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## Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta

The Discourse on the Noble Quest | **M 26**  
 also called **Pāsa,rāsi Sutta** The Pile of Snares Discourse [§§31-44]  
 Theme: The events leading up to the great awakening  
 Translated by Piya Tan ©2003, rev 2010

### 1 Oldest Buddha biography

#### 1.0 SUTTA SUMMARY

**The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26), the discourse on the noble quest, is a teaching on the right priorities *for* our spiritual life. Historically, It comprises the earliest records we have of the events attending the Bodhisattva up to his great awakening.

**The key sections** of the Sutta are as follows:

- §§1-4 Location and occasion for the Sutta.
- §§5-14 The 2 kinds of quests (*pariyesanā*)—the ignoble (a worldly quest) [§§5-12] and the noble (which leads to awakening) [§13-14].
- §§15-16 The 2 teachers: Ālāra Kālāma [§15] and Uddaka Rāma,putta [§16].
- §17 The ascetic striving (self-mortification) at Uruvelā (only briefly mentioned).
- §§18-19 The great awakening; the Dharma’s depth; the hesitation verses.
- §§20-24 Brahma’s supplication and the Buddha’s decision to teach.
- §§25-30 The journey to Uruvelā; Upaka; the 5 monks. The 1<sup>st</sup> discourse [§§29.30].
- §§31-44 The Pāsa,rāsi Sutta.

#### SUTTA SOURCES AND SIGNIFICANCE

##### 1.1 COMPARATIVE STUDY

The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta has a parallel in the Chinese Āgamas at MĀ 204 (T1.775c-778c), entitled “Rammaka” (羅摩 *luó mó*) [§2.3], after the brahmin in whose hermitage the teaching occurs.<sup>1</sup> MĀ 204 has been studied in some detail by THICH Minh Chau.<sup>2</sup> **Analayo** has done an interesting comparative study of this Sutta (with the Chinese Āgamas and other sources) in his book, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya* (2011:170-189). Some lines of the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta are also found in Sanskrit fragments discovered in Turfan, Central Asia.<sup>3</sup>

##### 1.2 HISTORICAL PECULIARITIES OF THE SUTTA

Many scholars agree that the earliest account of the Buddha’s renunciation and awakening is found in the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta.<sup>4</sup> Buddhism and religion scholar, **Jonathan S Walters**, in his journal article, “Suttas as History: Four approaches to the *Sermon on the Noble Quest* (Ariyapariyesanasutta)” (*History*

<sup>1</sup> The name *rammaka* appears only here in the suttas: see DPPN sv.

<sup>2</sup> THICH Minh Chau 1991:33, 153-199, 245-250.

<sup>3</sup> **Analayo** identifies them as follows: Cat nos 1332 & 1714 in SHT 5:227, and cat no 1493 in SHT 6:161. Cat nos 1332 & 1493 have preserved parts of the Intro narration at M 1:161, while cat no 1714 has parts of the verses spoken by the Buddha to Upaka at M 1:171. SHT = *Sanskrihandchriften aus den Turfanfunden* (ed Waldschmidt et al, vols 1-9, 1965-2004): see Textual Conventions III.

<sup>4</sup> See K R Norman 1990:126 f, qu L Schmithausen 1981:207, qu A Bareau. Also Nakamura 2000: 247 f.

of Religions, 1999) concludes that the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta is “arguably the oldest Buddha biography in existence” (1999:283).

The Sutta, Walters notes, “is full of startling silences: here we have no Suddhodana, no Mahā,māyā, no Mahāpajāpatī Gotamī, no Yasodharā and Rāhula, no pleasure palace, no women of the harem, no 4 signs, no Channa, no renunciatory<sup>5</sup> fanfare, no practice of austerities, no Sujātā’s milk-rice, no Māra’s army at the Bodhi tree, no 3 watches of the night, no 7 weeks after the great awakening, no text of the first sermon (replaced by the heap of snares, frame IV!)” (1993:276). Later biographies of the Buddha “are direct and indirect supplementations” of this Sutta, he further claims (277).<sup>6</sup>

### 1.3 LEGENDS AND HISTORY

As such, the story of Suddhodana as a powerful and wealthy king is very likely a later legend: it is clear from the suttas that the Sakyas were vassals (*anuyuttā*) of king Pasenadi of Kosala (D 27,8/3:83). In **the Pabbajjā Sutta**, the young ascetic Siddhattha tells Bimbisāra that he (Siddhattha) is a “Kosala-dweller” (*kosala nīketino*), connoting that the Sakyas are a part of Kosala (Sn 422). Furthermore, in **the Dhamma,dāyāda Sutta** (M 89), Pasenadi tells the Buddha, “The Blessed One is a kshatriya and I am a kshatriya; the Blessed One is a Kosalan (*kosalaka*) and I am a Kosalan” (M 89,19/2:124).

**The Ambaṭṭha Sutta** (D 3), however, gives a clear hint of the republican system of the Sakyas followed by a delightful analogy of the quail.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, although the Sakya territory was a vassal of rajah Pasenadi, it enjoyed some level of autonomy. This was understandable from Pasenadi’s high regard for the Buddha. Or, it could be simply political expedience: it was better to have an alliance with the Sakyas rather than having to fight these fierce kshatriya warriors.

### 1.4 THE OLDEST LIFE OF THE BUDDHA (AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

#### 1.4.1 A common nirvana

The suttas often define **an arhat’s awakening** as the mind’s destruction of the influxes, that is, release from all corruptions and the attainment of various powers. The best known and fullest definition of this is found in the “fruit of recluseship” (*sāmañña,phala*) pericope, such as that in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2), and in all the 13 suttas of the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter on “the aggregate of moral virtue” (*sīla-k,khandha vagga*) of the Dīgha Nikāya.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the universality of this pericope and also its brief version, which is the very last passage of the pericope,<sup>9</sup> as **Alexander Wynne** has noted,<sup>10</sup> in a close study of **the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59)<sup>11</sup> and elsewhere, it is unusual that another canonical account of the 5 monks’ awakening is differently described, here in **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta**, where they are said to have simply “**realized nirvana**” (at the end of a long passage regarding *the noble quest*), thus:

<sup>5</sup> “Renunciatory” is rare; one of the two quotes that OED gives for its usage is “A meek renunciatory action,” in Dickens’ *Our Mutual Friend* 1.4. The preferred word is “renunciative.”

<sup>6</sup> Cf the story of the child Gotama in **Nālaka S** (Sn 3.11), SD 49.18. See also **The Buddha as myth**, SD 36.2.

<sup>7</sup> D 3,1.13 f/1:91 (SD 21.3). See A K Warder, *Indian Buddhism*, 1970:45.

<sup>8</sup> **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,40-100/1:62-84), SD 8.10.

<sup>9</sup> D 2,100.5/1:85 (SD 8.10).

<sup>10</sup> “Early evidence for the ‘no self’ doctrine? A note on the second *anātman* teaching of the Second Sermon.” *Thai International Journal for Buddhist Studies* 1 2009:64-84 (66).

<sup>11</sup> S 22.59/3:66-68 = Mv 1.6.38-47 (V 1:13 f), SD 1.2.

“Then, bhikshus, the group of 5 monks, thus taught and instructed by me, ... realized the undefiled supreme security from bondage, nirvana. The knowledge and vision arose in them:

‘Unshakeable is *our* freedom of mind. This is our last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for us)!’<sup>12</sup> [§18.7].’

(M 26,30)

### 1.4.2 A unique sutta

**The awakening of the group of 5 monks** is described in identical terms as that of the Bodhisattva’s “noble quest,” as found in the Ariya Pariyesana Sutta [§12 + §30]. This is remarkable for at least **4 reasons**—as noted by Wynne:

(1) Both **the Bodhisattva and the 5 monks are said to have “realized nirvana”**—*nibbānaṃ ajjhagamāṃ*,<sup>13</sup> in the case of the Bodhisattva [§18], and *nibbānaṃ ajjhagamāṃsu*, “attained nirvana,” in the case of the 5 monks [§30].<sup>14</sup> This is the one of the few but key suttas where the awakening of the Bodhisattva and of other arhats are identically and explicitly described.<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere, the awakening of all arhats are usually described in a stock phrase that reflects this very same truth.

(2) The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta is the only sutta in which the stock passage describing the post-awakening knowledge [§18.7] is applied to persons apart from the newly awakened Buddha: the 5 monks are similarly said to have recognized their awakening with the formula: “Unshakeable is our freedom of mind. This is our last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for us)!” [§30.7].<sup>16</sup> In fact, in **the Sambuddha Sutta** (S 22.58), the Buddha is recorded as declaring that his awakening and that of an arhat are the same.<sup>17</sup>

(3) There is no other sutta account of awakening in which the expression **“to realize nirvana”** (*nibbānaṃ adhi-gam*)<sup>18</sup> [point (2)] is used except here in the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta.<sup>19</sup> This is true of the 2 verbs in the past tense—*ajjhagamāṃ* and *ajjhagamāṃsu*—but other forms of the phrase, *nibbānaṃ adhi-gam*, occur in the suttas—interestingly, almost all of them are in verse.<sup>20</sup> However, none of these phrases or

<sup>12</sup> *Atha kho bhikkhave pañca, vaggiyā bhikkhū mayā evaṃ ovadiyamānā evaṃ anusāsiyamānā ... asaṅkiliṭṭhaṃ anuttaraṃ yoga-k, khemaṃ nibbānaṃ ajjhagamāṃsu. ñāṇaṃ ca pana nesaṃ dassanaṃ udapādi: akuppā no vimutti, ayam antimā jāti, n’ atthi dāni punabbhavo’ti.* (M 26,30/1:173,7-20), SD 1.11.

<sup>13</sup> Both the Buddha and the 5 monks are described as **arhats** with the 3 knowledges. The same verb refers to the fact that they have “realized nirvana”: in the case of the Buddha, *nibbānaṃ ajjhagamāṃ* (1 aor sg, M 1:67,27); the 5 monks, *nibbānaṃ ajjhagamāṃsu* (3 aor pl, M 1:173,18). In **Bhaya Bherava S** (M 4) and elsewhere, the better known verb is *abbhaññasiṃ* (aor of *abhijānati*, “he truly knows”) (M 1:23,134), SD 44.3. **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,97), uses *pajānāti*, “he understands” (D 2,97/1:83), SD 8.10.

<sup>14</sup> *Ajjhagamāṃ* (= *ajjhagā*), aor 1 sg [§18 = M 1:167,12 etc], “I realized; *ajjhagamāṃsu*, aor 3 pl [§30 = M 1:173,11 etc]; from *adhigacchati*, pres 3 sg, “he realizes.”

<sup>15</sup> Eg, the account of the Bodhisattva’s realization of the 3 knowledges differs from a similar account of a monk’s realization of them in the standard long account of the Buddhist path, by using *yathā, bhūtaṃ abbhaññasiṃ* (eg M 4,31), SD 44.3, rather than *pajānāti* (D 2,99 f), SD 8.10.

<sup>16</sup> See Wynne 2007:20; also 136 n68), where he points out that the pericope is very similar in the Chin Sarvāstivāda Sūtra version of the text. For the Chin Sarvāstivāda version of this text, see Thich Minh Chau 1991:153-159.

<sup>17</sup> S 22.58/3:65 f (SD 49.10).

<sup>18</sup> In the various verbal forms *adhigacchati*, viz *ajjhagamāṃ*, *ajjhagamāṃsu*, etc. See (2) here.

<sup>19</sup> See Wynne 2007:20.

<sup>20</sup> These occurrences are: *anupubbena nibbānaṃ | adhigacchanti paṇḍitā*, “in stages, the wise realize nirvana” (A 3.57/1:162,29\* = A 5.179/3:214,19\*); *nibbānaṃ ev’ajjhagamum sapaññā*, “the wise realized nirvana” (S 1.4.3/-1:22,7\*); *nibbānaṃ adhigantabbam sabba, sukka-p, pamocanam*, “nirvana is to be realized for the release from

sentences refer to the Bodhisattva's awakening. However, Wynne's point is still useful to our understanding of the sameness of the awakening of the Buddha and an arhat.<sup>21</sup>

(4) Fourthly, this is the only sutta which is set in **the hermitage** or ashram (*assama*) of an obscure brahmin called Rammaka,<sup>22</sup> who is not otherwise mentioned in the Pāli canon [1.1]. These peculiarities, concludes Wynne, suggest that the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta contains the earliest account of the Buddha's awakening.<sup>23</sup> (Wynne 2009a:66)

## 2 Gotama as bodhisattva and ascetic

### 2.1 RENUNCIATION & SELF-MORTIFICATION

**2.1.1** The Majjhima Commentary calls this discourse **the Pāsa,rāsi Sutta**, “the discourse on the pile of snares,” referring to the simile in §§32-33. It is an example of the rare documentation of the Buddha's life as the Bodhisattva,<sup>24</sup> in this case, from his meeting with Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāma,putta up to the great awakening.

Here is the well-known stock passage on **the great renunciation**, describing Siddhattha's going-forth:

while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life, though my mother and father wished otherwise and wept with tearful faces, I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robe, and went forth from the household life into the homeless life.

(D 4,6/1:115 = 5,6/1:129 = M 26,14/1:163 = 36,13/1:240 = 85,11/1:93 = S 1.20,4/1:9)<sup>25</sup>

This great renunciation pericope is common to all the pre-awakening narratives in the Majjhima.

**2.1.2** The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta, however, omits both the account of his **self-mortification**<sup>26</sup> and the details of **the great renunciation**. These details are, however, found in the following suttas:<sup>27</sup>

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all suffering” (S 21.4/2:278,19\* = It 102/104,17\*); *ajjhagā amataṃ santiṃ | nibbānaṃ padam accutaṃ*, “realized the death-free, peace, | nirvana, the unchanging state” (Sn 204 = Vv 50.21/841).

<sup>21</sup> See Wynne, *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, 2007:20 f.

<sup>22</sup> §2.3: *tena h'āyusmanto yena rammakassa brāhmaṇassa assamo ten'upasaṅkamatha* (M 1:160,29), SD 1.11.

<sup>23</sup> For full details, see Wynne 2007:14-25. André Bareau, in *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dans les Sūtrapīṭaka et le Vinayapīṭaka anciens*, also believe this text to contain the oldest account of the Buddha's awakening (1963:72-74).

<sup>24</sup> Although the *Webster's 3<sup>rd</sup> International Dictionary* lists both the Sanskrit and Pali forms, I prefer the better known Sanskrit form, “bodhisattva” (as I do in other terms like “karma,” “tathagata” and “nirvana”). From the context it is clear that this refers to the early Buddhist notion. When used in special reference to our Buddha before his awakening, it is initially capitalized as “the Bodhisattva,” reflecting his pre-Buddha historical status. The same anglicized preference applies for such terms as arhat, buddha, tathagata, etc. In special case, such as amongst the Dalits (oppressed by brahmins and their system even today) adjustments may be made, eg, to use “Dhamma” rather than the anglicized “Dharma,” if this is helpful.

<sup>25</sup> For more refs, see SD 51.15 (1.3.1.2).

<sup>26</sup> See **Bhaya,bherava S** (M 4,20/1:20 f), SD 44.3; **Mahā Sīha,nāda S** (M 12,44-61/1:77-82), SD 49.1; **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,20-30/1:242-246), SD 49.4. Traditionally, ie, post-canonically, this period of the Bodhisattva's experiment with self-torture methods lasted “six years.” However, “[t]he Pali Canon does not, to my knowledge, indicate anywhere how long the future Buddha tried alternative methods. In the later literature [Buddhacarita, Lalitavistara, Mahavastu, J 1:67], however, it is often said that it lasted six years.” (Bronkhorst 1993:14 & n18).

<sup>27</sup> For a more detailed collation table, see SD 49.4 (Table 7).

<b>Bhaya,bherava Sutta</b>	M 4,20/1:21	SD 44.3
<b>Mahā Sihanāda Sutta</b>	M 12,44-61/1:77-83	SD 49.1, SD 1.13
<b>Mahā Saccaka Sutta</b>	M 36,12-44/1:242-249	SD 49.4, SD 1.12
<b>Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta</b>	M 85,15-54/2:93 f	SD 55.2
<b>Saṅgāra Sutta</b>	M 100,9-41/2:211-213	SD 10.9

and in part recounted in the following places:

Vinaya	<b>Mahā,vagga</b> 1.1-1.6.31 (V 1:1-12): from the great awakening to the 5 monks: SD 1.1
Dīgha Nikāya	<b>Soṇa,daṇḍa Sutta</b> (D 4,6/1:115), SD 30.5, = <b>Kūṭa,danta Sutta</b> (D 5,6/1:129), SD 22.8; <b>Mahā’padāna Sutta</b> (D 14,2.18-2.22/2:30-35), SD 49.8: life of the past buddha Vipassī; <b>Mahā,parinibbāna S</b> (D 16,5.27/2:151), SD 9.
Aṅguttara Nikāya	<b>Sukhumāla Sutta</b> (A 3.38/1:145 f), SD 63.7
Udāna	<b>Bodhi Suttas 1-3</b> (U 1.1-1.3/1-3), SD 83.13-15 respectively
Sutta Nipāta	<b>Pabbajjā Sutta</b> (Sn 3.1/72-74), SD 49.19; <b>Padhāna Sutta</b> (Sn 3.2/74-79), SD 51.11; <b>Nālaka Sutta</b> (Sn 3.11/131-136), SD 49.18.

## 2.2 SELF-LIBERATION

**2.2.1** The importance of the **Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** lies in its declaration of the Bodhisattva’s earlier motivation in going forth. According to the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta and its Madhyama Āgama parallel, the Buddha states his reason for going forth in search of awakening in very personal terms, speaking of himself (as Bodhisattva) of *being subject to old age, to disease, and to death*, and of searching a way out of this predicament for himself, without alluding to any wish to give teachings or liberate other beings:

*Yan nunāhaṃ attanā jarā,dhammo ... attanā vyādhi,dhammo ... attanā maraṇa,dhammo ... nibbānaṃ pariyeseyyāṃ.*

Suppose that I, being myself subject to decay ... being myself subject to disease ... being myself subject to death ... were to seek nirvana. (M 26,13/1:163)

**2.2.2 Analayo** makes this helpful observation in his *Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya*:

To understand the Buddha’s reasoning after his awakening, two other passages could be brought in. One of these passages occurs in **the Brahma,nimantanika Sutta** [M 49], where in reply to Māra the Buddha explained that his condition of inner freedom was independent of whether he taught or not.<sup>28</sup>

The other passage is from **the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta** [D 16], according to which the Buddha renounced his life principle and thereby set an end to his teaching activities because his attendant Ānanda had failed to request him to stay alive, even though that would have been possible.<sup>29</sup>

The point that emerges from these two passages is that the quality of the Buddha’s awakening did not in any way depend on him becoming a teacher. His realization was self-sufficient as it

<sup>28</sup> *Desento ... tathāgato sāvakānaṃ dhammaṃ tādiso va, adesento pi ... tādiso va* (M 49,30/1:331,18), SD 7.11.

<sup>29</sup> D 16,3.3-3.6/2:103 (SD 9). This recurs in the Skt fragments of Mahā Parinirvāṇa Sūtra (Waldschmidt 1951:204) and in Chin parallels DĀ 2, T5, T6 and T7 (T1.15b24, T1.165a13, T1.180b20, T1.191b19); a tr of DĀ 2 in Weller 1939: 78-79, of T5 in Puini 1909:36, and of T6 and T7 in Waldschmidt 1944:98-99. For biblio see SD 9.

were, and there was no need for him to proselytise in order to corroborate the truth he had discovered.

Once he had been requested to teach, he did so, but when on a later occasion he was not requested to continue teaching, he stopped teaching.

(Analayo 2005 (draft) at M 1:167; emphases added and standardized)<sup>30</sup>

### 3 Samvega and the 4 sights

#### 3.1 SAMVEGA AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

When the Bodhisattva, as a young prince, sees the 4 sights, he is overcome by a powerful spiritual experience termed *samvega*.<sup>31</sup> A possible English rendition of the term would be “fear and awe” although this expression is more applicable to a theistic belief-system than to a non-theistic one like Buddhism.

However, if we redefine this phrase without its theistic undertone, then we have the sense of samvega (which is found in the English dictionary).<sup>32</sup> The closest, albeit awkward, translation is perhaps “sense of urgency” or “spiritual urgency.” **Torkel Brekke**, in his book, *Religious Motivation and the Origins of Buddhism*, explains that

what makes this realization [the inherent suffering of life] so powerful in the case of the prince is the dissonance between his original cognition of his own life and this new knowledge that he himself must grow old, suffer and die...

This cognitive dissonance gives the prince a strong feeling of discomfort, which motivates him to equalize the discrepancy. Obviously the facts of life cannot be changed, and the only solution is to bring his own life into some sort of harmony with these facts. (Brekke, 2002:63)

The spiritual urgency experienced by the young Siddhattha is by no means unique. Many others in his time have left their homes in search of a higher liberating truth. These were the recluses (Pali *samaṇā*; Skt *śramaṇā*) who, at the same time, found no affinity with the established priestly religion of the *brāhmaṇā* or brahmins.<sup>33</sup>

#### 3.2 REASONS FOR THE GREAT RENUNCIATION

##### 3.2.1 The 3 intoxications

In **the Sukhumāla Sutta** (A 3.38), the Buddha recounts how powerful religious emotion (*samvega*) overcame him as the Bodhisattva when he reflected on the true nature of life despite (perhaps because of) his life being “delicate ... supremely delicate, exceedingly delicate,” thus:

**(1)** Bhikshus, amidst such splendour and wealth,<sup>34</sup> and because of such an exceedingly delicate<sup>35</sup> life, this thought arose in me:

<sup>30</sup> For an update on Analayo’s remarks here, see 2011:181. For further discussion, see **Brahma, nimantanika S** (M 49), SD 11.7 (2a).

<sup>31</sup> For detailed discussion, see **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16), SD 9 (7.6).

<sup>32</sup> Such as Webster’s 3<sup>rd</sup> New International Dictionary.

<sup>33</sup> On samvega, further see SD 9 (7f).

<sup>34</sup> “Splendour and wealth,” *iddhi*, or in a word “majesty.”

“An ignorant ordinary person, though by nature would himself age [decay] and being unable to escape ageing [decay], feels distressed, ashamed, disgusted<sup>36</sup> when seeing an old or aged person, being forgetful of himself [his own situation].

Now I, too, by nature, will age and cannot escape ageing. If, bhikshus, when seeing an old or aged person, I were to feel distressed, ashamed, disgusted, that would not be proper for one like myself.”

When I reflected thus, bhikshus, all my **intoxication with youth** vanished.

**(2)** (Again I reflected:)

“An ignorant ordinary person, though by nature would himself suffer disease and being unable to escape disease, feels distressed, ashamed, disgusted when seeing an ill person, being forgetful of himself.

Now I, too, by nature, will suffer disease and cannot escape disease. If, bhikshus, when seeing an ill person, I were to feel distressed, ashamed, disgusted, that would not be proper for one like myself.”

When I reflected thus, bhikshus, all my **intoxication with health** vanished.

**(3)** (Again I reflected:)

“An untutored ordinary person, though by nature would himself die and being unable to escape dying, feels distressed, ashamed, disgusted when seeing a dead person, being forgetful of himself.

Now I, too, by nature will die and cannot escape dying. If, bhikshus, when seeing a dead person, I were to feel distressed, ashamed, disgusted, that would not be proper for one like myself.”

When I reflected thus, bhikshus, all my **intoxication with life** vanished. (A 3.38)<sup>37</sup>

### 3.2.2 Divine messengers

Passages reflecting the same sentiment [3.2.1] appear in **the Māgandiya Sutta** (M 75)<sup>38</sup> and **the Mahā, vastu**.<sup>39</sup> In **the Vinaya**, the same story is told of the young man Yasa, whose pre-awakening story parallels that of the Buddha himself (V 1:15).

**The (Pañca) Deva, dūta Sutta** (M 130) gives a dramatic account of the 5 divine messengers—a tender infant, an old person, a sick person, a criminal being punished, and a dead person—and king Yama, the ruler of the dead, admonishes one newly fallen into his realm, thus:

Did it never occur to you, an intelligent and mature person, that “I too am subject to birth ... subject to old age ... subject to disease ... subject to tortures [punishments] ... subject to death ... surely I had better do good through body, speech and mind”?

(Abridged, M 130,3-8/3:178 ff; A 1:138 ff; cf DhA 1:107, AA 1:36, the Makha,deva J)<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Here, “delicate” (*sukhumāla*) means “delightful from its beauty, charming, pleasant, nice ... characterized by pleasure or sensuous delight; luxurious, voluptuous ... self-indulgent” (OED).

<sup>36</sup> “Would feel troubled, ashamed, disgusted,” *aṭṭiyeyyaṃ harāyeyyaṃ jeguccheyyaṃ*. For fuller analyses of these terms, see **Kevaḍḍha S** (D 11,5/1:213), SD 1.7 n sv.

<sup>37</sup> For full text, see A 3.38/1:145 f (SD 63.7). For further discussion, see SD 5.16 (19.4.2); SD 50.9 (2.2.1).

<sup>38</sup> M 75,10/1:504.

<sup>39</sup> Mvst 2:115.

<sup>40</sup> See **Deva, dūta S** (M 130), SD 2.23, esp (2.3).

### 3.2.3 The 3 great evils

In the **Mahā’padāna Sutta** (D 14), in the story of the past Buddha Vipassī, we see these reflective passages on the 3 great “evils” or the “3-D’s of life” (decay, disease, death) dramatized into the famous 4 sights of an old man, a sick man, a dead man and an ascetic, seen by the bodhisattva prince Vipassī.<sup>41</sup> The ascetic, of course, represents the way to liberation from the 3 great evils. What is true of a past Buddha, the ancient reciters must have thought, must also be true of our own Gotama Buddha,<sup>42</sup> although no such account is ever found in the Pali Canon itself.<sup>43</sup> And so the same epic tale is thus dutifully recounted down the ages of our own Buddha to this day.<sup>44</sup>

## 4 Āḷāra Kālāma & Uddaka Rāma,putta

### 4.1 DID ĀḷĀRA & RĀMA TEACH DHYANA?

#### 4.1.1 “Dhyana with right view” [5.3.2]

**4.1.1.1** Meditation was well known in the Buddha’s time, and it was such a milieu that produced the Buddha and made his presence meaningful and effective. Dhyana, too, was well known before his time, and, of course, in his own time, too. However, the Buddha made a most significant contribution to the history of religion in discovering “**dhyana with right view**,” the profoundly calm and clear mind, that is the basis for renouncing all views and directly seeing into true reality. It is in this spirit that we should understand the famous remark by the devaputra Pañcala,caṇḍa, as recorded in two suttas of the same name—both called **Pañcala,caṇḍa Sutta**—thus.<sup>45</sup>

In the midst of confines, the sage  
of vast wisdom has found the opening—  
The Buddha who has awakened to [discovered] dhyana,  
the lone lordly bull, the sage.<sup>47</sup>

*Sambādhe vata okāsaṃ  
avindi bhūri,medhaso  
yo jhānam,bujjhi<sup>46</sup> buddho  
paṭilīna,nisabho munī ti*

(S 2.7/1:48 @ SD 33.1b, = A 9.42/4:449 @ SD 33.2)

**4.1.1.2** The stanza, recorded in the **(Deva,putta) Pañcala,caṇḍa Sutta** (S 2.7), is first spoken by the devaputra Pañcala,caṇḍa before the Buddha himself,<sup>48</sup> and in the **(Pañcalacaṇḍa) Sambādha Sutta** (A 9.42), Ānanda is recorded as giving a full explanation of it to the monk Udāyī.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>41</sup> D 14,2.1-15/2:21-29.

<sup>42</sup> The fullest accounts of the 4 sights are in the Nidāna Kathā (intro) of the Jātakas and the Buddha,vaṃsa Commentary (prediction, J 1:57; BA 277), and which says that they were all seen on the same day, and that the “sights” are said to be enacted by the devas, ie epiphanies (J 1:58 f; BA 280). While BA says the Bodhisattva sees each of these 4 sights every 4 months, the Dīgha Reciters (BA 280) and J recount them as occurring on the same day.

<sup>43</sup> But see Vv 81; Buc bk 3 (The arising of samvega). See H Oldenberg, *Buddha: Sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, Berlin: W Hertz, 1881:114.

<sup>44</sup> See **(Yama) Deva,dūta S** (A 3.35) + SD 48.10 (2.2). On the 4 sights, see Nakamura 2000:95-99; Piya Tan 2004 2.6; Analayo 2006:104 f.

<sup>45</sup> See **Dhyana**, SD 8.4 (2) & **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1.

<sup>46</sup> So Be WT; Ce *jhanam,budhā* (another MS: *jhānaṃ buddhābuddho*); Ee *jhānam abuddhi*; Se *jhanam abuddhi*.

<sup>47</sup> *Sambādhe gataṃ okāsaṃ, avudā bhūri.medhaso | yo jhānaṃ abujjhi buddho, paṭilīna,nisabho munī ti*. For *abujjhi* here, S (PTS ed) has vl *abuddhi* (with no change in meaning). S:B tr: “The one of broad wisdom has indeed found | The opening in the midst of confinement, | The Buddha who discovered jhāna | The chief bull, aloof (from the herd), the sage.” See S:B 386 n151.

<sup>48</sup> S 2.7/1:48 @ SD 33.1b(2.1).

#### 4.1.2 Dhyana before the Buddha's time

**4.1.2.1** Brahmavamso, at some point,<sup>50</sup> held the view that the Buddha “discovered dhyana” (in an unqualified way):

When it is said that the Buddha discovered *Jhāna*, it is not to be understood that no one had ever experienced *Jhāna* before. For instance, in the era of the previous Buddha Kassapa, countless men and women achieved *Jhāna* and subsequently realized Enlightenment. But in the India of twenty six centuries ago, all knowledge of *Jhāna* had disappeared. This was one reason that there is no mention at all of *Jhāna* in any religious text before the time of the Buddha.<sup>51</sup> (2003:5)

**4.1.2.2** Then, he goes to explain the Bodhisattva's meditation training under Āḷāra Kālāma (from whom he learned to attain the stage of nothingness) and Uddaka Rāma,putta (from whom he mastered his father Rāma's teaching and attained the stage of neither-perception-nor-non-perception). [§15.1-17]

... these two attainments could not have been connected to *Jhāna*, because the Bodhisatta recalled, just prior to sitting under the Bodhi Tree, that the only time in his life that he had experienced any *Jhāna* was as a young boy, while sitting under a Tree as his father conducted the first-ploughing ceremony (M 36).

One of the reasons why *Jhāna* was not practised before the Buddha's enlightenment was because people then either indulged in seeking pleasure and comfort of the body or else followed a religion of tormenting the body. Both were caught up with the body and its five senses and knew no release from the five senses. Neither produced the sustained tranquillity of the body necessary as the foundation for *Jhāna*.

When the Bodhisatta began the easy practices leading to such tranquility of the body, his first five disciples abandoned him in disgust. Such a practice was not regarded as valid. Therefore it was not practised, and so *Jhāna* never occurred.

(Brahmavamso 2003:6; emphasis added)

**4.1.2.3** Brahmavamso's argument is that if we accept the young Bodhisattva's jambul-tree<sup>52</sup> dhyana experience as true, we cannot accept his tutelage under the 2 teachers, Āḷāra and Rāma (the elder), as true. However, this argument seems arbitrary and somewhat forced. In fact, it is easier to understand why the Bodhisattva *so easily* masters the meditation teachings of the two teachers—that is, *because he is familiar with dhyana*, able to attain it, even at a young age!

**4.1.2.4** There is neither good reason nor the evidence for rejecting **the story of the 2 teachers** as a later interpolation. Brahmavamso's arguments are unacceptable because rejecting such canonical

<sup>49</sup> A 9.42/4:449-451, SD 33.2.

<sup>50</sup> He certainly held this view before 2010, when **The Buddha discovered dhyana** (SD 33.1b) was written to discuss another troubling view he held: that there was “no dhyana” before the Buddha.

<sup>51</sup> **Dakkhiṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 142) mentions the “outsider free from lust for sense-pleasures” (*bāhirakā kāmesu vitarāga*) that is, a worldly dhyana-attainer<sup>51</sup> (M 142.5/ 3:255). If such a meditator existed before the Buddha's time in India or exists outside of Buddhism, then Brahmavamso's curious assertion that “the Buddha discovered *Jhāna*,” that there was no *jhāna* before him (Brahmavamso 2003:5) may need to be re-examined: **The Buddha discovered dhyana** (SD 33.1b). See **The layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5(11c), 2005.

<sup>52</sup> Wujastyk (2004) says that *jambu* here is not the “rose-apple” (of Malacca and SE Asia) which was not found in India; it is properly the jambul or black plum.

accounts only makes it for difficult for us to understand the context of the Bodhisattva's development leading to his awakening.

Indeed, we may see the child Siddhattha's dhyana experience under the jambul tree as a result of his past life experience. Even better, we can attribute his ability to attain such a high level of profound meditation at a young age to both his past-life experience and to the meditation tradition of his days. This is like the child prodigy, the young Mozart, who we may say had the benefit of both past-life experience (nature) and also the rich tradition of music in his society at that time (nurture).<sup>53</sup>

**4.1.2.5** Moreover, the fact that dhyana was known to other non-Buddhist practitioners is well attested in numerous suttas. Such accounts would not be meaningful to the early Buddhists unless there were a well known tradition. Moreover, the nature of dhyana itself is so subjective that it can be difficult to prove any such claims either way—except to go by the textual and historical evidence.

**4.1.2.6** We cannot simply throw out the account of the Bodhisattva's two dhyana teachers to show the Buddha's "uniqueness." To do so may imply that the compilers of the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta were wrong in their memory of the Buddha's quest, or worse, that they had manufactured such a story merely to glorify the Buddha's uniqueness. [4.3]

**4.1.2.7** If we regard religious history as human or human-related events, it must be closely related to the social realities of the founder's time. No religion arises in a social vacuum: religiosity is itself a human reaction to the social realities and a response to the human capacity for the divine and beyond. In short, a religion evolves, building and bettering itself from its cultural past.

Ancient India has a rich religious past, and by the Buddha's time had reached a time of significant tension between this religious development and social growth of an unprecedented dimension—the intellectual, political and spiritual development form the foundations and wellspring for what Indian society is today.

It was a time of unprecedented religious openness, search and experimentation. Religion—being a matter of faith rather than empirical experience—is understandably darkened by the shadows of priest-craft and opportunism. Where there is a market for beliefs, there are those who are ever ready to produce and provide attractive or compelling beliefs, rightly or wrongly—often the latter. In other words, wrong views and wrong practices were also widespread during the Buddha's time. It would be right and meaningful, then, to understand that the Buddha discovered "dhyana with right view."<sup>54</sup>

## 4.2 RĀMA AND UDDAKA RĀMA,PUTTA [§§15-16]

**4.2.1** The Bodhisattva's visits to Ājāra and to Uddaka are recorded in **the Mahā Saccaka Sutta** (M 36), **the Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85) and **the Saṅgārava Sutta** (M 100).<sup>55</sup> An interesting note is made in the Burmese version of the Pali Canon:

<sup>53</sup> There is, of course, a difference here: we do not really know whether the child Siddhattha was ever *nurtured* in meditation, which is unlikely at such a young age. However, the fact that dhyana meditation was already a well known tradition by his time was a more likely explanation than that of a unique childhood experience. On Mozart and child prodigies, see SD 57.1 (8.4.3).

<sup>54</sup> See further "Were Ājāra and Rāma masters of dhyana?": **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (2.4). See also Analayo 2015;19-21.

<sup>55</sup> For a comparable account of the Bodhisattva's visits to Ārāḍa Kālāma and to Udraka Rāma,putra, see Mvst 2:118,1-120,16.

The Great Being said, “Friend Rāma,” but Rāma,putta replied, “I’m not Rāma. Rāma was the community teacher (*gan’ācariya*) but he has passed on and is no more.” For this reason, sentences relating to Rāma are in the past tense, and so Rāma,putta was a co-religionist with the Great Being, not his teacher. Similarly, the Tīkā notes that the formless attainments are made in text (Pāli) refer to Rāma, not to Uddaka (and so on) [DAṬ:VRI 2:131]. (M:VRI 1:224)

**4.2.2 E J Thomas**, in his *Life of the Buddha Legend and History*, notes that “[t]he visit to Uddaka Rāma,putta is then described in almost the same terms [as the one with Ālāra Kālāma], but here the doctrine was that which had been realized and proclaimed by Rāma, the father of Uddaka” (1949:63).<sup>56</sup> **Bodhi** is aware of this, for in *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*, his translation of the Majjhima Nikāya (1995, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 2001) he notes under the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta that

Both Horner in [*Middle Length Sayings*] and Ñ[āṇamoli] in MS err in their translations of the account of Bodhisatta’s meeting with Uddaka Rāmaputta by assuming that Uddaka is identical with Rāma. However, as his name indicates, Uddaka was the son (*putta*) of Rāma, who must have already passed away before the Bodhisatta arrived on the scene. It should be noted that all references to Rāma are in the past tense and the third person, and that Uddaka in the end places the Bodhisatta in the position of teacher. Though the text does not allow for definite conclusions, this suggests that he himself had not yet reached the fourth immaterial attainment. (Bodhi, 2001:1217 n303)

**4.2.3** Such a scholarly lapse is understandable, especially when even long before them, the compilers of the later Buddhist texts, too, missed out this interesting detail of Buddhist history. The distinction between Rāma and his son, Uddaka Rāma,putta, is found in Sarvastivadin, Dharmaguptaka and Mahasanghika accounts of the Bodhisattva’s early meditation experiences.<sup>57</sup> However, **the Saṅgha, bheda, vastu** and its Tibetan parallel and **the Lalita, vistara** fail to distinguish them,<sup>58</sup> which as noted by Wynn, “is probably because of a later obfuscation of the tradition” (2007:13).

However, it is clear from the **Uddaka Sutta** that Uddaka Rāma,putta had no high spiritual attainment:

“Bhikshus, although Uddaka Rāma,putta was not himself a knowledge-master (*vedagū*), he claimed: ‘I’m a knowledge-master.’

Although he was not himself an all-conqueror (*sabba,ji*), he claimed: ‘I’m an all-conqueror.’

Although he had not excised the tumour’s root, he claimed: ‘I’ve excised the tumour’s root.’” (S 35.103/4:83), SD 96.2

**4.2.4** It is possible that the ascetic **Rāma**<sup>59</sup> was the first (apparently the oldest) of the 8 wise brahmins who attended the Nativity and performed the “protection rites” (*rakkha, kamma*, Miln 236). The Milinda,pañha lists the 8 brahmins as follows: Rāma, Dhaja, Lakkhaṇa, Mantī, Yañña, Suyāma, Subhoja and Sudatta (Miln 236). The Jātaka Commentary gives the same names with minor variations, that is, Koṇḍañña (for Yañña) and Bhoja (for Subhoja) (J 1:56). According to the Jātaka Commentary, seven of the brahmins raised two fingers, prophesizing that the Bodhisattva would either become a universal monarch (*cakka, vatti*) (if he remained in the world), or the Buddha (if he renounced the world) (J 1:56).

<sup>56</sup> Peter Skilling discusses this point in detail in “Uddaka Rāmaputta and Rāma,” *Pāli Buddhist Review* 6,2 1981-82a:99-105. See **Saṅgārava S** (M 100.11 f) in SD 10.9.

<sup>57</sup> See Skilling 1981-82a:100-102.

<sup>58</sup> See Skilling 1981-82b:100.

<sup>59</sup> Not listed in DPPN.

### 4.3 THE STORY OF THE 2 TEACHERS—A FABRICATION?

**4.3.1** Some scholars who think that the story of the two teachers' instructing the Bodhisattva was a fabrication include André Bareau,<sup>60</sup> Tilmann Vetter,<sup>61</sup> and Johannes Bronkhorst.<sup>62</sup> Bareau (1963:16) notes that this episode, found in M 26 (M 1:163,31), the Chinese parallel MĀ 204 (T1.776b8), and the Dharma, gup-taka Vinaya (T1.428 @ T22.780b8), is absent from the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya, which nevertheless does report the intention to teach them (T.1421 @ T22.104a11). Bareau (1963:20) then concludes that Ārāḍa Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra was probably fictitious ("son probablement fictifs," 1963:20 f), a conclusion accepted by Vetter (1988:xxii).<sup>63</sup>

This supposed discrepancy, notes **Analayo**, is simply due to the fact that the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya proceeds from the Bodhisattva's meeting with king Bimbisāra directly to his awakening.<sup>64</sup> In view of the narrative emphasis adopted in this Vinaya, it is only natural that neither the apprenticeship under Ārāḍa Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra nor the practice of austerities are mentioned.

**4.3.2** Among those who have shown the story of the 2 teachers to be historical are Ghirgo Zafirovulo<sup>65</sup> and Alexander Wynne.<sup>66</sup> **Wynne's** short but important article should be read in full. Here, we will only highlight the key points of his convincing arguments.

His first point is that the story of the 2 teachers are corroborated by at least 3 independent sources:

Xuanzang mentions some legendary evidence that relates Udraka Rāmaputra to Rājagṛha. It seems to represent the local tradition of the Buddhists living in the area of Rājagṛha.<sup>67</sup> This tradition is confirmed by the account of the Bodhisattva's training in the Mahāvastu, which also places Udraka Rāmaputra in Rājagṛha. (Mvst 2:119,8)

Then, we have **the (Mahā, purisa) Vassa, kāra Sutta** (A 4.35), which says the brahmin Vassakāra, chief minister of Magadha, visits the Buddha in Rājagaha and tells him that the rajah Eleyya has faith in the recluse Rama,putta.<sup>68</sup> The Commentary identifies him as Uddaka Rāmaputta.<sup>69</sup> Vassakāra also appears in **the Mahā, parinibbāna Sutta** as the chief minister of king Ajāta, sattu of Magadha.<sup>70</sup> Vassakāra's connect-

<sup>60</sup> *Recherches sur la biographie du Buddha dan les Sutrapitaka et les Vinaya anciens I*, Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1963.

<sup>61</sup> *The Ideas and Meditative Practices of Early Buddhism*, Leiden: EJ Brill, 1988.

<sup>62</sup> *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*, Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 1986; New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1993.

<sup>63</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Analayo 2014:22-25.

<sup>64</sup> The Chin Āgama (T1421 @ T22.102c14) relates that the Bodhisattva, after king Bimbisāra leaves, approaches the Bodhi tree and asks a person nearby for some grass to sit on. Applying Bareau's mode of interpretation consistently, argues **Analayo**, one would have to conclude that the Mahīśāsaka Vinaya presents an alternative account according to which the Bodhisattva awakens right away, without any need to search for a way to attain it and without any practice of asceticism. This, of course, does not match the remainder of the narration in the same Vinaya (2014: 23 f).

<sup>65</sup> *L'illumination du Buddha: de la quête à l'annonce de l'Éveil: essais de chronologie relative et de stratigraphie textuelle*, Innsbruck: Institut für Sprachwissenschaft der Universität Innsbruck, 1993. He argues against Bareau's thesis.

<sup>66</sup> A Wynne, "How old is the Suttapiṭaka?" 2003:22-28; see esp also Wynne, *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, 2007:9-26, esp 12 f.

<sup>67</sup> Xuanzang, *Si-Yu-Ki* (tr S Beal), part II, 1906:139 f.

<sup>68</sup> A 4.352:35-37 (SD 82.9).

<sup>69</sup> *Samāṇe rāmaputte'ti uddake rāmaputte* (AA 3:164,23).

<sup>70</sup> D 16,1.2/2:72,9 ff = A 7.20/4:17,11 ff (SD 9). Later, in the same Sutta, he and Sunidha are in charge of the construction of Paṭaligāma's defences (D 16,1.26-34/2:86-89; U 87; V 1:228). Vassa, kāra also appears in **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108/3:7 ff), SD 33.5, which is set in Rājagaha.

ion with Rāja,gaha and Magadha suggest that the rajah Eḷeyya was a local chieftain in Magadha, probably located near Rāja,gaha. If so, concludes Wynne, it is likely that Uddaka Rāma,putta, too, was situated in the vicinity of Raja,gaha (2007:12 f).

## 5 The Bodhisattva’s apprenticeship

**5.1** The Bodhisattva’s spiritual struggle after the great renunciation and just before the great awakening can be historically said to reflect **2 diametrically opposed religious systems**, that is, the 2 streams of pre-Buddhist meditation methods “primarily represented by the samadhi practitioners of the Upanishads and the self-tormentors of the Jains.”<sup>71</sup> That is to say, the apprenticeship under Āḷāra Kālāma [§15] and under Uddaka Rāma,putta [§16].

### **5.2 THEORY, PRACTICE, REALIZATION**

#### **5.2.1 The 3 stages of apprenticeship**

Virtually all the sutta descriptions of **the Bodhisattva’s apprenticeship** do not mention a vital point highlighted in the Ariyapariyesanā Sutta, that is, the 3 stages of his apprenticeship [§§15, 16]:

- (1) **mastering “the texts”**: learning (lip-reciting) and memorizing (rehearsal) of them; [§§15.3, 16.13]
- (2) **meditation practice**: learning the 5 factors of the path: faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom; [§§15.7, 16.7]
- (3) **realizing dhyana**: the attainments of the base of nothingness [§§15.15] and of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception [§16.15].

#### **5.2.2 The “texts”**

(1)<sup>72</sup> Clearly, Āḷāra and Uddaka were ascetics in the mainstream Vedic tradition. **The Uddaka Sutta** (S 35.103) records the Buddha as recalling that Uddaka Rāmaputta claims to be a *vedagū*, a master of the Vedas.<sup>73</sup> Even though the titles or nature of **the texts** is not specified, it is clear that they must be some Vedic texts, most probably the very early Upaniṣads, since often enough we can see, in the suttas, the Buddha refuting many of its ideas.<sup>74</sup>

Hence, the Vedas are the only texts known to the early suttas; there are also the Upaniṣads. However, some late Buddhist texts and modern scholars say that these teachers belong to the Sāṃkhya school. This highly unlikely claim is probably based on such works as the Buddhacarita of Aśvaghōṣa (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century CE), and is clearly anachronistic.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness*, 2004: 96, 2005: 136 f.

<sup>72</sup> These guide-numbers refer each of the 3 stages of the Bodhisattva’s apprenticeship [5.2.1].

<sup>73</sup> **Uddaka S** (S 35.103), where a “knowledge-master” (*veda,gū*) is defined as one “who understands as they really are the origin, the passing away, the gratification, the disadvantages [dangers], and the escape in regard to the 6 bases for contact [the 6 doors of sense-experience, ie, through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind]” (S 35.-103/4:83 f), SD 96.2.

<sup>74</sup> See **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3), SD 21.3 (3). On the Buddha refuting self-views, see SD 3.13 (4). On “Did the Buddha ‘borrow’ ideas from the Upaniṣads?”: SD 6.15 (5).

<sup>75</sup> See also Sujato 2004:14 f.

### 5.3 THE BODHISATTVA'S MEDITATION ATTAINMENTS

#### 5.3.1 The 5 factors of the path

(2) Secondly, the 2 teachers' factors of path-practice in which the Bodhisattva trains is identically described as **faith, energy, mindfulness, samadhi, and wisdom**<sup>76</sup> [§§15.7, 16.7]. These understandably are the basic qualities and skills that any apprentice meditator needs to have in order to progress in his meditation and master it. For each of the 2 teachers, these faculties would, of course, be detailed in accordance with their beliefs, knowledge and goals. They are definitely not those of what the Buddha himself later teaches as the 5 spiritual faculties (*pañc'indriya*) although they are identical in composition. [5.3.3.2]

#### 5.3.2 Dhyana with right view [4.1.1]

(3) Thirdly, the goals of the 2 teachers are similarly the formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti*). In the case of **Ājāra**, it is that of the base of nothingness [§15.15], and for **Uddaka** (or rather his father, Rāma), it is the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception [§16.15]. However, none of these profoundly exalted meditative states gives the Bodhisattva the breakthrough into total freedom from the body and suffering that he is looking for.

An important to note here is that the meditation masters in pre-Buddha times knew dhyana (*jhāna*). Indeed, even as a child of 7, the Bodhisattva himself is able to attain the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana. Moreover, the suttas themselves and the commentarial stories often speak of cases of dhyana meditators before the Buddha's time.

In other words, the Buddha is born into a culture steeped in **meditation**, and it is to *his* and to *our* benefit that he breaks through into the highest state, that is, nirvana. The reason that the other great meditators before the Buddha were unable to attain nirvana—the highest they attained was that of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception—was because they all believed in some kind of abiding entity or divine essence (like an immortal soul). The Buddha is able to break through into nirvana because he has mastered dhyana with **right view** which he then formulates as the noble eightfold path for our benefit.<sup>77</sup>

#### 5.3.3 Knowing the problem well before correcting it

**5.3.3.1** The 3 stages mentioned [5.2.1] are identical to Buddhist formulation of “**the 3 sublime truths**” (*saddhamma*)—study, practice, and realization—but this is a commentarial term.<sup>78</sup> The idea is, of course, used in the suttas, but it is not highlighted as a technical term. Clearly, this triad is very broad, too broad to be useful in practical terms of the Buddha's teaching methods. It may, however, given him the idea of **the 3 trainings** (*sikkha-t,taya*): in moral virtue, mental concentration and insight wisdom.

<sup>76</sup> The Sarvāstivādin version (MĀ 204) mentions only faith, energy, and wisdom here, but includes mindfulness just below. The Saṅghabheda, vastu (Gnoli pg. 97) and the Lalita, vistara (Lalv 239.2) mention all 5 spiritual faculties. [Sujato's fn]

<sup>77</sup> See **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b.

<sup>78</sup> Ie *pariyatti paṭipatti paṭivedha*, called the 3 “sublime truths” (*saddhamma*) (VA 225; AA 5:33). The first 2—*pariyatti* and *paṭipatti*—are called the twofold “teaching” or “dispensation” (*sāsana*) (Nm 143). Here, *pariyatti* is the textual study of the “nine-limbed teaching of the Teacher” (*nav'aṅga satthu sāsana*) (V 3:8; M 1:133; A 2:5, 3:86) [SD 3.2 (1)]; *paṭipatti* is the practice of the 37 awakening-limbs (*bodhi, pakkhiyā dhammā*) (Vbh 249) [SD 6.18 (1)]; and *paṭivedha* is awakening and its attendant knowledges, such as the “threefold knowledge” (*te, vijja*) (D 3:-220; A 10.102/5:211) [see **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,93-98/1:81-83), SD 8.10].

**5.3.3.2** The 5 factors of the path are the same as the Buddhist **5 spiritual faculties**. Despite the “non-Buddhist” nature of these interesting seminal passages, we must bear in mind how the Bodhisattva is willing to try out or use any teaching that will promote us to cultivate moral virtue, concentration and wisdom. Even if we are to dismiss the “non-Buddhist” nature of such a samadhi, in particular that of the formless attainments, we should remember that his encounters with the 2 teachers are part of his question for awakening.

The key terms of the 5 faculties, especially *smṛti* (P *sati*) and *prajñā* often occur in the Upaniṣads. The Buddha shows that what we know as the 5 faculties were historically associated with the Vedic tradition. Such an observation and admission are only to the Buddha’s advantage and our benefit. Indeed, it is no coincidence that we very frequently see, in the Upanisadic texts, *smṛti* treated as “memory,” a very important aspect of the early Buddhist teaching of *sati*, mindfulness.<sup>79</sup>

**5.3.3.3** It is, in fact, no loss at all for us to accept that many of the Buddha pedagogical terms—such as the 5 faculties—are rooted in the Upaniṣads; but he is *not* teaching any Vedic doctrine. Indeed, in order to debunk what is wrong in the old ultimately unwholesome system, we must know exactly what we are debunking, and so do it most effectively, and then to come up with an efficacious system for personal development, mental cultivation and spiritual awakening. The key lesson worth noting here is that the Bodhisattva has, strategically, practised mindfulness meditation to get into **samadhi**, which will later be of the greatest use to him.

### **5.3.4 Samadhi and beyond**

**5.3.4.1 Samadhi** (*samādhi*) is highlighted here because it was the most exalted state held in the pre-Buddhist meditation systems of India. Even when ordinary people practise such meditation methods from these teachers they will be able to attain samadhi—which here refers to the 4 dhyanas<sup>80</sup> and the 4 divine abodes.<sup>81</sup> These good ordinary practitioners are then reborn in the Brahmā realms.

Since this is still a karmic process, it is a cyclic path of rise and fall. The sublimely good karma propels them into the divine abodes. Then, with the exhaustion of that karmic energy, they fall back into the lower realms.<sup>82</sup>

For the noble disciples—those who have at least overcome any *self-notions, superstitions and doubt in self-effort*<sup>83</sup>—upon attaining the Brahmā realms, attain nirvana from there. We may even say that there is not real difference their states of samadhi: they are simply the state of the mind sublimely at peace. The difference lies in how we view things and what we vie for.

When we start our quest with wrong view, our meditation experiences are likely to simply reinforce our preconceptions and projections. If we practice samadhi with the notion that our soul, divine or otherwise, will meld into some exalted state of being, we will then get what we wish for and nothing more. Once we rid the mind of its shadows, we see it in true light, and the selfless and boundless reality of awakening unfolds right within us.

<sup>79</sup> See eg (Indriya) Vibhaṅga S 1 (S 48.9/5:196 f), SD 74.7a.

<sup>80</sup> Eg Nānā Puggalā S (A 4.123/2:126-128), SD 8.5 (11d).

<sup>81</sup> Eg (Puggalā) Mettā S 1 (A 4.125/2:128 f).

<sup>82</sup> See eg Brahmā Nimantanika S (M 49). The Buddha relates to the Brahmā Baka how he, from being a 4<sup>th</sup>-dhyana Brahmā of Veha-p,phalā (Abundant Fruit), passes away from there and is reborn as a 3<sup>rd</sup>-dhyana Brahmā of Subha,kinnā (Radiant Glory), and then as a 2<sup>nd</sup>-dhyana Brahmā of Ābhassarā (Streaming Radiance). From there he is reborn into the present 1<sup>st</sup>-dhyana world of Mahā Brahmā. This is in fact a spiritual devolution, a gradual falling from high places! (M 49,10/1:326-1331), SD 11.7.

<sup>83</sup> These are the 3 fetters that must be destroyed in order to reach the path through streamwinning: **Emotional independence**, SD 40a.8.

**5.3.4.2** These systems—including those of the 2 teachers—seem to regard (and mistakenly so) that *the path is the goal*, especially when the goal or any of its preliminary approaches has been attained. We then begin to view this idea of enlightenment is the goal, that *the status is state*: a common intellectual and scholastic error, even hubris, still often seen in the misguided religious zeal and zen of our own days. In the early Buddhist **3 trainings**—*sīla, samādhi, paññā*—samadhi, mental concentration, is only the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage of Dharma-spirited effort to gain the path of awakening.

The Bodhisattva rejects the old Dharma that is rooted in samadhi as a circular path that keeps us, even if sublimely, in this world. We may reach even the highest of the formless realms, but the higher we go, the lower we will fall: this is the law of **karma**, whose gravity holds us unremittingly in its samsaric orbit.

The sufficient path of freedom starts with moral virtue, which conduces to full mental concentration, and both, in turn, prepare us for liberating wisdom. This is how we end birth, decay, disease and death in the spirit of the Buddha Dharma.<sup>84</sup>

## 6 The 5 monks

### 6.1 KOṆḌAÑÑĀ

On the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the newly born Bodhisattva, it is said that his father, Suddhodana, invited 108 brahmins for offerings in his abode for the child's naming ceremony. Of these brahmins, 8 were sooth-sayers experts in the reading of bodily marks (*lakḥaṇa*). Examining the infant Bodhisattva, they held up 2 fingers, prophesizing that should the child remain a householder, he would become a world monarch, but if he were to renounce the world, he would become a world teacher.<sup>85</sup>

The youngest of the 8 brahmins, **Koṇḍañña**, however, put up only *one* finger, certain that the Bodhisattva would go forth upon seeing the 4 sights,<sup>86</sup> and become the Buddha (J 1:56). Koṇḍañña followed the Bodhisattva's career, and at the great renunciation, approached the sons of the other 7 brahmins (they themselves having passed on) and invited them to jointly renounce with him to follow the Bodhisattva. Only four of them followed him, and together they became the "group of 5 monks" (*pañca, vaggiya*) (J 56 f).<sup>87</sup> **Koṇḍañña** is thus honoured, not only as the leader of the group of 5 monks, as this world's 1<sup>st</sup> streamwinner,<sup>88</sup> but also as the eldest of the Buddha's disciples (A 1:23).<sup>89</sup>

### 6.2 THE 5 TEACHERS OF THE BODHISATTVA

**The Milinda, pañha** goes on to say that the Bodhisattva had "5 teachers." His 1<sup>st</sup> "teacher" was the group of 8 brahmins mentioned above [6.1]. The others were Sabba,mita (master of the Vedas), the deva who inspired the Bodhisattva to go forth, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Āḷāra Kālāma and the 4<sup>th</sup> Rāma (Miln 236).<sup>90</sup> **The Therīgāthā Commentary** mentions the Bodhisattva's 5<sup>th</sup> teacher to be Bhaggava (only one mention), after whom the Bodhisattva went to Āḷāra Kālāma (ThīA 2), but nothing else is known of him.

<sup>84</sup> For similar ideas, see Sujato, *A History of Mindfulness*, 2004b:95 f; 2005b:137 f.

<sup>85</sup> On the naming ceremony and Koṇḍañña's role, see SD 52.1 (4.4).

<sup>86</sup> On the 4 sights—an old man, a sick man, a corpse and a renunciant—see SD 52.1 (7).

<sup>87</sup> See **Dhamma, cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11/5:420-424), SD 1.1 (9).

<sup>88</sup> On Koṇḍañña as the 1<sup>st</sup> streamwinner, see **Dhamma, cakka Pavattana S** (S 52.11,16/5:423 = Mv 1.6.29 @ V 1:11,32-36), SD 1.1.

<sup>89</sup> *Etad aggaṃ ... sāvakaṇaṃ bhikkhūnaṃ rattaññūnaṃ*, "the foremost of the (Buddh's) monk disciples of long standing (A 1.14.1/1:23,17).

<sup>90</sup> Rāma is the father of Uddaka Rāma,putta: see **Ariya Pariyesana S** (M 26.6/1:165 f) here; cf J 1:56.

## 7 Pāsārāsi Sutta

### 7.1 TWO SUTTAS OR ONE?

#### 7.1.1 Interpolations?

**7.1.1.1** At the close of the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta, the Buddha is recorded as declaring that those who are caught up with any desire for “the 5 cords of sensual pleasures” [§31] are like a deer caught up in “a pile of snares” (*pāsa,rāsi*) [§32], a key metaphor of the Sutta. Both the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta and the Madhyama Āgama version compare *one who is caught up with the 5 kinds of sensual pleasures to a deer caught in deadly snares*, and those aloof from sensual pleasures as being free from Māra’s control, just as a deer not caught in snares, and so is not under the hunter’s control.

In both cases, however, “this passage comes a little unexpected, a sort of anti-climax after the account of the Buddha’s noble quest and full awakening, his subsequent teaching of the 5 monks and their full awakening” (Analayo on M 1:173, 2005:94). It seems as if **the Pāsa,rāsi Sutta** [§§31-43] was interpolated after the ending of the an older version of the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta.

**7.1.1.2** Furthermore, on closer examination of the whole Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta, we will notice that it flows from the start until it naturally “ends” in **§30.7** with the arhathood pericope stating the awakening of the 5 monks. **The Pāsa,rāsi Sutta** [§§31-43] seems to be rather abruptly inserted, and to start a new teaching, and which, for its part, clearly ends with §34.

The contents of the Pāsa,rāsi Sutta may have come from **the Nivāpa Sutta** (M 25) [§34.2 header n], centering on the parable of Māra the hunter, where it fits better. In fact, the Pāsa,rāsi Sutta is very much like the parable of the deer of the 1<sup>st</sup> herd [M 25,3] and the 2<sup>nd</sup> herd [M 25,4]. Indeed, the Sutta fits quite rightly into **§3** of the Nivāpa Sutta, which actually is a summary of it.

**7.1.1.3** Then, there is another abrupt interpolation: the “**9 progressive abodes**” pericope [§§34.2-43], which closes **M 26**, but is found elsewhere in a number of other suttas.<sup>91</sup> This version of the 9 progressive abodes has been inserted clearly because it mentions Māra and how he is “blinded” by deep samadhi, that is, any of the 4 dhyanas or the 4 attainments. The purpose of these passages, interpolation or not, is to exhort monastics (and us) to cultivate our minds so that it is free from defilements.

In any case, the Sutta as a whole traditionally ends with the standard ending with the “rejoicing monks” stock passage [§44].

#### 7.1.2 SCHOLARS’ OPINIONS

**7.1.2.1 G C Pande** wonders, “Is it possible that M 26 represents a ‘confusion’ of two (once) different suttas —the Ariya Pariyesanā and the Pāsārāsi? The wavering of the title would then, incidentally, be well explained” (1957:124).

**7.1.2.2 Analayo** adds further insight in his footnote:

The different Pāli editions do in fact vary in regard to the title: while the PTS and the Sinhalese editions speak of *Ariyapariyesanā Sutta*, the Burmese and Siamese editions speak of the *Pāsa-rāsi Sutta*, “heap of snares,” a title taken from the simile occurring in the passage under discuss-

<sup>91</sup> See eg **Jhānābhiññā S** (S 16.9), SD 50.7 (1.2.1.2); (**Navaka**) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36), SD 33.8; SD 1.8 (2.2.3) (3)n. See also SD 33.8 (2).

ion as present. What is possibly even more curious is that Buddhaghosa in his commentary on the Majjhima Nikāya [MA 2:163] speaks of the Pāsarāsi Sutta, but in the Atthasālinī [KvuA 35], his commentary on the first book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, he refers to the same discourse as Ariyapariyesanā. (Analayo, M 1:173, 2005:94 fn 176)

### 7.1.2.3 Analayo further notes:

While in the Pāli version it is not entirely clear if this passage is addressed to the five monks or to the group of monks assembled at Rammakā's hermitage, according to the Madhyama Āgama presentation the Buddha addressed this examination of sensual pleasures to the five monks.<sup>92</sup> This seems however less probable, since at this point the five monks had already gained full awakening, so that to warn them of the dangers of sensual pleasures would seem to be beside the point. (Analayo, M 1:173, 2005:94 f)

## 7.2 A PREAMBLE TO LEARNING THE DHAMMA, CAKKA SUTTA (S 52.11)?

As a text, **the Pāsarāsi Sutta** [§§31-42] first lists the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*kāma, guṇa*), that is, the physical body, which needs to be transcended, as it were, before we can attain to the 4 dhyanas [§§34-37] and the formless attainments [§38], and finally, the cessation of perception and feeling, here equated with the attainment of nirvana [§42].

This is, in fact, a neat summary of the Buddha's spiritual progress from the world to awakening itself. Understandably, this passage serves as a sort of preamble to **the 1<sup>st</sup> discourse** (S 56.11) given to the 5 monks when they are finally ready to hear a proper formulation of the essence of the Buddha's awakening.<sup>93</sup>

## 8 Related suttas

### 8.1 THE 2 KINDS OF QUESTS

**8.1.1 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26) centres around the 2 kinds of quests: the noble (*ariya, pariyesanā*) and the ignoble (*anariya, pariyesanā*) [§5]. Similarly, **the Pariyesanā Sutta** (A 4.252) speaks of 2 kinds of quests: the noble and the ignorable.<sup>94</sup> The noble quest is a spiritual one leading on to liberation, while the ignoble quest is that for material and worldly things bringing that brings suffering with it.<sup>95</sup> The shortest sutta related to this topic is surely **the Dve Pariyesanā Sutta** (A 2.14.4) which simply mentions the quest for material things and the quest for the Dharma, thus:

<sup>92</sup> MĀ 204 = T1.778a11.

<sup>93</sup> S 56.11/5:420-424 (SD 1.1).

<sup>94</sup> A 4.252/2:247 (SD 98.9). It speaks of 4 kinds of quests in each case: the ignoble quest is that of seeking what is subject to decay, to disease, to death and to defilement, while the noble quest is that of rejecting these for the quest for nirvana.

<sup>95</sup> On its relation to *samannesanā* and *samannesati*, see SD 35.6 (2.3).

**SD 1.11(8)****(Duka) Pariyesanā Sutta**

The (Twos) Discourse on the Quests

A 2.14.4/1:93 = A:B 2.154

Traditional: A 2.3.4.1 = Aṅguttara Nikaya 2, Duka Nipāta 3, Tatiya Paṇṇāsaka 4, Santhāra Vagga 1

Theme: The two kinds of quests

Bhikshus, there are these **2 kinds of quests**. What are the two?

The quest for material things and the quest for the Dharma. [The material quest and the Dharma quest.]

These, bhikshus, are the 2 kinds of quests.

— evaṃ —

**8.1.2 The Sakka Pañha Sutta** (D 21) mentions 2 kinds of quests (*pariyesanā*), that is, the one to be taken up (*sevitabbā pariyesanā*) and the one not to be taken up (*asevitabbā pariyesanā*).<sup>96</sup> **The Mahā, nidāna Sutta** (D 15), too, speaks of the same 2 kinds of quests, the one worthwhile and the one to be rejected.<sup>97</sup> The quest that is to be avoided is the 3 kinds of seeking mentioned in **the Paṭilīna Sutta** (A 4.38), that is, the seeking for sensual pleasures, seeking for existence (for good rebirth), and the holy life as seeking (acquisitions).<sup>98</sup>

**8.1.3 The Bāla Paṇḍita Pariyesanā Sutta** (A 2.4.8) uses the term “quest for sensual pleasures” (*kāma, pariyesanā*). Mahā Kaccāna tells the brahmin Kaṇḍararāyana that if an elderly person were to get caught up in a quest for sensual pleasures, then he is still *bāla* (a boy, a fool; a wordplay), but if he does not, then he is wise (*paṇḍita*).<sup>99</sup>

**8.2 WRONG KINDS OF QUESTS**

**8.2.1** Both **the Saññā Nānatta Sutta** (S 14.7)<sup>100</sup> and **the No Pariyesanā nānatta Sutta** (S 14.8)<sup>101</sup> use the term “diversity of quests” (*pariyesanā, nānatta*) as the end-result of a dependent arising chain, thus: dependent on the diversity of elements (*dhātu, nānatta*), there arises diversity of perception (*saññā, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of thought (*saṅkappa, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of desire (*chanda, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of fevers (*pariḷāha, nānatta*), dependent on which arises the diversity of quests.

**8.2.2 The Acariṃ Sutta** (S 14.32), **the Assāda Sutta 2** (S 22.27) and **the Assāda Pariyesanā Sutta 1** (S 35.-15) use the format of the threefold quests for gratification (*assāda, pariyesanā*), for disadvantages (*ādīnava, pariyesanā*), and for escape (*nissaraṇa, pariyesanā*). The 1<sup>st</sup> Sutta applies this the 4 elements; the 2<sup>nd</sup>,

<sup>96</sup> D 21,2.5/3:81 (SD 70.7).

<sup>97</sup> D 15/2:58,31+61,23 (SD 5.17). Cf *pariyesanaṃ paṭicca lābho*, “dependent on seeking there is gain” (D 15/2:-61,14).

<sup>98</sup> A 4.38,2/2:41 & SD 43.10 (1.2.2).

<sup>99</sup> A 2.4.8/1:68,6+10+11 = A:B 2.38. PTS wrongly numbers this as A 2.4.7.

<sup>100</sup> S 14.7/2:144,5+23.

<sup>101</sup> S 14.8/2:144,29+30, 145,10.

to the 5 aggregates; and the 3<sup>rd</sup>, to the 6 senses. Having understood all this, as they really are, declares the Buddha, he gains awakening.<sup>102</sup>

**8.2.3** A later form is the neutral noun, *pariyesana*, found only the commentarial works, such as **the Mahā Niddesa** (Nd 262), the canonical commentary on a **Kalaha Vivāda Sutta** verse (Sn 864). It also appears in the Dhammapada Commentary (DhA 3:256, “eagerly seeking the cords of sensual pleasure,” *kāma,guṇe ~ussukka*); DhA 1:75 (with “taking up,” *paṭiggahaṇa* & “enjoying,” *paribhoga*).

— — —

## Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta

### The Discourse on the Noble Quest

M 26

**1** Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was staying in Anāthapiṇḍika’s park in Jeta’s grove near Sāvattḥī.

#### Some monks wish to hear the Buddha teaching

**2** When it was morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Sāvattḥī for alms.

2.2 Then, a number of monks went to the venerable Ānanda. Having gone up to the venerable Ānanda, they said (to him):

“Avuso Ānanda, it has been a long time since we last heard a Dharma talk from the Blessed One’s own lips. It would be good if we could hear such a talk, avuso Ānanda, if we could hear a Dharma talk from the Blessed One’s own lips.”

2.3 “Then, let the venerable ones go to the brahmin Rammaka’s hermitage [ashram].<sup>103</sup> Perhaps there you would be able to hear a Dharma talk from the Blessed One’s own lips.”

“Yes, avuso,” the monks replied to the venerable Ānanda.

**3** When the Blessed One had gone on his alms-round in Sāvattḥī, returned and finished his meal, he addressed Ānanda:

“Ānanda, let us go to the Mansion of Migāra’s Mother in **the Eastern Park** for the day’s rest.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One in assent. **[161]**

Then the Blessed One went with the venerable Ānanda to the Mansion of Migāra’s Mother for the day’s rest.

<sup>102</sup> S 14.32/2:171,5+27 ≈ 22.27/3:29,3 f ≈ 35.15/4:8,23 f.

<sup>103</sup> *Assama* (Skt *āśrama*, from *ā*, “away” + *śRAM*, “to be weary”; but also incl meaning of *śAM* (1), “to labour”; cf *śAM* (2), “to be quiet”: **(1)** here (orig ancient usage) meaning ashram or hermitage, ie, a forest dwelling of an ascetic, usu *jaṭila*, eg Uruvelā Kassapa (V 1:24, 26), other *jaṭilas* (V 1:246, 4:109; D 2:339), or brahmin, eg Rammaka (M 26,2/1:60 here), Bāvāri (Sn 979); often with leaf-hut (*paṇṇa,sālā*), ambulatory (meditation path, *caṅkama*) and not far from a “village suitable for almsround” (*gocara,gāma*) (SnA 581). **(2)** The later sense of “a stage in life” is found in Comys, eg of Sumedha (our Bodhisattva) (B 2:29-33; J 1:6-10), of Sāriputta (Ap 15-17 = Tha 1:154); of Vessantara (J 6:520 f, 528-531, 533-540); see also Sn pp104, 111; J 2:284, 4:281, 5:196, 205; Abhidhāna-p, padīpikā (ed Subhūti 1900) 409, 928. See D:R 1:211-217 & P Olivelle, *The Āśrama System*, 1993. See (1.4(5)).

3.2 When it was evening, the Blessed One, having risen from meditation, addressed the venerable Ānanda:

“Ānanda, let us go to **the Eastern Bath** to bathe.”<sup>104</sup>

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda answered the Blessed One in assent.

3.3 Then, the Blessed One went with the venerable Ānanda to the Eastern Park to bathe their limbs. When he had finished, he emerged from the water and stood in one robe<sup>105</sup> drying his limbs. The venerable Ānanda then said to the Blessed One:

3.4 “Bhante, the brahmin Rammaka’s hermitage is nearby.

Delightful, bhante, is the brahmin Rammaka’s hermitage!

Pleasing, bhante, is the brahmin Rammaka’s hermitage!

It would be good, bhante, if the Blessed One, out of compassion, were to go to the Eastern Park.”

The Blessed One accepted by his silence.<sup>106</sup>

## The Buddha at Rammaka’s hermitage

4 Then, the Blessed One went to the brahmin Rammaka’s hermitage. Now on that occasion, a number of monks were sitting together in the hermitage discussing the Dharma.

The Blessed One stood outside the door waiting for their discussion to end. Then, he coughed and knocked on the latch, and the monks opened the door for him.<sup>107</sup>

4.2 The Blessed One entered the brahmin Rammjaka’s hermitage, sat down on the prepared seat.

Seated, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

“Bhikshus, what is the talk you are having, sitting together here? And what is the conversation that is left unfinished?”<sup>108</sup>

“Bhante, our Dharma discussion that is left unfinished when the Blessed One arrived was about the Blessed One himself.”

4.3 <sup>109</sup>“Good, bhikshus. It is fitting that you clansmen who have gone forth from the household life into the homeless life to sit together to discuss the Dharma.

When you gather together, bhikshus, there are 2 things that you should do: **talk Dharma or keep noble silence**.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>104</sup> *Āyāmañānanda yena pubba, koṭṭhako ten’upasaṅkamissāma gattāni pariñcitun’ti.*

<sup>105</sup> “In one robe” (*eka, cīvaram atṭhāsi*), ie, in his undergarment (*antara, vāsaka*) called “sabong” in Thailand (or “sarong” in Malay). With the upper robe (*saṅghāṭi*) and the outer robe (*uttar’āsanga*), they form the “3 robes” (*ti, cīvara*): M 10,8(4) n, SD 13.3.

<sup>106</sup> On this silence of acceptance, see **Silence and the Buddha**, SD 40.1 (2.4).

<sup>107</sup> *Atha kho bhagavā kathā, pariyoṣānaṃ viditvā ukkāsitvā aggaḷaṃ ākoṭesi. Vivarimsu kho te bhikkhu bhagavato dvāraṃ.*

<sup>108</sup> *Kāya nu’ttha, bho ānanda, etarahi kathāya sannisinnā, kā ca pana vo antarā, kathā vipakatā ti?* This is stock, where the person interrupting is usu the Buddha, eg, **D 1,1.4/1:2**; **M 108.6/3:8** (the brahmin Vassa, kāra), **119,2/-3:89**, **U 2.2/11**; **J 4/1:120**

<sup>109</sup> This quote sign marks the beginning of the Buddha Word of the Sutta, which ends with the close-quote at **§43**.

<sup>110</sup> *Sannipatitānaṃ vo bhikkhave dvayaṃ karaṇīyaṃ, dhammī vā kathā ariyo vā tuṅhī, bhāvo*, lit, “let there be Dhamma-talk or noble silence.” The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṅhī, bhāva*), explains **Kolita S (S 2:273)**, because within it initial application and sustained application (thinking and pondering) (*vitakka, vicāra*) cease, and with their cessation, speech cannot occur. In **Kāmaḃhū S 2 (S 4:293)** *vitakka* and *vicāra* are called verbal formations (*vacī, saṅkhāra*), the mental factors responsible for speech. Comy on Ariya Pariyesanā S, too, says that the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is called the noble silence, and explain this sentence as meaning that those who cannot attain *jhāna* are advised to maintain “noble silence” by attending to their basic meditation (*mūla, kammaṭṭhāna*) subject (MA 2:169). Hence, “noble silence” is a synecdoche for meditation or mindfulness. See also **Nandaka S (A 9.4/4:359)**;

## The 2 kinds of quests

5 Bhikshus, there are **2 kinds of quests**: the noble quest and the ignoble quest.<sup>111</sup>

5.2 And what, bhikshus, is **the ignoble quest**?

Here, bhikshus, someone<sup>112</sup>

being himself <u>subject to birth</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to <i>birth</i> ;	<i>jāti,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to decay</u> , [162]	seeks what is also subject to <i>decay</i> ;	<i>jarā,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to disease</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to <i>disease</i> ;	<i>vyādhi,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to death</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to <i>death</i> ;	<i>maraṇa,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to sorrow</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to <i>sorrow</i> ;	<i>soka,dhamma</i>
being himself <u>subject to defilement</u> ,	seeks what is also subject to <i>defilement</i> .	<i>saṅkilesa,dhamma</i>

6 (1) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be **subject to birth**?

Bhikshus,

wife and children	are subject to <i>birth</i> ;
men slaves and women slaves	are subject to <i>birth</i> ;
goats and sheep	are subject to <i>birth</i> ;
fowl and pigs	are subject to <i>birth</i> ;
elephants, cattle, horses and mares	are subject to <i>birth</i> ;
gold and silver	are subject to <i>birth</i> ;

These **acquisitions**,<sup>113</sup> bhikshus,

are subject to *birth*.

One is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them;

being himself subject to birth, seeks what is also *subject to birth*.

7 (2) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be **subject to decay [ageing]**?

Bhikshus,

wife and children	are subject to <i>decay</i> ;
men slaves and women slaves	are subject to <i>decay</i> ;
goats and sheep	are subject to <i>decay</i> ;

Tha 650, 999; ThaA 2:274 (qu M 1:161), but ThaA 3:102 refers this to 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana. See also **Dutiya Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.2/4:263 f), SD 24.12.

<sup>111</sup> “The noble quest and the ignoble quest,” *ariya,pariyesanā* and *anariya,pariyesanā*, respectively. The word *pariyesanā* comes from *pari*, denoting completion or fulfillment, “all around” + *y* (sandhi infix) + *esanā*, “search, quest”). Its verb is *pariyesati* (BHS *pariyeṣate*), “he investigates,”<sup>111</sup> denoting a sustained outer search, ie, noticing what is lacking in ourselves, we seek “outside,” as it were (eg from other teachers or methods) for answers or liberation: D 1:223; S 1:177, 181, 4:62; A 2:23, 25, 247; Sn 482; Nm 262; Nc 427; J 1:3, 138; Miln 109, 313; DhA 3:-163; PvA 31. For other forms, see PED: pariyesati. There is also the neut form *~na*: Nm 262; DhA 1:76, 3:256. For details, see SD 43.10 (1.2.4). On its relation to *samannesanā* and *samannesati*, see SD 35.6 (2.3). For related suttas, see (7).

<sup>112</sup> Four of these conditions—decay, disease, death and defilements (the 4 D’s)—form the topic of (**Catukka**) **Pariyesanā S** (A 4.252), SD 50.9.

<sup>113</sup> “Acquisitions,” *upadhi*, lit “that on which something is laid or rests, basis, foundation, substratum.” Here, as defined in DP, the term means both “worldly possessions or belongings” as well as “attachment to such possessions (forming a basis for rebirth).” Comys say there are **4 types** of *upadhi* (SA 1:31 = SnA 1:44 f): (1) the 5 cords of sense-pleasures (*kāma*) (MA 2:170; ItA 1:64); (2) the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*) (MA 3:171; ItA 1:89); (3) the defilements (*kilesa*) (MA 3:171; SnA 1:45 f; ItA 1:64; Nm 1:103); (4) volitional activities (*abhisāṅkhāra*) (ItA 1:64; Nm 1:103). It is often confounded with the near-synonym *upādi* (trace (of clinging), substrate): **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 22,22/2:314), SD 9.2.

fowl and pigs are subject to *decay*;  
 elephants, cattle, horses and mares, are subject to *decay*;  
 gold and silver<sup>114</sup> are subject to *decay*.

These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to decay.  
*One is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them;*  
 being himself subject to decay, seeks what is also *subject to decay*.

**8** (3) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be **subject to disease**?

Bhikshus,  
 wife and children are subject to disease;  
 men slaves and women slaves, are subject to *disease*;  
 goats and sheep, are subject to *disease*;  
 fowl and pigs, are subject to *disease*;  
 elephants, cattle, horses and mares, are subject to *disease*.  
 These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to *disease*.  
*One is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them;*  
 being himself subject to disease, seeks what is also *subject to disease*.

**9** (4) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be **subject to death**?

Bhikshus,  
 wife and children are subject to death;  
 men slaves and women slaves, are subject to *death*;  
 goats and sheep, are subject to *death*;  
 fowl and pigs, are subject to *death*;  
 elephants, cattle, horses and mares, are subject to *death*.  
 These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to *death*.  
*One is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them;*  
 being himself subject to death, seeks what is also *subject to death*.

**10** (5) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be **subject to sorrow**?

Bhikshus,  
 wife and children are subject to sorrow;  
 men slaves and women slaves, are subject to *sorrow*;  
 goats and sheep, are subject to *sorrow*;  
 fowl and pigs, are subject to *sorrow*;  
 elephants, cattle, horses and mares, are subject to *sorrow*.  
 These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to *sorrow*.  
*One is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them;*  
 being himself subject to sorrow, seeks what is also *subject to sorrow*.

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<sup>114</sup> Comy: Gold and silver are excluded from the things subject to disease, death and sorrow, but they are *subject to defilement* because they can be alloyed with metals of lesser worth (MA 2:170). The Chinese Āgama version, however, includes money and jewellery being subject to disease, decay and death, as well as subject to sorrow and defilement. **Ñāṇarama**, in Sermon 8, suggests that gold and silver can be *born and grow old* because “[t]hey are born of craving, conceit and views” (*Nibbāna—the Mind Stilled*, The Nibbāna Sermons 6-10, 2004 2:65). Blanchard: “When the Buddha talks about the problem with gold and silver’s aging, we can see that the real concern is not with an escape from aging, but with escaping from the *dukkha* that can result from aging.” (2012:60).

**11** (6) And what, bhikshus, may be said to be **subject to defilement**?

Bhikshus,

wife and children	are subject to <u>defilement</u> ;
men slaves and women slaves	are subject to <i>defilement</i> ;
goats and sheep	are subject to <i>defilement</i> ;
fowl and pigs	are subject to <i>defilement</i> ;
elephants, cattle, horses and mares,	are subject to <i>defilement</i> ;
gold and silver <sup>115</sup>	are subject to <i>defilement</i> .

These acquisitions, bhikshus, are subject to defilement.*One is tied to these things, infatuated with them, addicted to them;**being himself subject to defilement, seeks what is also *subject to defilement*.*This is **the ignoble quest**.**12** And what, bhikshus, is **the noble quest**?

Here, bhikshus, someone,

being himself subject to birth, having understood **the danger** in what is subject to *birth*, **[163]**seeks **the unborn** supreme security from bondage, nirvana;being himself subject to decay, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *decay*,seeks **the undecaying** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;being himself subject to disease, having understood the danger in what is subject to *disease*,seeks **the disease-free** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;being himself subject to death, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *death*,seeks **the undying** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;being himself subject to sorrow, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *sorrow*,seeks **the sorrowless** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;being himself subject to defilement, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *defilement*,seeks **the undefiled** supreme security from bondage, nirvana.This, bhikshus, is **the noble quest**.The search for awakening<sup>116</sup>**13** Bhikshus, before my self-awakening, while I was still only an unawakened bodhisattva,<sup>117</sup> I, too,

<i>being myself subject to <u>birth</u>,</i>	<i>sought what was also subject to birth;</i>
<i>being myself subject to <u>decay</u>,</i>	<i>sought what was also subject to decay;</i>
<i>being myself subject to <u>disease</u>,</i>	<i>sought what was also subject to disease;</i>
<i>being myself subject to <u>death</u>,</i>	<i>sought what was also subject to death;</i>
<i>being myself subject to <u>sorrow</u>,</i>	<i>sought what was also subject to sorrow;</i>
<i>being myself subject to <u>defilement</u>,</i>	<i>sought what was also subject to defilement.</i>

13.2 Then, bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘Why should I,

<sup>115</sup> “Gold and silver”: see §7 n ad loc.<sup>116</sup> **Sukhumāla S** (A 3.38/1:145 f), SD 5.16 (19.4.2), and **Mada S** (A 3.39/1:146 f), SD 42.13, form the prelude to this section.<sup>117</sup> *Pubbe va sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa bodhisattass’eva sato*, as at **Bhaya,bherava S** (M 4,3/1:17), **Dve-dhā,vitakka S** (M 19,2/1:114), **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,12/1:240), **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,10/2:93), **Saṅgārava S** (M 100,9/2:211), but different contexts. See also S 2:5, 10, 104, 170, 3:27, 4:7, 8, 97, 289, 5:263, 281; A 1:258, 3:240-242 (passim), 4:439; Pm 2:109; Miln 235. On the use of “bodhisattva,” see Intro (2) header n.

being myself subject to birth,  
 being myself subject to decay,  
 being myself subject to disease,  
 being myself subject to death,  
 being myself subject to sorrow,  
 being myself subject to defilement,

seek what was also subject to birth?  
 seek what was also subject to decay?  
 seek what was also subject to disease?  
 seek what was also subject to death?  
 seek what was also subject to sorrow?  
 seek what was also subject to defilement?

13.3 Suppose that I,  
 being myself subject to birth, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *birth*,  
 were to seek **the birth-free** [the non-born] (*ajāta*) supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;  
 being myself subject to decay, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *decay*,  
 were to seek **the decay-free** [the non-decaying] (*ajarā*) supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;  
 being myself subject to disease, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *disease*,  
 were to seek **the disease-free** [the non-diseased] (*avyādhi*) supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;  
 being myself subject to death, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *death*,  
 were to seek **the death-free** [the non-dying] (*amata*) supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;  
 being myself subject to sorrow, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *sorrow*,  
 were to seek **the sorrow-free** [non-sorrowing] (*asoka*) supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*;  
 being myself subject to defilement, having understood *the danger* in what is subject to *defilement*,  
 were to seek **the defilement-free** [the non-defiled] (*asaṅkiliṭṭha*) supreme security from bondage,  
**nirvana.**'

#### THE GREAT RENUNCIATION

**14** After some time, bhikshus, while still young,<sup>118</sup> a black-haired young lad endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life,<sup>119</sup>  
 though my mother<sup>120</sup> and father wished otherwise and wept with tearful faces,  
I shaved off my hair and beard, put on the saffron robe, and went forth from the household life into the homeless life.<sup>121</sup>

## THE 2 TEACHERS

### Ālāra Kālāma

**15** Having gone forth in this way, bhikshus, **in quest of the wholesome**, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace,<sup>122</sup>

<sup>118</sup> *Dahara* is often tr “young boy,” but here works as an adj.

<sup>119</sup> “In the prime of life,” ie, the first of the stages of life (*tiṇṇaṃ vayānaṃ paṭhama, vayena*, DA 1:253), ie, the 1<sup>st</sup> 30 years (MA 2:51 = AA 2:141). Presumably, the 3 stages of life are (1) youth (0-30), (2) middle age (40-70), and (3) senility (80-100+).

<sup>120</sup> This is Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī, Mahā Māyā’s sister and the Buddha’s foster mother. The Buddha’s uterine mother Mahā Māyā (**Mahā’padāna S**, D 2:7, 52, 53; ApA 18; J 1:15; DhA 4:89; ThaA 2:225; CA 39) has passed away a week after the Buddha is born (Tha 534 f; DA 2:431). See Analayo 2012:23-26.

<sup>121</sup> This same statement is repeated mutatis mutandis by Soṇa, daṇḍa (**Soṇa, daṇḍa S**, D 4,6/1:115), SD 30.5, by Kūṭa, danta (**Kūṭa, danta S**, D 5,7/1:131), SD 22.8(7a) and by Caṅkī (**Caṅkī S**, M 95,9/2:167), SD 21.15), all of which say that Gotama is “from a high family” (*uccā kulā*). A stock passage speaks of the Buddha as “the recluse Gotama, a Sakya son who went forth from the Sakya clan” (*samaṇo ... gotamo sakya, putto sakya, kulā pabbajito*): **Mv 22.2** @ V 1:35; **D 4,2/1:111**, **13,7/1:236**; **M 41,2/1:285**; **S 55,7.2/5:352**; **A 3.63,1/1:180**; **Sn p103**. See SD 52.1 (8.2.4.2).

I approached **Ālāra Kālāma**<sup>123</sup> and, having approached, said to Ālāra Kālāma:

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

15.2 Bhikshus, when this was spoken, Ālāra Kālāma said this to me:

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

(1) MASTERING THE TEXTS<sup>124</sup>

15.3 Bhikshus, I soon quickly learned that Dharma [ancient lore].

Bhikshus, as far as mere **lip-reciting and rehearsal**<sup>125</sup> of his teaching went, I spoke with the word of knowing and the word of an elder,<sup>126</sup> and I claimed, ‘I know and see,’ and there were others who did likewise.<sup>127</sup>

15.4 Bhikshus, I thought thus:

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

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

15.5 Certainly, Ālāra Kālāma dwells knowing and seeing this Dharma.’<sup>128</sup>

15.6 Then, bhikshus, I approached Ālāra Kālāma and, having approached, said to Ālāra Kālāma:

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

Bhikshus, he declared that it was **the base of nothingness**.<sup>129</sup>

(2) THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

**15.7** Bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>faith</u> ,	I, too, have	faith.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>energy</u> ,	I, too, have	energy.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>mindfulness</u> ,	I, too, have	mindfulness.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>concentration</u> ,	I, too, have	concentration.
Not only Ālāra Kālāma has <u>wisdom</u> ,	I, too, have	wisdom. <sup>130</sup>

<sup>122</sup> *Bhikkhave kim, kusala, gavesī anuttaram santi, vara, padam pariyesamāno.*

<sup>123</sup> Buddhaghosa says that **Ālāra** was also called Dīgha, piṅgala; **Kālāma** was his family name (DA 2:569 = MA 2:-171). The story of the Bodhisattva’s first 2 teachers [§§15-16] is found in several places in the early Canons: **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36/1:240; **Saṅgarāva S** (M 100/2:212); **Madhyam’āgama** of the Sarvāstivāda (T26.776b5-777a4; **Vinaya** of the Dharmaguptakas (T1428.780bt-c19); cf J 1:66; DhA 1:85; ApA 71; BA 6; DhsA 34; Mahvṛ 66. “No word is said about the Buddha’s relationship to these two people, nor indeed do we hear what these men had been or done. This would be hard to explain if the training of the Bodhisattva under them had been related at that time a few pages earlier as it is now.” (Bronkhorst 1993:85 f; see n to §§22-23 on “The first listeners” below).

<sup>124</sup> On this section (1) and the following two (2-3), see (5): The 3 trainings.

<sup>125</sup> “Mere lip-reciting and rehearsal,” *oṭṭha, pahata, mattena lapita, lāpana, mattena*, “merely moving the lips and reciting what had been recited” (Thomas 1949:62). The account in **Saṅghabheda, vastu** of Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya omits the mention of lip recital.

<sup>126</sup> “I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,” *ñāṇa, vādañ ca therā, vādañ ca*. Here, *therā, vāda* is used in a non-technical sense. The term *therā, vāda* as used of a school is a late post-canonical term.

<sup>127</sup> *So kho ahaṃ bhikkhave tāvataken’eva oṭṭha, pahata, mattena lapita, lāpana, mattena ñāṇa, vādañ ca vadāmi theravādañ ca. Jānāmi, passāmi ti ca paṭijānāmi ahañ c’eva aññe ca.*

<sup>128</sup> *Addhā ālāro kālāmo imam dhammam jānaṃ passam viharatīti*. Note the present tense here and at §15.7, whereas the parallel account for Rāma [§§16.5 + 16.7] they are in the past. While Rāma has died, Ālāra still lives at this time.

<sup>129</sup> Comy: Ālāra taught him (made him know) the 7 attainments ending with the base of nothingness (MA 2:171,-22). These 7 dhyanas may be joyful, peaceful, exalted mental states, but they do not conduce to the attaining of nirvana.

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

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

15.9 Then, I approached Ālāra Kālāma and, having approached, said to Ālāra Kālāma:

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

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

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

15.10 ‘It is a great gain for us, avuso, that we see<sup>131</sup> such a venerable one as a fellow brahmachari [as our companion in the holy life].<sup>132</sup>

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

The [165] Dharma that you dwell in, having yourself attained it through direct knowledge for yourself, I too proclaim it, having attained it through direct knowledge for myself.

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

Thus, **as I am, so you are; as you are, so am I.**<sup>133</sup>

15.13 Come now, avuso, let the two of us lead this community!<sup>134</sup>

### (3) MASTERING THE MIND

15.14 Thus, bhikshus, Ālāra Kālāma, my teacher, placed me, his pupil, on an equal footing with himself and accorded me the highest honour.

15.15 But it occurred to me: ‘This Dharma does not lead to revulsion (with the world), to cessation (of suffering), to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana, but only to rebirth<sup>135</sup> in the base of nothingness.’<sup>136</sup>

<sup>130</sup> On these 5 faculties, see Intro (5), in the Sujato quote.

<sup>131</sup> *Passāma.*

<sup>132</sup> From here until “as you are, so am I”: *iti yāhaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja pavedemi, taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharasi; yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharasi, tam ahaṃ dhammaṃ sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja pavedemi. Iti yāhaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi, taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi; yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, tam ahaṃ dhammaṃ jānāmi. Iti yādiso ahaṃ, tādiso tvaṃ; yādiso tvaṃ, tādiso ahaṃ.*

<sup>133</sup> *Iti yādiso ahaṃ, tādiso tvaṃ; yādiso tvaṃ, tādiso ahaṃ.* Cf similar sentence at §16.3 in connection with Rāma.

<sup>134</sup> See §16.13 below on Uddaka and the leadership of the community.

<sup>135</sup> §15.9 (= M 36/1:140,26 pe @ SD 49.4): The Bodhisattva’s reflection here indicates that what Ālāra Kālāma teaches is the full-fledged attainment of the base of nothingness, as this attainment is specified to lead to rebirth in the sphere of nothingness (*ākiñcaññ’āyatanaūpapatti*). Ālāra’s ability to attain profound levels of concentration is confirmed in the Mahāparinibbāna S (D 16), according to which he was able to enter such deep concentration that he did not even notice 500 carts passing by close to him (D 16/2:130,11 @ SD 9) and its parallels DĀ 2 (T1.19a12), T5 (T1.168b3), T6 (T1.183c15), T7 (T1.197c13, only 50 chariots), and the Skt version (S 360 folio 190V2 in Waldschmidt 1950: 27); not all Chin versions, however, clearly identify him as Ālāra Kālāma.

<sup>136</sup> “Base of nothingness,” *ākiñcaññ’āyatana*. Comy: Ālāra taught him the 7 attainments (of calmness meditation) ending with the base of nothingness, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 4 formless attainments. Though these states are spiritually exalted, they are still mundane and do not in themselves lead to nirvana, but merely to rebirth in the realm of no-

15.16 Bhikshus, dissatisfied with that Dharma, revulsed with that Dharma, I left.

## Uddaka Rāma,putta

**16** Bhikshus, as one in quest of the wholesome, *still* seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I approached **Uddaka Rāma,putta** and, having approached, said to Uddaka Rāma,putta:

‘Avuso,<sup>137</sup> I want to lead the holy life in this Dharma-Vinaya [Dharma and Discipline].’

16.2 Bhikshus, when this was spoken, Uddaka Rāma,putta said this to me:

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

### (1) MASTERING THE TEXTS<sup>138</sup>

16.3 Bhikshus, I soon quickly learned that Dharma [ancient lore].

Bhikshus, as far as mere **lip-reciting and rehearsal** of his teaching<sup>139</sup> went, I spoke with the word of knowing and the word of an elder,<sup>140</sup> and I claimed, ‘I know and see,’ and there were others who did likewise.<sup>141</sup>

16.4 Bhikshus, I thought thus:

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

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

16.5 Certainly, Rāma dwelled knowing and seeing this Dharma.’<sup>142</sup>

16.6 Then, bhikshus, I approached Uddaka Rāma,putta and, having approached, said to Uddaka Rāma,putta:

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

Bhikshus, Uddaka Rāma,putta declared that it was **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**.<sup>143</sup>

thingness. The lifespan there is 60,000 aeons (world-cycles) but at the end of which one returns to a lower world. As such, one is still caught in Death’s trap (MA 2:172). However, see Intro 4.1. Note here that “realm” (*āyatana*) is a cosmological or ontological term (a place of rebirth); but where *āyatana* is used in a meditative sense, it is rendered as “base.” See DEBD: āyatana. On the interesting point that this is not dhyana, see Intro 4.1.

<sup>137</sup> Be adds this n: *āvuso rāma* (Ce Ke Se) *mahā,satto rāma,puttam eva avoca, na rāmaṃ, rāmo hi tattha gaṇ’-ācariyo bhaveyya, tadā ca kālaṅkato asanto. Ten’ev’ettha rāmāyattāni kriya,padāni atīta,kāla,vasena āgatani, ud-dako ca rāma,putto mahā,sattassa sa,brahma,cāritv-eva vutto, na ācariyo ti. Tīkāyaṃ ca “Pāḷiyaṃ rāmass’eva samāpatti,lābhitā āgatā, na uddakassā ti ādi pacchā,bhāge pakāsītā* [D:Be 1:221]: The Great Being said, “Friend Rāma,” but Rāma,putta replied, “I’m not Rāma. Rāma was the community teacher (*gaṇ’ācariya*) but he has passed on and is no more. For this reason, sentences relating to Rāma are in the past tense, and so Rāma,putta was a co-religionist with the Great Being, not his teacher. Similarly, the Tīkā notes that the formless attainments are made in text (Pāḷi) refer to Rāma, not to Uddaka (and so on).”

<sup>138</sup> On this section (1) and the following two (2-3), see Intro (5): The 3 trainings.

<sup>139</sup> See n on lip-recital at §15.3.

<sup>140</sup> “I spoke with the word of knowing and with the word of an elder,” *ñāṇa,vādaṅ ca therā,vādaṅ ca*. Here, *therā,vāda* is used in a non-technical sense. The term Theravāda as used of a school is a late post-canonical term.

<sup>141</sup> *So kho ahaṃ bhikkhave tāvataken’eva oṭṭha,pahata,mattena lapita,lāpana,mattena ñāṇa,vādaṅ ca vadāmi theravādaṅ ca. Jānāmi, passāmi ti ca paṭijānāmi ahaṅ c’eva aññe ca*.

<sup>142</sup> *Addhā rāmo imam dhammaṃ jānaṃ passaṃ vihāsīti*. Note the past tense here and at §16.7, whereas the parallel account for Ālāra [§§15.5 + 15.7] they are in the present. While Rāma has died, Ālāra still lives at this time.

## (2) THE 5 SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

16.7 Bhikshus, I thought thus:

‘Not only Rāma had faith, [166] I, too, have faith.  
 Not only Rāma had energy, I, too, have energy.  
 Not only Rāma had mindfulness, I, too, have mindfulness.  
 Not only Rāma had concentration, I, too, have concentration.  
 Not only Rāma had wisdom, I, too, have wisdom.

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

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

16.9 Then I approached Uddaka Rāma,putta and, having approached, said to Uddaka Rāma,putta:

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

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

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

16.10 ‘It is a great gain for us, avuso, that we see<sup>144</sup> such a venerable one as a fellow brahmachari [as our companion in the holy life].

16.11 The Dharma that **Rāma** proclaimed to have attained through direct knowledge for himself, you yourself, too, dwell in that Dharma, having attained direct knowledge for yourself.<sup>145</sup>

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

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

Thus, as Rāma was, so you are; as you are, so Rāma was.<sup>146</sup>

16.13 Come now, avuso, lead this community!<sup>147</sup>

<sup>143</sup> “Neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” *n’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana*. This is the name for the 4<sup>th</sup> of the 4 formless sphere (*arūpāvacara*), a quasi-conscious state that is surpassed only by the state of complete suspension of consciousness called the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*) [§42 n].

<sup>144</sup> *Passāma*.

<sup>145</sup> Note that at §15.11, Āḷāra speaks for himself, but here [§16.11] Uddaka refers to Rāma, suggesting that Uddaka has not himself attained the formless attainment. See **Uddaka S** (S 35.103/4:83 f).

<sup>146</sup> *Iti yaṃ dhammaṃ Rāmo aññasi taṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi, yaṃ tvaṃ dhammaṃ jānāsi taṃ dhammaṃ rāmo aññasi. Iti yādiso rāmo ahoṣi tādiso tuvaṃ, yādiso tuvaṃ tādiso rāmo ahoṣi*: cf similar sentence in ref to Āḷāra above at §15.4. These sentences here are crucial in showing “**Rāma**,” ie Uddaka’s father, is referred to, and *not* Uddaka himself. Note further the past tense *ahoṣi* used in connection with Rāma. Bodhi: “Both Horner in [*Middle Length Sayings*] and Ñ[āṇamoli] in MS err in their translations of the account of Bodhisatta’s meeting with Uddaka Rāma,putta by assuming that Uddaka is identical with Rāma. However, as his name indicates, Uddaka was the son (*putta*) of Rāma, who must have already passed away before the Bodhisatta arrived on the scene. It should be noted that all references to Rāma are in the past tense and the third person, and that Uddaka in the end places the Bodhisatta in the position of teacher. Though the text does not allow for definite conclusions, this suggests that he himself had not yet reached the fourth immaterial attainment.” (Bodhi, 2001:1217 n303). See Intro (4.2).

<sup>147</sup> *Ehi dāni āvuso, tvaṃ imaṃ gaṇaṃ pariharāti*. Note here Uddaka is asking the Bodhisattva to *himself* lead the community. Cf §15.4 where Āḷāra invites the Bodhisattva, “Let the two of us lead this community!” (*ubho va santā imaṃ gaṇaṃ pariharāmi ti*).

## (3) MASTERING THE MIND

16.14 Thus, bhikshus, Uddaka Rāma,putta, my companion in the holy life, placed me in the position of a teacher and accorded me the highest honour.

16.15 But, bhikshus, it occurred to me: ‘This Dharma does not lead to revulsion (with the world), to cessation (of suffering), to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana, but only to rebirth in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.’<sup>148</sup>

16.16 Bhikshus, dissatisfied with that Dharma, revulsed with that Dharma, I left.<sup>149</sup>

## THE GREAT AWAKENING

Uruvelā

17 Bhikshus, still in quest of what is wholesome, seeking the supreme state of sublime peace, I walked by stages through Magadha until eventually I arrived at **Senāni,gama**<sup>150</sup> near Uru,velā. [167]

17.2 There I saw a pleasant spot, a delightful forest grove where a river flowed through a pleasant ford, with smooth banks of white sand, and villages all around for alms-resort.<sup>151</sup>

17.3 Bhikshus, I thought:

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

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

17.4 I sat down there, bhikshus, thinking: ‘This is sufficient for spiritual striving.’<sup>152</sup>

[For accounts of the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification, see Mahā Saccaka Sutta (M 36,17-44) & Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta (M 12,44-63).]<sup>153</sup>

Liberation

18 Then, bhikshus, being myself subject to **birth**,

<sup>148</sup> “Neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” *n’eva,saññā,nāsaññ’āyatana* [§16.2 n]. On why Rāma could not gain awakening through this attainment, see **Aṭṭhaka,nāgara S** (M 52) @ SD 41.1 (3.2.3). The fact that the Bodhisattva is able to reach either this formless attainment or the 3<sup>rd</sup> one [§§14.4+9] implies that he has mastered the 4 dhyanas, but still lacks the right view regarding their significance: see SD 49.4 (1.2.5) Remark. On the interesting point that this is *not* dhyana, see (4.1).

<sup>149</sup> For the Bodhisattva’s conclusion that dhyana is a pleasure “not to be feared,” which leads to his subsequent meditation and full awakening, see **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,31-32/1:246 f), SD 1.12 (excerpts) + SD 49.4 (full tr).

<sup>150</sup> Be Ce Ee Se *senāni,gāma*, village of wealthy houselord Senāni, Sujātā’s father (J 1:68; BA 238), and which is its original name; also called Senāni,nigāma (V 1:21; M 1:166, 240; S 1:106). This is where the lady Sujātā lives and gives the last alms-offering, some milk-rice, to the Bodhisattva before his awakening, It is on the Nerañjarā bank near Uruvelā (J 1:60).

<sup>151</sup> *Tatth’addasaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ bhūmi,bhāgaṃ, pāsādikañ ca vana,saṇḍaṃ, nadiñ ca sandantiṃ setakaṃ supatitthaṃ ramaṇīyaṃ samantā ca gocara,gāmaṃ*.

<sup>152</sup> *Alam idaṃ padhānāyāti*. **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,20-31), SD 49.4, picks up from here with graphic details of the Bodhisattva’s self-mortification (see App). This account, however, seems to be an abridgement of a longer account given in **Mahā Sīhanāda S** (M 12,44-61/1:77-82), SD 49.1. On overcoming fear in solitary ascetic practice: **Bhaya Bherava S** (M 4/1:16-24), SD 44.3.

<sup>153</sup> For full trs of these Suttas, see M 12 (SD 49.1), & M 36 (SD 49.4). For a collation of parallel accounts of the Buddha’s life up to the 1<sup>st</sup> discourse, see SD 49.4 (7.1.3): Table 7.

- having understood the danger in what is subject to *birth*,  
 seeking **the unborn** [*birth-free*] supreme security from bondage, nirvana, *ajāta*  
 I realized **nirvana**, the unborn [*birth-free*] supreme security from bondage;
- 18.2 being myself subject to *decay*,  
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *decay*,  
 seeking **the undecaying** supreme security from bondage, nirvana, *ajarā*  
 I realized **nirvana**, the undecaying supreme security from bondage;
- 18.3 being myself subject to *disease*,  
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *disease*,  
 seeking **the disease-free** supreme security from bondage, nirvana, *avyāधि*  
 I realized **nirvana**, the disease-free supreme security from bondage;
- 18.4 being myself subject to *death*,  
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *death*,  
 seeking **the death-free** supreme security from bondage, nirvana, *amata*  
 I realized **nirvana**, the death-free<sup>154</sup> supreme security from bondage;
- 18.5 being myself subject to *sorrow*,  
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *sorrow*,  
 seeking **the sorrowless** supreme security from bondage, nirvana, *asoka*  
 I realized **nirvana**, the sorrowless supreme security from bondage;
- 18.6 being myself subject to *defilement*,  
 having understood the danger in what is subject to *defilement*,  
 seeking **the undefiled** supreme security from bondage, nirvana, *asaṅkiliṭṭha*  
 I realized **nirvana**, the undefiled supreme security from bondage.
- 18.7 The knowledge and vision arose in me:  
 ‘Unshakeable<sup>155</sup> is my freedom of mind.<sup>156</sup> This is my last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for me)!’ [§30.7]

<sup>154</sup> “Death-free,” *amata*, often rendered as “deathless,” or worse “undying, immortal,” all of which suggest an abiding state (as if we live forever there). The point is that nirvana is neither impermanent nor permanent, with neither birth nor death, and beyond positive predication. No one is born in nirvana, and no one dies there. One way of talking about it is through negative language, such as “death-free.” See K R Norman, 1991d:3-9, 1997:13. The final choice of translation is your karmic choice, whatever it might be, as long as you define your terms, and that it should be as easy to understand as possible.

<sup>155</sup> “Unshakeable” (*akuppa*, adj, also n, “the unshakeable,” ie, nirvana) (§18.7 = §30.7), also **(Anuruddha) Upakilesa S** (M 128,32), SD 5.18; also A 3.55 = 7.50 = 8.64 = 9.41; also Tha 182c (*akuppā me vimuttīti*). Comy explains that this stock refers to the “freedom of the fruition of arhathood” (*arahatta, phala, vimutti*) in two ways, by way of means (*kāraṇa*) and object or goal (*ārammaṇa*), both of which are unshakeable (*akuppa*) (MA 2:154). The abstract n *akuppata*, “unshakeability,” is found in a related context at Tha 364c. **Das’uttara S** (D 34) calls this the “unshakeable knowledge” (*akuppa ñāṇa*), that it is the one thing that should be made to arise (*eko dhammo upādetabbo*, D 34,1.2(8)/1:273).

<sup>156</sup> *Akuppā me vimutti*. See SD 4.25 (2.3-2.4). For a philological n, see Norman 1990:24 n2. See prec n.

## The Dharma's depth

19 Bhikshus, I thought thus,<sup>157</sup>

'This Dharma I have realized is deep, hard to see, hard to understand,  
peaceful, sublime, unattainable through discursive thought (or logic),<sup>158</sup>  
subtle, to be experienced [to be felt] by the wise.<sup>159</sup>

19.2 But this generation revels in attachment, delights in *attachment*, rejoices in *attachment*.<sup>160</sup>  
For such a generation, *revelling in attachment, delighting in attachment, rejoicing in attachment,*  
this state of reality<sup>161</sup> is hard to see, that is to say, **specific conditionality**<sup>162</sup> and **dependent arising**.<sup>163</sup>

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

the stilling of all formations,  
the giving up of all acquisitions,  
the destruction of craving,  
fading away (of lust),

*sabba,saṅkhāra,samatha*<sup>164</sup>  
*sabbūpadhi,painissagga*<sup>165</sup>  
*taṇha-k,khaya*  
*virāga*<sup>166</sup>

<sup>157</sup> This passage on the Buddha "hesitation" recurs, in full or in part, in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.1), SD 49.8; **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19/1:167), SD 1.11 = **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,43/2:93), SD 55.2 = **Brahmāyācana S** (S 6.1/-1:136), SD 12.2 = V 1:4 = 1:6.

<sup>158</sup> *Atakkāvacaro* = *na + takka + avacara*, lit, "not in the sphere of discursive thought (or logic)" (V 1:4 = D 2:36 = 37 = M 1:167 = S 1:136 ≈ M 1:487 ≈ 2:172; A 2:289; D 1:12; It 37). See **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.1.2), SD 49.8.

<sup>159</sup> The full sentence: *Dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo paṇīto atakkāvacaro nipuṇo paṇḍita,veda-nīyo*. On the significance of *vedanīya* as "to be felt," meaning, to be experienced directly, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1b (6.5.2); also Reflection, "To live is to feel," R89, 2007.

<sup>160</sup> "**Attachment**," *ālaya*, ie worldly attachment, sensuality, "worldliness" (M:ÑB 1218 n306). The word has a wide range of meanings: 1 (a) house, dwelling, habitat, household, a built structure; (b) nest, lair, perch, shelter; (c) abode, seat, place of rest, resort, haven, repository; (d) domain, field of activity, sphere; 2 (a) liking, inclination, attachment, fondness for, partiality towards; (b) affection, love; (c) (as a metaphysical concept) **desire, yearning, clinging, sensual attachment (= taṇhā)**; (d) thought preparatory to a decision (regarding the *vassa*), the decision itself; (3) feint, pretence, ruse, dissimulation, impersonation (CPD). **MA**: The term denotes both sense-pleasures and the thoughts of craving concerned with them (MA 2:174 f). **SA** explains *ālaya* objectively as the 5 cords of sensual pleasure (*pañca kāma,guṇa*) [SD 8.7 (2)]. They are called "attachment" because they attach themselves to these 5 cords of sensual pleasure. Subjectively, *ālaya* refers to the 108 mental investigations driven by craving (*taṇha,vicaritāni*) [A 2:212 f], and it is these that attach themselves to their objects. (SA 1:195)

<sup>161</sup> + foll line: "State of reality" *ṭhānam* (uncountable), also "state of things" or simply "thing(s)"; usu meaning "state, possibility."

<sup>162</sup> "**Specific conditionality**," *idap,paccayatā*, ie causal relationship, shows how one thing is related to another, thus: "When this is, that is; when this arises, that arises. When this is not, that is not; when this ceases, that ceases" (M 3:63; S 2:28, 95). See also V 1:5; D 1:85, 2:55; M 1:262; S 2:25, 5:71. See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16 (6).

<sup>163</sup> "**Dependent arising**," *paṭicca,samuppāda*, is a formulation of the complex interdependence of all mental and physical phenomena, showing how they inherently lacks any permanent entity. This interdependence is shown through a cycle of up to 11 factors (*nidāna*) and 12 links (*paccay'ākāra*): between *ignorance, formations, consciousness, the 6 sense-bases, contact, feeling, craving, clinging, existence, birth and decay-and-death* (which links back to *ignorance*). See **Dependent arising**, SD 5.16.

<sup>164</sup> *Sabba,saṅkhāra,samatha*: **D 14,3.1/2:36; M 26,19/1:167; S 6.1/1:136, 22.90/3:133; A 3.32,1/1:133**. "Formations," *saṅkhāra*, here meaning the active aspect of "forming" actions (karma) through body, speech and mind, being either wholesome or unwholesome (S 12.1, 7). Nyanatiloka uses the neologism "karma-formations" to specifically refer to this aspect of *saṅkhāra*, otherwise a word that is polysemic and profound. Sometimes the term *abhi-saṅkhāra* is used here (D 3:217; M 1:297; S 12.51; A 1:112). See BDict: *saṅkhāra*.

<sup>165</sup> "Acquisitions," *upadhi*, see n4.

<sup>166</sup> "Fading away," *virāga*, also tr as "dispassion."

cessation (of suffering),  
nirvana.<sup>167</sup>

*nirodha*  
*nibbāna* [168]

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

### The “hesitation” verses

19.5 Thereupon, bhikshus, these stanzas unheard before,<sup>168</sup> arose spontaneously<sup>169</sup> in me:

- |      |   |  |                          |
|------|---|--|--------------------------|
| 19.6 | I have discovered the Dharma with difficulty:<br>enough with declaring it!<br>Not easily understood [awakened to] it is<br>by those lost in lust and hate.                | <i>Kicchena me adhigataṃ<br/>halaṃ dāni pakāsituṃ<br/>rāga,dosa,paretehi<br/>nāyaṃ dhammo susambudho</i>                           | <i>d<br/>e</i>           |
| 19.7 | It goes against the current, abstruse,<br>profound, hard to see, subtle—<br>those dyed in lust will not see it,<br>nor those shrouded in massive darkness. <sup>170</sup> | <i>Paṭisota,gāmiṃ nipuṇaṃ<br/>gambhīraṃ duddasaṃ aṇuṃ<br/>rāga,rattā na dakkhinti<br/>tamo-k,khandhena āvaṭṭā’ti<sup>171</sup></i> | <i>( )<sup>172</sup></i> |

Thinking thus, bhikshus, my mind inclined to being carefree,<sup>173</sup> rather than teaching the Dharma.<sup>174</sup>

<sup>167</sup> On nirvana as a state, see SD 50.1 (3.3).

<sup>168</sup> *pubbe assuta,pubbā*, lit “unheard of before, before.” See Oskar Von Hinüber, “*Anacchariyā pubbe assutapubbā*” in *Selected Papers on Pāli Studies*, Oxford: PTS, 1994:17-24, where he contends that *anacchariyā* represents Skt \**an-akṣar-ikā*, but, retorts Bodhi, “his argument rests on the assumption that *pubbe assutapubbā* would be redundancy and therefore *pubbe* must be taken in apposition to the preceding *anacchariyā*. This assumption, however, is contradicted by D 1:184,27-29, where we find *pubbe...sutapubbā* as one block. Interestingly, no corresponding word is to be found in the Mahā,vastu and Lalita,vistara versions of the same incident.” (S:B 431 n365; citations normalized). See foll n.

<sup>169</sup> PTS *acchariyā*; prob wr for *anacchariyā* (Be Ce Se), lit “not wonderful,” ie appearing quite naturally or spontaneously (CPD) (D 2: 93 = S 5:259; M 3:121; A 4:211; J 3:70, 406, 4:153, 6:220; cf V 2:17; S 4:301). For the tr here I am guided by the context of **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.19/1:168), where the reading is *anacchariyā*, and where the Buddha himself is the narrator: he is more likely to have said that the stanzas are “spontaneous” rather than “marvellous.” Although the Commentators seem to take *anacchariyā* as deriving from *acchariyā*, most translators render it as “spontaneously,” apparently invoking *acchara*, “moment.” Buddhaghosa glosses *anacchariyā* as *anu-acchariyā*, “repeatedly or following *acchariyā*” (VA 1:133; SA 1:196). For SA Porāṇa Ṭikā gloss and further comments, see S:B 431 n 365. See prev n.

<sup>170</sup> “Hidden in darkness,” *tamo-k,khandhena āvaṭṭā*, lit “blocked by the aggregates of darkness.” V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 2:37 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:315.

<sup>171</sup> Be Se *āvūṭṭā*; Ee Ce *āvaṭṭā*; also vl *āvaṭṭā* CPD prefers *āvata* (past part of *ā* + *√VR*, to cover, Skt *avṛṇoti*), covered, shrouded, veiled.

<sup>172</sup> This verse recurs at **Mv 1.5.3** (V 1:5\*), SD 12.1 (2.1) = **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.2.3/2:36, Vipassī Buddha), SD 49.8 = **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19.7/1:168), SD 1.11 = **Āyacana S** (S 6.1/1:136), SD 12.2; Mvst 3:315.

<sup>173</sup> “Inclined to being carefree,” *appossukkatāya* = *appa* (little) + *ussukka* (zealous activity, concern), meaning “little zeal”; ie “careless, unconcerned; living at ease, inactive” (V 2:188; D 2:176 = M 3:175 ≈ D 2:177 = M 3:176; M 1:450; Sn 43; Nc 91 = Ap 9; Thī 457, 477; Dh 330). Comys: *Appossukkatā* means the lack of zeal or desire (to teach) (SA 1:197). But why, when the Bodhisattva had long ago made an aspiration to reach Buddhahood in order to liberate others, is now inclined towards living at ease. Because it is only after reaching awakening did he fully realize the weight of defilements in people’s minds and of the Dharma’s profundity. Furthermore, he wanted Brahmā to

## BRAHMA'S SUPPLICATION TO TEACH

### Brahmā Sahampati

20 Then, bhikshus, Brahmā Sahampati, having known with his own mind the reflection in my mind, thought:

'Alas, the world is lost! Alas, the world is destroyed, now that the mind of the Tathagata, the arhat, the fully self-awakened one, *inclines to being carefree*, not to teaching Dharma!<sup>175</sup>

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

20.3 Then Brahmā Sahampati, having arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, saluted me with his palms lotus-wise, and said this to me:

**'Bhante, may the Blessed One teach the Dharma! May the wellfarer [Sugata] teach the Dharma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are falling away through not hearing the Dharma. There will be those who will understand the Dharma.'**<sup>176</sup>

20.4 Brahmā Sahampati said this. Having said this, he further said:<sup>177</sup>

[THE MAGADHA VERSE]

20.5 There has appeared in the past (until now) in Magadha an impure Dharma devised by those still tainted.<sup>178</sup>

Throw open this door to the death-free!<sup>179</sup>

Let them hear the Dharma discovered by the stainless one.<sup>180</sup>

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entreat him to teach, so that beings who venerated Brahmā would recognize the Dharma's value and desire to listen to it. (SA 1:197 f; MA 2:176 f on **Ariya Pariyesanā S**).

<sup>174</sup> Comy asks: Why, when the Bodhisattva had long ago made an aspiration to reach Buddhahood in order to liberate others, is he now inclined towards inaction? It then explains that it is only after reaching awakening did he fully realize the power of defilements in people's minds and of the Dharma's profundity. Furthermore, he wanted Brahmā to entreat him to teach so that beings who venerated Brahmā would recognize the Dharma's value and desire to listen to it (MA 2:176 f). For a fuller discussion, see **Why the Buddha "hesitated" to teach?** SD 12.1.

<sup>175</sup> In the **Mahāvastu** account, the deity who approaches the Buddha is simply referred to only as **Mahā Brahmā**; he is accompanied by many other gods, incl Sakra. On Brahmā Sahampati's role in the Buddha story, see Intro (2).

<sup>176</sup> *Desetu bhante bhagavā dhammāṃ desetu sugato dhammāṃ. Santi sattā appa,raj'akkha,jātikā, assavanatā dhammassa parihāyanti. Bhavissanti dhammassa aññātāro'ti.*

<sup>177</sup> These 3 verses [§§20.5-20.7] occur in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,20/1:168 f), SD 1.11; **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85/2:93); **Brahmāyacana S** (S 6.1/1:137); V 1:5. Verses §20.6+20.7 recur in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.9/2:39), SD 49.8

<sup>178</sup> These 2 lines, in dialectical terms, form the thesis, the real but unsatisfactory state of things stated by Brahmā on behalf of sentient beings as it were. In social terms, this statement clearly refers to the brahminical system of philosophy and practices, that is, the *āstika* system. This statement also means that the liberating truth has been forgotten during this time [see n for line d]. As such, the Buddha's claim that his newly proclaimed Dharma is "unheard before" (*pubbe assuta,pubbā*) is clearly justified. Kvu 4.8/286 discusses the question how far the Buddha did not have a teacher (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,25/1:170 @ SD 1.11) when, as the Bodhisattva (named Jotipāla) he had been Kassapa Buddha's disciple (**Ghaṭikāra S**, M 81.6/2:46, 81.3/2:54), and how far the Buddha's awakening was an insight into "things unheard before" (**Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S**, S 56.11,9-12/5:422 f; V 1:10-12 @ SD 1.1). See also Comy ad loc (KvuA 78). See **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16.6.4), SD 9 & Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, 2004b: §§10:20b, 11a.

<sup>179</sup> Comy: The door to the death-free is the noble path, "the door to the death-free nirvana" (SA 1:199). While *dvāra* here is singular, below [§21] it is plural (*dvārā*).

[BRAHMA'S INVITATION VERSES]<sup>181</sup>

- 20.6<sup>182</sup> *Sele yathā pabbata,muddhani-ṭ,ṭhito<sup>183</sup>*  
*yathā'pi passe janatam samantato*  
*tathūpamam dhamma,mayam sumedha*  
*pāsādam āruyha samanta,cakkhu*  
*sokāvatiṇṇam<sup>185</sup> janatam apeta,soko*  
*avekkhassu<sup>186</sup> jāti,jarā'bhībhūtam* Just as one, standing on a mountain peak,  
 may see the people all around (below),  
 even so, O wise one, all-seeing eye,<sup>184</sup> *d*  
 having ascended to the Dharma-made palace! *C*  
 rid of sorrow, may he regard mankind, *f*  
 sunk in sorrow, overcome by birth and decay! [169]
- 20.7<sup>187</sup> *Uṭṭhehi vīra vijita,saṅgāma,*  
*sattha,vāha aṇaṇa vicara loke.*  
*Desassu<sup>188</sup> bhagavā dhammam*  
*aññātāro bhavissantīti.* Arise, hero! Victor in battle!  
 Caravan leader, debt-free one, wander in the world!  
Teach the Dharma, O blessed lord!  
 There will be those who will understand.<sup>189</sup>

## The lotus pond

21 Then, bhikshus, heeding Brahmā's plea, and out of compassion for beings, I surveyed the world with the buddha-eye.

- 21.2 Surveying the world with the buddha-eye, I saw beings  
 with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes,  
 the keen and the dull,  
 the good and the bad,<sup>190</sup>  
 those easy to teach and those hard to teach,  
 some who live seeing fear in blame (in wrongdoing) and in the hereafter.<sup>191</sup>

<sup>180</sup> These last 2 lines form the antithesis to Brahmā's earlier request. The first statement was a definition of the problem, and this second statement is a proposal for its solution. See n for line c.

<sup>181</sup> These 2 verses (without the prec Magadha verse) recur in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.9), SD 49.8.

<sup>182</sup> This verse recurs in **(Iti) Vitakka S** (It 38/33): SD 55.9 (1.3.3.1), spoken by the Buddha Gotama. See prec n.

<sup>183</sup> *Muddhani-ṭ.ṭhito* resolved as *muddhāni* (loc, "top, peak, summit") (Sn 689c, 987c || 682c) + *ṭhita* ("standing").

<sup>184</sup> This is the last of "**the 5 eyes**" (*cakkhu*). The Buddha eye (*buddha,cakkhu*) is a name for the knowledge of the degrees of maturity in the faculties of being (*indriya,paropariyatta,ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of the dispositions and latent tendencies of beings (*āsayānusaya,ñāṇa*). The "knowledge of omniscience" is called the universal eye (*samanta,cakkhu*) (S 559d\*): see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133), SD 10.8 (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76), SD 35.7. The knowledge of the 3 lower paths is called the Dharma eye or "Dharma vision" (*dhamma,cakkhu*). Together with the divine eye or clairvoyance (*dibba,cakkhu*) (S 6.5/1:145, 12.70/2:121 f) and the physical eye (*maṃsa,cakkhu*), these make up the "5 eyes" of the Buddha (Nm 354-360; Nc 235; SA 1:200). See **Miracles**, SD 27.5a (5.5.1); SD 50.20 comy 14-15 (2).

<sup>185</sup> Se *sokāvatiṇṇam* (wr). "Sunk in sorrow," *sokāvatiṇṇa* = *soka* ("sorrow") + *avatiṇṇa* ("fallen into," past part of *avatarati*, "descend into, dive into"). Cf vl *sokānutiṇṇo* (S 1:123,1). Previous trs seemed to have misread this word.

<sup>186</sup> *Avekkhassu*, "may he consider," imper 2 sg med (Sn 1119 = Ap 488,5; V 1:61\* = D 2:39,14\* = M 1:168,34\* = S 1:137,36\*): see DP: *avekkhati*.

<sup>187</sup> This verse recurs, attr to Brahmā Sahampati, in **Buddha Vandana S** (S 11.17/1:234), SD 86.1 = **Brahmāyacana S** (S 6.1/1:137: v560), SD 12.2.

<sup>188</sup> Ee Se *desetu*.

<sup>189</sup> V 1:4-7; M 1:167-69; S 1:136-39; D 2:36-40 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:314-19; cf S 1:234. For the Buddha's response to this verse, see **(Iti) Vitakka S** (It 38,17) + SD 55.9 (1.2.3.3).

<sup>190</sup> "The good and the bad," *svākāre dvākāre* = *su* + *ākāra*, *du* + *ākāra*, lit "those with good nature, those with evil nature."

- 21.3 Bhikshus, just as in a **lotus pond of blue or red or white lotuses**,<sup>192</sup>  
 some lotuses might be born in the water,  
 grow in the water, and thrive while submerged in the water, without rising out of the water;  
 some lotuses might be born in the water,  
 grow up in the water, and stand up at an even level with the water;  
 some lotuses might be born in the water and grow up in the water,  
 but would rise up from the water and stand up in the water unsoiled by the water—  
 21.4 so, too, bhikshus, *surveying the world with the buddha-eye, I saw beings*  
*with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes,*  
*the keen and the dull, the good and the bad,*  
*those easy to teach and those hard to teach,*  
*some who live seeing fear in blame (in wrongdoing) and in the hereafter.*

21.5 Then, bhikshus, having seen this, I answered Brahmā Sahampati in verse:<sup>193</sup>

<i>Apārutā tesarū amatassa dvārā</i>	Open to them are the doors to the death-free, <sup>194</sup> (O Brahma),
<i>ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham</i>	for those with ears, <u>let them free (their) faith</u> <sup>195</sup>
<i>vihimsa,saññī paṇṇaṃ na bhāsīm</i>	Perceiving trouble, I did not speak
<i>dhammaṃ paṇītaṃ manujesu brahme</i>	the refined, sublime Dharma among humans, O Brahmā. <sup>196</sup>

21.6 Then, bhikshus, Brahmā Sahampati thought:

‘There is consent by the Blessed One for the teaching of the Dharma,<sup>197</sup> and, after paying homage to me, keeping me on the right, he disappeared right there.’<sup>198</sup>

<sup>191</sup> “Not seeing blame ... the hereafter,” *paraloka,vajja,bhaya,dassāvino* (pl), an ambiguous cpd. M:ÑB 261 (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,21/1:169) tr as “seeing fear in blame and in the other world,” which agrees well with Comys, which resolve it as *paralokañ c’eva vajjañ ca bhayato passanti* (MA 2:179; SA 1:200). Bodhi, however, notes that at **Dh 317 f** *bhaya* and *vajja* are treated as parallel terms, which suggests that the cpd should be resolved as *paraloke vajjañ c’eva bhayañ ca passanti*. (S:B 433 n371). In fact, it is obvious that the two terms are allusions to “moral shame” (*hiri*) and “moral fear” (*ottappa*) respectively.

<sup>192</sup> They are respectively *uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (Skt *padma*, *kokanada*), and *puṇḍarīka*. They are all varieties of the species *Nelumbo nucifera* (old name, now obsolete, *Nelumbium speciosum*).

<sup>193</sup> This verse also at V 1:7 (as at M 26,21), **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.7/2:39, spoken by Vipassī Buddha to Mahā Brahmā), **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,21/1:169; MĀ 204 = T765.4), **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,45/2:93, quoting M 26,21); **Āyācana S** (S 6.1.13/1:138), BA 18. Line b appears in **Jana,vasabha S** (D 18,27/2:217). See foll n.

<sup>194</sup> “The doors to the Deathfree” (*amatassa dvārā*) = the noble path (*ariya,magga*) (VA 963).

<sup>195</sup> On this difficult sentence, see esp SD 12.2 (3).

<sup>196</sup> This verse: (BHS) *apāvṛtaṃ me amṛtasya dvāraṃ | brahmeti bhagavantaṃ ye śrotukāmā | śraddhāṃ pramuñcantu viheṭṭha,saṃjñāṃ || viheṭṭha,saṃjñā praguṇo abhūsi | dharmo aśuddho magadheṣu pūrvaṃ ||* (Mvst 3:319, Senart). BHS: sv viheṭṭhā, however, says that Senart’s text is “very corrupt” (Edgerton 1953: 50). For a detailed study, see SD 12.2 (3).

<sup>197</sup> *Katāvakāso kho’mhi bhagavatā dhamma,desanāya*, free tr: “The Blessed One has consented to the teaching of the Dharma!” Here *bhagavato* (dat, gen) at S 1:138 (PTS 1884) appears to be wr. In **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,21/1:169), M:ÑB (similarly at V:H 4:10) has “I have created the opportunity for the Blessed One to teach the Dhamma.” CPD: *katāvakāsa*, however, remarks that this rendition is “both grammatically impossible and contextually unlikely; the reading *bhagavato* at S 1:138,26, however, would seem to represent a reinterpretation of the clause supporting the traditional interpretation of the passage, unless the gen is taken as the gen of the agent to be construed with *katāvakāso*.” CPD cites **Mahāvastu**, *bhagavatā mahābrahmaṇe avakāśe kṛte* (Mvst 3:319), “which would seem to support the interpretation suggested above.”

## TEACHING THE DHARMA

### The first listeners<sup>199</sup>

**22** Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

**‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’**

22.2 It then occurred to me:

**Āḷāra Kālāma** is wise, intelligent and discerning, and has little dust in his eyes.

22.3 Suppose I **[170]** taught the Dharma first to Āḷāra Kālāma. He will quickly understand it.’

Then, bhikshus, devas approached me and said,

‘Bhante, Āḷāra Kālāma died 7 days ago.’

22.4 And then the knowledge arose in me: ‘Āḷāra Kālāma has *died 7 days ago.*’

Then, bhikshus, it occurred to me:

‘Āḷāra Kālāma’s death is a great loss. If he had heard this Dharma, he would have understood it quickly.’

**23** Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

**‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’**

23.2 Bhikshus, it then occurred to me:

**Uddaka Rāma,putta** is wise, intelligent and discerning, and has little dust in his eyes.

23.3 Suppose I taught the Dharma first to Uddaka Rāma,putta. He will quickly understand it.’

23.4 Then, bhikshus, devas approached me and said this,

‘Bhante, Uddaka Rāma,putta died the night before.’

23.5 And then the knowledge arose in me: ‘Uddaka Rāma,putta *died the night before.*’

Then, bhikshus, it occurred to me:

‘Uddaka Rāma,putta’s death is a great loss. If he had heard this Dharma, he would have understood it quickly.’

**24** Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:

**‘To whom shall I first teach the Dharma? Who will understand the Dharma quickly?’**

24.2 Bhikshus, it then occurred to me to teach **the group of 5 monks**<sup>200</sup> who attended upon me when I was engaged in my quest, that they were very helpful.

24.3 ‘What now if I taught the Dharma first to the group of 5 monks?’

<sup>198</sup> V 1:7; M 1:170; S 1:138; D 2:39 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:318; cf S:B 1:233 n372; also Sn 1146c. We see here an existential role reversal of the God-religion, where instead of man supplicating God for guidance and succour, it is the High God himself who comes down from his heaven to supplicate the Buddha to declare the Dharma for the world’s good.

<sup>199</sup> **Bronkhorst:** “One suspects that the names of these two men [Āḷāra and Uddaka] originally occurred only where the Buddha thinks of possible persons with whom to start his missionary activity. In order to give some context to these mysterious names, the account of the Bodhisattva’s training under teachers with these names was added.” (1993:86). Bronkhorst argues that this view is supported by the fact that although the Mahīśāsaka **Vinaya** mentions the two teachers in the Buddha’s doubt as to teach whom first (T1421.104a.11), it “does not refer to the Bodhisattva’s training under these two even though this *Vinaya* mentions a number of things about the Bodhisattva prior to his awakening (T1421.101a10-102c14) (1993:86). Note however that **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16) mentions a Pukkusa, supposedly a follower of Āḷāra Kālāma, visiting the Buddha not long after his death (D 16.4.26/-2:131). See §§15-16 above.

<sup>200</sup> This is prob the oldest canonical ref to the 5 monks that we have. See **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11/-5:420-424; V 1:10-12), SD 1.1

24.4 Then, bhikshus, this occurred to me:  
‘Where is the group of 5 monks living now?’

24.5 With the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human, I saw that they were living in **the Deer Park at Isipatana** near Benares.

## Upaka

25 Then, bhikshus, when I had stayed at Uruvelā for as long as I was inclined to, I set out in stages for Benares.<sup>201</sup>

25.2 Between Gayā and the place of the Awakening, the naked ascetic, **Upaka**,<sup>202</sup> saw me on the road and said,

‘Serene are your senses, avuso! Clear and bright is your complexion. Under whom have you gone forth? Who is your teacher? Whose doctrine do you profess?’ [171]

25.3 Bhikshus, after Upaka had spoken thus, I replied him in verse:

25.4 **All** have I overcome, all do I know,  
from all am I detached, all<sup>203</sup> have I renounced,  
through the stopping of craving, I am freed,  
having understood all by myself, whom shall I call teacher?

25.5 No teacher have I,<sup>204</sup> an equal to me there is none.  
In all the world, with its gods, there is no other like me [no counterpart of me].<sup>205</sup>  
**An arhat**, indeed, am I in this world.<sup>206</sup>

25.6 Peerless teacher am I.  
Alone am I fully self-awakened,  
quenched, whose fires are all extinguished.  
I’m going to **Kāsi**<sup>207</sup> to set the wheel of truth in motion.  
In this blind world, I shall beat the drum of the death-free state!

25.7 ‘Then, avuso, from your claim, you are worthy as a conqueror of the endless (ananta,jina)?<sup>208</sup>

<sup>201</sup> This episode is related in greater detail in Mahāvastu: Mvst 3:322-329 (tr Jones) & *Uruvilvāto Rṣipatanam Gamanam*, tr (with nn) Ānandajoti, 2009b.

<sup>202</sup> Upaka is also called Kāla, probably a nickname for his dark complexion (Thī 309, or Upaganena, Divy 393). For details of history, see SnA 1:258-260). His story is given at SnA 1:258-260; see also SD 12.1 (4+5); SD 49.13 (4.2).

<sup>203</sup> For other verses that play on “all” (*sabba*), see SD 15.7 (3.3.2.4 f). On the meaning of *sabba*, see **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1.

<sup>204</sup> According to Comy on **Ghaṭikāra S** (M 81), the Bodhisattva had learned all of Kassapa Buddha’s teachings and was effectively on the brink of streamwinning (MA 3:282). As such, the Buddha’s proclamation here that he has no teacher apparently refers to the fact none of his teachers are alive then. See Analayo on M 81, 2005:8. **Kathā,vatthu** (Kvu 4.8/286) discusses the question how far the Buddha did not have a teacher (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,25-1:170), SD 1.11, when, as the Bodhisattva, he had been Kassapa Buddha’s disciple, and how the Buddha’s awakening was an insight into “things unheard of before” (**Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S**), S 56,11.9-12/5:422 f; V 1:10-12, (SD 1.1). See also Comy ad loc (KvuA 78).

<sup>205</sup> On the only one buddha in the present, see SD 55.8 (2.6).

<sup>206</sup> *Na me ācariyo atthi, | sadiso me na vijjati. || sa,devakasmim lokasmim | n’atthi me paṭipuggalo. ||*

<sup>207</sup> **Kāsi** or Kāsika is one of the 16 great states of ancient India who capital is Benares (*bārāṇasī*), by which it is often referred to, eg. “the rajah of Benares” (in the Jātakas).

- 25.8 The conquerors like me are those whose impurities have been destroyed.  
All the bad I have conquered.  
Therefore, Upaka, am I called **conqueror**!

25.9 Bhikshus, when this was said, the naked ascetic said, ‘It might be so [I’m sure it is], avuso.’<sup>209</sup>  
Shaking his head, he took a byway and departed.<sup>210</sup>

## The 5 monks

26 Then, bhikshus, walking by stages, I eventually came to **the Deer Park at Isipatana**, near Benares, and I approached the group of 5 monks.

26.2 When they saw me coming in the distance, they agreed among themselves, thus:

‘Avuso, here comes the recluse Gotama who lives luxuriously, who has given up his striving and reverted to luxury.<sup>211</sup> We should neither pay him homage, nor rise up to him, nor receive his bowl and outer robe. But a seat may be prepared for him. If he likes, he may sit down.’

26.3 However, bhikshus, even as I approached, those monks were unable to keep to their decision.

One came to meet me and took my bowl and outer robe; another prepared a seat; another set up water for my feet.

26.4 However, they addressed me by my name and as **‘avuso’** (*āvuso*).<sup>212</sup>

27 Thereupon, bhikshus, I told the group of 5 monks, thus:

‘Bhikshus, do not address the Tathagata by name and as “avuso.” The Tathagata is an arhat, [172] fully self-awakened.

Give ear, bhikshus, the death-free state has been attained! I shall instruct you the Dharma.

<sup>208</sup> *Yathā kho tvarā āvuso paṭijānāsi arahasi ananta,jino* = V 1:8,27. Here *arahasi* (2 sg) can also be *arahā asi*. **An-anta,jina** (a Jain + Ajivika term), “conqueror of the endless (nirvana), of unlimited mastery” (V 1:8,27 = M 1:171,13 ≈ Mvst 3:326,9 13, 17; SnA 260,1 f ≈ MA 2,190,20 f ≈ ThĀ 2:221 f; also Miln 105,24.

<sup>209</sup> Be *hupeyya p’āvuso’ti*; Ce Ee *huveyya p’āvuso’ti*; Se *huveyy’āvuso’ti*.

<sup>210</sup> MA: Upaka thereafter falls in love with Cāpā, a hunter’s daughter and marries her (ThĀ 225). Later, when the marriage fails, Upaka goes to the Buddha who admits him into the order. As a result of his meditation, Upaka becomes a non-returner and is reborn in the Avihā heaven of the pure abodes (Suddhāvāsa), where he immediately becomes an arhat (MA 1:190). (See Sn 11 which is made in reference to Upaka’s attainment of non-returning.) Later, Cāpā, too, goes forth and becomes an arhat nun. The importance of this meeting is that the Buddha for the first time proclaims from his own mouth and before another person his new and supreme dignity—the first public statement of his awakening—as well as his determination to liberate the world. This is what is important to the simple follower. Whether Upaka understands his privilege or not is of little consequence. In fact, the Dīgha Commentary says that the Buddha walks all the way (about 7 km) from Gayā to Isipatana, instead of teleporting himself, so that Upaka could meet him (DA 2:471). See also V 1:8; M 1:171; J 1:81; DhA 4:71 f; cf Miln 235; UA 54; Kvu 289; Mvst 3:326. On Upaka, further see SD 49.14 (4.2).

<sup>211</sup> The “luxury” here refers to his taking “some boiled rice and gruel” *odāna,kummāsa* (as *dvandva*), or “rice gruel” (as *tatpurusha*). This offering is prob part of the milk-rice (*pāyāsa*) made by the lady Sujātā, and which is the Bodhisattva’s last meal before the great awakening (J 1:68; SA 1:172; AA 1:401; BA 7; ApA 72; DhsA 34).

<sup>212</sup> *āvuso*, meaning “Friend!” “Sir!”, a polite vocative for monks equal in “rains” with the speaker, or to juniors; prob derived from \**āvusso* < \**āyuṣmas* (cf Whitney, *A Sanskrit Grammar*, London, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed 1896 §454); cf BHS *āvusa. āyuṣman*. Uses: (1) by and to non-Buddhists (V 1:8, Upaka; D 2:130, Ālāra Kālāma; M 1:372, nirgrantha; Tha 1196; J 2:448, 3:230); (2) by monks and nuns (a) to laity (V 1:84; M 1:299, to Visākha; J 3:191, 4:244; (b) to each other (but not to the Buddha), post-Buddha only by a senior monk to a junior (*āvuso,vādā*) (V 1:9; D 2:154; UA 311): see **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16), where the Buddha declares that after his passing, only senior monks address juniors as *āvuso* or by name, while juniors shall address seniors as *bhante* or *āyasmā* (D 16,6.2/2:154) & also R O Franke, “The Buddhist Councils at Rājagaha and Vesālī,” *Journal of the Pali Text Soc*, 1908:18-44. See CPD & DP sv.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.'

27.2 When this was said, bhikshus, the group of 5 monks said this to me:

'Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have not gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?'

27.3 When this was said, I told the group of 5 monks:

'The Tathagatha does not live luxuriously, nor has he given up his striving and reverted to luxury. *The Tathagatha is an arhat, fully self-awakened.*

27.4 Listen, bhikshus, **the death-free state has been attained!** I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dharma.

Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.'

27.5 **For the 2<sup>nd</sup> time**, the group of 5 monks said to me:

'Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have not gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?'

27.6 For the 2<sup>nd</sup> time, bhikshus, I said to the group of 5 monks:

'The Tathagatha does not live luxuriously, nor has he given up his striving and reverted to luxury. The Tathagatha is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

27.7 Give ear, bhikshus, the deathfree state has been attained! I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the Dharma.

*Practising as instructed, realizing it [freedom] for yourselves through your own direct knowledge, here and now, enter and dwell in that unsurpassed goal of the holy life, for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into homelessness.'*

27.8 **For the 3<sup>rd</sup> time**, bhikshus, the group of 5 monks said to me:

'Avuso Gotama, by your posture, your way, and your deeds of austerities, you have not gained any superhuman states, any excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones.

Since you now live luxuriously, having given up your striving and reverted to luxury, how would you have achieved any superhuman states, excellence in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones?'

**28** When this was said, I asked the group of 5 monks, thus:

'Bhikshus, **have you ever known me to speak like this before?**'

'No, bhante.'

28.2 'Bhikshus, the Tathagata is an arhat, fully self-awakened.

*Give ear, bhikshus, the deathfree state has been attained! I shall instruct you the Dharma. Practising as you are instructed so that by realizing direct knowledge for yourself here and now, you will in no long time attain and dwell in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which sons of family rightly go forth from the household life into the homeless life.'*

## The 1<sup>st</sup> discourse<sup>213</sup>

**29 [173]** Bhikshus, I was able to convince the group of 5 monks.

29.2 Bhikshus, sometimes I instructed 2 monks while the other 3 went out for alms, and the 6 of us lived on what those 3 monks brought back.

29.3 Bhikshus, sometimes I instructed 3 monks while the other 2 went for alms, and the 6 of us lived on what those 2 monks brought back.<sup>214</sup>

**30** Then, bhikshus, the group of 5 monks, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **birth**,

having understood the danger in what is subject to *birth*,  
seeking the *unborn* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,  
realized **the unborn** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*.

30.2 Being themselves subject to **decay**,  
having understood the danger in what is subject to *decay*,  
seeking the *undecaying* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,  
realized **the undecaying** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*.

30.3 Being themselves subject to **disease**,  
having understood the danger in what is subject to *disease*,  
seeking the *disease-free* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,  
realized **the disease-free** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*.

30.4 Being themselves subject to **death**,  
having understood the danger in what is subject to *death*,  
seeking the *death-free* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,  
realized **the death-free** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*.

30.5 Being themselves subject to **sorrow**,  
having understood the danger in what is subject to *sorrow*,  
seeking the *sorrowless* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,  
realized **the sorrowless** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*.

30.6 The group of 5 monks, bhikshus, thus taught and instructed by me, being themselves subject to **defilement**,  
having understood the danger in what is subject to *defilement*,  
seeking the *undefiled* supreme security from bondage, nirvana,  
realized **the undefiled** supreme security from bondage, *nirvana*.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>213</sup> This is prob the original form of the “first discourse,” or a gist of the Buddha’s first teachings to the 5 monks, or a key section of the first discourse—we cannot really be sure. However, this is certainly older than the teachings of **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1.

<sup>214</sup> The episode from this point is recorded in **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1. A few days later, after they all had become streamwinners, the Buddha taught them the teaching recorded in **Anatta,lakkhaṇa S** (S 22.59 @ SD 1.2), upon hearing which they all attained arhathood. The complete episode is recorded in the Vinaya (V 1:7-14) (see Ñāṇamoli, *The Life of the Buddha*, 1992:42-47).

<sup>215</sup> The Pali is abbreviated so. For an important discussion on the attributes of the conditions leading to nirvana, see Norman, 1995:218-221. The main points to consider here are: (1) The opposition in terms (“death” ... “death-free,” etc) here does *not* refer to nirvana but to the opposition between nirvana and a being who is in *saṃsāra*; (2)

## The awakening of the 5 monks

30.7 The knowledge and vision arose in them:

‘Unshakeable is our freedom of mind. This is our last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for us)!’<sup>216</sup>  
[§18.7]

### **PĀSA,RĀSI SUTTA**<sup>217</sup>

The Discourse on the Pile of Snares

## The 5 cords of sensual pleasures

**31** Bhikshus, there are these **5 cords of sensual pleasures**.<sup>218</sup> What are the five?

- (1) **Forms** cognizable by the eye  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.
  - (2) **Sounds** cognizable by the ear  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.
  - (3) **Smells** cognizable by the nose  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.
  - (4) **Tastes** cognizable by the tongue  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.
  - (5) **Touches** cognizable by the body  
that are wished for, desirable, agreeable, likeable, connected with sensuality, arousing lust.
- Bhikshus, these are the 5 cords of sensual pleasures.

**32** Bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures, infatuated with them, enjoying them with relish,<sup>219</sup> unaware of the danger, knowing no way out, it may be understood of them:

‘They have met with calamity, with disaster—the Evil One may do with them as he likes.’

## The pile of the snares

32.2 Suppose, bhikshus, **a forest deer** that is bound, lies down on **a pile of snares** (*pāsa,rāsi*):<sup>220</sup> it might be understood of it:

‘It has met with calamity, with disaster—

the hunter may do with it as he likes, and when the hunter comes, it cannot go where it wants.’

32.3 Even so, bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures,

The epithets here refer *not* to nirvana but to the conditions that pertain in nirvana, which must be the opposite of those that pertain in *saṃsāra*; (3) These epithets refer to the conditions of the *beings* who have gained nirvana: such beings are “death-free,” etc, but nirvana itself is actually beyond any attribute.

<sup>216</sup> Compare this ancient account of the arhathood of the 5 monks with that of **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11), SD 1.1. On the significance of this passage: [5.3.5.2]

<sup>217</sup> For a discussion on **Pāsa,rāsi S**, see Intro (7) above.

<sup>218</sup> As in **Araṇa,vibhaṅga S** (M 139,9). *Kāma,guṇa* is also tr as “strand(s) of sensual pleasure.”

<sup>219</sup> Read *ajjhopanno* (see CPD), “being addicted to, being enthralled by,” (to enjoy doing something) with relish. PTS has *ajjhāpanna*, “with guilt,” guiltily.

<sup>220</sup> Hence, the sutta title as found in Comy: *Pāsa,rāsi Sutta*.

infatuated with them, enjoying them with relish, unaware of the danger, knowing no way out, it may be understood of them:

‘They have met with calamity, with disaster—the Evil One may do with them as he likes.

**33** Bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are not tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures, not infatuated with them, not enjoying them with relish, aware of the danger, knowing the way out, [174] it may be understood of them:

‘They have not met with calamity, nor disaster—the Evil One may *not* do with them as he likes.’

#### PARABLE OF THE PILE OF SNARES

33.2 Suppose, bhikshus, **a forest deer** that is unbound lies down on a pile of snares: it might be understood of it: ‘It has *neither* met with calamity, *nor* disaster—

the hunter may *not* do with it as he likes, and when the hunter comes, it may go where it wants.’

33.3 Even so, bhikshus, of those recluses and brahmins who are not tied to these 5 cords of sensual pleasures, not infatuated with them, not enjoying them with relish, aware of the danger, knowing the way out, it may be understood of them:

‘They have not met with calamity, nor disaster—the Evil One may *not* do with them as he likes.’

**34** Suppose, bhikshus, a forest deer is wandering in the forest wilds—it walks, stand, sits, lies down confidently. Why is that? Because it is **out of the hunter’s range**.

### THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES<sup>221</sup>

NAVA ANUPUBBA, VIHĀRA

#### THE 4 DHYANAS

34.2 (1) So, too,

quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states,

a monk attains and dwells in the **1<sup>st</sup> dhyana**,<sup>222</sup>

accompanied by initial application and sustained application,

accompanied by zest and happiness born of seclusion.

Thus, bhikshus, this monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.<sup>223</sup>

**35** (2) Again, bhikshus,

with the stilling of initial application and sustained application,

by gaining inner tranquility and oneness of mind,

he attains and dwells in the **2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana**,

free from initial application and sustained application,

accompanied by zest and happiness born of concentration.<sup>224</sup>

*This monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.*

<sup>221</sup> *Nava anupubba, vihāra: Jhānābhiññā S* (S 16.9), SD 50.7 (1.2.1.2); (**Navaka**) *Jhāna S* (A 9.36), SD 33.8; SD 1.8 (2.2.3) (3)n. These 9 are the 4 form dhyanas (*rūpa jhāna*), the 4 formless attainments (*arūpa samāpatti* or *ārūppa*) and the attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*). **Analayo**, in *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima Nikāya*, notes that these 9 attainments blinding Māra, “occur in similar terms in the preceding discourse, **the Nivāpa Sutta** [M 25/1:159 f], where the passage fits the context better than in the present instance.” (2005:95): cf A 9.39/4:433 f.

<sup>222</sup> For a more detailed description of the *jhāna* with similes, see **Sāmaññaphala S** (D 1:73-76=2.75-82).

<sup>223</sup> *Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, bhikkhu andham akāsi māraṃ apadaṃ, vadhitvā māra, cakkhuṃ adassanaṃ gato pāpimato*. MA says that this refers to the attainment of any of the 8 dhyanas as bases for insight, over which Māra has no power.

<sup>224</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana is known as “the noble silence” (*ariya, tuṇhī, bhāva*): see §4n.

**36** (3) Again, bhikshus, with the fading away of zest, he dwells equanimous, mindful and fully aware, and experiences happiness 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.’ *This monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.*

**37** (4) Again, bhikshus, with the abandoning of joy and abandoning pain, and with the earlier disappearance of pleasure and displeasure, he attains and dwells in **the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana** that is neither painful nor pleasant, and with mindfulness fully purified by equanimity.<sup>225</sup> *This monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.*

#### THE 4 ATTAINMENTS

**38** (1) Again, bhikshus, by completely transcending the perceptions of form, with the disappearance of the perceptions of sense-reaction,<sup>226</sup> with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘Space is infinite,’ a monk attains and dwells in **the base of infinite space**. *This monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.*

**39** (2) Again, bhikshus, by completely transcending the base of infinite space, aware that ‘Consciousness is infinite,’ a monk attains and dwells in **the base of infinite consciousness**. *This monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.*

**40** (3) Again, bhikshus, by completely transcending the base of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘There is nothing,’ a monk attains and dwells in **the base of nothingness**. *This monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.*

**41** (4) Again, bhikshus, by completely transcending the base of nothingness, [175] a monk attains and dwells in **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**. *This monk is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One’s eye.*

#### CESSATION & ARHATHOOD

**42** Again, bhikshus, by completely transcending the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,

<sup>225</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>226</sup> “Perceptions of sense-reaction,” *pañigha,saññā*, also “sensory impact” (M:ÑB 267), “resistance-perception, reflex-perception” (BDict), said to be absent in the formless dhyanas. This is one of those terms that are only used contextually. See Vibh 245, §262; Vism 10.12-16.

a monk attains and dwells in **the cessation of perception and feeling**.<sup>227</sup>

And having seen the influxes<sup>228</sup> with wisdom, he has destroyed them.<sup>229</sup>

**43** This monk, bhikshu, is said to have **blinded Māra**, to be unseen by Māra the Evil One's eye, and to have crossed beyond attachment to the world.<sup>230</sup>

He walks, stands, sits, lies down confidently.

Why is that? Because he is **out of the Evil One's range**.<sup>231</sup>

**44** The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, the monks rejoiced in the Blessed One's word.

— sattamaṃ —

<sup>227</sup> "The cessation of perception and feeling," *saññā,vedayita nirodha*, ie, the attainment of cessation (*nirodha, samāpatti*, S 14.11/2:151). The absolute necessary preconditions to the attainment of cessation are said to be the perfect mastery of all the 8 dhyanas as well as the previous attainment of non-returning or arhathood. Comys say that this state may last for 7 days or even longer (MA 1:125, 152; AA 1:152; DhA 1:109; BA 163). Immediately at the arising of the state, however, there arises in the non-returned, the fruition of non-return (*anāgāmi,phala*), and in the arhat, the fruition of arhathood (*arahatta,phala*) (PmA 1:41, 321). Only an arhat or a non-returned who have mastered the 8 liberations [SD 49.5b (1)] can experience this cessation (A 5.166/3:193 f; Vism 23.18/702, 23.49/-708). On emerging from cessation, they experience the fruit of their respective attainments (Vism 708). Cf **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); also **Animitta Ceto,samādhi Pañha S** (S 40.9/4:268 f), SD 24.19. On cessation (*nirodha*), see **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43.25/1:296) + SD 30.2 (4); **Cūḷa Vedalla S** (M 44.16-21/1:301 f) + SD 40a.9 (2.5); also SID: *saññā,vedayita,nirodha*.

<sup>228</sup> Influxes (*āsava*). As "mental influxes," the oldest list is prob a set of **3 influxes**—of sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), of existence (*bhav'āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijj'āsava*), as in **Saṅgīti S** (D 33), **Sammā,diṭṭhi S** (M 9), the **Cūḷa Suññata S** (M 121), **Āsava S** (S 38.8), **Ti,kaṇṇa S** (A 35.8), **(Te,vijja) Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 3.59), **Nibbedhika Pariyāya S** (A 6.63). The 4 influxes, or "floods" (*ogha*) or "yokes" (*yoga*)<sup>228</sup> of (1) sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal existence (*bhav'āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh'āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijj'āsava*). See SID: *āsava*.

<sup>229</sup> *Paññāya c'assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti*. This does not refer to a "wisdom-liberated" (*paññā,vimutti*) arhat, but prob one "free both ways" (*ubhato,bhāga,vimutta*)—he has mastered the 8 liberations (*aṭṭha vimokkha*)—since he is able to attain cessation. See SD 4.25 (233.2-3.3).

<sup>230</sup> This monk, by destroying his influxes (*āsava*) [§42n], becomes temporarily invisible to Māra but permanently out of his reach. On the cessation of perception and feeling, see §42 n.

<sup>231</sup> This is the close-quote for the Buddha Word of the Sutta that starts at **§4.3**.

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<sup>232</sup> *Fàn tiān quàn fǎ*, “Brahmā beseeches (the Buddha) to teach Dharma.”

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