

**SD 61.17****(Māra) Rajja Sutta****The (Māra) Discourse on Kingship****S 4.20**

Theme: Māra invites the Buddha to wield sovereignty

Translated by Piya Tan ©2017, 2024

**1 Sutta summary and parallel****1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY**

Once the Buddha was reflecting on the possibility of rulership with neither violence nor loss, nor destruction of property, nor suffering. Māra, learning of this, at once appeared before the Buddha and invited him to be such a ruler. The Buddha replied that those who enjoy power would never have enough. And those who understand the source of suffering would never get caught up in the world.

**1.2 MĀRA VATTHU 2 (DhA 23.8)**

**1.2.0** A slightly longer version of the Sutta incident, with extra verses, is found in **the Māra Vatthu 2** (the story of Māra) in the Dhammapada Commentary (DhA 23.8/4:31-33) on Dh 331-333. The following translation (but not the commentary) is partly based on E W Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends* (DhA:B), 1921 3:213-14.<sup>1</sup>

**1.2.1 Māra tempts the Buddha**

**1.2.1.1** “**There is a need**” (*atth’amhi*). This Dharma teaching, with reference to Māra, was given by the Teacher while he was dwelling in a forest hut in the Himalayan slope with reference to Māra. It is said that at that time, kings ruled oppressing their subjects. As the Blessed One saw people being punished and persecuted under the rule of these wicked kings, he was moved by compassion. [32] He thought, “Now, it is possible to rule without killing or causing to kill; without conquering or causing to conquer; without sorrow or causing sorrow; but is it possible to rule justly?”

**1.2.1.2** Now, Māra the evil one read the Blessed One’s mind with his own mind, and thought thus: “The recluse Gotama is considering:  
‘Is it possible to exercise kingship [sovereignty] (*rajja*)?’  
It must be that he now desires to exercise kingship, and this thing called sovereignty is an occasion of heedlessness. Perhaps I may be able to catch him off his guard. Let me now arouse his ambition.”

**1.2.1.3** Accordingly, Māra the evil one, approached the Teacher and said:  
“Bhante, let the Blessed One exercise kingship. Let the well gone one exercise kingship, *without killing or causing to kill; without conquering or causing to conquer; without sorrow or causing sorrow; but to rule justly!*”

Then the Teacher said to Māra:

“Evil one, what do you see in me that makes you speak thus to me?”

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<sup>1</sup> Cf E Windisch, *Māra und Buddha*, Leipzig, 1895:107-109.

“Bhante, the Blessed One has well developed **the 4 bases of power**.<sup>2</sup> Should the Blessed One resolve, ‘Let the Himalayas, king of mountains, be turned into gold,’ gold would that mountain be. I, too, will do with wealth whatever that wealth can do. Thus, you should rule justly.”

#### 1.2.1.4 Then said the Teacher:

If there were a mountain of gold, entirely of solid gold,  
double this<sup>3</sup> would not suffice for one: having known this, fare harmoniously. [S 486]  
[33]

How could a person who has seen the source of suffering | bend to sensual pleasures?  
Having known acquisition as a tie to the world, | surely a person would train for its removal. [S 487]

With these verses, the Teacher caused Māra to be troubled with religious emotion (*saṁvejetvā*). Then he said:

“I will admonish you, evil one. I’ve nothing in common with you. Thus do I admonish you.”  
So saying, he uttered these verses:

<p><i>atthamhi jātamhi sukhā sahāya</i> <i>tuṭṭhī sukhā yā itarītarena</i><sup>4</sup> <i>puññaṃ sukhaṃ jīvita,saṅkhayamhi</i> <i>sabbassa dukkhassa sukhaṃ pahānaṃ</i>     <b>Dh 331</b></p>	<p>When the need arises, companions are a joy. Joyful is contentment with this or that. Merits are a joy at life’s end. Joyful ’tis to abandon all suffering.</p>
<p><i>sukhā metteyyatā</i><sup>5</sup> <i>loke</i> <i>atho petteyyatā</i><sup>6</sup> <i>sukhā</i> <i>sukhā sāmāññatā loke</i> <i>atho brahmaññatā sukhā</i>     <b>Dh 332</b></p>	<p>Joyful is respect for mother in this world, joyful, too, respect for father in this world. Joyful is respect for the recluse<sup>7</sup> in this world, and joyful, too, respect for the brahmin.<sup>8</sup></p>

<sup>2</sup> “The 4 bases of power [success]” (*iddhi,pāda*) are: (1) will (*chanda*), (2) effort [energy] (*virīya*), (3) mind (*citta*), and investigation (*vīmaṁsā*): **Cattāro Iddhi,pāda** SD 10.3; **Iddhi,pāda Vibhaṅga S** (S 51.20) SD 28.14.

<sup>3</sup> Ee dvittā pi; Be Se dvittā’va.

<sup>4</sup> *Itarītarena* recurs in **Tha 111** (Jenta), where Comy explains it as “according to what one receives by way of support” (*itarītarena, yathā,laddhena paccayena, ThaA 1:234,27 f*). Similarly, Comy on **Tha 230** (Dhaniya): “whatever one gets by way of support whether inferior or superior” (*itarītarena, yena kenaci hīnena vā paṇītena vā yathā,laddhena paccayena. ThaA 2:90,28-31*). Comy on **Tha 922**: “in whatever one gets as support whether gross or fine” (*itarītarena ti yasmim tasmim hīne paṇīte vā yathā,laddhe paccaye, ThaA 3:76,5 f*). For philological details, see Tha:N 147 n111.

<sup>5</sup> *Matteyya-tā* or *metteyya-tā* (BHS *mātrjñā*, “mother-honouring,” Mvst 3:131,16). *Petteyya-tā* (BHS *pitṛjñā*, “father-honouring”). Comy: “*Matteyya* means right conduct to one’s mother; *petteyya* is right conduct to one’s father. It refers to the supporting of both parents” (*matteyyā ti mātari sammā,paṭipatti, petteyyā ti pitari sammā,-paṭipatti, ubhayena pi mātā,pitunnaṃ upaṭṭhānam eva kathitaṃ, DhA 4:34,12-15*). Comy at D 3:145,27: *matteyyatā* means “duties to be done for one’s mother” (*matteyyatāya ti mātu,katappa,vatte, DA 920,31 f*). P *matteyya(tā) petteyya(tā) sāmāñña(tā) brāhmañña(tā)* (and their respective neg *a-* forms) are often found in the suttas (**D 26**,17-19/3:70-72; **S 56.66-69**/5:467 f; **A 3.36**/1:138,15); for their Skt forms *mātrjñā pitṛjñā śrāmaṇyatā brāhmaṇyatā* in Skt texts: BHS svv. For philological details, see Dh:N 142 n332. See also [1.2.1.5 (5+6)] below.

<sup>6</sup> *Petteyya-tā* (BHS *pitṛjñā-tā*), see prec n.

<sup>7</sup> Comy defines “respect for the recluse” (*sāmāññata*) as “for those with right practice in being renunciants” (*pabbajitesu sammā,paṭipatti, DhA 4:35,3 f*).

<sup>8</sup> Here, “respect for a (true) brahmin’s state” (*brahmaññatā*) is “for those who have pushed away evil” (*bāhita,-pāpesu*), “that is, those with right practice, such as the buddhas, pratyekas-buddhas and disciples” (*buddha,paccekabuddha,sāvakesu sammā,paṭipatti yeva*) (DhA 4:35,4 f). Hence, “brahmin” here refers to arhats, not those born priests of self-proclaimed high-caste status. See 3 prec nn.

<i>sukhaṃ yāva jarā sīlaṃ</i>	A moral life unto old age is joyful.
<i>sukhā saddhā paṭiṭṭhitā</i>	Faith firmly founded is joyful.
<i>sukho paññāya paṭilābho</i>	The gaining of wisdom is joyful.
<i>pāpānaṃ akaraṇaṃ sukhaṃ ti</i>	Joyful is the avoidance of evil.

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**1.2.1.5 DHAMMAPADA COMMENTARY ON THE VERSES<sup>9</sup>****(1) When the need arises (*atthamhi jātamhi*)**

When there is a need—such as in the case of a renunciant, when it is robe-making or settling of disputes, and so forth; and in the case of a layperson, [34] when it is farming [“ploughing”], or when oppressed by those with the powerful, and so forth—then, friends such as those who can accomplish the task or settle the matter, are indeed **joyful** (*sukha*).

**(2) Joyful is contentment with this or that (*tuṭṭhī sukhā yā itarītarena*)**

Since lay persons, not content with what they have, undertake such acts as burglary, and renunciants commit all kinds of impropriety, but still they find no satisfaction; therefore, this alone is joyful: namely, being content with what is one’s own, whatever it is, little or much.

**(3) Merits are a joy at life’s end (*puññaṃ sukhaṃ jīvita, saṅkhayamhi*)**

A wholesome act done close to life’s end,<sup>10</sup> according to one’s nature and inclination, is indeed a joy. [This is because of its potential good effect on one’s future life.]

**(4) (Joyful ’tis to abandon) all suffering (*sabbassa dukkhassa*)**

And arhathood, which is the abandoning of all suffering of the cycle (of existence), is indeed *the* blessing in this world.<sup>11</sup>

**(5) Respect for mother (*metteyyatā*); respect for father (*petteyyatā*)**

*Metteyyatā* is proper conduct towards one’s mother.

*Petteyyatā* is proper conduct towards one’s father.

They both refer to attending upon one’s parents.

When parents come to know that their children would not look after them, parents either bury their wealth in the ground or they bestow it upon others. Furthermore, bad reputation accrues to those children, that is, they do not look after their parents. And also, upon dying they are reborn in the hell called Gūtha (“excrement”).

But those who look after their parents will inherit their wealth and also receive praise (for their dutiful conduct). And after their death, they are reborn in a state of happiness. Thus, it is said that these two (proper conduct towards mother and father) are said to be joyful.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This comy is based mainly on that of J R Carter & M Paliawadana, *The Dhammapada*, Oxford, 1987:351-353.

<sup>10</sup> “Close to life’s end,” *maraṇa, kāle*, lit, “at the time of death.”

<sup>11</sup> “In this world,” Be Ee Se *imasmim loke*; Ce omits.

<sup>12</sup> Comy here gives a traditionally “consequentialist” view of karma, which reflects the “old” pre-Buddhist social attitude. The sutta approach is based on *kusala* (wholesome) conduct by way of **virtue ethics**. It is right and good to assist parents not only out of gratitude to them, but as a training in *generosity, love, compassion, joy and peace of mind*. We could well treat anyone with such qualities, esp the seniors; why not give priority to our own parents while they live. See SD 60.1c (11.4.7); SD 61.5b (5.2).

**(6) Respect for the recluse (*sāmaññatā*); respect for the brahmin (*brahmaññatā*)**

*Sāmaññatā* is proper conduct towards renunciants.

*Brahmaññatā* is proper conduct towards the true brahmins.<sup>13</sup>

The proper conduct is indeed towards those who have fully discarded the unwholesome, that is, buddhas, pratyeka-buddha, and disciples.

By “respect for” the recluse and the brahmin, is meant the conduct of providing them with the 4 supports.<sup>14</sup> This, too, is declared to be joyful in this world.

**2 The 4 bases of success (*iddhi, pāda*)****2.0 THE BASIC SET****2.0.1 Sutta references and sources****2.0.1.1 The 4 bases of success or spiritual powers are:**

(1) will or zeal	<i>chanda</i>	[2.1]
(2) effort	<i>virīya</i>	[2.2]
(3) mind	<i>citta</i>	[2.3]
(4) investigation	<i>vīmaṃsā</i>	[2.4]

Each of these bases are actually a meditative concentration (*samādhi*) from which one cultivates the dhyanas. Hence, their names in full, such as stated in **the (Majjhima) Ceto, khila Sutta** (M 16), are:

(1) the base of success that is (the accomplishment in) the samadhi based on <b>zeal</b> and volitional striving	<i>chanda, samādhi, padhāna, saṅkhāra</i>
(2) <i>the base of success that is (the accomplishment in) the samadhi based on <b>energy</b> and volitional striving</i>	<i>vīriya, samādhi, padhāna, saṅkhāra</i>
(3) <i>the base of success that is (the accomplishment in) the samadhi based on <b>mind</b><sup>15</sup> and volitional striving</i>	<i>citta, samādhi, padhāna, saṅkhāra</i>
(4) <i>the base of success that is (the accomplishment in) the samadhi based on <b>investigation</b> and volitional striving</i>	<i>vīmaṃsā, samādhi, padhāna, saṅkhāra</i> (M 16,26), SD 32.14

**2.0.1.2** The term *iddhi* as used in this expression has a broader sense than merely “psychic powers” by which we usually understand the term *iddhi*. Basically, it means “success,” which covers psychic wonders as well as personal abilities, such as the extension of one’s lifespan.<sup>16</sup> On a very simple mundane level, it can mean the use of proper meditation to help one accomplish some wholesome task by one’s (1) will power, (2) unrelenting effort, (3) a mind focused on the task, and (4) being circumspect of the weaknesses and possible failure of one’s efforts, and also their various benefits.

On the highest level, the tetrad refers to the use of one’s meditative powers to attain the path. This begins with:

<sup>13</sup> On the def of the true brahmin, see under (1.2.1.4) Dh 332 n.

<sup>14</sup> The 4 supports (*paccaya*) are almsfood, robes, shelter and medical support. See **Sabb’āsava S** (M 2,13-16), SD 30.3.

<sup>15</sup> The “mind” (*citta*) is mental purity.

<sup>16</sup> On life-extension, see **Kappāvesesa**, SD 60.13.

- (1) the will or aspiration to reflect on impermanence;
- (2) the effort or persistence in one's reflection of impermanence;
- (3) the constant mindfulness and awareness of the reality that is impermanence; and
- (4) the wise consideration of what one has experienced or understood of impermanence.

Hence, the term *iddhi* is used in 2 important senses:

- (1) success in the exercise of the psychic power (*iddhi, vidha*),<sup>17</sup> and
- (2) success in the effort to win liberation (signified by the term *iddhi, pāda*).

**2.0.1.3** This ancient tetrad of qualities are mentioned in the following texts:

- Cakka, vatti Sīha, nāda Sutta      D 26,29              SD 36.10
- Mahā Sakul'udāyī Sutta          M 77,17 SD 49.5
- **Chanda Samādhi Sutta**          S 51.13              SD 10.3(3.3)
- Iddhi, pāda Vibhaṅga Sutta      S 51.20              SD 28.14.

For a study on the tetrad, see the essay, **Catu Iddhi, pāda** (SD 10.3).<sup>18</sup>

### 2.1 SAMADHI ARISING FROM WILL

In simple terms, "**will**" (*chanda*) here refers to the desire to act in our meditation: to meditate in a thought-free manner, so that the mind, free from the body, is able to function in its fullest capacity. One renounces any idea of "being" this or that, or of "having" this or that. There is just this present moment before the meditating mind.

### 2.2 SAMADHI ARISING FROM EFFORT

By "**effort**" is meant constant mindfulness; the mind is naturally and zestfully brought back to the meditation sign (*nimitta*). One goes on doing this until the point when even the sign itself is no more there (or rather, not needed), but one remains concentrated in the signless (*animitta*). In the early stages, one must, of course, master the sign before experiencing the signless.<sup>19</sup>

Even at the level of watching the sign, one needs full concentration, which means that there must be no trace whatsoever of "being" (I, me, mine) or "having" (craving or any kind of thinking). It is the notion of being and having that keeps one and the sign apart. As one relinquishes more of one's sense of being and having, the sign, as it were, draws closer, until there is no more "one" or "sign." That is "the samadhi based volitional striving." [2.0.1.1]

### 2.3 SAMADHI ARISING FROM MIND

The "**mind**" (*citta*) here is the concentration itself, the one-point of consciousness at a tangent to the sphere of reality, spinning and glowing. It is one of countless tangents to the sphere. The tangent is a dynamic one, directed at the sun-like sphere, giver of light and life. That tangent, though barely in contact with the sphere, is so very close enough to be able to draw the spheres' light and life. This is the reality of the moment, the *point* through which flows the knowledge and vision of true reality, for just the moment, or for a lifetime, or for some lifetimes, before the tangent dissolves—there is just the revolving sphere of countless tangents.

<sup>17</sup> S 51.11/5:263-66, 51.14/5:269-71, 51.17/5:274 f.

<sup>18</sup> See also SD 57.22 (1.2.3.9).

<sup>19</sup> On the signless freedom of mind, see **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43,27) + SD 30.2 (3.2.3).

## 2.4 SAMADHI ARISING FROM INVESTIGATION

This 4<sup>th</sup> and last samadhi is based on refining and persevering in one's meditation and daily life. After every meditation experience, one **reviews** it with one's understanding of the Buddha Dharma—the plain truth of the suttas. Often enough, the wisdom that arises during such a sitting will give one clearer and deeper insight into the Dharma. Then, one begins to notice the difference between the Dharma of words and concepts, and the Dharma of *nonwords, nonself and non-noise* (inner silence). One is then moving closer to the path.<sup>20</sup>

## 3 The Buddha and governance

### 3.1 THE IDEAL RULER

#### 3.1.1 The world ruler

**3.1.1.1 The Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) and its excerpt, **the Cetiya Sutta** (S 51.10),<sup>21</sup> record the Buddha as saying that one who has mastery over the 4 bases of success [power] (*iddhi, pāda*) can, if he so desires, live on beyond his current age, for the full lifespan (that is, for the remaining years of the possible lifespan at that time, or *kappāvasesa*) [SD 60.13].

**3.1.1.2** Māra makes this appeal to the Buddha, not out of respect for his leadership ability, but because Māra wants to tempt the Buddha with lust for power, and thereby keep him under his own control. The Suttas do not offer much detailed answers to the question of righteous governance for the simple reason that it is an ideal. [3.1.2]

#### 3.1.2 The “wheel-turner” (*cakka, vatti*)

**3.1.2.1** One of the well known late canonical concepts is that of **the wheel turner** (*cakka, vatti*). The suttas hold up the “wheel-turner” as the ideal king who rules with neither force nor violence but with justice and righteousness. This ideal world ruler is described in suttas such as the following:<sup>22</sup>

- |   |                 |                  |
|---|-----------------|------------------|
| • <b>Cakka, vatti Sīhanāda Sutta</b>    | D 26/3:58-79    | SD 36.10;        |
| • <b>Mahā Sudassana Sutta</b>           | D 17/2:169-199  | SD 36.12;        |
| • <b>Bāla Paṇḍita Sutta</b>             | M 129/3:163-178 | SD 2.22;         |
| • <b>(Bojjhaṅga) Cakka, vatti Sutta</b> | S 46.42/5:99    | SD 36.12(3.8);   |
| • <b>Cakka, vatti Acchariya Sutta</b>   | A 4.130/2:123   | SD 36.10(2.1.2); |

**3.1.2.2** There are probably 3 main reasons for the origin and popularity of the notion:<sup>23</sup>

- (1) the concept of the “great man” (*mahā, purisa*); [3.1.2.3 f]
- (2) the rise of powerful kingdoms (like Āṅga-Magadha, that is, the Haryanka dynasty) replacing the old republican confederations (*gaṇa, saṅgha*) (such as the Sakyas, Vajjīs and Licchavīs); [3.1.2.5]
- (2) the advent of Alexander the Great who almost invaded India; [3.1.2.6].

<sup>20</sup> On the bases of success and life-prolongation, see SD 60.13 (2.2.2).

<sup>21</sup> **D 16,3.3/2:103,23-26 = S 51.10/5:259,18-20** (SD 9).

<sup>22</sup> See also SD 36.9 (3) *cakkavatti* as the great man; SD 36.10 (2).

<sup>23</sup> For the “great man” concept and the wheel-turner, see SD 36.9 (4.2.1).

### 3.1.2.3 THE “WHEEL-TURNER” AS “THE GREAT MAN” (MAHĀ,PURISA)

The term **cakka,vatti** (Skt *cakra-vartin*) is a bahuvrihi,<sup>24</sup> compound, which can be translated in the following ways:

- nominatively (as agent), “one who turns the wheels (of power)”;
- instrumentally, “through whom the wheels (chariots) are turning”;
- genitively, “one whose wheels are moving,” that is, “whose chariots are advancing everywhere without obstruction.”

The *cakkavatti*’s “wheel” (*cakka*) is of course *the wheel of power*, that is, his sphere of dominance and influence: the wheel of power (*āṇā,cakka*) is contrasted with the Buddha’s “wheel of truth” (*dhamma,-cakka*) that he turned in the deer park at Isipatana near Benares, as stated in **the Dhamma,cakka Pavatana Sutta** (the discourse on the turning of the Dharma-wheel) (S 56.11).<sup>25</sup> The Dharma-wheel is the wheel of truth, representing renunciation of the world, governed by the Dharma-Vinaya.<sup>26</sup>

**3.1.2.4** The 2 ideas of the “wheel-turner”—one turning the *worldly* wheel of power and the other the *spiritual* wheel of Dharma—are unified in the concept of “the great man” (**mahā,purisa**), who is said to be endowed with the 32 marks and their 80 lesser tokens. Although the Buddhist texts tell us these tradition of marks was a brahminical one, we can find no such source. Their actual source clearly came from another more foreign, but no less remarkable, source [3.1.2.6].

The Commentaries relate that brahmin soothsayers who came to the child Siddhattha’s naming ceremony (on the 5<sup>th</sup> day after his birth), seeing the 3 marks, predicted that the child would become a world-ruler (a *cakkavatti*) if he remained a householder, or become a world-teacher (the Buddha), if he renounced the world.

However, the youngest of the 8 brahmins who made this prediction, Koṇḍañña, was certain that the child would leave home and become a world-teacher. Koṇḍañña was said to have followed the child’s spiritual growth very closely, and when Siddhattha renounced the world, Koṇḍañña and 4 sons of the other brahmins, too, renounced to quietly follow the Bodhisattva’s progress.<sup>27</sup>

### 3.1.2.5 THE RISE OF POWERFUL KINGDOMS

Late in the Buddha’s life, we see Magadha growing into a powerful kingdom under Ajāta,sattu. In fact, **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16) opens with Ajātasattu planning to invade his neighbour, the Vajjī. As a spiritual teacher, the Buddha had, as a rule, stayed above politics. Ajātasattu had sent his chief minister, Vassakāra, to inform the Buddha that Ajātasattu plans to invade the Vajjīs, and to know what the Buddha had to say. Interestingly, what the Buddha told Vassakāra effectively made Ajātasattu postpone his invasion plans for a few years.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> A **bahuvrihi**, is a type of relative compound, a noun, that refers to something that is not specified by any of its parts by themselves, esp a cpd that refers to a possessor of an object specified: eg, a sabretooth (it is neither a sabre nor a tooth: it is an extinct giant feline with huge fangs. English bahuvrihis often describe people by referring to specific properties, such as: *flatfoot*, *half-wit*, *highbrow*, *lowlife*, *redhead*, *tenderfoot*, and *white-collar*.

<sup>25</sup> S 56.11/5:420-424 = Mv 1.6.16-31 (V 1:10-12), SD 1.1.

<sup>26</sup> On the 2 wheels, of the Dharma (*dhamma,cakka*) and of power (*āṇā,cakka*), ie, Sangha and State, see SD 36.10 (5.4.1.2); SD 59.15 (2.2.3).

<sup>27</sup> On the naming ceremony & Koṇḍañña, see SD 52.1 (4.3 f).

<sup>28</sup> D 16,1.1-1.5 (SD 9).

There was a clear separation of powers between the 2 “wheels”: the power wheel (Ajāta,sattu) and the Dharma wheel (the Buddha). Clearly, kingship and rulership usually involve politics and violence, where are hard to reconcile with proper observance of the precepts.<sup>29</sup>

Just 2 months after the Buddha’s passing, when the monks formally informed king Ajātasattu of Magadha that they would be rehearsing the Dharma-Vinaya, he famously replied: “Very well, bhante, do so with full confidence. Let mine be the ‘wheel of (worldly) power’ (*āṇā,cakka*); let yours be **the ‘wheel of Dharma’!** Instruct me, I will do it.”<sup>30</sup>

### 3.1.2.6 ALEXANDER THE GREAT (356-323 BCE)

Western scholars generally agree that the Buddha dies sometime between 410 and 400 BCE.<sup>31</sup> If we accept these dates, then Alexander and his multinational forces impacted northern India only about half a century later. As a charismatic young conqueror, Alexander must have profoundly influenced early Buddhist culture, as evident in the Buddhist concepts of the great man and his 32 marks.

**Arrian**, “Xenophon” (c86-160), for example, claimed that Alexander, had heterochromia iridum, thus: “[T]he strong, handsome commander with one eye dark as the night and one blue as the sky.” Both colours would be described in Sanskrit or Pali as *nīla*, and is one of the 32 marks.<sup>32</sup>

**3.1.2.7 The Greeks in India and the northwest** beyond India (around Gandhara) were deeply influenced by Buddhism, and in turn profoundly influenced Buddhism too. One of the radical changes that Greek iconography introduced into Buddhism was the representation of the Buddha in human form (anthropomorphism). Indeed, the Buddha forbade both the worshipping of him as a deity, and making images of him. The first 400 years of Buddhism was an **aniconic** vision of the represented only symbolically (like a wheel, footprints, an empty seat, and so on—and the bodhi tree).<sup>33</sup>

Once the Greek vision of beauty assumed the form of a Buddha image, people were simply enthralled by it. For some 400 years after the Buddha, there were no human image of him—now people are able not only to “see” the Buddha but as a god more real than any of the Greek mythical figures.<sup>34</sup> In an important way, this may have encouraged **the apotheosis of the Buddha** (he began to be worshipped like a god), especially with the rise of the Mahāyāna, deeply influenced by the Kushan empire in the same region and beyond.<sup>35</sup>

## 3.2 THE DUTIES OF A GOOD KING

**The Mahā Haṃsa Jātaka** (J 534) preserves a well-known set of kingly duties called the 10 “royal duties or virtues” (*rāja,dhamma*), namely,

- |                               |                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) generosity                | ( <i>dāna</i> ),      |
| (2) moral virtue              | ( <i>sīla</i> ),      |
| (3) self-charity or sacrifice | ( <i>pariccāga</i> ), |
| (4) integrity                 | ( <i>ājjava</i> ),    |

<sup>29</sup> **Āditta J** (J 424,3 n), SD 22.10a; SD 36.10 (5.4.1.4); SD 36.12 (3.1.1.2) n. For an insightful discussion on early Buddhism and rulership, see S Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities*, 1998: “kingship and its discontents” (419-436) & “the good king” (448-470).

<sup>30</sup> Sadhu bhante vissatthā karotha, mayhaṃ āṇā,cakkaṃ, tumhākaṃ dhamma,cakkaṃ hotu. Āṇāpetha me bhante kiṃ karomī ti (VA 1:1014 f = KhpA 95,2-4. See also SD 59.15 (2.2.3); SD 60.1c (1.9.6.3).

<sup>31</sup> See D Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, Oxford, 2003: date of the Buddha.

<sup>32</sup> On the great man’s and the Buddha’s 32 marks, see SD 36.9 (4.1).

<sup>33</sup> See **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) + SD 36.9 (3).

<sup>34</sup> On how the Buddha looked like historically, see SD 52.1 (10.2.3).

<sup>35</sup> **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16,5.18 n), SD 9; SD 36.9 (4.2.1.1); SD 36.10 (2.2); SD 40a.2 (3.4); SD 52.1 (2.2.1.17).



- |      |  |                        |
|------|--|------------------------|
| (5)  | kind gentleness                              | ( <i>maddava</i> ),    |
| (6)  | austerity or self-restraint ( <i>tapa</i> ), |                        |
| (7)  | non-anger                                    | ( <i>akkodha</i> ),    |
| (8)  | non-violence                                 | ( <i>avihimsā</i> ),   |
| (9)  | patience                                     | ( <i>khanti</i> ),     |
| (10) | non-hostility and law-abiding                | ( <i>avirodhana</i> ). |

These 10 qualities are summarized in J 534 in a *śloka* (a four-line stanza of 8 syllables each), said to be spoken by the Buddha himself:

<i>dānaṃ sīlaṃ pariccāgaṃ</i>	Giving, moral virtue, charity,	
<i>ājjavaṃ maddavaṃ tapaṃ</i>	uprightness, gentleness, austerity,	
<i>akkodhaṃ avihimsāñ ca</i>	non-anger and non-violence,	
<i>khantiñ ca avirodhanāṃ</i>	patience and absence of strife.	(J 534/5:378)

These are, in fact, the qualities of a wheel-turner; they are what make him a true world monarch. In other words, just as the Buddha regards the Dharma being above himself,<sup>36</sup> the Dharma is above the wheel-turner, too. Hence, declares **the (Dhamma) Cakka,vatti Sutta** (A 3.14), the Dharma is “the rajah of just rajah” (*dhammikassa dhamma,rañño rāja*).<sup>37</sup> Justice (*dhamma*), in other words, is the true nature of things. It is the nature of the wheel-turner and the ideal society that he rules over.<sup>38</sup>

— — —

## (Māra) Rajja Sutta

The Discourse on Kingship  
S 4.20

**1** At one time, the Blessed One was staying in a small forest hut in the Himalayan region in Kosala country.

**2** Then, when the Blessed One was in solitary retreat, a reflection arose in his mind, thus:

“Is it possible to exercise rulership righteously: without killing, without instigating others to kill; without confiscating, without instigating others to confiscate; without sorrowing and without causing sorrow?”<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> On the Dharma being above even the Buddha, see **Gārava S** (S 6.2/1:138-140), SD 12.3 & **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16): the supreme worship (D 16,5.3/2:138), SD 9 & the Dharma as teacher and refuge (**D 16**,2.26/2:100 f = 26,1/3:58, **26**,27/77; **S 22.43**/3:42, **47.9**/5:154, **47.13**/5:163, **17.14**/5:164).

<sup>37</sup> A 3.14/1:109 f @ SD 72.10.

<sup>38</sup> **(Dhamma) Cakka,vatti S** (A 3.14), playing on the word *dhamma,rāja*, applies it to the Buddha himself: he is also the Dharma-rajah, as he places the Dharma above himself (A 3.14/1:110), SD 72.10. The Buddha is the Dharma,rajah in the sense that he “delights” (*ranjeti*) the people with the Dharma: *dhammena pare rañjetī ti rāja* (**Aggañña S**, D 27,21/3:93 (SD 2.19)). The **(Dhamma) Cakka,vatti S** is one of the ancient texts that supports the idea of the “2 wheels,” that of worldly power and of spirituality, ie, the state-church dichotomy of later Buddhist kingship: see eg Tambiah 1987:20.

<sup>39</sup> Comy: “The Buddha reflected thus with compassion, having seen people afflicted with punishments in realms ruled by unrighteous kings.” (SA 1:180,30 f). A slightly longer version of this incident, is found in **Māra Vatthu 2** (DhA 23.8) [1.2].

3 Then Māra the evil one, having known with his own mind the reflection in the Blessed One's mind, approached the Blessed One and said to him:

"Bhante, let the Blessed One exercise rulership righteously: without killing, without instigating others to kill; without confiscating, without instigating others to confiscate; without sorrowing, without causing sorrow."

4 "But what do you see, evil one, that you speak thus to me?"

"Bhante, the Blessed One has cultivated and developed **the 4 bases of success [spiritual power]**,<sup>40</sup> made them a vehicle, made them a basis, stabilized them, exercised himself in them, and fully perfected them.

5 And, bhante, if the Blessed One wishes, he need only to resolve that the Himalayas, the king of mountains, should become gold, and it would turn to gold."<sup>41</sup> [117]

[The Blessed One:]<sup>42</sup>

6 *pabbat'assa suvaṇṇassa  
jāta,rūpassa kevalo<sup>43</sup>  
dvittā va<sup>44</sup> nālam ekassa  
iti vidvā samañ care*

S 486

If there were a mountain of gold,  
entirely of solid gold,  
double this would not suffice for one:  
having known this, fare harmoniously.

6.2 *yo dukkham addakkhi yato nidānaṃ  
kāmesu so jantu kathaṃ nameyya  
upadhiṃ viditvā saṅgo ti loke  
tass'eva jantu vinayāya sikkheti*

S 487

How would a person bend to sensual pleasures *b*  
who has seen them as the source of suffering? *a*  
Having known acquisition as a tie to the world,  
surely a person should train for its removal.<sup>45</sup>

Then, Mara the evil one, thinking,  
"The Blessed One knows me, the well gone knows me!"  
sad and disheartened, disappeared right there.<sup>46</sup>

evaṃ

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<sup>40</sup> On the 4 bases of success, see (2).

<sup>41</sup> On the task of good governance, see (3).

<sup>42</sup> S 486 f recurs in Uv 2:19 f; Mūḷasarvastivāda Vinayavastu (Dutt) 1:96\*; Divy (Cowell & Neil) p244\*.

<sup>43</sup> Be Ce Ee so; Se *kevalā*.

<sup>44</sup> Be Ce read *dvittāva*; Se *dvitāva*; Ee1 & 2 *dvittā va* (preferred). Comy: "Let alone one mountain, even as much as double (*dvikkhattum pi tava*) a large golden mountain would not suffice for one person." BHS parallels to this verse read *vittāṃ*, "treasure," in place of *dvittā* [above n on S 486 f].

<sup>45</sup> S 487. Comy: "Suffering has its source in the 5 cords of sensual pleasure; that is 'the source of suffering' (*yato,-nidānaṃ*). When a person has seen this is so, for what reason should he bend to sensual pleasures which are the source of suffering?" (SA 1:181,16-21). *Upadhi* in line c is glossed by Comy as *pañca kāma,guṇa-upadhi* (S 1:181,16): see SD 61.10 (2.2.1.7) n. In place of *saṅgo*, "tie," the BHS versions read *śalyam* (Pali: *sallaṃ*), "dart." Subcomy: The source of suffering is craving, and the source of craving is the 5 cords of sensual pleasure. Therefore, it is said that the 5 cords of sensual pleasure—the conditions for craving—are the source of suffering. When one who has fully understood reality has seen suffering as it really is with the eye of wisdom, and seen the cords of sensual pleasure to be its source, there is no reason for him to bend to sensual pleasures.

<sup>46</sup> *Dukkhī dummano tatth'ev'antaradhāyi*. This stock occurs 32 times in Saṃyutta in connection with Māra [SD 61.9 (3.1.2)].