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## Vīmaṃsaka Sutta

The Discourse on the Investigator | M 47

Theme: Even the Buddha should be investigated

Translated by Piya Tan ©2008, 2010

### 1 Introduction

#### 1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

##### 1.1.1 The investigator

The **Kesa,puttiya Sutta** (A 3.65) is often cited as the locus classicus for the early Buddhist spirit of *free inquiry*. Its real concern, however, is with the valid sources of knowledge, and the proper way of attaining *direct knowledge* of true reality. The true locus classicus for free inquiry in early Buddhism is, properly, **the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta** (M 47), which is remarkable for its intrepidity in advocating *open investigation* and personal verification of perhaps the most sacred of living religious systems, that of the teacher himself, traditionally regarded as one who holds an authority that should never be questioned.<sup>1</sup>

The Vīmaṃsaka Sutta is about the **vīmaṃsaka**, the “investigator” or one who is inquisitive,<sup>2</sup> but who lacks the power of mind-reading, should make a thorough examination of the Buddha’s claim to being a fully self-awakened teacher [§§1-2]. The key statement or sutta thesis reads thus:

The Tathagata, bhikshus, should be examined (*samannesanā kātabbā*) [2.3] by a monk, an investigator, who does not know<sup>3</sup> how to read another’s mind,<sup>4</sup> so that he knows whether the Blessed One is fully self-awakened or not.

*Vīmaṃsakena, bhikkhave, bhikkhunā parassa ceto,pariyāyaṃ ajānantena tathāgate samannesanā kātabbā “sammā,sambuddho vā no vā” iti viññāṇāyā ti. [§2]*

The significance of this teaching is a radical and universal one, because if the Buddha himself (or the early reciters themselves) recommends that the Buddha himself should be examined in terms of personal development and purity of body and mind, *this examination must surely apply to other teachers, too.*<sup>5</sup>

##### 1.1.2 Investigating the Buddha

The monks in the audience request the Buddha to elaborate [§3]. The Buddha then instructs that the investigator should visually observe and carefully listen whether the Buddha’s actions or speech are

<sup>1</sup> See Analayo 2010/:7. Jayatilleke, commenting on **Vīmaṃsaka S** (M 47) says that “doubt about the claims of the Tathāgata is not condemned, but in fact plays a central role in the process of inquiry which is considered to be essential prior to and for the generation of belief (or faith)” (1963:392). This is a classic example of belief or faith through personal verification.

<sup>2</sup> In **Vīmaṃsaka S** (M 47), we find the term *vīmaṃsaka*, which I have tr as “investigator.” Elsewhere, esp in **Sandaka S** (M 76), we have *vīmaṃsī* (used in ref to a non-Buddhist speculator), which I have tr as “inquirer” (in the rationalist context): see M 76/1:513-524 @ SD 35.7 (3.1.3).

<sup>3</sup> Be Ce *ajānantena*; only Ee has *ājānantena* (“with the knowing, or knowing”) clearly wr. The context clearly requires the negative **ajānantena** (*na*, “not” + *jānāti*, “he knows,” as neg participle), since the monk who is unable to directly know the Buddha’s mind that he is fully awakened must infer this from external means, such as his bodily and verbal conduct. See M:ÑB 1244 n482.

<sup>4</sup> “How to read another’s mind, *parassa ceto,pariyāyaṃ*, also “the range of another’s mind.” Here, Comy glosses *pariyāya* as “turn, track (n)” (*vāra*) and “range, limit” (*pariccheda*) (MA 2:378).

<sup>5</sup> In this connection, it is useful to read **The teacher or the teaching?** SD 3.14.

**defiled** (*sāṅkiliṭṭha*) in any way [§4], or whether they are of a “mixed” (*vītimissā*) nature, that is, inconsistent [§5]. The investigator should note whether the Buddha’s conduct is **purified** (cleansed) (*vodāta*) or **not** [§6], or whether his purity is **long-standing** (*dīgha,ratta*) or **fleeting** (*ittara*) [§7].

At this point, the investigator switches from addressing “the Tathagata” to “this venerable one” (*ayam āyasmā*), and this pronoun is used in the rest of the questions section here [4.1]. Is he negatively affected by fame and charisma? [§8] Is he morally restrained (or live the holy life) out of some kind of fear (such as those arising from religious dogma and theistic beliefs), or that he is totally lust-free, that is, spiritually liberated? [§9]

The investigator then questions the Buddha himself [§10], who confirms his observations in a positive way [§§11-13]. As a result, the investigator gains wise faith<sup>6</sup> not only in the Buddha, but in the Three Jewels [§14]. If others were to ask him about his faith in the Dharma and the sangha, he answers that he has himself heard the Dharma from the Buddha, who is fully self-awakened [§15].

His faith has arisen from seeing the truth for himself, rooted in vision (*dassana,mūlika*). As such, it is unshakable, even by Māra or Brahmā or anyone else. The monks rejoice in this discourse [§16].

## 1.2 ĀGAMA PARALLEL AND A FEW PROBLEMS.

### 1.2.1 Close parallels

There is a Chinese version of the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta in the Madhyama Āgama,<sup>7</sup> which has been translated into English by Analayo (2011). While the Pali **M 47** records the venue as Jeta’s Grove near Sāvathī, the Chinese translation, **MĀ 186**, gives it as Kammāsa,damma in the Kuru country.<sup>8</sup> Both the Pali sutta and its Chinese parallel begin with the Buddha instructing that a monk who has no mind-reading power should examine the Buddha by way of observing his bodily action and speech to ascertain if they are defiled, mixed, or pure, and whether he has attained them permanently (for a long time), showing them consistently, or only temporarily.

For the rest of the discourse, both the versions generally agree, except for two points. When the Pali sutta says that the Buddha is famous, his fame does not harm him [§8], the Chinese version simply says that the Buddha’s practice of meditation is not motivated by the desire for fame or gain [§8n]. Secondly, while the Pali sutta states that the Buddha does not identify with his moral virtue [§13], the Chinese version omits this statement.

### 1.2.2 *Dīgha,rattaṃ samāpanno ... ittara,samāpanno*

In section 7 of the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta, the investigating monk asks:

‘Has this venerable one *attained* to this wholesome state for a long time, or has he attained it for a short while [temporarily]?’<sup>9</sup> [§7]

<sup>6</sup> On faith, see SD 10.7(1).

<sup>7</sup> MĀ 186 = T1.731a-732a, which has the similar title “in search of understanding,” 求解 *qiújiě*. P Skilling, *Mahā-sūtra 2*, Oxford: PTS, 1997:341 notes a ref to a version of the present discourse in an *uddāna* preserved in Samatha,-deva’s comy on the Abhidharmakośa at D (4094) mngon pa, ju 235b4 or Q (5595) tu 269a5, reading *rjes [su] ’brang [ba]*, which would correspond to *anveṣaṇā*, and thus result in the discourse on “investigating.” See Analayo 2011: 291 n131.

<sup>8</sup> On Kammāsa,damma, see SD 13.1 (1.3). On Kuru country, see SD 13.1 (1.2).

<sup>9</sup> *Dīgha,rattaṃ samāpanno ayam-āyasmā imarṃ kusalarṃ dhammarṃ, udāhu ittara,samāpannō ti?* “A short while,” *ittara* (adj), sometimes misspelt as *itara*: (1) (Ved Skt *itvara*, “going, moving” going along, (fig) passing), “fleeting, temporary, brief,” as meant here; opp “for a long time” (*dīgha,ratta*); (2) “limited, unreliable,” A 3:165 ~*pema*; Miln

The Āgama version reads “為長夜行此法，為暫行?” (*wéi cháng yè xíng cǐ fǎ, wéi zàn xíng*),<sup>10</sup> which closely reflects the Pali, “*dīgha,rattam samāpanno ayam-āyasmā imam kusalam dhammam, udāhu ittara,samāpannō ti?*” and the translation here.

Bh Bodhi here, however, renders it as “Has this venerable one attained this wholesome state over a long time or did he attain it recently?” which is curious, as Analayo has noted, that it is “not how long ago the Buddha had attained [it], but whether he was practising *consistently* or only *temporarily*.”<sup>11</sup>

Furthermore, in **the Dahara Sutta** (S 3.1), the Buddha tells the rajah Pasenadi, who is doubtful about the Buddha’s awakening due to his youth, that the attainment of a monk, even a young one, should not be doubted, especially if he is perfect in virtue (S 3.1). This discourse is also found in both the Chinese versions of the Saṃyukta Āgama and a Sanskrit fragment.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.2.3 Tathāgata ... ayam āyasmā

In the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta [§§4-7], that is, from M 1:318,3 up till M 1:318,26, the monk refers to the Buddha as *tathāgata*, but from M 1:318,27 onwards, refers to him as “this venerable one,” *ayam āyasmā*. The Chinese MĀ 186 is more consistent here, since the monk is recorded throughout as referring to the Buddha as “this venerable one,” 彼尊者 *bǐ zūnzhě*<sup>13</sup> (Analayo 2011:292 n133).

This interesting change in pronominal (pronoun) reference is interesting and significant. The pronoun phrase, *ayam āyasmā*, is also found in a similar investigative context regarding a forest monk, as recorded in **the Gulissāni Sutta** (M 69), but not in the reflexive sense as used by the Buddha in the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta. The form *ayam āyasmā* is common,<sup>14</sup> but is never used in the reflexive sense as mentioned.

The impression we get from this development in the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta is that these investigations should be done not only regarding the Teacher, that is, the Buddha, but also in regard to other monastics,

93 *ittaratā*; (3) (BHS *itvara*, small, inferior, eg, ~ *dāna*, Divy 317) “low birth” (~ *jacca*, M 2:47; A 2:34; Sn 757. See PED, CPD, DPL, BHSD sv. Comy explains as “since a very long time (Be Se *aticira,kālato*; Ee *cira,kālato*), or attained yesterday (*hiyyo*)” (MA 2:382), which however seems to miss the context, as even if one were awakened yesterday or today itself, that awakening is no different from being awakened decades ago. In fact, the Chinese version (based on a Prakrit text) reflects the Pali better: see Intro (1.2).

<sup>10</sup> MĀ 186 = T1.731b19.

<sup>11</sup> Analayo 2011:292 @ M 1:318; emphases added; also n135, an important n, where he says that in the Chin tr of this passage, 為長夜行此法, 為暫行 *wéi cháng yè xíng cǐ fǎ, wéi zàn xíng* (MĀ 186 = T1.731b19), the use of 行 *xíng* does not seem to be just a free tr of an equivalent to the *samāpanna* found in the Pali, since other occurrences of the vb *samāpajjati* or its past part *samāpanna* in Majjhima have their counterparts in 入 *rù* or 得 *dé* in their MĀ parallels: cf M 43/1:296,12: *samāpanno* and MĀ 210 = T1.789a11: 入; M 50/1:333,24: *samāpannam* and MĀ 131 = T1.620c22: 入; M 79/2:37,26: *samāpajjati* and MĀ 208 = T1.786a16: 得; M 106/2:262,15: *samāpajjati* and MĀ 75 = T1.542b22: 得; M 136/3:207,14: *samāpanno* and MĀ 171 = T1.706b22: 入. This suggests that the orig on which the tr of MĀ 186 was based had a different verb at this point of its exposition. (Analayo however does not say what this vb is or might be.) Hirakawa 1997: 1043, however, lists a broad range of possible equivalents to 行, which does, however, not incl *samāpad*; cf also Zacchetti 2005a:245 n27, 322 n29 and 339 n75 on the use of 行 by Dharmarakṣa.

<sup>12</sup> S 3.1/1:69 (SD 42.11); SĀ 1226 = T 2.335a2; SĀ2 53 = T2.391c17; Saṅghabhedavastu, ed Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu* pt 1, 1977:182,17. See Analayo 2011:292 n136.

<sup>13</sup> Note: 彼 *bǐ* means “that, the other; he, him,” in contrast to 此 *cǐ*, “this.”

<sup>14</sup> M 69/1:469-473 (SD 73.8) the Sutta; also in **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70/1:479 f); **Caṅkī S** (M 2:172 f); **Pañcattaya S** (M 102,24/2:237) (where the Buddha, *tathāgata*, refers to a “this venerable one,” *ayam āyasmā*); **Ṭhāna S** (A 4.192/-2:287), SD 14.12 (the Sutta); **Āghāta Paṭivīnaya S 1** (A 5.161/3:185); **Āghāta Paṭivīnaya S 2** (A 5.162/3:189); **Nāgita S** (A 6.42/3:343); **Soṇa (Kojivīsa) S** (A 6.55/3:376 f); **(Brahmā) Tissa S** (A 7.53/4:77 f); **Paññā S** (A 8.2/4:153-155); **(Nāgita) Yasa S** (A 8.86/4:344); **Nandaka S** (A 9.4/4:362); **Kāya S** (A 10.23/5:40 f); **Mahā Cunda S** (A 10.24/5:41-45); **Vyākaraṇa S** (A 10.84/5:156 f); **Kaṭṭhī S** (A 10.85/5:158-161); **Adhimāna S** (A 10.86/5:162-164); Nm 1:238; Pm 2:19; V 1:183 f (on Soṇa’s going-forth).

especially teachers or trainers. This surmise is clearly valid as the Buddha has attained parinirvana, and hence the discourse would be useful if it also refers to living teachers. [4.1]

## 2 Key and related words

### 2.1 VĪMAṂSĀ AND RELATED WORDS

The word **vīmaṁsaka** is both an adjective (“inquisitive, investigative”) and an agent noun or nomen agens (“an investigator”). There is also the rarer agent noun form, *vīmaṁsī*,<sup>15</sup> which the Commentaries gloss as “wise” (*paṇḍito* etc).<sup>16</sup> Both come from the stem *vīmaṁsā* (f) [see below], whose verb is *vīmaṁsati*,<sup>17</sup> “he considers, examines, thinks over, finds out.”<sup>18</sup>

It has at least 2 abstract nouns: the first is *vīmaṁsana* (“investigation, investigating, texting, finding out”),<sup>19</sup> and the second, the more important term, is **vīmaṁsā**, which is the fourth of the 4 bases of spiritual power (*iddhi, pāda*), namely, will (*chanda*), effort (*virīya*), the mind (*citta*) and investigation (*vīmaṁsā*).<sup>20</sup>

Will is the enthusiasm, a wholesome desire, we show towards personal or mental development. This then translates into physical and mental effort to cultivate the mind, that is, to train it to become calm and clear, so that it grows in wisdom. Investigation (*vīmaṁsā*) is wisdom in its mode of investigating into the reasons for progress or decline in meditation.<sup>21</sup>

There are two more important forms related to *vīmaṁsā*, both the prefix *pari~* (denoting completion or fulfillment, “all around”), that is, the verb, *parivīmaṁsati*, “he thinks over, considers thoroughly, examines, searches,”<sup>22</sup> and the noun, *parivīmaṁsā* (f), “full inquiry, thorough examination or search.”<sup>23</sup>

### 2.2 VĪMAṂSAKA

As already noted [2.1], the word **vīmaṁsaka** is both an adjective (“inquisitive, investigative”) and an agent noun or nomen agens (“an investigator”). The Commentary explains that there are three kinds of investigators (*vīmaṁsaka*), that is, (1) an investigator of meanings (*attha, vīmaṁsaka*), (2) an investigator of formations (*saṅkhāra, vīmaṁsaka*), and (3) an investigator of the teacher (*satthu, vīmaṁsaka*). It cites the following references as examples for them:

<sup>15</sup> Sn 877; Nm 283; DA 1:106.

<sup>16</sup> Nm 1:283,23; SnA 554,2-3.

<sup>17</sup> Ved *mīmāṁsate*, desid of *VMAN*, to think, “to wish to think,” where *m* becomes *v* through dissimilation. Dissimilation is a linguistic process by which one of two similar sounds in a word becomes less like the other, eg, the Old French *marbre* dissimilated into the English *marble*, and the Latin *peregrīnus* became the English *pilgrim* with the first *r* of the Latin word dissimilated into *l*. Cf Geiger, *Pali Grammar*, rev ed, 2000:46.4.

<sup>18</sup> Sn 215, 405; J 1:128, 147, 6:334; Miln 143.

<sup>19</sup> V 3:79; J 3:55; PvA 153.

<sup>20</sup> Refs to **iddhi, pāda** D 3:71n (*samādhī~*), 222; S 5:280; A 1:39, 297, 3:37, 346, 5:24, 90, 338; Pm 1:19, 2:123; Kvu 508; Dhs 269; Vbh 219 (*samādhī~*), 222, 227; TikaP 2; Nett 16 (*~samādhī*), 42; DA 1:106; SnA 349. See also **Cattāro Iddhi, pāda** @ SD 10.3 (1.1); **Cakka, vatti Sīha, nāda S** (D 26,28/3:77), SD 36.10; **Mahā Sakul’udāyī S** (M 77,17/2:11) @ SD 49.5; **Chanda Samādhī Sutta** (S 51.13/5:268 f) @ SD 10.3(3.2); **Iddhi, pāda Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20/5:276-281) @ SD 28.14.

<sup>21</sup> See SD 10.3 (1.2).

<sup>22</sup> S 2:80 f; It 42 = Sn 972 (cf Nm 508); DA 1:134; DhA 4:117 (*attānaṁ*).

<sup>23</sup> M 3:85; S 3:331, 5:68; SnA 173.

- (1) An investigator of meanings (*attha, vīmaṃsaka*), as in **the (Vīmaṃsaka) Deva,daha Sutta** (S 22.2):  
 “For the wise, avuso, are people who investigate [who are inquisitive]” (*paṇḍitā hi āvuso manussā vīmaṃsakā*) (S 22.2/3:6), SD 35.6.  
 This is the most general sense of the word, referring to our being inquisitive, especially an eagerness to learn.
- (2) An investigator of formations (*saṅkhāra, vīmaṃsaka*), as in **the Bahu,dhātuka Sutta** (M 115):  
 “Ānanda, when a monk is skilled in the elements, skilled in the sense-bases, skilled in dependent arising, and skilled in the possible and the impossible—to that extent, Ānanda, a monk is called wise, an investigator.” (*Yato kho ānanda bhikkhu dhātu, kusalo ca hoti āyatana, kusalo ca hoti, paṭicca, samuppāda, kusalo ca hoti, thānāṭṭhāna, kusalo ca hoti, ettāvata kho ānanda, paṇḍito bhikkhu vīmaṃsako ti alaṃ vacanāya*) (M 115,3/3:62), SD 29.1a.  
 Here the investigation is focused more on the teachings regarding the nature of our being, our conditioned reality.
- (3) An investigator of the Teacher (*satthu, vīmaṃsaka*), as here in **the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta** (M 47,6).  
 (MA 2:378)

From such an analysis [2.1-2], we can safely say that the word “investigator” (*vīmaṃsaka*) is not only a wise person (*paṇḍita*) but also a meditator. For, the purpose of such an investigation of the teacher is not an intellectual one or merely to ascertain the Buddha’s or a teacher’s “status,” but that we are being taught or guided by a morally virtuous, spiritually competent and patiently compassionate teacher who is able to inspire us to walk the path to awakening.

### **2.3 SAMANNESANĀ AND RELATED WORDS**

Let us look at the key statement that reads:

The Tathagata, bhikkhus, should be examined (*samannesanā kātabbā*)<sup>24</sup> by a monk, an investigator ... (*Vīmaṃsakena, bhikkhave, bhikkhunā ... tathāgate samannesanā kātabbā*) [§2]

We see here the phrase “should make an investigation” (*samannesanā kātabba*) [§2] (rather an awkward construction) and the simpler “should be examined” (*samanesitabba*) [§4] acting as the verbs for the agent noun, “investigator” (*vīmaṃsaka*). A more appropriate (and simpler) word here would be *vīmaṃsati* or *parivīmaṃsati* [2.1]. It hints of a process of *psychologization*<sup>25</sup> of the teachings, that is, towards an Abhidhamma trend [4].

Having said that, we should note that the key word, ***samannesanā*** (“inquiring, examining, investigating”)<sup>26</sup> is an important one. Its verb is ***samannesati*** or *samanvesati* (“he seeks, looks for, searches, exam-

<sup>24</sup> The key word, ***samannesanā*** (“inquiring, examining, investigating”) has its verb as ***samannesati*** or *samanvesati* (“he seeks, looks for, searches, examines, investigates”), which comes from *saṃ* (“together”) + *anvesati* (ie, *anu* + *esati*, “he seeks after or repeatedly”). The abstract n *samannesanā* is also the key word of **Caṅkī S** (M 95,20/-2:173) + SD 21.15 (1.3.2).

<sup>25</sup> Psychologization is a process of investigating or explaining mental states in systematic sets (such as locating the mind “base” as being in the physical heart) and measured categories (such as the numbering of thought-moments). Character profiling is also done in terms of individuals (as in the “personality types”) rather than behavioural tendencies, as often laid out in the early texts. Psychologized methods may be helpful in modern counselling, but early sutta methodology is, as a rule, simpler (less theoretical) and more *problem*-orientated rather than being *person*-oriented.

<sup>26</sup> BHS *samanveṣanā*, “search” (Mvyut 7278).

ines, investigates”), which comes from *sam* (“together”) + *anvesati* (ie, *anu*, “along, following, after”<sup>27</sup> + *esati*, “he seeks,” from *viṣ*, to seek, desire),<sup>28</sup> meaning “he seeks after or repeatedly or consistently.”<sup>29</sup>

From all this, we gather that *samannesanā* means a thorough (*anu*-) inner (*sam*-) inquiry (*esanā*) regarding a state, object or person before oneself. On the other hand, a near-synonym, *pariyesanā* or *pariyesana* (*pari*, denoting completion or fulfillment, “all around” + *y*, sandhi infix, + *esanā*, “search, quest”),<sup>30</sup> and its verb *pariyesati* (BHS *paryeṣate*), “he investigates,”<sup>31</sup> denotes a sustained outer search, that is, noticing what is lacking in ourselves, we seek “outside,” as it were (eg, from other teachers or methods) for answers or liberation.

### 3 The investigative seeker

#### 3.1 THE INVESTIGATOR’S FAITH

The *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta* closes with the declaration of *the unshakable faith* of the disciple who investigates the moral virtue of the Buddha,

Bhikshus, whose faith in the Tathagata is certain, well rooted, established, in these ways, these sentences, these words—

this, bhikshus, is called faith with a good cause, rooted in vision, firm. It is immovable [invincible] by any recluse or brahmin, or deva [god] or Māra or Brahmā [God] or by anyone in the world. [§16]

The Commentary on **the *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta*** (M 47) states that such an investigative disciple would attain to streamwinning (MA 2:389). Two possible reasons for this are that the *Sutta* describes this disciple’s faith as being “rooted in vision” (*dassana, mūlika*), and secondly, that he is faith-rooted [§16].

Similarly, in **the *Uṇṇābha Sutta*** (S 48.42), the commentator is not comfortable with the likelihood of *a layman attaining non-return* (despite the *Sutta*’s allusion to this effect). In the case of the *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta* (M 47), however, the attainment of the disciple (in this case, a monk), the commentator surmises, must be streamwinning (MA 2:389).

#### 3.2 HOW DO WE PROPERLY INVESTIGATE A TEACHER?

**3.2.1 The *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta*** (M 47) exhorts us to investigate the moral and spiritual worth of our teachers so that we would truly benefit from *spiritual friendship*<sup>32</sup> with them. Far from being summary judges of people, we are exhorted to mindfully and compassionately examine their conduct and moral virtue over a period of time. We should check out the following:

<sup>27</sup> The prefix *anu*- as the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of a prefix-cpd is found only here, as *sam+anu*- (PED, sv *anu*<sup>1</sup>).

<sup>28</sup> Geiger, *A Pāli Grammar*, rev ed, 2000 §54.5.

<sup>29</sup> The abstract n *samannesanā* is also the key word of **Caṅkī S** (M 95), where it is mentioned in detail (M 95,20-/2:173) + SD 21.15 (1.3.2). On *samannesanā*, see Pematatana 2004: §2.2.1 (56-67).

<sup>30</sup> (*~nā*, f) D 2:58, 61, 280 twofold, *sevitabba* (worthy of accepting) and *sevitabba* (not to be associated with), 3:289; M 1:161 twofold, *ariya* (noble) and *anariya* (ignoble); A 1:68 (*kāma*~), 93, 2:247 (id); S 1:143, 2:144, 171, 3:29, 4:8 f *assāda* (gratification) and *ādinava* (danger, disadvantage); (*~na*, nt) Nm 262; DhA 1:76, 3:256.

<sup>31</sup> 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*.

<sup>32</sup> See **Spiritual friendship: A textual study**, SD 34.1.

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|--|-------|
| (1) Do we see or hear of “defiled states” in that teacher?                       | [§4]  |
| (2) Do we see or hear of “mixed states” (inconsistencies) in that teacher?       | [§5]  |
| (3) Do we see or hear of “purified states” in that teacher, or not?              | [§6]  |
| (4) Is his wholesome attainment (spiritual quality) sustained or only temporary? | [§7]  |
| (5) Has fame and honour negatively affected him?                                 | [§8]  |
| (6) Is his conduct motivated by fear or by having overcome lust?                 | [§9]  |
| (7) Is his good conduct consistent whether he is with others or in solitude?     | [§10] |
| (8) He should confirm all this with the Buddha (or the teacher) himself.         | [§11] |

Since we do not have mind-reading powers, our investigations need to be based on personal observation and the testimonies of others [§4]. This investigation is done with “the eye and the ear,” that is, by way of what is *seen* or visually evident of the teacher’s conduct, and what is *heard* or from his teachings and the way he speaks. Details on how to do this are found in such texts as **the Jaṭṭha Sutta** (S 3.11) and **the Thāna Sutta** (A 4.192).<sup>33</sup> **The Rūpa Sutta** (A 4.65) warns us against “measuring” a teacher by way of charisma (that is, by his looks, voice or austerity), but to gauge him in terms of the Dharma.<sup>34</sup>

**3.2.2 The Kesa,puttiya Sutta** (A 3.65), however, reminds us of the inadequacies of *sense-based* sources of knowing, and of knowledge based on *logic and intellectual efforts*. In other words, to some extent we need to reserve any kind of judgement, but keep on observing patterns of behaviour of the teacher (or anyone, for that matter), until we are very certain of them. Furthermore, how we come to this certainty and how we respond to it depend very much on our own level of wisdom, compassion and practice.

Clearly, if a teacher is consistently immoral or unwise, we should avoid him. However, the situation is never an easy one, as we tend to measure others by way of our own conditionings and biases: in short, we tend to be attracted to teachers who are a reflection of ourselves or fulfill our lack. As such, some proper understanding of the Dharma (especially the suttas) and the Vinaya are vital here. Our grasp of the Dharma and Vinaya should guide our investigations with some wisdom and faith.

Moreover, we need to keep up cultivating our own moral virtue, and our mindfulness and meditation practices, so that we have a calm and clear mind in our investigations. With such a mind, we can also be better prepared to ask useful questions of the teachers, and to better understand their teachings and conduct. Above all, *our own practice* will in due course become *our own true teacher*, that is, the Dharma becomes our one true refuge.<sup>35</sup>

### 3.3 HOW DO WE KNOW A TEACHER IS AWAKENED?

**3.3.1** An important result of a successful investigation of a Dharma teacher is that it inspires *wise faith* in the investigator [§14]. Colin Edwards takes this arising of firm faith in the Dharma as “standing in contrast,” that is, incongruent, even opposed, to the idea that early Buddhism advocates freedom of thought (2008:235). However, it is clear from the sutta that such faith conduces to the attaining of streamwinning, as affirmed by the Buddha who calls it “faith with a good cause, rooted in vision.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Respectively, S 3.11/1:78 f (= U 6.2/65 f), SD 14.11 & A 4.192/2:187-190 @ SD 14.12.

<sup>34</sup> A 4.65/2:71; Pug 4.22/7 (*māṭṭikā*); explained in Pug 4.22/53 f; PugA 229 f; cfA 2:70; SnA 242; DhA 3:113 f. See **The teacher or the teaching**, SD 3.14(7). On the relationship of *measures* (*pamāṇa*) to *conceit* (*māna*), see **Pubba Sambodha S 1** (S 35.13), SD 14.9 (3) & **Me: The problems of conceit**, SD 19.2a (3.5).

<sup>35</sup> See **Garava S** (S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3; **Uruvelā S 1** (A 4.21/2:20 f).

<sup>36</sup> *Ākāra, vatī saddhā dassana, mūlikā dalhā*, see §16n.

**3.3.2 Analayo** explains that the “wise faith” passage [§14] points to the inner certitude that comes with the attainment of streamwinning. He quotes a phrase from a related passage in **the Kosambiya Sutta** (M 48), which says that we could “through direct knowledge, come to a certainty [conclusion] about a teaching” (*abhiññāya idh’ekaccam dhammam, dhamme niṭṭham gacchati*, M 48,14/1:319 f). The commentary on it says, “on account of direct knowledge in some Dharma-realization, he comes to a certainty in realizing the Dharma in a Dharma teaching by way of that direct knowledge” (*ekaccam paṭivedha, dhammam abhiññāya tena abhiññātena paṭivedha, dhammena desanā, dhamme niṭṭham gacchati* (MA 2:388,9). Its subcommentary (*ṭīkā*) explains *paṭivedha, dhammam abhiññāya* as “having understood with the wisdom of the path” (*magga, paññāya jānitvā*).<sup>37</sup> All this is possible, says Analayo,

as a stream-enterer would know for certain that the one who taught him or her must also be awakened (and by implication that the teachings received must have the potential of leading to awakening). This certainly does not contradict the principle of freedom of thought evident in the remainder of the discourse’s recommendation to freely query the teacher’s claim to being awakened, but is only the final product arrived at through a process of free inquiry, which has resulted in confidence in the one whose teachings have led the stream-enterer to realization.

(2010/13 n20)

**3.3.3** Just as some might set a thief to catch a thief, on the positive side, it takes a wise person to see the wisdom in another. We must say that only when we have attained at least to the level of a streamwinner that we can be truly certain of another’s spiritual attainment, at least of streamwinning itself.<sup>38</sup> A streamwinner is like a thirsty person who has reached a well and is able to see the water in it, but he lacks the means to draw water. He would also probably see others too, like him, at the well, and it is a matter of time that they are all quenched and rested.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.4 PERSONAL VERIFICATION

**3.4.1** On a somewhat technical level, it can be said that the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta (M 47) is about personal verification of religious truth, leading to *spiritual liberation*. When we have fully investigated the teacher as laid out in the Sutta, understandably a certain level of faith (*saddhā*) would arise in us. This faith should then move us to practise the teachings for ourselves.

However, we only attain the full fruit of this faith when we have personally verified for ourselves the teachings’ efficacy. The best way that the Dharma is verified is undeniably by our attaining to the path, especially arhathood. When this spiritual distinction is attained, that faith blossoms into liberating insight, or at least insight wisdom, in the case of the “learner” (*sekha*) saints (that is, the streamwinners, the once-returners, the non-returners, and the arhat-to-be). In the case of at least two great disciples, one a monk and the other a layman, we see a paradoxical turn of language when this transformation has been attained.

**3.4.2 The Pubba Koṭṭhaka Sutta** (S 48.44) is a simple but important discourse about how Sāriputta, *on account of his wisdom* realizes the liberating truth for himself, and declares: “I am one, bhante, for whom

<sup>37</sup> MAṬ:Be 2:303.

<sup>38</sup> See **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5), where a saint of the same type is able to be compatibly impartial to one another, ie, clearly know that the other’s mind is free from the biases of greed, hate, delusion and fear. Of course, it goes without saying that a saint of a higher attainment is able to unilaterally know this of any other saint of a lower level (A 9.5.4/4:364), SD 2.21.

<sup>39</sup> This parable is my own, slightly modified from the one given in **(Musīla Narada) Kosambī S** (S 12.68), which actually refers to a non-returned (S 12.68/2:115-118), SD 70.11. See the well looking parable in SD 30.3(2.1.1).

this is known, seen, understood, realized, touched by *wisdom*—I have no uncertainty, no doubt, about” the 5 faculties (that is, those of faith, of effort, of mindfulness, of concentration, of wisdom).<sup>40</sup> Through this realization, he *also gains wise faith* in the teacher (the Buddha, and also the 3 jewels as a whole). The word “**touched**” (*phusitaṃ*) here refers to Sāriputta’s *personal verification* of the truth of the teaching.

**3.4.3** Another classic example of personal verification (and a humorous one, too) is that of Citta the householder, as recorded in **the Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta Sutta** (S 41.8). When Nigaṇṭha Nāta,putta asks Citta about a point of meditation, Citta replies, “In this matter, bhante, I do not go by faith in the Blessed One ... .” Nāta,putta misconstrues this, thinking that Citta actually has *no* faith in the Buddha, and proudly declares his misconception before his assembly! Citta then explains that he knows this for a fact by personal verification so that he does not *need* to have faith in the Buddha to know this!<sup>41</sup>

**3.4.4** In fact, a person who awakens on account of personal verification is highly acclaimed as “the supreme person” (*uttama, purisa*), in what is perhaps the most cryptic of the Dhammapada verses (Dh 97), *cryptic*, that is, to those who lack understanding in the importance of personal verification in Buddhist training. **Dh 97** declares that “the faithless one” (*asaddha*) is “the supreme person,” or that “the supreme person is *without* faith!”<sup>42</sup> The negative statement here does not have the ordinary sense, but is a wordplay meaning that it is *not through faith*, but through wisdom, that he has attained that state. Technically, this kind of statement is said to be an **apophasis**, that is, the use of *negative language* to express a transcendental truth or reality, such as awakening or nirvana.<sup>43</sup>

**3.4.5** An apophatic statement sees nirvana as ineffable and attempts to describe it in terms of what it is *not*. **Apophasis** refers to the *transcendence* of nirvana in this context, as opposed, loosely speaking, to **cataphasis**, referring to *immanence* of consciousness.<sup>44</sup> It is important to note that “immanent” here refers to “this” world of the senses and virtual realities, while “transcendence” refers to the supramundane state that is ineffable that we can only be “touched” by personal experience.<sup>45</sup>

Since such a realization of the truth is not an external investment (such as the certification of Zen enlightenment) or cognitive faith through grace (as in word-based God-centred religions and Pure Land Buddhism), but *an internal or personal experience and realization*, this experience-based faith is real and unshakable.

**3.4.6** **The student’s investigation** can be summarized as follows:

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| (1) “comprehensive range of investigation of the teacher,”                                 | [§§2-9]   |
| (2) “personal verification of their efficacy.”   | [§10]     |
| (3) “put the teaching to the test,”  | [§§11-13] |
| (4) “the investigation has yielded an initial degree of confidence ( <i>saddhā</i> ),” and | [§§14-16] |

Here Analayo concludes:

<sup>40</sup> S 48.44/5:220-222 (SD 10.7).

<sup>41</sup> S 41.8/4:298-300 (SD 40a.7).

<sup>42</sup> See **Dh 97: The two levels of religious language**, SD 10.6; cf Dh 383.

<sup>43</sup> See **Notion of *ditṭhi***, SD 40a.1 (6.3).

<sup>44</sup> See Johansson 1969 (on nirvana and western psychology), esp ch 11 (34-43); D’Amato 2008.

<sup>45</sup> **Dh 97: The two levels of religious language**, SD 10.6.

The thorough testing advocated in these four steps<sup>46</sup> clearly shows that in early Buddhist thought the principle of free inquiry was invested with remarkable importance. In sum, in early Buddhist thought—in the way this is reflected in the discourses preserved in the Pāli *Nikāyas* and the Chinese *Āgamas*—the scope of free inquiry is such that the teacher and founder of the tradition himself can become an object of rather searching type of scrutiny and examination by a prospective disciple. (Analayo 2010/18)

## 4 Is the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta late?

### 4.1 CHANGE OF REFERENCE

From the Sutta’s opening up till §6 (M 1:318,22), the monk (as narrated by the Buddha) refers to the Buddha as “Tathagata,” but from §7 (M 1:318,25) onwards, refers to him as “this venerable one,” *ayam āyasmā* [1.2.3]. The Chinese **MĀ 186** is more consistent in this respect, since there the monk throughout refers to the Buddha as “this venerable one,” 彼尊者 *bǐ zūnzhě* (Analayo 2011:292 n133).

This switch in the person addressed—from “Tathagata” to “this venerable one”—is very significant, as it suggests that these investigations should be done with other monastics, too. Of course, it is also possible that §§6-7 could have been interpolated. Any such interpolation, however, would still work in the same way, reinforcing the main purpose of the Sutta’s thesis (as found in its older sections):<sup>47</sup> the teacher should be an authentic one.

### 4.2 WORDS LOST AND RARE

#### 4.2.1 Samāpanna

Another significant point is apparent from a comparative study of the sutta. **Analayo**, in his Nikāya-Agama study, refers to this passage:

‘Has this venerable one attained to this wholesome state for a long time, or has he attained it for a short while [temporarily]?’ [§7]

and points out that its Chinese translation reads: 為長夜行此法, 為暫行 *wéi cháng yè xíng cǐ fǎ, wéi zàn xíng* (MĀ 186 = T1.731b19). Here, he says, the use of 行 *xíng* does not seem to be just a free translation of an equivalent to the Pali *samāpanna*, since other occurrences of the verb *samāpajjati* or its participle *samāpanna* in Majjhima have their counterparts in 入 *rù* or 得 *dé* in their MĀ parallels. This suggests, he concludes,<sup>48</sup> that the original on which the translation of MĀ 186 was based had a different verb at this point of its exposition.<sup>49</sup> However, from the present texts and research, it is impossible to say what this Pali word should have been.

<sup>46</sup> In Analayo’s list, he puts reason 4 as (2).

<sup>47</sup> It is possible that the sutta started off with an ancient core, but new materials were added to it, that is, before the canon was closed.

<sup>48</sup> **Analayo** 2011:292 n135. Cf M 43/1:296,12: *samāpanno* and MĀ 210 = T1.789a11: 入 *rù*; M 50/1:333,24: *samāpannaṃ* and MĀ 131 = T1.620c22: 入; M 79/2:37,26: *samāpajjati* and MĀ 208 = T1.786a16: 得 *dé*; M 106/2:262,15: *samāpajjati* and MĀ 75 = T1.542b22: 得; M 136/3:207,14: *samāpanno* and MĀ 171 = T1.706b22: 入.

<sup>49</sup> Hirakawa 1997:1043 lists a broad range of possible equivalents to 行 *xíng*, which, however, does not comprise *samāpad*; cf also Zacchetti 2005a: 245 n27, 322 n29 and 339 n75 on the use of 行 by Dharmarakṣa.

### 4.2.2 Large urbanized communities

This point of vocabulary does not in itself suggest that the sutta is late, except perhaps the possibility of a transmission error. The point, however, remains that there is here a concern of authenticating the Buddha or a teacher. This may suggest that the text was compiled at a time when the monastic community was large, settled and widespread, so that the Buddha was not always present in the far-flung monastic communities.

This is broadly hinted at with such allusions as to the teacher's "gaining fame" and becoming charismatic [§8], and to the monks "dwelling in a community, or is dwelling alone, while some there are well behaved or some are ill behaved" [§10]. This is further supported by the earlier remark that the Buddha "had gained his attainment" (*samāpanna*) for a time long since (*dīgha, ratta*) [§7].

All this probably point to a period after the first twenty years of his ministry, when there were "more training-rules but fewer monks established in final knowledge [become arhats]," as stated in **the Saddhamma Paṭirūpaka Sutta** (S 16.13).<sup>50</sup> As the Buddhist monastic communities became larger, more widespread and more urbanized (that is more settled), they needed to be better organized, and this is part of efforts to systematize such burgeoning communities with a set of criteria for authenticating teachers.

### 4.2.3 Vinodāta

In §6, we see the word *vinodāta*, "purified or cleansed," or more fully, *vodātā dhammā*, "purified states," describing the Buddha's conduct. The word *vodāta* (from *vi-*, intensifier, + *odāta*, "clean, white") is rare, and in the suttas, it seems to be found only here in the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta, and in metric form as in the Sutta Nipāta, as *avivadātā* (Sn 784) and *vivadātā* (Sn 881), but is common in the Commentaries.<sup>51</sup>

The usual words for "pure" would be *suddha*, "pure, clean, perfect,"<sup>52</sup> or *parisuddha*, "thoroughly pure, clean, perfect."<sup>53</sup> Their respective opposites are *asuddha*, "impure, unclean"<sup>54</sup> and *aparisuddha*, "utterly unclean, impure."<sup>55</sup> Another common pair of words related to purity of states and persons are *asaṅkiliṭṭha*, "undefiled, untarnished"<sup>56</sup> and *saṅkiliṭṭha*, "defiled, tarnished."<sup>57</sup> Their noun, *kilesa*, "defilement," is very common.<sup>58</sup>

Such forms as *vodāta* suggest that at least that particular sentence or section is late. If such late forms are found throughout the sutta, then it is very likely to be a late text. Much of the key words of the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta, some of which we have examined here, suggests that it is likely to be a late text.

<sup>50</sup> S 16.13/2:222: see SD 1.10(5.3).

<sup>51</sup> It is found in a number of comys (MA 2:381; SnA 2:555 ×2; NmA 2:361). However, it is common as cpds in the canonical comy, Mahā Niddesa: ~*dassana* (Nm 1:96, 2:289, 327), ~*dassī* (Nm 1:96), ~*paññā* (Nm 2:289), ~*magga* (Nm 2:300, 324), ~*vāda* (Nm 2:327).

<sup>52</sup> (Ethical & psychological) M 1:39; Dh 125, 412; Sn 90.

<sup>53</sup> V 2:237; M 1:26, 3:11; S 2: 199, 3:235, 5:301, 354; A 3:125, 4:120 f; J 1:265; Pug 28

<sup>54</sup> V 1:5 = M 1:168; V 3:166; S 1:79; Nm 448.

<sup>55</sup> V 2:236; M 1:17.

<sup>56</sup> A 2:248, 3:124, 126; Dhs p6, 1153. ~*citta* (said of persons) D 1:247; M 1:25; A 1:192 f.

<sup>57</sup> D 1:247; M 1:163, 318 f, 2:258; S 2:271; A 3:124, 5:169; Dh 244; J 2:418; Pv 4.1.23.

<sup>58</sup> An afflicting, defiling passion, esp lust: V 3:92; S 5:24 = A 5:232, 253 = Dh 88; A 2:6; Sn 348; Tha 67; Nm 386; J 1:305.

### 4.3 PSYCHOLOGIZING TREND?

#### 4.3.1 *Viññānāya*

A final point observed that suggests lateness is that there is a hint towards *psychologization*, that is, towards an Abhidhamma trend. This is clearly suggested by the Abhidhamma form, *viññāṇāya* (“so that he knows”) [§2], literally, “for the sake of knowing ... ,” which the Commentary glosses so, as *vijānan’atthāya* (MA 2:378). This is probably one of the rare places in the suttas where *viññāṇa* is used in this late sense, “knowing,” rather than the usual sense of “consciousness.”

The word in the same late sense appears as *dhamma,viññāṇa* (Tha 1020), translated as “expert in the Dharma” by K R Norman.<sup>59</sup> The Thera,gāthā commentary glosses: “What is referred to as *dhamma,viññāṇa* is Dharma-knowledge” (*dhamma,viññāṇa,sankhataṃ dhamma,ñāṇaṃ*, ThaA 3:118). This is clearly a post-canonical usage of *viññāṇa*.

In fact, in post-canonical works (and non-Buddhist literature), *viññāṇa* can have the sense of “(practical or applied) knowledge (as opposed to *jñāna* (Skt), theoretical knowledge),” a sense attested by Monier Williams (Sanskrit-English Dictionary: *vijñāna*) and Edgerton (Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary, id).

Then there is the verbal phrase, “should make an investigation” (*samannesanā kātabba*) [§2] (rather an awkward construction), as there is also the simpler verb form, “should be examined” (*samanesitabba*) [§4], both referring to the action of the agent noun, “investigator” (*vīmaṃsaka*). In fact, the more appropriate and simpler verbs here (with practically the same sense as these two) would be *vīmaṃsati* or *parivīmaṃsati* [2.1].

#### 4.3.2 *Bhayūparata abhayūparata*

**4.3.2.1** Another famous pair of late terms found in the *Vīmaṃsaka Sutta* are found here in this description of the Buddha:

“This venerable one is *neither* restrained for fear, *nor* is this venerable one restrained by fear. He indulges not in sense-pleasures on account of *being lust-free by having destroyed it*.”<sup>60</sup>  
*Abhayūparato ayam-āyasmā, nāyam-āyasmā bhayūparato*. [§9-10]

The 2 terms are *bhayūparata* and *abhayūparata*. The compound *bhayūparata* comes from *bhaya* (“fear, danger”) and *uparata* (“abstaining”). The adjective *uparata* (past participle of *uparamati*, “he becomes quiet; he dies”) has the following ranges of senses: “quiet, calm, abstaining; ceased, stopped, dead.” But in *bhayūparata* and *abhayūparata*, it means “abstaining (from evil), restrained (in faculties).”<sup>61</sup>

**4.3.2.2** The Commentaries explain that **the worldling** has 4 fears or dangers (*bhaya*), that is, they are faced with the following [4.3.2.4]:

<sup>59</sup> See also Tha:N 266 n1030.

<sup>60</sup> Comy: **The worldling** has 4 fears or dangers (*bhaya*), ie, those of defilements (*kilesa,bhaya*), of the samsaric cycle (*vaṭṭa,bhaya*), of suffering states (*duggati,bhaya*), and of criticism (*upavāda,bhaya*); and **the learner** (*sekha*) only 3, ie, excluding the fear of suffering states; but there is not a single fear for **one with influxes are destroyed** (the arhat). The learners, as such, practise restraint out of fear, while the arhats practise without any fear. (MA 2:385; PugA 184 (12)).

<sup>61</sup> “Restrained,” *uparata* (pp of *uparamati*), (1) (here) having ceased, desisting from (V 1:245 *rattūparata*, “abstaining from food at night” = *ratti,bhojanato uparata*, DA 1:77; D 1:5; M 1:319; Sn 914); (2) ceased, extinguished died (Miln 96, 97, 307).

(1) the danger of defilements,	<i>kilesa, bhaya</i>
(2) the danger of the samsaric cycle,	<i>vaṭṭa, bhaya</i>
(3) the danger [fear] of the suffering states, and	<i>duggati, bhaya</i>
(4) the danger [fear] of criticism.	<i>upavāda, bhaya</i>

**The learner** (*sekha*)—the streamwinner, the once-returner and the non-returner—fear only 3 dangers, that is, excluding (3) the danger of suffering states. As for **the one with influxes are destroyed** (the arhat), however, he has not fear whatsoever since he is full freed from samsara. The learners, as such, still practise moral restraint out of fear, while the arhats practise without any fear. (MA 2:385; PugA 184 (12)).

**4.3.2.3** The phrase in §9.2, “This venerable one is *neither* restrained for fear, *nor* is this venerable one restrained by fear” (*abhayūparato ayam-āyasmā, nāyam-āyasmā bhayūparato,*) needs some explanation. The **chiasmus** (a mirrored rhetorical device)<sup>62</sup> of the Pali is difficult to be shown in an English translation, but this “neither-nor correlative sentence” gives us some sense of aesthetical teaching:

“This venerable one is *neither* restrained for fear, *nor* is this venerable one restrained by fear.”

“**Neither restrained for fear**” means the arhats (like the Buddha) are not morally virtuous (keeping the precepts, virtuous in conduct, etc), because of the fear of punishment by some external agency, or merely out of fear for the karmic consequences of one’s actions, either of which they would be cast into the subhuman suffering states.

Seeing only purity of body and speech or karmic purity may turn out to be a ritual practice perhaps to look pure before others (and thus attract charisma for themselves). Or that the moral practice is seen as a goal in itself. The training in moral virtue has a higher purpose: that of mental cultivation.

“**Nor ... restrained by fear**” means that the arhats are morally restrained not merely by the “rule of law” without understanding its higher purpose. They are *fully* and *naturally* restrained by the spirit of the Vinaya: they respect and understand the nature of renunciation (that of letting go, of non-attachment) and its goal (that of attaining the path of nirvana).

Hence, they are not restrained *by* fear of breaking the precepts but rather because they are inspired by the love (a wholehearted commitment) for the Dharma and others, the unawakened, that they, too, would live moral lives. Hence, neither the fear or danger of defilements, nor of the samsaric cycle arise in the arhats (including the Buddha). [4.3.2.2]

**4.3.2.4** Apparently, this pair of words is found only in two places in the Pali canon, that is, here in the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta, and in the Puggala Paññatti, an Abhidhamma work. **The Puggala Paññatti** explains these two terms as follows: [4.3.2.2]

The 7 learners and the morally virtuous worldling are *restrained on account of fear*. The arhat [worthy one] is restrained *without fear*.

*Satta sekhā bhayūparatā ye ca puthujjanā sīlavanto. Arahā abhayūparato.* (Pug 1.11-12/13)

Since this pair of terms is found only in the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta, and with other supporting evidence that it is a late sutta, it is very likely that the terms have been taken from **the Puggala Paññatti**. The importance of these two terms is evinced by the fact that it is found in the Abhidhamma Māṭikā or matrix, a summary list of key mental states, that is, the key ideas of the Abhidhamma.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> On chiasmus, see SD 55.12a (5).++

<sup>63</sup> See the VRI CD under Abhidhammamāṭikāpāḷi, VRI 263, Be 344.

#### 4.4 MEANING OF “LATE”

**4.4.1** When we say that a sutta is “late,” we do not necessarily mean that it is in any way less authentic, or even spurious. This is certainly not the case with the Vīmaṃsaka Sutta, where the purpose of the discourse is very clear: *we need to carefully check out or authenticate a teacher, monastic or lay*. If there is a need for such an authentication, it is obvious that there were or are false or incompetent teachers around. This is likely to occur when the sangha has grown large, become more settled and urbanized. The monasteries then would be prosperous and more “socially engaged” (in the sense to having to service large lay followings).

This is a time when there would be teachers who are purely “academic” in their Dharma learning (often reflected in the “venerable doctors” of our own times), but lacking in moral virtue, meditative depth and spiritual authenticity.<sup>64</sup> Or they appear “professional” (in the modern monetary sense), with merely an impressive veneer of titles, dressing, and add-ons clouded by an air or aura of control, superiority, and social distance.

**4.4.2** There are a large number of discourses, prophetic in tone, warning of the dangers of monastics in large, settled, urbanized monasteries engaged in worldly pursuits and goaded on by material priorities. Such an urgency can be sensed in this remark by the Buddha to Mahā Kassapa, as recorded in **the Ovāda Sutta 3** (S 16.8), thus:

Now, it is the monk who is well known and famous, one who gains robes, almsfood, lodgings and medical requisites, that the elder monks invite to a seat, saying: “Come, bhikshu. What is this monk’s name? This is an excellent monk. This monk is keen on the company of his brothers in the holy life. Come, bhikshu, here’s a seat, sit down.” Then, the newly ordained monks will also strive to emulate him, and that leads to their harm and suffering for a long time.

S 6.18/2:208-210 (SD 1.10)<sup>65</sup>

**4.4.3 The Anāgata Bhaya Sutta 3** (A 5.79), probably reflecting a historical situation in early Buddhist times, lists the following shortcomings of such false teachers and monastics, thus:

- (1) They *ordain* others but are unable to give them higher training, and such a lineage continues.
- (2) *The training and tutelage* they give are ineffective, and these continue in the lineage.
- (3) *They lecture on the Dharma* without any understanding, falling into “dark dharmas.”
- (4) *They neglect the Buddha Word* and promote secular learning [S 2:266 f].
- (5) They are *luxurious*, lax, backsliders, not valuing solitude (they enjoy socializing).

A 5.79/3:105-108 @ SD 1.10(3.3); cf S 2:266 f.

In fact, such monastics are practically no different from the laity as they accept and use money, and indulge in sensual pleasures. One main difference is perhaps that they have more money than an average lay devotee, and enjoy *better* physical benefits, leisure and indulgences, such as owning the latest and very sophisticated electronic devices, watches and handphones, enjoying pastime (like playing cricket, or badminton, or swimming) and are often inappropriately close with the laity.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> See eg, (**Dhamma.yogī Jhāyī**) **Mahā Cunda S** (A 6.46/3:355 f), SD 4.6; also L S Cousins 2009.

<sup>65</sup> See also **Sugata Vinaya S** (A 4.160/2:147-149), SD 1.10(3.5).

<sup>66</sup> See **Money and monastics**, SD 4.19.

Discourses such as the Vīmaṃsa Sutta, even though they are late texts, are valuable in reminding us to carefully re-assess in whom we place our faith and vision, whether in a person or in the Dharma.<sup>67</sup> They remind us that we should avoid false gurus: for, if we patronize them, we are only adding to the sure demise of the Dharma.<sup>68</sup> Much as we listen to others, the bottom line is that we have to make a Dharma-island of ourselves as expressly exhorted by the Buddha in his first and last teachings.<sup>69</sup>

## 5 Pali terms related to “desire”

We will here examine some key Pali terms related to desire to understand their similarities, differences, and how they are related. This will help us better understand the terms “**lust**” (*rāga*) and “**sensual pleasures**” (*kāma*) [§9.2], and also such terms as they are found in the suttas.

### 5.1 LOBHA

#### 5.1.1 Lobha, rāga, dosa, moha

**5.1.1.1** In the latter half of the ancient **Uraga Sutta**, the discourse on the snake (Sn 1.1), the very first discourse of the Sutta Nipāta, we see each of the terms *lobha*, *raga*, *dosa* and *moha* used in their respective verses (Sn 10-13). These 4 are template verses: they recur in the same format, each with one of these 4 terms as the verse’s keyword, thus:

*Yo n’āccasārī<sup>70</sup> na paccasārī  
sabbam vitatham idan ti **vita,lobho**  
[vita,rāgo | vita,doso | vita,moho]  
so bhikkhu jahāti ora,param  
urago jīṇṇam iva tacam purānam*

One who neither runs too far nor runs back,  
greed-free (knowing): This is all unreal—  
[lust-free | hate-free ] delusion-free]  
that monk abandons the here and the beyond  
like a snake its old worn-out skin.

(Sn 10-13/2)

The sequence—*lobha*, *raga*, *dosa* and *moha*—is significant. The follow verse (**Sn 14**) goes on to say: “for whom there is no latent tendencies at all” (*yassānusayā na santi keci*), “whose unwholesome roots are uprooted” (*mūlā akusalā samuhatāse*) ... (the last 2 lines are identical). This is an ancient set of defilements where apparently the unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*) and the latent tendencies (*anusaya*) have not been differentiated, except by degree of darkness (that is, its power to drive us to do evil).

**5.1.1.2** The Sn Commentary (Paramattha,jotikā 2) defines the 4 key terms—*lobha*, *raga*, *dosa* and *moha*—as follows:

“Here, **greed** (*lobha*) is the power of greediness (*lubbhana.vasena*), an all-embracing term for the 1<sup>st</sup> unwholesome root, or it is disharmonious [unrighteous] greed, of which it is said [**Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja Sutta**, S 35.127]:

<sup>67</sup> See further **The teacher or the teaching**, SD 3.14.

<sup>68</sup> See **Dharma-ending age**, SD 1.10.

<sup>69</sup> **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16/2:101 = 3:58, 77; S 3:42, 5:154, 163, 164), SD 9; **Gāraḥ S** (S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3.

<sup>70</sup> *Nāccasārī* (Sn 8a-13a) = *na* (not) + **acc-asārī** (does not run, *nātidhavati*, SnA 22,14). *Acc-asārī* is 3 aor sg of *atisarati*, “to go too far or beyond,” which figuratively can also mean either to overlook or ignore, or to transgress [DP: atisarati]. **Paccasārī** = 3 aor sg of *paṭi-sarati*: “has gone back; has gone the other way” [DP sv]. See Brough Dh.G 1962:201-204; K R Norman, *Group of Discourses*, 2001:151 (n8); B Levman, *Linguistic Ambiguities*, 2014:336-342; D T Jones, “That bhikkhu lets go both the near and the far shores,” 2016:96-103; Sn:B 1367 f (n308).

‘Come now, bhikshus,  
 towards those old enough to be your mother,           mentally regard them as your mother;  
 towards those old enough to be your sister,           mentally regard them as your sister;  
 towards those young enough to be your daughter,   mentally regard them as your daughter.’<sup>71</sup>

**Lust** (*rāga*) is a term for the lust for the 5 cords of sense-pleasures [5.4.2.2].

**Hate** (*dosa*) is a term for anger ... .

**Delusion** is a term for lack of understanding of the 4 noble truths.” (SnA 22,12-20)

Although **greed** (*lobha*) is sometimes defined in the Commentaries in terms of **lust** (*rāga*) and **covetousness** (*abhijjhā*),<sup>72</sup> this is to show their generic connection; however, *lobha* functions as *an unwholesome root*. The sequence of the terms also hints at their severity: *lobha* is listed first since it is the most common, arising on the preconscious, so that we are often aware of it. *Rāga* (lust) is listed next since it is a stronger form of greed, but is a latent tendency; hence, hardly noticeable even when present.

**Hate** is listed next: it is the *opposite* of both greed and lust; hence, hate is always present when either greed or lust is present.<sup>73</sup> The unwholesome root that is **delusion** is listed last because it is the most difficult to notice, even on a preconscious level. Yet, it is a more “visible” form of **ignorance** (*avijjā*), its darker counterpart as a latent tendency.

**5.1.1.3** Elsewhere in the suttas—such as **the (Kamma) Nidāna Sutta** (A 3.33) and **the Channa Paribbājaka Sutta** (A 3.71)—only 3 of them are listed as “**the 3 unwholesome roots**” (*akusala mūla*) of greed, hate and delusions, and, conversely, as “**the 3 wholesome roots**” (*kusala mūla*) of non-greed, non-hate and non-delusion, that is, charity, lovingkindness and wisdom.<sup>74</sup>

Ethically, the 3 unwholesome roots motivate and fuel our actions (*kamma*) through the 3 doors of body, speech and mind. Since they occur at the “preconscious” level [5.4.3.2], we are actually **aware** of them. However, when we are not **mindful** of their deleterious effects, or we are morally weak, then, by their dark **latent tendency** (*anusaya*) drives us into unwholesome actions and habits. Every time we act unwholesomely, we reinforce that unwholesome root.

On the conscious level, we can and must apply **the moral precepts** (*sīla*) or training rules (*sikkhāpada*) to prevent the unwholesome roots from fruiting into negative karma of body, speech or mind. However, on a deeper level lurk the latent tendencies, which can only be weakened, and ultimately uprooted, with **mental training** (*citta, sikkhā*), that is, with meditation and mental development, which strengthens us to weaken and overcome the powers of the senses, that is, **sensuality** (*kāma*) [5.4.3.4].

**5.1.1.4** The Buddha’s teachings train us **to see here and now** (*sandiṭṭhika*), and to notice **the directly visible** (*sandiṭṭhika*) states, that is, the **unwholesome roots** as they arise in us. We see the greed, or the hate, or the delusion for what it really is, and that it is present in our own actions, speech or mind. Not attending to any of these unwholesome roots, we abandon them. We then joyfully notice that they are no more present in it.

Similarly, we notice states that are subject to greed (*lobha, dhamma*), or subject to hate (*dosa, dhamma*), or subject to delusion, that is, any of our actions, speech or thought that has been tinged with

<sup>71</sup> S 35.127,4/4:110 f (SD 27.6a(2.4)).

<sup>72</sup> Eg, “**Lobha** is greed, being greedy, a state of greediness, being with lust, lustfulness, a state of lustfulness, covetousness, greed that is a wholesome root” (**Lobhāti yo lobho lubbhanā lubbhitattā sarāgo sārājjana sārājjitattam abhijjhā lobho akusala, mūlam**, Nm 2:261).

<sup>73</sup> As a latent tendency, **hate** is called **repulsion** (*paṭigha*), showing its greater power. [5.4.1.1]

<sup>74</sup> **A 3.33**/1:134-136 (SD 4.14 (1)); **A 3.71**/1:215-217 (SD 18.10).

greed, or hate, or delusion. We pay no heed to them, and then notice the absence of greed, hate, delusion in them.<sup>75</sup>

## 5.2 RĀGA

### 5.2.1 *Rāga, taṇhā, abhijjhā*

**5.2.1.1** The terms *lobha*, *raga*, *taṇhā* and *abhijjhā* are often used as synonyms in the suttas. Hence, we cannot really say that they are “technical terms” (tt), that is, terms with fixed meanings. Strictly speaking, there are technical terms are rare in the suttas but more common in the Abhidhamma, the Commentaries and later works.

The reason is simple: the suttas often describe our actions and speech in mental terms. The stress is on a **psychology** of our bodily and verbal conduct. Such habits are motivated by our mind through the 3 unwholesome roots [5.1.1], which are, in turn, fed by the latent tendencies [5.4.1.1]. Many of these terms are used in different ways and means that describe the mind, how it works, and manifests itself through our action and speech. Hence, they often overlap in very significant ways that we cannot really separate them: they are all interrelated, working at various levels of intensity.

**5.2.1.2** When we examine the text (*anuvyañjana*), words, sentences, passages, we need to understand **their context** (*attha*).<sup>76</sup> We often have to discern their meanings (*neyy’attha*),<sup>77</sup> especially when the text is expressed in conventional terms (*sammuti*),<sup>78</sup> that is, by way of worldly language, figures of speech, stories, and so on. In essence, this explains **the rule of context** (or contextuality). [5.4.0.1]

One of the difficulties with early Buddhism, especially concerning mental training, meditation and insight, is that of communicating **our experience**, or rather Buddhism as experience. Very often, when we speak of “experience” in religion, even Buddhism (as sectarian religion), we are referring to our own construction of what we view or understand as who or what a teacher or his teaching is: we are talking about psychological projections.<sup>79</sup>

When we speak of **Buddhist experience** as insight, we can only express the details and nature of our own acts and thoughts through speech, words and symbols. Then, the listener or audience make out, in their own terms, what all this means. The sutta teachings and meditations taught by the Buddha are the “middle ground,” the only real environment where we can truly experience for ourself *here and now* what we really are.

This is **the principle of higher context** where we make sense of things, true reality, as we directly experience them. This is the “here and now” of true insight, such as that taught by the Buddha in **the Sandiṭṭhika Sutta 1** (A 6.47) [5.1.1.4]. This the experiential meaning of the statement that the Buddha Dharma is for us to “come and see” (*ehi,passika*). Only when we arrive in the teaching, through practising it to gain personal insight, that we “see” true reality.

<sup>75</sup> **Sandiṭṭhika S 1** (A 6.47), SD 94.16.

<sup>76</sup> On *attha* as “meaning,” see SD 17.4 (2.3).

<sup>77</sup> See **Neyy’attha Nī’tattha Sutta** (A 2.3.5+6), SD 2.6b.

<sup>78</sup> See the 2 kinds of **desanā** (teachings), esp in ABhidhamma: (1) conventional teaching (*sammuti desanā*) and (2) ultimate teaching (*parama’ttha desanā*): **Anaṅgana S** (M 5,2) n on “persons,” SD 37.7; SD 2.17 (1.1.2); SD 38.3 (5.7.2.2).

<sup>79</sup> For details, see **Rhetoric of Buddhist experience and meditation**, SD 60.1c.

## 5.2.2 Wrong contexts

**5.2.2.1** We will here look at a few more words related to desire but used in other contexts. We will start with the term *taṇhā* (literally, “thirst”), “craving,” an ancient sutta term, when paired with *avijjā*, “ignorance,” form the deadly duo of “ignorance and craving,” the twin roots of suffering. While ignorance represents the 1<sup>st</sup> noble truth (ignorance as the root of suffering), craving is at the root of the 2<sup>nd</sup> noble truth, from which suffering arises. It is thus said that “lame” craving is carried around by “blind” ignorance who dictates craving where to go and what to do!

**5.2.2.2 Ignorance** can be imagined to be our inability to see rightly. Hence, in our blindness, we fail to make sense of things: we are driven on by **craving**, that is, projecting what we *like or dislike* onto the objects of our experiences. Hence, we crave for the perceived pleasures in our experiences, and crave to be free from the perceived displeasures in them. Essentially, this is **the sensual craving** (*kāma, taṇhā*) mentioned in **the Dhamma, cakka Pavattana** (S 56.11,6).

If sensual craving is the thirst to “**have**,” then, the 2<sup>nd</sup> kind of craving, **the craving for existence** (*bhava, taṇhā*) is the craving to “**be**,” to live, to be this and that, to have status and power, to be titled and entitled. However, when these things suddenly don’t seem to work out, we realize they are really worthless or false, but lacking wisdom, we are unable to see this.

Thus, we turn to the opposite extreme—to *non-being*—as a perceived solution or way out. We think that by “ending it all” we can overcome suffering: this is **the craving for non-existence** (*vibhava, taṇhā*). Life, however, does not end with death: we are caught in the samsaric loop of rebirths. We simply keep re-living our past, our memories, our tendencies. The only way we can break this vicious cycle is by overcoming ignorance, by seeing things as they really are. By rightly understanding the 4 noble truths, we break out of the samsaric cycle and attain nirvana.

In summary, then, here are the 3 kinds of craving:

- |                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) sensual craving           | <i>kāma, taṇha</i>    |
| (2) craving for existence     | <i>bhava, taṇhā</i>   |
| (3) craving for non-existence | <i>vibhava, taṇha</i> |

(S 56.11,6 = Mv 1.6.20 (SD 1.1); A 3:445; Vbh 365; SD 53.38 (1.2.3))

**5.2.2.3** An important synonym for *taṇhā* (craving) is *raga*, “lust” [5.1.1.2]. If the *taṇhā* of the 3 kinds of craving is psychological, explaining our mental attitude towards life and things, then, *raga* reflects our existential craving that fetter us to samsara, cyclic existence. In fact, **lust** forms 3 of **the 10 fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*) of samsaric life, that is, fetters (4), (6) and (7), thus:<sup>80</sup>

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| (1) self-identity view                 | <i>sakkāya, diṭṭhi</i>        |
| (2) spiritual doubt                    | <i>vicikicchā</i>             |
| (3) attachment to rituals and vows     | <i>sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa</i> |
| (4) <b>sensual lust</b>                | <i>kāma, rāga</i>             |
| (5) aversion                           | <i>paṭigha</i>                |
| (6) <b>lust for form existence</b>     | <i>rūpa, rāga</i>             |
| (7) <b>lust for formless existence</b> | <i>arūpa, rāga</i>            |
| (8) conceit                            | <i>māna</i>                   |
| (9) restlessness                       | <i>uddhacca</i>               |

<sup>80</sup> Note that “greed: (*lobha*), the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 3 unwholesome roots, is not mentioned here, since they apply mostly to the sense-world beings. The subtler but more powerful “lust” (*rāga*) is what fetters us beyond the sense world, to the form and the formless worlds.

(10) ignorance

*avijjā*(See SD 56.1 (4.4) for details)<sup>81</sup>

Breaking free from the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 fetters makes us **streamwinners**, meaning that we have reached the path of awakening, and have 7 more lives at most before attaining arhathood. When we are able to significantly weaken the unwholesome roots of greed and hate [5.1.1.1], we become **once-returns**. This is actually the same as weakening fetter (4+5).

Fetters (1-5) are called the “lower fetters” (*orāma, bhāgiya saṃyojana*) because they fetter us to the sense world (which we now exist in). The last 5, fetters (6-10), are the “higher fetters,” so called because they fetter us to the form world and the formless world. **The non-returns** have broken all the 5 lower fetters, while **the arhats** have abandoned all the 10 fetters.

**5.2.2.4** Now we come to the least common of the terms related to desire we have been discussing, that is: **covetousness** (*abhijjhā*). It is a synonym for **greed** (*lobha*) as an unwholesome root [5.1.1.1] and **craving** (*taṇhā*) [5.2.2.1]. It is the 8<sup>th</sup> factor in the 10 unwholesome courses of karma (*akusala kamma, -patha*): (1) killing, (2) stealing, (3) sexual misconduct, (4) false speech, (5) malicious speech, (6) harsh speech, (7) frivolous chatter, (8) **covetousness**, (9) ill will, (10) wrong views.<sup>82</sup>

Although **covetousness**—as desiring what others have—occurs by itself as the 8<sup>th</sup> of the 10 unwholesome courses of karma, it also plays an important role twinning with its opposite as “**covetousness and displeasure**” (*abhijjhā, domanassa*),<sup>83</sup> famously featured in the sutta passages on meditation.<sup>84</sup> In fact, it is a shorthand (synecdoche) for the **5 mental hindrances** (*pañca nīvaraṇa*),<sup>85</sup> overcoming which we attain the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, the basis of all the higher dhyanas.

A term related to *abhijjhā, domanassa*, but stressing on the *desire* aspect is **abhijjhā-visama, lobha**, “covetousness and rampant greed”: the “rampant greed” suggest a sense of urgency to crave for things, to cling to them in desperation.<sup>86</sup> The wholesome opposite of all this seems to be **vigat’ābhijjho vigata, -vyāpādo**, “free from covetousness and from ill will.”<sup>87</sup>

## 5.3 CHANDA

### 5.3.1 Chanda as “intention”

**5.3.1.1** As an ethically neutral term, *chanda* means “intention” (*cetanā*), especially as “concentrated intention,” and is, according to Abhidhamma, one of the mental factors (*cetasika*).<sup>88</sup> Its moral quality is determined by the nature of the intention associated with it. For example, **kāma, raga**, “sensual lust” [5.4.3.2] and **kāma-c, chanda**, “lustful desire” [5.4.3.4], are negative terms.

*Chanda*, as a neutral term, is explained by the Commentaries as “a wish to act or do” (*kattu, kamyatā, chanda*).<sup>89</sup> This “will to act” gives us an impression that we are able to act freely, as we like; that we

<sup>81</sup> See also SD 10.16 (1.6.6-8); SD 11.1 (5.1.4); SD 3.3 (2).

<sup>82</sup> See **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,7-10), SD 5.7; **Sañcetanika S** (A 10.206,1-7), SD 3.9.

<sup>83</sup> *Abhijjhā, domanassa* lit. means “desire and sorrow”: (**Assāda**) **Pubbe Sambodha S** (A 3.101) + SD 14.6 (1.2).

<sup>84</sup> See **Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna S** (D 22,13), SD 13.2; **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,36), SD 13.3; **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118,24.2), SD 7.13; **Mahā Assa, pura S** (M 39,13), SD 39.13; SD 13.1 (4.2).

<sup>85</sup> **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1 (2.1).

<sup>86</sup> See **Vatthūpama S** (M 7,3), SD 28.12; (**Anuruddha**) **Upakkilesa S** (M 128,27 + 30), SD 5.18; SD 32.1 (3.1.1); SD 31.7 (7.1).

<sup>87</sup> See **Kara, ja, kāya Brahma, vihāra S** (A 10.208,1.3), SD 2.10.

<sup>88</sup> See BDict Table II.

<sup>89</sup> DA 2:641; MA 1:140; SA 3:255; AA 3:412; DhsA 303.

have “free will.” However, the reality is that, more often, we are likely to be driven by our “old habits,” that is, we are being dictated by our latent tendencies. When we turn to the Dharma to cultivate our body and speech (keeping the precepts), then we are more likely to be able to train the mind, too, so that we can free it in due course.

**5.3.1.2 Adhipati** is an Abhidhamma term; it first appears in the Paṭṭhāna (the last book of the Abhidhamma and the Tipiṭaka), as one of the 24 “supports” (*paccaya*). A *paccaya* is a condition upon which a state is dependent on for its arising, and without which the latter would not arise or would cease to be. **The Paṭṭhāna** enumerate and explain these 24 conditions, and then appiles them to every conceivable mental and physical state, showing their conditioned nature.<sup>90</sup>

Teachings related to the term *adhipati* is, however, found in the suttas, such as the 4 paths of success (*iddhi, pāda*) [5.3.1.3]. The best know related teaching is that of the threefold **ādhipateyya** (sometimes wrongly spelt as *adhipateyya*) “dominance or supremacy,” but figuratively means “priorities.” This teaching is explained in **the Ādhipateyya Sutta** (A 3.40), as relating having proper priorities in life, and ensuring what each priority entails in a wholesome sense. The 3 priorities are: self-priority (*attādhipateyya*), world as priority (*lokādhipateyya*) and Dharma (the true good) as priority (*dhammādhipateyya*).<sup>91</sup>

**Self-priority** is basically taking oneself as “refuge,” giving priority to self-respect, self-cultivation and self-understanding. Hence, it means making wholesome effort (guided by moral shame and moral fear);<sup>92</sup> training the mind through cultivating lovingkindness and impermanence; and seeing impermanence within oneself and how it relates to everything in life.

**World-priority** is “other supremacy” is respect for others, including the environment. This is the extension of lovingkindness to others; showing compassion to those who are suffering and uplifting them; rejoicing in the goodness and happiness of others (learning from them); and looking on with even-mindedness (equanimity) at the vicissitudes of the world (gain and loss, fame and obscurity, blame and praise, and joy and pain).<sup>93</sup>

**Dharma-priority** is the “supremacy of truth (*dhamma*),” that is, respect for the Dharma as the true teaching and true reality. Basically, this priority is that of learning from every situation; even seeing beyond people and things: seeing how conditions work in presenting situations and their meanings. In this connection, it is significant to understand what it means to always put the teaching above the teacher.<sup>94</sup>

**5.3.1.3** When *chanda* is intensified in our mind, it acts as a “predominance condition” (*adhipati*), the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 24 “supports.”<sup>95</sup> It is of 2 types: object-predominance (*ārammaṇa, paccaya*) and co-nascence predominance (*sahajāta, paccaya*). The former, **the object-predominance**, is an extension of the object-condition, where it refers to an object, which, as conditioning state, dominates the mental states that it takes as their object. In this case, only those objects that have a strong appeal to us can become the conditioning state, because of the dominating influence they have on the mind.

In the latter, **the co-nascence-predominance**, refers to a relation where the conditioning state has a dominant influence on the conditioned states, that arise together with it. The conditioning states in this

<sup>90</sup> The Siamese Tipiṭaka devotes the last 6 large volumes to the Paṭṭhāna, while the Burmese canon, 5 volumes. See BDict: *paccaya*.

<sup>91</sup> **Ādhipateyya S** (A 3.40), SD 27.3; also SD 19.13 (2.5).

<sup>92</sup> Moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*): **Moral shame and moral fear** (SD 2.5).

<sup>93</sup> “World-priority” includes the practice of the 4 divine abodes (*brahma, vihāra*) [SD 38.5]. On the 8 worldly winds (*loka, dhamma*), see **Loka, dhamma Ss 1+2** (A 8,5+6), SD 42.2+3.

<sup>94</sup> On **The teacher or the teaching?** SD 3.14 esp (14).

<sup>95</sup> For an intro: Karunadasa, *The Theravāda Abhidhamma*, 2010:262-281 (ch 18).

relation are: (1) concentrated intention (*chanda*),<sup>96</sup> (2) effort (*virīya*), (3) mind (*citta*), and (4) investigation (*vīmaṃsā*). They are commonly known as the “4 paths of success” (*iddhi,pāda*).<sup>97</sup>

In a single mind-moment, however, only one of these 4 factors can activate as a condition.<sup>98</sup> The Paṭṭhāna states that “Whenever such phenomena as consciousness and mental factor are arising by giving predominance to one of these 4, then, this phenomenon is for the other phenomena a condition by way of predominance.”<sup>99</sup>

It will be seen that in the former, the object-predominance, the condition is always an object of consciousness. Thus, the condition as object can belong to the past, present or future. On the other hand, for the latter, the co-nascent-predominance, the condition and what is conditioned thereby are always co-nascent. For here the reference is not to an object of consciousness but to consciousness itself and 3 mental factors, namely, concentrated intention, effort and investigation.<sup>100</sup>

## 5.4 KĀMA

### 5.4.0 The 3 important senses of *kāma* [SD 55.17 (2.1.1.2) n]

**5.4.0.1** The term *kāma* has 3 important senses: the subjective, the objective, and the sense-based. Basically, *kāma* (1) is objective sensuality, that is, the 5 physical sense-objects, that is, “external” objects over which we have no control, but we tend to project our views and perceptions onto them. [5.4.1]

*Kāma* (2) [5.4.2] denotes either subjective sensuality or sense-desire or objective sensuality, the 5 physical sense-objects [5.4.1]. This is not always easy to discern, but comes with a better understanding of the suttas and our proper Dharma practice.<sup>101</sup> The rule of contextuality applies here.<sup>102</sup> [5.2.1.2]

**5.4.0.2** Sense-based *kāma* has 2 important interrelated senses: broadly, (1) the nature of our existence, that is, of the sense-world (*kāma,loka*) and sense-existence (*kāma,bhava*). In the Abhidhamma and the Commentaries, we also see the terms “sense-sphere” (*kāmācavara*) and “sense-base” (*kām'-āyatana*).<sup>103</sup>

(2) Sense-objects (sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches) are morally “neutral,” in the sense that they are neither good nor bad in themselves. This is famously stated by the Buddha in **the Nibbedhika (Pariyāya) Sutta** (A 6.6.3), that there is “no sensuality in what is beautiful in the world,” and that good and bad are all in our own mind, our perception of these objects.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>96</sup> On the will, will power: SD 17.6 (9.4) n; SD 56.17 (9.1.1.1) (1).

<sup>97</sup> The 4 paths of success (*iddhi,pāda*): see esp (**Iddhi,pāda**) **Pubba S** (S 51.11) + SD 10.3; also SD 57.22 (1.2.39).

<sup>98</sup> Abhs:BRS 316 f.

<sup>99</sup> Beginning with the case for “form” (*rūpa*): **Adhipatipaccayo** ti *chandādhīpati chanda,sampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ taṃ,samuṭṭhānānaṃ ca rūpānaṃ adhipati,paccayena paccayo*. **Vīriyādhīpati** *vīriya,sampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ taṃ,samuṭṭhānānaṃ ca rūpānaṃ adhipati,paccayena paccayo*. **Cittādhīpati** *citta,sampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ taṃ,samuṭṭhānānaṃ ca rūpānaṃ adhipati,paccayena paccayo*. **Vīmaṃsādhīpati** *vīmaṃsa,sampayuttakānaṃ dhammānaṃ taṃ,samuṭṭhānānaṃ ca rūpānaṃ adhipati,paccayena paccayo*.

*Yaṃ yaṃ dhammaṃ garuṃ katvā ye ye dhammā uppajjanti citta,cetasikā dhammā, te te dhammā tesāṃ tesāṃ dhammānaṃ adhipati,paccayena paccayo*. (Paṭ:Be 1.1). For tr: Paṭ:Nar 2 f.

<sup>100</sup> Abhs id. See Karunadasa op cit 267.

<sup>101</sup> See SD 32.2 (1.2.2).

<sup>102</sup> On the rule of context or contextuality: SD 6.11 (2.1.2); SD 53.5 (4.2.3); SD 54.3b (2.3.2.3).

<sup>103</sup> On *-avacara*, see SD 17.8a (5.2); SD 39.1 (1.4); on *āyatana*, see SD 17.8a (11.2).

<sup>104</sup> A 6.63,3.4 (SD 6.11); **Na Santi S** (S 103\*/1:34,6) SD 42.6.

### 5.4.1 Kāma (1) subjective sensuality

**5.4.1.1 Subjective sensuality** refers to the 5 physical senses (*pañc'indriya*)<sup>105</sup> and their nature, that is, we tend to be attracted to what we *subjectively* perceive as pleasant, to reject what we see as unpleasant, and to ignore what we are unable to discern as pleasant or unpleasant. This psychological aspect of subjective sensuality is projected by the mind (where all the subjectivity arises) and, in turn, feeds the latent tendencies (*anusaya*)<sup>106</sup> of lust (*rāga*), repulsion (*paṭigha*) and ignorance (*avijjā*) [5.1.1.1].

**5.4.1.2** Subjective sensuality, then, refers to either our **sense-desire** (*kāma-c, chanda*) [5.3.1.1] or **sensual lust** (*kāma, rāga*) [5.4.3.2]. These are defilements (*kilesa, kāma*) as contrasted with the sense-objects (*vatthu, kāma*) that are attended to.<sup>107</sup> Joy and happiness (*pīti, sukha*) arise when we are able to let go of these sense-desires, that is, we are (at least momentarily) free from the powers of our physical senses. This teaching on letting go of sense-desire is given, for example, in **the (Mahānāma) Gilāyana Sutta** (S 55.54).<sup>108</sup>

### 5.4.2 Kāma (2) objective sensuality

**5.4.2.1** Technically, the 2<sup>nd</sup> sense of *kāma* is the objects of sense-desire (*vatthu, kāma*). Epistemologically (in terms of how we know things), objective sensuality refers to *what* we can know. **The Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), for example, records the Buddha as stating that “the all” (*sabba*) comprises the 6 sense-bases (the 5 senses + the mind) and their respective objects.<sup>109</sup>

These “objects” (*dhamma*) are those of sense-desire when we project our views onto them [5.4.1]; or, they are simply “objects” when we see them just as they are [5.4.2.3]. With Dharma-training, we learn to see these sense-objects as being impermanent; hence, unsatisfactory; and as such, they are non-self, without any essence. We have no “control” over them, meaning that we cannot really *identify* with them as “I”; nor *measure* them as “me” (against others as having or being); nor really *own* them (a “mine”).

**5.4.2.2** When we “sense” or experience things without mindfulness or wisdom—we do not see them as being impermanent, and miss the significance of this vision [5.4.2.1]—then, we are drawn to them and bound by them. Thus, these sense-objects become **the 5 cords of sensuality** (*pañca kāma, gūṇa*),<sup>110</sup> the 5 sense-objects regarded as attractive and captivating [5.1.1.2]. The word *gūṇa* is polysemic [DP sv gūṇa], and here can mean either “a strand, string, cord” (V 1:182,36) by which we are bound to them; or once we are bound by any of them, we will keep seeking more of it, with a “multiplying” effect (Pv 36.9) of being overwhelmed and shackled by them.<sup>111</sup>

### 5.4.3 Kāma (3) sensuality

**5.4.3.1** An important specific sense of *kāma* has **ethical** significance, that is, as “sexuality.” We can only discern this usage from its context, such as in the phrase, *kāmesu, micchā.cārā*, “misconduct in sex-

<sup>105</sup> This set [SD 17.2a (9.2)] should not be confused with “the 5 faculties” (*pañc'indriya*) of faith (*saddhā*), effort (*virīya*), mindfulness (*sati*), concentration (*samādhi*) and wisdom (*paññā*) [SD 10.4; SD 3.6 (3); SD 54.3h (3.1)].

<sup>106</sup> On the latent tendencies, see *Anusaya*, SD 31.3 esp (8.2).

<sup>107</sup> See SD 4.7 (1.3); SD 38.4 (3.1.2); SD 41.4 (2.3.1).

<sup>108</sup> S 55.54,6-9 (SD 4.10).

<sup>109</sup> S 35.23/4:15 (SD 7.1).

<sup>110</sup> See SD 32.2 (1.2.2).

<sup>111</sup> See eg, *Nibbāna, sukha S* (A 9.34), SD 91.5.

uality.”<sup>112</sup> Its best known occurrence is, of course, as the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 5 precepts, which are the practical essence of natural morality.<sup>113</sup>

This should not be misconstrued that “sex is evil,” but rather that it entails a sense of restraint out of respect for others by not violating their person, and to practise *love, compassion and responsibility* in our affairs with others. Even those who observe only the 5 precepts are able to attain the path as streamwinners and once-returners.<sup>114</sup> Hence, it is not necessary for us to attain dhyana to gain our first step on the path.<sup>115</sup>

**5.4.3.2 The Mahā Vaccha,gotta Sutta** (M 73), in fact, specifically mentions such laity who “enjoy sensual pleasures” (*kāma,bhogī*) within the purview of the 5 precepts, as being noble disciples (that is, as streamwinners and once-returners).<sup>116</sup> This is where it helps for us to understand the subtle difference between existential **greed** (*lobha*), as the first of the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala,mūla*), and **lust** (*rāga*), as one of the latent tendencies [5.4.1.1].

Theoretically, “greed” (*lobha*) works on a preconscious level [5.1.1.3], initiating or influencing our actions, but when we are mindful, we are able to restrain ourself or act wholesomely. In other words, a wholesome or mindful person has a significant degree of self-control in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, including sex.<sup>117</sup>

The suttas tell us that the once-returner has weakened the 3 unwholesome roots: greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*) and delusion (*moha*).<sup>118</sup> There is no mention of lust (*rāga*), which is only uprooted by the non-returner<sup>119</sup> and, of course, the arhat. *Lobha*, after all, is a weaker form of *raga*, which is more deeply rooted as a latent tendency. [5.4.1.1].

**5.4.3.3** If we are not on the path yet (that is, as worldlings), when we are unmindful, **lust** (*rāga*) is likely to rise up from the depths of our latent tendencies and overwhelm us, making us lose control of ourself and break the 3<sup>rd</sup> precept.<sup>120</sup> We may be able to restrain ourself from the dictates of *lobha*, and move on; but *raga* still lurks in the depths of our unconscious as the latent tendencies. However, its immediate effects or influence may be averted by the proper keeping of the moral precepts, especially as the basis for mental training, that is, meditation.

Hence, there is the precept against any kind of sexual activity, personal or interpersonal, especially for monastics, who have freely taken up the vow of **celibacy** (*brahma,cariya*) as part of their monastic training. Again here, the reason is simply because sexuality is the very root of samsara (the cycle of rebirths and redeaths). Moreover, sexual behaviour entails responsibility for our partner and family; a true monastic, as a renunciant, has given up family life, socializing and worldliness.

**The Alagaddūpama Sutta** (M 22) is a key text wherein the Buddha clearly states that sexuality is a sure stumbling-block, a hindrance, to the monastic life.<sup>121</sup> The monastic “higher training” (*adhisikkhā*)

<sup>112</sup> See SD 32.2 (3).

<sup>113</sup> Natural moral (*pakati sīla*) refers to universal morality, one that is karmically potent, applying to all sentient beings: contrasted with conventional morality (*sammuti,sīla*): SD 30.8 (8.4.2.2); SD 37.8 (2); SD 40a.1 (13.2); or with prescribed morality (*paññatti,sīla*), such as that of the Vinaya rules: SD 56.1 (4.2.1.4).

<sup>114</sup> See SD 4.9 (1.2).

<sup>115</sup> On dhyana being unnecessary for attaining streamwinning or once-returning, see SD 3.3 (0.3); SD 8.5 (2); SD 23.6 (2).

<sup>116</sup> M 73,10/1:491 (SD 27.4); SD 54.9 (4.2).

<sup>117</sup> On the preconscious, see SD 17.8b, esp (1.1.2; 2.2); SD 7.10 (3.3).

<sup>118</sup> See **(Sekha) Uddesa S** (A 3.86), SD 80.13; **Sa,upādi,sesa S** (A 9.12/4:380 f), SD 3.3(3); SD 10.16 (12.1.2.1).

<sup>119</sup> See SD 10.16 (1.6.7.1); SD 23.16 (1.1) n.

<sup>120</sup> On lust (*kāma,raga*), see SD 6.11 (2). For an overview, see **Sexuality**, SD 31.7.

<sup>121</sup> M 22,1-9 (SD 3.13).

comprises the higher morality (entailing complete celibacy), the higher mind (the attaining of dhyana) and the higher wisdom (attaining the path). In short, a monastic who has mastered dhyana will enjoy profound mental pleasures that far surpass those of sexuality. Further, the purpose of such mental attainment is to facilitate the direct seeing into true reality for attaining nirvana.<sup>122</sup>

**5.4.3.4** The subject of *kāma*—sensuality, desire and related topics—is a broad and vital one in early Buddhism. We have here only touched on some key points that we should know and understand. *Kāma* features in many other early Buddhist teachings, of which we here list the main ones that we should study carefully for a better understanding of the teachings and greater progress in our personal practice.

*āsava*, mental influxes: the 3 influxes, SD 30.3 (1.3.2); SD 4.25 (5); SD 50.12 (2.5.2) ; SD 55.9 (1.3.2.5) ; the 4 influxes, D 16,10.4 n (SD 9); SD 70.18 (2.4.1 n).

*upādāna*, clinging, especially in connection with the 5 aggregates of clinging:

(*pañc'upādāna-k,khandha*)

SD 17.1a (2)

*kāma*: polysemy:

SD 6.11 (2)

*kāma-c,chanda*, sensual desire, one of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*):

SD 32.1

*kāma,tanḥā*, sensual craving, one of the 3 cravings (*tanḥā*):

SD 53.38 (1.2.3)

*kāma,raga*, sensual lust, as one of the 10 fetters (*dasa saṃyojana*):

SD 10.16 (1.6.7 f)

*kāma,vitakka*, sensual thought, one of the 3 kinds of unwholesome thoughts

(*akusala,vitakka*):

S 14.12,2+9 (SD 29.8)

— — —

## Vīmaṃsaka Sutta

### The Discourse on the Investigator

M 47

1 Thus have I heard.

#### The investigative monk

1.2 At one time, the Blessed One was residing in Anātha,piṇḍika's monastery-park in Jeta's grove near Sāvathī.

There, the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Bhikshus!"

"Bhante," the monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

2 "The Tathagata, bhikshus, should be examined<sup>123</sup> by a monk, an investigator [one who is inquisitive],<sup>124</sup> *who does not know*<sup>125</sup> *how to read another's mind*<sup>126</sup>—so that he will know<sup>127</sup> whether the Blessed One is fully self-awakened or not."<sup>128</sup>

<sup>122</sup> On the necessity of dhyana for arhathood: SD 8.5 (2); SD 10.16 (1.5.1.6); SD 15.1 (13); SD 41.1 (2.2.2.4); SD 23.6 (4).

<sup>123</sup> "Should be examined," *samannesanā kātabbā*. The key word, *samannesanā* ("inquiring, examining, investigating") has its verb as *samannesati* or *samanvesati* ("he seeks, looks for, searches, examines, investigates"),

3 “Bhante, our teachings are rooted in the Blessed One, guided by the Blessed One, have the Blessed One as refuge. It would be good indeed if the Blessed One were to explain its meaning. Having heard the Blessed One, the monks would remember it.”<sup>129</sup>

3.2 “Then, listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, [318] I will speak.”

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

The Blessed One said this:

### How to investigate the Buddha

4 (1) “The Tathagata, bhikshus, should be examined<sup>130</sup> in 2 ways [regarding 2 states],<sup>131</sup> by a monk who is **an investigator** [who is inquisitive], who does *not* know how to read another’s mind, that is, states cognizable by the eye or by the ear,<sup>132</sup> thus:

‘Does he find **any defiled states** cognizable by **the eye** or by **the ear** in the Tathagata or not?’

4.2 When he investigates him thus, he comes to know thus:

‘Defiled states cognizable by the eye or by the ear are not found in the Tathagata.’

5 From investigating him, he knows thus,

‘Defiled states cognizable by the eye or by the ear are not found in the Tathagata.’

Thereupon, he investigates him further:

which comes from *sam* (“together”) + *anvesati* (ie, *anu* + *esati*, “he seeks after or repeatedly”). The abstract n *samannesanā* is also the key word of **Caṅkī S** (M 95,20/2:173) + SD 21.15 (1.3.2). See Intro (2.3).

<sup>124</sup> Comy says there are 3 kinds of investigators. Here an “investigator of the Teacher” is meant: see Intro (2.1).

<sup>125</sup> Be Ce *ajānantena*; only Ee has *ājānantena* (“with the knowing, or knowing”) clearly wr. The context clearly requires the negative *ajānantena* (*a*, “not” + *jānāti*, “he knows,” as neg participle), since the monk who is unable to directly know the Buddha’s mind that he is fully awakened must infer this from external means, such as his bodily and verbal conduct. See M:ÑB 1244 n482.

<sup>126</sup> “How to read another’s mind, *parassa ceto,pariyāyam*, also “the range of another’s mind.” Here, Comy glosses *pariyāya* as “turn, track (n)” (*vāra*) and “range, limit” (*pariccheda*) (MA 2:378).

<sup>127</sup> *Viññāṇāya*, lit “for the sake of knowing ...,” which Comy glosses so, as *vijānan’atthāya* (MA 2:378). See Intro (4.3.1).

<sup>128</sup> *Vīmaṃsakena, bhikkhave, bhikkhunā parassa ceto,pariyāyam ajānantena tathāgate samannesanā kātabbā sammā,sambuddho vā no vā” iti viññāṇāyā ti*. From the context, it appears that either this is a question (alt tr: “How, bhikhus, should the Tathagata be examined by a monk, an investigator, who does not know how to read another’s mind, so that he knows whether the Blessed One is fully self-awakened or not?”) or this statement is followed by a long statement eliciting a response from the audience (hence the monks’ request for teaching, §3). On *ajānantena*, see separate n above. The key word, **samannesanā** (“inquiring, examining, investigating”) has its verb as **samannesati** or **samanvesati** (“he seeks, looks for, searches, examines, investigates”), which comes from *sam* (“together”) + *anvesati* (ie, *anu* + *esati*, “he seeks after or repeatedly”). The abstract n *samannesanā* is also the key word of **Caṅkī S** (M 95,20/2:173) + SD 21.15 (1.3.2).

<sup>129</sup> *Bhagavam,mūlakā no bhante dhammā, bhagavaṃ nettikā, bhagavaṃ paṭisaraṇā. Sādhū vata bhante bhagavatañ-ñ’eva paṭibhātu etassa bhāsītassa attho. Bhagavato sutvā bhikkhū dhāressantī ti*. This is stock (M 1:309 f, 317, 465, 3:115; S 2:80 f; A 1:199, 4:158, 351, 5:355).

<sup>130</sup> “Should be examined,” *samannesitabbo*. See Intro (2.3).

<sup>131</sup> *Dve dhammesu*, lit “in 2 things,” ie, “by the eye or by the ear,” by observing or by listening, or both.

<sup>132</sup> *Cakkhu,sota,viññeyyā dhammā*. Comy: Here “states cognizable by the eye” refers to the Teacher’s bodily conduct (*kāyiko samācāro*), and states “cognizable by the ear” are the Teacher’s “verbal conduct” (*vācasiko samācāro*). From watching ripples and bubbles on the water surface, we can know that there is fish below; even so, when we can know that one’s defiled actions, such as killing and false speech, that his mind is defiled, too. (MA 2:380)

(2) ‘Does he find any **mixed states**<sup>133</sup> cognizable by **the eye** or by **the ear** in the Tathagata or not?’  
When he investigates him thus, he comes to know thus:  
‘Mixed states cognizable by the eye or by the ear are not found in the Tathagata.’

**6** From investigating him, he knows thus,  
‘Mixed states cognizable by the eye or by the ear are not found in the Tathagata.’  
Thereupon, he investigates him further:

(3) ‘Does he find any **purified [cleansed] states**<sup>134</sup> cognizable by **the eye** or by **the ear** in the Tathagata or not?’

When he investigates him thus, he comes to know thus:

‘Purified states cognizable by the eye or by the ear are found in the Tathagata.’

**7** From investigating him, he knows thus,  
‘Purified states cognizable by the eye or by the ear are found in the Tathagata.’  
Thereupon, he investigates him further:

(4) ‘Has this venerable one<sup>135</sup> attained<sup>136</sup> to this wholesome state for a long time, or has he attained it for a short while [momentarily]?<sup>137</sup>

When he investigates him thus, he knows thus:

‘This venerable one has attained to this wholesome state for a long time.

This venerable one has *not* attained it for a short while.’

**8** From investigating him, he knows thus,  
‘This venerable one has attained to this wholesome state for a long time. This venerable one has *not* attained it for a short while.’  
Thereupon, he investigates him further:

(5) ‘Has this venerable one **attained renown**, a monk who **has won fame**, so that **certain disadvantages** are found in him here?<sup>138</sup>

<sup>133</sup> “Mixed states,” *vītimissā dhammā*, Comy explains this as referring to conduct that is “sometimes dark (bad), sometimes white (good)” (*kāle kaṇhā kāle sukkā*) (MA 2:381). This refers to one who is in the task of purifying his conduct, sometimes does so, sometimes does not (MAṬ:Be 2:299). Comy (MA 2:381 f) qu **Arakkheyya S** (A 7.55), which states that the Buddha is purified in his bodily, verbal and mental conduct, and livelihood (A 7.55/4:82-84).

<sup>134</sup> “Purified [cleansed] states,” *vodātā dhammā*. See Intro (4.2.3).

<sup>135</sup> *Ayam-āyasmā*, “this venerable one.” See Intro (4.1).

<sup>136</sup> Bodhi’s sentence, “Has this venerable one attained this wholesome state over a long time or did he attain it recently?” is curious, as Analayo notes that *dīgha,rattam samāpanno ... udāhu ittara,samāpanno ti* (M 1:318,23) is explained by Comy to mean “since a long time ... or else ... yesterday” (MA 2:382,5), ie, not how long ago the Buddha had attained it, but whether he was practising consistently or only temporarily (**Analayo** 2011:292). See Intro (1.2.2) & (4.2.1).

<sup>137</sup> *Dīgha,rattam samāpanno ayam-āyasmā imam kusalam dhammam, udāhu ittara,samāpannō ti?* “A short while,” *ittara* (adj), sometimes misspelt as *itara*: (1) (Ved Skt *itvara*, “going, moving,” going along, (fig) passing), “fleeting, temporary, brief,” as meant here; opp “for a long time” (*dīgha,ratta*); (2) “limited, unreliable,” A 3:165 ~*pema*; Miln 93 *ittaratā*; (3) (BHS *itvara*, small, inferior, eg, ~ *dāna*, Divy 317) “low birth” (~*jacca*, M 2:47); A 2:34; Sn 757. See PED, CPD, DPL, BHSD sv. Comy explains as “since a very long time (Be Se *aticira,kālato*; Ee *cira,kālato*), or attained yesterday (*hiyyo*)” (MA 2:382), which however seems to miss the context, as even if one were awakened yesterday or today itself, that awakening is no different from being awakened decades ago. In fact, the Chinese version (based on a Prakrit text) reflects the Pali better: see Intro (1.2.2).

<sup>138</sup> *Ñatt’ajjhāpanno ayam-āyasmā bhikkhu yasa-p,patto, sarivijjantassa idh’ekacce ādīnavā ti?* Comy says that the advantages or dangers (*ādīnava*) here are “such as conceit and arrogance” (*mānātimānādayo*) (MA 2:384). The Chin version merely says that the Buddha’s practice of meditation is not motivated by the desire for fame or gain: 不為名

8.2 Bhikshus, certain disadvantages are *not* found in a monk as long as he has not attained to renown, not won fame.<sup>139</sup> But, bhikshus, when a monk has attained to renown, won fame, there are found certain disadvantages in him.<sup>140</sup>

8.3 When he investigates him thus, he knows thus:

‘This venerable one has attained renown, a monk who has *won fame*, but *no* disadvantages are found in him.’

9 From investigating him, he knows thus,

‘This venerable one has attained renown, [319] a monk who has won fame, but certain disadvantages are not found in him.’

Thereupon, he investigates him further:

(6) ‘Is this venerable one *restrained*<sup>141</sup> *for fear* [because of fear], or is he restrained *by fear*?<sup>142</sup>

9.2 Does he not indulge in sense-pleasures on account of **being lust-free** *by having destroyed it*?<sup>143</sup>  
When he investigates him thus, he knows thus:

This venerable one is *neither* restrained for fear, *nor* is this venerable one restrained by fear.

He indulges *not* in sense-pleasures on account of *being lust-free by having destroyed it*.<sup>144</sup> [§10.3]

## The Buddha is lust-free

10 And if, bhikshus, should that monk be asked by others, thus:

‘But what are the venerable one’s reasons, what are the evidence, that he speaks thus:

“*This venerable one restrains not on account of fear [free from fear]; this venerable one does not restrained on account of fear. He abstains from sense-pleasures on account of **being lust-free** by having destroyed it”?* [§9.2]

10.2 Bhikshus, the monk, answering rightly, would he answer thus:

‘Now, whether this venerable one is dwelling in a community or is dwelling alone,<sup>145</sup>

譽, 不為利義, 入此禪 *bù wèi míngyù, bù wèi lì yì, rù cǐ chán*. (MĀ 186 = T1.731b22). Here 義 *yì* is Skt *artha*, “meaning, purpose.” See “**Me**: The danger of conceit, SD 19.2a.

<sup>139</sup> Comy notes that a monk who has not become well known or attracted a large following faces no such dangers, but live very peacefully like a streamwinner or a once-returner; but who can know whether he is a noble saint or not? (MA 2:384).

<sup>140</sup> Comy notes that when a monk has become famous or gained a following, he would, like a fierce cow, with sharp horns, hurting others in the herd, or a leopard devouring a herd of deer, hurt other monks by not showing them respect or fellowship, wandering about as if treading on the ground with his forefoot (or toes) (MA 2:384). This is also an allusion to the monk being attributed with charisma: see **The teacher or the teaching?**, SD 3.14. The closing phrase, “wandering about ... etc,” is prob a figure for going about in a haughty manner (MAT:Be 2:301). Buddhaghosa notes that “one with a hating temperament walks as if he were digging with his forefoot, puts his foot down quickly, lifts it up quickly, dragging his feet (Vism 3.88/105; SnA 544).

<sup>141</sup> “Restrained,” *uparata* (pp of *uparamati*): see Intro (4.3.2).

<sup>142</sup> *Abhayūparato’ham asmi, nāham asmi bhayūparato*, lit, “I am one not restrained from fear, restrained from fear am I not ...” [4.3.2]. On the 4 kinds of fear, see Intro (4.3.2).

<sup>143</sup> *Abhayūparato ayam-āyasmā, nāyam-āyasmā bhayūparato, vīta,rāgattā kāme na sevati khayā rāgassā ti?* On “lust,” *raga* [5.2]; on “sensual pleasures,” *kāma* [5.4].

<sup>144</sup> On this above section, see Intro (3.2).

<sup>145</sup> Although many of the early monks led solitary lives, Comy here cites examples where the Buddha does so for only limited periods, eg, “Bhikshus, I wish to go into solitude for half a month” (*icchām’aham bhikkhave aḍḍha,mā-sarṃ paṭisallīyituṃ*, S 54.9/5:320); “I am going into a 3-month solitude” (*te,māsarṃ paṭisallīyituṃ*, S 5:325); and a solitary rains residence in Pārileyyaka forest (S 22.81/3:95). (MA 2:386)

there are those who teach a group, where some are well behaved, some ill behaved,<sup>146</sup> while some here are engaged in worldly things, some are untainted by worldly things, this venerable **one does not despise** any of them on that account.<sup>147</sup>

10.3 For I have heard this from the Blessed One himself, I have learned this before the Blessed One himself [from the Blessed One's own lips] thus:

*'I am neither restrained for fear nor am I restrained by fear. [§§9.2]*

*I indulge not in sense-pleasures on account of being lust-free by having destroyed it.'*<sup>148</sup>

## The Buddha has no defiled states

**11** Bhikshus, the Tathagata should indeed be further questioned, thus:

(1) 'Whatever **defiled** states there are cognizable through the eye or through the ear, are they to be found in the Tathagata, or not?'

The Tathagata, bhikshus, answering, would answer thus,<sup>149</sup>

'Whatever **defiled** states there are cognizable through the eye or through the ear, they are not found in the Tathagata.'

**12** (2) 'Whatever **mixed** states there are cognizable through *the eye* or through *the ear*, are they to be found in the Tathagata, or not?'

The Tathagata, bhikshus, answering, would answer thus,

'Whatever **mixed** states there are cognizable through the eye or through the ear, they are not found in the Tathagata.'

**13** (3) 'Whatever **purified** [cleansed] states there are cognizable through *the eye* or through *the ear*, are they to be found in the Tathagata, or not?'

The Tathagata, bhikshus, answering, would answer thus,

'Whatever **purified** states there are cognizable through the eye or through the ear, they are found in the Tathagata.'

This is my path, this is my pasture [resort],<sup>150</sup> and **I am not that** [I do not identify with them].<sup>151</sup>

<sup>146</sup> Lit, "While some therein are well behaved, and some therein are badly behaved, and some therein teach a group." Comy: The opposite to those who teach a group (that is, those who live away from groups), though not mentioned, should be understood, too (MA 2:387).

<sup>147</sup> Comy points to the Buddha's impartiality (*tādi, bhāva*) towards living beings, not unjustly praising some and disparaging others, ie, he is "the sage (*muni*) who treats all alike, as regards the killer Devadatta, the robber Aṅguli, māla, Dhana, pālaka (the fierce elephant), and (his own son) Rāhula" (*vadhakassa deva, dattassa corass' aṅgulimāline | dhana, pālake rāhule ca sabbesaṃ samako munī ti*) (MA 2:387; DhA 1:146; cf Miln 410). See **Araṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 139,6-8/3:231-233), SD 7.8. **Analyo** notes that the passage in MĀ 186 = T1.731c1 is somewhat cryptic: "if [some] are well gone, if the well gone [ones] are taught, or the leaders, because of [attachment to] material things one can see [the true nature of] that venerable one, I don't know myself," 彼賢者, 我不自知若有善逝, 若為善逝所化, 為宗主, 因食可見 *bǐ xiánzhě, wǒ bù zì zhī ruò yǒu shàn shì, ruò wéi shàn shì suǒ huà, wéi zōngzhǔ, yīn shí kě jiàn*. The mentioning of those who are "well gone," corresponds to *sugata* at M 1:319,13; the "teaching," 化, and the "leaders," 宗主, could correspond to "those who teach a group," *gaṇaṃ anusasanti* at M 1:319,13, and "material things," 食, correspond to *āmisā* at M 1:319,14 (cf eg, in MĀ 98 = T1.583c28, where 食 corresponds to *s'āmisā* in M 10/1:59,16). Finally, the ref to "not knowing," 不知, could be due to the translator mistaking *ava-viñā* "to despise," at M 1:319,15, for *a-viñā*, "to not know." Hence, concludes **Analyo**, "it seems that the main points made in [M 47] can be discerned in the Chinese translation." (2011:293 n139).

<sup>148</sup> *Vītarāgattā kāme na sevāmi khayā rāgassā ti*.

<sup>149</sup> As noted in Comy, the Tathagata would never speak falsely (*micchā*), but always rightly (*sammā*) (MA 2:387).

## Wise faith in the Teacher

**14** Bhikshus, a disciple should approach the Teacher who speaks thus for the sake of hearing the Dharma.

The Teacher teaches him the Dharma, ever higher, ever subtler, with its dark and its bright counterparts.<sup>152</sup>

14.2 Bhikshus, as **the Teacher teaches the monk the Dharma**, ever higher, ever subtler, with its dark and bright counterparts, in this way, he, through direct knowledge of a certain teaching here in the Dharma, **[320]** is convinced of the teachings.<sup>153</sup> He is *radiant with faith* in the Teacher,<sup>154</sup> thus:

<i>Sammā, sambuddho bhagavā svākkhātō bhagavatā dhammo sappaṭipanno saṅgho</i>	‘The Blessed One is fully self-awakened, well taught is the Blessed One’s teaching, the holy community keeps to the good way [is well practised].’ <sup>155</sup>
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**15** If, bhikshus, others were to ask that monk thus:

‘But what are the venerable one’s **reasons**, what are his **evidence**, that the venerable one speaks thus:

“*The Blessed One is fully self-awakened, well taught is the Blessed One’s teaching, the sangha is practising the right way*”?’

<sup>150</sup> Be *Etam patho’ham-asmi, etam gocaro*. The verb *asmi* (also *amhi*) (from √AS, to be), 1 sg pres. Means “is, becomes” [WarderPG 1974:30 f]. Ee & Comy interprets *asmi* as possessive, thus: “This is my path, my pasture” (*esa mayham patho esa gocaroti attho*), ie, he is utterly pure in regard to moral virtue of right livelihood (*ājīva’atthamaka sīla*)\* (MA 2:387). Comy adds that there is vl *etāpātho* (*eta + āpātha*), “that range,” ie, referring to his knowledge (*ñāna*) (MA 2:387). \**Ājīva’atthamaka sīla*, lit, “moral virtue with (right) livelihood as the eighth,” ie, the three-fold bodily purity (*kāya, sucarita*) (abstaining from killing, stealing and incelibacy) and keeping to the fourfold right speech (*vacī, sucarita*) (speech that is truthful, unifying, pleasant and useful): see **Mahā Saḷāyatānika S** (M 149,10/3:289), SD 41.9.

<sup>151</sup> “I am not that,” *no ca tena tammayō ti*, lit, “And not ‘made of it’ by that.” Cf “Bhikshu, one is reckoned by whatever lies latent in one. | One is not reckoned by what does not lie latent in one.” (*Yam kho bhikkhu anuseti, tena saṅkham gacchati; | yam nānuseti, na tena saṅkham gacchati ti*, S 22.35/3:35 @ SD 31.4); also the explanation of *na tena* (“not by that”) at (**Jhāna**) **Bāhiya S** (U 1.10.17/8), SD 33.7. Comy explains: “On account of utter purity of moral virtue, I am not ‘made of that’ (*tam, maya*), with no craving for that (*na sa, tanho*). On account of utter purity of moral virtue, I am without any craving (*nittaṅho*)” (MA 2:387). See **Atammayatā**, SD 19.13.

<sup>152</sup> *Tassa satthā dhammam deseti uttar’uttarim paṇīta, paṇītam kaṇha, sukka, sappaṭibhāgam*. Comy explains *sappaṭibhāga* as “with (their) fruits or results” (MA 2:388.4).

<sup>153</sup> *Yathā yathā kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno satthā dhammam deseti uttar’uttarim paṇīta, paṇītam kaṇha, sukka, - sappaṭibhāgam tathā tathā so tasmim dhamme abhiññāya idh’ekaccam dhammam dhammesu niṭṭham gacchati*. The Tīkā explains that when the Dharma, both mundane and supramundane, has been taught by the Teacher, having himself penetrated the path, fruition and nirvana, the monk rejoices with faith (*pasanna*) in the preliminary Dharma teachings that are the limbs of awakening (*bodhi, pakkiya dhamma*) (MAṬ:Be 2:303). “Is convinced of the teachings,” *dhammesu niṭṭham gacchati*. See M:ÑB 1245 n489.

<sup>154</sup> “Radiant with faith in the Teacher,” *satthari pasīdati*: see SD 10.16 (11.3.2.2).

<sup>155</sup> MĀ 186 only mentions 淨信世尊, 彼世尊正盡覺也, *jīng xìn shìzūn, bǐ shìzūn zhèng jìn jué yě* “pure faith in the Blessed One, ‘The Blessed One is rightly and fully self-awakened” (T1.26.731c21(03)). See (4.1) on how do we know a teacher is awakened. For a study on the qualities of the 3 jewels, see **Dhajajga S** (S 11.3/1:218-220), SD 15.5.

15.2 That monk, bhikshus, answering rightly, would answer thus:

‘Here, avuso, I went up to the Blessed One to hear the Dharma.

The Blessed One taught me the Dharma,

ever higher, ever subtler, with its dark and its bright counterparts.

15.3 Avuso, as the Teacher teaches me the Dharma,

ever higher, ever subtler, with its dark and its bright counterparts,

I, through direct knowledge of a certain teaching here in the Dharma, is convinced of the teachings.

15.4 **I am radiant with faith** in the Teacher, thus:

“The Blessed One is fully self-awakened, well taught is the Blessed One’s teaching, the holy community keeps to the good way.”

### The peyyāla

**16** Bhikshus, whose faith in the Tathagata is certain, well rooted, established, in these ways, these sentences, these words.”<sup>156</sup> [§§11-15]

—This, bhikshus, is called **faith with a good cause, rooted in vision, firm**.<sup>157</sup>

It is immovable [invincible] by any recluse or brahmin, or deva [god] or Māra or Brahmā [God] or by anyone in the world.<sup>158</sup>

16.2 Thus indeed, bhikshus, is the Dharma investigation in the Tathagata.

And thus, too, is the Tathagata *well investigated in accordance with the Dharma*.

The Blessed One said this. Satisfied, the monks rejoiced in the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>156</sup> *Yassa kassaci, bhikkhave, imehi ākārehi imehi padehi imehi vyañjanehi tathāgate saddhā niviṭṭhā hoti mūla, - jātā patitṭhitā*. “Through these ways” (*imehi ākārehi*), ie, on account of such investigations on the Teacher (MA 2:388). “In these ways, these phrases, these words” (*imehi ākārehi imehi padehi imehi vyañjanehi*) is a *peyyāla* stock, referring to an abridgement: see **Madhu, piṇḍika S** (M 18,20/1:114), SD 6.14.

<sup>157</sup> *Ākāra, vatī saddhā dassana, mūlikā dalhā*, which is apparently found only here in the suttas. While the Pali here has “faith with a good cause, rooted in vision” (*ākāra, vatī saddhā dassana, mūlikā*), the Chinese version puts it as “faith rooted in vision, indestructible and united with knowledge,” 信見本, 不壞, 智相應 *xìn jiàn běn, bú huài, zhì xiāng yìng* (MĀ 186 = T1.732a5; Analayo’s tr). On account of the monk’s being “rooted in vision” (*dassana, mūlika*), Comy says that his attainment is that of the path of streamwinning, as it is also based on faith, and a streamwinner’s faith is one that even Māra is unable to shake (MA 2:388). The Comy on **Uṇṇābha S** (S 48.42) makes a similar remark regarding the brahmin’s attainment (the Pali here however suggests that he has attained non-return): see S 48.42/5:219, SD 29.3.

<sup>158</sup> This whole section, slightly abridged, in **Uṇṇābha S** (S 48.42), describes the brahmin Uṇṇābha, who is said to have attained non-return (though its Comy says it is streamwinning) (S 48.42/5:219), SD 29.3.

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