

SD 61.5

Purisi'indriya,ñāṇa Sutta

The Discourse on the Knowledges
of a Person's Faculties

A 6.62

Theme: The Buddha's power of mind-reading

Translated by Piya Tan ©2008, 2024

1 Summaries

1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY AND RELATED NOTES

1.2.1 Sutta summary

1.2.1.1 The Purisi'indriya,ñāṇa Sutta (A 6.62), the discourse on the knowledges of a person's faculties, was taught by the Buddha to the elder Ānanda at Daṇḍa,kappaka, a town in Kosala. The sutta teaching is given to Ānanda in answer to his question regarding how the Buddha knew of the unregenerate wickedness of Devadatta.

1.2.1.2 Early in the Buddha's address to the monks, Ānanda apparently, in his eagerness, seems to interrupt the Buddha, inviting him to give a Dharma discourse on Devadatta's conduct and fate [§6]. The Buddha says:

"If, Ānanda, you would listen to the Tathagata's **knowledges of a person's faculties**, I will analyze them ... " [§6.1].

Ānanda, unable to contain his excitement at this announcement, seems to interrupt the Buddha. Anyway, the Buddha has not started discoursing on the actual topic. Hence, it is no ordinary "interruption" but Ānanda's interjection is simply his eagerness to hear what the Buddha has to say. Ānanda at once invites the Buddha to teach as soon as he offers to teach Dharma!

1.2.1.3 We see a similar development in **the Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 136,6.2)¹ and its parallel MĀ 171,² where the Buddha is addressing midway a question regarding feelings (wrongly answered by the young monk Samiddhi in his earlier conversation with a wanderer). In this case, the monk Udāyī, who is listening nearby, interrupts the Buddha, suggesting his own unsolicited opinion. The Buddha disapproves of Udāyī's interruption with his wrong view.³

We see here 2 occasions of an unfinished statement due to an interruption—this is called **an anacoluthon**. Such developments often go unnoticed because they are not seen as actually significant to the actual discourse. However, with proper analysis, we may have some interesting insights into the aesthetics of Pali literature. [1.2.2]

1.2.2 An anacoluthon

1.2.2.1 Apparently, translations that we have to date have failed to recognize this interesting rhetorical feature highlighting a beautiful and subtle aesthetic moment of Dharma joy in Ānanda. The Chinese translators, too, did not seem to notice this. Hence, the Madhyama Āgama (**MĀ 112**, T1.601a15) inter-

¹ M 136,6.2/3:209,12 (SD 4.16).

² MĀ 171 (T1.707a19). See Anālayo, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya*, Taipei, 2011b:778.

³ See M 136,6/3:209 (SD 4.16).

polates a “complete” sentence, as it were, finishing the Buddha’s words; whereas **A 6.62/3:404,5** seems “truncated” [§6.1].

1.2.2.2 The anacoluthon (Greek, “without sequence”) is well known in Western literature: it is an incomplete or interrupted sentence or speech; usually it is followed by a new sentence, like the Italian proverb, “A good thing—think about it.”⁴ It may be part of our own thought process⁵ or speech;⁶ or it is an interruption to a speech by someone else.

Although the suttas are carefully edited “transcripts” of the Buddha’s teachings, we do get numerous records of his actual spoken words, and various rhetorical features like the anacoluthon here. When we see such a rhetorical feature and appreciate it, we are more likely to get a real idea of what and how the Buddha or the speaker is thinking. This is a far more convincing read than what is generally considered to be proper grammar or standard syntax, or some academic analysis or watered down “modern” rendition. Ideally, we are able to see both the truth and the beauty of Buddha Dharma.

1.2.2.3 Most modern translations and the Chinese parallels think that the Buddha’s sentence was “incomplete,” that is, there was probably an “error in transmission,” and so on. If this passage is unique, that is, it occurred only in one place, then perhaps we may have such an error. We see this rhetorical feature both in **the Puris’indriya,ñāṇa Sutta** (A 6.62) and the **the Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 136). Hence, the sutta redactors knew exactly what they were doing—we should give the suttas the benefit of our doubt!

2 Sutta content and analysis

2.1 TYPES OF “PERSONAL FACULTIES”

2.1.1 The Puris’indriya,ñāṇa Sutta (A 6.62) and its Chinese parallel, 阿奴波經 *ā nú bō jīng* (MĀ 112),⁷ describes the different individuals according to the wholesome or the unwholesome qualities of their mind [2.2]. Wholesome qualities fruit in pleasant and happy feelings; unwholesome qualities fruit in unpleasant and painful feelings. This close relation between feelings and moral quality (bodily, verbal or mental) is also the theme of **the Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 136) [1.2.1.3].

2.1.2 The Puris’indriya,ñāṇa Sutta (A 6.62) uses the term “personal faculties” (*puris’indriya*) to refer to the karmic condition of persons. Three factors condition these faculties: (1) past good or bad karma (the roots), (2) present state (how one conducts oneself), and (3) future karmic fruition. The main idea here is that we are responsible for our actions that create these conditions whose fruition brings happiness or suffering in due course.

⁴ *A buona derrata, pensaci su*, <http://oaks.nvg.org/italian-proverbs.html> 3 Sept 2024.

⁵ James Joyce’s *Ulysses* often uses “stream of consciousness” inner narration or dialogue: [[PoemAnalysis](#)].

⁶ Hamlet’s soliloquy, Act 3, Scene 1, beginning, “To be or not to be ... ” (by Shakespeare).

⁷ MĀ 112 (T26.01.600b28-602b20); the Chin 阿奴波 *ā nú bō* reads Anupiya, a Vajjī town, the location of the Sutta according to MĀ 112. A 6.62 locates the Buddha at a Kosala town, Daṇḍa,kappaka [§1]. Both towns are near Aciravātī river.

2.2 A SCHOLAR'S VIEW OF THE SUTTAS

2.2.0 We will now make a comparative study of the **Puris'indriya,ñāṇa Sutta** and its Chinese parallel in the **Madhyama Āgama** presented by a prodigious Theravāda scholar monk, Bhikkhu Analayo [2.2.0.1-2.2.0.6]; this is followed by my reflection on what we can learn from such a study [2.3].

I have here reproduced, slightly standardized, Analayo's comparative study of Puris'indriya,ñāṇa Sutta and its Chinese parallel, MĀ 112.⁸ This is to help us think critically, and to understand and apply the "rule of context" [2.3.1] in sutta study.

"19. MĀ 112: Good and bad [Wholesome and Unwholesome] Qualities" (Analayo, 2016:28 f)⁹

2.2.0.1 Feelings and their relation to craving are of course central in the arising of either wholesome or unwholesome qualities. The distinction between these two is taken up in another discourse among the Sixes of the Aṅguttara Nikāya (A 6.62) and its Madhyama Āgama parallel, which describe different individuals according to the wholesome or the unwholesome qualities of their minds.¹⁰

2.2.0.2¹¹ The second case taken up in **A 6.62** concerns someone who manifests wholesome qualities but the roots of unwholesomeness are still in the mind and will eventually lead to the decline of that person. The second case in the Madhyama Āgama parallel is someone who manifests unwholesome qualities but still has wholesome roots which will eventually also be cut off.

2.2.0.3 The two versions agree in illustrating their respective second case with good seeds that are sown in a place where they cannot grow.¹² The simile seems appropriate for illustrating wholesome roots that will not lead to wholesome states, as is the case of the Madhyama Āgama version, not unwholesome roots as in the Pāli version, for which spoiled seeds would be more appropriate.

2.2.0.4 The 3rd case can in fact be seen in relation to the case of someone who is thoroughly unwholesome, in which case, both versions speak of spoiled seeds. In the Madhyama Āgama version's illustration of this thoroughly unwholesome case, the spoiled seeds are sown in a barren field without timely water, whereas in **A 6.62**, the spoiled seeds are sown in a well-prepared field.¹³ As an illustration of the utterly hopeless case of someone completely immersed in unwholesomeness the Madhyama Āgama illustration appears to fit better.

2.2.0.5 From our discussion, it seems possible that the similes of A 6.62 have suffered from an error in transmission. From such a comparative study of suttas, we will be able to look deeper into the spirit of A 6.62 to have a better idea of what the Buddha is teaching there.

⁸ See preceding n.

⁹ See Analayo, "Selected Madhyāma-āgama Discourse Passages and their Pali Parallels," *Dharma Drum Journal of Buddhist Studies* 19, 2016:28 f. [SuttaCentral]

¹⁰ A difference in relation to their respective intro to this exposition is similar to a difference between M 136/-3:209,12 and its parallel MĀ 171 (T1.707a19) (cf Anālayo 2011b: 778). In the present case, too, MĀ 112 (T1.601a15) has the complete sentence, whereas A 6.62/3:404,5 seems truncated.

¹¹ This section was originally one paragraph with the preceding.

¹² In MĀ 112 (T1.601b29), the seeds will not grow because they do not receive timely rain; in A 6.62/3:405,20 they will not grow because they have been put on a rock.

¹³ MĀ 112 (T1.601c14) and A 6.62/3:406,14.

2.2.0.6 Another puzzling aspect in **A 6.62** is a reference in yet another simile, which mentions midnight as the time for the meal.¹⁴ The Madhyama Āgama parallel agrees with A 6.62 in regard to the preceding part of the simile, which refers to the rising of the sun. It differs in so far as it next describes that the sun has risen higher and mealtime has arrived.¹⁵ This is a more natural phrasing of the simile and the reference to a meal at midnight could be the result of some confusion in the transmission of this part of A 6.62. [2.4.4 f]

2.3 THE RULE OF CONTEXT: SEEING THE SUTTAS WITH FAITH AND RESPECT

2.3.1 The rule of context (or contextuality) is basically that when translating or interpreting a sutta or an aspect of it, we should seek to understand, as fully as possible, what the word, phrase, sentence, passage, figure or even the sutta itself means, in keeping with the “drift of the Dharma,” especially in contrast to other related occurrences or in relation to similar teachings and passages in the suttas and the Commentaries. Care must be taken not to pedantically, artificially or unfaithfully impose alien or late categories onto such an expression to merely postulate a bias or a technical view.¹⁶

Although academic standards and rigour can be helpful in presenting an “unbiased” critical translation or interpretation, the purpose of sutta translation and study is to understand as fully as possible both the text and the context of the sutta as **spiritual experience**, that is, as reflecting the experiences, teachings and intentions of the Buddha and the early saints as preserved in the suttas or texts. In this spirit, we rely on the early Buddhist texts as presenting the historical and true records of the Dharma-spirited Buddhist experience.

While scholars’ ingenuity and insights often create a new Buddhism in their name, Buddhism itself remains but an artefact or specimen in the lenses and learning of academia. Such learning should, however, facilitate our study and understanding of Buddhism as **living experience**, especially relevant to us today to shape and refine our own personal, social and spiritual lives with the purpose of attaining the path of awakening in this life itself. Hence, a scholar who is a practitioner is the learning ideal, who puts Dharma above everything else, and so becomes a means for rising above the world. Meantime, we joyfully live with the world with insight and vision in the bright healthy sun of Dharma.

2.3.2 The Puris’indriya,ñāṇa Sutta (A 6.62) records the Buddha as explaining how we are conditioned by karma in complex ways. The Buddha lists 6 ways how we can be karmically conditioned over time (instead of the terms “wholesome” and “unwholesome,” we shall here use “good” and “bad,” respectively, for easier reading), thus:

- (1) A bad person with *good roots* which prevent him from moral decline; [§7] like good seeds [§8]. [2.4.1]
- (2) A good person with *bad roots* which will bring decline [§10]; like good seeds on solid rock [§11]. [2.4.2]
- (3) A person without any good qualities at all; he will fall into a suffering state [§13]; like bad seeds on good soil [§14]; like the man drowning in a cesspool [§5]. [2.4.3]

¹⁴ A 6.62/3:407,19: *aḍḍha,rattarāṃ* (Be: *addha,rattarāṃ*) *bhatta,kālas,amaye*. Based on the comy gloss on *bhatta,kāla,samaye* at AA 3:406,7 as *rāja,kulānarāṃ bhatta,kāla,saṅkhāte samaye*, Bodhi reasons that “perhaps in the Buddha’s time the royal court ended the day with a midnight meal.” (A:B 1767 n1408).

¹⁵ MĀ 112 (T1.601a28): “the sun has risen high and the time of the meal has arrived,” 日轉昇上, 至于食時 *rì zhuǎn shēng shàng, zhìyǔ shí shí*; although the wording seems clearly preferable, the placing of this simile in MĀ 112 is less apt.

¹⁶ On the rule of context, see SD 6.11 (2.1.2) polysemy; SD 53.5 (4.2.3) text & thesis; SD 54.3b (2.3.2.3) definition & amplification.

- (4) A bad person with *good roots* but losing them; he will morally decline [§17]; like blazing coals on solid rock; like dusk; like midnight [§18]. [2.4.4]
- (5) A good person with *bad roots* that are going to be destroyed; he will not decline [§20]; like blazing coals on fodder; like dawn; like noon [§21]. [2.4.5]
- (6) A person without any bad quality; he will attain nirvana [§23]; like quenched coal on fodder [§24]. [2.4.6]

2.4 COMMENTS ON THE 6 KINDS OF PERSONS, INCLUDING A RESPONSE TO ANALAYO (2.2)

2.4.0 Not all bad, with good roots

2.4.0.1 My understanding is that these 6 categories *can* be regarded as flexible and that they are meant to act as warnings, or at least as reminders, that *we are how we think, speak and act*. How we think is especially significant since **karma is our intentions**; how we think is formative of whether we are good or bad. We tend to shuffle between good and bad.

If we think of ourselves as being basically **good**, then we should act on that thought and make a habit of it. This means that there are still parts of us that can be drawn into badness. If we are likely to regret such bad qualities, we have a good chance to cultivate good ones. We have been described by the Buddha, thus:

“This person’s **wholesome qualities have disappeared**, bad qualities have surfaced, but he has *wholesome roots* that have not been eradicated.

From his wholesome roots the wholesome will appear. Thus, this person will not be subject to decline in the future.” [§7.2]

2.4.0.2 This teaching from the Buddha and our reflection on the desire for good will empower us to build up on the good roots we already have and multiply them. We begin with keeping our body and speech as wholesome (free from greed and hatred) as possible. We support this effort with mindfulness and meditation to build up our wisdom to reject what is false and bad, and cultivate what is true and good; this way we work at weakening the 3rd bad root, delusion. We will then not decline but grow in Dharma.

2.4.1 A bad person with good roots, like good seeds in a good field [2.3.2 (1)]

2.4.1.1 1st **person’s** wholesome qualities have disappeared, bad qualities have surfaced, but he has *wholesome roots* that have not been eradicated. From the good roots, good will arise. Thus, this person will not morally decline in the future [§7] since he has good seeds [§8] which will grow well.

2.4.1.2 A good case here is that of **Aṅgulimāla**, especially as detailed in **the Aṅgulimāla Sutta** (M 86). Although he was a kind young man, because of the jealousy of his ashram colleagues and his foolish guru, he was induced to become a mass murderer. However, deep within him, his good karma remains. When he met the Buddha, he was able to rise out of his bad karma and awaken.¹⁷

2.4.2 A good person with bad roots, like good seeds on a rock [2.3.2 (2)]

2.4.2.1 [This section criticizes (2.2.0.3) which should be read or reread first.]

¹⁷ M 86/2:97-105 (SD 5.11).

The 2nd person's bad qualities have disappeared, wholesome qualities have surfaced, but he has bad roots that have not been eradicated. From the bad roots the bad will appear. Thus, this person will be subject to decline in the future [§10], like good seeds on solid rock [§11].

In MĀ 112 (the Chinese parallel), this second case is someone who has bad qualities but still has the roots of wholesomeness, which will eventually be cut off. The Pali and the Chinese versions agree in illustrating their respective second case with good seeds that are sown in a place where they cannot grow. Each version rightly explains their parable in their own way.

In MĀ 112 (T1.601b29) the seeds will not grow because they do not receive timely rain. These are good seeds that do not have the wholesome conditions for them to grow. In A 6.62 (A 3:405,20) the wholesome seeds will not grow because they have been put on solid rock. The good karmic roots are unable to grow because the bad roots have produced bad results that prevent the growing of wholesome roots, like solid rock not allowing the seeds to grow.

2.4.2.2 The Udumbarikā Sīha,nāda Sutta (D 25) presents the wanderer **Nigrodha**, leader of a wanderers' community, who is initially overbearing towards the Buddha. However, on meeting the Buddha, he is delightfully surprised that the Buddha wants to discuss wanderers' Dharma. As the engaging dialogue unfolds, Nigrodha is seen as not knowing the key teachings of his own faith. He ends in having to agree with the Buddha who subtly reveals the shortcomings of the wanderer's teachings. The Buddha however stops short of explaining arhathood since Nigrodha clearly is not a serious practitioner of his own teachings.

Despite the Buddha's comprehensive teaching for the benefit of Nigrodha and his congregation, in the end, none of them responds to the Buddha's invitation to try out Dharma training for even a week. So, Nigrodha and his followers remain as worldly occupants of their wanderers' park under royal patronage, living their easy lives. Despite being presented with good seeds, Nigrodha chooses to leave them on the massive rock of their worldliness.¹⁸

2.4.2.3 This 2nd category of karmic persons is broadly significant since it encompasses most of us who are drawn to Buddhism, who follow any religion or none. We are those for whom "bad qualities have disappeared, wholesome qualities have surfaced, but [have] bad roots that have not been eradicated. From (our) bad roots ... bad will appear. Thus (we) will be subject to decline in the future." [§10]. Our good seeds are left on a solid rock [§11]. The "solid rock" is our lack of true practice but following religion merely as routine, custom, social class, livelihood, or even convenience.

On the other hand, if we consider ourselves as having good roots—or at least try to be good—but we often face bad conditions or difficulties, then, we would be in **the 1st category**, that of a bad person with wholesome roots, but we can change for the better. [2.4.1]

2.4.3 A person without any good qualities, like bad seeds on good soil [2.3.2 (3)]

2.4.3.1 [This section criticizes (2.2.0.4 f) which should be read or reread first.]

The 3rd person "does not have even a mere fraction of a hair's tip of a bright quality. This person possesses only black, bad qualities. He will be reborn in a suffering state" [§13]; his karma is like bad seeds fallen on good soil [§14]; he is like one who has fallen into a cesspool and drowning in it [§5].

Both versions speak of someone who is thoroughly bad as having **spoiled seeds**. In the Madhyama Āgama version's illustration of this thoroughly bad case, the spoiled seeds are sown in a barren field

¹⁸ M 25/3:36-57 (SD 1.4).

without timely water,¹⁹ which clearly refers to the lack of the right conditions for the growing of the wholesome karmic seeds.

In the Pali version (A 6.62), the reference is to **Devadatta**, whose bad seeds have totally overwhelmed him—he does not show any wholesome quality despite being so close to the Buddha and the Dharma (the well-prepared field)²⁰ [§14]. While the Chinese version is referring to someone without any wholesome qualities, the Pali Sutta is implicitly referring to Devadatta, a monk living with the Buddha himself. The latter reflects the Sutta context more closely than does the Chinese version.

There is no “error in transmission” that Analayo speaks of [2.2.0.5]. If there is any error, it is in the Chinese version that seems to focus on the parable or simile instead of the Sutta’s allusion to Devadatta in the first place. Hence, the Sutta is about how karma affects our discipleship leading to the path and awakening.

2.4.3.2 The Puris’indriya,ñāṇa Sutta (A 6.62) opens with a certain monk asking the elder Ānanda whether the Buddha’s declaration—“Devadatta is bound for a suffering state, bound for hell, and he will remain there for the world-cycle, unredeemable” [§2.2]—is to be taken *literally* or *figuratively*. When Ānanda put the question before the Buddha, he firmly asserts that the statement is to be taken just as he has spoken it, that is, definitively or categorically (*ekam’sena*) [§4.1].

The Buddha prefaces his reply with a strong comment that the monk who has asked such a question “must be either newly ordained, not long gone forth, or a foolish and inept [inexperienced] elder” [§4.1]. The implication of this remark should be properly understood. In **the Abhaya Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 58), the Buddha asserts that he speaks only what is “true, real and connected with the goal,” whether it is *unpleasant* or *pleasant*, and speaks so *at the right time*.²¹

2.4.3.3 Notice that the Buddha, in declaring that he has spoken *definitively* about Devadatta’s suffering state, does *not* elaborate that his statement is to be taken “literally” either. In **the Pātāla Sutta** (S 36.4), for example, the Buddha explains that **hell** is not as dogmatically defined or popularly imagined as some place like “a bottomless abyss (*pātāla*) ... in the great ocean,” and so on.

Rather, the “abyss” (*patāla*) or “hell” (*āpāya; neraya*) should be understood as something closer and more real to us (psychologically, at least), that is, it is “a term (*adhivacana*) ... for painful bodily feelings (*sārīrika dukkha vedanā*).”²² In other words, hell is not a place we go to, but a suffering state of mind that can arise any time, anywhere, and that affects our body, too.

Just as we feel pain for various reasons or have terrifying dreams episodically, hell is a recurrent and sustained state of bodily suffering and terrifying visions. Hell arises and remains within us, mind and body; it is our very state of being that can last indefinitely, depending on our karma.

2.4.4 A bad person losing good roots, like coals on a rock; like dusk; like midnight [2.3.2 (4)]

This and the following section [2.4.5] criticize 2.2.0.6, which should be read or reread first.

2.4.4.1 The 4th person’s wholesome qualities have disappeared, bad qualities have surfaced. However, he still has wholesome roots that have not been eradicated, but that, too, are about to be completely destroyed. Thus, this person will be subject to decline in the future [§17]. His karma is like blazing coals on solid rock, which prevents the blaze from growing and becoming useful for cooking, keeping

¹⁹ MĀ 112 (T1.601c14).

²⁰ A 6.62/3:406,14.

²¹ M 58,8/1:395 (SD 7.12).

²² S 36.4/4:206 f (SD 2.25); SD 2.23 (3); SD 89.10 (1); SD 53.16 (2). On the hells as metaphors, see **Bāla,paṇḍita S** (M 129), SD 2.22 Intro.

warm and so on. Or, his karma is like **dusk**, which portends the coming of night; like “close to **midnight**,” meaning “close to the middle of the night” (*abhidose addha, rattam*), filled with darkness, lurking with danger—“when light has disappeared and darkness has appeared” [§18.3].

2.4.4.2 There is a seemingly odd simile here, that is, the Sutta’s comparison of one’s karma to **midnight** as the time for a meal [§18.3]. The Commentary explains that this is “the time for a meal in the king’s court” (AA 3:406,7). This is an allusion to a secular habit of having some supper before turning in. This is understandable because even today, it is a common worldly socializing habit to have some kind of meal before turning in: this is still seen in SE Asia and presumably urban India.

In fact, there is an early text, **the Kīṭāgiri Sutta** (M 70), that highlights the Buddha’s forbidding renunciants from taking meals “at the wrong time” (*vikāla*) and at night (*ratti, bhojana*)²³ for the sake of good health, not to burden the laity and to be diligent in Dharma practice. Yet a group of monks led by Assaji and Punabbasu outrightly rejects the Buddha’s instruction, claiming that they are used to the habit of taking meals at any time, even in the night!²⁴

The Commentary’s explaining that the “**midnight meal**” is a habit of the royal palace highlights it as a worldly practice. Considering all this (especially M 70), we can understand why the midnight meal is highlighted as an imagery of worldliness and bad karmic roots, especially for monastics.

2.4.5 A good person with weakening bad roots, like coals on fodder; like dawn; like noon [2.3.2 (5)]

[This whole section responds to (2.2.0.6) which should be read or reread first.]

2.4.5.1 The 5th person’s bad qualities have disappeared, wholesome qualities have surfaced. He has *bad roots* that have not been eradicated, but that, too, are about to be completely destroyed. Thus, this person will *not* be subject to decline in the future [§20], like blazing coals on fodder, like dawn, like noon [§21].

It is interesting that this person in karmic ascendance (arising of good karma) is compared to “**coals that are burning**, blazing, and glowing, that are deposited on a heap of dry grass or firewood” [§21]. This means that the coal will grow into a blazing fire. Since this simile refers to *wholesome* qualities, it means that the bigger fire becomes more useful for necessary and helpful activities such as cooking, keeping warm, keeping safe and so on. This is the context for wholesome qualities.

2.4.5.2 A 6.62 and its Chinese parallel agree in regard to the preceding simile of **the rising of the sun**, that is, dawn (another simile in this same section). **Dawn** is, as a rule, regarded as auspicious since it marks the brightening and warmth of daylight, that is, our daily routines and new opportunities for learning the Dharma, teaching it and practising it; and, in our own time, writing or working with Dharma.

It may be said that **dawn** is often regarded as the most welcome time of the day for the forest monk and those of us spending time in the great outdoors. We rise to welcome **dawn’s joyful face beaming right through the night** (*aruṇaṃ nandi, mukhī rattī*), as the Vinaya says.²⁵ “The Commentary tells us, “At dawn, the night appears like a face of delight; hence, dawn is called ‘night’s happy face’.” (VA 1287,4 f).²⁶

2.4.5.3 The Chinese parallel, **MĀ 112**, mentions the simile of “dawn,” but in a different context (in term of the arising of wisdom). Then, it goes on to say, 日轉昇上, 至于食時 *rì zhuǎn shēng shàng, zhìyú shí*

²³ Ie, between noon and daybreak (dawn) (Pāc 37, V 4:85). See SD 11.1 (2).

²⁴ M 70,2+4/1:473 f (SD 11.1 (2)).

²⁵ Cv 9.1.1 (3.1) @ V 2:237 (SD 59.2c).

²⁶ Homer calls it “rosy-fingered dawn,” *Odyssey* 23.240.

shí, “The sun has risen high and meal-time has arrived.”²⁷ Although the wording seems appropriate, the MĀ 112 simile is less appropriate here. This inappropriate simile probably occurred in the Chinese version due to a different base-text being used or to some difficulty in the translating of the Indic text into Chinese by a sutta master not familiar with Chinese and the translator who did not know the sutta language (either Pali or a Prakrit dialect).

2.4.6 A person without any bad quality [2.3.2 (6)]

2.4.6.1 The 6th person “does not have even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bad quality. This person possesses only bright, blameless qualities. He will attain nirvana in this very life” [§23]. The best example for this category would be **Siddhattha**, our Buddha before his awakening. From the suttas and Commentaries, we know him to be a totally good person in his last life, even amidst the luxury and sensuality of his youth, such as in the 3 palaces.²⁸

The Sukhumāla Sutta (A 3.38) records the Buddha as informing us how, even as a young man, he lived a luxurious life in terms of food, comfort and pleasures, in the 3 palaces, one for the hot season, one for the rains, one for the cold season. In almost modern sounding language of psychological flooding,²⁹ the Buddha explains to us how all this actually made him react by losing interest in them.

Even before seeing the first 3 of the 4 sights—those of an old man, a sick man and a dead man—Siddhattha had already overcome any **intoxication** (*mada*) with youth, with health and with life. Understandably, seeing the 4 sights (with the 4th sight as suggestive of the way out of the first 3), was the last straw that broke the camel’s back (the delusion of the pleasures of *youth*, *health* and *life*) for Siddhattha.³⁰

The spiritually precocious young Siddhattha was ready to leave behind the luxuries of *youth*, *health* and *life*, and seek freedom from the suffering that these intoxications (*mada*) entail. In due course, his struggles, guided by all his innate good qualities, brought him buddhahood, full awakening, that is, supreme wisdom and spiritual freedom.

2.4.6.2 Most of the great arhats, too, would fall into this **6th category** of karmic persons. The youth **Yasa**, for example, lived a luxurious life in 3 palaces [2.4.6.1], just like young Siddhattha. Yasa woke up one night in an agonizing epiphany: the dancing girls, beautiful and seductive in the light, asleep in disarray, looked like corpses in the night light right before him. He cried out, “Oh what trouble indeed! Oh what affliction indeed!”³¹

Yasa at once fled from his home in the middle of the night, crying out in existential agony. After a brief walk, Yasa met the Buddha. Hearing Yasa’s cry of existential agony, the Buddha replied:

“This, Yasa, is not trouble, indeed; this is no affliction! Come, Yasa, sit down: I will show you the Dharma.”

Hearing the Buddha’s soothing voice, Yasa’s heart was uplifted and ready to hear the Dharma. After hearing a progressive talk (*ānupubbī,kathā*) on Dharma from the Buddha, Yasa attained the Dharma-eye, that is, became a streamwinner. Later he renounced the world and became an arhat.³²

²⁷ MĀ 112 (T1.601a28).

²⁸ See esp **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,1.43), SD 49.8; (**Paribbājaka**) **Māgandiya S** (M 75,10), SD 31.5.

²⁹ As aspect of “flooding” is being overwhelmed with a “flood” of experiences (such as pleasures in Siddhattha’s case) so that he is desensitized or reacts against them (as in the case of Siddhattha). See SD 43.2 (2); SD 52.1 (7.2.2.1).

³⁰ A 3.38/1:145 f (SD 63.7).

³¹ Mv 1.7.2 (V 1:15), SD 11.2(7).

³² Mv 1.7.1-15 + SD 11.2 (1-7); SD 60.1c (1.12.7.23 (4)).

2.4.6.3 Sāriputta and Moggallāna, too, were born into good families and lived well as youths. Their disillusionment with the world overwhelmed them when they saw through the frivolousness and emptiness of worldly pleasures during their visit to the hilltop festival (*gir'agga samajja*).³³

Their sense of urgency (*saṁvega*) moved them to separate as friends so that they double their chances of meeting a wise teacher to spiritually heal them with the true meaning and purpose of life. They initially followed the great skeptic teacher, the wanderer Sañjaya (or Sañcaya) Belaṭṭhiputta (V 1:39). When the wanderer Sāriputta met the arhat Assaji, and was impressed by Assaji's peaceful aura, he insisted that Assaji teach him Dharma.

After hearing only 2 lines from a quatrain on conditionality (beginning with *ye dhammā hetu-p,pa-bhavā*), Sāriputta at once attained streamwinning; and later so did his companion, Moggallāna, on hearing the same 2 lines. They went to meet the Buddha, renounced to join the sangha, and became arhats.³⁴ The stories of Sāriputta and Moggallāna are cases of karmic persons without any bad qualities, and who attain nirvana in the same lifetime.

There are also those, like the bark-clothed wanderer **Bāhiya Dāruciriya**, who, upon hearing the Buddha teach Dharma briefly, attains arhatness.³⁵ Numerous other seekers, too, met the Buddha or his arhats, listened to the teaching, practised the Dharma, and became arhats themselves. Most of them were cases of karmic persons without any bad quality [§23]. They go on to become like quenched coal that fell into fodder and so do not burn [§24]; they are cooled with the quenching of the fires of greed, hatred and delusion.

3 On Devadatta's failings

3.1 THE 8 BAD CONDITIONS

3.1.1 The essence of the **Devadatta Vipatti Sutta** (A 8.7) is that the 8 bad conditions (*aṭṭha asaddhamma*) or "false states": *gain and loss, fame and obscurity, honour and lack of honour, evil desires and bad friendship* keep us in the deepest and darkest grasp of samsara, cyclic life. These are actually the 8 worldly conditions (*aṭṭha loka, dhamma*)³⁶ that we are pursuing and being caught up with them. These are the conditions that drive us on with sensual desires, to become this and that, dragged on by tantalizing views, to gain fame and honour, and power over resources and people—this is our world projected in full sensoround³⁷ by our delusion rooted in ignorance.

3.1.2 The **8 worldly conditions** [3.1.1] bring about the arising of the **influxes**—those of *sensual desires, existence, views and ignorance*.³⁸ These 8 conditions are the causes of Devadatta's desire to take over what he saw as the Buddha's status as "leader" of the sangha with his own self-righteous views, rooted

³³ SD 52.2f (1.4).

³⁴ On Sāriputta & Moggallāna, see Piya Tan, *The Buddha and His Disciples*, [2002] 2013 ch 5. Also Nyanaponika & Hecker, *Great Disciples of the Buddha*, Kandy & Boston, 1997: ch 1 Sāriputta, ch 2 Mahāmoggallāna.

³⁵ On Bāhiya, see SD 60.1c (1.12.7.23 (4)); (**Arahatta**) **Bāhiya S** (U 1.10), SD 33.7; (**Satipaṭṭhāna**) **Bāhiya S** (S 47.15), SD 47.10.

³⁶ The 8 worldly conditions are gain and loss (*lābha alābha*), fame and obscurity (*yasa ayasa*), blame and praise (*nindā pasamsā*), and joy and pain (*sukha dukkha*): **Loka, dhamma S 1+2** (A 8.5+6) SD 42.2+3.

³⁷ "Sensoround" a sound reproduction technology used esp in cinemas in the 1970s, in which low-frequency sound effects cause bodily sensations in the audience, resulting in a feeling of being involved in the movie.

³⁸ The early suttas mention only the influxes of (1) sensual desires (*kām'āsava*), (2) existence (*bhav'āsava*) and (3) ignorance (*avijj'āsava*): **D 2,99.1 n** (SD 8.10); **M 11,9 n** (SD 7.13). The later suttas and Comys mention the set of 4 influxes, eg **Cūja Gopālaka S** (M 34,6) n, SD 61.3. The 4 are also known as "floods" (*ogha*), **Ogha Pañha S** (S 38.11), SD 30.3(1.4) + (1.4.2), or as "yokes" (*yoga*), SD 30.3 (1.4.2 n).

deep in ignorance. Any of these 8 conditions can be the cause of our own sense of failure, which then defines our view of success, our “success.” Instead of understanding how to calm and clear our minds to gain states of peace and wisdom, we see them as *things* and status that we can have or gain from others.

3.1.3 These 8 worldly conditions are alluded to by the Buddha when he rejects Devadatta’s proposal to take over the leadership of the sangha: “I wouldn’t hand the sangha over to even Sāriputta and Mogallāna, so why then to you, a wretch who eats rejects [what the noble ones spit out]?” (Cv 7.3.1). These 8 conditions are said to be “rejects” (*kheḷa*); literally, *kheḷa* is “saliva or spit,” what we spit out.

A shorter list of the 8 worldly conditions is the phrase, “**gains, honours and praise**” (*lābha, sakkāra, siloka*), which has its own themed chapter, that is, **the Lābha, sakkāra Saṃyutta** (“the connected teachings on gain and honour,” S 17).³⁹ The 4th subchapter, subtitled “schism in the sangha” (*saṅgha, bheda*) has 13 suttas in all, of which the first six (S 17.31-36) mention Devadatta by name.

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³⁹ S 17.31-43/2:239-244, eg **Bhindi S** (S 17.31/2:239 f), SD 46.24.

SD 61.5(3) Devadatta Vipatti Sutta

The Discourse on Devadatta's Failings

A 8.7/4:160 f

Theme: Learning from others' examples what to do or not to do

A 8.1.1.7 Aṅguttara Nikāya 8, Aṭṭhaka Nipāta 1, Paṭhama Paṇṇāsaka 1, Mettā Vagga 7

1 At one time, the Blessed One was dwelling on **Mount Vulture Peak** at Rājagaha, not long after Devadatta had left.⁴⁰

There the Blessed One addressed the monks regarding Devadatta:

Timely reviews

2 “Bhikshus, it is good for a monk⁴¹ from time to time to review his own failings.
It is good, bhikshus, for a monk from time to time to review the failings of others.
It is good, bhikshus, for a monk from time to time to review his own accomplishments.
It is good, bhikshus, for a monk from time to time to review the accomplishments of others.”

The 8 bad conditions

3 Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by **8 bad conditions**, Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.

What are the eight?⁴²

- (1) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by **gain**,
Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell
where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.
- (2) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by **loss**,
*Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell
where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.*
- (3) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by **fame**,
*Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell
where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.*
- (4) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by **obscurity** [ill fame].
*Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell
where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.*

⁴⁰ Devadatta has caused a schism in the sangha, and left with his own company of monks, intending to establish his own order.

⁴¹ “Monk” (*bhikkhu*) refers to those listening or learning the Dharma: SD 4.9 (5.3); SD 13.1 (3.1.1).

⁴² This passage on the “8 bad conditions” (*aṭṭha asaddhamma*) recurs in **Vinaya** (Cv 7.4.7 @ V 2:202 f) and closes with 3 such bad conditions—evil desires, bad friendship and not attaining the path (when one could)—that brought Devadatta to a state of suffering (Cv 7.4.8 @ V 2:203). The last triad of bad states is also mentioned in **Uttara Vipatti S** (A 4:164) and **(Iti,vuttaka) Devadatta S** (It 89) mentions (It 3.4.10/85-87).

- (5) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by *Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.* **honour,**
- (6) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by *Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.* **lack of honour [dishonour],**
- (7) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by *Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.* **evil desires,**
- (8) Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by *Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.* **bad friendship,**

Because, bhikshus, he was overcome and obsessed by these 8 bad conditions, Devadatta is bound for the suffering state, bound for hell where he will remain for an aeon, unredeemable.

4	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	gain	whenever it arises.
	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	loss	whenever it arises.
	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	fame	whenever it arises.
	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	obscurity	whenever it arises.
	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	honour [161]	whenever it arises.
	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	lack of honour	whenever it arises.
	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	evil desires	whenever it arises.
	It is good, bhikshus, for a monk to dwell having overcome	bad friendship	whenever it arises.

The bad conditions bring about the influxes

5	(1) And for what purpose, ⁴³ bhikshus, should a monk dwell having overcome	gain	whenever it arises?
	For what purpose should a monk dwell having overcome	loss	whenever it arises?
	For what purpose should a monk dwell having overcome	fame	whenever it arises?
	For what purpose should a monk dwell having overcome	obscurity	whenever it arises?
	For what purpose should a monk dwell having overcome	honour	whenever it arises?
	For what purpose should a monk dwell having overcome	lack of honour	whenever it arises?
	For what purpose should a monk dwell having overcome	evil desires	whenever it arises?
	For what purpose should a monk dwell having overcome	bad friendship	whenever it arises?

5.2 So that, bhikshus, those influxes,⁴⁴ distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen **gain,** do not occur in one who has overcome it.

So that, bhikshus, those *influxes*, distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen **loss,** do not occur in one who has overcome it.

⁴³ "For what purpose," *kiñca ... atthavasam paṭicca.*

⁴⁴ See [3.1.2].

So that, bhikshus, those <i>influxes</i> , distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen	fame, do not occur in one who has overcome it.
So that, bhikshus, those <i>influxes</i> , distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen	obscurity, do not occur in one who has overcome it.
So that, bhikshus, those <i>influxes</i> , distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen	honour, do not occur in one who has overcome it.
So that, bhikshus, those <i>influxes</i> , distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen	lack of honour, do not occur in one who has overcome it.
So that, bhikshus, those <i>influxes</i> , distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen	evil desires, do not occur in one who has overcome it.
So that, bhikshus, those <i>influxes</i> , distressful and feverish, that might arise in one who has not overcome arisen	bad friendship, do not occur in one who has overcome it.

The 8 bad conditions should be overcome

6 For this purpose, bhikshus, a monk should overcome	gain	whenever it arises;
he should overcome	loss	whenever it arises;
he should overcome	fame	whenever it arises;
he should overcome	obscurity	whenever it arises;
he should overcome	honour	whenever it arises;
he should overcome	lack of honor	whenever it arises;
he should overcome	evil desires	whenever it arises;
he should overcome	bad friendship	whenever it arises.

7 Therefore, bhikshus, you should train yourselves thus: 'We will overcome	gain	whenever it arises.
We will overcome	loss	whenever it arises.
We will overcome	fame	whenever it arises.
We will overcome	obscurity	whenever it arises.
We will overcome	honour	whenever it arises.
We will overcome	lack of honor	whenever it arises.
We will overcome	evil desires	whenever it arises.
We will overcome	bad friendship	whenever it arises.'

8 It is in this way, bhikshus, that you should train yourselves." [162]

— evaṃ —

4 The closing verses

The Vinaya has the passage on the “8 bad conditions” (*aṭṭha asaddhamma*) (Cv 7.4.7 @ V 2:202 f) and closes with these 3 bad conditions—*evil desires, bad friendship and not attaining the path* (when one could)—that brought Devadatta to a state of suffering (Cv 7.4.8 @ V 2:203).

This Vinaya passage then closes with these verses:

1	<i>mā jātu koci lokasmim pāp'iccho udapajjatha tad aminā pi jānātha pāp'icchānaṃ yathā,gati</i>	Let not any evil desire arise in the world. Let one know it by this as the source of evil desires	b a
2	<i>paṇḍito ti samaññāto bhāvitatto ti sammato jalaṃ va yasasā aṭṭhā devadatto ti me sutam</i>	He was known as one wise, well known as one with cultivated self. Devadatta stood blazing with fame, so I have heard.	
3	<i>so pamādaṃ anuciṇṇo āsajja naṃ tathāgataṃ avīci,nirayaṃ patto catu,dvāraṃ bhayānakaṃ</i>	Falling into heedlessness, he assailed the Tathagata. He attained Avīci hell, four-doored, terrifying.	
4	<i>aduṭṭhassa hi yo dubbhe papa,kammaṃ akubbato tam eva pāpaṃ phusati duṭṭha,cittaṃ anādaraṃ</i>	For one who harms one harmless, one who does no evil deeds, that evil touches only him the disrespectful one of hating mind.	
5	<i>samuddaṃ visa,kumbhena yo maññeyya padūsituṃ⁴⁵ na so tena padūseyya bhesmā hi udadhī mahā</i>	Who should think to pollute [violate] the ocean with a pot of poison: no such harm would ever be; for awesome ⁴⁶ is the great ocean.	b a
6	<i>evam evaṃ tathāgataṃ yo vāden'upahimsati samaggataṃ⁴⁷ santa,cittaṃ vādo tamhi na rūhati</i>	Such indeed is the tathagata [thus come], who can harm him with abusive words? Who has gone rightly, with mind stilled— such abuse has no effect on him.	
7	<i>tadisaṃ mittam kubbetha tañ ca sevetha paṇḍito yassa maggānugo bhikkhu khayaṃ dukkhassa pāpuṇe ti</i>	One should make friends with such a one, let the wise associate with him, a monk who goes the same way as his should attain the end of suffering.	

⁴⁵ vl *padussituṃ*.

⁴⁶ *Bhesmā*, lit, “frightening.” Comy to the parallel verse at It 89 says: *Bhesmā ti vipula,bhāvena gambhīra,bhāvena ca bhimsāpento viya, Vipula,gambhīroti attho*, “‘Frightening’ means large and deep, as in frightening because of its size and depth.” (ItA 2:25 f)

⁴⁷ Ce *sammāgataṃ*; Se *samagataṃ*.

Puris'indriya,ñāṇa Sutta

The Discourse on the Knowledges of a Person's Faculties

A 6.62

Thus have I heard.

A monk asks about Devadatta's fate

1 On one occasion, the Blessed One was wandering on a teaching tour among the Kosalas together with a large community of monks. He arrived at a Kosala town named **Daṇḍa,kappaka**.

1.2 Then the Blessed One descended from the highway and sat down on a seat that was prepared for him at the foot of a tree, and those monks entered Daṇḍa,kappaka to look for a rest-house.

1.3 Then the venerable Ānanda together with a number of monks went down to the Aciravatī river to bathe. Having finished bathing and emerged from the water, he stood in one robe drying his body.

2 Then a certain monk approached the venerable Ānanda and said to him:

“Avuso Ānanda, was it after full consideration that the Blessed One declared of Devadatta:

2.2 ‘Devadatta is bound for a suffering state, bound for hell, and he will remain there for the world-cycle, unredeemable,’ or did he say this only *figuratively*?’⁴⁸

2.3 “It was just in this way, avuso, that the Blessed One declared it.”⁴⁹

Ānanda approaches the Buddha

3 Then the venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down at one side. Seated at one side, the venerable Ānanda said this to the Blessed One:

“I, bhante, together with a number of monks went down to the Aciravatī river to bathe. Having finished bathing and emerged from the water, I stood in one robe drying my body. [403]

3.2 Then a certain monk approached me and said:

‘Avuso Ānanda, was it after full consideration that the Blessed One declared of Devadatta:

3.3 “Devadatta is bound for a suffering state, bound for hell, and he will remain there for the world-cycle, unredeemable,” or did he say this only *figuratively*?’

3.4 When this was said, bhante, I said to that monk:

It was just in this way, avuso, that the Blessed One declared it.”

⁴⁸ *Āpāyiko devadatto nerayiko kappa-ṭ,ṭho atekiccho, udahu kenacid eva pariyāyenā ti.* See CPD: āpāyika.

⁴⁹ As at **(Dasaka) Miga,sāla S** (A 10.75/3:348,9 f). It seems that Ānanda is uncertain of the answer, or thought it is too complex for a simple answer. This uncertainty or reservation is confirmed by the next paragraph, telling us that Ānanda goes to the Buddha for clarification.

The Buddha answers Ānanda

4⁵⁰ [The Blessed One said:]

“Ānanda, that monk must be either newly ordained, not long gone forth, or a foolish and inept [inexperienced] elder. For when this was declared by me definitively,⁵¹ how can he see any ambiguity in it?⁵²

4.2 I do not see any other person, Ānanda, about whom I have made a declaration, after giving him such full consideration, as Devadatta. As long as I saw even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bright quality in Devadatta, I would not declare of him:

4.3 ‘Devadatta is bound for a suffering state, bound for hell, and he will remain there for a world-cycle, unredeemable.’

4.4 It was, Ānanda, only when I did not see even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bright quality⁵³ in Devadatta that I declared this of him.

PARABLE: THE MAN FALLEN INTO A CESSPOOL

5 Suppose there was a cesspit deeper than a man’s height full of feces right up to the top, and a man was sunk in it so that his head was submerged.

Then a man desiring his good, welfare, and security, came along, wishing to pull him out from the cesspit. He would go around the cesspit on all sides but would not see even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of the man not smeared with feces [404] where he might get a grip and pull him out.

5.2 So too, Ānanda, it was only when I did not see even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bright quality in Devadatta that I declared of him:

‘Devadatta is bound for a suffering state, bound for hell, and he will remain there for a world-cycle, unredeemable.’

The Buddha’s knowledges of a person’s faculties (*puris’indriya ñāṇā*)

6 If, Ānanda, you would listen to the Tathagata’s **knowledges of a person’s faculties**, I will analyze them.⁵⁴ [If, Ānanda, you would listen to the Tathagata’s analysis of the knowledges of a person’s faculties,]⁵⁵

6.2 “It is the time for this, Blessed One! It is the time for this, well-farer! The Blessed One should analyze his knowledges of a person’s faculties. Having heard this from the Blessed One, the monks will bear it in mind.”

⁵⁰ After this, the PTS paragraph numbering repeats “3” at *idhāhaṃ ānanda* (p404,12). From here on, it is SD paragraph numbering.

⁵¹ “Definitively” (*ekamsena*). The Buddha’s answer here is a categorical one, ie, a direct “literal” answer. On the 4 ways of answering a question, see **Kathā,vatthu S** (A 3.67/4:42), SD 46.11.

⁵² Be *Kathaṃ hi nāma yaṃ mayā ekamsena byākataṃ tattha dvejjhaṃ āpajjissati*. On this passage, see (2.4.3.2).

⁵³ *Vālagga,koṭi,nittudana,mattam pi sukka,dhammaṃ ālagga,koṭi,nittudana,mattam pi sukka,dhammaṃ*. Comy: “An amount that could be seen (*dassetabba*) on the tip of a hair; or an amount that could be dropped (*nipāta*) from a hair-tip.” (AA 3:405,14 f)

⁵⁴ Be *Ce sace tumhe ānanda suṇeyyātha tathāgatassa puris’indriya,ñāṇāni vibhajissāmī ti*. Variants for the last verb incl *vibhajessāmi* (Be Mandalay MS) and *vibhajissāmi* (Be Phayre MS).

⁵⁵ Ee reads last verb as *vibhājantassa* (A 3:404,6), Se *vibhajantassa*. Similar readings (Be Ce Se *vibhajantassa*; Ee *vibhājantassa*) are found in a parallel sentence in **Mahā Kamma,vibhaṅga S** (M 136,6.4), SD 4.16. *Vibhajantassa* [*vi + VBHAJ*, “to divide, share,” + *a + nta*] is pres part: “analysing in detail; classifying; explaining in detail.” In both suttas, we can see this as an example of [an anacoluton](#) [1.2.2].

“Well then, Ānanda, listen and attend closely. I will speak.”

“Yes, bhante,” the venerable Ānanda replied.

(1) A bad person with good roots present

The Blessed One said this:

7 “Here, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

7.2 ‘This person’s **good qualities have disappeared**, bad qualities have surfaced, but he has *good roots* that have not been eradicated.

From his good roots⁵⁶ the good will appear. Thus this person will not be subject to decline in the future.’

THE PARABLE OF THE VIABLE SEEDS

8 Suppose **seeds** that are intact, unspoiled, undamaged by wind and the sun’s heat, viable, well preserved, were deposited in well-prepared soil in a good field.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘These seeds will grow, increase, and mature’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

9 “In the same way, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’ **[405]**

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘This person’s good qualities have disappeared, bad qualities have surfaced, but he has good roots that have not been eradicated.

From his good roots the good will appear. Thus this person will not be subject to decline in the future.’

9.2 In this way, Ānanda, the Tathagata knows a person by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata has knowledge of a person’s faculties, acquired by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata knows the future arising of qualities by encompassing [another’s] mind with his own mind.

(2) A good person with bad roots present

10 Then, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

⁵⁶ *Kusala, mūlaṃ* (sg) [§§7.2, 9.1, 17,] and refs to *akusala, mūlaṃ* [§§10.1, 12.1, 19.1, 20.1, 22.1] are sg. They should be understood as uncountable nouns; hence, I have tr them as “roots” in the pl in the Sutta.

‘This person’s bad qualities have disappeared, good qualities have surfaced, but he has bad roots that have not been eradicated.

From his bad roots the bad will appear.

Thus this person will be subject to decline in the future.’

THE PARABLE OF VIABLE SEEDS ON A SOLID ROCK

11 Suppose, Ānanda, **seeds** that are intact, unspoiled, not damaged by wind and the sun’s heat, viable, well preserved, were left on solid rock.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘These seeds will not grow, increase, and mature?’”

“Yes, bhante.”

12 “In the same way, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘*Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.*’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘*This person’s bad qualities have disappeared, good qualities have surfaced, but he has bad roots that have not been eradicated.*

From his bad roots the bad will appear. Thus this person [406] will be subject to decline in the future.’

12.2 In this way, Ānanda, the Tathagata knows a person by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata has knowledge of a person’s faculties, acquired by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata knows the future arising of qualities by encompassing [another’s] mind with his own mind.

(3) A person with only bad qualities

13 Then, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘*Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.*

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘*This person does not have even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bright quality.*

This person possesses only black, bad qualities.

With the breakup of the body, after death, he will be reborn in a suffering state, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell.’

THE PARABLE OF THE SPOILED SEEDS ON WELL-PREPARED SOIL

14 Suppose, Ānanda, **seeds** that are broken, spoiled, damaged by wind and the sun’s heat, were deposited in well-prepared soil in a good field.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘These seeds will not grow, increase, and mature?’”

“Yes, bhante.”

15 “In the same way, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind I understand some person thus:

‘*Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.*

*On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:
‘This person does not have even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bright quality.*

This person possesses only black, bad qualities.

With the breakup of the body, after death, he will be reborn in a suffering state, in a bad destination, in the lower world, in hell.’

15.2 In this way, Ānanda, the Tathagata knows a person by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata has knowledge of a person’s faculties, acquired by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata knows the future arising of qualities by encompassing [another’s] mind with his own mind.”

(4) The person with bad roots about to sprout

16 When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: **[407]**

“Is it possible, bhante, to describe 3 other persons as **the counterparts of those 3?**”

“It is possible, Ānanda,” the Blessed One said.

17 “Here, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘This person’s good qualities have disappeared, bad qualities have surfaced, but he has good roots that have not been eradicated.

That, too, is about to be completely destroyed.

Thus this person will be subject to decline in the future.’

PARABLES: THE BLAZING COALS ON A SOLID ROCK; DUSK; AND MIDNIGHT

18 Suppose, Ānanda, **coals that are burning**, blazing, and glowing were deposited on solid rock. Would you know, Ānanda: ‘These coals will not grow, increase and spread?’”

“Yes, bhante.”

18.2 “Or suppose, Ānanda, it is **dusk** and the sun is setting.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘Light will disappear and darkness will appear?’”

“Yes, bhante.”

18.3 “Or suppose, Ānanda, it is close to **midnight**, the time for a meal.⁵⁷

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘Light has disappeared and darkness has appeared?’

“Yes, bhante.”

19 “In the same way, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

⁵⁷ *Abhidose addha, rattam bhatta, kāla, samaye*. CPD & DOP: sv *addha* defines *addha, ratta* as “midnight.” On *bhatta, kāla, samaye*, Comy says “the time for a meal in the king’s court” (*rāja, kulānam bhatta, kāla, saṅkhate samaye*, AA 3:406,7 f). Apparently, in the Buddha’s time, the royal court enjoyed a midnight meal.

‘This person’s good qualities have disappeared, bad qualities have surfaced, but he has good roots that have not been eradicated.

That, too, is about to be completely destroyed.

Thus this person will be subject to decline in the future.’

19.2 In this way, Ānanda, the Tathagata knows a person by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, [408] the Tathagata has knowledge of a person’s faculties, acquired by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata knows the future arising of qualities by encompassing [another’s] mind with his own mind.

(5) A good person whose bad qualities are about to be destroyed

20 “Then, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘This person’s bad qualities have disappeared, good qualities have surfaced.

*He has **bad roots** that have not been eradicated, but that, too, is about to be completely destroyed.*

*Thus this person will **not** be subject to decline in the future.’*

PARABLES: BLAZING COALS ON DRY FODDER; DAWN

21 Suppose, Ānanda, **coals that are burning**, blazing, and glowing, were deposited on a heap of dry grass or firewood.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘These coals will grow, increase, and spread’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Or suppose, Ānanda, it is the time when **the night** is fading and the sun is rising.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘Darkness will disappear and light will appear’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

“Or suppose, Ānanda, it is close to **noon**, the time for a meal.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘Darkness has disappeared and light has appeared’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

22 “In the same way, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘This person’s bad qualities have disappeared, good qualities have surfaced, but he has bad roots that have not been eradicated.

That, too, is about to be completely destroyed. Thus this person will not be subject to decline in the future.’

22.2 In this way, Ānanda, the Tathagata knows a person by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata has knowledge of a person’s faculties, [409] acquired by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata knows the future arising of qualities by encompassing [another’s] mind with his own mind.

(6) The person with only good qualities

23 Then, Ānanda, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘This person does *not* have even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bad quality.

This person possesses *only* bright, blameless qualities.

He will attain nirvana in this very life.’

PARABLE: QUENCHED COALS ON FODDER

24 Suppose, Ānanda, coals that are cool and extinguished were deposited on a heap of dry grass or firewood.

Would you know, Ānanda: ‘These coals will not grow, increase, and spread (in blazes)’?”

“Yes, bhante.”

25 “In the same way, Ānanda, having encompassed the mind of someone with my own mind, I understand some person thus:

‘Good qualities and bad qualities are found in this person.’

On a later occasion, having encompassed his mind with my own mind, I understand him thus:

‘*This person does not have even a mere fraction of a hair’s tip of a bad quality.*

This person possesses only bright, blameless qualities. He will attain nirvana in this very life.’

25.2 In this way, Ānanda, the Tathagata knows a person by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata has knowledge of a person’s faculties, acquired by encompassing his mind with his own mind.

In this way, the Tathagata knows the future arising of qualities by encompassing [another’s] mind with his own mind.

26 Ānanda, among the former 3 persons,
 one is not subject to decline,
 one is subject to decline, and
 one is bound for a suffering state, bound for hell.
 Among the latter 3 persons,
 one is not subject to decline,
 one is subject to decline, and
 one is bound to attain nirvana.” **[410]**

—evaṃ—

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