily and mental) are noted in **Sall’atthana S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), wherein the saint experiences only bodily pain but not mental pain. See SD 1.12.

<sup>204</sup> The 4 stages of breathless meditation here prob refer to an early attempt at attaining the 4 dhyanas, but then he “fears” the attending joy, and hence the bodily pains that he experiences: see (5.2, esp 5.2.2.1). This is *not* the normal dhyana: see SD 8.4 (3.1.4).

<sup>205</sup> “Breathless meditation” (all MSS: *appānakam ... jhānam*): see 49.4 (5.2).

<sup>206</sup> The figure of the smith’s bellows recurs in Māra’s context in **Sappa S** (S 4.6/1:106), SD 61.14.

<sup>207</sup> A close disciple of Maharishi Mahesh told me that once he did so much *bhastrikā prāṇāyāma* (a rapid and forceful inhalation and exhalation induced by the diaphragm’s movements), that it put him in such great physical pain, that he could hardly move or walk!

<sup>208</sup> The pains of the Bodhisattva’s asceticism are described in the stock passages in **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,22.2 +23.2+24.2+25.2); the brahmin Dhānañjāni, **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,29.2-5/2:193), SD 4.9; the houselord Anātha, piṇḍika, **Anāthapiṇḍik’ovāda S** (M 143,4/3:259), SD 23.9; the monk Channa, **Chann’ovāda S** (M 144,5/3:264) = **Channa S** (S 35.87,5/4:56), SD 11.12; the monk Phagguna, **Phagguna S** (A 6.56/3:379 f); cf (**Chakka**) **Āsava S** (A 6.58/-3:389), SD 62.1.

<sup>209</sup> This is a description of very bad migraine brought on by the Bodhisattva’s extreme efforts.

20.3 *But although I exerted tireless energy and unremitting mindfulness was established in me, my body was overstrained and lacking calm, because I was exhausted by the painful striving.*

20.4 *But, noble prince, such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.*

**21** [M 36,23] (2) Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Suppose **I practise further the breathingless meditation.**’

*So I stopped my in-breaths and out-breaths through my mouth, nose and ears.*

#### PARABLE OF THE STRONG MAN (2)

21.2 While I did so, there were violent pains in my head, just as if a strong man [M 36/1:244] were tightening a strong leather strap around my head as a headband.<sup>210</sup>

21.3 *But although I exerted tireless energy and unremitting mindfulness was established in me, my body was overstrained and lacking calm, because I was exhausted by the painful striving.*

21.4 *But, noble prince, such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.*

**22** [M 36,24] (3) Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Suppose **I practise further the breathingless meditation.**’

*So I stopped my in-breaths and out-breaths through my mouth, nose and ears.*

#### PARABLE OF THE BUTCHER

22.2 While I did so, violent winds carved up my belly,<sup>211</sup> just as if a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to carve up an ox’s belly with a sharp butcher’s knife.

22.3 *But although I exerted tireless energy and unremitting mindfulness was established in me, my body was overstrained and lacking calm, because I was exhausted by the painful striving.*

22.4 *But, noble prince, such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.*

**23** [M 36,25] (4) Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Suppose **I practise further the breathingless meditation.**’

*So I stopped my in-breaths and out-breaths through my mouth, nose and ears.*

#### PARABLE OF THE TWO MEN

23.2 While I did so, there was a violent burning in my body, just as if two men were to seize a weaker man by both arms and roast him over a pit of burning coal.

23.3 *But although I exerted tireless energy and unremitting mindfulness was established in me, my body was overstrained and lacking calm, because I was exhausted by the painful striving.*

23.4 *But, noble prince, such painful feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain.*

**24** [M 36,26] Now, noble prince, when [M 36/1:245] the devas saw me, some said: ‘The recluse Gotama is dead!’

Other devas said: ‘The recluse Gotama is not dead but dying!’

Still others said: ‘The recluse Gotama is neither dead nor dying: he is an arhat;<sup>212</sup> such is how arhats dwell!’

<sup>210</sup> *Seyyathā’pi raja,kumāra balavā puriso daḷhena varatta-k,khaṇḍena* [Ce varattaka,bandhanena] sīse sīsa,veṭṭam dadeyya. “Violent pains in the head” (daḷhena ... sīse sīsa,vedanaṃ), lit “strong head-pains in the head.”

<sup>211</sup> According to Agniveśa’s *Caraka Saṃhitā*, Sūtra,sthāna 20.11 (p113), headache (*śīroruj*) [21-23] and belly (*udarāveṣṭaḥ* [24]: the Ayurvedic commentator Cakrapāṇidatta explains: *udarasāveṣṭanam ivodarāveṣṭaḥ*) are caused by wind (*vāta*). Heat (*dāha*), on the other hand, is caused by bile (*pitta*): see Sūtra,sthāna 20.14 (p114). See Bronkhorst 1993:20 f & n29.

<sup>212</sup> Here, either the gods are mistaken, or the term is used in its popular pre-Buddhist sense, as a generic name for a “holy saint”: see J 1:67.

## The starvation austerity

**25** [M 36,27] Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Suppose I practise **cutting off food entirely**.’

25.2 Then, devas came to me and said, ‘Good sir, do not do so. If you do so, we shall infuse divine essence<sup>213</sup> through the pores of your skin and you will thus live on.’

25.3 Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘If I claim to be completely fasting while these devas infuse divine essence through the pores of my skin and I live on that, then I shall be lying.’

25.4 So I said. ‘There’s no need!’<sup>214</sup> and dismissed the devas.

**26** [M 36,28] Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Suppose I take **very little food**, a handful each time, perhaps of bean soup or lentil soup or vetch<sup>215</sup> soup or pea soup.’

### THE EMACIATED BODHISATTVA<sup>216</sup>

26.2 When I did so, my body reached a state of **extreme emaciation**.

26.3 Because of eating so little,

my limbs became like the joints of vine stems or bamboo stems;

my backside became like a camel’s hoof;

the projections of my spine stood out like corded beads;

my ribs jutted out like the crazy<sup>217</sup> rafters of an old broken shed;

the gleam of my eyes sank deep down into their sockets, looking like the gleam of water gone far down in a deep well;

my scalp shrivelled and withered just as [M 36/1:246] a green bitter gourd shrivels and withers in the wind and sun;

my belly skin touched my backbone, so that when I touched my belly I felt my backbone; and if I touched my backbone, I felt my belly skin;

when I defaecated or urinated, I fell over on my face right there;

when I tried to ease my body by rubbing my limbs with my hands, the hairs, rotted at their roots, fell off from my body as I rubbed—all because of eating so little.<sup>218</sup>

**27** [M 36,29] When people saw me, some said, ‘The recluse Gotama is black!’

Others said, ‘The recluse Gotama is not black, he is brown!’

Still others said, ‘The recluse Gotama is neither; he is sallow!’<sup>219</sup>

27.2 So much had the clear, bright colour of my skin deteriorated *through eating so little*.

<sup>213</sup> “Divine essence,” *oja*, ambrosia.

<sup>214</sup> *Tā devatā paccācikkhāmi halan’ti vadāmi*. This incident is recounted at J 1:67.

<sup>215</sup> A beanlike climbing plant.

<sup>216</sup> §26.3 as in **Mahā Sīhanāda S** (M 12), where the “emaciated Bodhisattva pericope” goes through 4 cycles, each time, taking respectively only jujube fruit (*kola*), only bean, only sesame, only rice—taking only their powdered (pulverized) form, their various concoctions, and down to merely a fruit, seed or grain a day (M 12,52-55/1:80), SD 49.1. See SD 49.4 (5.4.2.1).

<sup>217</sup> *Olugga*, collapsing and fallen down, dilapidated.

<sup>218</sup> The Bodhisattva’s self-mortification: see SD 49.4 (5).

<sup>219</sup> *Maṅgura-c, chav*: of an archer, **Cūḷa Māluṅkya,putta S** (M 63,5.2/1:429), SD 5.8; of the country’s beauty, **Cūḷa Sakul’udāyī S** (M 79,10/2:33), SD 91.4 = **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,35/1:193) = **Te, vijja S** (D 13,19/1:242); *Vism* 6.36/184 (*Vism*:Ñ: “yellow-skinned”). Poss related or syn of *maṅgula*, “sallow”; *maṅgulī*, “a woman of sallow complexion” (S 2:260 = V 3:107; V 3:100). SED, *maṅgura*: “a kind of fish” = Andersen (*A Pāli Glossary*), who adds: “yellow?” BHSD has *madgura* (sv), *madguru*, *madgula*: “a certain fish ... something like ‘sallow(-complexioned), unhealthy (in aspect)’; (of Gautama) *madgura, chavi* (Lalv 2:555,5; Mvst 2:256,8); *madgula, chavī* (Mvst 2:126,11, 127,15), Jones: “the sallow colour of a *madgura*” (eg Mvst:J 2:122 ff; of a wheel-turner’s woman jewel (*strī, ratna*) (Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya (Dutt, 1982) 1:36,17). “Golden-coloured” (PED) certainly cannot be the case here. See JRAS 1903:186.

**28** [M 36,30] Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘In the past, recluses and brahmins have experienced painful, racking, piercing pains;

in the future, recluses and brahmins will experience painful, racking, piercing pains;

at present, recluses and brahmins are experiencing painful, racking, piercing pains—but this is the utmost extreme—there is none beyond this!

28.2 But by these painful austerities, I did not attain any superhuman state, any distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

28.3 Could there be another path to awakening?<sup>220</sup>

## THE MIDDLE WAY

§§29-31

M 36,31-33/1:246,30-247,16 (SD 49.4)

### Wholesome pleasure

**29** [M 36,31] Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘I recall that when my father the Sakya was working,<sup>221</sup> I was seated in the cool shade of a jambul tree,<sup>222</sup>

29.2 quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, I entered upon and dwelt in **the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana** that is accompanied by initial application and sustained application, zest and joy born of seclusion.<sup>223</sup>

29.3 Could that be the path to awakening?’

29.4 Then, following on that mindfulness [memory],<sup>224</sup> I realized, ‘**That is the path to awakening!**’

**30** [M 36,32] Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘Why [M 36/1:247] do I fear the pleasure that has nothing to do with sensual desires and unwholesome states?’<sup>225</sup>

30.2 Noble prince, it occurred to me,

**‘I fear not the pleasure that has nothing to do with sensual desires and unwholesome states!’<sup>226</sup>**

### Ending the austerities

**31** [M 36,33] Noble prince, it occurred to me, ‘It is not easy to attain that pleasure with a body so excessively emaciated. Suppose I ate some solid food—some boiled rice and gruel.’

<sup>220</sup> See SD 51.11 (3.2.1.4).

<sup>221</sup> *Abhijānāmi kho panāhaṃ pitu sakkassa kammante.* ie, occupied with the ploughing festival (*vappa,maṅgala*, “blessed sowing”) or ritual sowing (MA 2:290; J 1:57): see SD 9 (9.10.3.4); SD 36.1 (5.4.3); SD 49.4 (6.1.2); SD 52.1 (5.1.2.2). See also Horner, *Early Buddhism and the Taking of Life*, B C Law Volume, pt 1.

<sup>222</sup> *Sītāya jambu-c, chāyāya nisinno.* Following this, Nakamura, adds “on a path between the fields” (2000: 91,11), which is unattested in the Pali. Wujastyk (2004) says that *jambu* here is not the “rose-apple” (of Malacca and SE Asia) which was not found in India; it is properly the jambul or black plum.

<sup>223</sup> On the significance of the Bodhisattva’s “1<sup>st</sup> dhyana,” see SD 49.4 (6.2).

<sup>224</sup> *Satānusāri viññāṇaṃ ahoṣi.* Comy says that “mindfulness” (*sati* or *sata*) here is the mindfulness of the in-and-out-breaths (MA 2:291). Anyway, it may well simply be “remembered” (*sata*) (PED: *sata*<sup>2</sup>).

<sup>225</sup> *Kim nu kho ahaṃ tassa sukhasa bhāyāmi, yaṃ taṃ sukhaṃ aññatr’eva kāmehi aññatra akusalehi dhamme-hīti?*

<sup>226</sup> *Na kho ahaṃ tassa sukhasa bhāyāmi, yaṃ taṃ sukhaṃ aññatt’eva kāmehi aññatra akusalehi dhammehi* (M:Ee 1:247,3; M:Ce 1: 584,4 and M:Se 1:458,5: *yantaṃ*, after which Se continues directly with *aññatr’eva*, omitting *sukhaṃ*). On the 2 kinds of pleasures—sensual pleasure and the pleasure of renunciation—see **Araṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 139,9.3/3:233), SD 7.8. On pleasure felt by the awakened mind, see **Uṇṇābha S** (S 51.15), SD 10.10.

31.2 And I ate some solid food.<sup>227</sup>

31.3 Now, at that time, **the 5 monks**<sup>228</sup> were waiting upon me, thinking, ‘If our recluse Gotama attain some state, he will inform us.’

31.4 But when I ate the boiled rice and gruel, the 5 monks were disgusted and left me, thinking, ‘The recluse Gotama now lives luxuriously. He has given up the quest and reverted to luxury!’

## THE FULL AWAKENING

§§32-42<sup>229</sup>

(M 36,34-44/1:247,17-249,21), SD 49.4

### The 4 dhyanas

**32** [M 36,34] Now, noble prince, when I had eaten solid food and regained my strength, then

32.2 <sup>230</sup>quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states,

I entered upon and dwelt in **the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana**,

accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and

with zest and joy born of solitude.<sup>231</sup>

[<sup>232</sup>]

**33** [M 36,35] With the stilling of initial application and sustained application,

I entered upon and dwelt in **the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana**,

free from initial application and sustained application,

with zest and joy born of stillness [samādhi].<sup>233</sup>

<sup>227</sup> This famous last meal of the Bodhisattva’s is offered by the lady **Sujātā**: SD 52.1 (14.1).

<sup>228</sup> The group of 5 monks (*pañca, vaggiya*) comprise Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Bhaddiya, Mahānāma and Assaji. It is said that the Buddha gives his 1<sup>st</sup> discourse to them on the night of the full moon day of Āsāḷha (June-July), following the great awakening. This becomes a festival still celebrated today amongst Theravāda Buddhists as Āsāḷha Pūjā (Mv 1.6.10-47 @ V 1:8-14; M 26,24-42/1:171-175; S 56.11/5:420-424; Mvst 3:330 f; Lalv 540(416) f). As a result of this event, the first sangha comprising the 5 monks and the Buddha is born. See SD 1.3 (3); SD 1.11 (6).

<sup>229</sup> This whole section (§§34-44)—the full awakening pericope—is at **Bhaya, bherava S** (M 4,27-33), SD 44.3 = **Dvedha Vitakka S** (M 19,18-24), SD 61.1; **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,34-44), SD 49.4. This stock recurs in **Mahā Assa-pura S** (M 39,19-21), 10.13, with similes for the 4 dhyanas, as the fuller awakening pericope. The same stock recurs in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,76-100)—with more details and similes, and a unique passage on “knowledge of the mind-made body” (D 2,87-88)—and called the comprehensive awakening pericope (D 2,93-98), SD 8.10.

<sup>230</sup> The description of the 4 dhyanas here as at **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,81-84), SD 8.10.

<sup>231</sup> “Born of solitude,” *viveka, ja*; ie it is the result of abandoning the hindrances: on the 3 kinds of solitude, see **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (1.5). On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek’aggatā*) and “stillness” (*samādhi*) here, see **The layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5.

<sup>232</sup> This refrain, “But, noble prince, such pleasant feeling that arose in me did not invade my mind and remain’ in M 36,34.3 + 35.3 + 36.2 + 37.2 + 39.2 are not found here.

<sup>233</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*) because within it initial application and sustained application (thinking and discursion, *vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 2:273); cf S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26/1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either discuss Dharma or meditate). See **Jhāna Pañha S 2** (S 40.2/4:263 f), SD 24.12a.

**34** [M 36,36] And with the fading away of zest,  
I remained equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and  
felt joy with the body.<sup>234</sup>  
I attained and dwelt in **the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana**,  
of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

**35** [M 36,37] And with the abandoning of joy and pain,<sup>235</sup>  
and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,  
I attained and dwelled in **the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana**  
that was neither painful nor pleasant, and  
with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>236</sup>

### The great awakening: the 3 knowledges<sup>237</sup>

**36** [M 36,38] (1) When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to unshakable steadiness,<sup>238</sup> [M 36/1:248]

36.2 I directed it to **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives**.<sup>239</sup>

36.3 I recollected my manifold past lives, that is,

1 birth, 2 births, 3 births, 4, 5,

10, 20, 30, 40, 50,

100, 1,000, 100,000,

many aeons of cosmic contractions, many aeons of cosmic expansions,

many aeons of cosmic contractions and expansions, (recollecting),

36.4 ‘There I had such a name,

belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.

Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain,

such the end of my life.

Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.

There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.

Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span.

Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.<sup>240</sup>

<sup>234</sup> On this point, see **The Buddha discovers dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.4.1) On coming out of dhyana.

<sup>235</sup> “Joy and pain,” *sukha-dukkha*: this refers to the bodily feelings. The next phrase—“pleasure and displeasure,” *domanassa-somanassa*—refers to mental feelings, which have been transcended (let go of) earlier. Mental feelings need to be overcome or let go of first so that the mind is not distracted by itself, as it were. Then, all the other feelings (arising from the bodily sense-contacts) are transcended: on its significance, see **Sall’atthēna S** (S 36.6/4:207-210), SD 5.5.

<sup>236</sup> Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana—equanimity (*upekhā*), mindfulness (*sati*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (5.4).

<sup>237</sup> The term “one with the threefold knowledge” (*te,vijja*) refers to an arhat with these 3 realizations in counterpoint to the masters of the 3 Vedas: see **Te,vijja S** (D 8), SD 1.8. This whole section—the 3-knowledge pericope—is stock: see §34 header, “The full awakening pericope” n.

<sup>238</sup> *So evaṃ samāhite citte parisuddhe pariyodāte anaṅgaṇe vigatūpakkilese mudu,bhūte kammaniye ṭhite āneñ-ja-p,patte.*

<sup>239</sup> *Pubbe,nivāsanānussati,ñāṇa*, detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

<sup>240</sup> As at **Bhaya Bherava S** (M 4,27/1:22), SD 44.3. Be & Se abbreviate: “Even so, noble prince, with my mind thus concentrated, I recollect my manifold past lives ... in their modes and details.”

**37** [M 36,39] This, noble prince, was **the 1<sup>st</sup> true knowledge** won by me in the 1<sup>st</sup> watch of the night. Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent and resolute.

**38** [M 36,40] (2) When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to unshakable steadiness,

38.2 I directed it to the knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings.<sup>241</sup>

38.3 By means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],<sup>242</sup> purified and surpassing the human—I see beings passing away and re-appearing, and

know how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, faring in accordance with their karma:

38.4 ‘These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones,

held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, when the body has broken up,

have re-appeared in a plane of misery, a bad destiny, a lower realm, in hell.

38.5 But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones,

who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—after death, when the body has broken up,

have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’

38.6 Thus, by means of **the divine eye**,

*I see beings passing away and re-appearing, and*

*know how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, faring in accordance with their karma:*

38.7 ‘These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones,

*held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—after death, when the body has broken up,*

*have re-appeared in a plane of misery, a bad destiny, a lower realm, in hell.*

38.8 But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones,

*who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—after death, when the body has broken up,*

*have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’*

**39** [M 36,41] This, noble prince, was **the 2<sup>nd</sup> true knowledge** won by me in the 2<sup>nd</sup> watch of the night.

39.2 Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who abides diligent, ardent and resolute. [M 36/1:249]

**40** [M 36,42] (3) When my concentrated mind was thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady and attained to unshakable steadiness,

40.2 I directed it to the knowledge of the destruction of the influxes.<sup>243</sup> I directly knew as it really is:

<sup>241</sup> *Sattānaṃ cutūpapāta,ñāṇa*, detailed at Vism 13.72-101/423-429.

<sup>242</sup> *Dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*) (see n in §102).

<sup>243</sup> *Āsava-k,khaya,ñāṇa*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) has been variously translated as taints, corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. The Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsava*:

‘This is suffering;  
This is the arising of suffering;  
This is the ending of suffering;  
This is the path leading to the ending of suffering.’<sup>244</sup>

These are the influxes;  
This is the arising of the influxes;  
This is the ending of the influxes;  
This is the path leading to the ending of the influxes.’<sup>245</sup>

**41** [M 36,43] When I knew and saw thus, my mind was freed  
from the influx of sensual desire,  
from the influx of existence, and  
from the influx of ignorance.

41.2 When the mind was **freed**, there arose the knowledge: *cittaṃ vimuccittha*  
‘Freed!’<sup>246</sup> I directly knew: *vimuttasmim vimuttan’ti iti ñāṇaṃ ahoṣi*  
‘Destroyed is birth. *khīṇā jāti*  
The holy life has been lived. *vusitaṃ brahma,cariyaṃ*  
What needs to be done has been done. *kataṃ karaṇiyaṃ*  
There is (for me) no more of arising in any state of being.’ *nāparaṃ itthattāyāti*  
*abbhaññāsīm*

**42** [M 36,44] This, noble prince, was **the 3<sup>rd</sup> true knowledge** won by me in the 3<sup>rd</sup> watch of the night.

42.2 Ignorance was banished and true knowledge arose, darkness was banished and light arose, as happens in one who dwells diligent, ardent and resolute.

## II. After the awakening up to the 1<sup>st</sup> discourse

§§43-54<sup>247</sup>

From: Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26,19-29/1:167,30-173,7), SD 1.11

### THE BUDDHA’S “HESITATION”

§43 (M 26,19)

### The Dharma’s depth

**43** [M 26,19] Noble prince, I thought thus,<sup>248</sup>

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the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kāma’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 16,2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) [43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216; M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). See BDict under *āsava*.

<sup>244</sup> These 4 statements on suffering pose an interesting problem: they are not called noble truths here (and in **Sāmañña,phala S**, 2.97/1:83). Norman remarks that “since they appear to be subordinate to the four statements about the *āsavas*, it is possible that the statements about misery are a later addition, which led to a parallel, but inappropriate, set of 4 statements being evolved about the *āsavas*, to provide symmetry. See Schmithausen 1981: 205 & Norman 1982:377-91, 1990:130.

<sup>245</sup> As in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2.97/1:83 f).

<sup>246</sup> Lit, “frees in freedom,” *vimuttasmim vimuttam*.

<sup>247</sup> For a collation table of the sutta sources of this account, see SD 49.4, Table 7.



‘This Dharma I have realized is deep, hard to see, hard to understand,  
peaceful, sublime, unattainable through discursive thought (or logic),<sup>249</sup>  
subtle, to be experienced [to be felt] by the wise.’<sup>250</sup>

43.2 But this generation revels in attachment, delights in attachment, rejoices in attachment.<sup>251</sup>

For such a generation, revelling in attachment, delighting in attachment, rejoicing in attachment,

this state of reality<sup>252</sup> is hard to see, that is to say, specific conditionality<sup>253</sup> and dependent arising.<sup>254</sup>

43.3 And this state of reality, too, is hard to see, that is to say,

the stilling of all formations, *sabba,saṅkhāra,samatha*<sup>255</sup>

the giving up of all acquisitions, *sabbūpadhi,painissagga*<sup>256</sup>

the destruction of craving, *taṇha-k,khaya*

fading away (of lust), *virāga*<sup>257</sup>

cessation (of suffering), *nirodha*

nirvana.<sup>258</sup> *nibbāna* [M 26/1: 168]

43.4 Noble prince, if I were to teach the Dharma, and if others would not understand me, that would be tiresome and troubling for me.’

<sup>248</sup> This passage on the Buddha “hesitation” recurs, in full or in part, in **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.1), SD 49.8; **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19/1:167), SD 1.11 = **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,43/2:93), SD 55.2 = **Āyācana S** (S 6.1/1:136), SD 12.2 = V 1:4 = 1:6.

<sup>249</sup> *Atakkāvacaro* = *na + takka + avacara*, lit, “not in the sphere of discursive thought (or logic)” (V 1:4 = D 2:36 = 37 = M 1:167 = S 1:136 ≈ M 1:487 ≈ 2:172; A 2:289; D 1:12; It 37). See **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.1.2), SD 49.8.

<sup>250</sup> The full sentence: *Dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo paṇīto atakkāvacaro nipuṇo paṇḍita,vedanīyo*. On the significance of *vedanīya* as “to be felt,” meaning, to be experienced directly, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.5.2); also Reflection, “To live is to feel,” R89, 2007.

<sup>251</sup> “Attachment,” *ālaya*, ie worldly attachment, sensuality, “worldliness” (M:ÑB 1218 n306). It has a wide range of meanings: 1 (a) house, dwelling, habitat, household, a built structure; (b) nest, lair, perch, shelter; (c) abode, seat, place of rest, resort, haven, repository; (d) domain, field of activity, sphere; 2 (a) liking, inclination, attachment, fondness for, partiality towards; (b) affection, love; (c) (as a metaphysical concept) **desire, yearning, clinging, sensual attachment (= taṇhā)**; (d) thought preparatory to a decision (regarding the *vassa*), the decision itself; (3) feint, pretence, ruse, dissimulation, impersonation (CPD). **MA**: The term denotes both sense-pleasures and the thoughts of craving concerned with them (MA 2:174 f). **SA** explains *ālaya* objectively as the 5 cords of sensual pleasure (*pañca kāma,guṇa*) [SD 8.7 (2)]. They are called “attachment” because they attach themselves to these 5 cords of sensual pleasure. Subjectively, *ālaya* refers to the 108 mental investigations driven by craving (*taṇha, vicarītāni*) [A 2:212 f], and it is these that attach themselves to their objects. (SA 1:195)

<sup>252</sup> + foll line: “State of reality” *ṭhānam* (uncountable), also “state of things” or simply “thing(s)”; usu meaning “state, possibility.”

<sup>253</sup> “Specific conditionality,” *idap,paccayatā*, ie causal relationship, shows how one thing is related to another, thus: “When this is, that is; when this arises, that arises. When this is not, that is not; when this ceases, that ceases” (M 3:63; S 2:28, 95). See also V 1:5; D 1:85, 2:55; M 1:262; S 2:25, 5:71. See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (6).

<sup>254</sup> “Dependent arising,” *paṭicca,samuppāda*, is a formulation of the complex interdependence of all mental and physical phenomena, showing how they inherently lack any permanent entity. See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.

<sup>255</sup> *Sabba,saṅkhāra,samatha*: **D 14,3.1/2:36; M 26,19/1:167; S 6.1/1:136, 22.90/3:133; A 3.32,1/1:133**. “Formations,” *saṅkhāra*, here meaning the active aspect of “forming” actions (karma) through body, speech and mind, being either wholesome or unwholesome (S 12.1, 7). Nyanatiloka uses the neologism “karma-formations” to specifically refer to this aspect of *saṅkhāra*, otherwise a word that is polysemic and profound. Sometimes the term *abhi-saṅkhāra* is used here (D 3:217; M 1:297; S 12.51; A 1:112). See BDict: *saṅkhāra*.

<sup>256</sup> “Acquisitions,” *upadhi*, see n4.

<sup>257</sup> “Fading away,” *virāga*, also tr as “dispassion.”

<sup>258</sup> On nirvana as a state, see SD 50.1 (3.3).

## The “hesitation” verses

43.5 Thereupon, noble prince, these stanzas unheard before,<sup>259</sup> arose spontaneously<sup>260</sup> in me:

43.6 I have discovered the Dharma with difficulty:  
 enough with declaring it!  
 Not easily understood [awakened to] it is  
 by those lost in lust and hate.

*Kicchena me adhigataṃ  
 halam dāni pakāsitum  
 nāyaṃ dhammo susambudho  
 rāga,dosa,paretehi*

43.7 It goes against the current, abstruse,  
 profound, hard to see, subtle—  
 those dyed in lust will not see it,  
 nor those shrouded in massive darkness.<sup>261</sup>

*Paṭisota,gāmiṃ nipuṇaṃ  
 gambhīraṃ duddasaṃ aṇuṃ  
 rāga,rattā na dakkhanti  
 tamo,khandhena āvuṭṭā’ti<sup>262</sup>*

Thinking thus, noble prince, my mind inclined to living at ease,<sup>263</sup> rather than teaching the Dharma.<sup>264</sup>

<sup>259</sup> *pubbe assuta,pubbā*, lit “unheard of before, before.” See Oskar Von Hinüber, “*Anacchariyā pubbe assutapubbā*” in *Selected Papers on Pāli Studies*, Oxford: PTS, 1994:17-24, where he contends that *anacchariyā* represents Skt \**an-akṣar-ikā*, but, retorts Bodhi, “his argument rests on the assumption that *pubbe assutapubbā* would be redundancy and therefore *pubbe* must be taken in apposition to the preceding *anacchariyā*. This assumption, however, is contradicted by D 1:184,27-29, where we find *pubbe ... sutapubbā* as one block. Interestingly, no corresponding word is to be found in the Mahā,vastu and Lalita,vistara versions of the same incident.” (S:B 431 n365; citations normalized). See foll n.

<sup>260</sup> PTS *acchariyā*; prob wr for *anacchariyā* (Be Ce Se), lit “not wonderful,” ie appearing quite naturally or spontaneously (CPD) (D 2: 93 = S 5:259; M 3:121; A 4:211; J 3:70, 406, 4:153, 6:220; cf V 2:17; S 4:301). For the tr here I am guided by the context of **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.19/1:168), where the reading is *anacchariyā*, and where the Buddha himself is the narrator: he is more likely to have said that the stanzas are “spontaneous” rather than “marvellous.” Although the Commentators seem to take *anacchariyā* as deriving from *acchariyā*, most translators render it as “spontaneously,” apparently invoking *acchara*, “moment.” Buddhaghosa glosses *anacchariyā* as *anucchariyā*, “repeatedly or following *acchariyā*” (VA 1:133; SA 1:196). For SA Porāṇa Ṭīkā gloss and further comments, see S:B 431 n 365. See prev n.

<sup>261</sup> “Hidden in darkness,” *tamo-k,khandhena avatā*, lit “blocked by the aggregates of darkness.” V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 2:37 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:315.

<sup>262</sup> This verse recurs at **Mv 1.5.3** (V 1:5\*), SD 12.1 (2.1) = **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.2.3/2:36, Vipassī Buddha), SD 49.8 = **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19.7/1:168), SD 1.11 = **Āyācana S** (S 6.1/1:136), SD 12.2; Mvst 3:315.

<sup>263</sup> “Inclined to living at ease,” *appossukkatāya* = *appa* (little) + *ussukka* (striving for), meaning “little zeal”; ie “careless, unconcerned; living at ease, inactive” (V 2:188; D 2:176 = M 3:175 ≈ D 2:177 = M 3:176; M 1:450; Sn 43; Nc 91 = Ap 9; Thī 457, 477; Dh 330). Comys: *Appossukkatā* means the lack of desire to teach (SA 1:197). But why, when the Bodhisattva had long ago made an aspiration to reach Buddhahood in order to liberate others, is now inclined towards living at ease. Because it is only after reaching awakening did he fully realize the weight of defilements in people’s minds and of the Dharma’s profundity. Furthermore, he wanted Brahmā to entreat him to teach, so that beings who venerated Brahmā would recognize the Dharma’s value and desire to listen to it. (SA 1:197 f; MA 2:176 f on **Ariya Pariyesanā S**).

<sup>264</sup> Comy asks: Why, when the Bodhisattva had long ago made an aspiration to reach Buddhahood in order to liberate others, is he now inclined towards inaction? It then explains that it is only after reaching awakening did he fully realize the power of defilements in people’s minds and of the Dharma’s profundity. Furthermore, he wanted Brahmā to entreat him to teach so that beings who venerated Brahmā would recognize the Dharma’s value and desire to listen to it (MA 2:176 f). For a fuller discussion, see **Why the Buddha “hesitated” to teach?** SD 12.1.

## BRAHMA'S SUPPLICATION TO TEACH

§§44-45

M 26,20-21/1:168,10-169,30 (SD 1.11)

### Brahmā Sahampati

**44** [M 26,20] Then, noble prince, **Brahmā Sahampati**, having known with his own mind the reflection in my mind, thought:

'Alas, the world is lost! Alas, the world is destroyed, now that the mind of the Tathagata, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one, inclines to living at ease, not to teaching Dharma!'<sup>265</sup>

44.2 Then, just as a strong man might stretch his arm out or bend it back, Brahmā Sahampati disappeared from the Brahmā world and reappeared before me.

44.3 Then, Brahmā Sahampati, having arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee on the ground, raised his palms lotus-wise towards me, and said this to me:

**'Bhante, may the Blessed One teach the Dharma!** May the wellfarer [Sugata] teach the Dharma!

**There are beings with little dust in their eyes** who are falling away through not hearing the Dharma. **There will be those who will understand the Dharma.**'<sup>266</sup>

44.4 Brahmā Sahampati said this. Having said this, he further said.<sup>267</sup>

[THE MAGADHA VERSE]<sup>268</sup>

44.5 There has appeared in the past (until now) in Magadha an impure Dharma devised by those still tainted.<sup>269</sup>

Throw open this door to the death-free!<sup>270</sup>

Let them hear the Dharma discovered by the stainless one.<sup>271</sup>

[BRAHMA'S INVITATION VERSES]<sup>272</sup>

<sup>265</sup> In the **Mahāvastu** account, the deity who approaches the Buddha is simply referred to only as **Mahā Brahmā**; he is accompanied by many other gods, incl Sakra. On Brahmā Sahampati's role in the Buddha story, see Intro (2).

<sup>266</sup> *Desetu bhante bhagavā dhammaṃ desetu sugato dhammaṃ. Santi sattā appa,raj'akkha,jātikā, assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanti. Bhavissanti dhammassa aññātāro'ti.*

<sup>267</sup> These 3 verses [§§20.5-20.7] occur in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,20/1:168 f), SD 1.11; **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85/2:93); **Āyācana S** (S 6.1/1:137); V 1:5. Verses §20.6+20.7 recur in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.9/2:39), SD 49.8

<sup>268</sup> The foll 3 verses (Brahma's invitation + the Magadha verses) recur in **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,45/2:93, quoting M 26.21) & **Āyācana S** (S 6.1,13/1:138), BA 18. See prec n.

<sup>269</sup> These 2 lines, in dialectical terms, form the thesis, the real but unsatisfactory state of things stated by Brahmā on behalf of sentient beings as it were. In social terms, this statement clearly refers to the brahminical system of philosophy and practices, that is, the *āstika* system. This statement also means that the liberating truth has been forgotten during this time [see n for line d]. As such, the Buddha's claim that his newly proclaimed Dharma is "unheard before" (*pubbe assuta,pubbā*) is clearly justified. Kvu 4.8/286 discusses the question how far the Buddha did not have a teacher (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,25/1:170 @ SD 1.11) when, as the Bodhisattva (named Jotipāla) he had been Kassapa Buddha's disciple (**Ghaṭikāra S**, M 81.6/2:46, 81.3/2:54), and how far the Buddha's awakening was an insight into "things unheard before" (**Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S**, S 56.11,9-12/5:422 f; V 1:10-12 @ SD 1.1). See also Comy ad loc (KvuA 78). See **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.6.4), SD 9 & Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004b: §§10:20b, 11a.

<sup>270</sup> Comy: The door to the death-free is the noble path, "the door to the death-free nirvana" (SA 1:199). While *dvāra* here is singular, below [§21] it is plural (*dvārā*).

<sup>271</sup> These last 2 lines form the antithesis to Brahmā's earlier request. The first statement was a definition of the problem, and this second statement is a proposal for its solution. See n for line c.

<sup>272</sup> These 2 verses (without the prec Magadha verse) recur in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.9), SD 49.8.

- 44.6<sup>273</sup> *Sele yathā pabbata,muddhani-ṭ,ṭhito*<sup>274</sup> Just as one standing on a mountain peak  
*yathāpi passe janatam samantato* might see the people all around,  
*tathūpamaṃ dhamma,mayaṃ sumedha* even so, O wise one, O universal eye,<sup>275</sup> *d*  
*pāsādam āruyha samanta,cakkhu.* ascend to the palace, made of Dharma! *c*  
*Sok'āvatiṇṇam*<sup>276</sup> *janatam apeta,soko* May he consider mankind, sunk in sorrow,  
*avekkhassu*<sup>277</sup> *jāti,jarābhībūtā* overcome by birth and decay! [M 26:169]
- 44.7<sup>278</sup> *Uṭṭhehi vīra vijita,saṅgāma,* Arise, hero! Victor in battle!  
*sattha,vāha aṇaṇa vicara loke.* Caravan leader, debt-free one, wander in the world!  
*Desassu*<sup>279</sup> *bhagavā dhammaṃ* Teach the Dharma, O blessed lord!  
*aññātāro bhavissantīti.* There will be those who will understand.<sup>280</sup>

## PARABLE OF THE LOTUSES IN THE POND

§45 (M 26,21/1:169,5-30), SD 1.11

### The lotus pond

45 [M 26,21] Then, noble prince, heeding Brahmā's plea, and out of compassion for beings, I surveyed the world with the buddha-eye.

45.2 Surveying the world with the buddha-eye, I saw beings  
 with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes,  
 the keen and the dull,  
 the good and the bad,<sup>281</sup>  
 those easy to teach and those hard to teach,  
 some who live seeing fear in blame (in wrongdoing) and in the hereafter.<sup>282</sup>

<sup>273</sup> This verse recurs in **Vitakka S** (It 2.2.1/33), SD 63.12, spoken by the Buddha Gotama. See prec n.

<sup>274</sup> *Muddhaniṭṭhito* resolved as *muddhāni* (loc, "top, peak, summit") (Sn 689c, 987c || 682c) + *ṭhita* ("standing").

<sup>275</sup> This is the last of "the 5 eyes" (*cakkhu*). The Buddha eye (*buddha,cakkhu*) is a name for the knowledge of the degrees of maturity in the faculties of being (*indriya,paropariyatta,ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of the dispositions and latent tendencies of beings (*āsayānusaya,ñāṇa*). The "knowledge of omniscience" is called the universal eye (*sam-anta,cakkhu*) (S 559d\*): see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133), SD 10.8 (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76), SD 35.7. The knowledge of the 3 lower paths is called the Dharma eye or "Dharma vision" (*dhamma,cakkhu*). Together with the divine eye or clairvoyance (*dibba,cakkhu*) (S 6.5/1:145, 12.70/2:121 f) and the physical eye (*maṃsa,cakkhu*), these make up the "5 eyes" of the Buddha (Nm 354-360; Nc 235; SA 1:200). See **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (5.5.1); SD 50.20 comy 14-15 (2).

<sup>276</sup> *Se sokāvakiṇṇam* (wr). "Sunk in sorrow," *sokāvatinna* = *soka* ("sorrow") + *avatiṇṇa* ("fallen into," past part of *avatarati*, "descend into, dive into"). Cf vl *sokānutiṇṇo* (S 1:123,1). Previous trs seemed to have misread this word.

<sup>277</sup> *Avekkhassu*, "may he consider," imper 2 sg med (Sn 1119 = Ap 488,5; V 1:61\* = D 2:39,14\* = M 1:168,34\* = S 1:137,36\*): see CPD sv *avekkhari*.

<sup>278</sup> This verse recurs, attr to Brahmā Sahampati, in **Buddha Vandana S** (S 11.17/1:234), SD 86.1 = **Āyācana S** (S 6.1,9/1:137: v560), SD 12.2.

<sup>279</sup> Ee *Se desetu*.

<sup>280</sup> V 1:4-7; M 1:167-69; S 1:136-39; D 2:36-40 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:314-19; cf S 1:234.

<sup>281</sup> "The good and the bad," *svākāre dvākāre* = *su* + *ākāra*, *du* + *ākāra*, lit "those with good nature, those with evil nature."

<sup>282</sup> "Seeing blame ... the hereafter," *paraloka,vajja,bhaya,dassāvino* (pl), an ambiguous cpd. M:ÑB 261 (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,21/1:169) tr as "seeing fear in blame and in the other world," which agrees well with Comys, which resolve it as *paralokañ c'eva vajjañ ca bhayato passanti* (MA 2:179; SA 1:200). Bodhi, however, notes that at **Dh 317 f** *bhaya* and *vajja* are treated as parallel terms, which suggests that the cpd should be resolved as *paraloke*

45.3 Noble prince, just as in a **lotus pond of blue or red or white lotuses**,<sup>283</sup>  
 some lotuses might be born *in* the water,  
 grow in the water, and thrive while submerged in the water, without rising out of the water;  
 some lotuses might be born in the water,  
 grow *up* in the water, and stand up at an even level with the water;  
 some lotuses might be born *in* the water and grow *up* in the water,  
 but would **rise up** from the water and *stand up* in the water without being soiled by the water—

45.4 so, too, noble prince, surveying the world with the buddha-eye, I saw beings  
 with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes,  
 the keen and the dull, the good and the bad,  
 those easy to teach and those hard to teach,  
 some who live seeing fear in blame (in wrongdoing) and in the hereafter.

45.5 Then, noble prince, having seen this, I answered Brahmā Sahampati in verse:<sup>284</sup>

<i>Apārutā tesam amatassa dvārā</i>	Open to them are the doors to the death-free, <sup>285</sup> (O Brahma),
<i>ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham</i>	for those with ears, let them free their faith! <sup>286</sup>
<i>vihimsa,saññī paguṇam na bhāsim</i>	Perceiving trouble, I did not speak
<i>dhammaṃ pañitam manujesu brahme</i>	the refined, sublime Dharma among humans, O Brahmā. <sup>287</sup>

45.6 Then, noble prince, Brahmā Sahampati, thought:

‘There is consent by the Blessed One for the teaching of the Dharma,’<sup>288</sup> and, after paying homage to me, keeping me on the right, he disappeared right there.<sup>289</sup>

*vajjañ c’eva bhayañ ca passanti.* (S:B 433 n371). In fact, it is obvious that the two terms are allusions to “moral shame” (*hiri*) and “moral fear” (*ottappa*) respectively.

<sup>283</sup> They are respectively *uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (Skt *padma*, *kokanada*), and *puṇḍarīka*. They are all varieties of the species *Nelumbo nucifera* (old name, now obsolete, *Nelumbium speciosum*).

<sup>284</sup> This verse also at V 1:7 (as at M 26,21), **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.7/2:39, spoken by Vipassī Buddha to Mahā Brahmā), **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,21/1:169; MĀ 204 = T765.4), **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,45/2:93, quoting M 26,21); **Āyācana S** (S 6.1.13/1:138), BA 18. Line b appears in **Jana,vasabha S** (D 18,27/2:217). See foll n.

<sup>285</sup> “The doors to the deathfree” (*amatassa dvārā*) = the noble path (*ariya,magga*) (VA 963).

<sup>286</sup> On this difficult sentence, see esp SD 12.2 (3).

<sup>287</sup> This verse: BHS: *apāvṛtaṃ me amṛtasya dvāraṃ | brahmeti bhagavantaṃ ye śrotukāmā | śraddhāṃ pramūcanta viheṭṭha,samjñāṃ || viheṭṭha,samjñō praguṇo abhūsi | dharmo aśuddho magadheṣu pūvaṃ ||* (Mvst 3:319, Senart). BHS: sv viheṭṭhā, however, says that Senart’s text is “very corrupt” (Edgerton 1953: 50). For a detailed study, see SD 12.2 (3).

<sup>288</sup> *Katāvakāso kho’mhi bhagavatā dhamma,desanāya*, free tr: “The Blessed One has consented to the teaching of the Dharma!” Here *bhagavato* (dat, gen) at S 1:138 (PTS 1884) appears to be wr. In **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,-21/1:169), M:ÑB (similarly at V:H 4:10) has “I have created the opportunity for the Blessed One to teach the Dhamma.” CPD: *katāvakāsa*, however, remarks that this rendition is “both grammatically impossible and contextually unlikely; the reading *bhagavato* at S 1:138,26, however, would seem to represent a reinterpretation of the clause supporting the traditional interpretation of the passage, unless the gen is taken as the gen of the agent to be construed with *katāvakāso*.” CPD cites **Mahāvastu**, *bhagavatā mahābrahmaṇe avakāśe kṛte* (Mvst 3:319), “which would seem to support the interpretation suggested above.”

<sup>289</sup> V 1:7; M 1:170; S 1:138; D 2:39 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:318; cf S:B 1:233 n372; also Sn 1146c. We see here an existential role reversal of the God-religion, where instead of man supplicating God for guidance and succour, it is the High God himself who comes down from his heaven to supplicate the Buddha to declare the Dharma for the world’s good.

THE WALK TO ISIPATANA  
(§§46-54) M 26,22-29/1:169,31-173,7 (SD 1.11)

### The first listeners<sup>290</sup>

**46** [M 26,22] Then, noble prince, this occurred to me:

‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’

46.2 It then occurred to me, ‘**Ājāra Kālāma** is wise, intelligent and discerning, and has little dust in his eyes.

46.3 Suppose I [M 26:170] taught the Dharma first to Ājāra Kālāma.’

Then, noble prince, devas approached me and said,

‘Bhante, Ājāra Kālāma died 7 days ago.’

46.4 And I realized this was true, and thought,

‘Ājāra Kālāma’s death is a great loss. If he had heard this Dharma, he would have understood it quickly.’

**47** [M 26,23] Then, noble prince, this occurred to me:

‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’

47.2 Noble prince, it then occurred to me that **Uddaka Rāma,putta** is wise, intelligent and discerning, and has little dust in his eyes.

47.3 Suppose I taught the Dharma first to Uddaka Rāma,putta.

47.4 Then, noble prince, devas approached me and said this,

‘Bhante, Uddaka Rāma,putta died the night before.’

47.5 And I realized this was true, and thought,

‘Uddaka Rāma,putta’s death is a great loss. If he had heard this Dharma, he would have understood it quickly.’

**48** [M 26,24] Then, noble prince, this occurred to me:

‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’

48.2 Noble prince, it then occurred to me to teach **the group of 5 monks**<sup>291</sup> who attended upon me when I was engaged in my quest, that they were very helpful.

48.3 ‘What now if I taught the Dharma first to them.’

48.4 Then, noble prince, this occurred to me:

‘Where is the group of 5 monks living now?’

48.5 With the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human, I saw that they were living in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Benares.

### Upaka

**49** [M 26,25] Then, noble prince, when I had stayed at Uruvelā for as long as I was inclined to, I set out in stages for Benares.

49.2 Between Gayā and the place of the Awakening, the naked ascetic, **Upaka**,<sup>292</sup> saw me on the

<sup>290</sup> On the question whether the Buddha learned under the 2 teachers, see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,22) header n (SD 1.11).

<sup>291</sup> This is prob the oldest canonical ref we have to the 5 monks. See **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11/5:420-424; V 1:10-12), SD 1.1

road and said,

‘Serene are your senses, avuso! Clear and bright is your complexion. Under whom have you gone forth? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?’ [M 26:171]

49.3 Noble prince, after Upaka had spoken thus, I replied him in verse:

49.4 All have I overcome, all do I know,  
from all am I detached, all have I renounced,  
through the stopping of craving, I am freed,  
having understood all by myself, whom shall I call teacher?<sup>293</sup>

49.5 No teacher have I,<sup>294</sup>  
an equal to me there is none.  
In all the world, with its gods, there is no rival to me.  
An arhat, indeed, am I in this world.

49.6 Peerless teacher am I.  
Alone am I fully self-awakened,  
quenched, whose fires are all extinguished.  
I’m going to Kāsī to set the wheel of truth in motion.  
In this blind world, I shall beat the drum of the death-free state!

49.7 ‘Then, avuso, from your claim, you are worthy as a conqueror of the endless (*ananta,jina*)?’<sup>295</sup>

49.8 The conquerors like me are those whose impurities have been destroyed.  
All the bad I have conquered.  
Therefore, Upaka, am I called conqueror!

49.9 Noble prince, when this was said, the naked ascetic said, ‘It may be so [I’m sure it is], avuso.’  
Shaking his head, he took a byway and departed.<sup>296</sup>

<sup>292</sup> Upaka is also called Kāla, probably a nickname for his dark complexion (Thī 309, or Upaganena, Divy 393). For details of history, see SnA 1:258-260). His story is given at SnA 1:258-260; see also SD 12.1 (4+5); SD 49.13 (4.2).

<sup>293</sup> For other verses that play on “all” (*sabba*), see SD 15.7 (3.3.2.4 f). On the meaning of *sabba*, see **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1.

<sup>294</sup> According to Comy on **Ghaṭikāra S** (M 81), the Bodhisattva had learned all of Kassapa Buddha’s teachings and was effectively on the brink of streamwinning (MA 3:282). As such, the Buddha’s proclamation here that he has no teacher apparently refers to the fact none of his teachers are alive then. See Analayo on M 81, 2005:8. **Kathā,vatthu** (Kvu 4.8/286) discusses the question regarding how far the Buddha did not have a teacher (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,25/1:170), SD 1.11, when, as the Bodhisattva, he had been Kassapa Buddha’s disciple, and how the Buddha’s awakening was an insight into “things unheard of before” (**Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S**), S 56,11.9-12/5:422 f; V 1:10-12, (SD 1.1). See also Comy ad loc (KvuA 78).

<sup>295</sup> *Yathā kho tvaṃ āvuso paṭijānāsi arahasi ananta,jino* = V 1:8,27. Here *arahasi* (2 sg) can also be *arahā asi*.

<sup>296</sup> MA: **Upaka** thereafter falls in love with Cāpā, a hunter’s daughter and marries her (ThīA 225). Later, when the marriage fails, Upaka goes to the Buddha who admits him into the order. As a result of his meditation, Upaka becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Avihā heaven of the pure abodes (Suddhāvāsa), where he immediately becomes an arhat (MA 1:190). (See Sn 11 which is made in reference to Upaka’s attainment of non-returning.) Later, Cāpā, too, goes forth and becomes an arhat nun. The importance of this meeting is that the Buddha for the first time proclaims from his own mouth and before another person his new and supreme dignity—the first public statement of his awakening—as well as his determination to liberate the world. This is what is important to the simple follower. Whether Upaka understands his privilege or not is of little consequence. In fact, the Dīgha Com-

THE DEER PARK, ISIPATANA  
§§50-54  
M 26,26-29/1:171,18-173,7 (SD 1.11)

### The group of 5 monks

50 [M 26,26] Then, noble prince, walking by stages, I eventually came to **the Deer Park** at Isipatana, near Benares, and I approached the group of 5 monks.

50.2 When they saw me coming in the distance, they agreed among themselves, thus:

‘Avuso, here comes the recluse Gotama who lives luxuriously, who has given up his striving and reverted to luxury.<sup>297</sup> We should neither pay him homage, nor rise up to him, nor receive his bowl and outer robe. But a seat may be prepared for him. If he likes, he may sit down.’

50.3 However, noble prince, as I approached, those monks were unable to keep to their decision.

One came to meet me and took my bowl and outer robe; another prepared a seat; another set out water for my feet.

50.4 However, they addressed me by my name and as ‘**avuso**’ [friend] (*āvuso*).<sup>298</sup>

51 [M 26,27] Thereupon, I told them:

‘Bhikshus, do not address the Tathagata by name and as “avuso.” The Tathagata is an arhat, [M 26:172] fully self-awakened.

Listen, bhikshus, **the death-free state has been attained**. I shall instruct you the Dharma.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.’

51.2 When this was said, noble prince, the group of 5 monks said this to me:

‘Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have *not* gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?’

51.3 When this was said, I told them:

‘The Tathagatha does not live luxuriously, nor has he given up his striving and reverted to luxury. The Tathagatha is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

mentary says that the Buddha walks all the way (about 7 km) from Gayā to Isi,patana, instead of teleporting himself, so that Upaka could meet him (DA 2:471). See also V 1:8; M 1:171; J 1:81; DhA 4:71 f; cf Miln 235; UA 54; Kvu 289; Mvst 3:326. On Upaka, further see SD 49.14 (4.2).

<sup>297</sup> The “luxury” here refers to his taking “some boiled rice and gruel” *odāna,kummāsa* (as *dvandva*), or “rice gruel” (as *tatpurusha*). This offering is prob part of the milk-rice (*pāyāsa*) made by the lady Sujātā, and which is the Bodhisattva’s last meal before the great awakening (J 1:68; SA 1:172; AA 1:401; BA 7; ApA 72; DhsA 34).

<sup>298</sup> *Āvuso*, meaning “Friend!” “Sir!”, a polite vocative for monks equal in “rains” with the speaker, or to juniors; prob derived from \**āvusso* < \**āyuṣmas* (cf Whitney, *A Sanskrit Grammar*, London, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed 1896 §454); cf BHS *āvusa*. *āyuṣman*. Uses: (1) by and to non-Buddhists (V 1:8, Upaka; D 2:130, Ālāra Kālāma; M 1:372, nirgrantha; Tha 1196; J 2:448, 3:230); (2) by monks and nuns (a) to laity (V 1:84; M 1:299, to Visākha; J 3:191, 4:244; (b) to each other (but not to the Buddha), post-Buddha only by a senior monk to a junior (*āvuso,vādā*) (V 1:9; D 2:154; UA 311): see **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), where the Buddha declares that after his passing, only senior monks address juniors as *āvuso* or by name, while juniors shall address seniors as *bhante* or *āyasmā* (D 16,6.2/2:154) & also R O Franke, “The Buddhist Councils at Rājagaha and Vesālī,” *Journal of the Pali Text Soc*, 1908:18-44. See CPD & DP sv.



51.4 Listen, bhikshus, ***the death-free state has been attained!*** I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dharma.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.’

51.5 **For the 2<sup>nd</sup> time**, the group of 5 monks said to me:

*‘Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have not gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.*

*Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?’*

51.6 When this was said, I told them:

‘The Tathagatha does not live luxuriously, nor has he given up his striving and reverted to luxury. The Tathagatha is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

51.7 Listen, bhikshus, ***the deathfree state has been attained!*** I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dharma.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.’

51.8 **For the 3<sup>rd</sup> time**, the group of 5 monks said to me:

*‘Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have not gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.*

*Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?’*

**52 [M 26,28]** When this was said, I asked the group of 5 monks, thus:

‘Bhikshus, **have you ever known me to speak like this before?**’

‘No, bhante.’

52.2 ‘Bhikshus, the Tthagata is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

Give ear, bhikshus, ***the deathfree state has been attained!*** I shall instruct you the Dharma.

52.3 Practising as you are instructed so that by realizing direct knowledge for yourself here and now, you will in no long time attain and dwell in that supreme goal of the holy life

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into the homeless life.’

## The 1<sup>st</sup> teachings<sup>299</sup>

[M 26/1:173]

**53 [M 26,29]** Noble prince, I was able to convince the group of 5 monks.

53.2 Noble prince, I sometimes instructed two monks while the other three went out for alms, and the six of us lived on what those three monks brought back. **[94]**

53.3 Noble prince, sometimes I instructed three monks while the other two went for alms, and the six of us lived on what those two monks brought back.<sup>300</sup>

<sup>299</sup> This is prob the original form of the “first discourse,” or a gist of the Buddha’s first teachings to the 5 monks, or a key section of the first discourse—we cannot really be sure. However, this is certainly older than the teachings of **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1.

<sup>300</sup> The episode from this point is recorded in **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1. A few days later, after they all had become streamwinners, the Buddha taught them the teaching recorded in **Anatta,lakkhaṇa S** (S

## The group of 5 monks awaken

<sup>4301</sup> Then, noble prince, **the group of 5 monks**, not long after being instructed and advised by me, by realizing for themselves with direct knowledge, here and now entered and abided in the supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the home into homelessness.”

### III. Conclusion

(§§55-64)

## The parable of elephant training

**55** When this was said, prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, **after how long** would a monk,<sup>302</sup>

obtaining the Tathagata as a guide (*vinayaka*),<sup>303</sup> [§59]

<sup>304</sup>right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge,

attain and dwell in the supreme goal of the holy life,

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness?”<sup>305</sup>

55.2 ‘Well then, noble prince, I shall ask you a question in return.<sup>306</sup> Answer as you see fit.

What do you think, noble prince? Are you skilled in **the art of the goad for elephant-riding?**”<sup>307</sup>

“Yes, bhante, I am skilled in the art of the goad for elephant-riding.”

22.59 @ SD 1.2), upon hearing which they all attained arhathood. The complete episode is recorded in the Vinaya (V 1:7-14) (see Ñāṇamoli, *The Life of the Buddha*, 1992:42-47).

<sup>301</sup> The preceding Ariya Pariyesanā S account (M 26,19-29) starting from §43 ends here, and our Sutta, M 85, here resumes its own account right to the end.

<sup>302</sup> “After how long” (*kiva cirena*). The Skt fragment reports him as asking: “Endowed with how many qualities, bhante?” (*(k(a)tibhi[r bhadaam]tāmgaīḥ sama[nv]āgata*) (fol 342V2, Hartmann 2004b:129; Silverlock 2009:78).

<sup>303</sup> “Guide,” *vinayaka*, from *vi-* (away) + *√nī*, to lead + *-ka* (agent marker); lit, “one who leads away (from bad),” a leader, guide, instructor (M 2:94; Vv 16,7 (he leads beings who are ready, *veneyya,satte vineti*, VvA 83); Tha 69.

<sup>304</sup> The 3 lines are the preamble to the arhat’s review knowledge, which together forms the “full arhat’s pericope”: for details, see **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,56.2+56.3), SD 7.14.

<sup>305</sup> The whole para: *Kīva cirena nu kho bhante bhikkhu tathāgataṃ vināyakaṃ labhamāno, yass’atthāya kula, - puttā sammad eva agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti, tad anuttaram brahma.cariya,pariyosānaṃ diṭṭh’eva dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja vihareyyāti.*

<sup>306</sup> Both the Sutta and its Chin versions report that the Buddha used a counter-question. The Pali version, however, fits the context better. If prince Bodhi has asked about the qualities necessary for awakening, there would be no need for a counter-question, since the Buddha could just have listed the 5 qualities straightaway. A counter-question (*paṭipucchā*) usually is used in reply to a question that cannot be answered categorically (yes-no) (*ekamsena*) or analytically (*vibhajja*). Here, the Buddha counter-questions Bodhi to evoke his familiarity with elephant-training to serve as the basis of the Dharma that is about to be taught. Moreover, Bodhi’s question about the time needed to reach the goal cannot be simply stated, since it depends on the practitioner’s qualities. See **Kathā,vatthu S** (A 3.67/-1:197-199), SD 46.11).

<sup>307</sup> *Kusalo tvaṃ hatth’ārūlḥe<sup>1</sup> añkusa,gayhe<sup>2</sup> sippe’ti.* (1) Be Se *hatth’ārūlḥe*; Ce *hatth’ārūyhe*; Ee *hatth’ārūyhe*. (2) Be Ce Ee *añkusa,gayhe*; Ke Se *añkusa,ganḥe*. **Hatth’ārūyha añkusa,gayha sippa**, lit, “the art of elephant-riding by the grasp of the goad” [2.5]. The elephant imagery to illustrate spiritual training occurs in **Danta,bhūmi S** (M 125,-12), which compares the practice of the gradual path to an elephant-trainer who catches and trains a wild elephant (SD 46.3). The M 85 imagery [§55.2], however, is quite specific: the task is only to teach one to ride an elephant (which would have already been tamed and trained); as such, would be considerably less demanding than having to catch and tame a wild elephant. See (2.5.3).

5 REASONS FOR FAILURE IN TRAINING<sup>308</sup>

**56** “What do you think, noble prince? Suppose a man were to come here, thinking:

‘Prince Bodhi knows the art of handling the goad while riding an elephant. I will train in *that art* under him.’

56.2 If he had no **faith**, he would not achieve whatever could be achieved by one who *has faith*.<sup>309</sup>

If he were often **ill**, he would not achieve whatever could be achieved by one *free from illness*.

If he were **crafty and deceitful**,<sup>310</sup> he would not achieve whatever could be achieved by one *free from craftiness and deceitfulness*.

If he were often **lazy**, he would not achieve whatever could be achieved by one *exerting effort*.

If he were often **unwise**, he would not achieve whatever could be achieved by one who *is wise*.

56.3 What do you think, noble prince, could that man train under you in the art of handling the goad while riding an elephant?”

Bhante, even if he has just one of these qualities, he would *not* be able to train under me; what more to speak of the five!?”<sup>311</sup>

## THE 5 QUALITIES OF AN APPRENTICE

**57** “What do you think, noble prince? Suppose a man were to come here, thinking: **[95]**

‘Prince Bodhi knows the art of handling the goad while riding an elephant. I will train in *that art* under him.’

57.2 If he had **faith**, he would achieve whatever could be achieved by one who *has faith*.

If he were **free from illness**, he would achieve whatever could be achieved by one *free from illness*.

If he were **neither crafty nor deceitful**, he would achieve whatever could be achieved by one *free from craftiness and deceitfulness*.

If he were **exertive in effort**, he would achieve whatever could be achieved by one *exerting effort*.

If he were **wise**, he would achieve whatever could be achieved by one who *is wise*.

57.3 What do you think, noble prince, could that man train under you in the art of handling the goad while riding an elephant?”

Bhante, even if he has just one of these qualities, he would be able to train under me; what more to speak of the five!?”<sup>312</sup>

The 5 limbs of striving

**58** Even so, noble prince, there are **these 5 limbs of striving** (*pañca padhāniy’āṅgāni*).<sup>313</sup> What are the five?<sup>314</sup>

<sup>308</sup> The teaching on the 5 limbs of striving are described in these Skt fragments: SHT IV 33 fol 23-24, SHT IV 180 fol 1 f, Hoernle frag 149/280 V or Or 15009/106, frag SI B/14 2-3, and fol 342-344. See (1.1.1.4) n.

<sup>309</sup> *So c’assa assaddho, yāvatakaṃ saddhena pattabbaṃ, taṃ na sampāpuṇeyya.*

<sup>310</sup> “Crafty and deceitful,” *saṭho māyāvī*, qualities that contribute to the “roots of dispute”: see SD 47.14 (1.1).

<sup>311</sup> This section and folio 342V8 + 343R1 (Hartmann 2004b:130; Silverlock 2009:78 f). The two versions only differ slightly in that in M 85 the Buddha presents all 5 limbs and then asks Bodhi if such a person would be able to learn, but in the Skt fragment, the Buddha asks the same question after each of the 5 limbs, and each time Bodhi replies that someone with this quality would not be able to learn from him.

<sup>312</sup> *Ekam ekena pi bhante aṅgena samannāgato so puriso mama santike ... sippaṃ sikkheyya, ko pana vādo pañcah’āṅgehīti* (M:Be 2:298,22: *ekenā*), fol 343R5-6 (Hartmann 2004b:130; Silverlock 2009:79): *ekaikena tāvad bhadanta ito’ṅgena samanvāgatena tena puruṣeṇa sukaraṃ mamāntikad anyatamānyatamac chilpsthānakarmasthāna samanvāgamayituruṃ, kaḥ punar vādaḥ sarvair*; see also SHT IV 33 fol 24V2-3 + frag SI B/14 3A3 (Bongard-Levin 1989:511).

Here, noble prince,

(1) Here, noble prince, a monk<sup>315</sup> has **faith**.<sup>316</sup> He has faith in the Tathagata's awakening, thus:  
So, too, is he the Blessed One.<sup>317</sup>

he is arhat [worthy],

fully self-awakened,

accomplished in wisdom and conduct,

well-farer,

knower of worlds,

peerless guide of tamable persons,

teacher of gods and humans,

awakened,

blessed.<sup>318</sup>

(2) He is **free from illness**, free from pain. He has good digestion. His body is neither too cold nor too warm but moderate, suitable for striving.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> This Sutta preserves fully this set of **5 limbs**. SHT IV 180 V3-5 only mentions the negative qualities of being faithless, ill and stupid, and at V8-9, the positive qualities of being honest and energetic, thereby listing all 5 qualities. Similarly, frags SI B/14 2A4+B2 and SI B/14 3A1+B4 (Bongard-Levin 1989:510-512) list the positive qualities of faith, health, honesty, energy, and wisdom. Fol 342V7-8 (Hartmann 2004b:129 f; Silverlock 2009:78) only lists being faithless, deceitful, and stupid, which Hartmann 2004b:132 n34 suggests to be "most likely due to a haplography in this highly repetitive passage." Parts of passages on these 5 factors of striving are also preserved in the Skt frags of Daśottara-sūtra: see frag S 493cR2-5 (Mittal 1957:34). See (2.6).

<sup>314</sup> The set of 5 limbs recurs in (**Pañcaka**) **Padhāna S** (A 5.53,2) + SD 51.14 (1.2.2); **Paṭṭhāna S 1** (A 5.135), SD 51.-22 and elsewhere. For a full list, see SD 51.14 (1.3), where also see explanations on the 5 limbs of striving (2-6).

<sup>315</sup> "A monk" (*bhikkhu*) is mentioned, despite the teaching being given to a lay person, follows a standard format where *bhikkhu* represents the ideal trainee as renunciant. In non-monastic contexts, otherwise *bhikkhu* is a shorthand for the audience (SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1)) or a meditator (**Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) n, SD 13.3).

<sup>316</sup> *Saddhā*, ie, *ākāra,vati saddhā*, faith founded on seeing; synonymous with *avecca,pasāda*, ie, faith through understanding. There are 2 kinds of faith: (1) "rootless faith (*amūlaka,saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith (M 2:170); (2) "faith with a good cause" (*ākāravati,saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8, 401,23). See also Se: AA 3/227; DhA 1/72 5/81; UA 369. *Amūlaka* = "not seen, not heard, not suspected" (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy).

<sup>317</sup> This & foll lines: *iti'pi so bhagavā araham sammā,sambuddho vijja,caraṇa,sampanno* (M 2:95,17). The foll are the Buddha's 9 worthy virtues (*navāraha guṇa*) serving as the key basis for the reflection on the Buddha (*buddhānussati*): SD 15.7 (2.2).

<sup>318</sup> The Skt fragment speaks instead of a noble disciple whose **faith** is so firm that it cannot be shaken by anyone in the world. Folio 343R7-8 (Hartmann 2004b:130; Silverlock 2009:79) describes the noble disciple's faith as being "rooted and established" (*mūla,jātā pratiṣṭhitā*). In the suttas, such unshakeable faith signifies a quality of the streamwinner: **Aggañña S** (D 27) states that those whose faith is firm (*mūla,jātā patiṭṭhitā*), can claim to be "born from the mouth" of the Blessed One (*mukhato jāto*) (D 27,9.3/3:84,21), SD 2.19, which Comy explains as signifying that they have won the paths and the fruits (*magga,phalesu patiṭṭhitattā oraso mukhato jāto*, DA 3:865,7). **Vimāṃsaka S** (M 47) states that one with such firm faith can claim that he has "through direct knowledge come to a conclusion in regard to a certain teaching among the teachings" (M 47/1:320,12) (*abhiññāya idh'ekaccaṃ dhammaṃ dhammesu niṭṭham agamaṃ* (M:Se 1:580,6: *niṭṭhaṅgamaṃ*) (SD 35.6). Comy explains that the streamwinner's firm faith is meant here (*mūla,jatāti sotāpatti,magga,vasena sañjāta,mūlā*. MA 2:388,23). **Kiṭṭhā,giri S** (M 70) defines the "faith-freed" (*saddhā,vimutta*), one who is at least a streamwinner, to have such firm faith (*saddhā niviṭṭhā hoti mūlajāta patiṭṭhitā*) (M 70,19/1:478,32), SD 11.1. **Uṇṇābha Brāhmaṇa S** (S 48.42) says that the brahmin Uṇṇābha has gained firm faith (*saddhā niviṭṭhā mūlajātā patiṭṭhitā*), and that he will not be reborn in this world (S 48.42/5:-219,2), SD 29.3, which Comy explains means that he is a streamwinner and Dhyana-attainer (SA 3:246,24). Such passages show that firm faith usually implies at least streamwinning. This explanation, however, will not work so well for Skt version, as it implies turning the fruit of path progress into a requirement for being taught the path. (See Analayo 2011 484 n214)

(3) He is **honest and sincere**,<sup>320</sup> and shows himself as he really is to teachers or to wise companions in the holy life.<sup>321</sup>

(4) He dwells **energetic** in abandoning unwholesome states, in promoting wholesome states, steadfast, resolute in his effort and not shirking from the task of cultivating wholesome states.<sup>322</sup>

(5) He is **wise**: he possesses wisdom regarding the arising and falling away (of things) that is noble and penetrative, and that leads to the complete destruction of suffering.<sup>323</sup>

These, noble prince, are the 5 limbs of striving.

**59** Noble prince, when a monk **who has these 5 limbs of striving** obtains the Tathagata as a guide (*vinayaka*), [§55.1]

he may dwell 7 years so that he,

right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge,

attains and dwells in the supreme goal of the holy life, [96]

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

59.2 Let alone 7 years, noble prince, when a monk **who has these 5 limbs of striving** obtains the Tathagata as one who disciplines him,

he may dwell 6 years so that he,

right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge,

attains and dwells in the supreme goal of the holy life,

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

59.3 Let alone 6 years ... **5 years** ...

59.4 Let alone 5 years ... **4 years** ...

59.5 Let alone 4 years ... **3 years** ...

59.6 Let alone 3 years ... **2 years** ...

59.7 Let alone 3 years ... **1 year** ...

59.8 Let alone 1 year, noble prince, when a monk **who has these 5 limbs of striving** obtains the Tathagata as a guide,

he may dwell 7 months so that he,

right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge,

attains and dwells in the supreme goal of the holy life,

for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.

59.9 Let alone 7 months ... **6 months** ...

59.10 Let alone 6 months ... **5 months** ...

59.11 Let alone 5 months ... **4 months** ...

<sup>319</sup> *App'ābādho hoti app'ātāṅko samavepākiniyā gahaṇiyā samannāgato nātisītāya nāccuṇhāya majjhimāya padhāna-k, khamāya*. This line occurs at **D 17**,1.20/2:177 (of a wheel-turner), **30**,2.8.2/3:166×2 (of a wheel-turner); **M 82**,31/2:67 (of Raṭṭha,pāla), **85**,57/2:95 (in a parable); the rest, all concerning meditators: **A 5.53**,2/3:65, **5.54**,9/-3:66, **5.78**,3/3:103, **5.135**,3/3:153 f×2, **10.11**,2/5:15. The above line with “surpassing any other human” (*ativiya aññehi manussehi*), ie the whole stock: **M 3**:176 (of a wheel-turner).

<sup>320</sup> *Asaḥho hoti amāyāvī*, “not fraudulent, not deceitful” (**A 3**:65, 153; **S 4**:298; cf 299).

<sup>321</sup> *Asaḥho hoti amāyāvī yathā,bhūtaṃ attānaṃ āvikattā satthari vā viññūsu vā sa,brahma,cārīsu*. On this line, see **Sallekha S** (**M 8**,12) + **SD 51.8** (3.2.1.5); (**Pañcaka**) **Padhāna S** (**A 5.53**,2(3)) + **SD 51.14** (4). On *asaḥho amāyāvī*, “not fraudulent, not deceitful,” see **A 3**:65, 153; **S 4**:298, cf 299.

<sup>322</sup> *Āraddha,viriyo viharati akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ upasampadāya thāma-vā daḥha,parakkamo anikkhitta,dhuro kusalesu dhammesu*. See (**Pañcaka**) **Padhāna S** (**A 5.53**,2(4)) + **SD 51.14** (5).

<sup>323</sup> *Paññavā hoti, uday'attha,gāminiyā paññāya samannāgato ariyāya nibbedhikāya sammā,dukkha-k,khaya,gāminiyā*. See (**Pañcaka**) **Padhāna S** (**A 5.53**,2(5)) + **SD 51.14** (6).

59.12 Let alone 4 months ... **3 months** ...

59.13 Let alone 3 months ... **2 month** ...

59.14 Let alone 2 months ... **1 month** ...

Let alone 1 month, noble prince, when a monk **who has these 5 limbs of striving** obtains the Tathagata as one who disciplines him,  
he may dwell **a fortnight** so that he,

*right here and now, having realized it for himself through direct knowledge,  
attains and dwells in the supreme goal of the holy life,*

*for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.*

59.15 Let alone a fortnight ... **7 nights and days** ...

59.16 Let alone 7 nights and days ... **6 nights and days** ...

59.17 Let alone 6 nights and days ... **5 nights and days** ...

59.18 Let alone 5 nights and days ... **4 nights and days** ...

59.19 Let alone 4 nights and days ... **3 nights and days** ...

59.20 Let alone 3 nights and days ... **2nights and days** ...

59.21 Let alone 2 nights and days ... **1 night and day** ...

59.22 Let alone 1 night and day, noble prince, when a monk **who has these 5 limbs of striving** obtains the Tathagata as a guide,

then, being instructed in the evening, he may arrive at distinction **in the morning**;  
being instructed in the morning, he may arrive at distinction **in the evening!**<sup>324</sup>

### Prince Bodhi's exultation

**60** When this was said, prince Bodhi said to the Blessed One:

“O the Buddha! O the Dharma! O that the Dhamma is well-taught!

For, one instructed in the evening may arrive at distinction in the morning;

And one instructed in the morning may arrive at distinction in the evening!”<sup>325</sup>

### Sañjika,putta's thunder<sup>326</sup>

**61** When this was said, the brahmin youth **Sañjikā,putta** said to prince Bodhi:

“Master Bodhi declares thus: ‘O the Buddha! O the Dharma! O that the Dhamma is well-taught!’

But he does not say:

‘I go to bhante **for refuge** and to the Dharma and to the sangha of monks.’

<sup>324</sup> This whole para: *Imehi pañcahi padhāniy'āngehi samannāgato bhikkhu tathāgataṃ vināyakaṃ labhamāno sāyam anusīṭṭho pāto visesaṃ adhiḡamissati, pātam anusīṭṭho sāyaṃ visesaṃ adhiḡamissatīti.*

<sup>325</sup> *Aho buddho aho dhammo aho dhammassa svākkhātātā, yatra hi nāma sāyam anusīṭṭho pāto visesaṃ adhiḡamissati, pātam anusīṭṭho sāyaṃ visesaṃ adhiḡamissatīti.*

<sup>326</sup> On a giver's thunder (to Pasenadi) S 3.24,24\* (SD 44.18). On Pilotikā.gajjita, see M 27,4-7 (SD 40a.5). On the 12,000-word Doṇa.gajjita, see SD 36.13 (2.2).

### Prince Bodhi's refuge-going<sup>327</sup>

**62** “Say not so, dear Sañjikā,putta! Say not so, dear Sañjikā,putta!

Dear Sañjikā,putta, from my mother herself I heard this, **[97]** from my mother herself I learned this.<sup>328</sup>

62.2 There was this time, dear Sañjikā,putta, the Buddha was residing in **Ghosita's monastery** outside Kosambī. Then, my mother, who was with child, went to the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side.

62.3 As my mother sat at one side, she said to the Blessed One:

‘Bhante, my unborn child, whether a boy or a girl, goes to the Blessed One for refuge, and to the Dharma, and to the sangha of monks. May the Blessed One remember him as a lay-follower from this day forth for life.’<sup>329</sup>

**63** There was this time, too, dear Sañjikā,putta, when the Blessed One was residing right here, in **the deer park, in Bhesakalā forest** in Sumsumār,giri, amongst the Bhaggas.

63.2 Then, my nurse, carrying me on her hips, approached the Blessed One, went to the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side.

63.3 As my nurse sat at one side, she said to the Blessed One:

‘Bhante, this is prince Bodhi, who goes to the Blessed One for refuge, and to the Dharma, and to the sangha of monks. May the Blessed One remember him as a lay-follower from this day forth for life.’

**64** Now, I, dear Sañjikā,putta, go for refuge for third time to the Blessed One and to the Dharma and to the sangha of monks. May the Blessed One remember me as a lay-follower from this day forth for life.”

— evaṃ —

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<sup>327</sup> Bodhi's refuge-going is described in these Skt fragments: SHT IV 33 fol 24+28, SHT IV 165 fol 24, SHT IV 180 fol 1-2, and Hoernle frag 149/280R. See (1.1.1.4) n.

<sup>328</sup> *Sammukhā m'etaṃ samma sañjikā,putta ayyāya sutarṃ, sammukhā paṭiggahitarṃ.*

<sup>329</sup> *Yo me ayaṃ bhante kuccha,gato kumārako vā kumārikā vā, so bhagavantarṃ saraṇarṃ gacchati dhammañ ca bhikkhu,saṅghañ ca, upāsakarṃ tarṃ bhagavā dhāretu ajjat'agge pāṇ'upetarṃ saraṇarṃ gatan'ti.*