

3

Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta

The Discourse to Gaṇaka Moggallāna | M 107

Theme: The Buddha's gradual way

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1 Summary and structure

§§1-2	Gaṇaka Moggallāna: The gradual training and its parables
§§3	The Buddha's parable of the thoroughbred colt's training
§4	Moral training begins: Sense-restraint
§5	Moderation in food
§6	Devotion to wakefulness
§7	Mindfulness and clear knowing
§§8-9	Concentration training begins: Solitude: bodily and mental; overcoming the 5 hindrances
§§10-11	The 4 dhyanas
§§12-13	Wisdom training: Nirvana
§§14	Closing passages: Parable of the way to Rājagaha: the Buddha as shower of the way
§15	2 kinds of renunciants: the faithless and the faithful
§16	Parable of the fragrant plants: the supremacy of the Buddha's teaching
§17	Gaṇaka Moggallāna's refuge-going

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND PARALLELS

1.1.1 Sutta summary. The brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna (the accountant) visits the Buddha and claims that, as in the most important things in life—religion (learning), martial arts (archery) and the professions (accountancy)—even the building of Migāra's mother's mansion (where they are)—entails gradual training, gradual practice, gradual progress (*anupubba, sikkha anupubba, kiriyā anupubba, paṭipadā*). Even the brahmins' faith keeps to this gradual training. [§2]

Can the Buddha's teaching, too, be described as **a gradual training**? The Buddha's reply is that, of course, his teaching, the Dharma-Vinaya, is gradual, progressive, incremental. Dharma training is gradual just like the way **a skilled horse-trainer** trains a fine thoroughbred colt. [§3]

1.1.2 Chinese parallels

1.1.2.1 The Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta (M 107) has a parallel in the Chinese Madhyama Āgama (MĀ 144)¹ and another in an individual translation (T 70).² The 3 versions agree³ that Moggallāna, in his com-

¹ MĀ 144 (T.2154-505a2). Tr Gautama Saṅghadeva between the 10th day, 11th month, 1st year and the 25th day, 6th month, 2nd year of 隆安 *Lóng Ān*, Eastern Chin dynasty 東晉 *Dōng Jìn* (15 Dec 397-24 July 398 CE) in Tung-t'ing Monastery 東亭寺 *Dōng tíng sì*.

² T 70 (T.2151-355a11). Tr 法炬 *Fǎjù*, in the period of 惠帝 *Huìdì*, Western Chin dynasty 西晉 *Xījìn* (290-307 CE). For Taisho ed: <https://suttacentral.net/ma145/lzh/taisho>.

³ The parallels are MĀ 144 (T1.652a-653c) + T 70 (T1.875a-876b), both of which agree with M 107 in locating the teaching at Migāra's mother mansion at Sāvattḥī. MĀ 144 also agrees with M 107 on the title 算數目捷連經 *suàn shù mù qián lián jīng*, "discourse to Gaṇaka Moggallāna," while T 70 simply titles it as 佛說數經 *fó shuō shù jīng*, "the discourse spoken by the Buddha to an accountant." Skilling notes that Vyākhyāyukti Ṭīkā, D (4069) *sems tsam, si 284a4*

parisons, points to the gradual nature of the staircase going down from Migara’s mother’s mansion, as well as with the gradual training in the study of the Vedic texts, in archery, and in accounting. [§2]

According to the 2 Chinese versions, he also mentions the gradual training given to elephants and horses.⁴ The Pali version, however, only mentions the Buddha as beginning his teaching with the parable of the training of a thoroughbred colt [§3].

1.1.2.2 Another significant divergence of the Chinese versions from the Pali is that, they state that the Sutta teachings are especially beneficial for “young monks who have just come to train in the path” (年少比丘初來學道 *nián shào bǐ qiū chū lái xué dào*), while in the case of the “senior monks” (比丘長老 *bǐ qiū zhǎng lǎo*), the Buddha continues to teach them on how to remove the influxes.⁵ Apparently, the Chinese translations take *sekha* or *sekkha* to literally mean “trainee or learner.” However, as a rule, the term refers to those noble saints on the path who are not yet arhats.⁶

Taking the passage as it is, it is difficult to say whether the Madhyama Āgama translator, Gautama Saṅghadeva,⁷ deliberately simplified the meaning of *sekha*, or was unaware of its meaning here. However, since the independent translator (*Fǎjù*) also seems to understand the term in a similar manner, it is likely that they were unaware of the Pali usage.⁸

1.1.3 Learners and neophytes

1.1.3.1 At this stage, it is useful to understand the practical difference between **the gradual talk** (*ānupubbī,kathā*) and **the gradual way**—the gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress of the Sutta [§§2+3]. In either case—the teaching and the practice—it deepens gradually like the great ocean.⁹ But the former is, as a rule, given to the laity [1.1.3.2], while the latter, to renunciants [1.1.3.3].

1.1.3.2 As a rule, **the gradual talk**—on giving, moral virtue, and the heavens; the disadvantages of sensual pleasures and the advantages of renunciation; as the basis for the teaching of the 4 noble truths

or Q (5570) i 171a8, similarly refers to the present discourse as “the accountant,” *rtsis mkhan* (2000b:341). For THICH MINH CHAU’s remark on MĀ 144, see 1964:32.

⁴ MĀ 144 (T1.652a16); T70 (T1.875a21).

⁵ MĀ 144 (T1.652c13) explains that in these Sutta teachings, “The Tathagata is of much benefit for young monks,” 如來為諸年少比丘多有所益 *rú lái wéi zhū nián shào bǐ qiū duō yǒu suǒ yì*. It adds that “if there are senior monks, elders who have trained in the holy life during the past, the Tathagata teaches them further, namely, the ultimate and complete destruction of the influxes,” 若有比丘長老, 上尊, 舊學梵行, 如來復上教, 謂究竟訖一切漏盡 *ruò yǒu bǐ qiū zhǎng lǎo, shàng zūn, jiù xué fàn xíng, rú lái fù shàng jiāo, wèi jiū jìng qì yī qiè lòu jìn*. T 70 (T1.875c7) similarly says that “the Tathagata is of much benefit to monks who have started to train,” 如來為初學比丘多有所益 *rú lái wéi chū xué bǐ qiū duō yǒu suǒ yì*. It adds that “in regard to elder monks ... who are established in diligent practice of the holy life, the Tathagata ... [leads them] to attaining the cessation of existence and the destruction of the influxes,” 彼諸比丘上尊. 無懈怠住行於梵行, 如來. 至竟盡有漏盡 *bǐ zhū bǐ qiū shàng zūn ... wú xiè dài zhù xíng yú fàn xíng, rú lái ... zhì jìng jìn yǒu lòu jìn*.

⁶ MĀ 144 (T1.652a29) describes the Buddha as teaching the gradual way to “young monks who have just come to train in the path and started to enter this Dharma-Vinaya,” 年少比丘初來學道, 始入法律者 *nián shào bǐ qiū chū lái xué dào, shǐ rù fǎ lǜ zhě*. In T 70 (T1.875b5), it is “monks who have just started to train and recently come to this Dharma-Vinaya,” 比丘初學不久至此法律 *bǐ qiū chū xué bù jiǔ zhì cǐ fǎ lǜ*. M 107 is more explicit: it indicates that the Tathagata, “having received a person to be tamed, he is disciplined thus first” (*purisa,dammaṃ labhitvā, paṭhamam evam vineti*), ie, instructed on cultivating moral virtue. [§3.3]

⁷ The tr was made 397-398 CE.

⁸ On the difficulties that the translators of Indian texts into Chinese faced, see SD 40b (2.6.1). See also (§16) n on translation.

⁹ Cv 9.1.4 (V 2:238 f), SD 56.1 (1.1.1).

—is given to the laity. So long as the laity have not penetrated into some understanding of the noble truths, they remain cultivating and accumulating merits on giving and moral virtue, for the sake of heavenly bliss here and hereafter.¹⁰

With some wisdom, even as laymen, we may develop some insight into the disadvantages or dangers of sensual pleasures, and deepen our wisdom into **renunciation**. We more truly see renunciation as “non-clinging” to the world, that is, our views of our body and our mind, of others and their views, and of the world itself. With some level of liberating insight into the noble truths (any one of them), we begin to actually let go of such views, and begin to actually see nirvana (as a vision, *dassana*)—like the parched man lost in the desert coming to a deep well, and seeing cool clean water in it.¹¹

All this evolve gradually, but the moment of insight into this fundamental level of true reality may seem to appear sudden.¹²

1.1.3.3 Once we have attained the path of awakening as a **streamwinner**, then, the 3 trainings (*sikkha-t, taya*) in moral virtue [§§4-9], concentration [§10] and wisdom [§11], truly begin, in the sense that we actually start moving along the path of awakening, heading for nirvana [§12]. The Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta gives a very brief but compact sequence of the 3 trainings to highlight **the gradual training** to the brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna.¹³

1.1.3.4 The path (*magga*) is for both the monastic and the lay, for anyone who wants to awaken to true reality. For monastics who are true to their vows to keep to the Vinaya and master the Dhamma, upon cultivating mindfulness and dhyana, will attain **arhathood** in this life itself. Even when their meditation may not be strong enough, they easily attain **streamwinning** in this life when they cultivate constant mindfulness, and habitually reflect on impermanence.

For **the lay practitioner**, involved with mundane livelihood, running a family (or not), enjoying sensual pleasures (in keeping with the 5 precepts), it is difficult to attain dhyana (a deep meditation that transcends all bodily experiences, reaching a purely mental state).

1.1.3.5 The key reason **why arhathood seems difficult, even impossible, today**, is our inability to attain dhyana with right view, that is, in keeping with the Vinaya and the Dharma.¹⁴ Of course, we may include laziness (taking the cloth as a career, resorting to the robes as a livelihood) and wrong views (giving priority to academic learning), as amongst various “modern” reasons for difficulty of attaining dhyana as taught by the Buddha.

When we see moral virtue, meditation and wisdom as academic subjects, then, they are measured and qualified by academicians concerned not with actual spiritual states that we can attain, but as controvertible **statements** to be defined, defended, debunked, in keeping with the secular standards, limitations and rewards of scholarship.

Then, we only have a scholar’s word-based worldly Buddhism; not a profoundly, radically, transforming experience of a Dharma-spirited life of renunciation of the historical Buddha. To truly awaken, or even to live a life leading to the path of awakening, we must accept and experience that Buddha Dharma just as it is, not as the world sees and measures it.

¹⁰ For details on the gradual talk, see SD 56.1 (3).

¹¹ On this parable of the thirsty man and the well, see **(Nidāna) Kosambī S** (S 12.68/2:119), SD 70.11.

¹² See SD 56.1 (6.3.1.4).

¹³ The *classic* detailed 3 trainings sequence is found, eg, in **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,43-99), SD 8.10, and in all the 13 suttas of the “chapter on morality” (*sīla-k, khandha, vagga*), the very 1st chapter of the Dīgha Nikāya.

¹⁴ See SD 33.1b (5.2).

1.2 SUTTA STRUCTURE

1.2.1.1 The first half of the **Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta** (M 107) significantly deals with “the gradual training, gradual practice, gradual progress” (*anupubba, sikkhā anupubba, kiriyā anupubba, paṭipadā*) (M 107,1-11). M 107 opens with the brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna remarking to the Buddha that both the Buddha and the brahmins seem to follow the gradual training—as in study, mantra learning, archery and counting. He asks the Buddha about the gradual training in the Buddha’s teaching. The rest of the Sutta records the Buddha’s reply. [2.1.1.2]

1.2.1.2 In the **Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta**, the Buddha only briefly mentions the parable of thoroughbred colt (explained in full in the **Bhaddāli Sutta**, M 65)¹⁵ [§3.2], after which he elaborates, in sequential terms, on how he trains a person, in cultivating these qualities and practices:

- (1) moral virtue (the precepts) (to refine his bodily actions and speech);
- (2) sense-restraint (directing the senses away from unwholesome mental objects to wholesome ones);¹⁶
- (3) moderation in food (eating mindfully and just enough for health and Dharma practice);¹⁷
- (4) wakefulness (including walking meditation alternating with restful sleep);¹⁸
- (5) mindfulness and clear knowing (wholesomely keeping the mind fully in the present and wisely examining our thoughts and emotions);
- (6) sitting meditation (to clear the mind of the mental hindrances¹⁹ for the attainment of dhyana);
- (7) the trainee then goes on to attain final knowledge (*aññā*), that is, arhathood.

The training sequence is clearly based on **the 3 trainings**: those of moral virtue (*sīla*), followed by mental concentration (*samādhi*) (that is, meditation), and finally the practitioner gains wisdom leading to “right final knowledge” (*samma-d-aññā*), that is, arhathood. [§§1-11]

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¹⁵ M 65,3 (SD 56.2).

¹⁶ For practical teaching on sense-restraint, see **Nimitta and anuvyañjana** (SD 19.14).

¹⁷ *Bhojane mattaññutā*, see **Nanda S** (A 8.9/4:166-168).

¹⁸ On this, and most of the other trainings listed here (in this sentence), see also **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,4-9/1:56 f), SD 13.3.

¹⁹ The 5 mental hindrances are sensual lust, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt: **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta

The Discourse to Gaṇaka Moggallāna

M 107

[1] 1 Thus have I heard.

The gradual training

1.2 At one time, the Blessed One was staying in **Migāra’s mother’s mansion** in the Eastern Park outside Sāvattthī.

1.3 Then, the brahmin **Gaṇaka Moggallāna** [the accountant] went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and cordial talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the Blessed One:

2 “Master Gotama, in this mansion of Migāra’s mother, there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress,²⁰ that is, down to the last step of the staircase.²¹

2.2 Among the **brahmins**, too, there can be seen *gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress*, that is, in learning.²²

2.3 Among **archers** too, *there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress*, that is, in archery.

2.4 And among **accountants**²³ like us, too, who earn our living by counting,²⁴ *there can be seen gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress*, that is, in calculation.

For, when we get an **apprentice**, first we make him count: one one, two twos, three threes, four fours, five fives, six sixes, seven sevens, eight eights, nine nines, ten tens; and we make him count a hundred, too.

2.5 Now is it also possible, Master Gotama, to describe *gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dharma-Vinaya* [teaching and discipline[?]] [2]

THE PARABLE OF THE THOROUGHbred COLT

3 “It is possible, brahmin, to describe gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress in this Dharma-Vinaya.

²⁰ *Anupubba, sikkhā anupubba, kiriya anupubba, paṭipadā* [1.1.3.1].

²¹ “Down to the last step of the staircase,” *yāva pacchimā sopāna, kaḷevarā*; M 107/3:1,10, *pacchimā sopāna, kaḷevara*; Ce *sopāna, kaḷebara*; V 2:128,7 *sopāna, kaliṅgarā*. For a similar parable, see **Kiṭṭhā, giri S** (M 70,22/1:479), which then gives the 12 step discipleship passage (M 70,23), SD 11.1. **Bodhi Rāja, kumara S** (M 85,5/2:92,22), prince Bodhi spreads white cloth all over the floor of the newly built palace Kokanada right down to the “last step of the staircase.” MĀ 144 (T1.652a15) + T 70 (T1.875120 adds that the staircase has only 4 steps. Comy: It is not possible to build a 7-storey mansion in a single day. Once the site is cleared, from the time the foundation is laid until the painting work is finished, there is gradual progress (MA 4:69,5-9).

²² *Ajjhena* = *ajjjhayana* (Skt *adhyayana*), “reading, learning (by heart), studying (the Vedas by reciting them)”; an analogy by Gaṇaka Moggallāna himself. Comy: One is not able to learn the 3 Vedas in just a day (MA 4:69,9-11; cf J 5:10). Cf (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99,9/2:199) where even after 7 generations, not a single teacher or teacher’s teacher had realized “the making of merit, the accomplishing of the wholesome,” by way of truth, asceticism, celibacy, study and generosity (SD 38.6).

²³ He is called Moggallāna the accountant (*gaṇaka moggallāna*).

²⁴ “Counting,” *gaṇanā*, listed amongst the “arts” (*sippa*) at M 1:85; U 31 f. See also D 1:11; V 1:77 = 4:128; Miln 59, 78. See V:H 2:176 n5.

3.2 Just as, brahmin, when a **clever horse-trainer** obtains a fine thoroughbred colt, he first makes him get used to wearing the bit, and afterwards trains him further,²⁵

3.3 even so when the Tathagata finds a person to be tamed, he first disciplines him,²⁶ thus:

‘Come, bhikshu, **be morally virtuous**, restrained with the restraint of the Pātimokkha, be perfect in conduct and resort, and fearing [seeing danger in] the slightest fault, train by undertaking the training-rules.’²⁷

TRAINING IN MORAL VIRTUE

Sense-restraint

4 When, brahmin, the monk is *morally virtuous, restrained with the restraint of the Pātimokkha, accomplished in conduct and resort, fearing the slightest fault, trains by undertaking the training-rules*, then the Tathagata disciplines him further:

‘Come, bhikshu, **guard the sense-doors**.’²⁸

²⁹(1) Here, bhikshus, a monk, having seen a form with the eye, grasps neither its sign nor its details.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure³⁰ may overwhelm him—for that reason, he keeps himself restrained.

²⁵ Only the 1st step of horse-training is alluded to here. The Buddha describes the training in full in **Bhaddāli S** (M 65,33/1:446), SD 56.2.

²⁶ Unlike the specific instruction the Buddha gives the learner (*sekha*) here, the Chin versions are less specific [1.1.2.2 n].

²⁷ Both M 107 and its Chin parallels (MĀ 144 @ T1652b1; T 70 @ T1.875b6) present moral training as the basis for the gradual path. But they show different emphases. M 107 highlights the importance of carefully keeping the rules, whereas MĀ 144 + T 70 stress on the purpose of the rules in bodily, verbal and mental purification. For a comparison of these training-factors in the 3 versions: Analayo 2011:619. A similar difference in emphasis between the parallels is seen in **Ākaṅkheyya S** (M 6,20): *sampanna, sīlā ... viharatha ... iti yan taṃ vuttam, idam etaṃ paṭicca vuttam* (M 1:36,4), SD 56.1; cf (**Dasaka**) **Sāriputta S** (A 10.7/5:133,5), SD 53.19.

²⁸ This passage on guarding the sense-doors recurs in **Sekha S** (M 53,8), SD 21.14. For a study of this practice, see **Nimitta and anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14: for refs on its occurrences: (1.1.2).

²⁹ *Na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuvyañjana-g, gāhī*, lit “he is not one who grasps at a sign, he is not one who grasps at a detail (feature).” Comys say that “**sign**” (*nimitta*) here refers to a grasping arising through one’s sensual lust (*chanda, rāga, vasena*) or on account of merely one’s view (*diṭṭhi, matta, vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuvyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by mentally grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhA 400, 402; cf MA 1:75, 4:195; SA 3:4, 394; Nc 1:55; DhA 1:74). On other meanings of **nimitta**, see SD 13 §3.1a.

³⁰ “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassaṃ*, alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first 2 hindrances—sensual desire and ill will—principal hindrances to be overcome for the practice to succeed. They thus represent the contemplation of mind-objects, which begins with the 5 hindrances. Cf **Mahā Assa, pura S** (M 39,13/1:274), SD 10.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,36) on how to deal with the hindrances in our meditation (SD 13). The meditator effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, of fading away (of lust), of cessation (of suffering) and of letting go (of defilements), and thus comes to look upon the object with equanimity. On *abhijjhā, domanassa*, there is an interesting related passage from **Pubba or Pubb’eva Sambodha S** (A 3.101a): “Bhikshus, before my awakening, when I was still a bodhisattva, this thought occurred to me... ‘Whatever physical and mental joy (*sukha, somanassa*) there is in the world, that is the gratification (*assāda*) in the world; that the world is impermanent, suffering and of the nature to change, that is the disadvantage (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world’.” (A 3.101a/1:258), SD 14.6a. Since the focus here is on the “gradual way,” *satipaṭṭhāna* is only briefly alluded so for the sake of focus: Analayo 2011:620 f esp n173.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the eye-faculty, he devotes himself to restraint in the eye-faculty.

(2) Having heard a *sound* with **the ear**, *he grasps neither its sign nor its details*.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him—*for that reason, he keeps himself restrained*.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the ear-faculty, he devotes himself to restraint in the ear-faculty.

(3) Having smelt a *smell* with **the nose**, *he grasps neither its sign nor its details*.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him—*for that reason, he keeps himself restrained*.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the nose-faculty, he devotes himself to restraint the nose-faculty.

(4) Having tasted a *taste* with **the tongue**, *he grasps neither its sign nor its details*.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him—*for that reason, he keeps himself restrained*.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the tongue-faculty, he devotes himself to restraint in the tongue-faculty.

(5) Having felt a *touch* with **the body**, *he grasps neither its sign nor its details*.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him—*for that reason, he keeps himself restrained*.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the body-faculty, he devotes himself to restraint in the body-faculty.

(6) Having known a *thought* [*a mind-object*] with **the mind**, *he grasps neither its sign nor its details*.

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty, bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure may overwhelm him—*for that reason, he keeps himself restrained*.

He practises the restraint of it. He guards the restraint of the mind-faculty, he devotes himself to restraint in the mind-faculty.³¹

Moderation in food

5 When, brahmin, the monk *guards the sense-doors*, then the Tathagata disciplines him further: ‘Come, bhikshu, be **moderate in food**.³²

5.2 Wisely reflecting, you should use almsfood:

not for amusement,³³ not for intoxication,

not for fattening, not for beautifying,

but only for keeping this body going and enduring,

for ending hunger pangs,³⁴

for the sake of supporting the holy life,³⁵

considering, “Thus I shall get rid of an old feeling,

³¹ For citations, see next para. This passage is analysed in detail in Vism 1.53-69/20-22.

³² The full passage is that of the reflection on the use of food: **Sabbāsava S** (M 2,14), SD 30.3; **Rathôpama S** (S 35.198,7 f with parable of the wound), SD 55.14.

³³ This stock: M 1:355; A 2:40, 145; Dhs 1346; Pug 21; Vbh 249.

³⁴ Vism 1.92/32.

³⁵ Buddhaghosa distinguishes 2 kinds of holy life (*brahma,cariya*): the teaching (*sāsana*) as a whole, and the holy life of the path (*magga brahma,cariya*), ie sainthood (Vism 1.92/32).

and not let a new feeling arise,
and so that I will be healthy and blameless, and live at ease.”³⁶

Devotion to wakefulness

6 When, [3] brahmin, the monk is *moderate in eating*, then the Tathagata disciplines him further:
‘Come, bhikshu, be **devoted to wakefulness**.’³⁷

6.2 Brahmin,

during the day,

a monk, while walking back and forth, while sitting, purifies his mind of hindering states.³⁸

In the first watch of the night,³⁹

while walking back and forth, while sitting, he purifies his mind of hindering states.

In the middle watch of the night,

he lies down on his right side in the lion-posture, with one leg resting on the other,
mindful and fully aware, after mentally noting the time for rising.⁴⁰

After rising, in the last watch of the night,

while walking back and forth, while sitting, he purifies his mind of hindering states.

Mindfulness and clear knowing

7 When, brahmin, the monk is *devoted to wakefulness*, then the Tathagata disciplines him further:
‘Come, bhikshu, be possessed of **mindfulness and clear knowing**.’⁴¹

(1) In going forward or going backward [stepping back], clearly know what you are doing.

³⁶ “Live at ease” (*phāsu, vihāra*) refers to bodily ease or comfort, free from pain and distraction, so that we could direct our mind to meditation.

³⁷ *Jāgariyaṃ anuyutto*. The full passage (§6.2) is stock: **Mahā Assa, pura S** (M 39,10/1:273), SD 10.13; **Sekha S** (M 53,10/1:355), SD 21.14; **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107,7/3:3), SD 56.3; **Sāriputta Saddhi, vihārika S** (S 35.120/4:104 f), **Rathōpama S** (S 35.198/4:177), SD 55.14; **Apaṇṇaka Paṭipada S** (A 3.16/1:114) SD 74.11; **Aparihānā S** (A 4.37/-2:40), SD 103.2; **(Aṭṭhaka) Nanda S** (A 8.9/4:168), SD 84.14. See SD 55.14 (1.2.4).

³⁸ *Idha bhikkhave bhikkhu divasaṃ caṅkamaṇa nisajjāya āvaraṇiyehi dhammehi cittaṃ parisodheti*. The “hindering states” (*āvaraṇa*) are “the 5 obstructions, hindrances that overgrow the mind, weaken wisdom” (*pañc’ime āvaraṇā nīvaraṇā cetaso ajjhārūhā paññāya dubbalīkaraṇā*), viz, sensual lust, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt [§§9.3, 10]: **Rukkha S** (S 46.39/5:96), SD 75.2; also **Āvaraṇa S** (A 5.51/3:63), SD 32.3; DhsA 382.

³⁹ In India of the Buddha’s time, the night is divided into 3 watches (*yāma*): the 1st (*paṭhama yāma*), 6-10 pm; the middle watch (*majjhima yāma*), 10-2 am; and the last watch (*pacchima yāma*), 2-6 am; so called because these were durations for keeping guard on the city-walls against any illegal activities or incursions: SD 56.1 (7.2.1).

⁴⁰ *Rattiyā majjhimaṃ yāmaṃ dakkhiṇena passena siha, seyyaṃ kappeti pāde pādaṃ accādhāya sato sampajāno utṭhāna, saññaṃ manasi karitvā*. “After mentally noting the time for rising,” *utṭhāna, saññaṃ manasi karitvā*, see n at **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,4.14/2:135, 16,1/2:137), SD 9 (§§4.40, 5.1); also **D 33/3:209**; **M 39,10/1:274**, **53,5 +10/1:354 f**; **S 4.7/1:107**, **4.12/14:110 f** (Buddha resting), **35.120/4:105**, **35.239/4:177**, **35.243/4:184**; **A 3.16/1:114**, **4.23/2:40**, **4.58,9/4:87**, **8.9,4/4:168**, **10.67,1/5:123**, **10.68,1/5:126**; **U 8.5/84**. On “sleeping mindfully,” see **Sati’paṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8(7)/1:57). In **Pacalā S** (A 7.58), the Buddha exhorts, “Moggallāna, mindful and clearly knowing, you should lie down lion-like on your right side, placing foot on foot, keeping in mind the thought that on awakening, you would get up quickly, thinking, ‘I will dwell without indulging in the pleasure of sleep, or in the pleasure of reclining, or in the pleasure of drowsiness’” (*na seyya, dukhaṃ na passa, sukhaṃ na middha, sukhaṃ anuyutto*) (A 7.58-/4:87), SD 4.11.

⁴¹ *Sati, sampajaññaṇa samannāgato hohi*. The full passage is a well known stock from “body contemplation” (*kāy-ānupassanā*) of **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 265), SD 8.10; **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,8), SD 13.3 + SD 13.1 (3.6.1+2+3); **Kāya, gata, sati S** (M 119,6/3:90), SD 12.21; **Attan Tapa S** (A 4.198/2:210), SD 56.7.

- | | |
|--|--|
| (2) In looking forward or looking back, | <i>clearly know what you are doing.</i> |
| (3) In bending or stretching, | <i>clearly know what you are doing.</i> |
| (4) In carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl, ⁴² | <i>clearly know what you are doing.</i> |
| (5) In eating, drinking, chewing and tasting, | <i>clearly know what you are doing.</i> |
| (6) In voiding or peeing, | <i>clearly know what you are doing.</i> |
| (7) In walking, in standing, in sitting, in being asleep,
in being awake, ⁴³ in talking, or in remaining silent, | <i>clearly know what you are doing.'</i> |

SOLITUDE

8 When, brahmin, the monk possesses *mindfulness and clear knowing*, then the Tathagata disciplines him further:

'Come, bhikshu, resort to a **secluded resting place**:⁴⁴ the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.'

9 ⁴⁵He resorts to a secluded resting place: *the forest, the root of a tree, a mountain, a ravine, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle thicket, an open space, a heap of straw.*

Overcoming the hindrances

9.2 Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crossing his legs crosswise, keeping his body upright, establishing mindfulness before him.⁴⁶

9.3 (1) Abandoning **covetousness** for the world,
he dwells with a mind free of covetousness; he purifies his mind of *covetousness*.

(2) Abandoning **ill will and hatred**,
he dwells with a mind free of ill will, compassionate in the welfare of all living beings;
he purifies his mind of *ill will and anger*.

⁴² This whole line: *Saṅghāṭi, patta, cīvara, dhāraṇe sampajāna, kāri hoti*, lit "upper robe, bowl, outer robe ..." Traditionally, the "3 robes" (*ti, cīvara*) are (1) the outer robe (*uttarāsaṅga* = "one-sided robe," *ekamsika cīvara*), (2) the under-garment (*antara, vāsaka*, also called *nīvasana*, V 1:46) and (3) the upper robe (*saṅghāṭi*) (V 1:94,8 = 2:272,11 ≈ 5:175,2). When "amongst houses" (ie, outside of the monastery, eg, for almsround) the outer robe must cover both shoulders. However, when showing respect to elders or the sangha, it should be placed on one side (*ekam-saṃ uttarā, saṅgam karitvā*, V 1:45,32, 46,5, 2:126,32). *Cīvara* is a generic term, meaning "robe," and can refer to any of the 3 above. Here, however, the context here clearly refers to it being used as an "outer robe," *uttarāsaṅga*. See CPD: *uttarāsaṅga*; also C S Upasak, *Dictionary of Early Buddhist Monastic Terms*, Varanasi, 1975:88-91.

⁴³ "When asleep, when awake" *sutte jāgarite* (both loc of reference). Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, "lying down, reclining." For details, see SD 13.1 (3.6.2).

⁴⁴ Sentence: *Ehi tvam bhikkhu vivittam senāsanaṃ bhajāhi*. This para not found elsewhere.

⁴⁵ This passage is stock: **Bhaddāli S** (M 65,14/1:440 + 441), SD 56.2; **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107,9/3:3), SD 56.3; **Mahā Suññata S** (M 122,23/3:116), SD 11.4; **Attan Tapa S** (A 4.198/2:210), SD 56.7; **Ayodh'ājīva S 1** (A 5.75/3:92), SD 69.2; **Ayodh'ājīva S 2** (A 5.76/3:100), SD 69.3; **(Navaka) Nāga S** (A 9.40/4:437); Vbh 244; Pug 68.

⁴⁶ This and foll passages on "overcoming the hindrances" are stock: **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,67.3/1:71 +n), SD 8.10; **(Majjhima) Subha S** (D 10,2.6.3 f/1:207), with parables, SD 40a.13; **Udumbarika Sīha, nāda S** (D 25,16.3/3:49), the 4 immeasurables, SD 1.4; **Cūḷa Hatthi, padōpama S** (M 27,18/1:181), SD 40a.5; **Māhā Taṇhā, saṅkhaya S** (M 38,38/-1:269), SD 7.10; **Mahā Assa, pura S** (M 39,13/1:274), with parables, SD 10.13; **Kandaraka S** (M 51,19/1:347), SD 32.9; **Ghoṛa, mukha S** (M 94,22/2:161), SD 28.11; **Deva, dāha S** (M 101,37/2:226), SD 18.4; **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107,9/3:3), SD 56.3; **Cha-b, bisodhana S** (M 112,17/3:35), SD 59.7; **Attan Tapa S** (A 4.198/2:210), SD 56.7; **Ayod'ājīva S 1** (A 5.75/3:92), SD 69.2; **Ayod'ājīva S 2** (A 5.76/3:100), SD 69.3; **(Navaka) Nāga S** (A 9.40/4:437); **(Dasaka) Upāli S** (A 10.99/5:207), SD 30.9; Vbh 224; Pug 59.

- (3) Abandoning **sloth and torpor**,
 he dwells free of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light;
 he purifies his mind of *sloth and torpor*.
- (4) Abandoning **restlessness and worry**,
 he dwells unagitated with a mind inwardly stilled;
 he purifies his mind of *restlessness and worry*.
- (5) Abandoning **doubt**,
 he dwells, having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity regarding wholesome states;
 he purifies his mind of *doubt*. [4]

Mental training: The 4 dhyanas⁴⁷

10 Having thus abandoned these 5 hindrances, imperfections of the mind that weaken wisdom, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states,

he attains and dwells in **the 1st dhyana**,
 accompanied by initial application and sustained application, and
 with zest and joy born of solitude.

With the stilling of initial application and sustained application,
 by gaining inner tranquillity and oneness of mind,
 he attains and dwells in **the 2nd dhyana**,
 free from initial application and sustained application,
 with zest and joy born of stillness [samadhi].

With the fading away of zest,
 he remains equanimous, mindful and clearly knowing, and
 feels joy with the body,
 he attains and dwells in **the 3rd dhyana**,
 of which noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’

With the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain,
 and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure,
 he attains and dwells in **the 4th dhyana**,
 that is neither painful nor pleasant, and
 with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.

11 Such, brahmin, is my instruction to those **learner monks**,⁴⁸ whose minds have not yet attained the goal, who dwell aspiring for the supreme security from bondage.

11.2 But these states conduce both to a pleasant dwelling here and now and to mindfulness and clear knowing for those monks who are **arhats** with the influxes destroyed,⁴⁹
 who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done,
 laid down the burden, reached their own goal,
 destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely free through final knowledge.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ These 4 dhyanas are illustrated with a parable each in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,77-84), SD 8.10; as the Buddha’s own practice, **Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama S** (M 27,19-22), SD 40a.5.

⁴⁸ “Learner monks ... ,” *bhikkhū sekkhā*, ie, those who are on the path as streamwinners, etc; hence, theirs is said to the “higher training.” (ItA 21-23; VA 1:242,23-27; VbhA 329,34-330,3 :: §1614). See (1.1.2.2).

⁴⁹ On arhats (incl the Buddha) using dhyana as “a pleasant dwelling here and now” (*diṭṭha, dhamma.sukha, vihāra*), see **Samādhi Bhāvanā S** (A 4.41,2), SD 24.1; SD 10.16 (8.3.4.4).

Nirvana

12 When this was said, the brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna asked the Blessed One:

“When Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, do they all attain nirvana, the supreme goal, or do some not attain it?”

“When, brahmin, they are thus advised and instructed by me, some of my disciples attain nirvana, the supreme goal, but some do not attain it.”

13 “Master Gotama, since **nirvana exists** and the path leading to nirvana exists and Master Gotama is present as the guide,

what is the cause and reason why, when Master Gotama’s disciples are thus advised and instructed by him, *some of them attain nirvana, the supreme goal, but some do not attain it?*”

The way to Rājagaha

14 “As to that, brahmin, I will ask you a question in return. Answer it as you choose. **[5]**

What do you think, brahmin? Are you familiar with **the way to Rājagaha?**”

“Yes, Master Gotama, I am familiar with the way to Rājagaha.”

14.2 “What do you think, brahmin?

Suppose a man came along who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said:

‘Bhante, I want to go to Rājagaha. Show me the way to Rājagaha.’

Then, you told him:

‘Now, good man, this is the way to Rājagaha.

Follow it for awhile and you’ll see a certain village;

go a little farther and you’ll see a certain town [market-town];

go a little farther and you’ll see Rājagaha with its delightful parks, groves, grounds and lotus ponds.’

Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would take a wrong way and would go to the west.

14.3 Then, a second man came who wanted to go to Rājagaha, and he approached you and said:

‘Bhante, I want to go to Rājagaha. Show me the way to Rājagaha.’

Then you told him:

‘Now, good man, this is the way to Rājagaha.

Follow it for awhile and you’ll see a certain village;

go a little farther and you’ll see a certain town;

go a little farther and you’ll see Rājagaha with its delightful parks, groves, grounds and lotus ponds.’

Then, having been thus advised and instructed by you, he would arrive safely in Rājagaha.

14.4 Now, brahmin, since Rājagaha exists and the way leading to Rājagaha exists, and you are present as the guide, what is the cause and reason why, when those men have been thus advised and instructed by you, one man takes a wrong road and goes to the west, and one arrives safely in Rājagaha?”

14.5 **[6]** “What can I do about that, Master Gotama? I am (only) **one who shows the way.**”

⁵⁰ Although dhyana is the basis for the application of insight that brings arhathood, arhats continue to practise them even after that since they bring about “a pleasant abiding here and now,” and are helpful in suppressing the effects of bodily pains, **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 19) relates how the Buddha does this: **D 19,2.23+2.25.3** (SD 9). Comy identifies this “abiding” with the attainment of the fruit of arhathood (*phala,samāpatti*), and explains that some arhats are “constant dhyana dwellers” (*satata,vihārī*) who easily and at will enter dhyana while others who are not (*no satata,vihārī*) must diligently sit to enter fruition. (MA 4:70,1-5)

“So, too, brahmin, nirvana exists and the path leading to nirvana exists, and I am present (only) as the guide. Yet when my disciples have been thus advised and instructed by me, some of them attain nirvana, the supreme goal, but some do not attain it.

What can I do about that, brahmin? The Tathagata is **one who shows the way.**”⁵¹

Renunciants

15 When this was said, the brahmin Gaṇaka Moggallāna said to the Blessed One:⁵²

THE FALSE RENUNCIANT

15.2 “There are, Master Gotama, these people who are **faithless**,⁵³ those who have left home for the homeless life, *not out of faith* but for the sake of a living,⁵⁴ who are false, crafty, fraudulent,⁵⁵ haughty,⁵⁶ insolent, fickle, garrulous, of loose speech, their sense-doors unguarded, lacking moderation in food, not devoted to wakefulness, with no regard for recluseship, with no respect for the training, living in abundance, lax, prone to distractions,⁵⁷ neglecting the task of solitude, lazy, lacking effort, confused, lacking clear knowing, unconcentrated, with wandering mind, lacking wisdom, drivellers.

15.2 Master Gotama dwells *not* in the spirit with them. [§15.4]

THE TRUE RENUNCIANT

15.3 But there are these sons of family who have left home for the homeless life **out of faith**,⁵⁸ who are not false, *not* crafty, *not* fraudulent, *not* haughty, *not* insolent, *not* fickle, *not* garrulous, *not* loose in speech,

with sense-doors restrained, moderate in food, devoted to wakefulness, intent on recluseship, with deep respect for the training, not living in abundance, not lax, bent on removing distractions, giving priority to solitude, exerting effort, resolute,

⁵¹ “The Tathagata is one who shows the way” (*magg’akkhāyī tathāgato*). Dh 276 says: “By you yourself must the effort be made: | the Tathagata shows the way.” (*tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ | akkhātāro tathāgato*): SD 49.21 (2.1.4.4).

⁵² These 2 foll passages are in **Anaṅgaṇa S** (M 5,32), SD 37.7.

⁵³ *Ye’me bho gotama puggalā assaddhā jīvikatthā na saddhā*. Ie bereft of faith in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha (**Assaddhā’ti buddha, dhamma, saṅghesu saddhā, virahitā**, MA 1:152). From “These people ... drivellers” (*puggalā assaddhā jīvikatthā na saddhā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitā, saṭhā māyāvino ketubhino* [Be *ketabino*] *uddhatā unnaḷā capalā mukharā vikiṇṇa, vācā, indriyesu agutta, dvārā, bhojane amattañño, jāgariyaṃ ananuyut-tā, sāmāññe anapekkhavanto, sikkhāya na tibbagarāvā, bāhulikā sāthalikā, okkamane pubbaṅgamā, paviveke nikkhitta, dhurā, kusitā hīna, vīriyā muṭṭha-s, satī asampajānā asamāhitā vibbhanta, cittā duppaññā eḷa, mūgā*) is stock: **Anaṅgaṇa S** (M 5,32/1:32), SD 37.7; **Gaṇaka Moggallāna S** (M 107,15/3:6), SD 56.3; **Codanā S** (A 5.167/3:199), SD 88.1.

⁵⁴ They renounce to find a living here from the fear of debts and so on; because they are unable to earn a living outside (**jīvik’atthā’ti iṇa, bhay’ādīhi pīlitā bahi jīvitum asakkontā idha jīvik’atthikā hutvā**, MA 1:152).

⁵⁵ Fraudulent, ie a trained fraudster, whose craftiness is of accomplished strength. It is called “deceit” because it is the craftiness of seeing non-existent virtues, of making objects show qualities that are absent of (**ketabhino’ti sikkhita, kerāṭikā, nipphanna, thāma, gata, sāṭheyāti vuttaṃ hoti. Sāṭheyāñ hi abhūta, guṇa, dassanato abhūta, - bhaṇḍa, guṇa, dassana, samam katvā “kerāṭiyan’ti vuccati**, MA 1:152)

⁵⁶ This line (see foll n), as at **Jantu S** (S 2.25/1:61,4), but replaces the last quality with *pākat’indriyā*, “loose in faculties.” See Intro [2.1].

⁵⁷ *Okkamane pubbaṅgamā*, ie “letting transgressions be the leader.” Comy explains these as the conditions for “going down,” ie going astray or transgressing, ie, the 5 mental hindrances (MA 1:101.26, 3:108,3). See M 1:14, 16 f = 3:5,15 = A 1:71,3 = 2:148,30 = 3:108,3; M 1:32,21; A 1:243,3 f. M:ÑB, foll M:H, has “leaders in backsliding,” which fails to reflect Comy which is helpful here. See CPD: ²o-kkamana.

⁵⁸ These qualities are arranged roughly according to the 3 trainings in moral virtue, samadhi and wisdom.

of stable mindfulness, clearly knowing, concentrated, one-pointed in mind, wise, not drivelling.⁵⁹
15.4 Master Gotama *dwells in the spirit* with them.⁶⁰

THE FRAGRANCE PARABLES

16 Just as amongst fragrant roots, **black orris root**⁶¹ is declared the foremost;
amongst fragrant heartwood, **red sandalwood**⁶² is declared the foremost;
amongst fragrant flowers, **jasmine**⁶³ is declared the foremost⁶⁴ — [7]
so too, Master Gotama’s advice is foremost among today’s teachings.⁶⁵

Gaṇaka Moggallāna’s refuge-going

17 Excellent, master Gotama! Excellent, master Gotama!
Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned,
were to reveal what was hidden,
were to show the way to one who was lost, or
were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,
in the same way, in numerous ways, has the Dharma been made clear by master Gotama.
I go to master Gotama for refuge, to the Dharma, and to the community of monks.
May master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge, from this day forth
for life.”

evaṃ

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⁵⁹ *Indriyesu guttadvārā, bhōjane mattañño, jāgariyaṃ anuyuttā, sāmāññe apekkhavanto, sikkhāya tibba, gāra-vā, na bāhulikā na sāthalikā, okkamane nikkhitta, dhurā, paviveke pubbaṅgamā, āradha, vīriyā, pahit’attā upatthi-ta-s, satī sampajānā samāhitā ek’agga, cittā paññavanto aneja, mūgā.* For nn & refs, see §32a nn ad loc.

⁶⁰ *Tehi bhavaṃ gotamo saddhiṃ samvasati.* “Dwell in the spirit,” *saṃvasati* (*saṃ*, “together,” + *vasati*, “live”), ie, dwell together “in communion” (*saṃvāsa*) with the Dharma-Vinaya. Comy says that Moggallāna says this because he has understood why some disciples do not gain the goal. (MA 4:70,15). MĀ 144 (T1.653b12) + T 70 (T1.876a21) illustrate this conclusion with the parable of someone looking after a sal grove by weeding and watering—a parable also found in **Kakacūpama S** (M 21,8/1:124,28), SD 38.1, and its parallel MĀ 193 (T 1.744b20). The contrast between the faithless and the faithful [§15] recurs in **Anaṅgaṇa S** (M 5,32/1:32,7), SD 37.7, similar to the 2 Chin versions, but where M 5 gives us a different imagery. In any case, the faithless is fittingly compared to weeds which are removed and discarded while the faithful is like a sal tree.

⁶¹ *Ye keci mūla, gandhā kālānusāri tesam aggam akkhāyati.* On *kālānusāri*, prob Indian valerian, is a kind of dark sandalwood (*Valeriana wallichii*), see **Aniccata Saññā S** (S 22.102,8), SD 12.12 (2.5).

⁶² *Ye keci sāra, gandhā lohita, candanaṃ tesam aggam akkhāyati.* On *lohita candana* or red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus samtalinus*), see **Aniccata Saññā S** (S 22.102,9), SD 12.12 (2.6).

⁶³ *Ye keci puppha, gandhā vassikaṃ tesam aggam akkhāyati.* On *vassikā* or jasmine (*Jasminum sambac*), see **Aniccata Saññā S** (S 22.102,10), SD 12.12 (2.7).

⁶⁴ Instead of the fragrant root, wood and flower, to illustrate the Buddha’s supremacy, MĀ 144 (T1.653b26) + T 70 (T1.876b7) mention 2 kinds of incense and 2 kinds of flowers, viz, the supreme fragrance amongst flowers that grow in water, and the supreme fragrance amongst flowers that grow on land. This is another translation difficulty confronting the Chinese translators: exotic names of Indian plants that were not found in China [1.1.2.2]: SD 40b (2.6.1).

⁶⁵ Comy: Gotama’s teaching is the “the best, highest” (*paramo uttamo*) of the teachings of the day (*ajja, dhamma*), incl those of the 6 sectarian teachers (MA 4:70,15-20). On the 6 teachers: **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,16-33), SD 8.10.