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(Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1

The 1st Discourse on the Conditions (for Non-decline) | A 7.21 (A:Be 7.23) = D 16,1.6/2:79

Be: **Paṭhama Sattaka Sutta** The 1st Sevens Sutta

or **Satta Vajji Aparahāniyā Dhammā** The 7 Conditions for Non-decline of the sangha

Theme: The 7 conditions for the spiritual growth of the monastic renunciant community

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2019

1 Sutta summary and significance

1.1 SUMMARY

The **(Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1** (A 7.21) is a short teaching on the 7 conditions for non-decline of the sangha, that is, for the spiritual growth of a monastic renunciant community. The Buddha teaches this specifically to the monastic sangha for its benefit.

Like this Sutta (A 7.21), **the Sāran,dada Sutta** (A 7.19),¹ too, contains the 7 conditions of non-decline, but which are taught to the Vajjīs (Skt *vṛjī*), and applied by them for national security and social growth. While the former teaches progress of renunciants, the latter is about social progress.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE

1.2.1 The teachings of **the (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1** (A 7.21) is reprised at the start of **the Mahā,-parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16).² Although the Buddha could have well given the same teaching again as part of his final instructions (D 16), it is more likely that the monks of the 1st council³ put together this set of teachings since they highlight sangha solidarity, which is vital for the perpetuation of the Buddha Dharma after the Buddha has passed away.

1.2.2 **The (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1** is the 2nd of the 7 suttas preserved in the Aṅguttara Nikāya which are included as part of the Buddha's final teachings preserved in **the Mahā,-parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) [1.2.1]. All these suttas centre on the same theme of the 7 conditions for non-decline, except for the last which is on the 6 conditions of conciliation.⁴

2 Welfare of the nation

2.1 Ajāta,sattu

After prince **Ajāta,sattu** (Skt *ajāta,śatru*) had murdered his own father, king Bimbisāra, king **Pasenadi** (Skt Prasenajit) of Kosala and the Vajjīs banded together against him. Ajātasattu first battled his own uncle Pasenadi and won, but later lost in another battle and was taken as prisoner by Pasenadi who, however, freed him and gave him his daughter Vajirā (Skt Vajrā) in marriage. As dowry, she received a village in Kāśī that had been the pretext for the war.

¹ A 7.19/4:16 f (SD 55.10a).

² D 16,1.6/2:76 f (SD 9).

³ Traditionally said to be held at the Satta,pañja cave, outside Rājagaha 3 months after the Buddha's passing: see Cv 11.1.7-1.11 (V 2:286-289).

⁴ For these 7 suttas, see SD 55.10a (4.3.2); also SD 55.15 (1.3.2.2).

During the Buddha's last year, Vassakāra (Skt *varṣakāra*) warned him of Ajātasattu's plans to attack the Vajjīs. The Buddha then expounds "**the 7 conditions for non-decline**" (*satta aparihāniya, dhamma*) on a secular as well as religious level.

2.2 Conditions of non-decline of the Vajjīs

2.2.1 A nation's welfare

These conditions of non-decline of the Vajjīs (*vajjī aparihāniyā dhammā*, D 2:73; A 4:15) keep the Vajjīs prosperous and progressive, that is, they are **the 7 conditions for a nation's welfare**:⁵

- (1) They gather regularly and their meetings are well-attended.
- (2) They gather in fellowship, adjourn in fellowship, manage Vajjī affairs in fellowship.
- (3) They do not promulgate what has not been promulgated, and do not abolish what has been promulgated, but keep to the Vajjī code.
- (4) They honour, respect, esteem, revere Vajjī elders and consider it worthwhile to listen to them.
- (5) They do not forcibly abduct women and maidens of family, compelling them to cohabit with them.
- (6) They honour, respect, esteem, revere their shrines within the city and those outside, and do not neglect the proper offerings previously given.
- (7) They duly protect and shelter the arhats [worthy ones] so that those who have not yet come will come, and those who have come will dwell at ease. (D 2:73; A 4:15)

At the conclusion of this teaching, Vassakāra remarks:

"Master Gotama, if the Vajjīs were accomplished in even *just one* of these conditions for non-decline, their growth is to be expected, not their decline, what to say of 7 conditions for non-decline!

Master Gotama, there is no way that the Vajjīs can be overcome by any war of the rajah Ajātasattu Vedehi,putta of Magadha, other than by persuasion, other than by internal discord.⁶ (D 16,1.5.2), SD 9. [1.2.2.4]

2.2.2 Conquest of the Vajjīs

In due course, however, when the Buddha is in the Great Wood, he prophesizes how the Licchavī would be conquered by Ajātasattu—as stated in **the Kaliṅgara Sutta** (S 20.8). In time, partly because of bad friendship with Vassa,kāra, whom they allowed to live amongst them, and partly because of their own neglect of the conditions of non-decline, they became less united, less diligent. It was then that Ajāta,sattu attacked Vajjī country and conquered it.⁷

⁵ For a survey of each of these 7 conditions for non-decline (*satta aparihāniya dhamma*), see SD 55.10a (5).

⁶ (Underscored words): *aññātra upalāpanāya aññātra mithu, bheda*. **Upalāpana** (from vb *upalāpeti*) (D 2:76,4; A 4,21,1; J 4:469,24'; Miln 1:17,4; Sadd 529,4); Comy explains as "saying, 'Enough with conflict; let's have unity here! Then, offering elephants, horses, chariots, silver, gold and so on in the name of goodwill (~ā nāma alaṃ vivādena, idāni samaggā homāti hatthi, assa, ratha, hiranna, suvann'ādāni pesetvā saṅgaha, karaṇaṃ. DA 522,4). See CPD: upalāpana[a/ā]; DP sv); Johnston 1931:572-575. **Mithu, bheda**, lit, "the creation of bilateral dissension" (D 2:76,4; J 4:-184,23*), cognate with Skt *mithobheda* (see Kern: *Toev* 1.165 & Johnston, "Notes on some Pali words," JRS 1931:-573). Similar confusion between *mithu* (Skt *mithu*, "falsely, wrongly") and *mitho* (Skt *mithah*, "mutually, reciprocally") at Sn 825, 882 (*mithu aññam-aññam*). See OberliesPG 670 (Ann 34a); also DA:A 16 n2.

⁷ See SD 55.10a (1.2.2).

2.2.3 The future tense as historical present

Notice that although all 7 sentences stating the conditions for non-decline are in **the future tense**, they have been translated in **the historical indicative** (that is, the present indicative or simple present) to show that they are, as a rule, always true, and should be practiced even here and now. It expresses the kind of actions we must do, with the sense that when we do A, then B will benefit us. This historical or present usage of the future tense—to highlight the spiritually significant—is common in Pali.⁸

3 The 7 conditions for the non-decline of the monastic sangha

3.1 “THE MONKS ASSEMBLE REGULARLY AND THE ASSEMBLIES ARE WELL ATTENDED” (*bhikkhū abhiñham sannipātā sannipāta, bahulā bhavissanti*)

3.1.1 Rules and retreat

3.1.1.1 The Dīgha Commentary on the Mahā, parinibbāna Sutta (D 16) tells us that the general import of this 1st condition of non-decline for the sangha is, *mutatis mutandis*, the same as that of the first condition of non-decline for the Vajjīs. This is explained in the modern commentary given in the translation of **the Sārandada Sutta** (A 7.19).⁹ If you have not read the former, it helps to do so first before reading this section, since they are both closely connected: the former teaching on the welfare of a nation of community, this teaching here is on the progress of the sangha.

3.1.1.2 The most important assembly for the sangha is clearly the fortnightly conclave for **the recital of the Pātimokkha** for monastics within the same parish (*sīmā*). The recital of the monastic is the life-line of the true monastic going back to the Buddha’s own time. It is both a reminder of the monastics’ renunciation as well as the immediate tasks as members of the spiritual community.¹⁰

3.1.1.3 Another important monastic practice is the observance of **the 3-month rains-retreat** (*vass’-āvāsa*), during which time monastics stay with other monastics within the same monastery or dwelling so that they are able to deepen their fellowship with one another, listen to the teachings, and update themselves on the latest developments in the sangha and the Buddhist community as a whole.¹¹

3.1.1.4 The rains-retreat is also a period for **the lay community** to show their generosity and support to the sangha, to observe the 8-precepts, to listen to the Dhamma more regularly, and keep up with developments in the Buddhist community. The laity plays an important role in inviting the sangha to spend the rains-retreat nearby for their benefit.

3.1.2 Routines and diligence

3.1.2.1 Monastic life is, by definition, a life of simplicity and routine, which is a predictability that conduces to personal and communal learning the Dhamma and practising mindfulness for inner calm and clarity. The Commentary speaks of the role of frequent assembly of sangha members at various level.

⁸ S Perniola, *Pali Grammar*, 1997: §274b. For other example, see SD 36.13 (6).

⁹ A 7.19 (SD 55.10a (1.1)).

¹⁰ Comy mentions these only in passing, prob suggesting the changing conditions in the Mahāvihāra tradition when the Comys were compiled or retranslated from the ancient Sinhala texts

¹¹ On the rains-retreat, see SD 38.3 (1.2.1).

Broadly, in a time without the kind of mass media we have today, monastics had to gather together to be informed of, for example, the extent of the monastic boundary (*simā*) or parish,¹² wherein the uposatha (precept day and Pātimokkha-recitation) and other sangha acts are conducted; hence, dictates the presence of the whole twin sanghas of monks or of nuns.

3.1.2.2 The frequent gatherings of monastics also act as a means of “quality control” for the sangha by way of monitoring reports of monastics who have lapsed in their monastic discipline. For example, the assembled sangha may be properly informed of where monks practise medicine,¹³ or run errands for the laity;¹⁴ or constantly drop hints for donations;¹⁵ or make a livelihood from the flower offerings; and so on. The sangha will then investigate such aberrations and correct them immediately. (DA 2:524,13-20)

3.1.2.3 When the sangha hears news of monastic misconduct elsewhere, a sangha delegation (of at least 2 experienced monks, usually more) will be sent to those places to correct the situation, such as getting them to observe the uposatha and invitation (*pavāraṇa*) ceremonies.¹⁶ Senior monks of the noble lineage (*ariya,vaṃsa*)—ideally arhats—are sent to such places crowded with monks practising wrong livelihood to make them recite **the noble lineage**,¹⁷ and the Vinaya monks will admonish them. (DA 2:524,-20-27)

3.2 “THE MONKS ASSEMBLE IN FELLOWSHIP, ADJOURN [ARISE] IN FELLOWSHIP, CARRY OUT SANGHA DUTIES IN FELLOWSHIP” (*bhikkhū samaggā sannipatissanti, samaggā vuṭṭhahissanti, samaggā saṅgha,karaṇīyāni karissanti*)

3.2.1 Assembling in fellowship

The drum or gong is sounded for a muster which can be occasioned by the giving of an admonition (*ovāda*) or the making of an ordinance of common consent (*katika,vatta*),¹⁸ or the need to repair the roof of the Bodhi-tree shelter (*bodhi,geha*) or the roof of the convocation-hall (*uposathâgāra*). All the monks assemble at once.

They will stop in whatever they are doing—whether it is working on a robe, firing an almsbowl, or some renovation work—and say, “Let me be the first to assemble!” This is called “**assembling in fellowship**.” (DA 2:524,28-36)

¹² On the determining the *simā*, see V 1:106, 108-111; VA 3:1091-1106.

¹³ From the various examples in the Vinaya (V 2:41-144) and the ancient *sīlas* (eg D 2,62/1:69), SD 8.10, and from the respect given to Jīvaka and other physicians, this remark clearly refers to a monk’s practising medicine as a means of livelihood (cf D:R 1:26 n1).

¹⁴ Monks (incl nuns) are not allowed to run errands (incl delivering messages), acting as go-betweens, for the laity, such as kings, ministers, kshatriyas, brahmins and young men (eg D 2,45.3 + 53 + 54), SD 8.10

¹⁵ See eg D 2,55/1:67 (SD 8.10).

¹⁶ The invitation (*pavāraṇā*) to counsel a monastic’s lapses, highlighting the end of the rains retreat: SD 4.18 (2.1.3). Broadly, this may refer to formally seeking the forgiveness of an elder monk, esp before sitting in conclave for the uposatha Pātimokkha recital [3.1.1.2].

¹⁷ The noble lineage (*ariya,vaṃsa*) is, technically, the transmission of the Buddha’s teaching, ie, the Dharma as text and tradition and the lineage of teachers that form the sangha (cf Gokhale 1994:7).

¹⁸ The phrase *katika,vatta* is post-canonical (J 6:541,4; VA 389,10). The word *katikā*, meaning “ruling by consensus” is found in the suttas (M 1:171,28) and the Vinaya (V 1:153,6) [3.3.1.4].

3.2.2 Adjourning in fellowship

During the assembly, none of them thinks, “Oh! This is an extraneous matter. Now, this is what we should be deciding on,” and then leave. They consensually consider, deliberate and act together. Only after such matters have been properly closed, do they adjourn together—this is called “**adjourning in fellowship**.” (DA 2:524,36-525,5)

3.2.3 Carrying out sangha duties in fellowship

Further, when a delegation needs to be sent somewhere to discipline some delinquent monks who are practising medicine, etc [3.1.2.2] or they need to be told to observe the uposatha or invitation (*pavāraṇa*) ceremonies [3.2.1.3], the assembled monks will at once and eagerly volunteer to be that delegation. This is called “**carrying out sangha duties in fellowship**” (DA 2:525,6-18).

3.2.4 Fellowship

3.2.4.1 Finally, the Commentary defines “**fellowship**” (*samaggā*), or technically, “in fellowship.” How do the monastics live in fellowship? When they see a visiting monastic, they do not direct him to some compound (*pariveṇa*) of the monastery, but attend personally to them. Should the visitor be ill, they look for medicine. If he is badly ill and needs looking after, without directing him elsewhere, they attend to him in their own cells. When it is a fetter (*gantha*)¹⁹ for a single monk to give such a hospitality [3.7.1], he seeks the assistance of a wise monk to free him from it. In this way, it is said that there is fellowship. (DA 2:525,9-18)

3.2.4.2 When they see that his robe or bowl is worn out,²⁰ they at once get them repaired, according to what is proper by way of alms (*bhikkh’ācāra, vatta*). Should the visitor need robes because his robes were stolen or lost since a monastery, as a rule, has extra robes donated by the laity (V 3:210-212).²¹

As a rule, monastics do not offer visitors any meals, since they neither cook nor store food. They do not build separate or new lodgings for visitors since this will involve construction and distract them from their personal practice and monastic routine. Moreover, monastics only need to go on almsround, and lodgings are donated or built by the laity.

In short, fellowship in the sangha and Buddhist community centres on hospitality, which will be discussed below [3.7.1].

3.3 “**THE MONKS DO NOT PROMULGATE WHAT HAS NOT BEEN PROMULGATED, AND DO NOT ABOLISH WHAT HAS BEEN PROMULGATED**” (*bhikkhū apaññattaṃ na paññapessanti, paññattaṃ na samucchindissanti, yathā, paññattesu sikkhāpadesu samādāya vattissanti*)

3.3.1 Not promulgating the unpromulgated

3.3.1.1 The Dīgha Commentary gives a few cases of “**promulgating the unpromulgated**” and its contrary, that of “not promulgating the unpromulgated,” from both the Vinaya and the suttas. For the former, it gives the bad examples of Assaji and Punabbasu and their followers [3.3.1.2], and the Vajjī monks of Vesālī [3.3.1.3]. The good examples are those of Yasa Kākaṇḍaka,putta [3.3.1.4], Upasena Vaṅganta,putta [3.3.2.1] and Mahā Kassapa [3.3.2.2]. (DA 2:525,19-526,8)

¹⁹ On the difficulties of translating *gantha* here, see DA:A 23 5.

²⁰ As a rule, a “worn-out” robe is defined as being worn out in at least 5 different places (V 3:242-247).

²¹ See Wijayaratna (tr Grangier & Collins), *Buddhist Monastic Life*, 1990: ch 3.

3.3.1.2 ASSAJI AND PUNABBASU AND THEIR FOLLOWERS. The term *assaji, punabbasuka* refers to a group of excitable and violent monks led by the pair, Assaji and Punabbasu, from the notorious “group of 6” (*cha-b, baggiya*), who misbehaved themselves by habitually socializing with the laity, becoming very popular with them, but they were not welcomed by the people of their own area.²² The **Vinaya** records how they misconducted themselves, promulgating what had not been promulgated, openly flouting the training rules. Hence, they were called “bad shameless” monks.

Besides committing a very long list of offences with the group of 6, Assaji and Punabbasu were also the occasions for the introduction of numerous Vinaya rules and disciplinary actions.²³ They grew flowers, made wreaths and garlands, and sent them to girls and women of respectable families, and to slave girls, lay down with such women, and disregarded the precepts regarding the eating of food at the wrong time, used perfumes, danced, played music, sang, visited shows, and played numerous kinds of games²⁴—violating altogether 18 precepts (VA 3:625).²⁵

Hearing of their wrongdoings from a monk sojourning in the area, the Buddha convened the sangha, and sent Sāriputta and Moggallāna, together with a number of other monks to carry out the act of **banishment** (*pabbājaniya, kamma*), that is, excommunication, against them. When the sangha arrived in Kīṭā, giri and instructed that the Assaji-Punabbasuka monks should no longer dwell there, the latter abused the monks, accusing them of partiality.

Adamant in their ways, Assaji-Punabbasuka and their followers left Kīṭā, giri, and left the order. When the matter was reported to the Buddha, he had the act of banishment revoked “because it had served no purpose.”²⁶ Because of the Kīṭā, giri incident, where the Assaji-Punabbasuka monks refused to obey the banishment ruling, the Buddha promulgated **Saṅgh’ādi, sesa 13** regarding the corrupting of families (V 3:179-184). This is a lesson for us even today not to associate with false monastics who habitually associate with the laity and live worldly lives.²⁷

3.3.1.3 THE VAJJĪ MONKS OF VESĀLĪ. A hundred years after the Buddha’s passing away, the Vajjī monks (*vajji, puttaka*) of Vesālī did not conduct themselves according to the Vinaya. Like Assaji and Punabbasu and his gang, they, too, keep breaking the minor precepts (DA 2:525, 22-26).

The Vajjī monks of Vesālī introduced **these 10 wrong practices**:

- (1) storing salt in a horn (*siṅgi, lona*);
- (2) the two-finger (*dv’āṅgula*) rule (eating until the sun’s shadow has passed 2 fingers’ breadth beyond noon);
- (3) going into another village (*gām’antara*) after having eaten once;
- (4) holding the uposatha separately by monks dwelling in the same boundary;
- (5) approving of an act (*anumati*) when the assembly is incomplete;
- (6) following the teacher’s habitual conduct (*āciṅṇa*);
- (7) partaking of sour milk (*amathita*);
- (8) drinking of new palm wine (*jalogi pātum*);
- (9) using sitting-rugs with fringes (*adasakaṃ nisīdanam*);
- (10) handling of gold and silver (*jāta, rūpa, rajata*).

²² V 2:10-12.

²³ V 2:8-15 (that main account), 2:107 f, 3:179-184, 4:267; VA 3:613 f ≠ V 2:9; DhA 2:108 ad Dh 77 = Tha 994, cf ThaA Ce 2:115; AA 165; V 2:171; DA 2:252.

²⁴ Such as the games mentioned amongst the “medium moralities” (*majjhima, sīla*): see eg **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,49/1:65), SD 8.10.

²⁵ Cv 1.13.1-2 @ V 2:9-10.

²⁶ Cv 1.13-17 @ V 2:9-15.

²⁷ See **Kīṭā, giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1; VA 3:625.

Of these cases of misconduct, the last is the most controversial.²⁸ [3.3.1.4]

3.3.1.4 YASA KĀKAṆḌAKA,PUTTA. Yasa, a pupil of Ānanda, lived during the time of the Vajjī monks of Vesālī [3.3.1.3]. When he discovered that the Vajjī monks had promulgated the 10 points, and that they were publicly asking for **money** from their lay-followers, he publicly condemned their actions. After obtaining the opinion and consensus of various elders from the sangha in different parts of north India, he then assembled a council led by **Sabba,kāmī**, the seniormost elder then.

Known as **the 2nd Buddhist council**, it was a Vinaya recital, and also called the “council of the 700” (*satta,sati saṅgīti*), since it was attended by 700 monks (V 2:307,35-37). On account of the elder Yasa’s key role in calling the Council, it was also called “the elder Yasa’s council” (*yasa-t,therassa saṅgīti*).²⁹

3.3.2 Not abolishing the promulgated

3.3.2.1 UPASENA VAṅGANTA,PUTTA. The case story of **Nissaggiya 15** relates that the Buddha decides to go on a 3-month solitary retreat,³⁰ during which time, only the food-bringer may approach him. The monks of Sāvattihī made a consensual pact or mandate (*katikā*)³¹ that for 3 months anyone who goes to see the Buddha (except for the food-bringer) would commit the offence entailing expiation (*pācittiya*).

Upasena Vaṅganta,putta and his followers, we are told, *unknowingly* approach the Buddha in solitary retreat. The Buddha, however, is happy to see him and his company of well-disciplined followers. Upasena informs the Buddha he only ordains those who observe 3 of the ascetic rules: being a forest-dweller (*āraññaka*), an almsgoer (*piṇḍapatika*) and a ragrobe-wearer (*paṃsukūlika*).³² The Buddha praises him for this.

When the Buddha asks **Upasena** whether he knows about the consensus ruling of the Sāvattihī sangha, he replies that he does not, and famously declares:

“Bhante, the Sāvattihī sangha will be known as having made the consensual agreement on their own. We will neither lay down what has not been laid down, nor abolish what has been laid down, We will practise in keeping with the training-rules which have been laid down.”³³

The Buddha praises Upasena and pronounces:

“Upasena, I allow those monks who are forest-dwellers, almsgoers, ragrobe-wearers, to come and see me whenever they wish.”³⁴

²⁸ Cv 11 @ V 2:301-308. See Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism*, 1958b:126-140.

²⁹ DA 3:898,2; MA 4:114,17; AA 2:10,5; VbhA 431,10.

³⁰ **icchā,naṅgala S** (S 54.11) tells us that the Buddha, while residing at Icchā,naṅgala forest, decides to go on a 3-month solitary retreat (S 54.11/5:325), SD 44.9. **Pārileyya S** (S 22.81) similarly reports the Buddha as spending a 3-month solitary retreat in the Pārileyya forest, near Kosambī (during the 10th rains), SD 6.1 (2.2). Elsewhere, he is reported to go on a 2-week solitary retreat: V 3:68; S 45.11/5:12, 54.9/320 (SD 62.11).

³¹ *Katikā*, “consensus, agreement, pact,” as in *katikā,saṅghāna*, “a standing rule,” which means “adherence, keeping to” (see PED: *santiṭṭhati* 3, “to stick to, to be fixed or settled”; also *saṅghapeti*): *pañca,vaggiyā bhikkhū sakāya katikāya asaṅghahantā*, “the 5 monks, not keeping to their own pact” (V 1:9,6); *sāriputta,moggallāna ... tehi katikā katā hoti*, “Sāriputta and Moggallāna made a pact between themselves” (V 1:39,1, qu AA 1:157,23 = DhA 1:91,5; See SD 38.4 (5.5.2) n.

³² Traditionally, there are a total of **13 ascetic practices** (*dhutaṅga*): **Bakkula S** (M 124) + SD 3.15 (2).

³³ *Paññāyissati bhante sāvattihiyam saṅgho sakāya katikāya. Na mayam apaññatam paññāpessāma paññattam vā na samucchindissāma yathā,paññatam sikkhāpadesu samādāya vattissāmāti.*

³⁴ *Anujānāmi upasena ye te bhikkhu āraññakā piṇḍapatika paṃsukūlikā yathā,sukham mam dassanāya upasam-kamantūti.*

Upon learning of this, **the Sāvattthī monks** are pleased. The monks discard their sitting-rugs (*santhata*)³⁵ and keep to those ascetic rules. The Buddha, upon his return, noticing the discarded rugs all over the place, introduced a rule regarding the rugs and their usage. (Nis 14 @ V 3:230-232)

The Sāvattthī monks had overzealously introduced a Vinaya ruling when the Buddha himself did not see its necessity. Clearly Upasena and his monks did no wrong meeting the Buddha on solitary retreat since they knew nothing about the Sāvattthī monks' ruling. The Buddha accepting the good conduct of Upasena, over-ruled the Sāvattthī monk's consensual mandate, on the understanding that it is the Vinaya that protects the Dharma. We see here the Buddha as a non-legalistic teacher who places the Dharma above everything else.

3.3.2 MAHĀ KASSAPA. One of the Buddha's passing-away instructions was that he allowed the order to abrogate the "lesser and minor rules" (*khuddakānukhuddakāni sikkhāpadani*).³⁶ However, when the 1st council headed by **Mahā Kassapa** assembled, no one—not even Ānanda—knew what the Buddha exactly meant by "lesser and minor rules."

Hence, the elder Mahā Kassapa pronounced this before the sangha:

"Let the sangha brothers listen to me. There are these training-rules of ours connected with the laity, which even our laity know, thus: 'Such and such is allowable to you who are recluses and Sakya sons, but such and such is not allowable.'

If we abrogate the lesser and minor rules, there will be those who will say:

'The recluse Gotama promulgated the training-rule³⁷ for his disciples lasted only until the smoke of his cremation.³⁸ As long as their Teacher lived, they trained themselves according to the training-rules. Now that their Teacher has died, they stop doing so.'

If the sangha sees fit, let it neither promulgate what has not been promulgated, nor abrogate what has been promulgated, but conduct itself according to the training-rules as promulgated."

(DA 2:525,32-536,8).³⁹

On account of Mahā Kassapa's decision and the sangha consensus, we have the basic Vinaya code handed down intact, since the time of the 1st council. Historically, this makes it the oldest legal code still extant today.

3.4 "THE MONKS HONOUR, RESPECT, ESTEEM, REVERE ELDER MONKS WHO ARE OF LONG STANDING, LONG GONE FORTH, WHO ARE SANGHA FATHERS AND SANGHA LEADERS, AND CONSIDER IT WORTHWHILE TO LISTEN TO THEM" (*bhikkhū ye te bhikkhū therā rattaññū cira, pabbajitā saṅgha, pitaro saṅgha, pariñāyakā, te sakkariṣṣanti garuṃ karissanti mānessanti pūjessanti, tesañ ca sotabbaṃ maññissanti*)

³⁵ On *santhata*, see V:H 2:86 n1.

³⁶ D 16,6.3/2:154,16 + SD 9 (12); Cv 11.1.9 @ V 2:287,31

³⁷ *Sikkhapadam* (sg), as a collective n.

³⁸ *Dhūma, kālikam samaṇena gotamena sāvakanam sikkhāpadam paññatam*. "Lasted only as long as smoke" (*dhūma, kālikam*) (DA 2:526,1 f; VA 6:1296,24-26): PED sv. Subcomy & DP take this as alluding to the Buddha's funeral pyre (DAPṬ 163). Cf Horner who tr this as: "At the time of his cremation a rule of training had been laid down by the recluse Gotama for disciples." (V:H 5:399,24-26). See DA:A 25 n4.

³⁹ Found in Cv 11.1.9 (V 2:288,16-26) and recurs at DA 2:592,28-593,3. However, AA 4:19,3 only mentions Mahā Kassapa without recounting this well-known speech (perhaps for this very reason):

3.4.1 Respecting elders

3.4.1.1 The Dīgha Commentary broadly defines an “elder” (*thera*), based on word-etymology, as “firm” (*thira*). More fully, its definition reads: “Elders are those who have reached a state of firmness [stability], endowed with the qualities that makes on an elder.”⁴⁰ Now let us examine what is meant by “firmness” (*thira, bhāva*) and “the qualities that make an elder” (*thera, kāraṅga guṇa*).

3.4.1.2 Firmness (*thira, bhāva*) is explained by the Subcommentary as “having reached the state of irreversible [unfailing] stability in the teaching”⁴¹—this is the spiritual sense. One is also *firm*, psychologically and intellectually, who is emotionally independent and mentally mature, in whom there is a harmonious balance of compassion and wisdom.

This definition may refer to one who has attained **arhathood**, one fully awakened like the Buddha himself;⁴² or to one who has at least attained **streamwinning**, or as aspiring to do. Those who have won the path, especially the arhat and the non-returner, will never fall or fall back (*anivatti*) from their liberated state. Even when the once-returner or the streamwinner were to unintentionally break a precept, he will effectively remedy such a lapse and grow morally in the path.⁴³

3.4.1.3 “The qualities that make an elder” (*thera, kāraṅga guṇa*) are those related to “firmness” (*thira, bhāva*) [3.4.1.2]. **The Uruveḷā Sutta 2** (A 4.22) lists the following 4 defining qualities of an ideal monastic elder (*thera*):

- (1) He is **morally virtuous** in all practical aspects of the Vinaya.
- (2) He is deeply learned in **the Dharma**, remembering it well, having mastered it in theory and practice.
- (3) He easily attains **the 4 dhyanas**, living at ease here and now.
- (4) Having destroyed all the mental influxes,⁴⁴ he is **an arhat**. (A 4.22/2:22 f), SD 94.14

Hence, a **monastic elder** is a fully awakened noble saint (like the Buddha), who is a good meditator, and a morally virtuous Dharma master who teaches the Dharma for the benefit of others. He is the ideal Dharma teacher, the voice of awakening itself; hence, the Buddha’s voice. Broadly speaking, such an elder may be any of the other 3 kinds of noble saint, that is, a streamwinner, and so on.

3.4.2 *Rattaññū cira, pabbajita saṅgha, pitā saṅgha, pariṇāyaka*

3.4.2.1 Besides the well-known term **thera**, “elder” [3.4.1, esp 3.4.1.2], the Sutta also mentions 4 other terms related to those who are worthy of respect, that is, *rattaññū* (of long standing), *cira, pabbajita* (long gone forth), *saṅgha, pitā* (saṅgha father), *saṅgha, pariṇāyaka* (saṅgha leader) [§5 (4)]. These 5 terms, beginning with *thera*, all share the idea of monastic elderliness. Separately, they are listed according to monastic experience and leadership qualities.

⁴⁰ *Therā’ti thira, bhava-, p, pattā thera, kāraṅgehi guṇehi samannāgatā* (DA 2:526,9 f).

⁴¹ *Thira, bhava-p, pattā’ti sāsane thira, bhāvaṃ anivatti, bhāvaṃ upagatā* (DAṬ 2:163,11 f).

⁴² Both the Buddha and the arhats have the same awakening. The only difference is that the Buddha arose first. See esp **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58), SD 49.10.

⁴³ On these 4 noble saints (*ariya*), see SD 10.16 (11-14); (**Catukka**) **Samāṇa S** (A 4.239), SD 49.14.

⁴⁴ The older texts list these 3 “influxes” (*āsava*), ie, those of: (1) sensual desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) existence (*bhav’āsava*) and ignorance (*avijjāsava*). The better-known later list of 4 influxes adds that of “views”: (*ditṭh’āsava*) as the 3rd influx. These are also known as the 4 floods (*ogha*) or yokes (*yoga*). See D 16,10.4 n (SD 9); SD 30.3 (1.4.2).

Technically, **seniority** (*rattaññū*) or monastic sangha age is measured in “rains” (*vassa*), after the number of rain-retreats properly observed by a monastic—this is a reminder to monastics to diligently observe the rains-retreat, not merely to pilfer its benefits [3.1.1.3]. Special respect is shown especially to monastics who have “**long gone forth**” (*cira, pabbajita*), clearly a term applied to the seniormost sangha members, such as the 80 great elders [3.4.2.2 (2)]

The term “**sangha father**” (*saṅgha, pitā*) is not an institutional title but an affective one, one suffused with lovingkindness. The Buddha, admonishing monastics to tend to sick colleagues, famously declares:

“Bhikshus, you have no mother, you have **no father**, who might tend to you. If you, bhikshus, do not tend to one another, then who is there who will tend to you?

Whoever, bhikshus, would tend to me, he would tend to the sick.”

(Mv 8,26,3 @ V 1:302,6-20)

In the same section of the Vinaya, the Buddha exhorts the monks, especially preceptors or teachers and their pupils to treat one another in a compassionate parent-child manner. Indeed, the spirit of renunciation is that of growing out of the *biological family* and unconditionally embracing sangha members and society as a **universal spiritual family**. The teaching on rebirth further extends this familial networking into the immemorial past, throughout samsara.⁴⁵

Even a spiritual family should have a head, a parent-figure, a harmonious synthesis of fatherly wisdom and motherly compassion, an animus-anima balance, as it were. Such a quality should characterize both the “sangha father” and the “**sangha leader**” (*saṅgha, pariṇāyaka*). This is especially true for the latter since he is the wisest and most capable of the seniormost elders whose counsel is often consulted and valued. [3.4.3]

3.4.2.2 The commentator Dhammapāla speaks of **3 kinds of arhat disciples**, that is,

- (1) **the foremost disciples** (*agga, sāvaka*), namely, Sāriputta and Moggallāna;
- (2) **the great disciples** (*mahā, sāvaka*), of which there are 80, as listed by Dhammapāla;⁴⁶ and
- (3) **the ordinary disciples** (*pakati, sāvaka*), who are the hundreds of thousands arhats.

(1) The story of how **the 2 foremost disciples** (*agga, sāvaka*), Sāriputta and Moggallāna, experienced spiritual urgency (*sarṁvega*) and discovered the Buddha Dhamma is related in the Vinaya and the Commentaries. Like the other great disciples, these 2 chief disciples had aspired to their Dharma roles before a Buddha many lives before.⁴⁷

(2) The term “**great elders**” (*mahā, therā*) applies to the 80 arhats listed above. This list of 80 refers to those senior arhats—including the 1st 60 arhats sent out by the Buddha⁴⁸—who not only have special abilities, especially the 6 superknowledges (*cha-ḷ-abhiññā*), but they were also capable and diligent in managing the sangha, and adept in teaching the Dhamma—many suttas (and the Commentaries) have recorded their teachings and activities.

⁴⁵ For suttas on such extended family relationships, see S 15.14-19/2:189 (SD 57.2-7).

⁴⁶ ThA 3:205,27-206,6 (SD 15.10a (7)); mentioned as a group at Vism 98; DhA 1:14.

⁴⁷ **Vinaya** (Mv 1.23-24 @ V 1:39,23-43,7); AA 1:148-161; DhA 1.8/1:83-114; J 1:2,13-85,24. See Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2013 ch 5.

⁴⁸ Mv 1.11 (V 1:20 f). They are the 1st 11 great disciples (incl Yasa’s 54 friends): see SD 15.10a (7). See also **The great commission** (SD 11.2).

(3) The term “**ordinary elders**” (*pakati,sāvaka*) refers to the arhats not listed amongst the 80. Among them are the “group of 30 fortunate youths” (*tiṃsa,matta bhadda,vaggiya sahayaka*). In this category are all the other arhats not in the list of 80.

The Majjhima Commentary (on the Dīgha,nāka Sutta, M 74) tells us that **1250 full-fledged arhats**, all ordained by the Buddha himself (by the *ehi-bhikkhu* formula)⁴⁹ gathered unannounced before him on the full-moon day of the month of Māgha (January-February) for what is known as **the 1st Māgha Pūjā**.⁵⁰

A gathering of the same number of monks is also mentioned in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2). This clearly shows that the event occurred late in the Buddha’s ministry when Ajāta,sattu was king and came himself to visit the Buddha and was taught the Dhamma.⁵¹

Often, too, the suttas mention **500 monks** following the Buddha on his Dhamma tours. We are not told, however, whether all of them are arhats (which is unlikely), nor what their names are. Such an entourage would probably include many monks who are non-arhats. It is likely, however, that they may include well known elders such as Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Anuruddha, Revata and Ānanda and their disciples—as mentioned in **the Mahā Go,siṅga Sutta** (M 32).⁵²

3.4.2.3 Throughout the Buddha’s life, there was **no sangha hierarchy**. The Buddha merely recognizes the special abilities of individual monk disciples (*sāvaka bhikkhu*), nun disciples (*sāvika bhikkhuni*), layman disciples (*sāvaka upāsaka*) and laywoman disciples (*sāvika upāsikā*), calling them “**the foremost**” (*etad agga*) in their respective special abilities or fields in their own assembly in the noble sangha.⁵³ Here are some examples:

Añña Koṇḍañña	foremost of monk disciples in <u>seniority</u>	<i>rattaññūnam</i>
Sāriputta	foremost of monk disciples with <u>great wisdom</u>	<i>mahā,paññānam</i>
Mahā Moggallāna	foremost of monk disciples with <u>psychic powers</u>	<i>iddhimantānam</i>
Mahā Kassapa	foremost of monk disciples in <u>ascetic practices</u>	<i>dhūtavādānam</i>
Ānanda	foremost of monk disciples with <u>great learning</u>	<i>bahu-s,sutānam</i>
Mahā Pajāpatī Gotami	foremost of nun disciples in <u>seniority</u>	<i>rattaññūnam</i>
Khemā	foremost of nun disciples with <u>great wisdom</u>	<i>mahā,paññānam</i>
Uppalavaṇṇā	foremost of nun disciples with <u>psychic powers</u>	<i>iddhimantānam</i>
Tapassu and Bhallika	foremost of layman disciples <u>the first to go for refuge</u>	<i>paṭhamam saraṇam gacchantānam</i>
the houselord Sudatta		
Anātha,piṇḍika	foremost of layman disciples among <u>donors</u>	<i>dāyakānam</i>
the houselord Citta		
of Macchika,saṇḍa	foremost of layman disciples among <u>Dharma-speakers</u>	<i>dhamma,kathikānam</i>
Sujātā Senāni’s daughter	foremost of laywoman disciples <u>the first to go for refuge</u>	<i>paṭhamam saraṇam gacchantīnam</i>
Uttarā Nanda’s mother	foremost of laywoman disciples who are meditators	<i>jhāyīnam</i>

⁴⁹ On the “come, O monk” going-forth (*ehi,bhikkhu pabbajjā*), see SD 45.16 (1.2).

⁵⁰ SD 16.1 (6); SD 45.16 (1.4).

⁵¹ D 2,8/1:48 (SD 8.10).

⁵² However, there is no mention of the number of monks present. It should also be noted that the elder Ānanda is only a streamwinner, and not yet an arhat: M 32/1:212-219 (SD 44.12).

⁵³ 47 foremost monks (A 1.14.1-4/1:23-25); 13 foremost nuns (A 1.14.5/1:25); 10 foremost laymen (A 1.14.6/1:25 f); 10 foremost laywomen (A 1.14.6/1:26); totaling 80 foremost disciples (from the 4 assemblies of noble saints).

Nakula,mātā

foremost of laywoman disciples who are intimate

vissāsikānaṃ

Further, in recognition of the special abilities of a few leading elders, the Buddha gives them sobriquets or nicknames. **Sāriputta**, for example, is called the “general of the Dharma” (*dhamma, senāpati*),⁵⁴ since he looks after the sangha as the Buddha’s right-hand monk, and **Ānanda** is the “treasurer of the Dharma” (*dhamma, bhaṇḍāgārika*),⁵⁵ on account of his skill and diligence in remembering and passing on the Buddha’s teaching.

3.4.3 Ways of showing respect

3.4.3.0 The Sutta uses 4 verbs regarding our proper attitude to sangha elders, that is: **to honour** (*sakkarissanti*), **respect** (*garuṃ karissanti*), **esteem** (*mānessanti*), and **revere** (*pūjessanti*) them. These verbs form a common stock phrase,⁵⁶ which, in the 3rd person singular present tense (transitive) is: *sakkaroti garu, karoti maneti pūjeti*, “he honours, respects, esteems, reveres” (someone or something).⁵⁷ This may be read as a string of synonyms (common in the Pali oral tradition).⁵⁸

In fact, the meanings of the other 3 verbs are all found in **sakkaroti**, meaning “to respect, esteem, revere.” It is important to understand such overlappings are common in Pali synonyms. The significance here is to give us the “full flavor” of a Pali text, especially those of the suttas.

Hence, we must, as a rule, see this **polysemy**, and where we should not impose the technicality or fixedness of word and expressions often found in English and other modern languages.⁵⁹ Such Pali words have their own nuances which depend on a teacher’s learning and skill to tease out and explain for a better grasp of the Dharma.

3.4.3.1 Sakkaroti (*sat*, “good, such” or *saṃ*, “complete” + √KR, to do), literally means “to fully treat as such,” that is, to accept others as they are; that is, to see the good in others, or their potential for good—this is essentially the meaning of the verb “to honour” another. Hence, when we honour an elder (*thera*), we also respect that he is one “of long standing” (*rattaññū*) and other special qualities.

“**Honour**” is put first because we can see it as pregnant with all the good senses of the other verbs in the stock passage. Hence, to properly honour another, especially an elder, is to cultivate **lovingkindness** in our hearts, our speech and our actions, openly or in private, expressed or unexpressed. In other words, this is an expression of joy that we are in the presence or accessibility of one who knows the Dharma and practises it—a living spiritual exemplar.

From *sakkaroti*, we get the important adverb **sakkacca**,⁶⁰ which basically means “respectfully,” but implies “thoroughly, carefully, duly, zealously.” It often modifies the verb *upaṭṭhahati* (*upa*, “near” + *tiṭṭhati*, “to stand”), “to attend, look after, serve (with due honour), to nurse (in sickness).”⁶¹ This proper

⁵⁴ Tha 1083; ThaA 2:101, 3:95; Ap 2.229/1:31; ApA 236.

⁵⁵ SA 1:292; AA 3:298; DhA 3:250; UA 185; ApA 287.

⁵⁶ *Sakkarissanti garuṃ karissanti mānessanti pūjessanti*, 3 pl fut D 2:74, 75, 77, 3:44, 46; A 2:240, 4:16x2, 19, 20, 21; J 1:341, 22'. For aor *sakkarimsu garuṃ karimsu mānesuṃ pūjesuṃ*: V 2:23 *na ...*; DA 1:164, 256; PvA 54.

⁵⁷ *Sakkaroti ... pūjeti*, 3 sg pres D 1:91, 117, 2:138, 3:84; M 1:126, 235; A 3:77x5, 4:265, 268. For details: DP: *garu-karoti*.

⁵⁸ As a memory aid or attention register (to hold the audience’s attention should one miss the leading words).

⁵⁹ In Pali, where words and ideas may have multiple meanings that apply simultaneously: SD 1.1 (4.4.5); SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2; 2.2); SD 54.3b (2.1.1.4).

⁶⁰ Skt *satkṛtya*. Orig a gerund (verbal n) of *sakkaroti*. The form *sakkaccaṃ* is old and common: V 4:190, 295; D 2:356 f; S 4:314; M 3:24 *sakkacca, dāna*; S 2:417, 4:392; Tha 1054; Dh 392; J 1:480.

⁶¹ V 1:50, 302, 4:326; M 3:25; S 1:167; A 3 :94, 5:72; Sn 82 = 481; J 1:67, 262, 4:131, 5:396. See SD 51.12 (1.1.1.3 f).

social decorum entails that we should welcome elders and guests, and treat them with **hospitality** whenever we meet them, especially in our own dwellings or homes. [3.4.4.1]

3.4.3.2 *Garuṃ karoti* or *garu, karoti* (literally, “to make heavy”) means “to take one seriously,” on account of the good that the person is or can be. *Garu* is both an adjective (heavy) and a noun (heaviness): one who is “respectable” (adj) (*garu*) (adj) carries that “burden/weight of respect (n)” (*garu-ṭ, ṭhāniya*), and we should show them due respect (*gāra* or *gāravatā*).⁶²

Occasionally, we see the word *guru* used for one who is given such respect, especially as a teacher. This, however, is rare in the suttas and Vinaya, but more common in post-canonical works. “Guru” has today taken a rather dark undertone, implying an amoral, cultish, exploitative Tartuffe.⁶³

On a positive note, when the unconditional mutual acceptance is reciprocal, there is mutual respect. This is the basis for **spiritual fellowship**. Ideally, this is how we should relate with one another in a family, amongst friends, in a relationship, with friends, with the audience and with those we are communicating. This is clearly possible and natural in spiritual friendship and in a spiritual community, where, as beautifully explained by the 3 arhats, Anuruddha, Nandiya and Kimbila, spending a silent retreat together, as described in **the (Anuruddha) Upakkilesa Sutta** (M 128).⁶⁴

Hence, in a **true sangha** (monastic community), elders “heavy” with the weight of experience and compassion uplift us, inspiring in us love and joy: love from the peaceful parenting presence; joy from the living skills we can learn from them. Despite their age, it is not a burden for us to support them; indeed, *because* of their age, we should happily support them. They are our living past before us, our roots and growth, those who have significantly shaped us into what we are and can be, so that a wholesomely bright future for the Dhamma and our community is possible.

3.4.3.3 *Māneti* (causative of √MAN, to think)⁶⁵ means “to make one think (highly) of, to recall someone (with respect), to highly regard.” Its future tense is *mānessati* (“one will think highly of”). *Māneti* is also derived from √MAN, to honour—this is a synonym of *pūjeti*, “to revere” [3.4.3.4], which is discussed next. Here, then, we will only discuss *māneti* in the sense of “to highly regard.”

The elders are **highly regarded**, and rightly so, for at least 3 good reasons:

- (1) they have lived more years than most renunciants (*pabbajita*) in the Dhamma: they are valued for their *experience*;
- (2) they have great learning: they are valued for their *wisdom*;
- (3) they are arhats or noble saints: they are valued as spiritual exemplars, since they are *fully awakened* (like the Buddha) or are farther up the noble path.

⁶² *Gāra* (Skt *gaurava*): V 2:168,34, 5:92,4; D 3:284,25; A 4:97,5; Tha 278. The 6 objects of *gāra*: *sattari* (*bud-dhe*) *dhamme* *saṅghe* *sikkhāya* *appamāde* *paṭisanthāre*: called the “6 conditions of non-decline” in **Aparihāna S 1+2** (A 6.32+33, SD 72.9; V 5:92 = D 3:244), SD 37.11 (1-7). Set of 7 with *samādhismim* as no. 5: A 7.56/4:84 (SD 106.14). ***Gāravatā*** (respect): set of 6 for *satthu~ dhamma~ saṅgha~ sikkhā~ appamāda~ paṭisanthāra~* (A 6.32/3:330 f); another 6: *satthu~ dhamma~ saṅgha~ sikkhā~ sovassatā~ kalyāṇa, mittatā~* (A 6.69/423 f), SD 64.19. Set of 7, with nos. 5-7 as *samādhi~ hiri~ ottappa~* (A 7.32/4:28 f); another 7 (like A 6.69), with *samādhi~* as no. 5 (in place of *sovassatā*) (A 7.33/4:29 f).

⁶³ Sadly, *guru*, on account of its abuse by sectarian and cultish Gurus of our times, has an insidious connotation of one who misuses faith and knowledge to exploit others in profoundly immoral ways, such as the abuse of power, the use and misuse of wealth, and sexual misconduct. On a psychology of the unwholesome aspects of Guru relationship, see **The Three Roots, Inc** (SD 31.12); on the social effects of **Bad friendship**: SD 64.17.

⁶⁴ M 128,11-13/3:156 (SD 5.18).

⁶⁵ *Māneti* has an alt root √MĀN, to honour (Dhātp 593): PvA 54 aor; past part *mānita*.

On account of such remarkable qualities, they serve well as subjects of meditation called the “**recollection of the sangha**” (*saṅghānussati*).⁶⁶ This is one of the 6 “inspiring meditations,”⁶⁷ which are helpful in freeing us when we are stuck in our practice, or to act as a catalyst for good meditation. This is a contemplation on the life and acts of the noble saints of the Buddha. For living teachers and inspiring practitioners yet unawakened who are good exemplars, they, too, serve well as the subject of our *cultivation of lovingkindness*, for our mutual spiritual benefit, that we will aspire to the path here and now.

3.4.3.4 Pūjeti “one will honour” comes from √PŪJ, to revere, worship.⁶⁸ **The Maṅgala Sutta** (Khp 5 = Sn 2.4) says that it is a supreme blessing to “**honour those worthy of honour**” (*pūjā ca pūjānīyānaṃ*).⁶⁹ The Khuddaka, pāṭha Commentary explains “those worthy of honour” as referring to the Buddha, pratyeka buddhas and the noble disciples (streamwinners, once-returners, non-returners and arhats), on account of their being free from moral faults and full of spiritual virtues.⁷⁰

The phrase “**elder monks**” (*bhikkhu therā*) used in **the (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1** [§5 (4)], as is well known in the Pali tradition, is simply a synecdoche (a shorthand) for all those “worthy of honour” (*pūjānīya*), as just stated.⁷¹ In the case of the sangha, this clearly means that monastics should keep to their proper decorum, that is, those with less “rains” (monastic years) [3.4.2.1] should joyfully show their respect to their worthy seniors.

3.4.4 Focuses of respect

3.4.4.1 The Sutta exhorts monastics not only to show respect to seniority as mentioned, but also to be aware of the special attainments and abilities of the elders (*thera*). Such a practice gives monastic juniors and neophytes the benefit of the learning, guidance and inspiration in the “**respect for the training**” (*sikkhā, gāravatā*). The set of **6 kinds of respect** are given in **the Aparihāna Sutta 1+2** (A 6.32+33), thus:⁷²

(1) respect for the Teacher	<i>satthu, gāravatā,</i>
(2) respect for the Dharma	<i>dhamma. gāravatā,</i>
(3) respect for the sangha	<i>saṅgha, gāravatā,</i>
(4) respect for the training	<i>sikkhā, gāravatā,</i>
(5) respect for heedfulness	<i>appamāda, gāravatā,</i>
(6) respect for hospitality [3.7.1]	<i>paṭisanthāra, gāravatā.</i>

Significantly, **the Aparihāna Sutta 1** (A 6.32) calls this sextet “**the 6 conditions for non-decline**” (*aparihāniya dhamma*). They serve well as the focuses of our respect. By “focus” here is meant that we joyfully bear them in mind or hold them in our heart, our speech and our actions. **The Aparihāna Sutta 2** (A 6.33) tell us that the faith and moral virtue inspired by such respect form the basis for our attaining streamwinning.

While the sextet of respect in **the (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1** (A 7.21) stress on the *social* dynamics of the sangha members—living a monastic life of fellowship and diligence—the sextet of the 2 Apari-

⁶⁶ On recollection of the sangha, see SD 15.10a, such as **Aṭṭha, puggala S 1** (A 8.59), SD 15.10a(1).

⁶⁷ On the 6 inspiring meditations, see SD 15.6 (1).

⁶⁸ Sn 316 (pot *pūjayeyya*), 485 (imp *pūjetha*); Dh 106, 195; DA 1:256; PvA 54 (aor).

⁶⁹ Khp 5/3,4 = Sn 259c. **Khp**: Se so; Be Ee Ke *pūjāneyyānaṃ*; Ce *pūjāniyyānaṃ*. **Sn**: Ce Ee Ke Se so; Be *pūjāneyyānaṃ*.

⁷⁰ KhpA 129,16-20 (SnA refers to KjpA). For details, see **Maṅgala S** (Khp 5 = Sn 2.4), SD 101.5.

⁷¹ On *bhikkhu* as addressing all attending: SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1); referring to meditators: **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) n, SD 13.3.

⁷² A 6.32+33/3:330 f (SD 72.9); V 5:92 = D 3:244; SD 37.11 (1-7); explained at VbhA 507. See **Love**, SD 38.4 (5.1).

hāna Suttas help us focus or direct our respect for *spiritual* growth. Both the sextets contain the same teaching with their Dharma dynamics differently arranged: one in terms of our practice, the other in terms of our focuses of respect.

3.4.4.2 For the greatest benefits, the 6 conditions of non-decline of the (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1 should be cultivated with **the 4 divine abodes** (*brahma, vihāra*), which can here be called *the psychological foundations of a good society*, that is, to say, lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity. While the juniors and neophytes (as students and trainees) respect the sangha elders with lovingkindness and gladness—showing respect by way of love and joy—the elders (as exemplars, teachers, counsellors and guides) reciprocate with compassion and equanimity—responding with ruth⁷³ and peace.⁷⁴

3.4.5 Elders as transmitters of teaching and tradition

3.4.5.1 The monastic community is an open society whose members often meet one another or have the opportunity to do so. Buddhaghosa, in his Commentary, suggests that monastics should meet their elders at least 2-3 times a day—this can be excessive and distracting when their daily routine includes Dharma-Vinaya studies and meditation.⁷⁵

However, when we envision a large monastic establishment, it is likely to have morning puja (textual recitation in their main hall), regular classes in the Vinaya and the Dharma, and evening puja. Hence, the monastics do, in fact, congregate 2-3 times daily, besides consulting their elders whenever the necessity arises. Besides such communal practices, diligent individual monastics may also have their own daily solitary practice (*paṭisallāna*)⁷⁶ or personal intensive retreats.⁷⁷

3.4.5.2 Considering the size of a **monastery** of the Buddha’s time and the after-centuries, it is likely that a few younger monastics, or even a congregation of them, would be encouraged to meet monastery elders regularly for instructions. As a rule, it is the elders who order such meetings. The idea here, then, is that the monastics should not miss (not too often anyway) such important sessions.

Such gatherings are vital occasions when the elders transmit not only textual teachings but also accounts of their spiritual experiences, and other useful information related to the monastic life and the monastery itself (such as its history and traditions). (DA 2:526,25)

3.4.5.3 The duties of a monastic can be said to be basically twofold: the first is to train oneself to be a good renunciant whose goal is attaining the path in this life itself [3.5.2.2]; the second is to preserve the Dharma-Vinaya fully intact for posterity [3.4.4.4]. In important ways, these two goals are closely interconnected. Only in being a true renunciant will a monastic have a full taste of the Dharma and reach liberation.

The textual tradition is quite easily preserved since it is a material legacy, but more vital is **the spiritual lineage** which is only “transmitted” by personal transformation, by one’s attaining the path, and not through some institutional certification of “Dharma transmission” or worldly ways of legitimizing “enlight-

⁷³ “Ruth” is an old English word for “compassion”: SD 38.5 (2.3.2.1); SD 48.1 (5.2.1.3).

⁷⁴ On the 4 divine abodes, see *Brahma, vihāra*, SD 38.5.

⁷⁵ Buddhaghosa’s advice may reflect the structured and institutionalized nature of the Mahāvihāra in Sri Lanka in his time, when there was less emphasis on meditation and a growing emphasis on textual study.

⁷⁶ See (**Duka**) *Paṭisallāna S* (It 45) + SD 41.4 (1); *Viveka, ja S* (S 28.1), SD 33.3a.

⁷⁷ The suttas often record how individual monks approach the Buddha for instructions to go on solitary retreat, on account of which they attain arhathood. See eg (**Arahatta**) *Māluṅkyaputta S* (S 35.95), SD 5.9. For a list of such occasions, see SD 51.16 (1.1.4.3).

enment” of later times. There is no basis for such “other”-sanctioned status and hierarchy in the early Buddhist texts. **Awakening** is neither a status nor a statement; it is best described as a state.⁷⁸

3.4.5.4 Proper monastic training, according to the Dīgha Commentary, can be summarized as the 10 bases of discourse (*dasa kathā, vatthu*), the foundations for Dharma teaching and practice, thus:⁷⁹

(1) talk about wanting little,	<i>app'iccha, kathā</i>
(2) talk about contentment,	<i>santuṭṭhi, kathā</i>
(3) talk about solitude,	<i>paviveka, kathā</i>
(4) talk about non-socializing,	<i>asaṃsagga, kathā</i>
(5) talk about arousing effort,	<i>viriy'ārambha, kathā</i>
(6) talk about moral virtue,	<i>sīla, kathā</i>
(7) talk about mental concentration,	<i>samādhi, kathā</i>
(8) talk about wisdom,	<i>paññā, kathā</i>
(9) talk about freedom,	<i>vimutti, kathā</i>
(10) talk about the knowledge and vision of freedom—	<i>vimutti, ñāṇa. dassana, kathā</i>

(DA 2:526,26)

The importance of this decad of discourse in early Buddhist monastic training is attested by the fact that it is found in all the Nikāyas.⁸⁰

3.4.5.5 The vital years of monastic training are the minimum 5 years of **tutelage** (*nissaya*), which is the primary training for the “**new monk**” (*navaka, bhikkhu*) to learn the monastic ropes from a teacher. Those who fail to observe these formative years would surely fail to become a true renunciant despite their appearance. For this reason, too, those who renounce in old age are likely to have difficulty living as a renunciant, since it is usually difficult for them to undergo tutelage.⁸¹

Monasteries (especially forest monasteries) with elder monks experienced in **meditation** are especially ideal centres for the teaching and transmission of the meditation tradition that goes back to the Buddha himself. All the meditations are mentioned, even explained with some instructions, in the suttas. However, relying on the suttas alone for our meditation training is like learning to drive by reading various driving manuals and the highway code! For efficacious meditation practice, we need to get the foundation instructions from an experienced elder meditator.

For those who feel inclined to be stricter in their practice, they may request the elders to teach them any, some or all of **the 13 ascetic practices** (*dhutaṅga*). [3.6.1]

3.4.6 The lotus anjali

⁷⁸ On the *statement* is not the state: SD 10.16 (1.3.2.3); SD 49.5b (4.6.4.2).

⁷⁹ This stock passage on 10 “bases of discourse” (*kathā, vatthu*) are at: **Ratha, viñita S** (M 24,2.3), SD 28.3; **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,12), SD 11.4; **Kosala S 2** (S 10.30,9); **Sekha S 3** (A 5.90/3:117); **Vatthu Kathā S 1** (A 10.49/5:129); **Kathā, vatthu S 1** (A 10.69/5:129), SD 103.5; **Kathā, vatthu S 2** (A 10.70/5:130), SD 103.6; **U** 36,14; **V** 3:21; **Nm** 1:20,-18, 2:472,28; **Miln** 344,29.

⁸⁰ Interestingly, it is not found only in the Dīgha—which is understandable since this Nikāya is more concerned with highlighting what would attract non-Buddhists rather than listing the actual training: SD 21.3 (2.1).

⁸¹ In our times, we sometimes see aged Buddhist scholars turn to the robes *without tutelage*, perhaps, with the notion that their academic status is sufficient, or perhaps they merely see this as a retirement plan. Humane reasons notwithstanding, it would be doubly beneficial should they observe proper tutelage even in the sunset years.

3.4.6.1 Finally, a note on **showing mutual respect**—by way of the lotus palms or *añjali*. The “lotus anjali” is now becoming a universal gesture of peace, of greeting and parting. It is a good alternative to the handshake (dexiosis),⁸² especially when handshakes are known to spread a number of microbial pathogens, scabies and H1N1 influenza.⁸³

The handshake is a common practice going back to ancient Greece (5th century BCE) or even earlier. It is usually connected with the military, where individuals from opposing camps would each offer their weapon-free *right hand* as a gesture of goodwill or truce. It is possible that the “shake” was to try to dislodge any weapons hidden up the other’s sleeves. The left hand, however, remained free to its own devices.

It is not suggested that the anjali should replace the handshake. Either action as a gesture of greeting and goodwill is acceptable Buddhist practice. In fact, the handshake is acceptable, as a rule, with clean hands. Since either of them is only a bodily gesture, there is still the possibility that the mind may not reflect what the hands offer. Morally, when the negative mind is restrained, the lotus-palms done in unison may be the start of common goodwill. Of course, these gestures work best when attended by a heart of goodwill.

3.4.6.2 To Buddhists, the anjali is a gesture of **mutual respect**, solicitation or appreciation, used in greeting and parting (between two or more people). It is characterized by putting our palms together in the lotus gesture (*añjali*, anglicized as “anjali”; or *pañjali*).⁸⁴ **The anjali** (palms together) is directed towards the respected person or object of veneration with the head bowed slightly or deeply. The palms are raised to at least the heart-level or way up above the crown, depending on the occasion and one’s inclination or devotion. When the anjali is made at the end of a Dharma teaching, a puja or a solemn occasion, it is also accompanied by 3 loud exultations of *sadhu* (excellent!).

3.4.6.3 **The anjali is a spiritual gesture**, not a status-related gesture, like bowing before the powerful or royalty. What we are “bowing” to in anjali (whether to an individual, a group or an audience) is both in appreciation of their goodness, and, more importantly, as a **mutual reminder** that we are all capable of self-effort in reaching the path of awakening in this life itself. Hence, when someone anjalis us, we anjali back both appreciating the person’s goodness and reminding ourself of directing our lives closer to the path of awakening.

3.4.6.4 The anjali as a gesture of mutual respect is also a reminder for us in the sangha or lay community to appropriately keep **social distance** from the person we are anjaliing, especially when that person is a renunciant or Dharma teacher. In other words, the anjali also reminds us to cultivate moral virtue by keeping to the precepts. In this sense, the anjali is a spiritual gesture to renounce any unwholesome intentions towards the other party or anyone. Hence, the anjali is a simple yet most meaningful, most beautiful Buddhist social ritual.⁸⁵

⁸² <https://www.history.com/news/what-is-the-origin-of-the-handshake>.

⁸³ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Handshake>.

⁸⁴ V 2:188,27; D 1:118,31, 3:37,13 (≠ V 1:5,23), 163,27; M1:401,17, 2:74,21, 250,16; Sn 325, 566. 573, 1031, p79,2; Tha 460.

⁸⁵ It should be noted, too, that anjali between married couples, partners and the near and dear is also a gesture of unconditional love and mutual joy. Further on *añjali*, see SD 15.10a (1.0.1.6).

3.5 “MONKS DO NOT FALL UNDER THE POWER OF CRAVING, ARISING IN THEM, THAT LEADS TO REBIRTH” (*bhikkhū uppannāya taṇhāya ponobbhavikāya na vasarṃ gacchissanti*)

3.5.1 Lust-free life

3.5.1.1 The 5th condition of non-decline is that of not falling under the power of **lust** (*taṇhā*). For various reasons (like over-eating, over-sleeping, or keeping bad friends), or for no apparent reason (mainly from the latent tendencies) lust arises in us. However, when we mindfully observe this arisen lust for what it is (a passing thought), it will die away. Our task is not to feed it.

Why should we not fall under the power of lust, or stoke it? Lust is so consuming that it wants all our time and everything else. It is time-consuming (*kālika*); it distracts us from what really matters in life. Lust is simply being much ado about *nothing*—literally.

Basically, to feel lustful means to be driven by a sense of **lack**, especially a lack of a pervasive *inner joy*; hence, we are dependent on *external* things. We imagine what we see, smell, taste, touch and feel as *things* (something permanent and desirable). Hence, we try to collect them, instead of just enjoying the moment.⁸⁶ Since we lack a joyful **being**, we try to compensate it with a sense of having, to desire what we have not. Since this is unwholesome, it is attended by *fear*; since we cannot enjoy it for long, we cling to it, we desire to *control* it.

3.5.1.2 We are attracted to things, pleasure and power: we want to collect them. We want to **have** them. When we think we have it, we fear losing it; we fear to *feel* what we do *not* enjoy. Hence, we try to control the situation. We lust for a "**control situation**," where we have only people we love, things we like, fun we can have—whatever *feeds* our lust. We can never have enough of this since we can never really enjoy them.

Lust spurs us to run after things: lust is the running itself. When we actually grasp the desire object, we cling to it. But then, we soon notice that this is not really what we want; we tire of it. So we *run* again: we go out on the *hunt* again, and again. We are so busy running, hunting, catching, that we have no time to enjoy anything. We do not even know how to enjoy pleasure.

We never really enjoy lust because lust deludes us with things (the delusion of permanence) and manyness (dissatisfaction)—in short, with numbers. **Numbers**, ironically, are *numberless*! There is no end to numbers. When we search for numbers, we only see them changing ceaselessly. Hence, our search never ends. These endless numbers are called **samsara** (*saṃsāra*), the running cycle, a hamster running it is wheel.

3.5.1.3 We are reckoned by the numbers that we pursue. Numbers means “manyness” and “measuring.” What are measured are stuck lifeless, mere statistics on the setting-boards and storage systems of collectors and researchers. When we live by numbers, we too become numbers, and are reckoned by others who have their own system of numbering and reckoning; and we are just another statistic in their reckoning. Then, others can caught in these numbers likewise, ad infinitum. This is **unsatisfactoriness**, suffering (*dukkha*).

Only when craving stops do we overcome this unsatisfactoriness. We remove craving by understanding how our body (form) and mind (feeling, perception, formations, consciousness) arise and pass away. With this understanding we are liberated, never to be reckoned.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ For monastics, this means laughing at the arising or lust (it is incongruous for a monastic to be lustful), and smiling with relief when it passes away. For the laity, keeping the 5 precepts, pleasures may be momentarily enjoyed as long as they do not breach the precepts.

⁸⁷ On our being defined by the aggregate we identify with, see SD 31.4 (1.2).

<p><i>Acci yathā vāta, vegena khitto</i> <i>(upasīvāti bhagavā)</i> <i>atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkhaṃ</i> <i>evaṃ munī nāma, kaya vimutto</i> <i>atthaṃ paleti na upeti saṅkhaṃ</i></p>	(Sn 1074)	<p>Just as a flame tossed about by the wind's force, (Upasīva, said the Blessed One, goes out, and can no longer be reckoned, even so a sage freed from his mental body goes out, and can no longer be reckoned.</p>
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3.5.2 Right livelihood

3.5.2.2 The livelihood of the laity is that of exchange and consuming—hence, we have to work for a living, we offer our services or goods for a fee. **The right livelihood** of monastics, on the other hand, is that of cultivating moral virtue, the mind and wisdom.⁸⁸ These 3 trainings are wholesome karma (*kusala, -kamma*) that benefit the monastic, others, and the world.⁸⁹ The laity support the monastic renunciants by giving them offerings because this action generates mutually wholesome karma. The laity learns the Dharma from monastics whose virtuous conduct also set the good example for them. The monastics need not work like the laity so that they can focus on their spiritual training to reach the path in this life itself. In short, the laity supports the monastics out of **wise faith**. [3.7.2.1]

To ensure that the laity has wise faith, the Buddha reminds monastics not to fall under the power of lust with regards to their **4 supports** (*catu paccaya*) of robes (*cīvara*), almsfood (*piṇḍapāta*), dwelling (*sen'āsana*) and medicine (*bhesajja*).⁹⁰ Monastic right livelihood entails that we should use each of these 4 supports reflectively—meaning:

We (the monastics) do not own them; they have been given to us by those with faith and goodness. We use them only as *needed*; we use them with a *purpose*: to stay healthy and ready to reach the path of awakening. This is the teaching of **the Sabb'āsava Sutta** (M 2).⁹¹

3.5.2.3 In a beautiful short discourse, **the Santuṭṭhi Sutta** (A 4.27)—and its Iti, vuttaka version, **the Sulabha Sutta** (It 4.2)—the Buddha reminds monastics of the nature of their 4 supports in these words:

- **dust-heap rag** (*paṃsukūla*) is but a trifle, easily gotten, blameless⁹² of robes (*cīvara*);
- **a morsel of almsfood** (*piṇḍi-y-ālopa*) is but a trifle, easily gotten, blameless of meals (*bhojana*);
- **the foot of a tree** (*rukkha, mūla*) is but a trifle, easily gotten, blameless of lodgings (*sen'āsana*);
- **fermented urine**⁹³ (*pūti, mutta*) is but a trifle, easily gotten, blameless of medicines (*bhesajja*).

⁸⁸ On right livelihood (*sammā, ājīva*), see SD 10.16 (5).

⁸⁹ This 3 conditions are called the 3 points of purity (*ti, koṭi parisuddhi*) regarding our good actions: SD 1.5 (3)

⁹⁰ Fully, the 4th support is “support for the sick and medical requisites” (*gilāna.paccaya, bhesajja.parikkhāra*): V 3:99,27; D 3:130,18; S 4:192,22; A 2:65,18*.

⁹¹ M 2,13-16 (SD 30.3).

⁹² “A trifle, easily gotten, blameless” (*appaṇ ca sulabhaṇ ca taṇ ca anavajjam*). These are said to be “blameless” partly because they are with owners and freely available.

⁹³ *Pūti, mutta*, ie, fermented cow's urine (*pūti, mutta, bhesajja*) (Mv 1.30 @ V 1:58), prepared by the monks themselves; they are buried in the ground. Comy says that any kind of urine can be used: “for, just as a golden-coloured body is called a foul body, even so fresh urine, too, is called ‘putrid urine’” (AA 3:43,20-23; ItA 2:147,17-19). Dhammapāla adds that broken pieces of yellow myrobalan are steeped in the fermented urine (to be used as medicine) (ItA 2:147,19 f). In Ayurveda (traditional Indian medicine), however, gallnuts are used instead. See SD 24.6a (2.3.1.2 (2)).

“When a monk is satisfied with what is trifling and easily gained, this is for him a certain kind [limb]⁹⁴ of recluseship, I say!” (*yato kho bhikkhave bhikkhu appena ca tuṭṭho hoti sulabhena ca idaṃ assāhaṃ aññatarāṃ sāmāññan’ti vadāmīti*) (A 4.27 ≈ It 4.2).⁹⁵

In other words, a monastic living in this way is a true renunciant (*pabbajita*), living as a recluse (*samaṇa*). In this way, he falls not under the power of craving, which fuels rebirth.⁹⁶ He easily reaches the path even in this life itself, and in no long time attains awakening, liberated from rebirth and suffering.

3.6 “MONKS LOOK FORWARD TO FOREST-DWELLINGS” (*bhikkhū āraññakesu senāsanesu sāpekkhā bhavissanti*)

3.6.1 The way out of the crowd

3.6.1.1 By the Buddha’s time, **the central Gangetic plane**, in which he lived and taught, had reached such a level of development, politically and economically, unsurpassed until recent times. The old republics in the outlying areas were quickly being absorbed into the nascent empires, centred on **Magadha**, which would later grow to become the largest Indian empire under Asoka (r 274-232 BCE).

An important factor to the rise of Magadha was its discovery, control and use of **iron** (it was the Iron Age). Iron allowed the kings to have better weapons, chariots, ships and vehicles. This means they had better-equipped armies. The growing political stability and **peace** encouraged population growth, which provided more soldiers and support for the king’s troops. Peace pervaded the kingdom, and with it, trade and prosperity quickly grew.

The numerous villages evolved into market-towns, and these into **cities**, crowded and bustling with people, commerce, communication and learning. The central Gangetic plain of north India, the main arena of Indian civilization of its time, was effectively unified or connected enough for easy movements of people and goods in every direction, even overseas. Traders came not only with their goods but also ideas and religions from Persia and the Mediterranean coasts.⁹⁷

3.6.1.2 The crowded urbanized lifestyle supported the specialization of labour, and there was a common durable currency in the form of punch-marked coins.⁹⁸ This meant that most people could specialize in their occupations (unlike the subsistence economy), which encouraged the exchanges of goods and services. Most of the population thus had surplus wealth and time. Such conditions encouraged learning and exploring beyond the normal social life. With time on their hand, people began to ask all kinds of questions and speculated about society, the world and about themselves.

The milieu is fertile for the rise of great thinkers, teachers—and opportunists and charlatans. It was into this fertile social milieu that **the Buddha** arose amongst the numerous teachers who had all the explanations for all things, or knew just what to say to hold a crowd to attract believers, harvest wealth and live in holy comfort.

Unlike these teachers, the Buddha, coming from a wealthy family and spurred on by a profound existential crisis, provided a teaching that well resounded with the existential questions and spiritual needs of his times that attracted the greatest minds, and yet gave liberating space for the socially deprived and

⁹⁴ Reading *aññatarāṃ sāmāññan’aṅgan’ti* (It 103,6).

⁹⁵ A 4.27/2:26 ≈ It 101/4.2/102 f (SD 104.8); cf Vism 2.30/67.

⁹⁶ DA 2:526,30 f; AA 4:19,23 f.

⁹⁷ It was possible, even likely, that in the early centuries, Christian and theistic influences from the West began to merge with Buddhist ideas in India, Persia and Central Asia, leading to the rise of Mahāyāna texts and traditions.

⁹⁸ The rise of money economy also challenged monastic Buddhism: the Vajjī monks of Vesālī, eg, openly raised funds despite Vinaya rules against it [3.3.1.4]. See J Auboyer, *Daily Life in Ancient India* Tr S W Taylor) 1965:110-113 & L Gopal, “Agriculture, industry and trade: 600 BC-AD 300” in Pande 2001:937 f.

marginalized. Unlike the emergent gurus and sects that rose, flowered and died with the times, the Buddha's teachings spread beyond India to become a global faith, even more relevant today and for the future of humans and other beings—he is, after all, the “teacher of humans and devas” (*satthā deva, manussānaṃ*).⁹⁹

The Buddha's spiritual community is open to all classes, including unclassed. In simple terms, the Buddha gives the most satisfactory explanation of an unsatisfactory world, and provided the best alternative out of the crowdedness and angst of city and empire. He offers a viable alternative to the crowd, the way out of the world: **the path of renunciation and awakening**.

3.6.2 The 13 ascetic practices

3.6.2.1 The Buddha, in his teachings, opens **the middle way** avoiding both the extremes of crowdedness and the loneliness of social angst. Those who practise the Buddha's teaching will, at some crucial point, leave the crowd for the open space of **the forest** or the inner space of radiant peace. The Buddha himself is known to love the spacious peace and natural beauty of the forests, and wherever he or his teaching goes, there arises an awakening radiance.

The Buddha, in his Dharma tours, outside of the rains retreat, often **sojourns** in a forest or quiet space outside the villages and cities. This is the space conducive for deep meditation and monastic training. Technically, by “**forest**” (*ārañṇaka*) is meant a distance of at least 500 bows' length from a village.¹⁰⁰ This distance, in ancient times, was where one was out of earshot of a village or inhabited area, far and free from the madding crowd, but near enough for the monastics to reach by foot for almsfood.

3.6.2.2 Dhammapāla explains how **a meditator** in dwelling outside a village, having attained dhyana (*jhāna*), emerges, and hears the sounds of women, men, children and so on—he then loses his attainment. However, **a forest-dweller** living far enough from human habitation, wakes up to the sounds of animals like peacocks, tigers and lions. Hearing this, he is joyful, and continues to be at peace in the forest so that his practice is fruitful. Hence, the Buddha praises a monk who sleeps in the forest more than the monk who sits, having attained dhyana, on the edge of a village.¹⁰¹ (DA 2:527; AA 4:20)

3.6.2.3 As the Buddha and his monastics became better known and the sangha grew, so did their **monasteries**. Even in the Buddha's lifetime, such monasteries could house hundreds of monastics. They became villages in their own right. The difference was that the monastic village was governed by Vinaya rules and had a daily routine of work, study, meditation and fellowship. Hence, **living the forest life** becomes one of the optional 13 ascetic practices.

In time, the Buddha allows, even encourages, monastics to live **the forest life** (as he and his disciple have done during the 1st period¹⁰²), and to love it, as **the (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1** states [§5 (6)]. For those who are inclined to such ascetic practice, they may request the elders to teach them any, some or all of **the 13 ascetic practices** (*terasa dhutaṅga*), which are as follows:¹⁰³

⁹⁹ On the Buddha as *satthā deva, manussānaṃ*: SD 15.7 (3.7).

¹⁰⁰ DA 2:527,2. The traditional Indian bow was usually about 3 ft long (0.9 m) but might be as long as 5 ft (1.5 m).

¹⁰¹ *Iti bhagavā gāma'anta, sen'āsane jhānaṃ appetvā nisinna, bhikkhuno araṇṇe niddāyamānam eva pasamsati.* (DA 2:527,8-10).

¹⁰² On the 2 periods in the Buddha's ministry: SD 1.1 (2.2); SD 40a.1 (1.3).

¹⁰³ See **Bakkula S** (M 124) + SD 3.15 (2). For technical details, see Vism 59-80.

(1) wearing only dust-heap robes;	<i>paṃsukūlik'āṅga</i>	}	connected with robes
(2) having only the 3 robes;	<i>te, cīvarik'āṅga</i>		
(3) eating only almsfood;	<i>piṇḍa, pātik'āṅga</i>	}	connected with almsfood
(4) faring house-to-house for alms;	<i>sapadāna, cārik'āṅga</i>		
(5) taking only one meal in one sitting (a day);	<i>ek'āsaanik'āṅga</i>		
(6) eating almsfood from the almsbowl;	<i>patta, piṇḍik'āṅga</i>	}	connected with dwelling*
(7) refusing further food (not having seconds);	<i>khalu, pacchā, bhattik'āṅga</i>		
(8) dwelling in a forest;	<i>araññik'āṅga</i>	}	connected with dwelling*
(9) dwelling at the foot of a tree	<i>rukkha, mūlik'āṅga</i>		
(10) dwelling in the open;	<i>abbhokāsik'āṅga</i>	}	connected with dwelling*
(11) dwelling in a cemetery [charnel ground];	<i>sosānik'āṅga</i>		
(12) being satisfied with whatever dwelling;	<i>yathā, santhatik'āṅga</i>	}	connected with dwelling*
(13) sleeping only in the sitting posture;	<i>nesajjik'āṅga</i>		
		—	effort

*Technically, for (8)–(12), only one practice is possible at a time, since practices (8) and (12) are *generic* in that either of them may overlap with (9), (10) or (11). Such choices depend on one's practice and inclination. They are meant to enhance one's spiritual practice and progress.

These ascetic practices are not compulsory for a monastic. He may adopt one or more of these practices, depending on personal inclination and stamina for the sake of a noble ascetic life. In an unawakened renunciant, such practices help overcome defilements. In an arhat, it is a natural lifestyle carried over from his earlier practice.

3.7 “MONKS KEEP UP MINDFULNESS IN THEMSELVES, SO FELLOW BRAHMACHARIS, LOVING VIRTUOUS CONDUCT, WHO HAVE NOT YET COME MAY COME, AND THOSE WHO HAVE COME MAY DWELL AT EASE” (*bhikkhū paccattañ ñeva satim upaṭṭhapessanti: kin'ti anāgatā ca pesalā sa, brahma, cārī āgaccheyyūm, āgatā ca pesalā sa, brahma. cārī phāsu vihareyyun'ti*)

3.7.1 Hospitality

3.7.1.1 We have already noted that **hospitality** (*paṭisanthāra*) is the last of the 6 kinds of “respects” (*gāravatā*) or wholesome attitudes to be cultivated by a monastic, or even a lay Buddhist for the sake of spiritual progress [3.4.4.3]. Good hospitality is also the key element in community fellowship [3.2.4].

Basically, hospitality means keeping our dwelling or home *hospitable*, and also *being* hospitable to guests—showing our proper respect to guests. It is an ancient Asian tradition that guests, especially *those whom we know and who respect us*, are deeply respected, and the house is kept open to them.¹⁰⁴

In this connection, the Buddha is recorded as teaching **the 2 kinds of hospitality**: worldly hospitality (*amisa paṭisanthāra*) [3.7.1.2] and spiritual hospitality (*dhamma, paṭisanthāra*).¹⁰⁵ [3.7.1.3]

3.7.1.2 The (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1 (A 7.21) tells us that “monks should keep up mindfulness in themselves” so that other monastics would visit, feel welcome and at ease, and would stay on to benefit from the host's hospitality [§5 (7)]. Hospitality closes the faulty gap (*chidda*) between the host and the guest, benefit both, the community and others. (DhsA 397,20-22)

There are 2 kinds of faulty gaps that the host should close for his guest, that is, the worldly or material gap and the spiritual gap. **The “worldly gap”**—what the host *has* that can be shared or given away,

¹⁰⁴ For details on hospitality, see **Love**, SD 38.4 (5).

¹⁰⁵ A 2.152/1:93,6-9; Vbh 360,13-17; DhA 4:111,13-21. For details, see DA 527,12-528,12 & DhsA 397,20-399,31.

and what the guest *needs* that is allowable and beneficial. Hence, materially, the host supplies the guest with robes, medicine and other such material needs.

Since monastics have rules against storing up food and perishables,¹⁰⁶ and go for daily almsround, and their long-term dwellings are usually built and donated by the laity, the hosts, as a rule, only provide available *robes, medicines* and such necessities should the guest need any.

3.7.1.3 The “spiritual gap”—what the host knows of the Dharma-Vinaya and what the guest lacks in such learning and experience—the host will happily teach and share with the guest. This, of course, goes both ways should the guest be more learned; then, he will teach the host what needs to be taught. In this way, they close the spiritual gap between them, keeping both host and guest close to the Buddha-Dhamma.

The Commentaries give us various details about such hospitality amongst the monastics. These are given in abridged paraphrase below [3.7.2].

3.7.2 Hospitable monastics

3.7.2.1 Why do monastics need to keep up mindfulness? The avowed purpose of being a monastic is to live a life of renunciation (*nekkhamma*), giving up greed, hate and delusion. This is done through the 3 trainings (*sikkha-t,taya*), those in moral virtue, in mental concentration and insight wisdom. Throughout our life as a monastic we have the moral obligation to be **mindful** of this training—this underlying attitude is known as **right livelihood** (*sammā,ājīva*), one of the 8 factors of the noble eightfold path. [3.5.2]

Basically, right livelihood is the abandoning of **wrong livelihood**, which is resorting to the cloth out of greed, hate and delusion. Such a person is a thief (*cora*) who exploits the monastic life to gain wealth, power and comfort; to turn the monastic life into a tribal sect centering on a person rather than the teaching; and to reject the teachings and practices of early Buddhism, and promotes one’s own views and lifestyle. This is **wrong livelihood** and very bad karma¹⁰⁷

3.7.2.2 Right livelihood, on a personal level, centres on cultivating oneself as **a true individual** (*sappurisa*). To be a true individual, our clear purpose is to diligently strive to reach the path of awakening in this life itself, at least as a streamwinner, if not an arhat. This individuation begins with our being **a morally upright renunciant**, that is, “one whose moral virtue is well purified” (*parisuddhi,sīla*), one who embodies these 4 moral virtues, as listed by Buddhaghosa, thus:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| (1) moral virtue by way of restraint in keeping with the monastic code; | <i>pāṭimokkha,samvara,sīla</i> |
| (2) moral virtue by way of sense-restraint; | <i>indriya,samvara,sīla</i> |
| (3) moral virtue by way of livelihood that is completely pure; and | <i>ājīva,parisuddhi,sīla</i> |
| (4) moral virtue by way of dependence on support. | <i>paccaya,nissita,sīla</i> |

(Vism 1.42-161/16-58; Abhs 9.49/204)¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ As a rule, no storing of food is allowed (V 4:87,1 f: Pāc 38, Bhī Pāc 121); and medicines (*bhesajja*) can only be stored up to 7 days at most (V 3:251,14-18: Pāc 23, Bhī Pāc 25). However, where there are lay workers living in the monastery, they may maintain a store, which exist, as it were, independently of the monks but they may ask the lay worker to prepare the allowable medicine (such as medicine or drinks) for them. “Medicines” or “extras” (*atireka,lābha*) basically refers to ghee (*sappi*), butter (*nava,nīta*), oil (*tela*), honey (*madhu*) and molasses (*phāṇīta*) (V 1:58,21 f; VA 3:690); but may include milk and other allowable drinks (such as Milo).

¹⁰⁷ On wrong livelihood, see SD 10.16 (5.4.1).

¹⁰⁸ On these 4 monastic moral virtues, see SD 24.6a (2.3).

Buddhaghosa's formulation is based on this definition of moral virtue given in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2), thus:

Then, after some time, he abandons all his wealth and relatives, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

(1) When he has thus gone forth, he lives restrained by the rules of the monastic code [Pāṭimokkha], possessed of proper conduct and resort.

(2) Having taken up the rules of training, he trains himself in them, seeing danger in the slightest faults.

(3) He comes to be accomplished in wholesome bodily and verbal deeds, his livelihood is purified, and he is possessed of moral virtue.

(4) He guards the sense-doors, is accomplished in mindfulness and clear comprehension, and is content.¹⁰⁹ (D 2,41-42/1:62 f), SD 8.10

3.7.2.3 On the community level, right livelihood entails *respecting* the sangha as a **spiritual community** dedicated to the Buddha-Dharma. The Commentary to **the (Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1** (A 7.21) explains this respect for the sangha in terms of **hospitality** (*paṭisanthārā*), that is, “the respect that is hospitality” (*paṭisanthāra garāvatā*), the last of the 6 kinds of respect [3.4.4.1].

The Dīgha Commentary begins by explaining that a “brahmacari” or a celibate monastic, should be one “who loves virtuous conduct” (*pesalāti piya, sīlā*). *Piya, sīla* can also mean “one who is habitually pleasant (or loving),” one with joyful faith in the Buddha Dharma. Such a monastic, then, is not only morally virtuous but also friendly—the ideal monastic host. After all, when monastery inmates are immoral and unfriendly, they are unlikely to attract or welcome good monastics as guests.

The good reputation of a monastery filled with virtuous and friendly monastics spreads and attract other good monastics. When they arrive, the hosts go out to welcome them, take their bowls and robes. Then, they prepare seats for the guests, and make them comfortable.

If the guest is a Vinaya-expert, they will invite him to teach them the finer points of monastic discipline and sangha affairs. If he is a sutta-expert, the host will benefit from sutta teachings. A guest who is a Pali master may teach the monks to better their Pali and sutta understanding.

3.7.2.4 If the guest is a good meditator,¹¹⁰ then, the hosts benefit from meditation training. Following such wholesome learning and training, the monks are better ready and skilled to train themselves to attain **arhathood** with all **the analytic skills** (*paṭisambhidā*): those of meaning, truth, language and ready wit. These are interesting tools and insights in the nature and function of semantics, epistemology, linguistics and hermeneutics in understanding the suttas. Having understood how such conditions work, we can free ourselves from their limits, and look within directly into true reality.¹¹¹ (DA 2:527,12-52812)

3.7.2.5 **The Dhamma,saṅgāṇī Commentary** explains respect for the sangha as entailing **the 2 kinds of hospitality**, namely, worldly hospitality (*āmisa paṭisanthāra*) and spiritual hospitality (*nirāmisa paṭisanthāra*). In practical terms, these 2 kinds of hospitality are the closing of the 2 “gaps” (*chidda*), that is,

¹⁰⁹ On this section, cf **Cha-ḷ-ābhijāti S** (A 6.57): “While living thus as a renunciant, having abandoned the 5 hindrances, the mental impurities that weaken wisdom, his mind well established in the four focuses of mindfulness, having cultivated the seven awakening-factors according to reality, he is reborn in nirvana...” (A 6.57.7+10/3:386+387), SD 23.10.

¹¹⁰ Comy does not mention Pali experts and meditation masters as guests, which are added on account of their vital importance.

¹¹¹ On the 4 analytic skills: SD 28.4 (4); SD 41.6 (2.2).

the closing of the “material gap” and the closing of the “spiritual gap,” respectively, that we have spoken about [3.7.1].

“**Worldly hospitality**,” then, is the host’s diligence and compassion in closing the material gap between him and his guest. This is simply being a good host. Having warmly welcomed the guest, we should help the guest with his luggage (if any), show him the toilet if he needs to freshen up. Then, we seat him in a comfortable place and provide him with water, drinks, or outside of meal-times, we offer some medicinal drinks.

If the guest is not well, suitable medicine or treatment should be given. If he has come to observe the rains-retreat, he should be welcomed and briefed accordingly. Similar hospitality should be shown to those accompanying him, including his licitor¹¹² and helpers. (DhsA -398,11)¹¹³

3.7.2.6 “Spiritual hospitality” (*nirāmisa paṭisanthāra*) refers to closing the spiritual gap between the host and the guest. In the evening, or at an appropriate time, the host should approach the guest for teachings in his area of expertise (the Dharma or the Vinaya). For those still under tutelage (*nissaya*) [3.4.5.5], with the permission of his teacher (if present), he may be given appropriate instructions in the Dharma-Vinaya.¹¹⁴

Alternatively, the hosts and the guests may gather at an appropriate time for a dialogue or discussion on relevant topics of the Dharma or the Vinaya. Otherwise, they may update one another on developments in the sangha or related to the sangha. Even in our age of digital mass media, such human communication is vital for the wisdom and solidarity of the community.

These are some examples of how to properly respond to the Buddha’s exhortation: “**Monks keep up mindfulness in themselves, so fellow brahmacharis who love virtuous conduct who have not yet come may come, and those who have come may dwell at ease.**” [§5 (7)]. These are some of the ways for us to practise and perpetuate the 7 conditions for non-decline.

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(Aparihāniya) Dhamma Sutta 1

The 1st Discourse on the Conditions (for Non-decline)

A 7.21

1 Then, not long after the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, had left,¹¹⁵ the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ānanda,

“Go now, Ānanda, gather all the monks¹¹⁶ living in the neighbourhood of Rājagaha in the assembly-hall.”

¹¹² A *licitor* (*kappiya*; fully *kappiya, karaka*, one who makes allowable) is a layman attendant to a monk who receives offerings on his behalf to make them allowable (V 1:245,2, 3:221,26-34, 242,11 (Nis 20), 4:90,28 (Pāc 40); def VA 675,1-677,2, PṭmkA 67,20-68,30): D 14,2.14 n, SD 19 (7.3). This is not mentioned in the Comy. See CPD: *kappiya-kāra*.

¹¹³ For a tr, see DhsA:P 506 f.

¹¹⁴ Not mentioned in the Comy.

¹¹⁵ This refers to the events of **(Aparihāniya) Vassa, kāra S** (A 7.20), where see §16 (SD 55.10b).

¹¹⁶ It is interesting to note that here only the “monks” are addressed but not the nuns who by this time number considerably: see D 16,3.8 f (SD 9), where all the 4 assemblies are mentioned. Either “monks” here is used inclus-

2 “Very well, bhante,” replied the venerable Ananda. He gathered all the monks living in the vicinity of Rājagaha in the assembly-hall.

Then, he approached the Blessed One, saluted him and stood at one side.

3 Standing at one side, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One:

“The community of bhikkhus, bhante, has been assembled. Let the Blessed One do as he seems fit.”

4 Then, the Blessed One rose from where he was sitting, and went to the assembly-hall. He sat down on the seat prepared for him. Seated, the Blessed One addressed the monks, thus:

“I will expound to you, bhikkhus, **the 7 conditions for non-decline** (of the sangha).

Listen well! Pay close attention! I will speak.”

“Sadhu, bhante,” replied the monks in assent to the Blessed One.

5 The Blessed One said this:

(1) “Bhikkhus, so long, as the monks **assemble regularly** and the assemblies are well attended, then, surely, bhikkhus, only growth is to be expected for the monks, not decline.¹¹⁷

(2) Bhikkhus, so long, as the monks **assemble in fellowship**, adjourn [arise] in fellowship, carry out sangha duties in fellowship, *then, surely, bhikkhus, only growth is to be expected for the monks, not decline.*¹¹⁸

(3) Bhikkhus, so long, as the monks **do not promulgate** what has not been promulgated, and do not abolish what has been promulgated, but observe the prescribed training-rules, *then, surely, bhikkhus, only growth is to be expected for the monks, not decline.*¹¹⁹

(4) Bhikkhus, so long, as the monks **honour, respect, esteem, revere elder monks** who are of long standing, long gone forth, who are sangha fathers and sangha leaders, and consider it worthwhile to listen to them, *then, surely, bhikkhus, only growth is to be expected for the monks, not decline.*¹²⁰

(5) Bhikkhus, so long, as monks **do not fall under the power of craving**, arising in them, that leads to rebirth, *then, surely, bhikkhus, only growth is to be expected for the monks, not decline.*¹²¹

(6) Bhikkhus, so long, as monks **look forward to forest-dwellings**, *then, surely, bhikkhus, only growth is to be expected for the monks, not decline.*¹²²

ively for “monks and nuns” or no nuns followed the Buddha on his final journey. It is possible that the texts were edited later (after the Buddha’s passing) to tone down the references to nuns due to external social pressures (where the position of women were lower). A study of the social conditions of India after the Buddha and how they affected the monastics would yield interesting results.

¹¹⁷ *Yāvākīvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū abhiṇhaṃ sannipātā sannipāta, bahulā bhavissanti, vuddhiy-eva bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ pāṭikañkhā no parihāni.* [3.1]. On tr this future-tense sentence in the present tense: (2.2.3).

¹¹⁸ *Yāvākīvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū samaggā sannipatissanti, samaggā vuṭṭhahissanti, samaggā saṅgha, karaṇīyāni karissanti, vuddhiy-eva bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ pāṭikañkhā no parihāni.* [3.2]

¹¹⁹ *Yāvākīvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū apaññattaṃ na paññapessanti, paññattaṃ na samucchindissanti, yathā, paññattesu sikkhāpadesu samādāya vattissanti, vuddhiy-eva bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ pāṭikañkhā no parihāni.* [3.3]

¹²⁰ *Yāvākīvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū ye te bhikkhū therā rattaññū cira, pabbajitā saṅgha, pitaro saṅgha, pariṇāyakā, te sakkarissanti garuṃ karissanti mānessanti pūjessanti, tesañ ca sotabbaṃ maññissanti, vuddhiy-eva bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ pāṭikañkhā no parihāni.* [3.4]

¹²¹ *Yāvākīvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū uppannāya taṇhāya ponobbhavikāya na vasaṃ gacchissanti, vuddhiy-eva bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ pāṭikañkhā no parihāni.* [3.5]

¹²² *Yāvākīvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū āraññakesu senāsanesu sāpekkhā bhavissanti, vuddhiy-eva bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ pāṭikañkhā no parihāni.* [3.6]

(7) Bhikshus, so long, as monks **keep up mindfulness in themselves**, so fellow brahmacharis, loving virtuous conduct, who have not yet come may come, and those who have come may dwell at ease, *then, surely, bhikshus, only growth is to be expected for the monks, not decline.*¹²³

7 Bhikshus, so long, as these 7 conditions for non-decline endure among the monks, and so long as the monks observe and apply these 7 conditions, *then, surely, bhikshus, growth, is to be expected for the monks, not decline.*

— evaṃ —

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¹²³ *Yāvakīvañ ca bhikkhave bhikkhū paccattañ ñeva satirū upaṭṭhapessanti: kin'ti anāgatā ca pesalā sa, brahma, cārī āgaccheyyurū, āgatā ca pesalā sa, brahma. cārī phāsu vihareyyun'ti vuddhiy-eva bhikkhave bhikkhūnaṃ pāṭi-kañkhā no parihāni. [3.7]*