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(Majjhima) Dhānañjāni Sutta

The (Middle-length) Discourse to Dhānañjāni¹ | M 97

Theme: Sāriputta guides a dying person to the brahma world

Translated by Piya Tan ©2003

1 Related suttas

1.1 The Dhānañjāni Sutta gives an account of how Sāriputta guides the dying brahmin Dhānañjāni in stages to be reborn in the Brahmā world. At the close of the Sutta, the Buddha rebukes him for leaving the brahmin in the “lowly Brahmā world” (*hīne brahmā,loke*) when he could have been guided to a higher level.²

1.2 In the **(Mahā,nāma) Gilāyana Sutta** (S 55.54), the Buddha instructs Mahānāma on how a dying “wise lay follower” (ie a streamwinner) could be “directed to the cessation of self-identity,” that is, attain arhat-hood. In this case (a lay person attaining cessation of self-identity), there is no difference between a lay follower thus liberated in mind and a monk liberated in mind for a hundred years—between a layman arhat and a monk arhat, “that is, there is no difference between the one liberation and the other” (S 55.-54,19), that is, they are both arhats, liberated and awakened.³

This clearly shows that there are two routes to awakening: one monastic renunciation and the other the lay life.⁴ The monastic life properly lived is the best direct “one way” route to spiritual liberation. However, for a lay person who is properly trained in meditation, the indirect route, albeit longer, still reaches the goal. At the moment of dying, there is neither monastic nor lay, except the mind that struggles with a rush of thought moments.⁵

1.3 **The Nakula Sutta** (A 6.16) is a heart-warming example of how a loving wife counsels her ailing husband who is on the verge of dying. Her counselling is so effective that he immediately recovers from his illness.⁶

1.4 Such texts belong to a fascinating group of suttas dealing with **Death Studies**.⁷ They show that it is possible for a skillful person or counsellor to guide a dying person to die well,⁸ have a good rebirth, even to the point of gaining spiritual liberation itself.

2 Dhānañjāni’s illness

2.1 Both the **Dhānañjāni Sutta** [§27,1] and its Āgama version in Chinese (MĀ 27)⁹ say that Sāriputta is informed of Dhānañjāni’s illness. According to the Pali version, Dhānañjāni sends a messenger to inform

¹ This discourse is named **(Majjhima) Dhānañjāni Sutta** to distinguish it from **Dhanañjāni Sutta** (S 7.1), SD 45.5.

² See M:H 2:xxix f. Cf the brahmin youth Subha Todeyya,putta (M 99) who, however, was not yet ready to go beyond the instruction on companionship with Brahmā, ie the cultivation of the 4 Divine Abodes (*brahma,vihāra*). See **(Brahma,vihāra) Subha Sutta** (M 99,24-28/2:207-208), SD 38.6.

³ **(Mahānāma) Gilāyana S** (S 55.54/5:408-410), SD 4.10.

⁴ On the 2 spiritual “packages,” see SD 40a. (2.2).

⁵ On the sameness of sainthood for monastics and laity, see SD 16.7 (1.1.1.3).

⁶ **Nakula S** (A 6.16/3:295-298), SD 5.2.

⁷ For refs on death according to Buddhism, see Biblio.

⁸ This is the true meaning of *euthanasia*, a Greek word that means “good death.”

Sāriputta, saying that he (Dhānañjāni) is not well but eager to hear the Dharma. The Āgama version, however, says that Sāriputta is informed by another monk who has just come from Rājagaha, that though Dhānañjāni is now eager to see the Buddha and hear the Dharma, he is ailing.

According to Analayo, “This passage thus comes as a counterpart to the earlier instance in MĀ 27, when a monk from Rājagaha had informed Sāriputta that Dhānañjāni was well, but was not eager to see the Buddha and did not delight in hearing the Dhamma.”¹⁰ Their contradiction is possibly due to a mistranslation in the Chinese version, as explained by Analayo.¹¹

2.2 VARIATIONS

2.2.1 According to the Āgama version,¹² as soon as Dhānañjāni sees Sāriputta approaching, he tries to get up from his bed, but is told by Sāriputta to remain where he is. Dhānañjāni then describes his pains to Sāriputta, according to the Pali version, as being that of “cutting, crushing, tearing, and burning” in this manner:

Violent winds are cutting¹³ through my head like a strong man cleaving it open with a sharp sword ...

Violent pains are crushing my head as if a strong man were tightening a strong leather strap around my head as a headband ...

Violent winds are tearing my belly as if a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to carve up a cow’s¹⁴ belly with a sharp butcher’s knife. ...

Violent pains are burning up my body¹⁵ as if two strong men were to seize a weaker man by both arms and burn and roast him over a pit of burning coal. [§29]

2.2.2 There is however a minor difference. While the Pali version¹⁶ gives three similes illustrating violent winds in Dhānañjāni’s head and belly, *adhimattā vātā*, while the Āgama version simply speaks of his “headache,” 頭痛 *tóutòng*,¹⁷ and of “belly pains,” 腹痛 *fùtòng*.¹⁸ According to **Analayo**:

Especially in the last case the Pāli version fits better, since the carving up of a cow’s belly can indeed be taken as an illustration of the action of various winds in the stomach, while it would

⁹ M 97,27a/2:191,34 and MĀ 27 @ T1.457c20.

¹⁰ Analayo 2011 at M 2:191 n206.

¹¹ M 97,4/2:186,2 says that, when Sāriputta arrives, Dhānañjāni is in his cowshed having his cows milked, *gāvo goṭṭhe dohāpeti* (M:Be 2:396,18 and M:Se 2:624,13: *duhāpeti*). MĀ 27 @ T1.456c10 instead reports that he is “punishing residents,” 苦治居民. The idea of “punishing,” lit “inflicting pain,” could be due to mistaking √DUH, “to milk,” for √DRU, “to harm” or “to hurt.” The tr “residents” is less easily explained, although perhaps the idea that someone is being harmed or hurt might have led to a misinterpretation of P *goṭṭha* or Skt *goṣṭha*, “cow-pen,” for P *gotta* or Skt *gotra*, “clan,” respectively. Alternatively, the ref to “residents” could be a gloss introduced by the translator. A mistaking of √DUH for √DRU could occur more easily in a Prakrit text in which, as in Pali, the two forms are not distinguishable by the occurrence of an *r* in the latter (cf PED 328 sv duhati, “to milk,” sv *duhana* “one who injures”), whereas such a mistaking would be less probable had the original been in Sanskrit. (Analayo 2011:567 n197)

¹² MĀ 27 @ T1.457c27.

¹³ “Cutting,” *ūhananti*, “piercing,” lit “are rising upwards.”

¹⁴ “Cow,” *go*, “cattle,” which is actually a collective term meaning, “cow, ox, bull.”

¹⁵ “Burning up my body,” *kāyasmim dāho*, lit “burning in the body.”

¹⁶ M 97.29/1:422,2+14.

¹⁷ MĀ 27 @ T1.458a6.

¹⁸ MĀ 27 @ T1.458a9.

not illustrate the pain experienced by Dhānañjāni so well, as the cow is already dead at the time of carving up and will thus no longer experience pain. (2005 at M 2:293)

2.3 According to **Visuddhi,magga**, “winds” are responsible for the various internal motions of the body, namely, “up-going winds” (*uddhani,gamā vātā*) for vomiting and belching, “down-going winds” (*adho,-gamā vātā*) for the expelling of faeces and urine (Vism 350). “Wind” here clearly refers to elemental “motion,” not to the object moved.

2.4 According to ancient Indian medicine, an imbalance in these winds can cause illness. **The Vinaya**, for example, records that the monk Pilinda,vaccha has “wind ailment” (*vātābādha*) (V 1:205). He is given an oil decoction as remedy: as such, this “wind ailment” is probably a stomach problem. The Vinaya again records Pilinda,vaccha as having winds in his limbs (*aṅga,vāta*) and joints (*pabba,vāta*), which **Horner** thinks refers to rheumatism (M:H 4:278 f).

3 Lovingkindness without dhyanas?

3.1 The Dhānañjāni Sutta describes how Dhānañjāni lies on his deathbed in great agony [§§8-9]. Sāriputta then counsels him gradually leading him to the cultivation of the divine abodes (*brahma,vihārā*). Dhānañjāni, who has been leading an unexemplary life, now lies on his deathbed, suffering from agonizing headaches, severe stomach cramps and high fever. Soon after being taught how to pervade the universe with the 4 divine abodes (lovingkindness, compassion, gladness and equanimity), passes away and is reborn in the Brahmā world.

According to **Analayo**:

This circumstance suggests that he must have been able to put the instructions to good use, even though his physical condition would have made it impossible for him to develop absorption. It is only with the commentaries, possibly because they associated pervasion exclusively with absorption (cf Vism 308), that meditation on loving kindness becomes an exercise in conceptual imagination, directed towards oneself, a friend, a neutral person, and an enemy in turn (cf Vism 296). This method is not found anywhere in the discourses. (2003:196 n 57)

3.2 It should be noted that the Buddha’s teaching of the cultivation of lovingkindness is by way of its immeasurable and unlimited pervasion of all directions, as stated for example in **the Vatthūpama Sutta** (M 7).¹⁹ This is the standard teaching we find throughout the suttas. **The Cūḷ’accharā Sutta** (A 1.6)²⁰ records the Buddha as simply admonishing:

Bhikshus, if even for just the moment of a finger-snap²¹ a monk associates with (*āsevati*) ... cultivates (*bhāveti*) ... pays attention (*manasikaroti*) to a thought of lovingkindness, he is called a monk. His meditation is not in vain. He acts in accordance with the Teacher’s teaching. He follows his advice. He does not eat the country’s alms in vain.²² How much more so if he were to often cultivate it! (A 1.6,3-5/1:10 f)

¹⁹ M 7,13-19/1:38. See also D 1:251, M 2:207, S 4:322.

²⁰ See SD 2.13.

²¹ “Even for just the moment of a finger-snap,” *accharā,saṅghāta,mattarā*. Also in **Velāma S** (A 9.20/4:395 f), SD 16.6.

²² Comy say that there are 4 ways in which a monk takes his alms: (1) an immoral monk takes it (undeservedly) like a thief; (2) a virtuous ordinary person who does not reflect on it is like a debtor; (3) a trainee (*sekhā*, ie one of the 7 saints, short of the arhat-become) uses it as an inheritance; (4) an arhat takes it as a proper owner.

4 Vindicating Sāriputta

4.1 COUNSELLING A DYING OUTSIDER

4.1.1 The close of the Sutta records Sāriputta’s reporting to the Buddha that Dhānañjāni is seriously ill and that he (Sāriputta) has taught Dhānañjāni the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*) so that he might have companionship with Brahmā,²³ the Buddha replies to Sāriputta [§38]:

“But, Sāriputta, why did you, having established the brahmin Dhānañjāni [196] in the lowly Brahmā world, rise from your seat and leave, while there was still a higher task to be done?”²⁴

“Bhante, I thought thus: ‘These brahmins are devoted to the Brahmā world.’ What if I were to teach the brahmin Dhānañjāni the way to companionship with Brahmā?”

“And, Sāriputta, the brahmin Dhānañjāni has died and arisen in the Brahmā world.”

(M 97,38/2:195 f)

4.1.2 It is evident from this dialogue that Sāriputta is unaware of Dhānañjāni’s death and is consulting the Buddha regarding his act of compassion towards Dhānañjāni. Since the brahmin still believes in Brahma,²⁵ Sāriputta teaches him the divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*). However, the brahmin dies before further instructions is given by the elder.

There are some divergences in this account of the brahmin Dhānañjāni [2.1]. A possible conclusion here is that it is too late for the Buddha to give Sāriputta any further advice since the brahmin has already died. This much is clear from the Buddha’s response as shown above [4.1.1].

4.2 We may speculate that Sāriputta erred in not teaching the dying brahmin more than just the divine abodes, but, as an arhat, this is simply unlikely, especially for one with Sāriputta’s wisdom. This notion is pure speculation reflecting our own doubts than what is like of an arhat. In such a situation, we should give ourself the benefit of the doubt.

They question may be asked why is such a seemingly embarrassing account of the “failure” of the wisest of the monks in instructing a dying person even included at all in a major Nikāya. This teaching is included for our benefit today: when counselling a dying person, we do not know exactly when he may die. Hence, we should give the proper instructions in Dharma practice as early as we can, especially when the person is lucid.

5 Laymen addressed as *bhante* and *āyasmā*

5.1 DHĀNAÑJĀNI ADDRESSED AS BHANTE

5.1.1 When the dying brahmin **Dhānañjāni** instructs his servant to inform the Buddha and Sāriputta of his grave illness [§27.1], the servant addresses Dhānañjāni as “bhante” (literally “sir”), a term we now usually use when addressing monastics. There are two possible explanations for this mode of address.

Firstly, it is proper mode of address since the servant is addressing his master. Secondly, the Majjhima Reciters might have retained (or introduced) this mode of address—after the fact—since the addressee, Dhānañjāni, is reborn in the Brahmā world, that is, as a high divine being [§§36, 38].

²³ “Companionship with Brahmā,” *brahmā, saḥavyatā*, ie rebirth in the Brahmā world.

²⁴ See §36 n.

²⁵ Technically. we today know this as Brahman (neut), but the term is unknown in the suttas: SD 58.6 (2.5.3.2).

5.1.2 A clear example of a layman **being** addressed as *bhante* is found in **the Yamaka Sutta** (S 22.86).²⁶ Anyway, *bhante* was probably a common way by which juniors addressed their seniors, or those of lower status (such as servants) addressed those of higher status (such as their masters), and the Buddha adopted and adapted this common mode of address for the monks.

5.2 LAY SAINTS ADDRESSED

5.2.1 In **the (Mahānāma) Gilayāna Sutta** (S 55.54), Mahānāma, the dying “wise layman,” is similarly addressed as “venerable one” (*āyasmā*).²⁷ When questioned by Mahānāma on how a dying “wise lay follower” should be counselled, the Buddha replies that he should let go of all worldly and heavenly attachments. Once the instructions turn to rebirth in the heavens, the mode of address changes to “friend” (*āvuso*).²⁸ In these instructions, the dying layman is told to let go of all thoughts of loved ones, of sense-pleasures, and of heavenly births, even the Brahmā world, and to “direct your mind to the cessation of self-identity.” [§18.2]

19 If he says thus, ‘My mind has turned away from the Brahmā world and is directed to the cessation of self-identity,’—then, Mahānāma, there is no difference between a lay follower who is thus liberated in mind and a monk who has been liberated in mind for a hundred years,²⁹ that is, there is no difference between the one liberation and the other.” [§19]³⁰

It should be noted that it is the Buddha himself who is giving these instructions, where the wise layman is addressed as *āyasmā* and *āvuso*. There is a clear hint here that such respectful modes of address (that is, *bhante*, *āyasmā* and *āvuso*) are also used for virtuous laymen or lay saints.³¹ After all, lay saints are also “noble individuals” (*ariya, puggalā*), or members of the “noble sangha” (*ariya, saṅgha*) (D 1:156), and as such are worthy of the respectful mode of address.

5.2.2 Further evidence is found in **the Dhamma, cetiya Sutta** (M 89.18), where rajah Pasenadi similarly refers to his two pious ministers, Isidatta and Purāṇa, as “*bhante*.”³² In the Dhamma, cetiya Sutta and **the Thapataya Sutta**,³³ both are “chamberlains” or keepers of the women’s quarters (*thapataya*; Skt *sthapataya*) of king Pasenadi. The commentary to the Thapataya Sutta says that at the time (in the Thapataya Sutta) Isidatta is a once-returner, and Purāṇa a streamwinner, content with his own wife (that is, one who is chaste but not celibate) (SA 3:278).³⁴ It is these two lay saints that rajah Pasenadi addresses as *bhante*.

²⁶ S 22.86,39/3:113 (SD 16.5).

²⁷ Or simply “venerable.” See **(Mahānāma) Gilayana S** (S 55.54,5(1)) & n, SD 4.10; cf **Ṭhāna S** (S 4.92/2:187-190), SD 14.11b.

²⁸ M 55.54,9.2 (SD 4.10). *Āvuso* (lit “one with age”) is a voc form of *āyasmā*. CPD: = Amg *āvuso*, derived by Leumann (Aup Gloss) and Pischel §396 from Ved voc **āyuṣmas* (Whitney 3rd ed §454), but phonetically rather < **āvuso* < **āyuṣvas*. The term **āvuso** is used by monks and nuns to address lay followers at V 1:84,29, 2:294,15; M 1:299 ff; DhA 1:18,4. For other usages and citations, see CPD: *āvuso*.

²⁹ I follow the Thai Pali here. See S:B 1961 n371.

³⁰ S 55.54,18.2-19/4:410 (SD 4.10).

³¹ The exception here is that of Dhānañjāni, who is not yet an *ariya*, and who, only upon listening to Sāriputta’s instructions, is reborn in the Brahmā world [§§36-38].

³² See Intro (5) above & also **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89,18/2:123), SD 64.10.

³³ M 89,18/2:124 & S 55.6/5:348-352.

³⁴ See S:W 5:303 n1, S:B 1955 n326.

5.2.3 The Madhyama Āgama parallel passage,³⁵ however, does not record such an expression. This is understandable, perhaps because the Chinese translator feels that *bhante* should be reserved for monastics. There is, of course, as argued by Analayo below, the possibility that the Pali passages (or rather, the Reciters) err. However, I think that this is a remote possibility; more likely a later monasticization of the terms *bhante* and *āyasmā*.

5.2.4 In the Naḷaka,pāna Sutta (M 68,18-20), the Buddha himself, in speaking of the attainment of streamwinning, of once-returning and of non-returning by a layman, addresses such a one (at least twice in each case) as “that venerable one” (*so āyasmā*), “a form of address usually only employed by laity when addressing monks and recluses” (Analayo 2005 at M 1:464). **Analayo** goes on to say that **the Madhyama Āgama** version “presents the same reflection in a more fitting manner, since it reports the male lay follower recollecting another male lay follower in terms of ‘that lay follower’ [彼優婆塞]”³⁶ (2005 id), and he concludes that

In an oral transmission that aims at verbatim recall of a text, however, it could occur that the honorific term used in the earlier passage [in the Naḷaka,pāna Sutta] on a monk recalling a monk was unintentionally repeated again when reciting the passage on a layman. Similarly, in the case of the Dhammacetiya Sutta king Pasenadi earlier had referred to monks, which may have misled the reciters to use the same honorific term appropriate for monks when reciting the passage on king Pasenadi’s lay employees. Once such an error had taken place, the fidelity of the tradition was such that in both discourse[s] the evidently incorrect way of address was kept as part of the oral heritage. (2005 at 1:464)

5.2.5 However, there is an alternative view, where the textual usage of *bhante* and *āyasmā* may be regarded as properly used when addressing certain laymen. In the Naḷaka,pāna Sutta, we again see the Buddha addressing lay saints, who as I have mentioned earlier, qualify to be addressed as *bhante* and *āyasmā*, since they are “noble individuals” and member of the “noble sangha.” The Chinese Buddhist tradition and later (post-Buddha) Pali tradition is that only monastics should be addressed as such.

5.2.6 Apparently, vocatives such as *āyasmā* and *bhante* are common ways of how addressing a master (employer, etc), a senior, or a teacher. When the early Buddhists adopted it (actually they were simply keeping to popular convention) and addressed monks the same way, those modes of address evolved in due course to refer more specially to monastics.

5.2.7 In all the above contexts, however, where laymen are addressed as *bhante* or as *āyasmā*, they are either reborn in a high divine plane—as in the case of the brahmin Dhānañjāni [§§36, 38]—or they are lay saints. As saintly members of the spiritual sangha, they clearly deserve to be addressed as such.

5.3 BHIKKHU

5.3.1 TO ALL ATTENDING. The sutta context helps in identifying the intended audience, especially where *bhikkhu* (both nominative and vocative), and its vocative plural, *bhikkhave*, are used. If the context concerns some issue of monastic discipline where rules or decisions are made or to be observed—that is, an ecclesiastical or monastic context—these words would address the monastics.

³⁵ MĀ 213 @ T 1.797b7.

³⁶ MĀ 77 @ T1.546b8.

In a Dharma context (as a rule in the Suttas), such terms address would encompass *all* of the 4 assemblies (*catu,parisā*),³⁷ that is, the monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen. On the term *bhikkhu*, **Analayo**, in his *Satipaṭṭhāna: The Direct Path to Realization*, comments that

These instances [where besides monks, nuns and lay followers, too, were accomplished meditators] clearly show that the word “monks” (*bhikkhave*), used in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta by the Buddha as a form of address to his audience, was not intended to restrict the instructions to fully ordained monks.³⁸ (2003:275 f)³⁹

5.3.2 REAL RENUNCIATION

5.3.2.1 In his footnote to this comment, Analayo, further quotes the Majjhima Commentary where Buddhaghosa explains that in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta context, the word *bhikkhu* includes whoever engages in the practice, especially meditation, that is, being a “monk” in deed, rather than as a person. In fact, while monasticism is merely an *external* renunciation, meditation *is* the real *internal* renunciation. In meditation, we begin by renouncing the world, that is, our 5 physical senses, to fully focus on the mind. When we are able to renounce all thoughts, then we have attained samadhi, or even dhyana.⁴⁰

5.3.2.2 However, a caveat is important here: this statement should in no way be construed as degrading or doing away with monkhood. It simply means that “clothing does not make a man,” but our conduct makes us one, and if such a conduct is wholesome, it should also be emulated by all. This sentiment is clear from numerous sutta statements, such as this one:

<p><i>Na câhaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ brūmi yonijaṃ matti,sambhavaṃ bho,vādi nāma so hoti sace hoti sa,kiñcano akiñcanaṃ anādānaṃ tam ahaṃ brūmi brāhmaṇaṃ</i></p>	<p>I do not call him a brahmin because he born so from a womb. He is but a “sir” (<i>bho</i>) by name⁴¹ if he has possessions. He who has nothing, without grasping, him I call a brahmin.</p>
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(M 98,11 (27*) = Sn 620/p119)⁴²

The sutta goes on with many other verses of similar sentiment showing that birth or status is no measure of one’s spirituality.

³⁷ A 2:132.

³⁸ MA 1:241 explains that in the present context “monk” includes whoever engages in the practice. See **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) n, SD 13.3.

³⁹ See also Collett & Analayo, 2014. Further see SD 52.10a (1.2.1.2).

⁴⁰ See **Bhāvanā**, SD 15.1 (14.7): Meditation is progressive renunciation.

⁴¹ “Sir” caller” (*bho,vādi*) is polysemous (it has two meanings), viz, “he is merely one who is addressed as ‘sir,’ and who addresses others so,” “he is ‘sir’-called and a ‘sir’-caller.” Alt trs giving only either meaning but not both: (A) In the sense of “sir”-caller: Ñāṇamoli & Bodhi: “He is just one who says ‘Sir’” (M:ÑB), Norman: “he becomes one who addresses others disrespectfully” (Sn:N); (B) In the sense of merely being addressed as “sir”: Hare, and Horner foll him: “bho’ he be ‘Sir’-ed” (Sn:H; M:H); Saddhatissa: “Just because a man is entitled to be called ‘Sir’” (Sn:S); Jayawickrama: “he is but to be addressed as ‘sir’ (Sn:J). Apparently, both senses apply: a status-minded brahmin is addressed as “sir” and is wont to address others in the same way.

⁴² See also M 98 vv 27-54 = Sn 620-647 = Dh 396-423 (but Dh 423 has an additional couplet).

5.3.3 TEACHER AS STATUS

In Thailand, even today, the word *ajahn* (from Skt *ācārya*, P *ācariya*), meaning “teacher,” is used as a respectful way of addressed either a monk or a lay person (male or female) who is a teacher (whether secular or religious). This mode of address is very similar to the Chinese *sifu* (sometimes rendered as “master”) and the Japanese *sensei*, used both of the lay and the ordained. Such modes of address is not so much an acknowledgement of *status*, as it is the rejoicing in *the spiritual potential* that such vocatives point to.

5.3.5 LAY ARHATS

The **Kathāvatthu**, dealing with the question on whether a layperson may become an arhat, states that the Uttarā, pathakas (“Northerners”)⁴³ answer affirmatively, mentioning Yasa the layman, Uttiya the houselord and Setu the brahmin youth as examples of lay arhats (Kvu 1:268), and its Commentary (KvuA 4.1/73) quotes the **Dhammapada**:⁴⁴

*Alaṅkato ce pi samaṃ careyya
santo danto niyato brahmacārī
sabbesu bhūtesu nidhāya daṇḍaṃ
so brāhmaṇo so samaṇo so bhikkhu*

Though well adorned [finely clad], if he fares in calmness,
At peace, tamed, self-controlled, living the holy life,
Having put down the rod towards all beings—
He is a brahmin, he is a recluse, he is a monk.

(Dh 142; Kvu:SR 157 f)

— — —

(Majjhima) Dhānañjāni Sutta

The (Middle-length) Discourse to Dhānañjāni

M 97

[184]

1 Thus have I heard.

1.2 At one time the Blessed One was staying in the squirrels’ feeding ground in the Bamboo Grove near Rājagaha.

Sāriputta at Dakkhina, giri

2 At that time, the venerable Sāriputta was wandering [peregrinating] in the Southern Hills [Dakkhina, giri]⁴⁵ in stages (on a teaching tour)⁴⁶ with a large community of monks.

Then a certain [185] monk who had spent the rains retreat at Rājagaha approached the venerable Sāriputta and having exchanged greetings with him, sat down at one side.

⁴³ *Uttarā, pathaka* refers to a “northerner,” probably an inhabitant of the region of Gandhāra, Kasmīra (Kashmir) and Kambojā. See DPPN: Uttarāpatha.

⁴⁴ See **Laymen Saints**, SD 8.6.

⁴⁵ *Dakkhina, giri*. This is the northern part of the Avantī kingdom, lying to the SW corner of the India, north of the Vindhya mountains. Its capital is Ujjenī (Skt Ujjayinī; modern Ujjain), north of Indore, on the Sipra River (which rises in the Vindhyas and flows into the Chambal, a tributary of the Yamuna). It is today part of the Deccan Plateau: “Deccan” comes from the Skt *dakṣiṇa* (Pali *dakkhiṇa*), meaning “south.” See MA 3:429.

⁴⁶ “Wandering...in stages,” *cārikaṃ caramāno*, lit “walking the walk,” that is, wandering about teaching the Dharma and ministering the people. See n ad loc in **Tevijja S** (D 13,1/1:235), SD 1.8.

2.2 Sitting thus at one side, the venerable Sāriputta said to him:

“Avuso [Friend], is the Blessed One well and strong?”

“The Blessed One, avuso, is well and strong.”

2.3 “Avuso, is the community of monks well and strong?”

“The community of monks, avuso, is well and strong, too.”

2.4 “Avuso, there is a brahmin named Dhānañjāni, living at the Taṇḍula, pāla Gate.⁴⁷ Is that brahmin Dhānañjāni well and strong?”

“The brahmin Dhānañjāni is well and strong.”

2.5 “Avuso, is the brahmin Dhānañjāni mindful?”⁴⁸

“How can he be mindful, avuso? The brahmin Dhānañjāni, avuso, uses the rajah to plunder the brahmin housemasters⁴⁹ and uses the brahmin housemasters to plunder the rajah.⁵⁰ His wife, a person of faith, coming from a clan of faith, has died, and he has taken another wife, one faithless, coming from a faithless clan.”

2.6 “What bad news indeed that we hear, avuso; what bad news indeed that we hear, avuso, that Dhānañjāni has become heedless. Perhaps we should sometime meet Dhānañjāni for a dialogue.”⁵¹

Sāriputta meets Dhānañjāni in Rājagaha

3 Then, the venerable Sāriputta, having stayed in the Southern Hills for as long as he wished, set out for Rājagaha, and walking in stages, eventually reached Rājagaha. There he resided in the squirrels’ feeding ground in the Bamboo Grove near Rājagaha.

4 Then, when it was morning, the venerable Sāriputta dressed and, taking bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. [186] Now at that time, the brahmin Dhānañjāni was having his cows milked in a cowshed outside the city.⁵²

4.2 Then the venerable Sāriputta having gone for his almsround and finished his meal of almsfood, approached the brahmin Dhānañjāni. The brahmin Dhānañjāni saw the venerable Sāriputta coming in the distance, approached him and said this to him:

“Here, master Sāriputta, drink some fresh milk since there is still time for your meal.”⁵³

4.3 “Enough, brahmin, I have finished my meal for today. I will be spending the afternoon rest⁵⁴ at the foot of that tree. You may come there.”

⁴⁷ *Taṇḍula, pāla, dvāra*, one of the smaller city gates of Rājagaha (MA 3:429). *Taṇḍula* is rice “without husk, fragrant and clean-grained [ready as food]” (D 3,6.1/3:88) which PED defines as “husked and ready for boiling. In Malay, this would be called “beras,” which when boiled is called “nasi”; unhusked rice is called “padi” (English “paddy”). *Taṇḍula, pāla* may be rendered as “the rice-keeper,” ie one who guards the husked rice.

⁴⁸ “Mindful,” *appamatta*, usu “heedful, diligent, vigilant,” would sound weak in this context. Sāriputta’s intention is clearly that of spiritual diligence; hence, “spiritually diligent” would be an alternate tr.

⁴⁹ *Brāhmaṇa, gaha, patikā*, also spelt as *brāhmaṇa, gaha, pati*, which is invariably a collective term, never an individual, ie, the landed community of the brahmin villages (*brāhmaṇa, gāma*) or fiefs (*brahma, deya*) as a whole. This classification is based on land-ownership (ie their economic function), who nonetheless still identified with the larger priestly class. As such, individually, they (such as Kūṭa, danta, Caṅkī, etc) are still referred to simply as *brāhmaṇa*. On *gaha, patika*, see SD 38.6 (2.1.4). See also Chakravarti 1987:72 f.

⁵⁰ *Dhānañjāni āvuso brāhmaṇo rājānaṃ nissāya brāhmaṇa, gahapatike vilumpati; brāhmaṇa, gahapatike nissāya rājānaṃ vilumpati*, lit “The brahmin Dhānañjāni, friend, depending on the rajah, plunders the brahmin housemasters; depending on the brahmin housemasters plunders the rajah.”

⁵¹ “Dialogue,” *kathā, sallāpa*, also “conversation.”

⁵² On a possible Chin mistr here, see Intro (2.1).

⁵³ *Ito bho Sāriputta payo pīyataṃ tāva bhattassa kālo bhavissati*, lit “Drink from this milk, master Sāriputta, there will still be time for your meal.” Evidently, this is well before noon.

“Yes, master,” the brahmin Dhānañjāni replied in assent to the venerable Sāriputta.

5 Then the brahmin Dhānañjāni, having finished his morning meal, approached the venerable Sāriputta, and after exchanging greetings with him, sat down at one side.

While the brahmin Dhānañjāni was seated thus at one side, the venerable Sāriputta said this to him: “Are you mindful, brahmin?”

Dhānañjāni’s heedlessness

5.2 “Master Sāriputta, how can I be mindful when I have

- (1) parents to support;
- (2) wife and children to support;
- (3) slaves, labourers and servants to support;
- (4) services towards friends and companions to discharge;
- (5) duties to relatives and blood relations;
- (6) duties to my guests;
- (7) duties to my ancestors;
- (8) duties to the gods;
- (9) duties to the rajah; and
- (10) this body’s needing satisfaction and care.”⁵⁵

6 (1) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **his parents**,

were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

6.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *my parents* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! [187] Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!?’

6.3 Or, would *his parents* be able to gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!?’”

6.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

7 (2) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **his wife and children**,

were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

7.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *my wife and children* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!?’

7.3 Or, would *his wife and children* be able to gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!?’”

7.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

⁵⁴ “The afternoon rest,” *divā, vihāra*, lit “the day residence,” ie afternoon siesta, often spent in meditation. See for examples in **Bhikkhuṇī Saṃyutta** (S 5).

⁵⁵ The duties that Dhānañjāni claim to be encumbered with here are actually household duties extolled by the Buddha whereby one’s wealth, justly and properly obtained, should be enjoyed (**Ādiya S**, A 5.41/3:45 f), SD 2.1. However, here, Dhānañjāni is ironically using these very same blessings as an excuse for not being mindful.

8 (3) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **slaves, labourers and servants**,
were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

8.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *slaves, labourers and servants* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

8.3 Or, would his *slaves, labourers and servants* be able to gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

8.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

9 (4) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **friends and companions**,
were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

9.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *friends and companions* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice!

[187] Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

9.3 Or, would his *friends and companions* be able to gain anything by claiming, ‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

9.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

10 (5) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **relatives and blood relations**,
were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

10.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *relatives and blood relations* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! **[187]** Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

10.3 Or, would his *relatives and blood relations* be able to gain anything by claiming, ‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

10.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

11 (6) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **guests**,

were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

11.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *guests* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! **[187]** Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

11.3 Or, would his *guests* be able to gain anything by claiming, ‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

11.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

[188]

12 (7) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **ancestors**,

were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

12.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *ancestors* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

12.3 Or, would ancestors be able to gain anything by claiming, ‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

12.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

13 (8) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **the gods**,

were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

13.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *the gods* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! **[187]** Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

13.3 Or, would *the gods* be able to gain anything by claiming, ‘It was on our account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

13.4 No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

14 (9) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **the rajah**,

were not a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

14.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *the rajah* that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! **[187]** Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

14.3 Or, would *the rajah* be able to gain anything by claiming, ‘It was on my account that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

14.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

15 (10) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Suppose someone here, on account of **his body’s needing satisfaction and care**,

were not to be a Dharmafarer and were to live a life of vice, and

because of such conduct, the hell wardens were to drag him off to hell,

15.2 would he gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *my body’s needing satisfaction and care*, that I am not a Dharmafarer, that I live a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take me to hell!’?

15.3 Or, would others be able to gain anything by claiming,

‘It was on account of *the body’s needing satisfaction and care* that he was not a Dharmafarer, that he lived a life of vice! Let not the hell wardens take him to hell!’?”

15.4 “No, indeed, master Sāriputta! Even as he cries out, the hell wardens would cast him into hell.”

Dharmafaring and right livelihood

16 (1) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better: one who, on account of **his parents**, is *not* a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice, or one who, on account of *his parents*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?”

16.2 “Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *parents*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice is not the better one.

16.3 The one who, on account of *parents*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—

he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *his parents*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice.”

16.4 “Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just,⁵⁶ by means of which one could support one’s *parents*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.⁵⁷

17 (2) What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **his wife and children**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice, or one who, on account of *his wife and children*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?”

[189]

17.2 “Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *wife and children*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice is not the better one.

17.3 The one who, on account of *wife and children*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—

he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *wife and children*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice.”

17.4 “Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one could support one’s *wife and children*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.

18 (3) What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **slaves, labourers and servants**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice, or one who, on account of *slaves, labourers and servants*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?”

18.2 “Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *slaves, labourers and servants*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice is not the better one.

18.3 The one who, on account of *slaves, labourers and servants*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—

he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *slaves, labourers and servants*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice.”

18.4 “Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one could support one’s *slaves, labourers and servants*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.

⁵⁶ “Wholesome in cause and just,” *sahetuka dhammika*, or “profitable and Dharma-based.”

⁵⁷ “Follow the way of merit,” *puññaṃ ca paṭipadaṃ paṭipajjitum*. “Merit” (*puñña*) here refers to mundane goodness the opp of which is *pāpa*. Such meritorious deeds still bind one to the world. It is skillful deed (*kusala*) that frees one from the world. Merit, however, can form the basis for skillful acts if one is not attached to merit as worldly action. See eg (**Puñña**) **Mettā S** (A 7.58a): “Monks, be not afraid of merit. This ‘merit’ is another name for happiness.” (A 7.58a/4:88-91), SD 2.11a . This passage as a whole is an exhortation regarding right livelihood.

19 (4) What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **friends and companions**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice,
or one who, on account of his parents, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?"

19.2 "Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *friends and companions*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice is not the better one.

19.3 The one who, on account of friends and companions, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life, is better than the one who, on account of *friends and companions*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice."

19.4 "Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one could support one's *friends and companions*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.

20 (5) What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **relatives and blood relations**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice,
or one who, on account of his parents, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?" **[190]**

20.2 "Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *relatives and blood relations*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice is not the better one.

20.3 The one who, on account of *relatives and blood relations*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—

he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *relatives and blood relations*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice."

20.4 "Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just,⁵⁸ by means of which one could support one's *parents*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.⁵⁹

21 (6) "What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **guests**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice,
or one who, on account of his *guests*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?"

21.2 "Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *guests*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice is not the better one.

21.3 The one who is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—

he is here surely better than the one who, on account of his *guests*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice."

21.4 "Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one could support one's *guests*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.

22 (7) What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **his ancestors**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice,
or one who, on account of his *ancestors*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?"

⁵⁸ "Wholesome in cause and just," *sahetuka dhammika*, or "profitable and Dharma-based."

⁵⁹ "Follow the way of merit," *puññaṃ ca paṭipadaṃ paṭipajjitum*. "Merit" (*puñña*) here refers to mundane goodness the opp of which is *pāpa*. Such meritorious deeds still bind one to the world. It is skillful deed (*kusala*) that frees one from the world. Merit, however, can form the basis for skillful acts if one is not attached to merit as worldly action. See eg (**Puñña**) **Mettā S** (A 7.58a): "Monks, be not afraid of merit. This 'merit' is another name for happiness." (A 7.58a/4:88-91), SD 2.11a. This passage as a whole is an exhortation regarding right livelihood.

22.2 “Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *ancestors*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice is not the better one.

22.3 The one who is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—
he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *ancestors*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice.”

22.4 “Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one could support one’s *ancestors*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.

23 (8) What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **the gods**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice,
or one who, on account of his parents, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?”

23.2 “Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of the gods, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice, is not the better one. **[191]**

23.3 The one who is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—
he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *the gods*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice.”

23.4 “Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one could support *the gods*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.

24 (9) What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **the rajah**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice,
or one who, on account of his parents, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?”

24.2 “Master Sāriputta, the one who on account of the rajah is not a Dharmafarer, who on account of the rajah lives a life of vice, is not the better one.

24.3 The one who is a Dharmafarer, who lives a harmonious life—
he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *the rajah*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice.”

24.4 Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one could support one’s *the rajah*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.

25 (10) “What do you think, Dhānañjāni?

Who is the better:

one who, on account of **his body’s needing satisfaction and care**, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice,
or one who, on account of *his body’s needing satisfaction and care*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life?”

25.2 “Master Sāriputta, the one who, on account of *the body’s needing satisfaction and care*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice, is not the better one.

25.3 The one who, on account of *the body’s needing satisfaction and care*, is a Dharmafarer and lives a harmonious life—
he is here surely better than the one who, on account of *the body’s needing satisfaction and care*, is not a Dharmafarer and lives a life of vice.”

25.4 “Dhānañjāni, there are other kinds of work, wholesome in cause and just, by means of which one can give *the body’s needing satisfaction and care*, and yet avoid bad and follow the way of merit.”

26 Then the brahmin Dhānañjāni delighted in the venerable Sāriputta’s word and having rejoiced in it, rose from his seat and left.

The dying Dhānañjāni takes leave

27 Then, at a later time, the brahmin Dhānañjāni was sick, in pain and seriously ill. Then, the brahmin Dhānañjāni addressed a certain servant,⁶⁰

27.2 “Come, my good man, **[192]** approach the Blessed One and bow at his feet in my name, saying, ‘Bhante, the brahmin Dhānañjāni is sick, in pain and seriously ill. He bows his head at the Blessed One’s feet.’

27.3 Approach the venerable Sāriputta and bow at his feet in my name, saying, ‘Bhante, the brahmin Dhānañjāni is sick, in pain and seriously ill. He bows his head at the venerable Sāriputta’s feet.’

27.4 And say thus: ‘It would be good, bhante, if the venerable Sāriputta could come to the brahmin Dhānañjāni’s house out of compassion.’”⁶¹

27.5 “Yes, bhante,”⁶² the brahmin Dhānañjāni’s servant replied in assent to Dhānañjāni.

27.6 Having approached the Blessed One, the servant saluted him and sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, he said this to the Blessed One:

27.7 “Bhante, the brahmin Dhānañjāni is sick, in pain and seriously ill. He bows his head at the Blessed One’s feet.”

27.8 Then he approached the venerable Sāriputta, and having saluted him, sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, he said this to the venerable Sāriputta,

27.9 “Bhante, the brahmin Dhānañjāni is sick, in pain and seriously ill. He bows his head at the venerable Sāriputta’s feet and says thus:

‘It would be good, bhante, if the venerable Sāriputta could come to the brahmin Dhānañjāni’s house out of compassion.’”

27.10 The venerable Sāriputta assented by his silence.

Dhānañjāni’s pains

28 Then the venerable Sāriputta, having taken his robe and bowl approached the house of the brahmin Dhānañjāni, and sat down on the prepared seat.⁶³

Thus seated, the venerable Sāriputta said this to the brahmin Dhānañjāni,⁶⁴ **[M 3:264; S 4:56]**

28.2 “I hope you are bearing it, Dhānañjāni. I hope you are getting better, and your pains⁶⁵ are abating, not rising; that their abating is evident, not their rising.”

29 ⁶⁶“Master Sāriputta, I cannot bear it; I am not getting better, and my pains are not abating, but rising; their rising is evident, not their abating. **[193]**

⁶⁰ On this section (Dhānañjāni’s illness), see Intro (2.1).

⁶¹ See Intro (2).

⁶² *Bhante* (lit “sir”). See above Intro (5).

⁶³ According to MĀ 27 @ T1.457c27, on seeing Sāriputta approaching, Dhānañjāni tries to get up from his bed, but is told by the former to remain where he is.

⁶⁴ The rest of this para as at **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36.23-25/1:243 f), SD 49.4 & **Chann’ovāda S** (M 144.4-5/3:264; S 4:56 f), SD 11.12.

⁶⁵ “Pains,” *dukkhā vedanā*, lit “painful feelings.”

⁶⁶ These 4 stock passages describe the pains of: the self-mortifying Bodhisattva, **Mahā Saccaka S** (M 36,22.2 (different figure) +23.2+24.2+25.2), SD 49.4; the dying brahmin Dhānañjāni, **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,29.2-5/2:193), SD 4.9; the dying householder Anātha, piṇḍika, **Anāthapiṇḍik’ovāda S** (M 143,4/3:259), SD 23.9; the dying monk Channa, **Chann’ovāda S** (M 144,5/3:264) = **Channa S** (S 35.87,5/4:56), SD 11.12; the dying monk Phagguna, (**Gilāna Phagguna S** (A 6.56,1.4/3:379 f), SD 23.4; cf (**Chakka**) **Āsava S** (A 6.58/3:389), SD 62.1.

29.2 (1) Violent winds are cutting⁶⁷ through my head like a strong man cleaving it open with a sharp sword.

I cannot bear it; I am not getting better, and my pains are not abating, but rising; their rising is evident, not their abating.

29.3 (2) Violent pains are crushing my head as if a strong man were tightening a strong leather strap around my head as a headband.

I cannot bear it; I am not getting better, and my pains are not abating, but rising; their rising is evident, not their abating.

29.4 (3) Violent winds are rending my belly as if a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to carve up a cow's⁶⁸ belly with a sharp butcher's knife.

I cannot bear it; I am not getting better, and my pains are not abating, but rising; their rising is evident, not their abating.

29.5 (4) Violent pains are burning up my body⁶⁹ as if two strong men were to seize a weaker man by both [S 4:57] arms and burn and roast him over a pit of burning coal.

I cannot bear it; I am not getting better, and my pains are not abating, but rising; their rising is evident, not their abating.

Sāriputta's admonition

30 What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: hell or the animal world?"

"The animal world, master Sāriputta, is better than hell."

30.2 "What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the animal world or the preta realm?"

"The preta realm, master Sāriputta, is better than the animal world."

30.3 "What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the preta realm or the human world?"

"The human world, master Sāriputta, is better than the preta realm."

30.4 "What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the human world or the devas of the Four Great Kings [Cātum, mahārājika]?"⁷⁰

"The devas of the Four Great Kings, master Sāriputta, are better than the human world." [194]

30.5 "What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the devas of the Four Great Kings or the devas of the heaven of Thirty-three [Tāvatisa]?"

"The devas of the heaven of Thirty-three, master Sāriputta, are better than the devas of the Four Great Kings."

30.6 "What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the devas of the heaven of the Thirty-three or the devas of the heaven of Yāma?"

"The devas of the heaven of Yāma, master Sāriputta, are better than the devas of the heaven of the Thirty-three."

⁶⁷ "Cutting," *ūhananti*, "piercing," lit "are rising upwards."

⁶⁸ "Cow," *go*, "cattle," which is actually a collective term meaning, "cow, ox, bull."

⁶⁹ "Burning up my body," *kāyasmim dāho*, lit "burning in the body."

⁷⁰ For a fuller list of the heavenly realms, see eg **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,15-42/1:289), SD 5.7.

30.7 “What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the devas of the heaven of Yāma or the devas of Tusita heaven [of the contented gods]?”

“The devas of Tusita heaven, master Sāriputta, are better than the devas of the heaven of Yāma.”

30.8 “What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the devas of Tusita heaven or the Nimmāṇa, ratī devas [who delight in creation]?”

“The Nimmāṇa, ratī devas, master Sāriputta, are better than the devas of Tusita heaven.”

30.9 “What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the Nimmāṇa, ratī devas or the Para, nimitta, vasavatti [who lord over the creations of others]?”

“The Para, nimitta, vasavatti devas, master Sāriputta, are better than the Nimmāṇa, ratī devas.”

Companionship with Brahmā

31 “What do you think, Dhānañjāni, which is better: the Para, nimitta, vasavatti devas or the Brahmā world?”

31.2 “Master Sāriputta says,

‘The Brahmā world’? Master Sāriputta says, ‘The Brahmā world’?”

31.3 Then the venerable Sāriputta thought,

‘These brahmins are devoted to the Brahmā world. What if I were to teach the brahmin Dhānañjāni the way to companionship with Brahmā?’⁷¹

31.4 Then he said to the brahmin, “Dhānañjāni, I shall teach you the way to companionship with Brahmā. Listen, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”

“Yes, master Sāriputta,” the brahmin Dhānañjāni replied in assent to the venerable Sāriputta. [195]

The venerable Sāriputta said this:

The 4 divine abodes⁷²

32 “And what, Dhānañjāni, is the way to companionship with Brahmā?”

⁷¹ “Companionship with Brahmā,” *brahmā, saḥavyatā*, ie rebirth in the 1st-dhyana Brahmā world.

⁷² This whole section on the 4 divine abodes is stock: **Cakka, vatti Sīha. nāda S** (D 26,31/3:78), SD 36.10, says that it is “the wealth for a monk (*bhikkhuno bhogasmim*).” **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,1.11(6)/3:223, calls it “the immeasurables” (*appamañña*). **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,31/1:297), SD 35.1, (**Ceto, vimutti**) **Anuruddha S** (M 127,4-7/3:146 f), SD 54.10 & **Go, datta S** (S 41.7,5/4:296), SD 60.4, call it “the immeasurable freedom of mind” (*appamañña ceto, vimutti*). According to **Aṭṭhaka, nāgara S** (M 52,8-11/1:351 f) = **Dasama Gaha, pati S** (A 11.17/5:344), SD 41.2, if one stabilizes these states, reflecting on its impermanence, etc, one attains arhathood; if not, one attains non-returning. (**Majjhima**) **Jīvaka S** (M 55,6/1:369), SD 43.4, presents the Buddha as Brahmā. **Dhānañjāni S** (M 97,32-33/2:195), SD 4.9, and (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S** (M 99,24-27/2:207 f), SD 38.6, call it the path to companionship with Brahmā (communion with God). (**Saṅgha**) **Uposatha S** (A 4.190,4/2:184), SD 15.10b, concerns one “attained to Godliness,” *brahma-p, patta*. **Pm** 5.20/2:39 calls it “freedom that is focused on only the beautiful,” *subhan t’eva adhimutto hotī ti vimokkho*); **Vbh** 13/272-276 (*sutta, niddesa*), 276-282 (*abhidhamma, niddesa*), 282-284 (comy). For a table of refs, see SD 38.5 (2.1.3.2).

32.2 Here, Dhānañjāni, a monk,⁷³ with a heart of **lovingkindness**, dwells suffusing one quarter, so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth; thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing all the world with lovingkindness that is vast, grown great [exalted],⁷⁴ immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will.⁷⁵ This, Dhānañjāni, is the way to companionship with Brahmā.

33 Further, Dhānañjāni, the monk, with a heart of **compassion**, dwells suffusing one quarter, so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth; thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing all the world with compassion that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will. This, Dhānañjāni, is the way to companionship with Brahmā.

34 Further, Dhānañjāni, the monk, with a heart of **gladness**, dwells suffusing one quarter; so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth; thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing all the world with gladness that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will. This, Dhānañjāni, is the way to companionship with Brahmā.

35 Further, Dhānañjāni, the monk, with a heart of **equanimity**, dwells suffusing one quarter; so, too, the second; so, too, the third; so, too, the fourth; thus above, below, across, everywhere, and to everyone as well as to himself, he dwells suffusing all the world with equanimity that is vast, grown great [exalted], immeasurable, without hate, without ill-will. This, Dhānañjāni, is the way to companionship with Brahmā.”

Dhānañjāni dies

36 “In that case, master Sāriputta, I bow my head at the feet of the Blessed One, saying: ‘Bhante, the brahmin Dhānañjāni is sick, in pain, seriously ill; he bows his head at your feet.’”

36.2 Then, the venerable Sāriputta, having established the brahmin Dhānañjāni in the lowly Brahmā world, rose from his seat and left—while there was still a higher task to be done.⁷⁶

⁷³ “Monk” (*bhikkhu*) here refers to any meditator. Note that Sāriputta is here teaching the layman Dhānañjāni to cultivate the divine abodes. Further, in **(Nānā,karaṇa) Mettā S 1** (A 4.125), the subject of each of the stock passages on the 4 divine abodes is “a certain person” (*ekacco puggalo*) (A 4.125,2 etc), SD33.9. Even a lay person, properly meditating, attains the state of monkhood (*bhikkhu,bhāva*): **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,3A) +n, SD 13.3; SD 13.1 (3.1.1.5); SD 16.7 (1.1.1.2). For similes, see **Te,vijja S** (D 13,76-79/1:251), SD 1.8; see also: **D 2**:185, 250, **3**:49, 78, 223; **M 1**:38, 283, 297, 335ī2, 351, 369, **2**:76, 77, 78, 81, 195, 207, **3**:146; **S 4**:296, 322, 351, 352ī2, **5**:115, 116, 117, 118; **A 1**:183, 192, **2**:172, 175, 184, **3**:225, **4**:390, **5**:299, 343, 344.

⁷⁴ The mind “grown great” (*maha-g,gatā*) or exalted perception refers to the mind in dhyana, ie in the form sphere (*rūpāvacara*). See **Catuttha Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.4), SD 24.14 (4).

⁷⁵ The recurrence of these last two phrases—“without hate, without ill will”—attests to the fact that lovingkindness is the basis for all the other three abodes, ie, they are actually a refinement of lovingkindness applied on deeper and broader levels.

⁷⁶ “While there was still a higher task to be done,” *sati uttari,karaṇīye*. Sāriputta failed to teach the dying Dhānañjāni how to gain the supramundane path and be assured of awakening, compared to which the Brahmā

36.3 Then not long after the venerable Sāriputta had left, the brahmin Dhānañjāni died and arose in the Brahmā world.”

The Buddha questions Sāriputta

37 Then the Blessed One addressed the monks,

“Bhikkhus, this Sāriputta,⁷⁷ having established the brahmin Dhānañjāni in the lowly Brahmā world, rose from his seat and left—while there was still a higher task to be done.”

38 Then the venerable Sāriputta approached the Blessed One, saluted him and then sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the venerable Sāriputta said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, the brahmin Dhānañjāni is sick, in pain, seriously ill; he bows his head at your feet.”

38.2 “But, Sāriputta, why did you, having established the brahmin Dhānañjāni [196] in the lowly Brahmā world, rise from your seat and leave, while there was still a higher task to be done?”

38.3 “Bhante, I thought thus: ‘These brahmins are devoted to the Brahmā world.’ What if I were to teach the brahmin Dhānañjāni the way to companionship with Brahmā?”

38.4 “And, Sāriputta, the brahmin Dhānañjāni has died and arisen in the Brahmā world.”⁷⁸

— evaṃ —

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world is “lowly” (*hīna*). Comy is silent on this point. The Majjhima Reciters, in a rare gesture, here express their own opinion here regarding Sāriputta’s deed, but it is recorded as the Buddha’s word later [38].

⁷⁷ “This Sāriputta,” *eso Sāriputto*, which suggests a gentle disapproval from the Buddha.

⁷⁸ Although the epithet “lowly” (*hīna*) is not mentioned of the Brahmā world here, the Buddha is clearly rebuking Sāriputta. Although elsewhere (eg (**Brahma, vihāra**) **Subha S**, M 99/2:196-209 @ SD 38.6; cf (**Karaja, kāya**) **Brahma, vihāra S**, A 10.208 @ SD 2.10), the Buddha teaches the way to the Brahmā world, here Dhānañjāni has the potential of attaining liberation itself (M 99,24-27/2:207 f @ SD 38.6; A 10.208/5:299-301 @ SD 2.10). See **Esukāri S** (M 96/2:177-184), SD 37.9.