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## Kevaḍḍha Sutta

or **Kevaṭṭa Sutta** The Discourse to Kevaḍḍha<sup>1</sup> | D 11

Theme: The best answer to life lies within ourself

Translated by Piya Tan ©2010, 2018

"I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist  
and that there are as few as there are any other great artists.

Teaching might even be the greatest of the arts  
since the medium is the human mind and spirit." (John Steinbeck)

1 Introduction**1.0 SUTTA SUMMARY**

**1.0.1** Once when the Buddha was staying in the Pāvārika mango grove, outside Nālandā, Kevaḍḍha (or Kevaṭṭa), a householder, visits and requests him to order a monk to perform some psychic wonder as a strategy to increase the faith and size of the Buddha's followers. The Buddha expresses his disapproval of such miracles and tells Kevaṭṭa that the greatest miracle of all is that of "**instruction**" [education] (*anusāsanī*) the self-training culminating in arhathood.

As an illustration, the Buddha recounts a humorous, yet insightful, case of how a monk seeks the answer to the question "**Where do these 4 great elements [primary elements]—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?**" [§§67-84]. In his zeal, using his psychic powers, he ascends each of the sense-world heavens in turn until the 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana brahma realm, asking the gods and their respective leaders for an answer, but none of them knows it.

In each heaven, he is referred to the next higher heaven, until he comes at last to Mahā Brahmā, the Almighty Deity, himself. After some majestic delay, Brahmā appears, and is *twice* asked the question by the monk, and *twice* he only mightily and slyly announces all his theistic titles.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> time, upon the monk's insistence for an answer, Brahma famously and judiciously takes the monk aside and quietly, grudgingly admits that he does not know the answer! Only the Buddha knows this answer, and that the monk should go to him for it.

**1.0.2** When that monk finally comes to the Buddha with his question, the latter first relates to him **the parable of the land-sighting bird** [§85]. Some sea-faring merchants, having sailed mid-ocean, when in need of seeking landfall, release a land-sighting bird. Should the bird after flying around, *finding no land, return to the ship*, it keeps sailing on. When the bird finally flies away without returning, the ship would go in the direction, too, until land is reached. That monk, declares the Buddha, is like a land-sighting bird.

That monk, says the Buddha, should not have troubled himself with such a journey, or troubled the gods with such a question: he should have come straight to the Buddha himself. Moreover, the Buddha points out, the monk's question is wrongly put. He should be asking: "... Where (do) name and form to-tally cease without a trace?" [§85.3].

The answer: the 4 great elements find no footing at all in **the "consciousness without attribute,"** that is, nirvana! [§85.4]. The 4 primary elements cease completely in nirvana.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kevaḍḍha*, vl *Kevaṭṭa* (Skt *Kaivarta*), this latter means "fisher" or "fisherman" (D 1:45; M 1:456; U 24; J 1:210). He was a very wealthy young man of Nālandā. Comy says that he was deeply devoted to the Buddha and this occasioned him to ask the question here (DA 1:388). Although some scholars think that a rich young man is unlikely to have a name like "fisherman," some editors and translators prefer this name (*Kevaṭṭa*) (see D:RW 1:276 n2). Both RD & Walshe however use *Kevaḍḍha*.

**1.1 HUMOUR.** This discourse belongs to a rare category of religious literature: **religious humour**,<sup>2</sup> of which it is one of the finest examples. Its import is nonetheless serious in terms of reflecting the true nature of religion and of spiritual development. The discourse clearly does not advocate any feeling of awe towards an inexplicably mysterious universe or fear of the gods, but advocates that a wise understanding of the true nature of things is possible and desirable, a wisdom that all the gods and God (in religious mythology) themselves need.

**1.2 THE END OF THE UNIVERSE.** The Buddha tells Kevaḍḍha about a monk who once asked one of the most disturbing questions of where the very building-blocks of the universe itself cease to exist. The answer cannot be found even if we were to have direct access to the highest heavens. Indeed, the answer is found right here in our own spirituality.

**1.3 THE ROLE OF MIRACLES.** The discourse humorously downplays the role of miracles in religion. The 9 kinds of miracles listed here have little in common with the Abrahamic or theistic conception of a miracle. While others may attribute these “miraculous powers” to God, the sutta clearly shows that they are attainable by anyone who has a high level of control of his own mind.

**The 9 psychic powers** mentioned are:

- (1) Self-morphing: Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.
- (2) Materialization and dematerialization: He appears; he disappears.
- (3) He goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space.
- (4) He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.
- (5) He walks on water without sinking as if it were dry land.
- (6) Teleportation: Sitting cross-legged he flies through the air like a winged bird.
- (7) With his hand he touches and strokes the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful.
- (8) Astral travel: He has power over his own body up to as far as the Brahmā world [all in §4]
- (9) And mind-reading [telepathy] [§6]

And yet none of these 9 psychic powers can bring us spiritual salvation nor are they any sign of spirituality. The greatest of all miracles is that of instruction or education, of the self-conversion from inner darkness to inner lights [§§8-66]. For even the highest heavens are not yet awakened and freed and are in need of this miracle.

**1.4 THE 6 SUPERKNOWLEDGES.** §§55-66 are a list of the well-known **6 superknowledges** or supernormal faculties (*cha-!-abhiññā*),<sup>3</sup> in ascending significance. The first, being more or less identical to the first 8 “worldly” miraculous powers [§4], mentioned above, is of the lowest spiritual significance, but the 6<sup>th</sup> and last one is of the highest significance—the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes—this is *the* liberating wisdom.

- (1) Knowledge of various psychic powers (*iddhi, vidhā*);
- (2) Knowledge of clairaudience or the “divine ear” (*dibba, sota*);
- (3) Knowledge of mind-reading (*parassa ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*), here called *ādesanā, pāṭihāriya* [§6];
- (4) Knowledge of retrocognition or recollection of past lives (*pubbe, nivāsānussati, ñāṇa*);
- (5) Knowledge of clairvoyance or the passing-away and re-appearance of beings, faring according to their karma (*cutūpapāta yathā, kammāpaga, ñāṇa*) or the “divine eye” (*dibba, cakkhu*);
- (6) Knowledge of the destruction of mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See my essay, “The Buddha’s Smile: A study in Buddhist humour” (NUS lecture, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> On *abhiññā*, see Jayatilleke 1963:438-442.

<sup>4</sup> *Āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*. The term *āsava* (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously translated as taints (“deadly taints,” RD), corruptions, intoxi-

These superknowledges are part and parcel of the contemplative spiritual life. The Buddha does not condemn any of these powers, but he cautions,

the display of the miraculous eightfold *iddhi* to householders because he views it as unhelpful and dangerous for precisely the reasons [that follow]. He is not making a general judgement about the practice of *iddhi* at all. (Gethin, 2001:100)

**1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MIRACULOUS.** Gethin explains that “the saint is somehow less impressive than the wonder-worker flying through the air ... but the display of miraculous *iddhi* as rule achieves nothing worthwhile” (ib).

The man already of confidence and trust sees it as wonderful (and is perhaps impressed for the wrong reasons), while the man without such confidence mistrusts it and sees it as a trick with no deeper significance. (Gethin op cit)<sup>5</sup>

### 1.6 MIND-READING AND THOUGHT-READING.

§6 of the Kevaḍḍha Sutta describes “**thought-reading**” (*ādesana, pāṭihāriya*), which is often erroneously taken to be the same as “**mind-reading**” (*ceto, pariya,, ñāṇa*). While **thought-reading** is, as a rule, a mundane activity—limited mostly to reading others’ thoughts or cognitive processes—**mind-reading** (*ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*) is a spiritual faculty rooted in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana.

**Thought-reading** is a mundane aspect of **mind-reading** (*ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*), which is itself a power of the “divine eye” (*dibba, cakkhu*).<sup>6</sup> As a spiritual faculty—one that is helpful in spiritual development—is defined in **the Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2), as rightly knowing the mind—one’s own or other’s—as being grasped by sensual desire, by ill will, by delusion, and so on.<sup>7</sup>

While **mind-reading** is a useful spiritual skill—used even by the Buddha himself—**thought-reading** can be cultivated even by a worldly person—such as a mentalist or conman—and, as such, is disapproved of by the Buddha. Even then, the Buddha disallows any monastic from making a public display of both mind-reading and thought-reading, since the crowd is unlikely to appreciate their true significance, and is likely to idolize the person instead of being inspired to follow the spiritual path.<sup>8</sup>

## 2 On the elements (*dhātu*)

**2.1** Section 67b of this sutta records this question is asked by a “certain monk”: “Where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?” These elements, although physical as opposed to mental, do not merely refer to the “elemental” forces we face, but are the very structure of the universe and life itself, that is, the 4 states of matter (*rūpa*). In modern terms, **the 4 great elements** may

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cants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untranslated. **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16) & Abhidhamma lists 4 *āsava*: the influx of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*ditth’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj’āsava*) (D 16.1.12/2:81, 16.2.4/2:92), Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937/373 f). These 4 are also known as “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting the influx of views) [43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these *āsavas* is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: *āsava*.

<sup>5</sup> On the superknowledges (*abhiññā*), see **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (5) & (7.4).

<sup>6</sup> (**Pāṭihāriya**) **Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60.5), SD 16.10), & **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28,6/3:104 f), SD 14.10, give a more detailed def of **mind-reading**; see also SD 27.5a (5.3.2.2).

<sup>7</sup> D 2,93.2/1:79 f (SD 8.10).

<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed analysis of **thought-reading**, see SD 27.5a (5.5.5).

be freely and respectively rendered as solidity, fluidity, heat (plasma) and gas, or more dynamically as *hardness* (or extension), *cohesiveness*, *softness* (decay or maturation) and *motion* (or distension).<sup>9</sup>

Regarding the question asked by a “certain monk” as to “Where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?” [§67.2], the *where* of the question should be well noted. It is interesting to note that while the ancient Indian sages and seekers generally discuss existence in outer *spatial* terms,<sup>10</sup> the Buddha speaks in terms of inner space, of the six senses.<sup>11</sup> This spatial notion is clearly evident in the certain monk’s question [§67.2].

**2.2** The primary elements clearly cannot cease in the physical or non-physical universe existing in time and space, that is, a universe made up of the 4 primary elements themselves. This universe comprises the sense-world (*kāma,dhātu*), the form world (*rūpa,dhātu*) and the formless world (*arūpa,dhātu*).

Early Upaniṣadic asseverations place the realm of the immortal, the liberated, variously in the *brahmaloka*, *svargaloka*, or the trans-solar region. It is quite literally and spatially the highest cosmic plane. In cosmological *suttas* such the *Devaddha* [sic, Kevaḍḍha Sutta, D 13], the paradise of the god *Brahmā* is merely a *devaloka*, and *devaloka* is not the abode of immortality.

(R H Robinson 1972:321)

Obviously, the answer has to lie outside of such a universe, as something non-temporal and non-spatial, or what is sometimes called “the realm of cessation” (*nirodha,dhātu*),<sup>12</sup> that is, a non-spatial (*apattiḥhita*) realm.<sup>13</sup> In other word, the 4 primary elements cease to exist in nirvana.<sup>14</sup>

### 3 The Buddhist attitude to miracles

#### **3.1 MIRACLES ARE NOT A MARK OF SPIRITUALITY**

**3.1.1** Midway through the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, the Buddha expresses to Kevaḍḍha his disapproval of miracles or psychic wonders (*pāṭihāriya*), especially the miracle of miraculous power (*iddhi,pāṭihāriya*) [§§4-5] and of thought-reading (*ādesana,pāṭihāriya*) [§§6-7]. In fact, the Buddha disapproves of them in the strongest terms, using the well-known stock phrase or formula, “**I am pained, ashamed, disgusted**” (*aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi*).<sup>15</sup> Apparently, this is the only time in the Suttas that we find the Buddha doing so in

<sup>9</sup> For details on the 4 primary elements (*mahā,bhūta*) and their derivatives, see **Mahā Hatthi,padōpama S** (M 28), SD 6.16(2).

<sup>10</sup> See eg S Schayer, “Das mahāyānistische Absolutum nach der Lehre der Mādhyamikas,” *Orientalische Literaturzeitung*, 1935:401-415; and R H Robinson, “Some methodological approaches to the unexplained points,” 1972:321 f.

<sup>11</sup> See eg E J Thomas, *The History of Buddhist Thought*, London: Routledge & KeganPaul, 1933:128.

<sup>12</sup> D 33,1.10(14)/3:215.

<sup>13</sup> See R H Robinson 1972:322 f.

<sup>14</sup> See **Khandha 1 Rūpa**, SD 17.2 (on matter and the 4 great elements). For a related discussion in connection with the state of the Tathāgata after death, see **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 63), SD 5.8(3.6).

<sup>15</sup> §§5, 7. MA glosses *aṭṭiyatibbarṇ* as *aṭṭena pīlītena bhavitibbarṇ*, “one should be distressed, (feel) harassed”; *harāyitibbarṇ* = *lajjitibbarṇ*, “one should be ashamed”; *jigucchitibbarṇ* = *gūtharṇ disvā viya jigucchā uppādetabbā*, “one should arouse disgust (in oneself) as if looking at excrement” (MA 3:129). Elsewhere, the 3rd person stock phrase, *aṭṭiyati harāyati jigucchati*, is more common: A 1:145; M 1:423 = A 4:374; M 3:300; A 4:435, 5:111 (by all formations); J 2:143, 5:280; V 1:87, 88, 3:68. **Aṭṭiyati** (“he is sickened, disgusted, worried, bored, or incommoded (with)”) is denom of *aṭṭa* (Skt *ārta*), “hurt, afflicted, tormented, desperate (Sn 694). **Harāyati** is denom of *hiri* (moral shame). **Jigucchati** (Skt *jugutsati*) (he shuns, avoids, loathes, detests, is revulsed at, disgusted with, horrified at) is desid or redupl of √GUP, “to protect.” A denominative is a noun or a verb der from a noun or adjective, eg “man” (a fleet) or “localize.” See Intro (3) above & **Nibbidā**, SD 20.1 (2.3).

these words.<sup>16</sup> However, the Vinaya, too, records his unequivocal disapproval of such a display, in the story of **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja**.<sup>17</sup>

**3.1.2** In the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, the Buddha first defines the miracle [§§4, 6], and goes on to mention the reaction of one with faith and one without faith regarding it. The one who has faith in the miracle speaks of it to an unbeliever, who is unimpressed, claiming that in the case of the miracle of miraculous power (or thaumaturgy), he knows of the Gandhārī charm<sup>18</sup> [§5], and in the case of thought-reading, he knows of the Maṇika charm<sup>19</sup> [§7].

**3.1.3** In a contemporary or a futuristic scenario, this can be explained in this way. The unbeliever sees no special merit in *the talk of psychic power* because it could be done with, say, holographic images, airplanes, antigravity devices, etc; nor any merit in *the talk of thought-reading* because this could be done by a mind-imaging machine.<sup>20</sup> Or, as **Luis O Gomez** puts it: “they are not the exclusive property of the enlightened, or other people could come into possession of these powers by other means, such as the magical arts of Gandhāra (*gandhārī nāma vijjā*)” (1977:221). It should be added that, as pointed out in **the Susīma Sutta** (S 12.70), there are also arhats who do *not* possess any psychic power,<sup>21</sup> and that their spiritual status is in no way inferior to any other arhat.<sup>22</sup>

### 3.2 DEFINITION OF PĀṬIHĀRIYA

**3.2.1** The next point we should consider is the definition of “miracle” (*pāṭihāriya*) in the Suttas. The term **pāṭihāriya** (Skt *prātihārya*) can be better understood from its Sanskrit forms. The Sanskrit-English Dictionary says that **pratihārayati** (the verb for *prātihārya*) is the causative form of *prati-vhri* or *vhri* (“to take”), meaning, “to have one’s self announced to (gen)” [Jātaka, māla 118.13] (SED 673b). The Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary gives 2 readings: *pratihārayati*, ~*reti*, and gives one of its meanings as “has announced, causes to be announced” quoting the same Jātaka, māla source (BHSD 373c).

If we accept this explanation, that *pāṭihāriya* has the sense of “announcing” or attracting attention to oneself by way of a psychic wonder, then it is easy to understand that, as a rule, the performance of psychic wonders is not a spiritually worthwhile effort.<sup>23</sup> In fact, **Buddhaghosa**, too, notes that the miraculous wonder (*pāṭihāriya*) itself is objected to, but not the psychic power (*iddhi*) that is volitional in nature<sup>24</sup> (VA 1203).

<sup>16</sup> The stock *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi* is also found in **Vuṭṭha S** (A 9.11,4/4:377, spoken by a certain monk). The form *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi* is found in **Vijayā S** (S 5.4/530\*/1:31), **Khemā Thī** (Thī 140), and **Khalātya Pv** (Pv 1.10.2-/8).

<sup>17</sup> See the Piṇḍola story in **Vinaya** (Cv 5.8 = V 2:110 f). See also **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja**, SD 27.6a.

<sup>18</sup> The Gandhārī charm, *Gandhārī nāma vijjā*. The Jātaka mentions this charm as especially efficacious for making one invisible (J 4:498 f).

<sup>19</sup> The Maṇika charm is identified by DA as the *Cinta, maṇī vijjā*, ie the charm of the wish-fulfilling gem, which, however, according to **Jātaka** is efficacious for following up trails or tracing footsteps (J 3:504).

<sup>20</sup> On various forms of mind-imaging machines, see SD 17.8c(6.7).

<sup>21</sup> S 12.70/2:119-128 @ SD 15.8.

<sup>22</sup> See **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (7.4).

<sup>23</sup> This is, of course, truer of the Suttas than the Comys, which abound with miraculous stories. Lacking the wisdom and charisma of the Buddha and the early arhats, the later Buddhists were apparently compelled to resort to such stories as a didactic means. See Gethin 2001:100. For a discussion, see **Mythology in Buddhism**, SD 36.1.

<sup>24</sup> **iddhi, pāṭihāriyan ti ettha vikubban’iddhi, pāṭihāriyam paṭikkhittam, adhiṭṭhān’iddhi pana appaṭikkhittā ti vedītabba** = “Here **the miracle of psychic power** should understood thus: it refers to the display of miraculous psychic power, but the psychic power by resolve is not forbidden.” (VA 2003). CPD explains “psychic power by resolve (*adhiṭṭhān’iddhi*) as “the power of creating by volition only phenomena outside of one’s body.”

**3.2.2 T W Rhys Davids**, in the introduction to his translation of the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, further notes,

They were not, however, miracles in our Western sense. There was no interference by an outside power with the laws of nature. It was supposed that certain people by reason of special (but quite natural) powers could accomplish certain special acts beyond the power of ordinary men.

(D:RD 1:272)

**3.2.3** The phrase “beyond the power of ordinary men,” as pointed out by **Rupert Gethin**, is problematic. As Rhys Davids himself states in the above quote, these powers are “quite natural.”

They are the result of meditation success in exactly the same way as, for example, the *jhānas*. True, as Rhys Davids again points out,<sup>25</sup> they are termed *puṭhujjanika-iddhi* or *iddhi* that may belong to ordinary men as opposed to the *ariyas* or “noble ones” (stream-attainers, once-returners, non-returners and *arahants*). But then this is also true of the four *jhānas* in general and does not constitute any kind of condemnation *per se* as Rhys Davids seems to want to imply.

(2001:100 f)

**3.2.4 The (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava Sutta** (A 3.60) throws some light here. The same three miracles mentioned in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta are defined in the (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava Sutta, where, when Saṅgārava asks *who else besides the Buddha himself has such powers*, the Buddha goes on to declare,

“Not just one hundred, brahmin, nor two hundred, nor three hundred, nor four hundred, nor five hundred, but even more than that are endowed with these three miracles!”

“And, master Gotama, where are these monks dwelling now?”

“In the very community of monks, brahmin.” (A 3.60,7.2/1:172 f), SD 16.10

There are, of course, numerous other Sutta passages on monks with psychic powers, and often these powers are mentioned to be the result of attaining the fourth dhyana.<sup>26</sup> As such, it is clear that the Buddha is *not* condemning these powers, but the *public display* of such powers, especially where they have no didactic purpose or value. This is clear from the definition of the term *pāṭihāriya* above, and from the Vinaya, which we shall now examine.

### 3.3 THE VINAYA RULE AGAINST PSYCHIC DISPLAY.

**3.3.1 Rupert Gethin**, in his study of *iddhi*, points to the key passage relating to the Buddha’s disapproval of miracles (*iddhi*), as stated in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta, thus:

Seeing this (*imam*) danger in the display of miraculous power, Kevaḍḍha, I am pained, ashamed, disgusted<sup>27</sup> regarding the display of miraculous power ... regarding the miracle of mind-reading.<sup>28</sup>

(D 11,5+7/1:213 f; emphasis added)

<sup>25</sup> D:RD 1:272.

<sup>26</sup> See eg *Sāmañña,phala S* (D 2,81-96/1:75-83), SD 8.10.

<sup>27</sup> “I am pained, ashamed, disgusted,” *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi*. See Intro (3).

<sup>28</sup> *Imam kho aham Kevaḍḍha iddhi,pāṭihāriye ādīnavam samanupassamāno iddhi,pāṭihāriyena aṭṭiyāmi harayāmi jigucchāmi*.

Gethin makes this important observation regarding this passage:

As soon as *imaṃ* is translated the particularity rather than the generality of the condemnation of eightfold *iddhi* becomes obvious. The Buddha's condemning the display of miraculous eightfold *iddhi* to householders because he views it as unhelpful and dangerous for precisely the reasons I have just outlined.<sup>29</sup> He is not making a general judgement about the practice of the eightfold *iddhi* at all. (2001:100)

**3.3.2** Gethin's opinion is supported by the Vinaya prohibition regarding the display of miracles (*iddhi,-pāṭihāriya*) and superhuman states (*uttari,manussa,dhamma*). **The Culla,vagga** of the Vinaya Piṭaka contains this rule:

Bhikkhus, a superhuman psychic miracle should not be shown to householders. For whomever shows it, there is the offence of wrong-doing. Bhikkhus, break the wooden bowl into small fragments, and then give them to the monks as scent-mixed ointment.<sup>30</sup> And, bhikkhus, a wooden bowl should not be used.<sup>31</sup>

*Na, bhikkhave, gihīnaṃ uttarimanussadhammaṃ iddhipāṭihāriyaṃ dassetabbaṃ. Yo dasseyya, āpatti dukkaṭassa. Bhandath'etaṃ, bhikkhave, dāru,pattaṃ sakalikaṃ sakalikaṃ katvā, bhikkhūnaṃ añjan'upapisaṇaṃ detha. Na ca, bhikkhave, dāru,patto dhāretabbo. Yo dhāreyya, āpatti dukkaṭassā'ti.* (Cv 5.8.2 = V 2:110 f)

**3.3.3** The case history behind this prohibition concerns the monk **Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja**,<sup>32</sup> whose miracle story is found in all the extant Vinayas, albeit with some variants.<sup>33</sup> In the Pali Vinaya, the Buddha is recorded as rebuking Piṇḍola for performing a cheap miracle. The seth of Rājagaha has placed a sandalwood bowl on a high pole and challenges any holy person to bring it down. Piṇḍola hears of this and, at Moggallāna's suggestion, rises into the air by his psychic power and brings it down.

On learning of Piṇḍola's deed, the Buddha reprimands him for using his psychic power in an unworthy manner. The Buddha explains that such an act is neither impressive to those without faith in the teaching nor to the faithful,<sup>34</sup> and it is unworthy, like a woman exposing herself for a mere coin. The Buddha then announces the Vinaya rule against such displays before the laity. The bowl is given to the monks to be broken and ground into sandal paste.<sup>35</sup> Here again, we see that it is the *display* of psychic power to the laity or unordained that is condemned, not the practice itself.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>29</sup> See Gethin 2001:98-100.

<sup>30</sup> Cf V 1:203 where sandalwood is one of the 5 perfumes (*añjan'upapisaṇa*) allowable.

<sup>31</sup> See also Cv 5.37 (V 2:143); cf Niss 21.3 (V 3:243 :: V:H 2:115 + nn1-2), Pāc 40.2.1 (V 4:123 :: V:H 2:415 n1).

<sup>32</sup> See **Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja Vatthu** (DhA 14.2.2a), SD 27.6a (2.5).

<sup>33</sup> Cv 5.8 = V 2:110-112; the story is given in greater detail at DhA 14.2a/3:199-203. In Comys, the Piṇḍola incident forms the prelude to the Buddha's performance of the twin wonder (*yamaka pāṭihāriya*): the explanation given is that the Buddha made the rule for his disciples, but not for himself! (DA 1:57; DhA 3:204; SnA 570; J 483/4:263). See JS Strong 1979, & S Sylvain Lévi & E Chavannes, "Les seize arhat protecteurs de la loi," *Journal Asiatique* 7 1916: 233-347.

<sup>34</sup> The full stock passage runs: "It neither conduces to faith for those without faith, nor to growth for the faithful. Indeed, bhikkhus, it conduces to the lack of faith for those without faith, and to the loss of faith of some in the faithful (*n'etaṃ bhikkhave appasannānaṃ vā pasādāya pasannānaṃ vā bhiyyo,bhāvāya, atha kho taṃ bhikkhave appasannānaṃ c'eva appasādāya pasannānaṃ ca ekaccānaṃ aññathattāyā ti*). (V 2:112, cf V 2:2)

<sup>35</sup> Cv 5.8 = V 2:110-112.

<sup>36</sup> The V Comy says that it is the miracle (*vikubban'iddhi,pāṭihāriya*) that is objected to, not the psychic power that is volitional in nature (*adhittān'iddhi*) (VA 1203). We do find, eg, in (**Pasāda,kampana**) **Moggallāna S** (S 51.14), the Buddha instructing Moggallāna to use his powers to shake up Migāra's Mansion wherein some monks are cavorting

**3.3.4** There are two other rules that are related to this rule, namely, the fourth Pārājika and the eighth Pācittiya. **The 4<sup>th</sup> Pārājika** states that a monk who makes a false claim to any kind of superhuman state entails defeat (that is, automatic falling from monkhood) (V 3:87-109). **The 8<sup>th</sup> Pācittiya** prohibits the declaration of a superhuman state that one actually possesses to an unordained (that is, either a novice or the laity), an offence that entails expiation (V 4:23-30). Again, here these two rules do not condemn psychic power, but their false claims and telling the unordained about it.<sup>37</sup>

## 4 Related suttas

### **4.1 (PĀṬIHĀRIYA) SAṄGĀRAVA SUTTA (A 3,60)**

**4.1.1** The Kevaḍḍha Sutta should be studied in connection with **the (Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava Sutta (A 3.60)**<sup>38</sup> that deals with the same three miracles. The interlocutor this time is the brahmin Saṅgārava, an overseer in charge of renovating dilapidated buildings. Saṅgārava meets the Buddha and claims that

We sacrifice and cause others to sacrifice...so both engage in a meritorious practice, the offering of sacrifice that extends to many people. But when one leaves the household life for the homeless life ... he attains nirvana for himself alone. This being the case, he only engages in a meritorious deed involving only one person...  
(A 3.60/1:168)

**4.1.2** The Buddha then replies that the Tathagata arises in the world for the benefit of the masses, teaching others the liberating truth that he himself has discovered, benefitting countless people. Ānanda then counter-questions Saṅgārava:

Which of these two practices appeals to you as being simpler and less harmful, and giving richer fruit and greater benefit?  
(A 3.60/1:169)

Saṅgārava avoids a direct answer (like Mahā Brahmā in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta [81-83]) by thrice replying to Ānanda: “I must honour and praise those like Master Gotama and Master Ānanda!”

**4.1.3** The Buddha then decides to “release Saṅgārava from that situation” and asks him what the courtiers at the royal palace are discussing that day. To this question, Saṅgārava replies:

The topic of conversation is this, Master Gotama: ‘Formerly there were fewer monks but there were more who performed miracles; but now there are more monks, but fewer who perform miracles.’  
(A 3.60/1:170)

**4.1.4** The Buddha replies by speaking on the 3 miracles but gives a more detailed account of the second miracle than in the Kevaḍḍha Sutta. This is especially interesting because it explains how “someone with faith<sup>39</sup> and devotion” [4, 6] is able to be an informed eye-witness of such a mind-searching psychic display by another, that is,

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on the second floor (S 51.14/5:269-271 @ SD 27.9), and the Buddha himself occasionally performing miraculous feats publicly, such as when crossing the Ganges on his last journey (D 2,1.33/2:89 @ SD 9).

<sup>37</sup> See also **(Pāṭihāriya) Mahaka S** (S 4.14/4:288-291), SD 27.2 & **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (7.2).

<sup>38</sup> A 3.60/1:168-173 @ SD 16.10. See also Bodhi (tr), *Numerical Discourses of the Buddha*, 1999:58-61.

<sup>39</sup> “Faith,” *saddhā*. There are 2 kinds of faith (*saddhā*): (1) “rootless faith” (*amūlika,saddhā*), baseless or irrational faith, blind faith. (M 2:170,21); (2) “faith with a good cause” (*ākāravati,saddhā*), faith founded on seeing (M 1:320,8 401,23); also called *avecca-p,pasāda* (S 12.41.11/2:69). “Wise faith” is syn with (2). *Amūlaka* = “not seen, not heard, not suspected” (V 2:243 3:163 & Comy). **Gethin** speaks of two kinds of faith: the cognitive and the affective (eg ERE:



- (1) By means of a sign (*nimitta*).
- (2) By hearing the voices of humans, non-humans or devas.
- (3) By listening to the sounds of a person's thought-vibrations<sup>40</sup> (*vitakka, vipphāra, sadda*).
- (4) By mentally penetrating the direction of his mental dispositions when he is in a thought-free state of meditation.

The Aṅguttara Commentary explains how each of these methods work:

- (1) By “a sign” is meant a revelation one receives from a deva who has supernormal knowledge of others' minds.
- (2) Through directly hearing the voices of those beings.
- (3) The third method depends on the subtle sounds produced by the thoughts that are penetrated by the divine ear itself.
- (4) For one in a thought-free meditation, the mind-reader can only predict, on the basis of the meditator's mental disposition, the thoughts he would think on emerging from the meditation.

At the end of the exposition, Saṅgārava takes refuge in the 3 jewels for life.

#### 4.2 PĀṬIKA SUTTA (D 24)

**4.2.1** In the **Pāṭika Sutta** (D 24,1.4-5), probably a late work (in the style of the Jātaka stories but of less subtle humour than the Kevaḍḍha Sutta), the Buddha explains to the unbelieving and foolish Sunakkhatta that it is not the purpose of this teaching to perform miracles or explain the origin of the world. Disappointed, Sunakkhatta leaves the Order and turns to the boastful charlatan Pāṭika,putta, a naked ascetic of Vesālī, who falsely claims to be an arhat. Pāṭika,putta challenges the Buddha to a duel of miracles but fails to turn up. As for the Buddha, after giving the public assembly a Dharma talk, “entered into the fire-element and rose into the air to the height of seven palm-trees, burst into flames and fragrance to the height of another seven palm-trees, and then reappeared in the Gable Hall in the Mahāvāna.” (D 24,2.13/3:27).

**4.2.2** The Commentary is remarkably silent on this significant episode. It is possible that this miracle episode was inserted later (D:W 598 n749). Although the Buddha has earlier declared that it is not the purpose of his teachings to perform miracles (D 24,1.4/3:3), the events that follow in the sutta contradict this declaration (D 24,2.13/3:27). On the problem of dating the Pāṭika Sutta, T W Rhys Davids says:

We are not entitled on these facts to suppose that the Pāṭika Suttanta was either earlier or later than the Kevaḍḍha, Both may have been already current in the community when the Dīgha was edited, and the editors may have been tolerant of whichever of the opposing views they did not share; or they may have thought the story should go in, as it clearly implied how very silly Sunakkhatta was, and how deplorably weak were the views he held. (D:RD 3:3)

**4.3 ROHITASSA SUTTA (A 4.45).** The Kevaḍḍha Sutta should be studied with the **Rohitassa Sutta** (A 4.45) that records an account of how the ascetic Rohitassa Bhoja,putta, using his psychic powers, spent his life tra-

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Faith & Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:387): “Faith in its cognitive dimension is seen as concerning belief in propositions or statements of which one does not—or perhaps cannot—have knowledge proper (however that should be defined); cognitive faith is a mode of knowing in a different category from that knowledge. Faith in its affective dimension is a more straightforward positive response to trust or confidence towards something or somebody ... the conception of *saddhā* in Buddhist writings appears almost, if not entirely affective, the cognitive element is completely secondary.” (Gethin 2001:207; my emphases).

<sup>40</sup> Bodhi's tr.

versing the universe at super speed, seeking the end of the universe, but failed to do so even with his death at 100.<sup>41</sup>

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## Kevaḍḍha Sutta

### The Discourse to Kevaḍḍha

D 11

**[211] 1** Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Pāvārika’s mango grove near Nālandā. Then, Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son approached the Blessed One, saluted him, and sat down at one side. Sitting at one side, Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son said:

1.2 “Bhante, this Nālandā is rich, prosperous, populous, and filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good, bhante, if the Blessed One were to instruct a monk to perform a psychic wonder (*iddhi, pāṭihāriya*) of the superhuman state<sup>42</sup> so that Nālandā would grow even greater in faith in the Blessed One.”

1.3 When this was said, the Blessed One said to Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son:

“Kevaḍḍha, I do not teach the monks the Dharma, thus:

‘Come, bhikshus, display a miracle to the white-clad lay people!’<sup>43</sup>

**2** For a 2<sup>nd</sup> time, Kevaddha the houselord’s son said to the Blessed One:

‘Bhante, I am not doing anything detrimental to (the interest of) the Blessed One, but I still say:

“Bhante, this Nālandā is rich, prosperous, populous, and filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good, bhante, if the Blessed One were to instruct a monk **[212]** to perform a psychic wonder of the superhuman state so that Nālandā would grow even greater in faith in the Blessed One.”

2.2 And for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, too, the Blessed One said to Kevaḍḍha the houselord’s son:

“Kevaḍḍha, I do not teach the monks thus:

‘Come, bhikshus, display a miracle to the white-clad lay people!’”

**3** And a 3<sup>rd</sup> time Kevaddha the houselord’s son, addressed the Blessed One, and said:

‘Bhante, I am not doing anything detrimental to (the interest of) the Blessed One, but I still say:

“Bhante, this Nālandā is rich, prosperous, populous, and filled with people who have faith in the Blessed One. It would be good, bhante, if the Blessed One were to instruct a monk to perform a psychic wonder of the superhuman state so that Nālandā would grow even greater in faith in the Blessed One.”

<sup>41</sup> A 4.45/2:47-49, SD 7.2.

<sup>42</sup> *Uttari, manussa, dhamma*, ie, it could refer to either psychic powers or saintly attainments, but here it is clear from the previous statement that it is the former.

<sup>43</sup> *Na kho dhammaṃ kevaḍḍha desemi bhikkhūnaṃ evaṃ dhammaṃ desemi—etha tumhe bhikkhave gihīnaṃ odā-ta, vasaṇānaṃ uttari, manussa, dhammā iddhi, pāṭihāriyaṃ karoṭhā ti*. The tenor of the remark here is that the Buddha does not regard psychic wonder as a part of his teaching, but conspicuous by its omission is that the Buddha does not mention that it is against the Vinaya—which means that the rule is not or has not been introduced yet. See **Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja Vatthu** (DhA 142.2.2a/3:199-203), SD 27.6a(2.5) & **Miracles**, SD 27.5a, esp (3.1).

## THE 3 KINDS OF MIRACLES

3.2 Kevaḍḍha, there are **these 3 kinds of psychic wonders**<sup>44</sup> that I have declared, having directly known and realized them for myself. What are the three?

The miracle of psychic power, the miracle of thought-reading, and the miracle of instruction.<sup>45</sup>

### (1) The miracle of psychic power

**4** And what, Kevaḍḍha, is **the wonder of psychic power (*iddhi, pāṭihāriya*)**?

Here, Kevaḍḍha, a monk has manifold psychic powers:

- (1) Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.
- (2) He appears, and vanishes.
- (3) He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.
- (4) He dives in and out of the earth **[213]** as if it were water.
- (5) He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.
- (6) Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.
- (7) With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.
- (8) He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.<sup>46</sup>

4.2 Then someone with faith and devotion sees him having manifold psychic powers<sup>47</sup>—

- (1) *Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.*
- (2) *He appears, and vanishes.*
- (3) *He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.*
- (4) *He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.*
- (5) *He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.*
- (6) *Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.*
- (7) *With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.*
- (8) *He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.*

**5** Then, that someone with faith and devotion reports to another who lacks faith and devotion, saying,

'Isn't it marvellous, sir? Isn't it wonderful, sir? How very powerful, how very mighty is this recluse! Just now I saw him having **various psychic wonders**, thus:

- (1) *Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.*
- (2) *He appears, and vanishes.*
- (3) *He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.*
- (4) *He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.*
- (5) *He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.*
- (6) *Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.*
- (7) *With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.*
- (8) *He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.'*

<sup>44</sup> These same three miracles are also mentioned in **(Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60). The moot point there however is "Formerly there were fewer monks but there were more who performed miracles; but now there are more monks, but fewer who perform miracles." (A 3.60/1:168-173), SD 16.10.

<sup>45</sup> Listed in **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,1.10(60)/3:220).

<sup>46</sup> *Yāva brahma, lokā pi kāyena va samvatteti* [Be:Ka *vasam vatteti*; also at M 12/1:69,18].

<sup>47</sup> **(Pāṭihāriya) Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60) explains how such a person may know another's mind: see Intro (3.2).

5.2 Then the person without faith or devotion would say to the person with faith and devotion:

‘Sir, there is something called **the Gandhārī charm**<sup>48</sup> by which a monk summons manifold psychic powers:

- (1) *Having been one he becomes many; having been many he becomes one.*
- (2) *He appears, and vanishes.*
- (3) *He goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space.*
- (4) *He dives in and out of the earth as if it were water.*
- (5) *He walks on water without sinking as if it were earth.*
- (6) *Sitting cross-legged, he flies through the air like a winged bird.*
- (7) *With his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful.*
- (8) *He has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.’*

5.3 What do you think, Kevaḍḍha, isn’t that what the man without faith or devotion would say to the man with faith and devotion?”

“Yes, bhante, he would say that.”

“Seeing this danger in the miracle of psychic power, Kevaḍḍha, I am pained, ashamed, disgusted<sup>49</sup> regarding the miracle of psychic power.

## (2) The miracle of thought-reading

**6** And what, Kevaḍḍha, is **the miracle of thought-reading (ādesanā, pāṭihāriya)?**

Here, Kevaḍḍha, a monk reads the mind, the mental state, the thought, the pondering, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘Such is your mind: this is your mind; thus is your thought.’<sup>50</sup>

Then, someone with faith and devotion sees the monk *reading the mind, mental state, thought, pondering, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘Such is your mind: this is your mind; thus is your thought.’*

**7** He reports this to someone who lacks faith and devotion, saying to him,

‘Isn’t it marvellous? **[214]** How very powerful is this recluse! Just now I saw him *reading the mind, mental state, thought, pondering, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘Such is your mind: this is your mind; thus is your thought.’*

7.2 Then, the person without faith or devotion, would say to the person with faith and devotion: ‘Sir, there is something called **the maṇika [jewel] charm**<sup>51</sup> by which a monk *reads the mind, mental state, thought, pondering, of other beings and other individuals, thus: ‘Such is your mind: this is your mind; such is your thought.’*

7.3 What do you think, Kevaḍḍha, isn’t that what the man without faith and devotion would say to the man with faith and devotion?”

“Yes, bhante, he would say that.”

7.4 “Seeing this danger to the miracle of thought-reading, Kevaḍḍha, I am pained, shamed, disgusted regarding the miracle of thought-reading.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The Gandhārī charm, *Gandhārī nāma vijjā*. The Jātaka mentions this charm as especially efficacious for making one invisible (J 4:498 f).

<sup>49</sup> “I am pained, ashamed, disgusted,” *aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi jigucchāmi*. See (3).

<sup>50</sup> *Evam pi te mano, itthaṃ pi te mano, iti pi te cittaṃ ti*. Thought-reading is an aspect of mind-reading (*ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*), which is itself a power of the “divine eye” (*dibba, cakkhu*): see (1). (**Pāṭihāriya**) **Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60.5), SD 16.10, & **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28,6/3:104 f), SD 14.10, give a more detailed def of mind-reading; see also SD 27.5a (5.3.2.2). On similar statements (and words of the mind), see SD 17.8a (12.4).

<sup>51</sup> *Maṇiko nāma vijjā*. The *maṇika* or “jewel” charm is identified by DA as the *cinta, maṇī vijjā*, ie the charm of the “wish-fulfilling gem,” which, however, according to **Jātaka** is efficacious for following up trails or tracing footsteps (J 3:504).

<sup>52</sup> On thought-reading, see SD 27.5a (5.5.4.4).

### (3) The miracle of instruction

**8** And what, Kevaḍḍha, is **the miracle of instruction [the miracle of education] (*anusāsani, pāṭihāriya*)?**

Here, Kevaḍḍha, a monk gives instruction in this way:

'You should think in this way, not in that way.

*Evaṃ vitakketha, mā evaṃ vitakkayittha*

Direct your attention to this, not to that.

*Evaṃ manasi karoṭha, mā evaṃ manasākattha*

Let go of this, dwell cultivating that.<sup>53</sup>

*Idaṃ pajahatha, idaṃ upasampajja viharatha*

This, Kevaḍḍha, is called the miracle of instruction.<sup>54</sup>

## THE FRUITS OF RECLUSESHIP

(*sāmañña, phala*)

**9** [D 2,40]<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, here a Tathagata appears in the world, an arhat, fully self-awakened one.

He teaches the Dharma good in its beginning, good in its middle, good in its end, both in the spirit and in the letter.

He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

**10** [D 2,41] A houselord or houselord's son, hearing the Dharma, gains faith in the Tathagata and reflects:

'The household life is stifling, a dusty path.<sup>56</sup> The life of renunciation is like the open air.

It is not easy living in a house to practise the holy life completely, in all its purity, like a polished conch-shell.

What if I were to shave off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robes, and go forth from the household life into homelessness?'

Then, after some time, he abandons all his pile of wealth, little or great, and circle of relatives, small or large, shaves off his hair and beard, puts on the saffron robes, and goes forth from the household life into homelessness.

Having thus gone forth he lives restrained in body, speech, and mind, content with the simplest food and shelter, delighting in solitude.

<sup>53</sup> This miracle of instruction is given in identical words in (**Pāṭihāriya**) **Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60,6) but receives its longest treatment here onwards. A canonical example of the Buddha's miracle of instruction is **Acchariya Sutta 2** (A 4.128) where after listening to the Buddha's teachings (1) those attached to the world let go of their worldly attachments (*ālaya*); (2) the conceited let go of their conceit (*māna*); (3) those not delighting in peace (*anupasama, rata*) turn to peace; (4) those with ignorance destroy their ignorance (*avijjā*) (A 2:131 f). AA gives examples of the miracle of instructions thus: "You should think thoughts of renunciation, not thoughts of sensuality. You should practise the perception of impermanence, not the perception of permanence. You should give up desire for the five cords of sensual pleasure and acquire the supramundane Dharma of the four paths and fruits."

<sup>54</sup> (**Pāṭihāriya**) **Saṅgārava S** (A 3.60) climaxes with Saṅgārava's answering the Buddha as regards to which of the three miracles appeals to him, thus: "As to the miracles of psychic power and of mind-reading, only the one who performs them will experience their fruit: they belong only to the performer. These two appear to me as being of the nature of a conjurer's trick. But as to the miracle of instruction, it appeals to me the most!" (A 3.60/1:172, abridged), SD 16.10.

<sup>55</sup> §§9-13 is given as *peyyāla* (abbreviated passage) in the text, but is here laid out in full.

<sup>56</sup> *Sambādho gharavāso rajā, patho*. There is a wordplay on *sambādha*, "crowded, stifling, narrow, full of hindrances," which also refers to the sexual organ, male (V 1:216, 2:134) or female (V 4:259; Sn 609; J 1:61, 4:260). *Rajā, patha*, "a dusty path," here refers to "the dust of passion," and to "the path of returning" (*āgamana, patha*), ie rebirth (DA 1:180,17 = MA 2:179,20; UA 237,27).

**11** [D 2,42] When he has thus gone forth,  
he lives restrained by the rules of the monastic code (Pāṭimokkha),  
possessed of proper conduct and resort.<sup>57</sup>

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

He comes to be endowed with wholesome bodily and verbal deeds, his livelihood is purified,  
and he is possessed of moral virtue.

He guards the sense-doors, is possessed of mindfulness and clear knowing, and is content.

### [THE MORALITIES §12-44]<sup>58</sup>

#### Perfection of moral virtue

**12** [D 2,43] And how, Kevaḍḍha, is a monk accomplished in moral virtue?

Here, Kevaḍḍha, a monk, having abandoned the destruction of life, he abstains from destroying life. He dwells with rod and sword laid down, conscientious, merciful, compassionate for the welfare of all living beings.

This is part of his moral virtue.

(2) Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, he abstains from taking what is not given. He takes only what is given, accepts only what is given, lives not by stealth but by means of a pure mind.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(3) Having abandoned incelibacy, he lives a celibate life, living apart, abstaining from the sexual act,<sup>59</sup> the way of the village.<sup>60</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**13** [D 2,44] (4) Having abandoned false speech, he abstains from false speech.

He<sup>61</sup> speaks the truth, the truth is his bond,<sup>62</sup> trustworthy, reliable, no deceiver of the world.<sup>63</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(5) Having abandoned divisive speech, he abstains from divisive speech.

What he has heard here he does not tell there to break those people apart from these people here. **[64]**

What he has heard there he does not tell here to break these people apart from those people there.

Thus reconciling those who have broken apart or consolidating those who are united, he loves concord, delights in concord, enjoys concord, speaks things that create concord.<sup>64</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

<sup>57</sup> "Resort" (*gocara*), lit "the cow's routine path or pasture." Here it refers to two aspects of the renunciate's life. In the Canon, it refers to places that are regarded as suitable for collecting almsfood (V 2:208). In this sense, *agocara* refers to places that are unsuitable for renunciates to resort to (whether for alms or otherwise) (D 1:63 = It 118; M 1:33; S 5:187; It 96; cf Dh 22). In Comys, *gocara* refers to places suitable for meditation (Vism 127). We can also take *gocara* here in the psychological sense of *ārammana*, that is, sense-objects. In other words, one "possessed of proper conduct and resort" may mean "accomplished in proper conduct of body and of mind."

<sup>58</sup> These 3 sections on moral virtue (*sīla*) occur verbatim (in whole or with some omissions) in all of the 1<sup>st</sup> 13 suttas constituting *Sīla Vagga* (the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter) of *Dīgha Nikāya* and, according to T W Rhys Davids, may once have formed a separate "tract" (D:RD 1:3 n1). The Moralities section here have been collated with parallel refs in **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2), SD 8.10 (3). See also **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,8-27/1:4-11), SD 25, **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 2,43-62/2:63-69), SD 8.10.

<sup>59</sup> *Brahma,cariya* is the supreme conduct or holy life, ie, celibacy. DA points out that it involves abstaining from other forms of erotic behaviour besides intercourse.

<sup>60</sup> *gāma,dhamma*, ie, the way of the householder, vulgar (in the sense of being associated with the masses).

<sup>61</sup> PTS ed has *samaṇo Gotamo* here, which seems rather abrupt.

<sup>62</sup> "The truth is his bond," *sacca,sandha*. Comy glosses as *saccena saccam sandahati*, "he joins truth with truth" (MA 1:206 = DA 1:73).

<sup>63</sup> *Sacca,vādī sacca,sandho theto paccayiko avisaṃvādako lokassa*: as in **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30,2.16/3:170), SD 36.9.

<sup>64</sup> This para is stock, eg **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,9/1:286 f), SD 5.7 & **Sevitabbāsevitabba S** (M 114,6.7/3:49), SD 39.8.

(6) Having abandoned abusive speech, he abstains from abusive speech.

He speaks words that are gentle, pleasant to the ear, loving, touching the heart, urbane, delightful and pleasing to the people.<sup>65</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

(7) Having abandoned frivolous talk, he abstains from frivolous talk.

He speaks at the right time, speaks what is true, speaks what is beneficial [good].<sup>66</sup>

He speaks on the Dharma [teaching]<sup>67</sup> and the Vinaya [discipline].<sup>68</sup>

He speaks words worth treasuring, timely, [D 1:5] backed by reason, credible [with authority], connected with the goal.<sup>69</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

### **General** [D 1,1.10/1:5,4]

13.2 (8) He abstains from damaging seeds and plant life.<sup>70</sup>

### **Sāmaṇera,sikkhā 6-10** [D 1,1.10/1:5,5-12]

(9) He eats only once a day, abstaining from the evening meal and from food at improper times.<sup>71</sup>

(10) He abstains from dancing, singing, music and from watching shows.

(11) He abstains from wearing garlands and from beautifying himself with scents and make-up.

(12) He abstains from high and luxurious beds and seats.

(13) He abstains from accepting gold and silver [money].

### **General** [D 1,1.10/1:5,12-27]

(14) He abstains from accepting uncooked grain; raw meat; women and girls; male and female slaves; goats and sheep, fowl and pigs; elephants, cattle, horses, and mares.

(15) He abstains from accepting fields and lands [property].<sup>72</sup>

(16) He abstains from running messages [or errands].

(17) He abstains from buying and selling.

(18) He abstains from dealing with false scales, false metals, and false measures.

(19) He abstains from bribery, deception, and fraud.

(20) He abstains from wounding, executing, imprisoning, highway robbery, plunder, and violence.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

<sup>65</sup> *Yā sā vācā nelā kaṇṇa,sukhā pemaṇiyā hadayaṅ,gamā porī bahu.jana,kantā bahu.jana,manāpā tathā,rūpim vācam bhāsītā hoti.*

<sup>66</sup> *Kāla,vādī bhūta,vādī attha,vādī.* Comy glosses *attha,vādī*, as that he speaks about what is connected with the spiritual goal here and now, and hereafter (MA 2:208; DA 1:76). However, here, I have rendered *attha* as “the beneficial, the good (incl the goal),” which fits the flow of ideas better. As *attha* (as “goal”) appears at the end of this stock passage, I have rendered this closing word as “the goal,” which seems more fitting.

<sup>67</sup> He speaks on the 9 supramundane things (*nava lok’uttara,dhamma*) (MA 2:208 = DA 1:76), ie the 4 paths, 4 fruitions, nirvana (Dhs 1094).

<sup>68</sup> *Dhamma,vādī vinaya,vādī.* The disciplines of restraint (*saṁvara*) (of the senses) and of letting go (*pahāna*) (of defilements) (MA 2:208 = DA 1:76). We can also connect *attha,vādī* (in the prec line) here, as alt have “He speaks on meanings, he speaks on teachings, he speaks on the discipline.”

<sup>69</sup> *Nidhāna,vatim vācam bhāsītā kālena sâpadesam pariyanta,vatim attha,samhitam.* *Sâpadesa = sa* (“with”) + *apadesa* (DP: “designation, pointing out, reference; witness, authority”). *Pariyanta,vati* means “within limits, well defined.” On “the goal” (*attha*), see n on “speaks on the beneficial” above here.

<sup>70</sup> Curiously, this replaces the precept against intoxicants which is omitted.

<sup>71</sup> “Improper times” here means between noon and the following dawn (V 1:83).

<sup>72</sup> The Buddha however accepted land from rajahs like Bimbisāra and Pasenadi, and others like Anāthapiṇḍaka and Visākhā, which were received in the name of the Sangha. What is connoted here is accepting land on a personal basis.

## THE MEDIUM SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE

**14** [D 1,1.11] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on **damaging seeds and plant life** such as these:

plants propagated from roots, stems, joints, buddings, and seeds [65]—  
he abstains from damaging seeds and plant life such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue. [D 1:6]

**15** [D 1,1.12] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on **consuming stored-up goods** such as these:

stored-up food, stored-up drinks, stored-up clothing, stored-up vehicles, stored-up bedding,  
stored-up scents, and stored-up meat—

he abstains from consuming stored-up goods such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**16** [D 1,1.13] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on **watching shows** such as these:

dancing, singing, music, plays, ballad recitations, hand-clapping, cymbals and drums, painted scenes,<sup>73</sup>  
acrobatic and conjuring tricks,<sup>74</sup> elephant fights, horse fights, buffalo fights, bull fights, goat fights,  
ram fights, cock fights, quail fights; fighting with staves, boxing, wrestling, war-games, roll calls,  
battle arrays, and troop movements—

he abstains from watching shows such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**17** [D 1,1.14] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on **heedless and idle games** such as these—

eight-row chess, ten-row chess, chess in the air, hopscotch, spillikins [or jackstraws], dice, stick games,  
hand-pictures,<sup>75</sup> ball-games [marbles], blowing through toy pipes [playing whistling games with folded  
leaves], playing with toy ploughs, turning somersaults [acrobatics], playing with toy windmills, toy  
measures, toy chariots, toy bows, guessing letters drawn in the air or on one's back, guessing  
thoughts, mimicking deformities—[D 1:7]

he abstains from heedless and idle games such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**18** [D 1,1.15] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on **high and luxurious furnishings** such as these—

over-sized couches, couches adorned with carved animals, long-haired coverlets, multi-colored patch  
work coverlets, white woollen coverlets, woollen coverlets embroidered with flowers or animal figures,  
stuffed quilts, coverlets with fringes, silk coverlets embroidered with gems; large woollen carpets;  
elephant, horse, and chariot rugs, antelope-hide rugs, deer-hide rugs; couches with awnings,  
couches with red cushions for the head and feet—[1:66]

he abstains from using high and luxurious furnishings such as these.

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

<sup>73</sup> *Sobha, nagarakam*, “of the city of Sobha” (the city of the Gandharvas or heavenly musicians). RD thinks it refers to a ballet with fairy scenes. Bodhi: “art exhibitions.”

<sup>74</sup> *Caṇḍālam vaṃsam dhapanam*, an obscure phrase. The performers were presumably of the lowest caste. DA thinks of an iron ball (used for juggling?). Cf **Citta Sambhūta J** (J 4:390) where the phrase appears.

<sup>75</sup> The hand is dipped in paint or dye, then struck on the ground or a wall, so that the player creates the figure of an elephant, a horse, etc. In classical Thai literature, the artful trickster Sī Thanonchai (Skt, Śrī Dhanañjaya) is well known for this skill.



**19** [D 1,1.16] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, enjoy scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification* such as these:

rubbing powders into the body, massaging with oils, bathing in perfumed water, kneading the limbs, using mirrors, ointments, garlands, scents, creams, face-powders, mascara [darkening one's eye-lashes], bracelets, head-bands, decorated walking sticks, ornamented water-bottles, swords, fancy sunshades, decorated sandals, turbans, gems, yak-tail whisks, long-fringed white robes—  
*he abstains from using scents, cosmetics, and means of beautification such as these.*

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**20** [D 1,1.17] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on low chatter,*<sup>76</sup> *such as these:*

talking about kings, robbers, ministers of state; armies, dangers, and wars; food and drink; clothing, furniture, garlands, and scents; relatives; vehicles; villages, towns, cities, the countryside; women [D 1:8] and heroes; the gossip of the street and the well; tales of the dead; tales of diversity [philosophical discussions of the past and the future], the creation of the world and of the sea, and talk of whether things exist or not [or, talk about gain and loss]<sup>77</sup>—

*he abstains from talking about low topics such as these.*

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**21** [D 1,1.18] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, are bent on debates* such as these—

'You do not understand this Dharma [Teaching] and Vinaya [Discipline].

I understand this Dharma and Vinaya. What could you understand of this Dharma and Vinaya?

You are practising wrongly. I am practising rightly. I am being consistent. You are inconsistent.

What should be said first you said after. What should be said after you said first. What you took so long to think out has been refuted. Your viewpoint has been overthrown. You are defeated.

Go and try to salvage your viewpoint; extricate yourself if you can!<sup>78</sup>

*he abstains from debates such as these.*

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**22** [D 1,1.19] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, [1:67] are bent on relaying messages and running errands* for people such as these:

kings, ministers of state, noble warriors, brahmins, householders, or youths (who say),

'Go here, go there, take this there, fetch that here'—

*he abstains from running messages and errands for people such as these.*

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**23** [D 1,1.20] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, engage in deceitful pretensions* (to attainments), flattery (for gain), subtle insinuation or hinting (for gain), pressuring (for offerings), and pursuing gain with gain,

<sup>76</sup> *Tiracchāna, kathā*, lit animal talk. As animals mostly walk parallel to the earth, so this kind of talk does not lead on upwards. Cf Lohicca S (D 1:228).

<sup>77</sup> *Iti, bhavābhāva, kathā*, may be rendered as "being and non-being" or as "profit and loss," but according to Walshe, the philosophical sense (as in Horner and Ñāṇamoli translations of Sandaka S, M 76) is preferable.

<sup>78</sup> This is stock: **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1:8), **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 1:66), **Pāsādika S** (D 3:117), **Saṅgīti S** (D 3:210), **Mahā Sakuludāyī S** (M 2:3), **Sāmagāma S** (M 2:245), **Hālidakāni S 1** (S 3:12), **Viggāhika Kathā S** (S 5:418) and **Mahā Nid- desa** (Nm 1:173). See Brahma, jāla S, D 1:2 f. Cf **Alagaddūpama S** (M 22) where a similar statement is made regarding the wrong reason for learning the Dharma (M 22,10/1:133).

*he abstains from such pretensions and flattery.*<sup>79</sup>

This, too, is part of his moral virtue. [D 1:9]

### THE GREAT SECTION ON MORAL VIRTUE<sup>80</sup>

**24** [D 1,1.21] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by **wrong livelihood** through the low arts such as:*

reading marks on the limbs [eg, palmistry, sole-reading];

reading omens and signs;

interpreting celestial events [lightning, falling stars, comets];

interpreting dreams;

reading marks on the body [eg, physiognomy, phrenology];

reading marks on cloth gnawed by mice;

offering fire oblations, oblations from a ladle, oblations of husks, rice powder, rice grains, ghee, and oil;

offering oblations using oral spells;

offering blood-sacrifices;

making predictions based on the fingertips;

determining whether the site for a proposed house or garden is propitious or not [geomancy];

making predictions for officers of state;

laying demons in a cemetery;

laying spirits;

reciting house-protection charms [or using charms recited by those living in an earthen house];

snake charming, treating poisoning, curing scorpion-stings and rat-bites;

interpreting animal and bird sounds and the cawing of crows;

foretelling the remaining duration of life;

reciting charms for protection against arrows;

reciting charms to understand the calls of birds and animals

—*he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.*

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**25** [D 1,1.22] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by **wrong livelihood** through the low arts such as:*

determining lucky and unlucky gems, staffs, garments, swords, arrows, bows, and other weapons;

determining lucky and unlucky women, men, boys, girls, male slaves, female slaves;

determining lucky and unlucky elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, cows, goats, rams, fowl, quails,

lizards [or iguana], long-eared rodents,<sup>81</sup> tortoises, and other animals

—*he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.*

This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**26** [D 1,1.23] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by **wrong livelihood** through the low arts such [1:68] as forecasting thus: [D 1:10]*

<sup>79</sup> For details, see Vism 1.61-82.

<sup>80</sup> For Pali listing and nn, see **Brahma, jāla S** (D 1,21-27), SD 25.2.

<sup>81</sup> *Kaṇṇika, lakkaṇam*, from *kaṇṇa*, “ear.” DA thinks it means either ear-rings or house-gables, both of which do not fit here. Walshe follows the Thai tr which, probably following an old tradition, has *tun*, “bamboo-rat” (see McFarland, *Thai-English Dictionary*, p371). Franke says “an animal that is always mentioned with the hare” and considers that it must mean an animal with long ears.

the leaders [rajahs]<sup>82</sup> will march forth [advance];  
 the leaders will return [retreat];  
 our leaders will attack, and their leaders will retreat;  
 their leaders will attack, and our leaders will retreat;  
 there will be triumph for our leaders and defeat for their leaders;  
 there will be triumph for their leaders and defeat for our leaders;  
 thus there will be triumph, thus there will be defeat  
 —*he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.*  
 This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**27** [D 1,1.24] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by **wrong livelihood** through the low arts such as *forecasting* thus:  
 there will be a lunar eclipse;  
 there will be a solar eclipse;  
 there will be an occultation of an asterism;  
 the sun and moon will go their normal courses;  
 the sun and moon will go astray;  
 the asterisms will go their normal courses;  
 the asterisms will go astray;  
 there will be a meteor shower;  
 there will be a darkening of the sky;  
 there will be an earthquake;  
 there will be thunder coming from a clear sky;  
 there will be a rising, a setting, a darkening, a brightening of the sun, moon, and asterisms;  
 such will be the result of the lunar eclipse, of the solar eclipse *and so on*  
 —*he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.* [D 1:11]  
 This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**28** [D 1,1.25] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by **wrong livelihood** through the low arts such [1:69] as *forecasting* thus:  
 there will be abundant rain; there will be a drought;  
 there will be plenty; there will be famine;  
 there will be rest and security; there will be danger;  
 there will be disease; there will be health [freedom from disease];  
 or they earn their living by counting, accounting, calculation,  
 composing poetry, or teaching hedonistic arts and doctrines  
 —*he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.*  
 This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**29** [D 1,1.26] Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by **wrong livelihood** through the low arts such as:  
 calculating auspicious dates for marriages (where the bride is brought home or leaves the house),  
 betrothals, divorces;  
 calculating auspicious dates for collecting debts or making investments and loans; reciting charms  
 for becoming attractive or unattractive;  
 curing women who have undergone miscarriages or abortions [or, reviving the fetuses of abortive  
 women];<sup>83</sup>

<sup>82</sup> *Raññam* (gen pl), ie the joint leaders (rajahs) of a republican state in ancient India.

<sup>83</sup> *Viruddha, gabbha, karaṇam*.

reciting spells to bind a man's tongue, to paralyze his jaws, to make him lose control over his hands, or to bring on deafness;  
 getting oracular answers to questions addressed to a mirror, to a young girl, or to a spirit medium;  
 worshipping the sun, worshipping Mahā Brahmā, bringing forth flames from the mouth, invoking the goddess of luck  
 —*he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.*  
 This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

**30** [D 1,1.27] *Whereas some recluses and brahmins, living off food given in faith, maintain themselves by **wrong livelihood** through the low arts such as:*  
 promising gifts to deities in return for favors; fulfilling such promises;  
 demonology;  
 teaching house-protection spells;  
 inducing virility and impotence;  
 consecrating sites for construction;  
 giving ceremonial mouthwashes and ceremonial bathing;  
 offering sacrificial fires;  
 preparing emetics, purgatives, expectorants, diuretics, headache cures;  
 preparing ear-oil, eye-drops, oil for treatment through the nose, collyrium [eye-wash] and counter-ointments;  
 curing cataracts, practising surgery, practising as a children's doctor, administering medicines and treatments to cure their after-effects  
 —*he abstains from wrong livelihood through such low arts as these.*<sup>84</sup> [D 1,1.27 ends here.] [D 1:12]  
 This, too, is part of his moral virtue.

### ***Confidence through practising the above moralities***

**31** A monk, Kevaḍḍha, thus accomplished in **moral virtue** sees no danger anywhere owing to his restraint through moral virtue.  
 Just as a head-anointed noble kshatriya rajah who has defeated his enemies sees no danger anywhere from his enemies, [1:70]  
 in the same way the monk thus accomplished in moral virtue sees no danger owing to his restraint through moral virtue.

Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, he feels within himself a blameless joy.<sup>85</sup>

This is how a monk is accomplished in moral virtue.

<sup>84</sup> It is the practice of medicine for gain that is here condemned. (Walshe)

<sup>85</sup> "A blameless joy," *anavajja,sukham*. Comy: "He experiences within himself a blameless, faultless, wholesome bodily and mental joy accompanied by such phenomena as non-worry, gladness, rapture, and tranquillity, which are based on moral virtue as their proximate cause" (DA 1:183); "a joy free from faults" (*niddosa,sukha*, MA 2:214 = AA 3:198). Evidently, this joy arises on account of being free from the fear of being blamed of moral faults. Cf *avyāseka,sukha*: see D 2,64/1:70 (SD 8.10).

## (B) MENTAL CULTIVATION

Sense-restraint (Custody of the senses)

**32** And how, Kevaddha, does a monk **guard the sense-doors**?

<sup>86</sup>(1) Here, Kevaddha,  
when a monk sees a form with **the eye**, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.<sup>87</sup>

So long as he dwells unrestrained in that eye-faculty,  
bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure<sup>88</sup> might overwhelm him,  
to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He guards the eye-faculty; he maintains the restraint of the eye-faculty.

(2) When he hears a sound with **the ear**, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.  
So long as he dwells unrestrained in that ear-faculty,

bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him,  
to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He guards the ear-faculty; he maintains the restraint of the ear-faculty.

(3) When he smells a smell with **the nose**, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.  
So long as he dwells unrestrained in that nose-faculty,

bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him,  
to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

He guards the nose-faculty; he maintains the restraint of the nose-faculty.

(4) When he tastes a taste with **the tongue**, he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.  
So long as he dwells unrestrained in that tongue-faculty,

bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him,  
to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.

<sup>86</sup> This whole para: *Idha mahārāja bhikkhu cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā na nimitta-g, gāhī hoti nānuvyañjana-g, gāhī. Yatvādhikaraṇaṃ enaṃ cakkhundriyaṃ asaṃvutaṃ viharantaṃ abhijjhā, domanassā pāpakā akusalā dhammā an-vāssaveyyuṃ, tassa saṃvarāya paṭipajjati, rakkhati cakkhundriyaṃ, cakkhundriye saṃvaraṃ āpajjati. On 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),” see SD 19.14. 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 (*ditṭhi*, *matta*, *vasena*); “**detail**” (*anuvyañjana*) here refers to finding delight by grasping at another’s limb or body part (eyes, arms, legs, etc) (Nm 2:390; Nc 141, 141; DhsA 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 13.1 (3.1.4).*

<sup>87</sup> See **Nimitta & anuvyañjana**, SD 19.14.

<sup>88</sup> “Covetousness and displeasure,” *abhijjhā, domanassaṃ*, which Walshe (1995:335 & n632) renders as “hankering and fretting for the world”; alt tr “covetousness and displeasure” or “longing and loathing.” MA says that longing and displeasure signify the first two 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 five hindrances. Cf M 1:274/39.13; see also **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.13) and **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10.36) on how to deal with the hindrances in our meditation. The monk effects the abandoning of the hindrances by the contemplations of impermanence, fading away (of lust), cessation (of suffering) and 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 3.101): “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 disadvantages (*ādīnava*) in the world—the removal and abandoning of desire and lust for the world, that is the escape from the world.’” (A 3.101/1:258, pointed out to me by Robert Eddison).

*He guards the tongue-faculty, he maintains the restraint of the tongue-faculty.*

(5) When he feels a touch with **the body**, *he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.*  
*So long as he dwells unrestrained in that body-faculty,*  
*bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him,*  
*to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.*  
*He guards the body-faculty; he maintains the restraint of the body-faculty.*

(6) When he cognizes a mind-object with **the mind**, *he grasps neither its sign nor its detail.*  
*So long as he dwells unrestrained in that mind-faculty,*  
*bad, unwholesome states of covetousness and displeasure might overwhelm him,*  
*to that extent, he therefore keeps himself restrained.*  
*He guards the mind-faculty, he maintains the restraint of the mind-faculty.<sup>89</sup>*

Possessing this noble restraint over the sense-faculties, he feels within himself an undefiled joy.<sup>90</sup>

This, Kevaḍḍha, is how a monk guards the sense-doors.

## Mindfulness and clear knowing<sup>91</sup>

**33** And how, Kevaḍḍha, is a monk possessed of **mindfulness and clear knowing**?

Here, Kevaḍḍha,

- |                                                                                                                                |                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| (1) in going forward or back,                                                                                                  | he clearly knows what he is doing;        |
| (2) in looking forward or back,                                                                                                | <i>he clearly knows what he is doing;</i> |
| (3) in bending or stretching,                                                                                                  | <i>he clearly knows what he is doing;</i> |
| (4) in carrying his upper robe, outer robe and bowl,                                                                           | <i>he clearly knows what he is doing;</i> |
| (5) in eating, drinking, chewing and tasting,                                                                                  | <i>he clearly knows what he is doing;</i> |
| (6) in voiding or peeing,                                                                                                      | <i>he clearly knows what he is doing;</i> |
| (7) in walking, in standing, in sitting, in being asleep,<br>in being awake, <sup>92</sup> in talking, or in remaining silent, | <i>he clearly knows what he is doing.</i> |

This, Kevaḍḍha, is how **[71]** a monk is possessed of mindfulness and clear knowing.

## Contentment

**34** And how, Kevaḍḍha, is a monk **content**?

Here, Kevaḍḍha, he is *content* with **robes** to protect his body and with **almsfood** to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes he sets out only with these with him.

Here, Kevaḍḍha, just as **a bird**, wherever it goes, flies with its wings as its only burden;

<sup>89</sup> D 2,64/1:70, 10,2.2/1:207, 33,1.11(10)/3:225; M 27,15/1:180, 33,20/1:223, 38,35/1:269, 51,16/1:346, 53,8/-1:355, 94,18/2:162, 101,33/2:226; S 35.120/4:104, 35.239/4:176; A 3.16/1:113, 4.14/2:16, 4.37/2:39, 4.164/2:152 (ī4), 4.198,11/2:210, 5.76,12/3:99 f, 5.140,11/3:163, 10.99,6/5:206, 11.18,23/5:351. For a detailed analysis, see Vism 1.53-69/20-22. For a study, see *Nimitta & anuvyañjana*, SD 19.14.

<sup>90</sup> "A joy that is undefiled," *avyāseka,sukhaṃ* [vl *abyāseka,sukhaṃ*]. Comy: "He experiences the purified joy of higher consciousness (*adhicitta,sukha*), which is undefiled, unblemished, since it is devoid of the blemish of the defilements" (DA 1:183; MA 2:213 = AA 3:198). Evidently, this joy arises from meditation and mindfulness; cf *anavajja,sukha* above [§63].

<sup>91</sup> *Sati,sampajañña = sati*, "mindfulness," *sampajañña*, "clear knowing." In *Satipaṭṭhānas Ss*, however, this section is simply "clear knowing" (*sampajañña*)." See SD 13.1 (3.6.3).

<sup>92</sup> "In being asleep, in being awake" *sutte jāgarite*. Comy glosses *sutte* as *sayane*, "lying down, sleeping." See SD 13 (3.6.3).

so too. Kevaḍḍha, is he content with robes to protect his body and with almsfood to sustain his belly, and wherever he goes, he takes only these with him.<sup>93</sup>

This, Kevaḍḍha, is how a monk is content.

### Abandoning the mental hindrances

**35** [D 2,67] Possessing *this noble aggregate of moral virtue, this noble restraint over the sense faculties, this noble mindfulness and clear knowing, and this noble contentment,*

he seeks out a secluded dwelling:

a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a glen, a hillside cave, a charnel ground, a jungle grove, the open air, a heap of straw.

Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, holds his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.<sup>94</sup>

**36** [D 2,68] (1) Abandoning **covetousness** with regard to the world, he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness.

(2) Abandoning **ill will and anger**, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.

(3) Abandoning **sloth and torpor**, he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light. He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.

(4) Abandoning **restlessness and worry**, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and worry.

(5) Abandoning **spiritual doubt**, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states. He cleanses his mind of doubt.

### Parables for joy without hindrances

**37** [D 2:69] (1) “Suppose, Kevaḍḍha, that a man, **taking a loan**, invests it in his businesses. His businesses succeed. He repays his old debts and there is a surplus for wife and ornaments.

The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, taking a loan, I invested it in my businesses. Now my businesses have succeeded.

I have repaid my old debts and there is a surplus for wife and ornaments.’

Because of that he would experience zest and joy.

**38** [D 2:70] (2) Suppose, Kevaḍḍha, that a man **falls sick**, in pain and seriously ill. He does not enjoy his meals and there is no strength in his body.

As time passes, he recovers from that sickness.

He enjoys his meals and there is strength in his body.

The thought would occur to him,

‘Before, I was sick; now I have recovered from that sickness.

I enjoy my meals and there is strength in my body.’

Because of that he would experience zest and joy.

**39** [D 2:71] (3) Suppose, Kevaḍḍha, that a man is **bound in prison**.

As time passes, he eventually is released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of property.

<sup>93</sup> This bird parable: D 2,66/1:71= M 51,15/1:346 = 38,34/1:268 = 112,14/3:35 = A 4.198,10/2:209 f.

<sup>94</sup> Comy. He applies mindfulness towards his meditation subject; or he sets it up in the region of the mouth. As such, it is said in **Vibhaṅga**: “This mindfulness is set up, set up well, at the tip of the nose or at the sign of the mouth” (Vbh §537/252). NT: The “sign of the mouth” (*mukha, nimitta*) is the middle region of the upper lip, against which the air strikes when it comes out of the nose.

The thought would occur to him,  
 ‘Before, I was bound in prison.  
 Now I am released from that bondage, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’  
 Because of that he would experience zest and joy.

**40** [D 2:72] (4) Suppose, Kevaḍḍha, that a man is **a slave**, subject to others, not subject to himself, unable to go where he likes. As time passes, he eventually is released from that slavery, subject to himself, not subject to others, free, able to go where he likes. The thought would occur to him,  
 ‘Before, I was a slave, subject to others, not subject to myself, unable to go where I like.  
 Now I am released from that slavery, not subject to others, subject to myself, able to go where I like.’  
 Because of that he would experience zest and joy.

**41** [D 2:73] (5) Suppose, Kevaḍḍha, that a man, **carrying money and goods**, is travelling by a road through desolate country. As time passes, he eventually emerges from that desolate country, safe and sound, with no loss of property. The thought would occur to him,  
 ‘Before, bearing money and goods, I was traveling by a road through desolate country.  
 Now I have emerged from that desolate country, safe and sound, with no loss of my property.’  
 Because of that he would experience zest and joy.

**42** [D 2:74] In the same way, Kevaḍḍha, when these 5 hindrances are not abandoned in himself, the monk regards it as a debt, a sickness, a prison, slavery, a road through desolate country.

**43** [D 2,75] In the same way, Kevaḍḍha, when he knows that these 5 hindrances are abandoned in him, the monk regards it as solvency, good health, release from prison, emancipation, a place of security.

**44** [D 2,76] Seeing that they have been abandoned within him, he becomes glad. For one who is glad, zest arises.

For one whose mind zestful, the body is tranquil.  
 One tranquil in body feels joyful.  
 For one who is happy, the mind concentrates.<sup>95</sup>

## THE 4 DHYANAS

### The 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana

**45** [D 2,77] Quite detached from sense-objects, detached from unwholesome mental states, he attains and dwells in **the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, **[215]** accompanied by zest and joy born of solitude.<sup>96</sup> He permeates and pervades, floods and fills, this very body with the zest and joy born of solitude. There is no part of his entire body<sup>97</sup> unpervaded by zest and joy born of solitude.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>95</sup> *Tass’ime pañca nīvaraṇe pahīṇe attani samanupassato pāmojjaṃ jāyati. Pamuditassa pīti jāyati. Pītimanassa kāyo passambhati. Passaddha, kāyo sukhaṃ vedeti. Sukhino cittaṃ samādhīyati.* This important stock passage is found throughout the Nikāyas: see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,76/1:73), SD 8.10 n for refs. See also SD 10.15 (4.4.2).

<sup>96</sup> Ie samadhi. Dhyana factors: *vitakka vicāra pīti sukhasa ek’aggatā*.

<sup>97</sup> Here “body” (*kāya*) refers to the “mental body” (*nāma, kāya*), ie, feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (Vism 4.175/169). AA however says that it refers to the “living physical body” (*karaja, kāya*, AA 3:232).

<sup>98</sup> These are the dhyana-factors: *vitakka vicāra pīti sukhasa ek’aggatā*, respectively.



**46** [D 2,78] Kevaḍḍha, just as **a skilled bathman or bathman’s apprentice** would pour bath powder into a brass basin and knead it together, sprinkling it again and again with water, and knead it together, so that his ball of bath lather—saturated, moisture-laden, permeated within and without—would not drip;<sup>99</sup> even so, Kevaḍḍha, the monk permeates this very body with the zest and joy born from solitude. There is no part of his entire body unpervaded by zest and joy born of solitude.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

### The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana

**47** [D 2,79] Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, with the stilling of initial application and sustained application, by gaining inner tranquillity [serene faith] and singleness of mind,<sup>100</sup> he attains and dwells in **the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana**, free of initial application and sustained application,<sup>101</sup> accompanied by zest and joy born of concentration. He permeates and pervades, floods and fills this very body with zest and joy born of concentration.

**48** [D 2,80] Kevaḍḍha, just as **a lake with spring-water welling up from within**, having *no* inflow from the eastern quarter, *no* inflow from the western quarter, *no* inflow from the northern quarter, *no* inflow from the southern quarter, and the skies not pouring frequent and timely torrents.<sup>102</sup> Yet the cool spring, welling up from within the lake, would permeate and pervade, flood and fill it with cool waters—there being no part of the lake unpervaded by the cool waters; even so, Kevaḍḍha, the monk permeates this very body with the zest and joy born of concentration. There is no part of his entire body unpervaded by zest and joy born of concentration.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

### The 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana

**49** [D 2,81] Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences joy with the body. He attains and dwells in **the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana**, of which the noble ones declare, ‘Happily he dwells in equanimity and mindfulness.’ He permeates and pervades, floods and fills, this very body with joy (of mind) free from zest (of body).

<sup>99</sup> From “so that ... would not drip,” *sā’ssa nahāniya piṇḍī snehā’nugatā sneha,paretā santara,bāhirā phutā sine-hena na ca paggharaṇī*.

<sup>100</sup> *Ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodi,bhāvaṃ*: [SD 56.4 (3.2.1.2)].

<sup>101</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya,tuṇhī,bhāva*) because within it initial application and sustained application (thought and discursion, *vitakka,vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur (S 2:273); cf S 4:293 where *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formation (*vacī,saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. In **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26,4.3/1:161), the Buddha exhorts the monks when assembled to “either speak on the Dharma or observe the noble silence” (ie either talk Dharma or meditate) (SD 1.11).

<sup>102</sup> Be Ce M 39/1:277,4 = M:Be *devo ca na kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya*; Ce *devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ nānupaveccheyya*. Ee Se omit *na: devo ca kālena kālaṃ sammā dhāraṃ anupaveccheyya*. For preferring the *na* reading, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (8.2).

**50** [D 2,82] Kevaḍḍha, just as in a **lotus pond of the blue lotus, or a pond of white lotus, or a pond red lotus,**<sup>103</sup>

some of those blue lotus or white lotus or red lotus, born and growing in the water,  
 stay immersed in the water and flourish without standing up out of the water,  
 so that they are permeated, pervaded, flooded and filled with cool water from their roots to their tips,  
 and none of those lotuses would be unpervaded with cool water;  
 even so, Kevaḍḍha,  
 the monk permeates and pervades, floods and fills, this very body with the joy free of zest.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

## The 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana

**51** [D 2,83] Furthermore, Kevaḍḍha, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning of pain—and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure—

he attains and dwells in **the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana**,

that is neither pleasant nor painful, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>104</sup>

He sits, pervading the body with a pure, bright mind.<sup>105</sup>

There is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by a pure, bright mind.

[D 2,84] Kevaḍḍha, just as **a man were sitting covered from head to foot with a white cloth**, so that there would be no part of his body over which the white cloth did not extend;

even so, Kevaḍḍha, the monk sits, permeating the body with a pure, bright mind.

There is no part of his entire body that is not pervaded by pure, bright mind.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

## THE 8 SUPERKNOWLEDGES

### (1) Insight knowledge (*vipassanā,ñāṇa*)

**52** [D 2,85] With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects,<sup>106</sup> pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed,

he directs and inclines it to **knowledge and vision**.

He understands thus:

‘This body of mine is endowed with form, composed of the 4 great elements,  
 born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge,

<sup>103</sup> *uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (*padma*) and *piṇḍarīka* respectively.

<sup>104</sup> Here, **Vibhaṅga** gives 3 factors of the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana—equanimity (*upekhā*), mindfulness (*sati*) and one-pointedness of mind (*cittassa ek’aggatā*)—according to the Sutta analysis (Vbh 261), and 2 factors—equanimity and one-pointedness of the mind—according to the Abhidhamma analysis (Vbh 164; Vism 4.183/165). See **Dhyana** @ SD 8.4 (5.4).

<sup>105</sup> See **Accharā Vagga** (A 1.6.1-2): “Monks, this mind is radiant (*pabhassara*), but it is defiled by defilements from outside. The ignorant ordinary person does not understand this as it really is. As such, for him there is no personal development.” (A 1:10). On reaching the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, the practitioner becomes directly aware of the naturally and truly pure state of the mind. This analogy shows how the natural luminosity of the mind pervades the whole being of the meditator. See also A:ÑB 1999 §4.

<sup>106</sup> *Upakkilesa*: to be distinguished from *kilesa*, “defilement.” Perhaps the 10 “imperfections of insight” listed in Vism 20.105 ff. are meant. Most of these are not hindrances in themselves but potential hindrances at a certain stage of insight meditation. (D:W 546 n124)

subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion.

And this consciousness of mine is supported here and bound up here.<sup>107</sup>

**53** [D 2,86] Kevaḍḍha, just as if there were a beautiful beryl gem of the purest water [natural beauty]<sup>108</sup>—eight faceted, well polished, clear, limpid, consummate in all its aspects,

and going through the middle of it was a blue, yellow, red, white, or brown thread—

and a man with good eyesight, taking it in his hand, were to reflect on it thus:

‘This is a beautiful beryl gem of the purest water—

eight faceted, well polished, clear, limpid, consummate in all its aspects,

through which runs a blue, or yellow, or red, or white, or brown thread.’<sup>109</sup>

53.2 Even so, Kevaḍḍha—when the monk’s mind is thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and totally undisturbed—

the monk directs and inclines it to **knowledge and vision**.

53.3 He understands thus:

‘This body of mine is endowed with form, composed of the 4 great elements, born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge, subject to uncertainty, rubbing, pressing, breaking up and destruction.

And this consciousness of mine is supported here and bound up here.’

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

## (2) Knowledge of the mind-made body (*mano,may’iddhi,ñāṇa*)

53.2 [D 2,87] “With his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed,*

he directs and inclines it to creating a **mind-made body**.<sup>110</sup>

From this body he creates another body, endowed with form, mind-made, complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.

**54** [D 2,88] Kevaḍḍha, just as if a man were to **draw a reed from its sheath**, the thought would occur to him:

‘This is the sheath, this is the muñja reed.<sup>111</sup> The sheath is one thing, the muñja reed another, but the muñja reed has been drawn out from the sheath.’

Or, Kevaḍḍha, as if a man were to draw a sword from its scabbard. The thought would occur to him:

‘This is the sword, this is the scabbard. The sword is one thing, the scabbard another, but the sword has been drawn out from the scabbard.’

<sup>107</sup> Rhys Davids (D:RD 1:87 n3) points out that this and other passages reject and disprove the idea that consciousness (*viññāṇa*) transmigrates. Sāti, who held on to this belief, was rebuked by the Buddha (M 38,1-7/1: 256-259. The Visuddhi,magga says that a new relinking consciousness (*paṭisandhi,citta*) arises at conception, dependent on the old consciousness (Vism 17.1644 ff).

<sup>108</sup> On “beryl” (*veḷuriya*), see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,86.1), SD 8.10.

<sup>109</sup> Close parallel in **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,1.21/2:13), SD 49.8 & **Acchariya Abbhūta S** (M 123,12/3:121), SD 52.2.

<sup>110</sup> *Mano,mayā kāya*. This whole section at **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,86/1:77,13), SD 8.10; **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11,54/1:71), SD 1.7; **(Sāla,vatikā) Lohicca S** (D 12,66/1:66,233), SD 34.8. The elder **Cūḷa Panthaka** is declared by the Buddha as the foremost of those monks skilled in creating the mind-made body (A 1:24). The Comys say he is skilled in attaining the form dhyana (*rūpa jhāna*) and *samatha* practice, while his elder brother, Mahā Panthaka, is skilled in the formless dhyana (*aruppa*) and in *vipassanā* practice. While other monks are able to produce only one or two mind-made forms of themselves, Cūḷa Panthaka projects as many as 1000 at the same time, each doing a different action. However, when even one was touched, all the rest disappeared (AA 1:216 f; DhA 1:247 f; J 1:118; ThaA 2:237 f; PmA 2:405 f; ApA 318). On *mano,mayā*, see Sue Hamilton, *Identity and Experience*, 1996:138-168 (ch 7).

<sup>111</sup> Saccharum munja.

Or, Kevaḍḍha, as if a man were **to pull a snake out from its slough**. The thought would occur to him:  
 ‘This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake is one thing, the slough another,  
 but the snake has been pulled out from the slough;  
 even so, Kevaḍḍha, with his mind thus *concentrated,*  
*purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed,*  
 the monk directs and inclines it to creating a **mind-made body**.  
 From this body he creates another body, endowed with form, mind-made,  
 complete in all its parts, not inferior in its faculties.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

### KNOWLEDGE OF THE FORMS OF SUPERNORMAL POWER

*Mundane superknowledges [§§55-64];<sup>112</sup> supramundane superknowledge [§65-66]*

### (3) Psychic powers (*iddhi.vidha,ñāṇa*)

**55 [D 2,89]** With his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*  
 he directs and inclines it to **the manifold psychic powers**.<sup>113</sup>

He wields the manifold psychic powers, thus:

- (1) having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one;
- (2) he appears, and vanishes;
- (3) he goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space;
- (4) he dives in and out of the earth as if it were water;
- (5) he walks on water without sinking as if it were earth;
- (6) sitting cross-legged, he goes through the air like a winged bird;
- (7) with his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful;
- (8) he has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.

**56 [D 2,90]** Kevaḍḍha, just as a **skilled potter or his assistant**  
 could craft from well-prepared clay whatever kind of pottery vessel he likes,  
 or as a **skilled ivory-carver** or his assistant

could craft from well-prepared ivory any kind of ivory-work he likes,

or as a **skilled goldsmith** or his assistant

could craft from well-prepared gold any kind of gold article he likes—

even so, Kevaḍḍha, with his mind thus *concentrated,*

*purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*  
 he directs and inclines it to **the manifold psychic powers**.

He wields the manifold psychic powers, thus:

<sup>112</sup> Note that both the first two types of miracles [§§4-10] are listed here again [§§59-66] but this time approved of by the Buddha since they have arisen in connection with spiritual attainment, not as worldly manifestations.

<sup>113</sup> *Eko’pi hutvā bahudhā hoti, bahudhā’pi hutvā eko hoti; āvibhāvaṃ tiro, bhāvaṃ tiro, kuṭṭaṃ tiro, pākāraṃ tiro, pabbataṃ asajjamāno gacchati seyyathā’pi ākāse. Pathaviyāpi ummujj’animujjaṃ karoti seyyathā’pi udake. Udake’pi abhijjamāne gacchati [Ce Ke abhijjamāno] seyyathā’pi pathaviyā. Ākāse’pi pallaṅkena kamati seyyathā’pi pakkhī sakuṇo. Ime’pi candima, sūriye evam mah’iddhike evam’mahā’nubhāve pāṇinā parāmasati parimajjati. Yāva brahma, lokāpi kāyena vasaṃ vatteti. Buddhaghosa takes āvibhāvaṃ tiro, bhāvaṃ tiro to be a distinct power, thus giving a list of 8 powers (Vism 12.69). The syntax of the Sutta passage, Gethin notes, might be read as suggesting only 7 distinct powers (ie, taking powers 2+3 as one). (The Buddhist Path to Awakening, 2001: 82 n6). Cf Kevaḍḍha S here (§§4-5) where the Buddha disapproves of exhibiting such powers. See also Miracles, SD 27.5a.*

- (1) *having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one;*
- (2) *he appears, and vanishes;*
- (3) *he goes unhindered through walls, through ramparts, and through mountains as if through space;*
- (4) *he dives in and out of the earth as if it were water;*
- (5) *he walks on water without sinking as if it were earth;*
- (6) *sitting cross-legged, he goes through the air like a winged bird;*
- (7) *with his hand he touches and strokes even the sun and the moon, so mighty, so powerful;*
- (8) *he has power over his body up to as far as the Brahmā world.*

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

#### (4) The divine ear (*dibba,sota,ñāṇa*)

**57** [D 2,91] With his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*

He directs his mind to **the divine-ear element**.<sup>114</sup>

He hears, by means of the divine-ear element, purified and surpassing the human, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.

**58** [D 2,92] Kevaḍḍha, just as if **a man travelling along a highway were to hear the sounds** of kettle-drums, small drums, conch-shells, cymbals and tom-toms, he would know,

‘That is the sound of kettledrums;

that is the sound of small drums;

that is the sound of conches;

that is the sound of cymbals;

that is the sound of tom-toms’ —

even so, Kevaḍḍha, with his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*

*the monk directs his mind to **the divine-ear element**.*

*He hears, by means of the divine ear-element, purified and surpassing the human ear, both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far.*

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

#### (5) Mind-reading (*ceto,pariya ñāṇa*)

**59** [D 2,93] With his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*

he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of mind-reading**.<sup>115</sup>

He knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.

<sup>116</sup>He knows a mind with lust as

and a mind *without* lust as

He knows a mind with aversion as

and a mind *without* aversion as

a mind with lust,

a mind without lust.

a mind with aversion,

a mind without aversion.

<sup>114</sup> “Divine-ear element,” *dibba,sota,dhātu*, clairaudience.

<sup>115</sup> *Ceto pariya,ñāṇa*, ie, telepathy or mind-to-mind communication.

<sup>116</sup> The following section (italicized) is a list of mental states apparently taken from **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22.12), where it is more appropriate. (D:W)

He knows a mind with <u>delusion</u> as and a mind <i>without</i> delusion as	a mind with delusion, a mind without delusion.
He knows a <u>contracted</u> mind [due to sloth and torpor] and a <i>distracted</i> mind [due to restlessness and worry]	as a contracted mind, as a distracted mind.
He knows an <u>exalted</u> mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] and an <i>unexalted</i> mind [not developed by dhyana]	as an exalted mind, as an unexalted mind.
He knows a <u>surpassable</u> mind as and an <i>unsurpassable</i> mind as	a surpassable mind, an unsurpassable mind.
He knows a <u>concentrated</u> mind as and an <i>unconcentrated</i> mind as	a concentrated mind, an unconcentrated mind.
He knows a <u>freed</u> mind as and an <i>unfreed</i> mind as	a freed mind, an unfreed mind.

**60** [D 2,94] Kevaḍḍha, just as if a **young man or woman, fond of ornaments**, examining the reflection of his or her own face in a bright mirror or a bowl of clear water would know ‘blemished’ if it were blemished, or ‘unblemished’ if it were not— even so, with his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable*, he knows the minds of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed them with his own mind.

<i>He knows a mind with lust as and a mind without lust as</i>	<i>a mind with lust, a mind without lust.</i>
<i>He knows a mind with aversion as and a mind without aversion as</i>	<i>a mind with aversion, a mind without aversion.</i>
<i>He knows a mind with delusion as and a mind without delusion as</i>	<i>a mind with delusion, a mind without delusion.</i>
<i>He knows a contracted mind [due to sloth and torpor] and a distracted mind [due to restlessness and worry]</i>	<i>as a contracted mind, as a distracted mind.</i>
<i>He knows an exalted mind [through the lower or higher dhyana] and an unexalted mind [not developed by dhyana]</i>	<i>as an exalted mind, as an unexalted mind.</i>
<i>He knows a surpassable mind as and an unsurpassable mind as</i>	<i>a surpassable mind, an unsurpassable mind.</i>
<i>He knows a concentrated mind as and an unconcentrated mind as</i>	<i>a concentrated mind, an unconcentrated mind.</i>
<i>He knows a freed mind as and an unfreed mind as</i>	<i>a freed mind, an unfreed mind.</i>

—he knows each of them just as it is.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

## (6) The knowledge of the recollection of past lives (*pubbe,nivāsābussati,ñāna*)

**61** [D 2,95] With his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable*,

he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives**.<sup>117</sup>

He recollects his manifold past lives, that is,  
one birth, two births, three births, four, five,  
ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand,

<sup>117</sup> “Past lives,” *pubbe,nivāsa*, lit previous abodes..

many aeons<sup>118</sup> of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,  
 many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, [recollecting,]  
 ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life.  
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.  
 There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span.  
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’  
 Thus, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

**62 [D 2,96]** Kevaḍḍha, just as if **a man were to go from his home village to another village,**  
 and then from that village to yet another village,  
 and then from that village back to his home village.  
 The thought would occur to him,  
 ‘I went from my home village to that village over there.  
 There I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way, remained silent in such a way.  
 From that village I went to that village over there,  
 and there I stood in such a way, sat in such a way, talked in such a way,  
 and remained silent in such a way.  
 From that village I came back my home village’;<sup>119</sup>  
*even so, Kevaḍḍha, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*  
*the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives.<sup>120</sup>*  
*He recollects his manifold past existence, that is to say,*  
*one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births,*  
*ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births,*  
*one hundred births, one thousand births, one hundred thousand births,*  
*many aeons of cosmic contraction, many aeons of cosmic expansion,*  
*many aeons of cosmic contraction and expansion, thus:*  
 ‘There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life.  
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.  
 There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span.  
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.’  
 Thus, Kevaḍḍha, he recollects his manifold past lives in their modes and details.

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction.**

## (7) The knowledge of the passing away and re-arising of beings (*dibba.cakkhu,ñāna*)

**63 [D 2,97]** With his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*  
 he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the passing away and re-appearance of beings.**<sup>121</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Aeon (*kappa*) or world-cycle.

<sup>119</sup> The 3 villages are the world of sense-desire, the form world, and the formless world (DA).

<sup>120</sup> *Pubbe,nivāsanānussati,ñāna*, lit “the knowledge of the recollection of past abidings [existences].” The remainder of this is expanded into 4 sections in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,1.31-34/1:13-16 @ SD 25.3(76.3)) and 3 sections in **Sampasādaniya S** (D 27,15-17/3:107-112 @ SD 10.12). In both cases, each explains how the eternalist view arose.

He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance],<sup>122</sup> purified and surpassing the human—  
beings passing away and re-appearing, and he knows how they are inferior and superior,  
beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, in accordance with their karma, thus:

‘Sirs, these beings—who were  
endowed with bad conduct of *body*,  
endowed with bad conduct of *speech*,  
endowed with bad conduct of *mind*,  
who reviled the noble ones,  
held **wrong views** and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—  
after death, when the body has broken up,  
have re-appeared in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

But these beings—who were  
endowed with good conduct of *body*,  
endowed with bad conduct of *speech*,  
endowed with bad conduct of *mind*,  
who did not revile the noble ones,  
who held **right views** and undertook actions under the influence of right views—  
after death, when the body has broken up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’  
Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and how they fare  
according to their karma.

**64 [D 2,98]** Kevaḍḍha, just as if there were **a mansion in the central square [where four roads meet]**,  
and a man with good eyesight standing on top of it were to see people  
entering a house, leaving it, walking along the street, and sitting in the central square.

The thought would occur to him, thus:

‘These people are entering a house, leaving it, walking along the streets, and sitting in the central square.’

*Even so, with his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant,  
malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,*

*he directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the passing away and re-appearance of beings.***

*He sees—by means of **the divine eye** [clairvoyance], purified and surpassing the human—  
beings passing away and re-appearing, and he knows how they are inferior and superior,  
beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their karma, thus:*

‘These beings—who were  
endowed with bad conduct of *body*,  
endowed with bad conduct of *speech*,  
endowed with bad conduct of *mind*,  
who reviled the noble ones,  
held **wrong views** and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—  
after death, when the body has broken up,  
have re-appeared in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

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

<sup>121</sup> “The knowledge of ... beings,” *cutūpapāta,ñāṇa* or “the knowledge of karmic progress” (*yathā,kammūpaga,ñāṇa*). Also called “the divine eye” (*dibba,cakkhu*), which, in the early texts, is a common term for both *pibbe,nivāsā-nussati,ñāna* and *cutūpapāta,ñāna*: see foll n.

<sup>122</sup> *Dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*) (§104).



*who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—  
after death, when the body has broken up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’  
Thus, by means of the divine eye, he sees beings passing away and re-appearing, and how they fare  
according to their karma.*

This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.

### (8) The knowledge of the destruction of mental influxes (*āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*)

**65** [D 2,99] With his mind thus *concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and totally undisturbed,*  
the monk directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes**.<sup>123</sup>

He knows, as it really is: ‘This is suffering.’  
He knows, as it really is: ‘This is the arising of suffering.’  
He knows, as it really is: ‘This is the ending of suffering.’  
He knows, as it really is: ‘This is the path to the ending of suffering.’

He knows, as it really is: ‘These are mental influxes.’  
He knows, as it really is: ‘This is the arising of influxes,’  
He knows, as it really is: ‘This is the ending of influxes.’  
He knows, as it really is: ‘This is the path to the ending of influxes.’

His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is  
released from the influx of sensual desire,  
released from the influx of existence,  
released from the influx of ignorance.<sup>124</sup>

With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Freed (am I)!’

He understands thus:

‘Birth is ended, the holy life has been lived,  
done is that which needs to be done.  
There is no more of this state of being.’<sup>125</sup>

**66** [D 2,100] Kevaḍḍha, just as if there were **a pool of water in a mountain glen**, clear, limpid, and unsullied, where a man with good eyesight standing on the bank could see shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also shoals of fish swimming about and resting, and it would occur to him,

‘This pool of water is clear, limpid, and unsullied.

Here are these shells, gravel, and pebbles, and also these shoals of fish swimming about and resting.’

Even so, Kevaḍḍha, with his mind thus *concentrated,*

*purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and totally undisturbed,*  
the monk directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the ending of the mental influxes  
*and in due course is freed.*

66.2 This, too, Kevaḍḍha, is called **the miracle of instruction**.<sup>126</sup>

<sup>123</sup> For an older, perhaps original, version of this *āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa* pericope, see **Jhānābhiññā S** (S 16.19), SD 50.7. On the influxes (*āsava*), see Intro (1) n.

<sup>124</sup> See previous n.

<sup>125</sup> *Nāparam itthatāya*: lit “there is no more of ‘thusness’.” See **Mahā Nidāna S** (M 15.22); SD 51.18 (.2.3.2.2).

<sup>126</sup> *Anusāsani, pāṭihāriya*.

**67** These, Kevaḍḍha, are the 3 miracles that I declare, having directly known and realized them for myself.

### ON THE MONK WHO SOUGHT THE END OF EXISTENCE

(*Bhūta, nirodh'esaka, bhikkhu Vatthu*)

#### Questioning the gods

67.2 Once, Kevaḍḍha, in this very community of monks this thought occurred to a certain monk:<sup>127</sup>

**'Where do these 4 great elements [primary elements]—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?'**<sup>128</sup>

67.3 Then, Kevaddha, that monk attained to such a state of mental concentration that the way leading to the devas appeared before him.<sup>129</sup>

**68** (1) Then, Kevaddha, that monk approached the devas of **the retinue of the 4 great kings**<sup>130</sup> and asked them,

*'Avuso, where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?'*

When this was said, the devas of the retinue of the 4 great kings **[216]** said to the monk,

*'We, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

But there are the 4 great kings who are higher and sublimer than us.

*They should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

**69** (2) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the 4 great kings**, and asked them,

*'Avuso, where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?'*

When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, the 4 great kings said to the monk,

*'We too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

But there are the 33 devas who are higher and sublimer than us.

*They should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

**70** (3) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the 33 gods**, and asked them,

*'Avuso, where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?'*

When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, the 33 gods said to the monk,

*'We too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

But there is the lord of the devas called Sakra, who is higher and sublimer than us.

*He should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'* **[217]**

<sup>127</sup> **Rohitassa S 1** (A 4.45/2:47-49), SD 52.8a records an account of how the ascetic Rohitassa Bhoja,putta, using his psychic powers, spent his whole life traversing the universe, seeking the end of the universe, but failed to do so.

<sup>128</sup> *Kattha nu khi āvuso ime cattāro mahā, bhūtā aparisesā nirujjhanti, seyyāthīdam paṭhavī, dhātu āpo, dhātu tejo, dhātu vāyo, dhātu.*

<sup>129</sup> *Atha kho so kevaḍḍha bhikkhu tathā, rūpaṃ samādhim samāpajji yathā samāhite citte devayāniyo maggo pātur ahoṣi.* Cf §80 below, where a similar sentence is used but in ref to the Brahma world.

<sup>130</sup> The monk visits the devas in stages, from the lowest heaven in the sense world to the highest of the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana level, that is, Mahā Brahmā. On such gods (including those that follow) and realms of existence, see, for example, Francis Story, *Gods and the Universe*, Wheel 180-181, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society & D:W 38-45.

**71** (4) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **Sakra**, lord of the devas, and asked him, ‘Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’  
When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, Sakra, lord of the devas, said to the monk,  
*‘I too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.*

But there are the Yama devas, who are higher and sublimer than me.  
*They should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.’*

**72** (5) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the Yama devas**, and asked them, ‘Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’  
When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, the Yama devas said to the monk,  
*‘We too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.*

But there is the devaputra Suyama, who is higher and sublimer than us.  
*He should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.’*

**73** (6) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra **Suyama**, and asked him, ‘Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’  
When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, the devaputra Suyama said to the monk,  
*‘I too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.*

But there are the Tusita devas, who are higher and sublimer than us. **[218]**  
*They should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.’*

**74** (7) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the Tusita devas**, and asked them, ‘Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’  
When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, the Tusita devas said to the monk,  
*‘We too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.*

But there is the devaputra Santusita,<sup>131</sup> who is higher and sublimer than us.  
*He should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.’*

**75** (8) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra **Santusita**, and asked him, ‘Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’  
*‘I too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.*  
But there are the Nimmana,rati devas who are higher and sublimer than us.  
*They should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.’*

**76** (9) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached **the Nimmana,rati devas**, and asked him, ‘Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’  
*‘We too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.*

But there is the devaputra Sunimmita who is higher and sublimer than us. **[219]**  
*He should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.’*

**77** (10) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra **Sunimmita**, and asked him, ‘Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’

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<sup>131</sup> On Santusita, see SD 49.3 (1.1.6).

*'I too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace. But there are the Para,nimmita Vasa,vatti devas, who are higher and sublimer than us. They should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

**78** (11) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the **Para,nimmita Vasa,vatti devas**, and asked them, *'Avuso, where do the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?'*

*'We too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

But there is the devaputra **Vasa,vatti [220]** who is higher and sublimer than us.

*He should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

**79** (12) Then, Kevaddha, the monk approached the devaputra **Vasavatti** and, then asked him, **[220]** *'Avuso, where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?'*

When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, the devaputra Vasavatti said to the monk,

*'I too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

But there are the gods called the **retinue of Brahma**, who are higher and sublimer than us.

*They should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

**80** (13) So, that monk, Kevaddha, attained to such a state of mental concentration so that the way leading to Brahmas appeared before him.<sup>132</sup>

80.2 Then, Kevaddha, that monk approached the gods of the **Brahmā's retinue**, and asked them: *'Avuso, where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?'*

When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, the gods of the Brahmā's retinue said to the monk,

*'We too, bhikshu, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.'*

80.3 (14) But, bhikshu, there is **Brahmā**, the Great Brahmā, the Vanquisher, the Unvanquished, the Supreme Seer of All, the All-powerful, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer,<sup>133</sup> the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be.<sup>134</sup>

*He is higher and sublimer than us.*

*He should know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind —cease without a trace.'*

## Even Great Brahma does not know

80.4 *'But where, avuso, is Great Brahmā now?'*

*'Bhikshu, we do not know where Great Brahmā is, nor how Great Brahmā is, nor from where he will come.'*<sup>135</sup>

But when signs appear, lights issue forth, and a radiance appears, Great Brahmā will appear.

For, these are the signs of Great Brahma's appearance.'

<sup>132</sup> *Atha kho so kevaḍḍha bhikkhu tathā,rūpaṃ samādhim samāpajji yathā samāhite citte brahma,yāniyo maggo pātur ahoṣi.* Here the monk has to get into the form dhyana to gain access to the Brahma world. Cf §67.3 where the ref is to the sense-world devas.

<sup>133</sup> Comy: "I am the supreme ordainer. I am the one who appoints beings to their places, 'You be a noble [kshatriya], you a brahmin, you a merchant, you an artisan! You be a householder, you a renunciant! And you be a camel, you a cow!'" (DA 1:111 f)

<sup>134</sup> *Atthi kho bhikkhu Brahmā Mahā,brahmā abhibhū anabhibhūto aññad-atthu,daso vasavatti issaro kattā nim-mātā seṭṭho sañjita vasī pitā bhūta,bhavyānaṃ.* This is stock: for a humorous riposte to this, see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,42/1:18), SD 25.2. For the Mahā Brahmā pericopes, see SD 11.7 (5) n.

<sup>135</sup> *Mayam pi kho bhikkhu na jānāma, yattha vā brahmā, yena vā brahmā, yahiṃ vā brahmā.*

**81** It was not long, Kevaḍḍha, before Great Brahmā [221] appeared. Then, the monk, Kevaḍḍha, approached Great Brahmā and said,

‘Avuso, where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’

81.2 When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, Great Brahmā said to the monk,

‘I, bhikshu, am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-knowing, the All-powerful, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be.’<sup>136</sup>

**82** For the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, Kevaḍḍha, the monk asked Great Brahmā and again Great Brahmā gave this same reply.<sup>137</sup>

**83** On the 3<sup>rd</sup> time, Kevaḍḍha, the monk said to Great Brahmā,

‘Avuso, I did not ask you if you were Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-knowing, the All-powerful, the Lord God, the Maker, the Creator, the Chief, the Ordainer, the Almighty, the Father of all that are and that will be.

I asked you where these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace.’

83.2 Then, Kevaḍḍha, Great Brahmā, taking the monk by the arm and leading him off to one side, [222] said to him,

‘These gods of the Brahmā’s retinue believe,

“There is nothing that Great Brahmā does not know.

There is nothing that Great Brahmā does not see.

There is nothing that Great Brahmā is unaware of.

There is nothing that Great Brahma has not realized.”

That is why I did not say in their presence that I, too, do not know where the 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace. You have thus acted wrongly and incorrectly in bypassing the Blessed One going in search of an answer to this question elsewhere.

Go right back to the Blessed One and ask him this question. However, he answers it, you should bear it in mind.’

**84** Then, Kevaḍḍha, just as it takes a strong man to stretch his flexed arm or to flex his stretched arm, the monk disappeared from the Brahmā world and immediately appeared before me.

Having bowed down to me, he sat down at one side. Sitting there at one side, he said to me,

‘**Bhante, where do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?**’

## The land-sighting bird

**85** When this was said, Kevaḍḍha, I said to him,

‘Once, bhikshu, some sea-faring merchants took a **land-sighting bird**<sup>138</sup> and set sail in their ship.

<sup>136</sup> *Aham asmi Brahmā Mahā, brahmā abhibhū anabhibhūto aññad-atthu, daso vasavatti issaro kattā nimmātā seṭṭho sañjita vasī pitā bhūta, bhavyānaṃ.*

<sup>137</sup> Saṅgārava gives a similar evasive answer in **Saṅgārava (Pāṭihāriya) S** (see Intro above).

<sup>138</sup> *Tira, dassī sakuṇa*: the parable also at **(Paribhāsaka) Dhammika S** (A 6.54.5/3:368), SD 84.3. This bird-dispatching episode is found in numerous ancient flood myths. The first Mesopotamian flood story known to the western world was that of Berossus, a 3rd-century BCE priest of Marduk in Babylon, who wrote a 3-volume history of his country. Xisuthros, the hero of the flood story in Berossus’s account, sends out some birds from the vessel and they too return to him after failing to find food or land. He waits a few days, then sends them out again. They return with their feet tinged with mud. The third time he sends them out they do not return. A similar sequence is related in the most famous, detailed and complete account of Mesopotamian flood stories: the ancient Akkadian Gilgamesh Epic (Tablet XI) (2000-650 BCE) in which Utnapishtim waits seven days after grounding before releasing a dove, then a swallow, and then a raven to search for dry land. This episode is also found in the Noah story (1500-500 BCE) in the Bible (Gen 8:11).

When they could not see the shore, they released the land-sighting bird.

It flew to the east, the south, the west, the north, straight up,  
and to all the intermediate points of the quarters.

If it saw land in any direction, it flew there.

If it did not see land anywhere, it returned right back to the ship.

85.2 In the same way, bhikṣu, having gone [223] as far as the Brahmā world in search of an answer to your question, you have come right back to my presence.

Your question should *not* be phrased in this way:

‘Where, bhante, do these 4 great elements—earth, water, fire, wind—cease without a trace?’

85.3 Instead, it should be phrased like this:

*Kattha āpo ca paṭhavī ca tejo vāyo na gadhati*

Where do earth, water, fire, wind find no footing;

*kattha dīghañ ca rassañ ca anuṃ thulam*

where long and short, small and great, fair and foul;

*subhâsubham*

*kattha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhati?*

where name and form totally cease without a trace?

85.4 And the answer to that is:<sup>139</sup>

**The consciousness without attribute [non-manifesting],<sup>140</sup> without end, radiant all around<sup>141</sup>—**

*ettha āpo ca paṭhavī tejo vāyo na gādhati*

It is here that earth, water, fire and wind find no footing;

*ettha dīgham ca rassañ ca anuṃ thulam*

here, long and short, small and great, fair and foul;

*subhâsubham*

*ettha nāmañ ca rūpañ ca asesam uparujjhati*

here, name and form cease without trace:

*viññāṇam nirodhena etth’etam uparujjhatīti*

with consciousness’ cessation this stops here.”<sup>142</sup>

85.5 The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, Kevaḍḍha the householder’s son rejoiced in the Blessed One’s word.

— ekādasamam —

<sup>139</sup> The first stanza line, *viññāṇam anidassanam anantam sabbato, pabham*, as in **Brahma, nimantanika S** (M 49, 25/1:329), SD 11.7. On the unestablished consciousness, see **Viññāṇa**, SD 17.8a(11.3).

<sup>140</sup> “Without attribute [signless],” *anidassana*, “invisible.” Nāṇananda renders it as “non-manifesting” (*Concept and Reality in Early Buddhist Thought*, Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 1971:59). See Bodhi’s important n at M:ÑB 1249 n513. See also Thanissaro’s nn: <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.11.0.than.html> & <http://www.accesstoinight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.049.than.html>.

<sup>141</sup> “Radiant all around,” *sabbato, pabham*, where *pabham*, vl *paham*. Nāṇamoli, in his *Majjhima tr*, takes *pabham* to be the negative present participle of *pabhavati* (“to be able”)—*apabham*—the negative-prefix *a* elided in conjunction with *sabbato*: “The sense can be paraphrased freely by ‘not predicating being in relation to “all,”’ or ‘not assuming of “all” that it is or is not in an absolute sense’” (M:ÑB 1249 n513). But, argues Bodhi. “if we take *pabham* as ‘luminous,’ which seems better justified, the [Majjhima] verse links up with the idea of the mind as being intrinsically luminous [A 1:10]” (id). See D:W 557 n241. Cf A 1.10 (SD 8.3) where the mind is said to be by nature radiant (*pabhassara*) & A 2:139 where the light of wisdom (*paññā, pabha*) is called the best of lights. See Bodhi’s important n at M:ÑB 1249 n513. See also Sue Hamilton, *Identity and Experience*, 1996:100 f. On the radiant mind, see also SD 54.2a (4.3.3).

<sup>142</sup> The Buddha makes a similar statement by way of an inspired utterance (*udāna*) on the parinirvana of **Bāhiya Dāru, cīriya** (U 1.10): “Where water, earth, fire and wind find no footing, | There neither brightness burns nor sun shines | There neither moon gleams nor darkness reigns. | When a sage, a brahmin, through wisdom has known this by himself. | Then, he is freed from form and formless, from joy and pain.” (U 1.10/9,4-8), SD 33.7. A similar verse is found at **S 1.27** (1:15,18\*), SD 50.13(2), and a similar teaching is given by Mahā Cunda to Channa (S 35.87/4:59), SD 11.12. The brahma Ghāṭikāra says something similar (S 1.50/1:35,19\* = 2.24/2:60,17\*). On this verse [§85], see D:W 557 n242 & **Mahā Parinibbāna S**, SD 9 (9.8.6). For further modern comy, see also SD 54.2b (2.2.2).

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[See SD 1, Main Bibliography]

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## Appendix: The 31 planes of existence according to the Pali sources<sup>143</sup>

<u>WORLD</u> ( <i>dhātu</i> )	<u>COSMOLOGY</u>	LIFE-SPAN	<u>PSYCHOLOGY</u>	
	REALM ( <i>bhūmi</i> )		KARMA bringing rebirth in corresponding realm	
<b>FORMLESS WORLD</b> ( <i>arūpa, dhātu</i> )	1 Neither-perception-nor-non-perception ( <i>n'eva, saññā, nāsaññ'āyatana</i> )	84,000 aeons	<b>FORMLESS SPHERE</b> ( <i>arūpāvacara</i> )  Formless attainments ( <i>arūpa samāpatti</i> )	
	2 Nothingness ( <i>ākiñcaññ'āyatana</i> )	60,000 aeons		
	3 Infinite consciousness ( <i>viññāṇaṅc'āyatana</i> )	40,000 aeons		
	4 Infinite space ( <i>ākāsānanc'āyatana</i> )	20,000 aeons		
<b>FORM WORLD</b> ( <i>rūpa, dhātu</i> )	5 The supreme ( <i>akaniṭṭhā</i> )	16,000 aeons	<b>FORM SPHERE</b> ( <i>rūpāvacara</i> )  PURE ABODES ( <i>suddh'āvāsa</i> ) Path of non-returning ( <i>anāgāmī, magga</i> ) Supramundane 4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana  Non-percipient attainment ( <i>asañña, samāpatti</i> ) Ordinary 4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana  4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana	
	6 The clear-visioned ( <i>sudassī</i> )	8,000 aeons		
	7 The clear-beauty ( <i>sudassā</i> )	4,000 aeons		
	8 The serene ( <i>ātappā</i> )	2,000 aeons		
	9 The durable ( <i>avihā</i> )	1,000 aeons		
	10 Non-percipient beings ( <i>asañña, satta</i> )	500 aeons		
	11 Abundant Fruit ( <i>veha-p, phala</i> )	500 aeons		
	destroyed by wind	↑ 12 Radiant glory ( <i>subha, kiṇha</i> )		64 aeons
		13 Boundless glory ( <i>appamaṇa, subha</i> )		32 aeons
		14 Limited glory ( <i>paritta, subha</i> )		16 aeons
	destroyed by water	↑ 15 Streaming radiance ( <i>ābhassara</i> )		8 aeons
	16 Boundless radiance ( <i>appamāṇ'ābha</i> )	4 aeons		
	17 Limited radiance ( <i>paritt'ābha</i> )	2 aeons		
destroyed by fire	↑ 18 Great Brahma ( <i>mahā brahmā</i> )	1 aeon	} 1 <sup>st</sup> dhyana	
	19 Brahma's ministers ( <i>brahmā purohita</i> )	½ aeon		
	20 Brahma's retinue ( <i>brahmā pārisajja</i> )	¼ aeon		
<b>SENSE-WORLD</b> ( <i>kāma, dhātu</i> )	21 Lords of other's creations ( <i>paranimmita, vasavatti</i> )	16,000 cy <sup>144</sup>	<b>SENSE-SPHERES</b> ( <i>kāmāvacara</i> )  HAPPY DESTINIES ( <i>sugati</i> )  10 courses of wholesome karma motivated by non- attachment, loving- kindness and wisdom  SUFFERING DESTINIES ( <i>duggati</i> ) THE DESCENTS ( <i>apāya</i> ) 10 courses of unwholesome karma motivated by greed, hate and delusion	
	22 Those who delight in creation ( <i>nimmāna, ratī</i> )	8,000 cy		
	23 The contented ( <i>tusita</i> )	4,000 cy		
	24 The Yāma devas ( <i>yāma</i> )	2,000 cy		
	25 The 33 ( <i>tāvatiṃsa</i> )	1,000 cy		
	26 The 4 great kings ( <i>cātum, mahārājika</i> )	500 cy		
	27 Human beings ( <i>manussa</i> )	variable		
	28 Titans ( <i>asura, kāya</i> )	unspecified		
	29 Animals ( <i>tiracchāna, yoni</i> )	unspecified		
	30 Ghosts ( <i>petti, visāya</i> )	unspecified		
	31 Hell beings ( <i>niraya</i> )	unspecified		

<sup>143</sup> See Vbh 422-426 life-spans; Vism 7.40-44 physical universe, 13.41-63 destruction; Abhs 5.1-17 the 31 planes; R Gethin, *The Foundations of Buddhism*, 1998:116 f gives different figures for the 6 sense-world heavens.

<sup>144</sup> The lifespans here follow the Vibhaṅga scheme: see SD 54.3 (2.2.1.1).