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## Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta

The Lesser Discourse on the Destruction of Craving | M 37

Theme: A brief definition of arhathood (the *accanta,niṭṭha* pericope)

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2013, 2019

### 1 Sutta summary and parallels

#### 1.1 SUMMARY

**1.1.1** The Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta, the lesser discourse on the destruction of craving, relates Sakra<sup>1</sup> to asking the Buddha for a brief explanation on the question of how awakening is attained [§3]. Moggallāna then visits Sakra to verify if he has understood the lesson. At that time, Sakra is enjoying himself, listening to a large musical ensemble playing celestial music [§§1-7].

**1.1.2** When Sakra is asked by Moggallāna to recite what he has learned from the Buddha, he, at first, evades it by declaring that he is busy with various duties, especially with the newly built **Vejayanta** palace. Then, he invites Moggallāna on a tour of the huge palace<sup>2</sup> [§§8-13].

**1.1.3** Noticing Sakra’s distraction, Moggallāna rouses samvega in him by making the whole palace shake. Sakra is impressed and relates to him the Buddha’s teaching as he has heard it. Moggallāna, satisfied, leaves and sees the Buddha. Meanwhile, Sakra informs the devas that Moggallāna is his fellow brahma-farer [§§14-22]

**1.1.4** Moggallāna asks the Buddha if he recalls having instructed a certain “yaksha” (his term for Sakra). The Buddha answers that he does recall and repeats the teaching to Moggallāna. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle of the teaching. [§§23-27]

#### 1.2 ĀGAMA PARALLELS

##### 1.2.1 Differences and difficulties

**1.2.1.1** The Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta has two Chinese parallels, found in the Saṃyukta Āgama (SĀ 505) and in the Ekottarika Āgama (EĀ 19.3). While in M 37, the sutta venue is the mansion of Migāra’s mother, outside Sāvattihī, SĀ 505 locates it in Rājagaha, and EĀ in Jeta’s grove.<sup>3</sup>

**1.2.1.2 EĀ 19.3** is problematic in giving differing accounts of the central teaching of the Sutta, that is, the one given by the Buddha to Sakra (T2.593.c18), the one repeated by Sakra to Moggallāna in Tāvatiṃsa (T2.594b12), and the one repeated by the Buddha to Moggallāna (T2.594c3). Yet, they are actually the

<sup>1</sup> On Sakra, see SD 54.2 (3.2.3.6).

<sup>2</sup> On this occasion of the devas’ victory over the asuras and the building of the Vejayanta, see **Magha V** (DhA 2.7,-58/1:272), SD 54.22.

<sup>3</sup> SĀ 505 (T2.133b-134a), tr Analayo 2011f, and EĀ 19.3 (T2.593c-594c), tr THICH Huyen-Vi 1998:65-70. Akanuma (1929) gives “destruction of craving,” 愛盡 *ài jìn*, as a tentative title for SĀ 505. The summary verse at T2.596c13 refers to EĀ 19.3 as “the abandoning of craving,” 斷愛 (*duàn ài*). For a comparative study of M 37 and its Chin parallels, see Analayo 2011:246-251.

same instruction. The instruction in EĀ 19.3 thus “substantially differs from the Pāli.”<sup>4</sup> This is especially true of the 1<sup>st</sup> instruction (T2.593.c18).<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2.2 Similarities

**1.2.2.1** Both M 37 and EĀ 19.3 begin by relating that Sakra visits the Buddha and asks how, briefly, a monk destroys craving to gain nirvana [§2.2]. According to M 37, the Buddha replies that a monk, who sees that **nothing is worth clinging to**, gains direct knowledge, and then contemplates the 3 kinds of feelings in terms of *impermanence, fading away, cessation and relinquishment*. Contemplating thus, he goes beyond clinging and mental agitation, and then attains nirvaṇa.

**1.2.2.2** The two Chinese versions [1.2.1.1] agree with M 37 by stating that Moggallāna visits Sakra in Tāvātimsa to ascertain that he has understood the lesson from the Buddha. All the 3 versions tell us that Moggallāna asks Sakra to repeat the teaching he has learned, but he evades doing so, claiming that he is busy with much work.

Only SĀ 505 relates that Sakra artfully suggests that Moggallāna should ask the Buddha himself so that, having heard it from the teacher himself, he would remember it accordingly!<sup>6</sup> The subtle humour is clear humour here, along with Sakra’s use of a stock passage on the Buddha as our teacher whose teaching we aspire to remember.<sup>7</sup> However, since Moggallāna is a monk respected by Sakra, it is highly unlikely that he would make such a dismissive suggestion. Moreover, the other versions do not have such an episode.<sup>8</sup>

## 2 Sakra’s question

### 2.1 BACKGROUND TO THE QUESTION

**2.1.1 Sakra’s reason for asking his question** [§2.2] goes back to an earlier meeting with the Buddha recorded in **the Sakka,pañha Sutta** (D 21), an interesting dialogue between Sakra and the Buddha. Sakra asks the Buddha a number of questions which the Buddha answers to his satisfaction. Sakra relates that he has asked other forest-dwelling recluses and brahmins similar questions but it ends up instead with him teaching them and they becoming his pupils. To these holy men, Sakra declares himself as a “streamwinner,” that is, as one who has attained the 1<sup>st</sup> path (sotāpatti,magga).<sup>9</sup> [2.1.3]

**2.1.2 Sakra’s understanding.** Hearing the Buddha’s answers evokes profound joy in him [2.1.1]. When asked by the Buddha, Sakra replies that he has previously experienced this same joy (*veda*) after defeating the asuras in battle, and reflecting that, having defeated the asuras, the devas could now enjoy the divine foods (*oja* or *ojā*) both of the devas and of the asuras.

Then, he realizes that such happiness “on account of blows and wounds [rod and sword]” (*sa,daṇḍāvacaro sa,satthāvacaro*), does *not* conduce to *revulsion, fading away (of defilements), ending (of suffer-*

<sup>4</sup> THICH Huyen-Vi 1998:65 n4.

<sup>5</sup> See Analayo 2011:247 n11. On the passage at T2.594.c3 as we have it today, see Pasadika 2010:88.

<sup>6</sup> SĀ 505 (T2.133c12).

<sup>7</sup> See esp **Bhagavā Mūlaka S** (A 10.58), SD 67.4.

<sup>8</sup> For a comparative study of SĀ 50, see Analayo 2011f.

<sup>9</sup> D 21,2.7/2:284,22 f (SD 54.8).

ing), stilling (of the mind), to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to nirvana.<sup>10</sup> However, he does not understand the spiritual significance of these words beyond merely saying them, nor does he ask for clarification about them.<sup>11</sup>

**2.1.3 The Sakka Pañha Sutta** (D 21) closes with Sakra showing his gratitude to **Pañca,sikha**, the divine minstrel, for introducing him (Sakra) to the Buddha and receiving teachings from him. He gratefully tells Pañca,sikha that he (Sakra) will be a father to him, he makes him lord of the gandharvas (the heavenly musicians and guardians of the great king Dhata,raṭṭha, the protector of the eastern quarter, and gives him Bhaddā Suriya,vaccasā in marriage.

Then, Sakra, to seal his words, touches the earth with his hand and calls out thrice, “Homage to the Blessed One, the arhat, the fully self-awakened!” (*namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā,sambuddhassa*). It is during this conversation that the stainless spotless Dharma-eye arises in him, that is, he becomes a full-fledged streamwinner (*sotāpatti,phala*), highlighted by his udana. [2.1.1]

**2.1.4 The (Saṃyutta) Sakka,pañha Sutta** (S 35.118) records Sakra visiting the Buddha (clearly after the visit recorded in D 21) [2.1.3] and asking him why some attain nirvana in this life itself, and some do not.<sup>12</sup> The same teachings of S 35.118 are recorded as **the Panca,sikhā Sutta** (S 35.119), the gandharva Pañca,-sikha’s only sutta in the Pali canon.<sup>13</sup>

## **2.2 THE ACCANTA,NITṬHA QUESTION**

**2.2.1** Now, **the Sakka Pañha Sutta** (D 21,2.6/2:282 f) relates that earlier on, Sakra asks the Buddha: “Sir, are all the recluses and brahmins those who have reached the utter end,<sup>14</sup> reached the total security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal?” (*sabbe va nu kho mārisa sama-ṇa,brāhmaṇā accanta,niṭṭhā accanta,yoga-k,khemī accanta,brahmacārī accanta,pariyosānā’ti*). The Buddha replies that they are not. When asked who are those of such qualities, the Buddha replies that they are those who “have been freed by the destruction of craving” (*taṇhā,sāṅkhaya,vimutta*). Sakra rejoices in the answer but does not question further on how this freedom (*vimutti*) of awakening is gained.

**2.2.2** It is at another meeting, recorded in **the Cūḷa Taṇhā,sāṅkhaya Sutta** (M 37), that Sakra specifically asks the Buddha about what is meant by this accanta,niṭṭha teaching and the Buddha answers him [§§2-4]. Elsewhere, the Buddha gave a slightly longer answer to Mahā Kaccāna, that is, in **the Hālidakāni Sutta** (S 22.4) [3.5]. In fact, this **accanta,niṭṭha question**—as we shall call it—is such a significant one that it has quite an interesting developmental history. It centres on **the accanta,niṭṭha pericope** [3].

## **3 The accanta,niṭṭha pericope**

**3.1 WHAT THE PERICOPE<sup>15</sup> DEFINES.** The Sutta’s **accanta,niṭṭha pericope**, which defines one “freed by the destruction of craving” (*taṇhā,sāṅkhaya*), refers to “one who has reached the utter end, reached the total

<sup>10</sup> *Na nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasāmāya na abhiññāya na sambodhāya nibbānāya saṃvattati: Sakka,pañha S* (D 21,2.7.13), SD 54.8.

<sup>11</sup> D 21/2:263-289 (SD 54.8). On the last statement, see D 21,2.7/2:285,10-19.

<sup>12</sup> For summary and nn, see SD 54.8 (3.6).

<sup>13</sup> S 35.119/4:103 (SD 74.1(\*\*\*)).

<sup>14</sup> “Who has reached utter end,” **accanta,niṭṭha** (mf): see §2.2 n.

<sup>15</sup> A **pericope** (pə’rɪkəpi), an extract, often self-contained, from a text, especially a sutta, presenting some key teaching or stock passage.

security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans” (*accanta,niṭṭha accanta,yoga-k,khemī accanta,brahma.cārī accanta,pariyosāno seṭṭho deva,-manussānaṃ*) [§§2.2, 3.9, 19.9]. This is **the extended pericope**—with the closing phrase, “the best of gods and humans.” The more common **standard *accanta,niṭṭha* pericope**, also called **the “full pericope,”** omits this closing phrase.

### 3.2 THE STANDARD *ACCANTA,NIṬṬHA* PERICOPE

**3.2.1 First mention.** The earliest teaching on the *accanta,niṭṭha* (the standard pericope) [3.1] is probably given by the Buddha to *Moggallāna* just before his awakening, as recorded in **the Pacalā Sutta** (A 7.58).<sup>16</sup> This teaching is given to *Moggallāna* after the Buddha has taught him **the 8 ways of overcoming drowsiness** (A 7.58,2-9), followed by teachings on **the conditions conducive to mental concentration** (A 7.58,10). In fact, the *accanta,niṭṭha* teaching is the climax and close of the Sutta. This teaching is identical to that given to Sakra in **the Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta** (M 37).

**3.2.2** Hence, *Moggallāna* is familiar with the teaching [§3], even as he listens to the Buddha teaching it to Sakra [§3]. This also explains *Moggallāna*’s special interest in wishing to know whether Sakra has well understood it. Moreover, Sakra only asks the Buddha to give a “brief” answer [2.2]. Hence, he visits Sakra in Tāvātimsa to find this out [§§7-21].

**3.3 THE SAKKA PAÑHA SUTTA** (D 21). Apparently, Sakra first asks the Buddha the *accanta,niṭṭha* question (the last of his 5 questions) in **the Sakka,pañha Sutta** (D 21): “Sir, have all recluses and brahmins reached the utter end, reached the total security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal?”<sup>17</sup> The Buddha replies no.

When Sakra asks why, the Buddha *briefly* answers that “only those who are freed by the destruction of craving” have done so.<sup>18</sup> Then, the dialogue takes a different tack. At the end of the teaching, Sakra becomes a **streamwinner**.<sup>19</sup>

A fuller answer to this important question is given to Mahā Kaccāna, as recorded in **the Hālidakāni Sutta** (S 22.4) [3.5], which quotes the question from D 21. It is this very same question that Sakra asks the Buddha again in M 37 [3.4].

**3.4 THE CŪḶA TAṆHĀ,SAṆKHAYA SUTTA** (M 37) records Sakra asking the Buddha the same question—that is, “In what way ... in brief, is a monk **freed by the destruction of craving**, one who has reached the utter end,<sup>20</sup> reached the total security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans?” [§2.2]. This time the Buddha gives a fuller answer.

In fact, the whole Sutta centres on this question and its answer—constituting **the *accanta,niṭṭha* teaching**—which is repeated thrice. First, the Buddha teaching it [§3]; then, *Moggallāna* ascertaining that Sakra understands the answer [§19]; and thirdly, the Buddha repeats it to *Moggallāna* [§§25]. The significance of **the teaching being repeated thrice** should be well noted [3.8.1].

<sup>16</sup> A 7.58,11/4:88 (SD 4.11).

<sup>17</sup> *Sabbe va nu kho mārisa samaṇa,brāhmaṇā accanta,niṭṭhā accanta,yoga-k,khemī accanta,brahma.cārī accanta,-pariyosānā’ti* (D 21,2,6/2:282,32-283,2), SD 54.8.

<sup>18</sup> D 21,2.6.9/2:283 (SD 54.8).

<sup>19</sup> D 21,2.10/2:289 (SD 54.8).

<sup>20</sup> “Who has reached the utter end,” *accanta,niṭṭha* (mf): *accanta* (Skt *atyanta*) = *ati* + *anta*, “reached the end or limit” of absolute perfection; *niṭṭha* (Ved *niṣṭhā, niḥṣṭhā*) = *nis* + *ṭhā* (from *-ṭhā*, “end, conclusion, perfection, height, summit, object, goal”), as in *niṭṭham gata = niṭṭhaṅ,gata*, “who has attained the goal, perfection” (= *pabbajitānaṃ arahattam patta*), S 3:99; A 2:175, 3:450, 5:119 f; Dh 351; Pm 1:81, 161; DhA 4:70.

**3.5 A FULL EXPLANATION** on the *accanta,niṭṭha* (extended pericope) is also found in **the Hālidakāni Sutta 2** (S 22.4), where Hālidakāni, a householder of Kuraraghara (in Avanti), mentions the Sakka, pañha by name to Mahā Kaccāna and asks him to give a detailed explanation of the *accanta,niṭṭha* teaching.

Mahā Kaccāna answers in terms of the 5 aggregates. Each of these aggregates is called an “element” (*dhātu*), which should be relinquished altogether. When all these aggregates are thus relinquished, the mind is said to be well freed, and that person is said to be *accanta,niṭṭha* and so on, that is, “a monk **freed by the destruction of craving**, one who has reached the utter end, reached the total security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans.”<sup>21</sup>

**3.6 THE (TIKA) MORA, NIVĀPA SUTTA** (A 3.140) gives the standard *accanta,niṭṭha* pericope [3.1], taught to the monks at the peacock feeding-ground. This Sutta has 3 parts, which forms 3 separate suttas in the Burmese canon. The *accanta,niṭṭha* teaching is found in the 1<sup>st</sup> part (A 1:291,22-33), where it is defined as the fulfilment of the 3 trainings (*sikkha-t, taya*). The 2<sup>nd</sup> part adds 3 more qualities, that is, the 3 kinds of miracles, those of (1) psychic wonders, (2) mind-reading and (3) education (A 1:291,34-292,4). The 3<sup>rd</sup> part lists the 3 culminating qualities of (1) right view, (2) right knowledge and (3) right liberation (A 1:291,5-10).<sup>22</sup>

**3.7 THE (EKĀDASAKA) MORA, NIVĀPA SUTTA** (A 11.11) contains the same teachings as given to the monks in **the (Tika) Mora, nivāpa Sutta** (A 3.140) [3.6]. It gives all the 3 parts of the (Tika) Mora, nivāpa Sutta teaching plus 2 more, that is, (10) true knowledge and (11) conduct (*vijjā, carāṇa*). Thus, the Sutta comprises a set of 11 qualities, making it the longest exposition on the *accanta,niṭṭha*.<sup>23</sup>

### 3.8 THE 3-CYCLE TEACHING IN M 37

#### 3.8.1 The 3 teachings

**3.8.1.1 The Cūḷa Taṇhā, saṅkhaya Sutta** records the well-known *accanta,niṭṭha* teaching [3.1, 3.4] as being given thrice [3.4], as follows:

- (1) 1<sup>st</sup> cycle: the Buddha teaches it to Sakra, while Moggallāna, sitting nearby, witnesses this [§§3-5];
- (2) 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle: Moggallāna invites Sakra to repeat it to him [§8], and Sakra ultimately does [§§19-20];
- (3) 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle: Moggallāna reports to the Buddha [§§23-34], who repeats it to Moggallāna [§§25-26].

**3.8.1.2** At least one scholar has found that Moggallāna’s “request” for the Buddha to repeat the *accanta,niṭṭha* teaching “puzzling, since ... he had been sitting close to the Buddha when Sakka came and received this instruction in the first place.”<sup>24</sup> This is actually a non-problem, since Moggallāna, upon returning from Tāvatisa and reporting to the Buddha, *does not* request the teaching from the Buddha. He only asks whether the Buddha recalls teaching “in brief on the freedom by the destruction of craving to a certain renowned and mighty yaksha (that is, Sakra)” [§23]. In fact, as we shall see, this triple repetition of the teaching is highly significant in didactic terms [3.8.1.3].

**3.8.1.3** Note that it is clear here that Moggallāna is very familiar with the *accanta,niṭṭha* teaching, and for good reasons, too. It is taught to him just before his own awakening [3.2]. Yet, there is an important reason for the Buddha repeating this important teaching in full before Moggallāna—this 3<sup>rd</sup> recital is for our sake!

<sup>21</sup> S 22.4/3:12 f (SD 70.15). See also SD 54.8 (1.1.3.2(1)).

<sup>22</sup> A 3.140/1:291 f.

<sup>23</sup> A 11.11/5:326-328.

<sup>24</sup> Analayo 2011:251 + n225.

Indeed, **the 3 cycles of the teachings** [3.8.1.1.] follow a well-known and vital aspect of the early Buddhist oral tradition to repeat important teachings (called “stock passages” or pericopes), not only for the benefit of the audience (those who listen to the teaching), but also so that, through the repetition, we are more likely to remember it. This, of course, is more effective and efficacious when we wisely attend to the teaching.

## 4 Sakra as a brahmafärer

### 4.1 “FELLOW BRAHMAFÄRER”

**4.1.1** After Mogallāna’s departure from Tāvātimsa, the devas ask Sakra if Moggallāna is Sakra’s teacher, the Buddha [§22.1]. This remark suggests that these devas (not all the Tāvātimsa devas) have never seen the Buddha. Sakra replies that Moggallāna is his “**fellow brahmafärer**” (*sa, brahma.cārī*) [§22.2]. However, while Moggallāna is a *monk and celibate arhat*, Sakra is still a pleasure-loving streamwinner<sup>25</sup> [4.1.3].

**4.1.2** Technically, a *brahma.cārī* (literally, “divine liver”)<sup>26</sup> is a practitioner who abstains from sensual pleasures, that is, a celibate monastic or a celibate layperson—such a lifestyle is called *brahma, cariya*, “the holy life,”<sup>27</sup> whose goal is that of living a morally virtuous life of cultivating the mind for attaining liberating wisdom for the ending of suffering and attaining nirvana. Its synonyms are *dhamma.cārī*, “dharmafärer,”<sup>28</sup> and *dhamma, cariya*, “the Dharma-life”<sup>29</sup> (that is, living in keeping with the Buddha Dharma, a Dharma-centred life).

A rule of thumb is that “**brahmafärer**” (*brahma.cārī*), when used to describe a monastic or one following the celibacy rule<sup>30</sup> (including a lay practitioner), especially as a sustained practice, refers to a celibate practitioner. The term “**dharmafärer**” (*dhamma.cārī*) refers to anyone who practises the Buddha Dharma, whether monastic or lay, celibate or not, that is, keeping to at least the 5 precepts.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> On Sakra’s streamwinning, see SD 54.8 (1.2.4).

<sup>26</sup> *Brahma.cārī*: V 3:43,5; M 1:492,14+23, 493,1+7+11+13+19+21,2:188,23; S 1:102,28\*, 5:16,29; A 2:44,5\*, 5:18,6 sa,~; Dh 168; Vv 32.11; Tha 303; C 2.3.2.

<sup>27</sup> *Brahma, cariya*: (-ā, fem): D 1:84,11, 155,36, 2:106,8, 3:122,8+25+29+34, 123,7+9+11+19+21, 211,4+11+18; M 1:77,24, 147,17+20+22+31+33+36, 193,5, 205,2, 426,26, 463,4+9+14, 492,4+7+11+14+25, 493,22, 514,31+32, 2:38,2, 11+15+23+31, 3:36,27, 116,22; S 1:38,8\*+11\*+12\*+19(x2)+25 f, 43,8\*+15\*, 87,32, 105,31, 154,29\*, 209,1\*,2:24, 25, 29,8, 120,3 +17+25+31, 219,27, 278,13 & 284,22 (~*pariyosāna*, “culminating in the holy life”), 3:83,12, 189,28, 4:51,3+6+16+19+ 23+25+29+30, 104,5+25, 110,28, 126,3+16+27, 136,5, 137,26, 163,30, 253,27, 5:7,8+26-29, 8,2, 15,19 f (a~), 16,12(x2)-14+18-20+23+26+29(x2)-31, 26 passim ~*phala*, 27,1+3 ~*attha*, 54,17 ~*esanā*, 55,5+12+20: ~*esanā*, 233,12, 262,12, 272,7, 352,29; A 1:50,21 ~*pariyosanā*, 115 ~*vussati*, “live the holy life,” 168,29+31: ~*ogadha*, “a firm footing in the holy life,” 225,4+8+10+12+12, 2:26,4+10\*, 44,1\*, 185,25, 3:250,1 f+4 f, 346,22\*, 4:311,-21, 5:18,26 f, 27 f, 71,18, 136,9; Sn 267, 274 (*vas’uttamā*, “the greatest wealth”), 566, 655, 1128; Tha 1027, 1079; It 28, 48, 78, 111; Dh 155, 156, 312; J 3:396,4\*,11, 4:52,28\*; Pv 2.9,13; DhA 4:42,19\* (*vas’uttamā*); VbhA 504,32 = *methuna, virati*, “celibacy.”

<sup>28</sup> *Dhamma.cārī* (adj; n): M 1:291,25 a-; Dh 168c, 169c; J 5:266,11.

<sup>29</sup> *Dhamma, cariya*: (-ā, fem): D 2:28,31; A 2:5,7\*; Khp 5,6; Sn 274; DhA 4:42,19\*.

<sup>30</sup> The celibacy rule entails no bodily sexual action of any kind. Its purpose is to cultivate and prepare the mind for sustained and deep meditation to weaken, if not uproot, the latent tendency (*anusaya*) of lust. See **Anusaya**, SD 31.3, esp (2).

<sup>31</sup> The “5 precepts” (*pañca, sīla*) are those against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicants and addictives: see **Dīgha, jānu S** (A 8.54,13), SD 5.10; **Veḷu, dvāreyya S** (S 55.7), SD 1.5 (2); **Sīlānussati**, SD 15.11 (2.2); SD 21.6 (1.2); SD 37.8 (2.2).



**4.1.3** However, we have noted that, towards the end of the Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta, Sakra declares that he and Moggallāna are “**fellow brahmafarers**” [4.1.1.]. However, while Moggallāna is a *monk and celibate arhat*, Sakra is still a pleasure-loving streamwinner. The Commentary explains that Sakra refers to Moggallāna as a “fellow brahmafarer” (*sa, brahma.cārī*), that is, as companions in the holy life, because he himself has earlier gained streamwinning (*sotāpatti*)—as stated in **the Sakka,pañha Sutta** (D 21).<sup>32</sup>

As a saint of the path, a streamwinner (*sotāpanna*), Sakra is a noble disciple (*ariya, sāvaka*) bound for the same awakening that Moggallāna has already attained (MA 2:304,27-30). In other words, **brahma, cārī** here refers to one who is on the path of awakening, including the arhat. It is a broad term distinguishing the noble individuals from the “outsiders” (*bahira* or *bāhiraka*). Both Moggallāna (an arhat) and Sakra (a streamwinner) are saints of the path: they are the true “insiders,” practitioners of the true teaching.<sup>33</sup>

**4.1.4** Lay practitioners who are streamwinners (like Sakra) or once-returners have only overcome the first 3 fetters—those of self-identity view, spiritual doubt and attachment to rituals and vows.<sup>34</sup> In other words, sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*) still exists to some significant level in a streamwinner.<sup>35</sup> Hence, on account of sensual lust, Sakra enjoys heavenly pleasures of the senses by way of heavenly sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touches [§7]. Those who have sensual lust also have its attendant opposite, aversion (*paṭigha*). Hence, Sakra is not too keen to repeat what he has learned from the Buddha when asked to do so by Moggallāna [§8].

## 4.2 STREAMWINNERS WHO ENJOY SENSE-PLEASURES

**4.2.1** However, as a streamwinner, a noble disciple of the path, Sakra’s worldliness is well moderated and restrained by moral virtue, that is, he diligently keeps to at least the 5 precepts [4.1.2]. He is the kind of lay disciple who is said to be “one who enjoys sense-pleasures” (*kāma, bhogī*),<sup>36</sup> and yet leads a Dharma-spirited life.

**4.2.2** Such a person is described in **the Rasiya Gāmaṇi Sutta** (S 42.12) and **the Kāma, bhogī Sutta** (A 10.91) as follows:

Here, having sought wealth rightfully, without violence, he enjoys sensual pleasures. Thus, he makes himself happy and pleased; he offers his share in giving and does deeds of merit. And he uses his wealth, unattached to it, not infatuated with it, not blindly absorbed in it, seeing its danger, understanding the escape.<sup>37</sup> (S 42.12, SD 91.3) = (A 10.91, SD 100.8)<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> D 21,2.10/2:289 (SD 54.8).

<sup>33</sup> See SD 54.8 (1.2.4.3).

<sup>34</sup> These are, respectively, (1) *sakkāya, diṭṭhi*, (2) *vicikicchā*, and (3) *silā-b, bata parāmāsa*: see SD 3.3 (5). Technically, a streamwinner (*sotāpanna*) has broken all these 3 fetters [SD 10.16 (1.6.6)], while a once-returner (*sakad-ā-gāmī*) has progressed further by weakening the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala, mūla*) of lust, hate and delusion [SD 10.16 (1.6.6.7)].

<sup>35</sup> Lust is, however, overcome by the non-returner (*anāgāmī*), who, as a once-returner, goes on to break the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> fetters, too—respectively, those of (4) sensual lust (*kāma, rāga*) and (5) aversion (*paṭigha*). These are the 5 “lower fetters” (*orāma, bhāgiya samyojana*): SD 10.16 (1.6.7).

<sup>36</sup> On *kāma, bhogī*, see **Mahā Vaccha, gotta S** (M 73,10/1:491), SD 27.4.

<sup>37</sup> *Idha pana ... ekacco kāma, bhogī dhammena bhoge pariyesati asāhasena, dhammena bhoge pariyesitvā asāhasena attānaṃ sukheti piṇeti saṃvibhajati puññāni ca karoti. Te ca bhoge agadhito [vī agathito] amucchito anajjhāpanno ādīnava, dassāvī nissaraṇa, pañño paribhuñjati.* (S 42.12/4:332,31-333,3), SD 91.3, = (A 5:178,8-12), SD 100.8. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, see D 3:46,27=30; A 3:242,28 f; also AA 3:52,6-12 = SA 2:163,22-28 on S 2:194,7-9 = DA 3:1013,32-38 on D 3:224,27 f.

<sup>38</sup> S 42.12/4:332,31-333,3 (SD 91.3) & A 10.91/5:178+181 (SD 100.8).

**4.2.3 The Mahā Vaccha,gotta Sutta** (M 73) gives a slightly longer definition of lay-disciples who enjoy sense-pleasures (*kāma,bhogī*). Vaccha,gotta asks the Buddha about the lay disciples “who enjoy sense-pleasures,” thus:

“Other than master Gotama,  
 other than the monks,  
 other than the nuns,  
 other than the laymen, householders dressed in white, brahmacharis [celibates],  
 is there any *one layman*, ...  
 is there any one *laywoman*,  
 a disciple of master Gotama, a householder dressed in white,  
**who enjoys sense-pleasures,**<sup>39</sup>  
 who is a doer of the teaching,  
 follower of instructions,  
 crossed beyond doubt,  
 become free of uncertainties,  
 gained fearless confidence,  
 and independent of others, dwells in the teaching?”<sup>40</sup>

In reply to Vaccha,gotta, the Buddha gives this slightly longer definition of such a liberated disciple, beginning thus:

“Not just one, Vaccha, nor 100, nor 200, nor 300, nor 400, nor 500, but far more laymen, who are my disciples, householders dressed in white, who enjoy sense-pleasures, ... ”

(M 73,10/1:491), SD 27.4

#### 4.3 THE NATURE OF A STREAMWINNER

**4.3.1** Being a streamwinner is the very 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the path, one that makes us true practitioners of Buddha Dharma. We are no more “outsiders” [4.1.3], and, as true practitioners, we are assured of self-awakening and liberation within 7 lives at the most.<sup>41</sup> The suttas and Commentaries tell us that there are countless numbers of humans and devas who are streamwinners (*sotāpanna*).<sup>42</sup>

In **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), the Buddha is recorded as declaring that there are 500 laymen in the village of Nādika who have died as streamwinners.<sup>43</sup> At the end of **the Sakka Pañha Sutta** (D 21), we

<sup>39</sup> “A householder ... enjoying sense-pleasures,” *gihī odāta,vasano kāma,bhogī*. See SD 47.1 (1.1.2.4); SD 52.11 (1.2.3.3).

<sup>40</sup> “Gone beyond doubt ... in the Teacher’s teaching,” *sasana,karo ovāda-p,paṭikāro tiṇṇa,vicikiccho vigata,katham,katho vesāraja-p,patto apara-p,paccayo satthu,sāsane viharati*, which refers to the once-returned and the streamwinner, who may be incelibate laypersons (but keeping to the 5 precepts): as in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3/1:110), **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5/1:148), **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35,24/1:234 f), **Upāli S** (M 56/1:380), **Mahā Vaccha,gotta S** (M 73/1:491), **Dīgha,nakha S** (M 74/1:501), **Brahmāyū S** (M 91/2:145), **(Licchavī) Sīha S** (A 8.12/4:186), **Ugga S 1** (A 8.21/4:210), **Ugga S 2** (A 8.22/4:213), **Suppabuddha Kuṭṭhi S** (U 5.3/50). A longer pericope — *diṭṭha,dhammo patta,dhammo vidita,dhammo pariyogaḷha,dhammo tiṇṇa,vicikiccho vigata,kathaṇ,katho vesāraja-p,patto apara-p,paccayo satthu,sāsane* (“having seen, mastered, known, immersed and himself in the Dharma, ...”)—is found in ref to: Yasa’s father (Mv 7.10c @ V 1:16), SD 11.2(7), & the brahmin Pokkhara,sāti (**Ambaṭṭha S**, D 3,2.22/1:110), SD 21.3.

<sup>41</sup> On this “7-life” teaching, see **Sa,upādi,sesa S** (A 9.12, 8-10), SD 3.3(3).

<sup>42</sup> SnA 2:587 (on **Ajita Māṇava Pucchā**, Sn 5.1), 589 = NcA 10 (on **Tissa Metteyya Māṇava Pucchā**, Sn 5.2), SnA 590 = NcA 18 (on **Puṇṇaka Māṇava Pucchā**, Sn 5.3)

<sup>43</sup> D 16,2.7/2:93 (SD 9).



are told that when Sakra became a streamwinner, 80,000 devas, too, attained the same state.<sup>44</sup> The brahmin Piṅgiya and his 1,000 matted-hair ascetic (*jaṭila*) followers,<sup>45</sup> too, became streamwinners (NcA 83). At the end of the teaching of **the Cūḷa Rāhul'ovāda Sutta** (M 63)<sup>46</sup> and of **the Rāhul'ovāda Sutta** (S 35.121),<sup>47</sup> many thousands of deities attain streamwinning.

Other lay streamwinners include the parents of Sigāla (Sigāla,mātā and Sigāla,pitā)<sup>48</sup> and of Nakula (Nakula,mātā and Nakula,pitā),<sup>49</sup> king Bimbisāra,<sup>50</sup> Anātha,piṇḍika,<sup>51</sup> the brahmins Pokkhara,sāti,<sup>52</sup> Kūṭa,-danta<sup>53</sup> and Brahmāyu,<sup>54</sup> the wanderer Dīgha,nakha,<sup>55</sup> the Licchavī Upāli,<sup>56</sup> general Sīha<sup>57</sup> and the leper Suppabuddha.<sup>58</sup> Of the 500 monks present on the day of the Buddha's passing, the least of them are streamwinners.<sup>59</sup>

**4.3.2** Many of **the streamwinners** mentioned [4.3.1], it should be noted, are laymen, both humans and gods. Hence, it is not surprising to find Sakra, lord of the devas, to be one, too. When listening to the Dharma from the Buddha, the streamwinner Sakra is all ears and remembers the teaching. Yet, we see Sakra enjoying sensual pleasures, even feeling reluctant to recite the Dharma to Moggallāna. Instead, Sakra invites Moggallāna on a tour of his luxurious Vejayanta palace. Sakra is not yet fully awakened.

Yet, when Moggallāna makes a point of being serious about the Dharma by causing the whole of Vejayanta palace to shake, it is sufficient to jolt Sakra back into mindfulness so that he recites the Dharma to Moggallāna as he has requested. No matter how self-indulgent or unmindful a streamwinner may be, he will remain morally virtuous and respectful of the Dharma. In short, lay streamwinners may not live or act like good monastics at all but they are morally sensible, Dharma-spirited, lay practitioners, who, despite everything, will fully awaken within 7 lives.

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<sup>44</sup> D 21,2.10/2:289 (SD 54.8).

<sup>45</sup> See SD 49.6a (2.1.2.3).

<sup>46</sup> M 63/3:280 (SD 5.8).

<sup>47</sup> S 35.121/4:106 (SD 93.6).

<sup>48</sup> See SD 4.1 (5).

<sup>49</sup> See SD 5.4 (2).

<sup>50</sup> Cv 1.22.9 (V 1:37).

<sup>51</sup> Cv 6.4.5 (V 2:157).

<sup>52</sup> **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3/1:100), SD 21.3.

<sup>53</sup> **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5/1:148), SD 22.8.

<sup>54</sup> **Brahmāyu S** (M 91/2:145), SD 63.8.

<sup>55</sup> **Dīgha,makha S** (M 74/1:501), SD 16.1.

<sup>56</sup> **Upāli S** (M 56/1:379), SD 27.1.

<sup>57</sup> **Sīha S** (A 8.12/4:186), SD 71.5.

<sup>58</sup> (**Suppabuddha**) **Kuṭṭhi S** (U 5.3/49), SD 70.4.

<sup>59</sup> **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,6.6/2:155), SD 9.

# Cūḷa Taṇha,saṅkhaya Sutta

## The Lesser Discourse on the Destruction of Craving

M 37

1 Thus have I heard.

### Sakra's question

1.1 At one time, the Blessed One was staying in the mansion of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Park [Pubb'ārama], outside Sāvattihī.

2 Then, Sakra, the lord of the devas, approached the Blessed One, saluted him and stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, Sakra, the lord of the devas, said to the Blessed One:

2.2 "In what way, bhante, in brief,<sup>60</sup> is a monk **freed by the destruction of craving**, one who has reached the utter end,<sup>61</sup> reached the total security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal<sup>62</sup>—the best of gods and humans<sup>63</sup>?"<sup>64</sup> [§§3.9, 19.9]

### A brief definition of arhathood

3 "Here, lord of devas, a monk has heard that "**Nothing is worth clinging to.**"<sup>65</sup>

3.2 When, lord of devas, a monk has heard that *nothing is worth clinging to*,

he directly knows<sup>66</sup> all things.

*so sabbaṃ dhammaṃ abhijānāti*

3.3 When he has *directly known* all things,

*sabbaṃ dhammaṃ abhiññāya*

<sup>60</sup> Comy paraphrases Sakra as saying: "Briefly, to what extent is he said to be freed by the destruction of craving, that is, in nirvana, the destruction of craving by the freedom of his mind that takes nirvana as (mental) object. Teach me briefly the preliminary practice by which the influx-destroyed monk is freed by the destruction of craving." (MA 2:291.17-21)

<sup>61</sup> "Who has reached utter end," *accanta,niṭṭha* (mfn): *accanta* (Skt *atyanta*) = *ati* + *anta*, "reached the end or limit" of absolute perfection; *niṭṭha* (Ved *niṣṭhā, niḥṣṭhā*) = *nis* + *ṭhā* (from *-ṭhā*, "end, conclusion, perfection, height, summit, object, goal"), as in *niṭṭham gata* = *niṭṭhaṃ, gata*, "who has attained the goal, perfection" (= *pabbajitānaṃ arahattaṃ patta*), S 3:99 (a-); A 2:175, 3:450, 5:119 f; Dh 351; Pm 1:81, 161; DhA 4:70.

<sup>62</sup> The *accanta,niṭṭha* pericope [3].

<sup>63</sup> "The best of gods and humans," *setṭho deva, manussānaṃ*, usu used of the Buddha (eg M 99/2:209), SD 38.6, but here refers to any arhat: (**Ekādasaka**) **Mora, nivāpa S** (A 11.11/5:327) [3.7]: see also other suttas [3].

<sup>64</sup> *Kittāvatā nu kho bhante bhikkhu saṅkhittena taṇhā, saṅkhaya, vimutto hoti accanta, niṭṭho accanta, yoga-k, khemī accanta, brahma. cārī accanta, pariyoṣāno setṭho deva, manussānaṃ'ti*. The underlined phrase: *accanta, niṭṭho ... accanta, pariyoṣāno*, **M 37/1:251,18**; **A 3.143/1:291,25**, **7.61/4:88,9**, **11.10/5:326,26** also pl ~ā, etc, **D 21,2.6/2:283,1** (SD 54.8); **S 22.4/3:13,7** (SD 70.15); also VA 2:401,3; DA 2:449,3; SA 2:319,12; AA 3:432,19; also epithet to *nibbāna*: M 107/3:4,24 (SD 56.3). Cf **Pacalā S** (A 7.58,11.1 + 7), SD 4.11.

<sup>65</sup> *Sabbe dhammā nālaṃ abhinivesāyāti*, lit, "all things are not fit for clinging to": Comy says that *sabbe dhammā* ("all things") refers to the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k, khandha*) [SD 17], the 12 sense-spheres (*dvādas'āyatana*) (**S 35.23-/4:15**, SD 7.1; **M 137,4+5/3:216**, SD 29.5) and the 18 elements (*aṭṭhārasa, dhātu*) [**M 115,4/3:62**, SD 29.1a] (MA 2:-298,14-16 = AA 4:43,6-11). These are "**not worth clinging to**" by way of craving and views because they turn out actually to be other than the way they are grasped: what is grasped as permanent, as pleasurable, as self, turn out to be impermanent, to be suffering, to be non-self. See **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (**M 37,3/1:251×2**, 19/254×2, 25/255×2), SD 54.9; **Avijjā Pahāna S 2** (S 35.80/4:50×2) + SD 16.9 (2.6); **Pacalā S** (A 7.58,11.2/4:88×2), SD 4.11.

<sup>66</sup> He "directly knows" (*abhijānāti*) them to be evident (*ñāta*) as impermanent, as suffering, as non-self (MA 2:298,-22 f = AA 4:43,12 f). On *ñāta, pariññā*, see SD 49.2 (4.3.5.5); SD 3.8 (6.2).

- he fully understands<sup>67</sup> all things.
- 3.4 When he has *fully understood* all things,  
whatever feelings he *feels*,  
whether pleasant or painful or neutral
- 3.5 he dwells contemplating impermanence<sup>68</sup>  
in those feelings;  
he dwells contemplating fading away [dispassion],<sup>69</sup>  
he dwells contemplating ending,<sup>70</sup>  
he dwells contemplating relinquishment.
- 3.6 Thus dwelling contemplating impermanence in those *feelings*,  
dwelling contemplating *fading away*,  
dwelling contemplating *ending*,  
dwelling contemplating *relinquishment*,
- 3.7 he does not cling to anything in the world.  
When he does not cling, he is not (mentally) agitated.<sup>71</sup>  
When he is not agitated, he personally attains nirvana.<sup>72</sup>
- 3.8 He understands:<sup>73</sup>  
'Birth is destroyed,  
the holy life has been lived,  
what should be done is done,  
there is no more of this state of being.'
- 3.9 To that extent, lord of devas, in brief, is how a monk is freed by the destruction of craving, who *has reached the utter end, reached the ultimate security from bondage, reached the highest of the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans.*" [§2.2, 19.9]

*sabbaṃ dhammaṃ parijānāti*  
*sabbaṃ dhammaṃ pariññāya*  
*yaṃ kiñci vedanaṃ vedeti*  
*sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkham,asukhaṃ vā*

*so tāsu vedanāsu aniccā'nupassī viharati*  
*virāgānupassī viharati*  
*nirodhānupassī viharati*  
*paṭinissaggānupassī viharati*

*na kiñci loke upādiyati*  
*anupādiyam na paritassati*  
*aparitassaṃ paccattañ,ñeva parinibbā-*  
*yati [252]*

*khīṇā jāti*  
*vusitaṃ brahma,cariyaṃ*  
*kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ*  
*nāparaṃ itthattāyāti pajānāti* [§§19.8, 25.8]

4 Then, Sakra, the lord of the devas, rejoicing in and approving of the Blessed One's word, saluted him, keeping him to the right [walking sunwise around him],<sup>74</sup> and vanished right there.

<sup>67</sup> He "fully understands" (*parijānāti*) them by scrutinizing (*tīraṇa*) them in the same way (as impermanent, as suffering, as non-self). (MA 2:298,23 f = AA 4:43,14). On *tīraṇa,pariññā*, see SD 49.2 (4.3.5.5); SD 3.8 (6.2).

<sup>68</sup> "Contemplating impermanence," etc, is accomplished by the insight knowledges (*ñāṇa*) of rise and fall (*uppāda,-vaya*), and of destruction and disappearance (*khayato vayo*). (MA 2:298,33-35)

<sup>69</sup> "Fading away [dispassion]" (*virāga*) is twofold: fading away as "ending" (*khaya*) of defilements in the 1<sup>st</sup> round [§3.5], and as "absolute" (*accanta*) fading-away in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round [§3.6]. (MA 2:299,3-4)

<sup>70</sup> "Ending" (*nirodha*) is twofold: ending as "destruction" (*khaya*) of suffering in the 1<sup>st</sup> round [§3.5], and as "absolute" (*accanta*) ending (non-recurrence) in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round [§3.6]. (MA 2:299,9-10)

<sup>71</sup> "Not agitated," *na paritassati*. The subtlest form of this "agitation" (*paritassanā*) is called (mental) restlessness (*uddhacca*), or more specifically, "Dharma restlessness" (*dhamm'uddhacca*), which is found even in a non-returner: see SD 41.5 (5); SD 32.7 (2.1.4, 2.2.3); SD 41.4 (2.2.1).

<sup>72</sup> *Anupādiyam na paritassati, aparitassaṃ paccattañ,ñeva parinibbāyati*. On *paccattaṃ yeva parinibbāyati*, cf **Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya S** (M 37,3/1:251 f, by fully understanding "the all, *sabba*"), SD 54.9; **Pacālā S** (A 7.58/4:88, by contemplating "nothing is worth clinging to"), SD 4.11. Comy says that he brings himself to nirvana (ie by his own efforts) by the utter extinction of defilements (*sayam eva kilesa,parinibbānena parinibbāyati*, MA 2:18,30, 299,29). This is the 1<sup>st</sup> nirvana (with the 5 aggregates remaining "without clinging" (free of defilements, *kilesa,nibbāna*, ie, while he lives); the other is nirvana of these aggregates (*khandha,nibbāna*): SD 45.18 (2.5.2.4).

<sup>73</sup> See also M 11,17/1:67 (SD 49.2); S 22.53/3:54 (SD 29.4).

<sup>74</sup> "(Having) saluted him, keeping him to the right," *padakkhiṇam katvā*: circumambulation as a gesture of respect: see **Anātha,piṇḍik'ovāda S** (M 143,18) n, SD 23.9.

## Moggallāna's doubt about Sakra's understanding

5 Now at that time, the venerable **Mahā Moggallāna** was sitting not far away.

5.2 Then, it occurred to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna:

“Did that yaksha [spirit]<sup>75</sup> break through into the Blessed One's word when he rejoiced, or did he not?

What now if I find out whether that yaksha did break through into the Blessed One's word or did not?”<sup>76</sup>

6 Then, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna,

*just as a strong man would stretch his flexed arm or flex his stretched arm,*<sup>77</sup> [§21]

even so, he disappeared from the mansion of Migāra's mother in the Eastern Park and appeared amongst the devas of Tāva,tiṃsa.

## Moggallāna visits Sakra

7 Now at that time, Sakra, the lord of the devas, was enjoying himself in the One-lotus Park [Eka,puṇḍarīka Uyyāna],<sup>78</sup> endowed and provided with a hundred of the fivefold musical instruments.<sup>79</sup>

7.2 Seeing the venerable Mahā Moggallāna coming from afar, Sakra, the lord of the devas, dismissed the five hundredfold divine music,<sup>80</sup> approached the venerable Mahā Moggallāna and said:

“Please come, master Moggallāna! Welcome, master Moggallāna! It's been a long time since master Moggallāna has found the occasion to come here.<sup>81</sup> Let master Moggallāna take a seat. Here's one prepared.”

The venerable Mahā Moggallāna sat on the prepared seat. Sakra, the lord of the devas, took another, a low seat, and sat down at one side.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>75</sup> *Yakkha*, an Indian mythical nature spirit: SD 21.3 (4.2.5); SD 51.11 (3.1.1.2); SD 54.2 (3.2.2.2) (4).

<sup>76</sup> On Moggallāna's decision to question Sakra, see (3.2.2).

<sup>77</sup> The prec 2 lines: *Atha kho bhagavā āyasmantaṃ nandaṃ bāhāyaṃ gahetvā seyyathāpi nāma balavā puriso sammīñjitaṃ* [only Be *samīñjitaṃ*] *vā bāhaṃ pasāreyya, pasāritaṃ vā bāhaṃ sammīñjeyya* [only Be *samīñjeyya*].

<sup>78</sup> *Eka,puṇḍarīka*: Comy on **Tevijja Vaccha,gotta S** (M 71) says that it is a “white mango tree” (*set'amba,rukkha*) in the wanderers' park (MA 3:195,10). It is also the name of a wanderers' park near Vesālī (M 71,2/1:481), SD 53.3, and of Pasenadi of Kosala's elephant (M 88,3/2:112; MA 3:346,8), SD 49.12. There is also the **Eka,puṇḍarīka-t,thera Ap** (Ap 1:237).

<sup>79</sup> *Tena kho pana samayena sakko devānam indo eka,puṇḍarīke uyyāne dibbehi pañcahi turiya,satehi* [only Be *tūriya-*] *samappito samaṅgī,bhūto paricāreti*. Comy explains that the 5 kinds of divine music are those of: single-sided drums (*ātata*), double-sided drums (*vitata*), strings (*ātata,vitata = tanti,baddha,paṇav'ādi*), winds (*susira*, “holed, hollow”) and percussion (*ghana*) (MA 2:300,17-23; Vv 5,4, 39,1; VvA 37, 257). The Chin parallel, **SĀ 505**, says that the music is played by 500 apsaras (*accharā*) (female counterparts of the gandharvas) [§9.2 n]: see Analayo 2011f:161; 2005:11.

<sup>80</sup> “Dismissed ... ,” *tāni dibbāni pañca turiya,satāni paṭippanāmetvā*.

<sup>81</sup> “Please come, ... to come here,” *etu kho bhante bhagavā svagataṃ bhante bhagavato, cirassaṃ kho marisā imāṃ pariyāyaṃ akāsi yad idaṃ idh'āgamanāya*, using the 3<sup>rd</sup> imp sg *etu* (“Let ... come!”) as a polite formality (D 25,7.1/3:39), SD 1.4. The passage is stock: **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9,5/1:179), SD 7.14; **Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda S** (D 25,6.2/-3:39), SD 1.4 (with additional remark); **Tevijja Vaccha,gotta S** (M 73,4.4), SD 53.3; **Mahā Sakul'udāyi S** (M 77,5/2:2), SD 49.5; **Gopaka Moggallāna S** (M 108,4/3:7), SD 33.5. In the phrase, *pariyāyam akasi*, “made it an occasion.” In the phrase, *pariyāyam akasi*, “made it an occasion,” Comy glosses *pariyāya* as *vāra* (“occasion, opportunity”) (UA 115). This is stock: **D 1**:90 (DA 2:369), 179 (see D:RD 1:245 n2), **2**:270, **3**:2, 39; **M 1**:252 (MA 2:300 f), 326, 481, **2**:2, 30, **3**:7; **S 1**:142; **A 3**:332 (AA 3:363), **4**:76; **U 13** (UA 115); **J 3**:359. In **Brahma Nimantanika S** (M 49), Baka Brahmā says: *ehi kho marisā, sāgataṃ marisā, cirassaṃ kho marisā imāṃ pariyāyaṃ akāsi yadidaṃ idh'āgamanāya* (M 49,-3.2), SD 11.7).

<sup>82</sup> For a detailed discussion on devas standing or sitting in the Buddha's presence, see Analayo 2011:248 n208.

## Moggallāna questions Sakra

8 Sitting thus on one side, Sakra, the lord of the devas, said to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna: “Kosiya,<sup>83</sup> how did the Blessed One speak to you, in brief, regarding the freedom by the destruction of craving? It would be good for us to hear even a portion of that talk.”<sup>84</sup>

8.2 “We, master Moggallāna, are busy with much duty, with much to do with our own tasks, and there’re still even more tasks for the Tāva,tiṃsa [the 33] devas.”<sup>85</sup>

8.3 Moreover, master Moggallāna, what is well heard, well learned, [253] well attended to, well remembered, does not suddenly vanish just like that!<sup>86</sup>

## The Vejayanta palace

9 Once upon a time, master Moggallāna, the devas and the asuras were in the thick of battle with one another.<sup>87</sup> In that battle, the devas won, the asuras lost.<sup>88</sup>

9.2 Having won the battle and returning from it, I had **the Vejayanta [Victory]<sup>89</sup> palace** built. Master Moggallāna, the Vejayanta palace has 100 towers; each tower has 700 gabled chambers; each gabled chamber has 7 apsaras;<sup>90</sup> each apsara has 7 maids.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Kosiya, “owl” (J 3:208), Sakra’s personal name. It means “belonging to the Kusika family.” Indra is so called in the Rg-veda, the sense of which is unknown. Rhys Davids suggests that it is likely to be a survival from the time when Indra was only the god of a Kusika clan (D:RD 2:296 f; C E Godage, “Place of Indra in early Buddhism,” *Univ of Ceylon Review* 3,1 1945:53). See also Divy 632; Mvst 3:200, 315, 403. Ancient Indian clan names were often names of animals, eg “tortoise” (Kassapa = *kacchapa*), “yearling (calf)” (*Vaccha*).

<sup>84</sup> *Sādhū mayam pi etissā kathāya bhāgino assāma savanāyāti*. Moggallāna is politely wondering if Sakra properly remembers what the Buddha has just taught him. *Etissā* is dat/gen f of dem pron *etad*. *Assāma* is 1 pl opt of *atthi*, “to be, is.”

<sup>85</sup> *Mayam kho mārisa moggallāna bahu,kiccā bahu,karaṇīyā app’eva sakena karaṇīyena, api ca devānaṃ yeva tāvatīmsānaṃ karaṇīyena*. “Our tasks may be easy and few but the Tāvatiṃsa devas have much to do,” (MA 2:301,10).

<sup>86</sup> *Api ca mārisa moggallāna sussutam yeva hoti suggahitam sumanasikataṃ sūpadhāritam, yam no khippam eva antaradhāyati*. Apparently, Sakra is hinting that he has not forgotten it. There may be a trace of sarcasm, ie Sakra suggesting that he should ask the Buddha himself regarding the teaching—which Moggallāna actually does later [§§23-27]. In the Chin parallels, **SĀ 505** (T2.133c11), however, Sakra says that “Sometimes I recall a previous matter, sometimes I do not remember it,” 或憶先事, 或時不憶 *huò yì xiān shì, huò shí bù yì*, and in **EĀ 19.3** (T2.594a10), he says that “What has been heard by me is quickly forgotten,” 我所聞者, 即時而忘 *wǒ suǒ wén zhě, jí shí ér wàng*. This error in the Chin versions “could be due to a misunderstanding of the negation *no* for being the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural of the personal pronoun, as it is not unusual for kings and devas to refer to themselves in this way” (Analayo 2011:248 n211). From **§§17-20** and the closing section **EĀ 19.3**, it is clear that Sakra remembers the Buddha’s instruction; moreover, he is a streamwinner (hence, is, as a rule, attentive to Dharma instructions).

<sup>87</sup> “In the past,” the devas and asuras were often engaged in battle: see esp **Sakka Saṃyutta** (S 1:216-225), esp S 11.1 (SD 114.13), 11.2 (SD 114.14), 11.3 (SD 15.5), 11.4 (SD 54.6a), 11.5 (SD 54.6b), 11.6 (SD 86.22). For its origin, see SD 15.5 (3.7.1); SD 39.2 (1). On the end of this belligerence, see **Na Dubbhiya S** (S 11.7), SD 54.7.

<sup>88</sup> As in **Sakka,pañha S** (D 21,2.7/2:285), SD 54.8, but, more likely, this is (**Khanti**) **Vepa,citti S** (S 11.4,3/1:221), SD 54.6a, which records events just preceding those of M 37.

<sup>89</sup> On Vejayanta palace, see **Gahaṭṭha Vandanā S** (S 11.19,5/1:234,17), SD 986.1; **Moggallāna Tha** (Tha 1194-96); description (DhA 2.7.7b/1:273). *Veja,yanta* is also the name of Sakra’s **chariot**: description (J 5:408 f); his charioteer is Mātali (S 1:224; DhA 1:279; J 4:335; VvA 141); goes to battle in it (J 1:20;2DA 2:481; SA 1:340; with Nimi, J 6:103; people see it, CA 57. The name of **Mahā Sudassana’s chief chariot** (out of 84,000): D 17,2.10.8/2:190 (SD 36.12).

<sup>90</sup> An **apsara** (*accharā*; Skt *apsarās*), celestial nymph: see SD 54.3 (2.3.2).

<sup>91</sup> *Vejayantassa kho mārisa moggallāna pāsādassa eka,satam niyyūham, ekekasmiṃ niyyūhe satta,satta kūṭāgāra,-satāni, ekam,ekasmiṃ kūṭāgāre satta,satta accharāyo, ekamekissā accharāya satta,satta paricārikāyo*.

**10** Would you, master Moggallāna, like to see how delightful the Vejayanta palace is?<sup>92</sup> The venerable Moggallāna consented by his silence.

10.2 Then, Sakra, the lord of the devas, and Vessavaṇa, the great king,<sup>93</sup> letting the venerable Mahā Moggallāna lead the way, approached the Vejayanta palace.

**11** When the maids of Sakra, the lord of the devas, saw Mahā Moggallāna coming from afar, they, feeling a sense of moral shame and moral fear, entered their chambers.<sup>94</sup> Just as a daughter-in-law feels moral shame and moral fear towards her father-in-law,<sup>95</sup> even so, *the maids of Sakra, the lord of the devas, saw Mahā Moggallāna coming from afar, they, feeling a sense of moral shame and moral fear, entered their chambers.*

### Sakra's pride in the palace

**12** Then, Sakra, the lord of the devas, and Vessavaṇa, the great king, had the venerable Mahā Moggallāna walk and view all over the Vejayanta palace.<sup>96</sup>

12.2 “See, master Moggallāna, this delightfulness of the Vejayanta palace! See, master Moggallāna, that delightfulness of the Vejayanta palace!”

**13** “This shines as the venerable Kosiya’s merit done formerly.<sup>97</sup> Whenever humans see anything delightful, they said: ‘This, sirs, indeed, shines like the devas of Tāvatiṃsa!’<sup>98</sup> This indeed shines as the venerable Kosiya’s merit done formerly.”

### Moggallāna rocks the palace

**14** Then, it occurred to the venerable Mahā Moggallāna: “This yaksha dwells much too heedlessly!<sup>99</sup> What now if I were to rouse a sense of urgency in this yaksha!”<sup>100</sup>

14.2 Then, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna performed an act of psychic wonder, so that with his toe, he made the Vejayanta palace quake, shake and tremble.<sup>101</sup> **[254]**

<sup>92</sup> *iccheyyāsi no tvaṃ mārisa moggallāna vejayantassa pāsādassa rāmaṇeyyakam datṭhun’ti.*

<sup>93</sup> **Vessavaṇa**, also called Kuvera, the “great king” (*mahārāja*) who is guardian of the northern quarter, and lord of the yakshas. Comy says that Vessavaṇa is Sakra’s favourite, and knew each other since they were boys (*vallabho, balava, vissāsiko*, MA 32:303,23)

<sup>94</sup> *Addasāṃsu kho sakkassa devānam indassa paricārikāyo āyasmantaṃ mahā, moggallānam dūrato’va āgacchantāṃ, disvā ottappamānā hiriyamānā sakam sakam ovarakam pavisiṃsu.*

<sup>95</sup> *Seyyathā’pi nāma suṇisā sasuram disvā ottappati hiriyati.* Cf **Mahā Hatthi, padōpama S** (M 28,20/1:186), SD 6.16. For a discussion on the social significance of the attitudes of a daughter-in-law towards her parents-in-law, see Analayo 2011:250 n218.

<sup>96</sup> *Atha kho sakko ca devānam indo vessavaṇo ca mahā, rājā āyasmantaṃ mahā, moggallānam vejayante pāsāde anucaṅkamāpentī anuvarāpentī.*

<sup>97</sup> *Sobhati idam āyasmato kosiyaṃ, yathā taṃ pubbe kata, puññassa.*

<sup>98</sup> *Manussā’pi kiñcid eva rāmaṇeyyakam diṭṭhā* [only Be: *disvā*] *evam āhaṃsu “sobhati vata bho yathā devānam tāvatimsānan’ti.*

<sup>99</sup> *Atibāḷham kho ayam yakkho pamatto viharati.*

<sup>100</sup> *Yam nūnāham imam yakkham saṃvejeyyan’ti.*

<sup>101</sup> *Atha kho āyasmā mahā, moggallāno tathā, rūpaṃ iddhābhisaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkhāsi* [Be Ee *abhisaṅkhāsi*; Be:Ka *abhisaṅkhāresi*; Ke Se *abhisaṅkhāreti*]. Comy says that Moggallāna did this by getting into the dhyana based on the water-kasiṇa [SD 49.5b (1.2)] and then resolving, “Let the foundations of the palace be like water!” Emerging from his dhyana, he rises into the air and strikes the palace’s corner with his big toe (MA 2:304,3-10). Saṃyutta Comy, however, says: After cultivating the water-kasiṇa, he rose into the air and struck it with his big toe (SA 3:257,28-31). Moggallāna performs a similar feat in (**Pāsāda Kampana**) **Moggallāna S** (S 51.14,3.2) to rouse some monks, SD 27.8.



15 Then, in the hearts of Sakra, the lord of the devas, of Vessavaṇa, the great king, and of the devas of Tāvātimsa, there arose awe and wonder:

“It’s terrible, indeed, sirs! Amazing, indeed, sirs!<sup>102</sup> Great is the power, great is the might of the recluse! That with his toe, he makes the Vejayanta palace quake, shake and tremble!”<sup>103</sup>

### Sakra answers Moggallāna

16 Then, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna knew that Sakra, the lord of the devas, was roused with a sense of urgency with his hair standing on end.<sup>104</sup> He said to Sakra, the lord of the devas:

16.2 “Now, Kosiya, as regards the brief instruction on **the freedom by the destruction of craving** that the Blessed One spoke to you about, *it would be good for us to hear even a portion of that talk.*” [§8.1]

17 “Here, master Moggallāna, I approached the Blessed One, saluted him and stood at one side. Standing at one side, I, master Moggallāna, said to the Blessed One:

“*In what way, bhante, in brief, is a monk freed by the destruction of craving, one who has reached the utter end, reached the total security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans?*” [§2.2]

18 When this was said, master Moggallāna, the Blessed One said:

### A brief definition of arhathood (1<sup>st</sup> reprise) [§§3, 25]

19 ‘Here, lord of devas, a monk has heard that “**Nothing is worth clinging to.**”

19.2 *When, lord of devas, a monk has heard that nothing is worth clinging to, he directly knows all things.*

19.3 *When he has directly known all things, he fully understands all things.*

19.4 *When he has fully understood all things, whatever feelings he feels, whether pleasant or painful or neutral*

19.5 *he dwells contemplating **impermanence** in those feelings;*

*he dwells contemplating fading away,*

*he dwells contemplating ending,*

*he dwells contemplating relinquishment.*

19.6 *Thus dwelling contemplating **impermanence** in those feelings,*

*dwelling contemplating fading away,*

*dwelling contemplating ending,*

*dwelling contemplating relinquishment,*

19.7 *he does not cling to anything in the world.*

*When he does not cling, he is not (mentally) agitated.*

*When he is not agitated, he personally attains **nirvana**.*

19.8 *He understands:*

*‘Birth is destroyed,*

*the holy life has been lived,*

<sup>102</sup> On this exclamation, see **Dubbhāṇiyya S** (S 11.22,4), SD 54.16.

<sup>103</sup> Mentioned in **Moggallāna Tha** (Tha 1194-96).

<sup>104</sup> Comy explains “a sense of urgency” (*samviggam*) as “agitated, afraid” (*ubbiggam*); but adds that the hair-raising is due to both fear (or awe) and joy (clearly because Sakra and the devas know that it is Moggallāna who has performed the psychic wonder) (MA 2:304,14-19).

*what should be done is done,  
there is no more of this state of being.*’ [§§3.8, 25.8]

19.9 *To that extent, lord of devas, in brief, is how a monk is freed by the destruction of craving, who has reached the utter end, reached the ultimate security from bondage, reached the highest of the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans.*’ [§§2.2, 3.9]

20 Thus, master Moggallāna, the Blessed One spoke on the freedom by the destruction of craving.”

21 Then, the venerable having rejoiced in and approved of what Sakra, the lord of the devas, had said, [255] *just as a strong man would stretch his flexed arm or flex his stretched arm,* [§6]

even so, he disappeared from amongst the devas of Tāva,tiṃsa and appeared in the mansion of Migāra’s mother in the Eastern Park.

## Fellow brahmafārers

22 Then, not long after the venerable Moggallāna had left, the attendants of Sakra, the lord of the devas, said:

“Is that, sir, the Blessed One, your teacher?”

“No, sirs, that is not the Blessed One, my teacher. He is the venerable Mahā Moggallāna, my fellow brahmafārer.<sup>105</sup>”

22.2 “It’s a gain, sir, [a great gain, sir,]<sup>106</sup> that you are the fellow brahmafārer of one with such great power, such great might. What more so, indeed, that the Blessed One is your teacher!”<sup>107</sup>

## Moggallāna sees the Buddha

23 Then, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna approached the Blessed One, saluted him and sat down at one side. Sitting thus at one side, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna said to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, does the Blessed One recall speaking in brief on the freedom by the destruction of craving to a certain renowned and mighty yaksha?<sup>108</sup>

24 “I do recall here, Moggallāna, that Sakra, lord of the devas, approached me, saluted and then stood at one side. Standing thus at one side, Sakra, lord of the devas, said to me:

24.2 “In what way, bhante, in brief, is a monk **freed by the destruction of craving**, one who has reached the utter end, reached the total security from bondage, reached the highest in the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans?” [§2.2]

24.3 When this was said, Moggallāna, I said:

## A brief definition of arhathood (2<sup>nd</sup> reprise) [§§3, 19]

25 ‘Here, lord of devas, a monk has heard that “**Nothing is worth clinging to.**”

25.2 *When, lord of devas, a monk has heard that nothing is worth clinging to, he directly knows all things.*

25.3 *When he has directly known all things,*

<sup>105</sup> *Sa, brahma.cārī me eso āyasmā mahā, moggallāno’ti.* On why Sakra calls himself a “brahmafārer,” see (4.2).

<sup>106</sup> *Suladdham te mārisa,* Ce Ee only.

<sup>107</sup> *Lābhā te mārisa yassa te sa, brahma.cārī evaṃ mah’iddhiko evaṃ mahā’nubhāvo, aho nūna te so bhagavā satthā’ti.*

<sup>108</sup> *Abhijānāti no bhante bhagavā ahu ñāt’aññatarassa\* mahesakkhassa yakkhassa saṅkhittena tanhā, saṅkhaya, vimuttiṃ bhāsītā’ti.* \*[Be; Ce Ke Se ahu nañ, ñeva aññatarassa; Ee ahu tañ, ñeva aññatarassa].

- he fully understands all things.*
- 25.4 *When he has fully understood all things, whatever feelings he feels,  
whether pleasant or painful or neutral*
- 25.5 *he dwells contemplating **impermanence**  
in those feelings;  
he dwells contemplating fading away,  
he dwells contemplating ending,  
he dwells contemplating relinquishment.*
- 25.6 *Thus dwelling contemplating **impermanence** in those feelings,  
dwelling contemplating fading away,  
dwelling contemplating ending,  
dwelling contemplating relinquishment,*
- 25.7 *he does not cling to anything in the world.  
When he does not cling, he is not (mentally) agitated.  
When he is not agitated, he personally attains **nirvana**.*
- 25.8 *He understands:  
‘Birth is destroyed,  
the holy life has been lived, [256]  
what should be done is done,  
there is no more of this state of being.’ [§§3.8, 19.8]*

25.9 *To that extent, lord of devas, in brief, is how a monk is freed by the destruction of craving, who has reached the utter end, reached the ultimate security from bondage, reached the highest of the holy life, reached the ultimate goal—the best of gods and humans.’*

**26** Thus, Moggallāna, do I recall speaking to Sakra, lord of the devas, on the freedom by the destruction of craving.”

**27** The Blessed One said this. The venerable Moggallāna, joyful at heart, approved of the Blessed One’s word.

— evaṃ —

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