

**SD 63.14****Dasa,bala Sutta 1**or **Paṭhama Dasa,bala Sutta** The First Discourse on the 10 Powers**S 12.21**

Theme: The Buddha's qualities and key teachings

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**Dasa,bala Sutta 1**, The First Discourse on the 10 Powers (S 12.21)

## 1 Sutta summary and significance

**1.1 The Dasa,bala Sutta 1** (S 12.21) gives a **brief definition of the Buddha and his knowledge**, that is, his key qualities [§2] as comprising the 10 powers and the 4 kinds of moral courage. With these, he is the most evolved of beings (“the lordly bull”) and a teacher heard by the world, that is, of gods and humans, by way of his “lion roar.” He thus sets rolling for us the divine wheel of salvation with which we are able to break the wheel of suffering.

The Sutta then lists the 5 aggregates [§3] which are to be understood in terms of specific conditionality [§4]—that is the essence of dependent arising [§5] and dependent ending [§6]. Both these formulas are laid out in full, that is, dependent arising followed by dependent ending.

**1.2 The Dasa,bala Sutta 2** (S 12.22, SD 63.15) reprises the Buddha’s key teachings of Dasa,bala Sutta 1 [§§1-6] as stated [1.1], and in its closing half [S 12.22,7-12] he lists his spiritual acts and admonitions. Sutta 2 then closes with the Buddha’s admonishing us to exert ourselves to attain awakening even now while life lasts.

## 2 The Buddha’s qualities

### **2.1 THE 10 TATHĀGATA POWERS**

**2.1.0 The 10 powers**,<sup>1</sup> which are the powers of spiritual knowledge (*ñāṇa,bala*), are given in **the Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta** (M 12),<sup>2</sup> where they are called “tathagata powers” (*tathagata,bala*). A detailed analysis of the 10 powers is given in **the Vibhaṅga**,<sup>3</sup> which has been cited in the notes [2.1].

Briefly, the Buddha’s 10 powers are as follows:<sup>4</sup>

“The tathagata understands, as it really is,

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| (1) what is <b>possible</b> as possible, what is <b>impossible</b> as impossible;  | [2.1.1] |
| (2) the results of <b>karma</b> undertaken, past, present and future, according to their causes and fruits;                            | [2.1.2] |
| (3) the ways leading to all <b>destinies</b> [states of rebirth];  | [2.1.3] |
| (4) the world with its manifold and diverse <b>elements</b> ;  | [2.1.4] |
| (5) the various <b>dispositions</b> of beings;   | [2.1.5] |
| (6) <b>the degrees of maturity</b> in the spiritual faculties of other beings and persons;   | [2.1.6] |
| (7) the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence regarding <b>the attainments, the liberations, the samadhis and the dhyanas</b> ; | [2.1.7] |
| (8) recollection of his manifold <b>past lives</b> ;   | [2.1.8] |
| (9) <b>the divine eye</b> [clairvoyance; how beings fare according to their karma];  | [2.1.9] |

<sup>1</sup> The 10 powers are def briefly or paraphrased at **SD 61.26** (2.1).

<sup>2</sup> **M 12**,9-21/1:69-71 + SD 49.1 (3.5).

<sup>3</sup> Vbh 335-344). SD 61.26 (2.3.2.0). **Vibhaṅga** (“analysis”) (Vbh) is the 2<sup>nd</sup> book of the 7 books of Abhidhamma Piṭaka. It deals in a general way with the different categories and formulas given in Dhamma,saṅgaṇī (Dhs) (the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 7 books), but with a different method of analysis. The book has 18 chapters, each of which is called a *vibhaṅga*. Each chapter has 3 parts: *Suttanta,bhājanīya* (sutta division), *Abhidhamma,bhājanīya* (abhidhamma division) and *Paññā,pucchaka* (list of questions). The Commentary to the Vibhaṅga is called Sammoha,vinodaṇī (VbhA).

<sup>4</sup> These 10 powers are listed in **Maha Sīha,nāda S** (M 12) [above], (**Dasaka**) **Sīha S** (A 10.21/5:32 f), SD 81.2; summarized at **Pm** 2:174-176; briefly at **Vbh** §§760/317 f; elaborated at **Vbh** §§809-831/335-344. See **M 12**,6 n (header) (SD 49.1).

- (10) attainment and dwelling in the freedom of mind and the freedom by wisdom that are influx-free with **the destruction of the mental influxes.**” [2.1.10]

**The 10 powers** are here listed as defined in the suttas, the Vibhaṅga and the Commentaries, followed by brief notes on their significance today.

### **2.1.1 The possible and the impossible (*thānāttthāna*)**

- (1) “The tathagata understands, as it really is, what is **possible** as possible, what is **impossible** as impossible” (*tathāgato thānañ ca thānato aṭṭhānañ ca aṭṭhānato yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānāti*, M 1:69,36 f)<sup>5</sup>

**2.1.1.1** According to the Commentaries,<sup>6</sup> the 1<sup>st</sup> power of the Buddha is the ability to see and understand the possibility (*thāna*) and the impossibility (*aṭṭhāna*) of events, states and things by analyzing them in terms of causal relationships (*hetu, paccaya*). Or he knows the cause and not-cause of situations (*kāraṇākaraṇaṃ eva jānāti*, AA 5:16,10 f).

In modern terms, we may say that this is an application of **the theory of causes and effects** to human experiences. Notice that we here speak of “causes and effects” in the plural. When we carefully examine any of our experiences, such as when we *see* (or hear, smell, taste, feel or think about) something, and examine how we *react* to it, we will find that they often differ from how *another* person experiences and reacts to it or to a memory of it.

In either case, there are a number of causes for how we *see* things, and so on, and also a number of different ways people react to them. Even for us, we may change our view of an experience upon learning new facts, or when in a different situation, or when our memory of it dims. Upon closer examination, we may, in due course, be able to see the truth or reality (*thāna*) and error or falsity (*aṭṭhāna*) of our experiences.

**2.1.1.2** There are at least 2 things we need to consider here, which are:

- (1) what can exist or happen, and
- (2) how we know such a truth or reality or remember it.

According to **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23), whatever that we can know are what we *experience* through our 5 physical senses and the mind. In other words, all that we can know is either sense-based or mentally constructed; this is the crux of the early Buddhist theory of knowledge (epistemology).<sup>7</sup>

**2.1.1.3** With this understanding, we can see why early Buddhism rejects the Creator-God idea. We cannot really “experience” God through any of our senses—there is no such being. We may try to describe—or rather “prescribe”—our *idea* of God, but we cannot define God into existence. At best we can say that we thought about it, or we can imagine it or even reason it out. When we define a unicorn, no matter how cleverly or beautifully, it still remains a unicorn, an imagined creature!

We can talk about God, devas, demons and non-humans as **stories** to spiritually educate or inspire people, including ourselves, *not to do evil, to do good and purify the mind*. As Buddhists, we know they are stories but we value their wholesome morals and imports. However, these very same ideas can be

<sup>5</sup> Vbh 809/335-338 explains this knowledge by qu **Bahu, dhātuka S** (M 115,12-19/3:64-67), SD 29.1a; see also Vbh 400; Dhs 1337. Comy, however, explains it in the Abhidhamma sense, as the knowledge of the correlations btw conditions and their results (MA 2:28). This is the only place in M where this quality is mentioned. Elsewhere in the canon, it is stated in **Thāna S** (S 52.15/5:304); (**Chakka**) **Sīha, nāda S** (A 6.64/3:417+419+420); (**Dasaka**) **Sīha, nāda S** (A 10.21/5:33); **Adhivuttipada S** (A 10.22/5:37); It 123\*; Ap 2:460; Pm 2:174, 175, 176.

<sup>6</sup> MA 2:28; AA 5:12 f.

<sup>7</sup> S 35.23/4:15 (SD 7.1).

wrongly used to control and manipulate others, either through fear or hope. Believers instinctively speak of God since they have been conditioned to believe in the idea. Thankfully today with better education, modern science (especially psychology) and broader political freedom, religion is put in its place—as private belief and practice.

The point remains that the Creator-God idea is mentally constructed. For this reason, too, we find that even within the same religion or amongst God-believers, it is very common that not everyone agrees on the nature of such a God, how he exists, and so on. Over time, even theologians have to work to revise or discount their God-ideas. The better ones who have benefited from faith and grow beyond it, turn away from the God-idea to become better humans. I think the Buddha was one such person.<sup>8</sup>

Those who promote the God-idea tend to seek knowledge of power and domination; when we seek to understand true reality, we rejoice in the power of knowledge (*ñāṇa, bala*) and freedom. The God-idea is about faith and power; stories should inspire wisdom and liberation, or at least correct delusive or delusory notions, especially a massively delusional notion.<sup>9</sup>

“When one person suffers from a delusion it is called insanity. When many people suffer from a delusion it is called religion.”<sup>10</sup>

**2.1.1.4** The Aṅguttara Commentary goes on to give an interesting practical application of the meaning of “possible and impossible,” that is, the Buddha’s **realization** (*paṭivedha*) or awakening, as the basis for his mastery of the knowledge of what is possible and what is not; and his **teaching** (*desanā*) of others so that they (and we), too, are able to realize the truth and awaken to full freedom.<sup>11</sup> An early example is his teaching the 5 monks, and Añña Koṇḍañña, listening to the Buddha’s teaching and attaining stream-winning.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> A growing number of former theologians, pastors, and biblical scholars, on account of closer inspection of scripture, history, and the problem of suffering led them away from theistic belief, from studying or teaching theology to doubting, deconstructing, or outright debunking the traditional concept of God, often moving toward atheism, agnosticism, or secular humanism. Among such key figures are: **Bart D Ehrman** (b 1955): Formerly a committed evangelical Christian and Moody Bible Institute graduate, Ehrman became a prominent New Testament scholar. He later deconstructed his faith, concluding the Bible is a purely human book riddled with contradictions and errors, leading him to agnosticism. **Thomas Jay Oord** (b 1965): While still describing himself as a “constructive Christian theologian,” Oord has publicly argued against traditional, foundational aspects of theism, specifically the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing), which he claims makes God responsible for evil.

<sup>9</sup> Good philosophical studies on God’s non-existence often focus on **the problem of evil**, divine hiddenness, logical inconsistencies in God’s attributes, or metaphysical naturalism. A good primer is John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, 1953, 1967:425-492 (ch 7), 4<sup>th</sup> ed 1997:201-247. **Key arguments & works** incl:

**Problem of evil:** Epicurus, David Hume, J L Mackie, *Evil and Omnipotence*, 1955; Alvin Plantinga (offers theodicies but engages *the power of evil* deeply).

**Divine hiddenness:** A loving God would make His presence clear; hiddenness suggests non-existence. J L Schellenberg, *Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason*, 2017.

**Logical incoherence:** Attempts to show the concept of God (eg, omnipotence vs omniscience) is inherently contradictory. Early critiques incl the pre-Socratic Greek philosophers, *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*.

**Metaphysical naturalism:** A worldview where only natural laws and entities exist, removing the need for God. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, 1779; Richard Carrier, *Sense and Goodness without God*, 2005 a comprehensive study; Daniel Dennett, Bertrand Russell.

**Buddhist philosophy** offers robust non-theistic frameworks, critiquing creator deities. See *Nāgārjuna*; Ratnakīrti (11<sup>th</sup> cent)(analyzed by Parimal Patil, *Against a Hindu God*, 2009). 27 Dec 2025.

<sup>10</sup> R M Pirsig, *Lila: An inquiry into morals*, 1991:173 f, 2006; Pirsig’s idea was distilled into this quote by R Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006:5. “[Preface online](#)” (PDF). 26 Dec 2025.

<sup>11</sup> See **Santa Vimokkha S** (A 10.9/5:12), an expanded parallel of A 8.72; **Nātha S 2** (A 10.18/5:27), SD 79.5.

<sup>12</sup> **Dhamma, cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,16/5:423 = Mv 1.6.29 @ V 1:11,32-36), SD 1.1.

From the teachings of any of the 10 suttas of **the Okkanta Saṃyutta** (S 25)—such as **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1)—by understanding the Buddha’s teaching on impermanence and reflecting on it, we will certainly be able to attain streamwinning within this life itself, if not with our very last breath.<sup>13</sup>

### **2.1.2 Karma (kamma)**

(2) “The tathagata understands, as it really is, the results of karma undertaken, past, present and future, according to their causes and fruits [potentials]” (*tathāgato atītānāgata, paccuppannānaṃ kamma, samādānānaṃ thānaso hetuso vipākam yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānāti*, M 1:70,3 f).<sup>14</sup>

**2.1.2.1** Part of the Buddha’s comprehensive understanding of conditionality—how causes and effects interact, create and define our experiences—is the deep understanding of how all beings are conditioned by their karma. This particular power of knowledge encompasses the Buddha’s own karma. He understood his own past karma and how it conditioned his last life, even his struggle for awakening, such as his 6 long years of self-mortification.<sup>15</sup>

This knowledge of the Buddha’s gives him deep insight into the nature of good and evil, that is, how we are shaped and directed by our intentions (*cetanā*). He fully understands how good karma (*puñña*) endows us with *longevity, beauty, happiness and power*; and how evil (*pāpa*) brings us *lack and suffering*. Yet, although good brings wholesome benefits, these are impermanent and imperfect. In other words, good and bad work together as one’s karma to keep one fettered to the wheel of life and death.

**2.1.2.2** Understanding karma as samsara’s chains of good and evil, reward and punishment, the Buddha realized that we have to live with wholesome skillfulness (*kusala*) to be free from samsara’s chains. Skillful living means that one sees sense-experiences as being only in the moment. They pass away as soon as they arise; only memory makes them seem lasting and worthwhile. In other words, the mind, free from the grip of the senses, stays calm and clear to gain true happiness with the wisdom of seeing true reality. One is then free from both good and evil [2.1.3.2]. This leads to full awakening and freedom.

### **2.1.3 Destinies (gati)**

(3) “The tathagata understands, as it really is, the ways leading to all destinies [states of rebirth]” (*tathāgato sabbattha, gāminiṃ paṭipadam yathā, bhūtaṃ pajānāti*, M 1:70,7 f).<sup>16</sup>

**2.1.3.1** This 3<sup>rd</sup> power is a development from the 2<sup>nd</sup> power, karma as cause and fruit [2.1.2.2]. In significant ways, this is the knowing of the **effects of one’s karma**, that is, in terms of rebirth and existence, both happy and painful. Here again we see karma as proliferating itself so that beings are shackled to samsara, the cycle of rebirths and redeaths. So long as one enjoys karmic fruits, even happy benefits, one will continue to generate karma, that is, the engine that runs samsara, keeping beings imprisoned in it.

<sup>13</sup> S 25.1/3:225 (SD 16.7).

<sup>14</sup> Comy explains possibility (*thāna*) as a condition (*paccaya*), ie, the realms, circumstances, time and effort—which either impedes or enhances the result; cause (*hetu*) is karma itself (MA 2:29). The Buddha’s analyses of karma are given in **Kukkura, vātika S** (M 57), SD 23.11, **Cūḷa Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 135), SD 4.15; and **Mahā Kamma Vibhaṅga S** (M 136), SD 4.16.

<sup>15</sup> On the 6 years of self-mortification, see SD 36.5 (1.1.3); SD 49.19 (2.4); SD 1.11 (2.1.2); SD 52.1 (9.1.2.2).

<sup>16</sup> Explained in M 12,35-42 (SD 49.1).

**The Vibhaṅga** explains this power as the knowledge of “the path and the way” (*ayaṃ maggo, ayaṃ paṭipadā*) to the hell-state, the animal state, the preta state, the human state, the heavenly state, and nirvana (Vbh 339,8-19). The first 5 are also called “the 5 realms,” which can further be divided into the 31 planes (*bhūmi*).<sup>17</sup> Nirvana is the antithesis of samsara. [On the 3 worlds: 2.1.4.1.]

**2.1.3.2** To be free from suffering, one must stop generating karma. However, karma is rooted in *greed, hatred, delusion and fear, the 4 biases (agati)*<sup>18</sup> that drive us to do both good and evil, each action bringing their own fruits and potential effects, shaping our lives and holding us back as humans, as sub-humans and as heavenly beings. Even beings in the highest heavens are caught in karma. When the effects of their good karma are exhausted or interrupted, these beings fall from their heavens, often into the suffering states to undergo due karma.

Only **the arhats**—by giving up greed, hatred and delusion, the roots of karma—are truly free from the fruits of both good and evil (*puñña, papa, pahīna*).<sup>19</sup> Since the arhats (like the Buddha) are free from lust, existence and ignorance, they generate no new karma, and so are no more held back in samsara. [2.1.10.1]

An important point needs to be stressed here. When we say that the arhats are free from good and evil, or beyond wholesome and unwholesome, it does not mean that they do not have to keep any moral rules or that they may even break the precepts (kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct, lie or get drunk). That the arhats are “beyond good and evil” simply means that, on account of their abandoning *lust, existence and ignorance*, they are purified of all latent or unconscious tendencies that would make them commit any bad or evil act. They are happily good and naturally moral individuals; they will, for example, by nature, keep to all the monastic rules.

#### **2.1.4 The world (*loka*)**

**(4)** “The tathagata understands, as it really is, **the world** with its many and different elements” (*tathāgato aneka.dhātu, nānā.dhātu, lokarṃ yathā, bhūtarṃ pajānāti*, M 1:70,9 f).<sup>20</sup>

**2.1.4.1** The Commentaries<sup>21</sup> explain “**many elements**” (*aneka, dhātu*) as referring to 2 kinds of existence, as follows:

(1) **The individual being** is comprised of the 18 elements (*aṭṭhārasa dhātu*), that is, the 6 sense-bases, their sense-objects and their respective sense-consciousnesses. These constitute the “all” (*sabba*) of **the Sabba Sutta** (S 35.23) that can be experienced or known by us and that which constitutes our individual being [2.1.1.2].

(2) **The cosmic existence** comprises the 3 worlds (*ti, loka*), that is, the sense-world (*kāma, dhātu*), the form world (*rūpa, dhātu*) and the formless world (*arūpa, dhātu*).<sup>22</sup> Beings of **the sense-world** depend on their 5 physical sense-faculties, comprising the subhuman states, humans, and the sense-world devas.

Humans and to some extent devas have the capacity for mental and spiritual development since they experience both good and evil/bad. Animals who associate with spiritual people like the Buddha,

<sup>17</sup> The 31 planes: SD 1.7 App; SD 57.10 (2.2).

<sup>18</sup> **Sigal’ovāda S** (D 31,5), SD 4.1; **Āgati S 1** (A 4.17), SD 89.7; **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5,6.4) n, SD 2.21; SD 31.12 (6.4.1.3); SD 53.5 (2.2.1.1).

<sup>19</sup> See **Beyond good and evil**, SD 18.7; SD 2.10 (3.2.3.4).

<sup>20</sup> The “elements” (*dhātu*) here are the 5 aggregates (*khandha*), the 6 sense-bases (*āyatana*), and the 18 elements (*dhātu*) = 6 sense-bases + 6 sense-consciousnesses + 6 sense-contacts (MA 2:29). These are explained in **Bahu, dhatuka S** (M 115,4-9), SD 29.1a.

<sup>21</sup> MA 2:29,20; AA 5:14,11 f.

<sup>22</sup> On the 3 worlds, see **Viññāṇa-ṭṭhiti**, SD 23.14; SD 29.6a (5.2); SD 29.6b (7.2).

the arhats, renunciants and good lay followers are likely to rub off the gentle calmness of mind from them, which helps the animals to be reborn in the sense-world heaven (usually Tāvatiṃsa).<sup>23</sup>

**The form-world** beings are brahmas (a higher form of devas) who are reborn as dhyanic beings on account of their previous meditation karma. On account of the purity of their minds, they exist in the form of brilliant radiance, and often exist in a persistent state of dhyanic joy.

**The formless world** beings attain an even subtler existential form on account of their formless dhyana. They exist in the form of pure energy, and are thus unseen by other kinds of beings. In order to appear to the Buddha or other beings, these formless brahmas have to assume some kind of material form.

**2.1.4.2** The term “**different elements**” (*nānā,dhātu*) is explained as “with the various kinds of elements on account of the characteristics of those very same elements” (*tāsam [vi tesam] yeva dhātūnam vilakkhaṇattā nāna-p,pakāra,dhātuṃ*).<sup>24</sup> This, I think, refers to the 6 elements—earth, water, fire, wind, space and consciousness—constituting these worlds in different ways. In the sense-world, for example, we see all the 4 primary elements quite palpably. In the form world, the fire element predominates in the form of brilliant light.

In the formless world, the 4 primary elements take very subtle forms as energy. In the 1<sup>st</sup> formless realm—that of the infinity of space—space predominates. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> formless realm—that of nothingness—all the elements, as it were, subside. And in the 3<sup>rd</sup> formless realm—that of consciousness—only the subtle mind exists. And in the 4<sup>th</sup> realm—that of neither-perception-nor-non-perception—even the mind is too subtle to be noticed.

**2.1.4.3** The Buddha, with his awakening, fully knows the true nature of the “**world**” (*loka*); that is, there are these 3 kinds of world:

- |                             |                      |   |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|---|
| (1) the world of space      | <i>okāsa,loka</i>    | the physical world of time and space;   |
| (2) the world of beings     | <i>satta,loka</i>    | life in its various forms;  |
| (3) the world of formations | <i>saṅkhāra,loka</i> | the mind and its projections or the 5 aggregates. <sup>25</sup><br>(Vism 7.37/204 f; DA 1:173 f; MA 1:397, 2:200) <sup>26</sup> |

In simple terms, the first is the physical world or universe that the various beings of the 31 planes (which is the 2<sup>nd</sup> type of world) inhabit. The 3<sup>rd</sup> kind of world is how we experience everything through our senses and the mind, projecting our own views and realities. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> kind of world that defines us and keeps us in samsara.

Interestingly, **samsara** (*saṃsāra*) can be broadly said to encompass all these 3 worlds, but specifically, samsara arises from our own **formations** (*saṅkhāra*), our will to live expressed through our various intentions, good and bad. These intentions generate karma, which in turn is the “engine” that runs our samsara, cycle of births, deaths and suffering.

### **2.1.5 Disposition (adhimutti)**

**(5)** “The tathagata understands, as it really is, the various dispositions of beings” (*tathāgato sattānaṃ nānādhimutti,katam yathā,bhūtaṃ pajānāti*, M 1:70,11 f).

<sup>23</sup> There are stories where such animals are reborn as devas in Tāvatiṃsa: SD 6.1 (3); R68a; R152. On animals benefitting from Dharma or going to heaven, see foll: bats (SD 26.1 (7.2)), dog (R68a 2009), elephant (SD 6.1 (3)), frog (SD 36.2 (5.1.1.4)), horse (SD 52.1 (8.2.3; esp 10.4.2)), and monkey (R68a 2009; SD 6.1 (3)).

<sup>24</sup> MA 2:29,21 f; AA 5:14,11 f; PmA 3:627 f; VbhA 401,8 f.

<sup>25</sup> On suffering as the 5 aggregates, see **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,5/1:420), SD 1.1.

<sup>26</sup> SD 15.7 (3.5.1 (2)); SD 17.6 (3.1.3).

**2.1.5.1** According to the 5<sup>th</sup> power, the Buddha knows, as they really are, the different dispositions, that is, the character and habits of beings. **The Vihāṅga** elaborates this power thus:

Herein the tathagata understands thus:

There are beings of **inferior** disposition; there are beings of **superior** disposition.

Beings of inferior disposition tend to rely on, turn to and associate with beings of *inferior* disposition.

Beings of superior disposition tend to rely on, turn to and associate with beings of *superior* disposition.

(This was the case in the past, and will be so in the future, and is true even now.)

(Vbh 339 f; briefly at AA 5:14,19-23)

**2.1.5.2** The Buddha “knows their dispositions and inclinations” (*ajjhasayādhimuttim eva pajānāti*, AA 5:16) of beings, especially those before him or those he communicates with. This is not just “mind-reading,” but the ability to understand the person’s character, inclination and karmic disposition, especially in terms of their ability to understand and accept the Dharma that he teaches.

Thus, we see the Buddha first teaching **the 5 monks**, who have renounced the world, too, and followed the bodhisattva until just before his awakening. At the end of the Buddha’s teaching of the “first sermon”—**the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11)—Koṇḍañña became a streamwinner. Then, Vappa gained streamwinning on the following day, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the waning fortnight;<sup>27</sup> Bhaddiya, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day; Mahānāma, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, and Assaji, on the 4<sup>th</sup> day (AA 1:147).<sup>28</sup> All the 5 monks attained arhatness at the end of the teaching of **the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (S 22.59),<sup>29</sup> on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the waning fortnight.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, with this power of the knowledge of personal disposition and inclinations, the Buddha taught Dharma to the first 80 great elders<sup>31</sup> who all became arhats.

**2.1.5.3** In most cases, even with listeners who are new to the Dharma, the Buddha would skillfully use the “progressive talk” (*ānupubbī,kathā*),<sup>32</sup> described as follows in **the Mahā’padāna Sutta** (D 14):

The Blessed One ... gave them **a progressive talk**—that is to say, he spoke

on giving,

*dāna*

on moral virtue and

*sīla*

on the heavens,

*sagga*

and proclaimed the danger, vanity and disadvantage of sensual pleasures,

*kām’ādīnava*

and the advantage of renunciation.

*nekkhamm’ānisaṃsa*

When the Blessed One ... **perceived that their minds were ready**, pliant, hindrance-free, elevated and lucid,

then, he explained to them the teaching peculiar to the Buddhas,<sup>33</sup> that is to say,

suffering, its arising, its ending, and the path.<sup>34</sup>

(D 14,3.15, 3.19, 3.23.2), SD 49.8b<sup>35</sup>

<sup>27</sup> In the forenoon, J 1:92.

<sup>28</sup> See SD 1.1 (2.3.4.1).

<sup>29</sup> S 22.59/3:68 (SD 1.2); V 1:13 f.

<sup>30</sup> DhA 1:87,8-12; J 1:82,19-22. On the 5 monks, see SD 1.1 (1.3.1). On the admission of the 5 monks as renunciants, see SD 45.16 (1.1).

<sup>31</sup> On the 80 great elders (*asīti mahā,thera*), SD 15.10a (7).

<sup>32</sup> **Mahā’padāna S** (D 14,3.15) + SD 49.8b (7.3 esp 7.3.2) pericope.

<sup>33</sup> *Buddhānaṃ sāmukkaṃsika dhamma,desanā*. This is an occasion when the Buddha teaches the 4 noble truths directly to the laity: see (7.3).

<sup>34</sup> This is stock: V 1:15, 2:156, 192; D 1:110, 148, 2:41; M 1:379; A 3:184, 4:186, 209; U 49.

<sup>35</sup> See SD 21.6 esp (1); SD 46.1 (4.1); SD 30.8 (3.4.2): Skillful means of speech.

The above passage records how the past buddha Vipassī—and also other buddhas, including our present Buddha Gotama—applied their knowledge of others’ disposition and inclination. When the buddhas “perceive that their minds are ready,” they then teach them the 4 noble truths.

### **2.1.6 Degree of spiritual maturity (paropariyatta) [14 levels]**

**6** “The tathagata understands, as it really is, **the degrees of maturity** in the spiritual faculties of other beings and persons” (*tathāgato para,sattānaṃ para,puggalānaṃ indriya,paropariyattaṃ yathā,-bhūtaṃ pajānāti*, M 1:70,13 f).<sup>36</sup>

**2.1.6.0** The Buddha’s 6<sup>th</sup> power is the ability to know the spiritual potential and readiness of others —their “**spiritual maturity**” (*indriya,paropariyatta*)—in all their diverse aspects.

**The Vibhaṅga** defines this power of knowing the degrees of spiritual maturity of others as follows:

Herein, the tathagata comprehends the beings’

(1) inclination,	<i>āsaya;</i>	[2.1.6.1]
(2) latent tendency,	<i>anusaya;</i>	[2.1.6.2]
(3) character,	<i>carita;</i>	[2.1.6.3]
(4) disposition,	<i>adhimutti;</i>	[2.1.6.4]
(5) with little dust in their eyes or	<i>appa,raj’akkha;</i>	[2.1.6.5]
(6) with much dust in their eyes,	<i>mahā.raj’akkha;</i>	[2.1.6.6]
(7) with weak faculties or	<i>mud’indriya;</i>	[2.1.6.7]
(8) with keen faculties,	<i>tikkh’indriya;</i>	[2.1.6.8]
(9) of good qualities or	<i>svākāra;</i>	[2.1.6.9]
(10) of bad qualities,	<i>dvākāra;</i>	[2.1.6.10]
(11) hard to instruct or	<i>duviññāpaya;</i>	[2.1.6.11]
(12) easy to instruct,	<i>suviññāpaya;</i>	[2.1.6.12]
(13) not fit or	<i>abhabba;</i>	[2.1.6.13]
(14) fit.	<i>bhabba.</i>	[2.1.6.14]

### **VIBHAṄGA EXPLANATIONS**

**The Vibhaṅga** continues by defining each of these points regarding spiritual maturity, thus:<sup>37</sup>

#### **2.1.6.1 (1) What is the inclination (*āsaya*) of beings?**

(They are inclined to speculate thus:)<sup>38</sup> [the 10 extreme clinging views, *anta,gahika diṭṭhi*<sup>39</sup>].

<sup>36</sup> Comy explains the inferiority and superiority of beings in terms of the 5 faculties (*pañc’indriya*), viz, faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom (MA 2:29 f). **Vibhaṅga** gives details (Vbh §814-827/340-342).

<sup>37</sup> These defs are slightly abridged.

<sup>38</sup> Speculative views (*diṭṭhi,gatāni*). These 10 theses are said to be *avyākata*, “unexplained” or questions “set aside” (*ṭhapanīya*) by the Buddha since they are unrelated to the training and salvation. They are listed in a number of suttas: **Poṭṭhapāda S** (D 9), SD 7.14, **Pāsādikā S** (D 29), **Cūḷa Māluṅkyaputta S** (M 63,2.2 *passim*), SD 5.8; **Aggi Vacchagotta S** (M 72), SD 6.15, **Vacchagotta Saṃyutta** (S 3:257 ff); **Abyākata Saṃyutta** (S 4:374-403); **U 66**. In **Milinda,pañha**, the double-horned question is used skillfully by way of Buddhist apologetics. See also Jayatilleke 1963:226-228, 334 f, 350-352. See also **Abhaya Rāja,kumāra S**, SD 7.12 Intro.

<sup>39</sup> See **S 12.15,7/2:17,23** (SD 6.13a); **Nm 1:113,1** (NmA) ≠ **V 5:138,13**; **Vbh 367,1**; **D 3:45,17** (DA: *sa yeva diṭṭhi ucchedantassa gahitattā anta,gāhikā ti vuccati*) = **A 1:154,25** (AA: *dasa,vatthukāya antaṃ gahetvā thita,diṭṭhiyā*) = 2:240,8 = 3:130,2; **Pm 1:151,9-158,38** (*anta-g,gahikāya diṭṭhiyā ... abhiniveso*).

- 1-4 (1) “The world is eternal” or (2) “The world is not eternal;”<sup>40</sup>  
 (3) “The world is finite” or (4) “The world is infinite;”<sup>41</sup>  
 5-6 (5) “The soul and the body are the same” or (6) “The soul and the body are different;”<sup>42</sup>  
 7-10 (7) “A being (*tathāgata*)<sup>43</sup> exists after death” or  
 (8) “A being does not exist after death” or  
 (9) “A being both exists and does not exist after death” or  
 (10) “A being neither exists nor does not exist after death.”<sup>44</sup>

Thus there are these beings dependent on **existence views**, dependent on **non-existence views**.<sup>45</sup>  
 By not adhering to either of these extremes,<sup>46</sup> there is the ability to achieve what conforms with specific conditionality and the dependently arisen.<sup>47</sup>

This is the inclination of beings.

(Vbh 815/340,12-22)

### 2.1.6.2 (2) What is latent tendency (*anusaya*) of beings?

There are these **7 latent tendencies**, namely:

Latent tendency (1) to sensuous lust, (2) to repulsion, (3) to conceit, (4) to wrong view, (5) to doubt, (6) to lust for existence, and (7) to ignorance.

That which in the world is lovely in form (*piya,rūpa*), pleasant in form, therein beings’ tendency to **lust** (*rāgānusaya*) lies latent; that which in the world is unlovely in form, unpleasant in form, therein beings’ tendency to **repulsion** (*paṭighānusaya*) lies latent.

Thus, in these two states it should be understood that **ignorance** continuously arises, and, coupled (with lust and repulsion), **conceit, wrong view** and **doubt** are to be seen.

This is latent tendency of beings.

(Vbh 816/340,23-30)

<sup>40</sup> While views 1-2 view the world or universe in terms of time, views 3-4 view it in terms of space.

<sup>41</sup> **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1) elaborates views 3-4 as “extension views” (*antānanta,vāda*), ie, the views that: (1) the world is finite, (2) the world is infinite, (3) the world is finite in a *vertical* direction but infinite *across*; and (4) the world is neither finite nor infinite. (D 1,2.16-21/1:22-24), SD 25.

<sup>42</sup> See **Is there a soul?** SD 2.16.

<sup>43</sup> Here, *tathāgata* means “a sentient being” (*satta*), as attested by these texts and comys: **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,2.27-1/1:27,24 f; DA 118.1) ≈ **Cūḷa Māluṅkyā,putta S** (M 63,2/1:426,14; MA 3:141,23), **Aggi Vaccha,gotta S** (M 72,9-14/1-484-486; MA 3:199,2) ≈ **Khemā S** (S 44.1/4:376,26 f; SA 3:113,18); **Yamaka S** (S 22.85/3:111,14 +112,6; SA 2:311,1), **Nānā Titthiyā S 1** (U 6.4/67,14; UA 340,6 (Ce Ee) 340; UA:Be *satto*; UA:Se *sattā*) ≈ Nm 64,20 (NmA 1:193,24). Cf **Anurādha S** (S 22.86.4/3:116), SD 21.13, where Comy explains *tathāgata* there as “your teacher” (ie, the Buddha), but regarding him as a “being” (*taṃ tathāgato ti tumhākaṃ satthā tathāgato taṃ sattaṃ tathāgataṃ* (SA 2:312).

<sup>44</sup> This tetralemma is well known: **Param,marāṇa S** (S 16.12/2:222 f); **Anurādha S** (S 22.86/3:116-119); **S 24.15-18/3:215 f**. **Avyākata Saṃyutta** has some suttas dealing with it (S 44.2-8/4:381-397): see S:B 1080 n165. For a philosophical discussion, see K N Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:350 & P Kügler, “The logic and language of nirvana,” *International J for Philosophy of Religion* 53 2003:100 f.

<sup>45</sup> These 2 wrong views are also respectively that “all exists” (*sabbam atthi*) or “nothing exists” (*sabbaṃ n’atthi*): **Kaccāyana,gotta S** (S 12.15,7/2:17,23), SD 6.13a.

<sup>46</sup> These “**(two) extremes**” (*antā*), those of “existence view” (*bhava,diṭṭhi*) and “non-existence view” (*vibhava,diṭṭhi*), are part of a triad of craving (*taṇhā*)—those for sensual pleasures (*kāma,taṇhā*), for existence (*bhava,taṇhā*), and for non-existence [annihilation] (*vibhava,taṇhā*)—which constitute the “arising” (*samudaya*) of suffering, the 2<sup>nd</sup> noble truth: **Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S** (S 56.11,6 = Mv 1.6.20), SD 1.1. These 2 extremes are the roots of various speculative views, listed here as a total of 10 [above].

<sup>47</sup> *Ete vā pana ubho anto anupagamma ida-p.paccayatā,paṭicca.samuppannesu dhammesu anulomikā khanti paṭiladdhā hoti, yathā,bhūtaṃ vā ñāṇaṃ.*

**2.1.6.3 (3) And what is the character (*carita*)<sup>48</sup> of beings?**

**Karmic activity** (or karma-formations) producing meritorious karma-formations (*puññābhisaṅkhāra*), demeritorious karma-formations (*apuññābhisaṅkhāra*), and imperturbable karma-formations (*āneñjābhisaṅkhāra*) “with limited ground” or “with great (or much) ground.”<sup>49</sup>

This is the character of beings.

(Vbh 817/340,31-34)

**2.1.6.4 (4) And what is disposition (*adhimutti*) of beings?**

There are beings of **inferior** disposition; there are beings of **superior** disposition.

Beings of inferior disposition depend on, [341] approach, and frequent beings of *inferior disposition*.  
Beings of superior disposition depend on, approach, and frequent beings of *superior disposition*.

In the past, too, *this was the case*. In the future, too, *this will be the case*.

This is disposition of beings.

(Vbh 818/340,35-841,9)

**2.1.6.5 (5) Who are those beings with much dust in their eyes (*mahā,raj’akkhe*)?**

**The 10 bases of corruption** (*kilesa,vatthu*) are:

(1) Greed, (2) hatred, (3) delusion, (4) conceit, (5) views, (6) doubt, (7) sloth, (8) restlessness, (9) lack of moral shame, and (10) lack of moral fear. Those beings in whom these 10 bases of corruption are pursued, cultivated, developed, become abundant.<sup>50</sup>

These are the beings with much dust in their eyes.

(Vbh 819/341,10-14)

**2.1.6.6 (6) Who are those beings with little dust in their eyes (*appa,raj’akkhe*)?**

Those beings in whom the 10 bases of corruption [2.1.6.5] are not pursued, not cultivated, not developed, not become abundant.

These are the beings with little dust in their eyes.

(Vbh 819/341,15-18)

**2.1.6.7 (7) Who are those beings with weak faculties (*mud’indriya*)?**

**The 5 (spiritual) faculties** are: the faculty of faith, faculty of energy, faculty of mindfulness, faculty of concentration, faculty of wisdom.

Those beings in whom these 5 faculties are not pursued, not cultivated, not developed, not become abundant.

These are the beings with weak faculties.

(Vbh 820/341,19-23)

**2.1.6.8 (8) Who are those beings with keen faculties (*tikkh’indriya*)?**

Those beings in whom the 5 faculties [2.1.6.7] are pursued, cultivated, developed, become abundant.

These are the beings with keen controlling faculties.

(Vbh 821/341,24-30)

**2.1.6.9 (9) Who are those beings with bad qualities (*dvākāra*)?**

Those beings who have bad (*pāpa*) inclinations, have bad latent tendencies, have a bad character, have bad dispositions, have much dust in their eyes, have weak faculties.

These are the beings with bad qualities.

(Vbh 822/341,31-33)

<sup>48</sup> Ie, “habitual conduct” that is of karmic significance or consequence.

<sup>49</sup> While the first 2 terms refer to good and to bad karma respectively, the “imperturbable” refers to karma that ripens in the formless realms. “**With limited ground**” (*paritta,bhūmaka*) refers to karma-formations arising in the sense-world; “**with great ground**” (*mahā,bhūmaka*) to those karma fruiting beyond the sense-world, ie, in the form or in the formless worlds (VbhA 460 f; tr VbhA:Ñ 2:208).

<sup>50</sup> “Pursued, cultivated, developed, become abundant,” *āsevitāni bhāvitāni bahulī,kaṭāni ussada,gatāni*.

**2.1.6.10 (10) Who are those beings with good qualities (*svākāra*)?**

Those beings who have good (*kaḷyāṇa*) inclinations, have good character, have good dispositions, have little dust in their eyes, have keen faculties.

These are the beings with good qualities.

(Vbh 823/341,33)

**2.1.6.11 (11) [Who are those beings hard to instruct (*duviññāpaya*)?]<sup>51</sup>**

Those beings who have *bad qualities* [2.1.6.9] are hard to instruct.

(Vbh 824/341,34 f)

**2.1.6.12 (12) Who are those beings easy to instruct (*suviññāpaya*)?**

Those beings who have *good qualities* [2.1.6.10] are easy to instruct.

(Vbh 825/341,36)

**2.1.6.13 (13) Who are those beings who are not (spiritually) fit (*abhabba*)?**

Those beings who *have* karmic obstruction, obstruction by defilements, obstruction by karmic fruition, but have *no* faith, have *no* will [wish to do good], have *no* wisdom, are not fit to descend into [embark on] the certainty of wholesome states which is the rightness (of the path).<sup>52</sup>

These are the beings who are not fit.

(Vbh 826/341,37-41)

**2.1.6.14 (14) Who are those beings who are (spiritually) fit (*bhabba*)?**

Those beings who do *not* have the karmic obstruction, nor obstruction by defilements, nor obstruction by karmic fruition, and *have* faith, have the will (wish to do good), have wisdom, are fit to descend into [embark on] the certainty of wholesome states which is the rightness (of the path).

These are the beings who are fit.

(Vbh 827/342,1-5)

**2.1.6.15** In brief, then, the Buddha sees and understands every type of inclination and tendency (*āsayam jānāti, anusayam jānāti*, MA 2:30; AA 5:15) of beings. He knows whether beings will grow spiritually or decline (*vuddhiñ ca hāniñ ca*, AA 5:15, 16). These unique powers of understanding completely the emotional, intellectual and spiritual makeup of others help him to instruct others according to their faculties and readiness on almost every occasion.<sup>53</sup>

The Buddha's powers also allow him to persuade or tame dangerous or difficult individuals. These qualities make him "the peerless guide of persons to be tamed," (*anuttaro purisa,damma sārathī*)<sup>54</sup> and "the teacher of gods and humans" (*satthā deva,manussānam*).<sup>55</sup>

**2.1.7 Attainments (*samāpatti*)**

**(7)** 'The tathagata understands, as it really is, the defilement, the cleansing, and the emergence regarding the dhyanas, the liberations, the samadhis and the attainments' (*tathāgato jhāna,vimokkha,-samādhi,samāpattīnam saṅkilesam vodānam vuṭṭhānam yathā,bhūtam pajānāti*, M 1:70,16 f).

**2.1.7.1 The Vibhaṅga** explains (1) defilement (*saṅkilesa*) as a state that brings about decline, (2) cleansing (*vodāna*) as a state that brings about excellence, and (3) emergence (*vuṭṭhāna*) as both cleansing and rising out of an attainment (Vbh §828/342).

<sup>51</sup> This point is combined with the following in Vbh.

<sup>52</sup> "... are not fit to descend ... etc.," *abhabbā niyāmaṃ okkamituṃ kusalessu dhammesu sammattarū*.

<sup>53</sup> For occasions when the Buddha still teaches although the listener/s do not convert or respond positively, see SD 1.4 (2.4).

<sup>54</sup> SD 61.4 (2.6.1.2).

<sup>55</sup> SD 15.7 (3.7); SD 54.2 (4.1.1.4). On the Buddha's qualities to be reflected on (*buddhānussati*), see SD 15.5 (2), 15.7 (3).

“**Defilement**” (*saṅkilesa*) (Vbh 343,16) refers to a state conducive to decrease (*hāna, bhāgiya, dhamma*) with the arising of sensual desire and so on regarding perception, and encroaches on the mind of one who has emerged from the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana which has not been well mastered. (VbhA 463,18 f)

In simple terms, **defilement** refers to what prevents the attaining of concentration and dhyana. These are the 5 (mental) hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*)—(1) *sensual desire*, (2) *ill will*, (3) *sloth and torpor*, (4) *restlessness and worry*, and (5) *doubt*—that distract the mind from being directed to the meditation object and weaken the mind so that it gains no wisdom.<sup>56</sup>

**2.1.7.2** The mind is **cleansed** of the hindrances by diligently keeping it on the breath—that is, the breath meditation (*ānāpāna, sati*)<sup>57</sup>—or any of the body-based meditations<sup>58</sup> in satipatthana practice.<sup>59</sup> Various meditations and practices, properly applied, serve to overcome the 5 hindrances, as follows:<sup>60</sup>

- |                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| (1) sensual desire         | meditation on the foulness of the body, sense-restraint, moderation in food; <u>spiritual friendship</u> helps in overcoming all of the 5 hindrances; |
| (2) ill will               | lovingkindness, reflecting on karmic consequences, wise attention;  |
| (3) sloth and torpor       | not over-eating, changing meditation posture, perception of light, practising outdoors;   |
| (4) restlessness and worry | sutta learning, Vinaya training, approaching experienced elders;  |
| (5) doubt                  | sutta inquiry, Vinaya training, great resolution.   |

The *cleansed* dhyanic mind is said to be in “**a state conducive to distinction**” (*visesa, bhāgiya, dhamma*), that is, having overcome the hindrances, one gains the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana; having mastered the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana, one moves on to attain the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana, and so on.

Hence, cleansing is often associated with **emerging** (*vodānam pi vutthānam*) (Vbh 343,18). Having well cleansed the mind of the 5 hindrances and let go of the dhyana-factors, one emerges from a lower dhyana and enters the next dhyana. Thus, the well mastered lower dhyana is the proximate cause of the arising of a higher dhyana. (VbhA 463,20-22)

**2.1.7.3 The Vibhaṅga Commentary** mentions 3 tetrads: (1) the 4 kinds of dhyana practitioners (*jhāyī*), (2) the 4 kinds of dhyana attainment and emerging [2.1.7.4] and (3) the 4 kinds of dhyana defining and delimiting [2.1.7.5], thus:

#### THE 4 KINDS OF DHYANA PRACTITIONERS

- (1) One reaches an attainment, perceives that he is *not* an attainer, perceives not the meditation subject (*kammaṭṭhāna*).<sup>61</sup> This is an attainer who has not well mastered dhyana (*appa, guṇa-j, jhana, lābhī*).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,77-75), SD 8.10; (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12; **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1.

<sup>57</sup> **Ānāpāna, sati S** (M 118,5-7 + 15-22), SD 7.13.

<sup>58</sup> *Kāyānupassanā*, ie, breath meditation, mindfulness of the 4 postures, clear awareness, perception of foulness (31 body-parts), analysis of the 4 elements or the 9 charnel-ground meditations: **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10,4-31), SD 13.3; SD 30.3 (2.6.2.1).

<sup>59</sup> Satipatthana leading to dhyana: SD 41.1 (6.3); without dhyana: SD 8.5 (5). **Satipaṭṭhāna S** (M 10), SD 13.3.

<sup>60</sup> On the antidotes for each of the 5 hindrances, see SD 32.1 (4.1).

<sup>61</sup> Comy to **Anuruddha S** (M 127,9, SD 54.10) says that such a meditator—who has not mastered the dhyana and purified it of obstructive states is reborn as a deva with “defiled radiance” (*saṅkiliṭṭh’ābha*) either amongst “limited radiance” devas or amongst “boundless radiance” devas (of the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana realms) (MA 4:201,14-20). On their location, see SD 1.7 (App).

<sup>62</sup> MA:Se 3:607 (MA:Ee 4:201,14-16 *apaguṇajjhāne*) on **M 127,9/3:147,14-20**; opp *paguṇa-j, jhana*.

- (2) One is a non-attainer but perceives that one is an attainer, and perceives not the meditation subject. This is a practitioner of **sleep dhyana** (*niddājhāyī*).
- (3) One is an attainer and perceives the meditation subject. This is an attainer who has mastered dhyana (*paṇa-j,jhāna,lābhī*).
- (4) One is a **non-attainer** and perceives that he is a non-attainer, not perceiving the meditation subject. Two of these persons (2 and 4) are not dhyana-attainers.

(VbhA 462,6-18)

**2.1.7.4 THE 4 KINDS OF DHYANA ATTAINMENT AND EMERGING**In the Commentary's 2<sup>nd</sup> tetrad, there are these 4 kinds of dhyana practitioners:

- (1) One who suppresses the states that obstruct concentration with prompting [mental noting] and with effort is "one **who attains slowly**" (*dandham samāpajjati*).
- (2) One who, having remained there for one or two mind-moments (*citta,vāra*),<sup>63</sup> quickly emerges, is called "one **who emerges quickly**" (*khippam vuṭṭhāti*).
- (3) One who easily purifies states obstructive to concentration is called "one **who quickly attains**" (*khippam samāpajjati*).
- (4) One who does not emerge at the determined time but when the time has passed is called "one **who emerges slowly**" (*dandham vuṭṭhāti*).

These 4 kinds of persons are only those who reach attainment (*samāpatti*) [2.1.7.6] (but not dhyana proper). (VbhA 462,19-27)

**2.1.7.5 THE 4 KINDS OF DHYANA DEFINING AND DELIMITING**In the Commentary's 3<sup>rd</sup> tetrad, there are these 4 kinds of **defining and delimiting dhyana-factors**<sup>64</sup> that one should be skilled in:

- (1) One who is skilled in defining and delimiting dhyana-factors (*jhān'āṅga*), whether there are 5 of them (in the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana) or 4 of them (in the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana of the 5-dhyana system)<sup>65</sup> is called "**skilled in samadhi as regards samadhi**" (*samādhismim samādhi,kusala*).

But one who is not skilled in suppressing the hindrances and putting the mind in its casket (*citta,mañjūsā*),<sup>66</sup> is called **unskilled in attainment as regards samadhi** (*samādhismim samāpatti,kusala*).

- (2) [One is skilled in the 3-factored dhyana, that is, the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana (of the 4-dhyana system).]<sup>67</sup>
- (3) [One is skilled in the 2-factored dhyana, that is, the 3<sup>rd</sup> dhyana.]
- (4) [One is skilled in the 1-factored dhyana, that is, the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana.]

These 4 are gainers of attainments (*samāpatti,lābhī*) only (but not dhyana-attainers).

<sup>63</sup> See (Ekaka) Vimokkha S (A 1.18,55-62), SD 49.5b (3.1.3).

<sup>64</sup> "Defining and delimiting dhyana-factors," *āṅga,vavatthāna,paricchedo (cheko)*.

<sup>65</sup> On dhyana-factors (*jhān'āṅga*), see SD 8.4 (6). On the 5 dhyanas, see SD 46.6 (2.2). R Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening*, notes: "Another example of a common innovation is the Abhidhamma system of five *jhānas* as opposed to the Suttanta system of four. The additional *jhāna* is achieved by distinguishing between *jhāna* that has both *vicāra* and *vitāka*, and *jhāna* that has only *vicāra*; the latter kind of *jhāna* corresponds to what is called the *dhyānāntara* in Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma literature, though *avitakko vicāra-matto samādhi* is distinguished at [S 43.12/-4:363,4-6]." (2001:14 n59). See Abhs:B 218. Effectively, the 5<sup>th</sup> dhyana of the Abhidhamma is the same as the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana of the suttas.

<sup>66</sup> "This is the flow of consciousness (*citta,santati*) free from the hindrances, etc, referring to either concentration (*samādhi*) or to the meditation subject (*kamaṭṭhāna*)" (VbhMṬ 214,3 f. On *citta,mañjūsā*, see DP 2:129).

<sup>67</sup> Comy abridges the text: "The other 3 should be understood in this way" (*itare pi tayo iminā va nayena vedītabbā*).

**2.1.7.6** In terms of dhyana, the samadhis (*samādhi*)<sup>68</sup> are as follows:

(1) (In the 4-dhyana and the 5-dhyana methods)<sup>69</sup> samadhi of the **1<sup>st</sup> dhyana** is said to be “accompanied by initial application and sustained application” (*sa.vitakka,sa.vicāra samādhi*).

(2) (In the 5-dhyana method), samadhi of the **2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana** is said to be “without initial application, with only sustained application” (*avitakka.vicāra,matta samādhi*).

(3) (In both methods), the concentration of the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> dhyanas is said to be “samadhi with neither initial application nor sustained application” (*avitakka,avicāra samādhi*). According to Buddhaghosa, in the Abhidhamma system, the 2<sup>nd</sup> dhyana still has the dhyana-factor of “initial application” (but without “sustained application”), while the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> correspond to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, respectively, of the fourfold division,<sup>70</sup> [§4] thus:

	<i>vitakka</i>	<i>vicāra</i>	<i>pīti</i>	<i>sukha</i>	<i>ek’aggatā</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> dhyana	✓	✓	✓	✓	[✓] <sup>71</sup>
2 <sup>nd</sup> dhyana	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
3 <sup>rd</sup> dhyana	-	-	✓	✓	✓
4 <sup>th</sup> dhyana	-	-	-	✓	✓
5 <sup>th</sup> dhyana	-	-	-	-	✓

**Table 2.1.7.6** The 5-dhyana Abhidhamma method

**2.1.7.7 Attainments** (*samāpatti*) that are successive comprise **the 8 attainments**, that is, the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments.<sup>72</sup> Although these formless attainments are mentally more refined than any of the 4 form dhyanas, they are all rooted in the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana.

In other words, having mastered the 4<sup>th</sup> dhyana, one then takes **space** (*ākāsa*) as the object leading to the 1<sup>st</sup> formless attainment. When one lets go of the space object, there is only the mind or **consciousness** left as the object; this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> formless attainment. When the mind object is transcended, one reaches the 3<sup>rd</sup> formless attainment, with nothing (literally) or **nothingness** as the object. When even nothingness is transcended as object, one attains a state where consciousness (here termed *saññā*) is profoundly subtle. Consciousness **neither exists nor does not exist**; this is the 4<sup>th</sup> formless attainment. (Vbh 343,10-15)

**Samāpatti**—when connected with *jhāna*—refers to the formless attainments (that is, the 4 formless dhyanas), and **vimutti** (freedom) refers to arhathood.

Each of the 8 attainments is also a samadhi or concentration (*samādhi*)—because of the presence of one-pointedness of mind. Thus, because of *the absence* of one-pointedness of mind<sup>73</sup> in the attainment of cessation [2.1.7.8], it is not called a samadhi.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>68</sup> See *Samādhi*, SD 33.1a.

<sup>69</sup> The suttas speaks of 4 dhyanas, while the Abhidhamma speaks of 5 dhyanas: SD 46.6 (2.2).

<sup>70</sup> In **Visuddhi,magga**, he says, “What is second in the fourfold method, by splitting them into two, becomes second and third in the fivefold method. The third and fourth here (in the fourfold method) become fourth and fifth there (in the fivefold method). The first is the same in both methods” (Vism 4.202/169).

<sup>71</sup> The phrase *cittassa ekaggatā* is not used here. The dhyana is said to “born of solitude,” is rid of all mental hindrances. See SD 8.4 (5.1.2).

<sup>72</sup> (**Anupubba**) **Vihāra S 1** (A 9.32). SD 95.1; SD 8.4 (12.3).

<sup>73</sup> There is no “one-pointedness of mind” because all conscious processes have ceased. The meditator is in a state of suspended animation for up to as long as a week.

<sup>74</sup> VbhA 2302/463,14-17.

**2.1.7.8 The 9 attainments** (*samāpatti*) usually refer to: the 4 dhyanas,<sup>75</sup> 4 formless attainments,<sup>76</sup> and cessation of perception and feeling [2.1.7.7],<sup>77</sup> such as in **the Nivāpa Sutta** (M 25).<sup>78</sup> A meditator who wishes to progress is taught to understand and practise how the dhyanas and attainments work progressively, one mastery opening up into another mastery of the attainments; hence, these very same 9 attainments are called the “**9 progressive abodes**” (*anupubba, vihāra*).<sup>79</sup>

**2.1.7.9 The 3 liberations** (*vimokkha*) are the liberation (that is, meditation) of the empty (*suññata, vimokkha*), the signless (*animitta, vimokkha*), and the undirected (*appaṇihita, vimokkha*), as mentioned in **the Kāmabhū Sutta 2** (S 41.6,20).<sup>80</sup>

The 3 terms are usually used in terms of speaking about the attaining of **arhathood**, as follows:<sup>81</sup>

- contemplating suffering to overcome *lust*, one gains **undirected freedom** (*appaṇihita, vimokkha*);
- contemplating impermanence to overcome *hate*, one gains **signless freedom** (*animitta, vimokkha*); and
- contemplating non-self to overcome *delusion*, one gains **empty freedom** (*suññata, vimokkha*).

**2.1.7.10 The 8 liberations** (*vimokkha*)<sup>82</sup> are listed in **the Mahā Sakul’udāyī Sutta** (M 77) and **the Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga Sutta** (M 137).<sup>83</sup> The “liberation” refers to freeing the mind from, first, the hindrances (to attain the 1<sup>st</sup> dhyana), then using a suitable meditation object, and then transcending the object of the higher dhyanas, until the mind is liberated (as a nonreturner or an arhat) to attain cessation, the 9<sup>th</sup> liberation, when the mind is fully freed.

Very briefly, here is how each of the 8 liberations or the 9 progressive abodes is gained:<sup>84</sup>

- (1) One uses a coloured object on one’s own body as kasiṇa focus to gain a form dhyana.
- (2) An external coloured meditation object is used as kasiṇa focus to gain a form dhyana.
- (3) One uses either a bright and beautiful kasina (such as a suitable colour) or one of the divine abodes to gain a form dhyana.
- (4) By letting go of all perception of physical forms and of diversity, one contemplates on the infinity of space to attain the base of infinite space (a formless attainment).
- (5) Letting go of the object of infinite space, one goes on to attain the base of infinite consciousness.
- (6) Letting go of the object of infinite consciousness, one goes on to attain the base of nothingness.
- (7) Letting go of the object of nothingness, one goes on to attain the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.
- (8) Letting go of the object of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, one enters and dwells in (9) the cessation of perception and feeling.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>75</sup> For an overview, see **Dhyana**, SD 8.4; **The layman & dhyana**, SD 8.5; **Nimitta**, SD 19.7; **The Buddha discovered dhyana**, SD 33.1a.

<sup>76</sup> SD 5.17 (10); SD 49.5b (3); SD 62.16 (5.3.2).

<sup>77</sup> VbhA 462 f refers to **DhsA** as follows: the 4 dhyanas (DhsA §§377-404, pp162-179)

<sup>78</sup> M 25,12-20 (SD 61.2).

<sup>79</sup> **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,34.2-42), SD 1.11; **Jhānābhīññā S** (S 16.9), SD 50.7 (1.2.1.2); (**Navaka**) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36), SD 33.8; SD 1.8 (2.2.3) (3)n.

<sup>80</sup> S 41.6,20/495 (SD 48.7).

<sup>81</sup> **Mūḷa, pariyāya S** (M 1,75-146) + SD 11.8 (4.3.3.3-5).

<sup>82</sup> SD 5.17 (10); SD 49.5b (3); SD 62.16 (5.3.2).

<sup>83</sup> M 77,22 (SD 49.5); M 137,26 (SD 29.5).

<sup>84</sup> See M 77,48 (SD 49.5). See SD 49.5b (3.1.1.1).

<sup>85</sup> “The cessation of perception and feeling,” *saññā, vedayita nirodha*. This anomalous state, fully described at Vism 23.16-52/702-709, is a combination of deep meditative calm and insight where all mental states temporarily shut down (Vism 23.43/707 f): see **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); **Mahā Vedalla S** (M 43), SD 30.2 (3).

**2.1.8 Past lives (*pubbe,nivāsa*)**

(8) “The tathagata understanding, as it really is, recollects his manifold **past lives**” (*tathāgato aneka,-vihitaṃ pubbe,nivāsaṃ anussarati*, M 1:70,18 f).

**2.1.8.1** This is the “knowledge of the recollection of past lives” (*pubbe,nivāsānussati,ñāṇa*) of one’s own, often mentioned in the suttas. Its pericope runs as follows:

With his concentrated mind thus purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,  
 he [the meditator] directs and inclines it to **the knowledge of the recollection of past lives**.  
 He recollects his manifold past existence, that is to say,  
 1 birth, 2 births, ... 10 births, 20 births, ... 100 births, 1,000 births, 100,000 births, ...  
 many aeons of cosmic contractions and expansions, thus:  
 “There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such the end of my life.  
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose there.  
 There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance.  
 Such was my food, such my experience of joy and pain, such my life-span.  
 Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.”  
 Thus, he recollects **his manifold past lives** in their modes and details.<sup>86</sup>

Note in the pericope’s last line that this is the knowledge of one’s own last lives. This knowledge thus affirms the truth of **rebirth**; one is able to see one’s own past lives as far back in time as dependent on one’s mastery of dhyana.

**2.1.9 The divine eye (*dibba cakkhu*)**

(9) “The tathagata, with **the divine eye** [clairvoyance; how beings fare according to their karma] ... knows how beings fare according to their karma” (*tathāgato dibbena cakkhunā ... yathā,kammūpage satte pajānāti*, M 1:70,31-34).<sup>87</sup>

**2.1.9.1** This is the “knowledge of the passing away and arising” (*cutūpapāta,ñāṇa*) of beings, according to their karma (*yathā,kammūpage*), often mentioned in the suttas. Its pericope, found, for example, in **the Sāmañña,phala Sutta** (D 2), runs as follows:

**97** With his concentrated mind thus purified, and bright, unblemished, free of defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,  
 he [the meditator] directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the recollection of past lives.<sup>88</sup>  
**97.2** He directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the passing and re-arising of beings.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>86</sup> See eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,95/1:81), SD 8.10. This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.13-71/411-423.

<sup>87</sup> *Dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*), which is a term for streamwinning.

<sup>88</sup> *Pubbe,nivāsanānussati,ñāṇa*, lit “the knowledge of the recollection of past abidings [existences].” The remainder of this is expanded into 4 sections in **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1,1.31-34/1:13-16 @ SD 25.3 (76.3)) and 3 sections in **Sampasādaniya S** (D 27,15-17/3:107-112 @ SD 10.12). In both cases, each explains how the eternalist view arose.

<sup>89</sup> *Cutūpapāta ñāṇa*, “the knowledge of the falling away and rebirth (of beings),” or “knowledge of rebirth according to karma” (*yathā,kammūpaga ñāṇa*), or “the divine eye” (*dibba,cakkhu*): see foll n.

He sees—by means of the divine eye [clairvoyance],<sup>90</sup> purified, surpassing the human<sup>91</sup>—  
beings passing away and re-arising, and

he understands how they are inferior and superior,  
beautiful and ugly,  
fortunate and unfortunate,  
in the heavens, in the suffering states,  
faring in accordance with their karma:

‘These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind,  
who reviled the noble ones,

held wrong views and  
undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—

after death, with the body’s breaking up,  
have re-arisen in a plane of misery, a bad destination, a lower realm, in hell.

97.3 But these beings—

who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind,  
who did not revile the noble ones,

who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—  
after death, with the body’s breaking up, have reappeared in a happy destination, in heaven.’

(D 2,97/1:82 f), SD 8.10<sup>92</sup>

This knowledge is that of how beings fare according to their karma; it is an affirmation of the truth of **karma**. These first 2 knowledges thus affirm the 2 key teachings and truths of early Buddhism, those of **karma and rebirth**. In other words, our karmic actions have moral consequences in this life and in generating new lives for these karmic fruits to produce their effects on us over and over, and also connecting us with other beings both as humans and as other forms of being.

These knowledges not only highlight the significance of the interbeing of all life, but also that we should be responsible for our every action so that we do not harm others in any way, and that we will not create a difficult and suffering environment for ourselves.

### **2.1.10 Destruction of the mental influxes (āsava-k,khaya)**

“The tathagata attains and dwells in the freedom of mind and the freedom by wisdom<sup>93</sup> that are influx-free with **the destruction of the mental influxes**” (*tathāgato āsavānaṃ khayā anāsavaṃ ceto,vimuttiṃ paññā,vimuttiṃ diṭṭhe va dhamme sayam abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja viharati.*) (M 1:71,10-12)

**2.1.10.1** This is the knowledge of **the destruction of the mental influxes (āsava-k,khaya)**,<sup>94</sup> that is, the uprooting of *sensual desire, existence and ignorance*, the 3 defilements that imprison beings to sam-

<sup>90</sup> *Dibba,cakkhu*, clairvoyance, not to be confused with the Dharma-eye (*dhamma,cakkhu*) [§104 n]). On the relationship of this knowledge to the 62 grounds for wrong views, see **Brahma,jāla S** (D 1), SD 25.3(76.3). See prec n.

<sup>91</sup> *So dibbena cakkhunā visuddhena atikkanta,manussakena.*

<sup>92</sup> This knowledge is detailed at Vism 13.72-101/423-429.

<sup>93</sup> “Freedom of mind (*ceto,vimutti*) ... freedom by wisdom (*paññā,vimutti*).” Freedom of mind is so called because the mind is freed, by way of concentration, from lust. Freedom by wisdom is so called because the mind is freed, normally through insight, from ignorance. When they are coupled and described as influx-free (anāsava), they jointly result from the destruction of the mental influxes by the supramundane path of arhathood.

<sup>94</sup> The term **āsava** (lit “inflow, outflow”) comes from *ā-savati* “flows towards” (ie either “into” or “out” towards the observer). It has been variously tr as “taints” (“deadly taints,” RD), “canker, corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, bad (influence),” or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists **4 influxes**, ie, those of (1) sense-desire (*kām’āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav’āsava*), (3) views (*diṭṭh’āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjā-*

sara, to be born again and again, going through suffering each time. This is the “final knowledge” that ends all suffering for the awakened person, the arhat.

With his concentrated mind thus purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,  
he directs and inclines it to the knowledge of the destruction of the mental influxes.

He understands, as it really is,	‘This is <b>suffering</b> ’;
he understands, as it really is,	‘This is <u>the arising</u> of suffering’;
he understands, as it really is,	‘This is <u>the ending</u> of suffering’;
he understands, as it really is,	‘This is <u>the path</u> to the ending of suffering’; <sup>95</sup>
he understands, as it really is,	‘These are <b>mental influxes</b> ’;
he understands, as it really is,	‘This is <i>the arising</i> of influxes’;
he understands, as it really is,	‘This is <i>the ending</i> of influxes’;
he understands, as it really is,	‘This is <i>the path</i> to the ending of influxes.’ <sup>96</sup>

His mind, thus knowing, thus seeing, is released from the influx of sensual desire, the influx of existence, the influx of ignorance.<sup>97</sup> With release, there is the knowledge, ‘Freed (am I)!’

He understands thus, ‘Birth is ended. The holy life has been lived. Done is that which needs to be done. There is no more of this state of being.’<sup>98</sup> (D 2,99.1:83 f), SD 8.10

The 2 preceding knowledges [2.1.8 f] and this one form **the 3 knowledges** (*te, vijja*) that define the arhat, an awakened and liberated being, like the Buddha. Since the arhats are free from lust (wanting this or that), existence (wishing for this or that existence) and ignorance (which generates greed, hatred and delusion for “something”), they are no more held back in samsara by karma.

The full understanding of **the 4 noble truths**, as they really are, removes our existential ignorance, giving us the full meaning and purpose of life. The full understanding of **the 4 mental influxes** means that we are fully free from craving that drives us, led by our *eyes, ear, nose, tongue and body*. Without craving, the mind is free from the 5 senses through which samsara controls and perpetuates us as playthings of suffering. We attain nirvana.

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*sava*) (D 16,2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also called “floods” (*ogha*) and “yokes” (*yoga*). The list of 3 influxes (omitting influx of views) [43] is prob older and is found more frequently in the suttas (D 33,1.10(20)/3:216; M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these āsavas is equivalent to arhathood.

<sup>95</sup> These 4 statements on suffering pose an interesting problem: they are not called “noble truths” here (nor in **Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,43). Norman remarks that these 4 statements, which also likewise appear in **Mahā Sacca-ka S** (M 36,42/1:249), but are not referred to as the noble truths about suffering, “and since they appear to be subordinate to the 4 statements about the *āsavas*, it is possible that the statements about misery are a later addition [here], which led to a parallel, but inappropriate, set of four statements being evolved about the *āsavas*, to provide a symmetry” (Norman 1990:26). For a discussion on the formulation of the noble truths, see Norman 1982: 377-91 & also Schmithausen 1981:205.

<sup>96</sup> As in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.42), SD 1.11. On the application of the 4-noble-truth template to both *dukkha* and to *āsvava* here, see Analayo 2003:224 n28 & SD 17.4(8.4), A briefer def is given in the set of 3 knowledges: see **Te, vijja Vaccha, gotta S** (M 73,9), SD 53.3.

<sup>97</sup> This list of 3 influxes (omitting that of views) is prob older, and virtually syn with the ignorance [SD 11.14 (9.1)], craving for sense-pleasures, and craving for existence found at the start of the dependent arising formula. The triad is also found more frequently in the suttas [SD 30.3 (1.3.2)]: **D 33**,1.10(20)/3:216; **M 2**,99.3 (SD 8.10), **9**,70/1:55 (SD 11.14), **121**,12/3:108 (SD 11.3); **S 38.8**/4:256 (SD 75.22(8)), **45.163**/5:56; **A 3.58**,5/1:165 (SD 94.5), **A 3.59**,4/1:167 (SD 80.16), **A 6.63**,9/3:414 (SD 6.11). On the destruction of the āsavas and arhathood: SD 56.4 (3.8.1.1); BDict āsvava.

<sup>98</sup> *Nāparam itthatāya*: lit, “there is no more of ‘thusness’.” See **Mahā, nidāna S** (D 15,32), SD 5.17; SD 51.18 (2.3.2.2).

## 2.2 ANURUDDHA'S 10 POWERS

The Anuruddha Saṃyutta—chapter 2, book 8 of part 5, the Mahā,vagga—has 10 suttas, S 52.15-24 (S 5:304-306), in each of which the elder **Anuruddha** declares that because he has “cultivated and developed the 4 satipatthanas” he has the 10 powers as stated above [2.1.0]. In other words, the elder has gained arhathood through the cultivation of the satipatthanas, and on account of his dhyana gained through satipatthana, he has also gained the 10 powers.

**The Commentary** on the suttas states the elder Anuruddha indeed has these 10 powers, even though he is merely a disciple of the Buddha (that is, Anuruddha is not as wise as the Buddha). The Commentary then explains that Anuruddha has the 10 powers “only in part” (*eka,desena*, SA 3:263,9-12).

## 2.3 THE BUDDHA'S MORAL COURAGE

### 2.3.1 The 4 bases of the Buddha's moral courage

**2.3.1.1** The Pali term, *vesārajja*, translates as “moral courage, spiritual confidence, intrepidity,” which describes a key quality of the Buddha as an awakened being and as an accomplished teacher. There are at least 2 suttas that speak of the Buddha's moral courage, and they all open just like the 2 **Dasa,bala Suttas** (S 12.21 f), that is, **the Mahā Sīha,nāda Sutta** (M 12) and **the (Catukka) Vesārajja Sutta** (A 4.8), thus:

“Bhikshus, accomplished in the 10 powers and the 4 kinds of moral courage, the Tathagata claims the place of the lordly bull, roars his lion-roar in assemblies, and sets in motion the divine wheel.” [§2 f] (M 12,22), SD 49.1; (A 4.8), SD 51.19; (S 12.21,2 = 12.22,2), SD 63.14 f

**M 12** and **A 4.8** then define the Buddha's 4 kinds of moral courage in his own words, as comprising the following truths (abridged):

- (1) “Here, I indeed see no ground on which any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or anyone else in the world could justly accuse me, thus:  
‘While you claim to be **fully awakened**, you are *not* fully awakened about these things.’  
Not seeing any such ground, bhikshus, I dwell accomplished in security, accomplished in fearlessness, accomplished in intrepidity [moral courage].”  
[That he is awakened.]
- (2) “... ‘While you claim to have destroyed **the mental influxes** [2.1.10], you have *not* (really) destroyed them.’ ... ”  
[That he is an arhat.]
- (3) “... ‘These things you call **obstructions** are *unable* to obstruct (the spiritual progress of) one who engages with them.’<sup>99</sup> ... ”  
[That there are hindrances to spiritual growth.]
- (4) “... ‘When he teaches the Dharma to someone for the sake of **the spiritual goal**, when he works on it, it would *not* lead him to **the complete ending of suffering**.’<sup>100</sup> ... ”  
[That the Dharma is efficacious in bringing one awakening (freedom from suffering).]

(M 12,23-27), SD 49.1; (A 4.8), SD 51.19; AA 2:45,6-24

<sup>99</sup> *Ye kho pana te antarāyikā dhammā vuttā, te paṭisevato nālaṃ antarāyāyā’ti.* Comy says that sexual intercourse (*methuna,dhamma*) is meant here (MA 2:33). Cf Pāc 68 (V 4:135,18-30); see V:H 3:21 n5.

<sup>100</sup> *Yassa kho pana te atthāya dhammo desito, so na niyyāti tak,karassa sammā dukkha-k,khayāyāti.*

Since the Buddha clearly understands these 4 truths, he is endowed with moral courage. They are also called the “knowledge that is moral courage” (*vesārajja,ñāṇa*) in the Commentaries.<sup>101</sup> The adjective for *vesārajja* is *visarada*, “morally courageous,” as stated in **the (Catukka) Sobhana Sutta** (A 4.7).<sup>102</sup>

**2.3.1.2** The negative opposite of *vesārajja* is *sārajja*, “timidity; lacking moral courage.” **The Sārajja Sutta** (A 5.101) lists 5 negative qualities that contribute to timidity and lack of moral courage,<sup>103</sup> that is, (1) lack of faith; (2) immoral conduct; (3) lack of learning; (4) laziness; and (5) unwise conduct.<sup>104</sup>

The positive opposite qualities of *vesārajja* contribute to “qualities that arouse moral courage” and these are found in learners (*sekha*), that is, those who have attained at least streamwinning. [2.3.2].

### 2.3.2 Qualities that arouse moral courage

The special qualities that arouse moral courage are known in Pali as “the states that arouse moral courage” (*vesārajja,karaṇa dhamma*).<sup>105</sup> Since they are fully found in streamwinners and others training on the path, modern Dharma teachers have used the term *sekha,vesārajja,karaṇa dhamma*, “the states that arouse moral courage in a learner.” **The (Pañcaka) Sārajja Sutta 1** (A 5.101) lists the following 5 qualities:

(1) faith	<i>saddhā</i>	arises through the seeing and acceptance of <u>impermanence</u> .
(2) moral virtue	<i>sīla</i>	filled with <u>lovingkindness</u> , respecting others in every way.
(3) wide learning	<i>bahu,sacca</i>	constant listening to and learning <u>the Dharma</u> .
(4) energy	<i>viriy'ārambha</i>	keeps <u>good health</u> for study and practice of Dharma.
(5) wisdom	<i>paññā</i>	keeps the mind <u>calm and clear</u> so that wisdom arises and grows.

(A 5.101/3:127) SD 28.9a(3)

## 2.4 OTHER QUALITIES OF THE ONE WITH THE 10 POWERS

**2.4.0** As the “one with the 10 powers” (*dasa,bala*) and the 4 kinds of moral courage—says the 2 Dasa,-bala Suttas—the Buddha “claims the place of **the lordly bull, roars his lion-roar in assemblies, and sets in motion the divine wheel.**” [§2]. We will here examine the highlighted key terms within the quote.

### 2.4.1 The lordly bull

**2.4.1.1** The suttas often record the Buddha as describing his awakened state or arhathood in tropes representing it as powerful or ferocious male animals, such as “lordly bull” (*āsabha*)<sup>106</sup> [§2], “bull-like leader of a man” (*nar'āsabha*, S 1:220,25\*), “lion” (*sīha*, S 1.38,6),<sup>107</sup> “elephant” (*nāga*, Sn 522, also king cobra), “thoroughbred” (*ājāniya*, Tha 174),<sup>108</sup> “thoroughbred horse” (*ass'ājāniya*), and thoroughbred elephant” (*naga ājāniya*, S 1:28,11; Vv 689; VvA 253,2).

US Indologist Wendy Doniger has noted that bulls and stallions are recurring symbols of strength and virility in India: “The Indo-Aryans were a nation of warriors whose conquest of much of Europe and Asia was made possible by the fact that they had tamed the horse and harnessed him to the chariot. Men

<sup>101</sup> MA 2:33, 34, 103, 104, 305; AA 3:11; UA 335; ItA 1:7; CA 7.

<sup>102</sup> A 4.7 + SD 51.17 (1.1.2.4).

<sup>103</sup> See SD 51.17 (2.2.1).

<sup>104</sup> A 5.101/3:127 (SD 28.9a(3)).

<sup>105</sup> *Vesārajja,karaṇa* is a comy term found apparently only at AA 3:278, comy on **Sārajja S** (A 5.101), SD 28.9a(3).

<sup>106</sup> Cf SD 61.4 (2.4).

<sup>107</sup> SD 61.4 (2.2).

<sup>108</sup> SD 61.4 (2.3).

rather than women are the creatures of Vedic life—aggressive, sexually potent men, symbolized by the stallion.”<sup>109</sup>

**2.4.1.2** Animals like horses, elephants and bulls are said to be “**thoroughbred**” (*ājāniya*), raised by and for kings and the powerful. These animals are used to project the well-trained “lineage” (*vaṃsa*) of the noble path of saints, especially the arhats. Other animals like the lion and the king cobra are dreaded by humans for their **solitariness, ferocity and deadliness**; the Buddha and the arhats, who celebrate spiritual solitude, on the other hand, are empowered with wisdom and compassion; so they do not fear lions and king cobras.

Animals like **bulls and horses** are also raised and kept as symbols of economic wealth and power. The Buddha and the arhats, with their awakening, are endowed with spiritual wealth that is joy and peace beyond those of the heavens themselves.

## **2.4.2 The Buddha’s lion-roar**

**2.4.2.1** Spiritually, the Buddha outshines even the gods in majesty and might, and the gods fear it when the Buddha’s teaching reminds them of their impermanence despite and because of their powers and longevity.<sup>110</sup> The Buddha, however, does not teach in order to arouse fear in others, except perhaps the fear to do evil; he teaches to show the way out of the real jungle that is samsaric life. Hence, the Buddha’s teaching is heard throughout the world, even beyond, so that beings are reminded of the true reality of life and to live wisely, even to seek freedom from impermanence and suffering.

**The (Anicca) Sīha Sutta** (S 22.78) compares the Buddha to a mighty lion, who, in the evening, emerges from his lair and stretches himself. Then, he lets out a resonant roar, and all the animals who hear it are terrified:

Bhikshus, when the animals and creatures hear **the roar of the lion**, the king of the beasts, they, for the most part, are struck with fear, urgency,<sup>111</sup> and trembling.<sup>112</sup>

Those that live in holes, enter their holes; the water-dwellers head into the waters; the forest-dwellers, seek the forests; winged birds resort to the skies.

Bhikshus, those royal elephants bound by stout bonds, in the villages, market towns and capitals—they break and burst their bonds, and flee about in terror, voiding and peeing.

(S 22.78/3:84-86), SD 42.10

**2.4.2.2** The Buddha’s **lion-roar** (*sīha, nāda*) refers to a naturally true teaching of faith and reality by the Buddha himself<sup>113</sup> or by a disciple who has himself gained self-awakening.<sup>114</sup> It is also called “**a (great)**

<sup>109</sup> W Doniger, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980: 239.

<sup>110</sup> **(Anicca) Sīha S** (S 22.78,8/3:85), SD 42.10.

<sup>111</sup> On “urgency” (*saṃvega*), usu (in human contexts), tr as “sense of urgency, spiritual urgency.” In the context here, that of animals, this emotion is that of fearful apprehension. See SD 9 (7f).

<sup>112</sup> The term “trembling” (*santāsa*) here might refer, amongst other things, to “delirium tremens” (DT), which usu includes extremely intense feelings of “impending doom.” Other symptoms are severe anxiety and feelings of imminent death.

<sup>113</sup> On the Buddha’s lion-roar, see **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12,22-28), SD 49.1; D 25,24.3 (SD 1.4); SD 1.4 (2.2).

<sup>114</sup> On the lion-roar by the Buddha’s disciples, see **Cūḷa Sīha, nāda S** (M 11) + SD 49.2 (0.1.1); M 140,33 f (SD 4.17) Pukkusāti; M 124 (SD 3.15) Bakkula; A 4.197,7-18 (SD 39.10) Mallikā; A 6.16,2 (SD 5.1) Nakula, mātā. The foremost of lion-roarers is the arhat Piṇḍola Bhāra, dvāja: SD 27.6a (2.1).

**thunder-roar”** (*gajjita*),<sup>115</sup> but this term is more commonly used for a lay follower (not yet on the path) who makes such a public declaration of their faith in the true teaching.<sup>116</sup>

Although the world sees the Buddha as a great religious teacher, generously supported by the faithful and deeply respected by many, the Buddha joyfully remained a true renunciant throughout his life. He owned nothing, not even the monastery donated in his name. Such assets are said to be *saṅghika*, that is, owned by the community of renunciants for their use in their spiritual quest and teaching.

**2.4.2.3 The (Pañcaka) Nāgita Sutta** (A 5.30), the (Fives) Discourse to Nāgita, records the Buddha giving a lion-roar of supreme simplicity, unmatched by any modern teacher or leader of organized religion. The Sutta relates the Buddha and his personal attendant **Nāgita** in a thick wood outside Icchā, -naṅgala, in Kosala, where they are staying with a large community of monks. When the brahmin house-masters of the village heard that the Buddha is staying in the forest nearby, they come in a great crowd with food-offerings.

As they excitedly wait at the forest entrance with their offerings, the Buddha, hearing their din, refuses to see them. He gives this lion-roar:

**“May I never meet with fame, Nāgita, nor fame ever meet with me.”**

He adds that only those who are unable to meditate or lack spiritual joy would be drawn to such offerings—“Let him enjoy for himself that dung of pleasure,<sup>117</sup> that sloth of pleasure, those pleasures of gain, honour and praise!”<sup>118</sup>

### **2.4.3 The assemblies [§2]**

**2.4.3.1** “The assemblies” (*parisā*) mentioned in §2 refers to the 8 assemblies, as mentioned, for example, in **the Mahā,parinibbāna** (D 9), where they are listed as follows by the Buddha, thus:<sup>119</sup>

“Now, Ānanda, there are these **8 assemblies**?  
What are the eight?”<sup>120</sup>

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| (1) The kshatriya [noble class] assembly, | <i>khattiya parisā;</i>          |
| (2) the brahmin [priestly] assembly,      | <i>brāhmaṇa parisā;</i>          |
| (3) the houselord assembly,               | <i>gahapati parisā;</i>          |
| (4) the recluse assembly,                 | <i>samaṇa parisā;</i>            |
| (5) the assembly of the 4 great kings,    | <i>cātum, mahārājika parisā;</i> |
| (6) the assembly of the 33 gods,          | <i>tāvatiṃsa parisā;</i>         |
| (7) Māra’s assembly, and                  | <i>māra parisā;</i>              |
| (8) the host of brahmās.                  | <i>brahma parisā.</i>            |

<sup>115</sup> On the *mahā, gajjita*, see Ap 45,1, 304,10; DA 395,26.

<sup>116</sup> On *gajjita*, see M 85,61 header n (SD 55.2); A 4.102 (SD 73.16). One who “walks his talk” is said to both “thunder and then rain” (A 4.101), SD 73.15.

<sup>117</sup> On *mīlha, sukha*, see **Laṭṭhikāpama S** (M 66,19/1:454,14), SD 28.11; **Araṇa Vibhaṅga S** (M 139,9.2/3:233,22, 13(3)/3:236,13), SD 7.8; **(Pañcaka) Nāgita S** (A 5.30,8.4/3:31,13, 11/3:29), SD 55.12a; **(Chakka) Nāgita S** (A 6.42,8.4-3/3:342,11, 11/3:27), SD 55.12b; **(Aṭṭhaka) Yasa S** (A 8.86,8.4/4:341,21, 11/4:42,11), SD 55.13.

<sup>118</sup> A 5.30/3:30-32 (SD 55.12a).

<sup>119</sup> **D 16,3.21-23/2:109 f** (SD 9), also in **Parisā S** (A 8.69/4:307 f) and nearly identical to a passage in **Maha Sīha-nāda S** (M 12,29/1:72). A Skt counterpart is at S 360 folio 179R3 (Waldschmidt, *Das Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, Berlin, 1950:22).

<sup>120</sup> For an evidently older listing, see **Dhammaññū S** (A 7.64,9/4:116), SD 30.10. Also at **Mahā Sīha, nāda S** (M 12,29), SD 49.1.

Ānanda, I recall having approached a **kshatriya assembly**\* ... of many hundreds, assembled ... , and conversed ... , and engaged in discussion with them before.

Whatever their colour was therein,<sup>121</sup> so was my colour, too.

Whatever was their voice therein, so was my voice, too.

I instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk.

But even as I was speaking, they knew me not, wondering,

‘Who could this be who speaks? A deva or a human?’

And having instructed, inspired, roused and gladdened them with Dharma talk, I disappeared.

And when I had disappeared, they wondered,

‘Who is this who has disappeared? A deva or a human?’”

[\*Each of the other 7 assemblies applies here accordingly.] (D 16,3.21-23/2:109 f), SD 9

**2.4.3.2** The 8 assemblies passage is a teaching on **Buddhist missiology**, the discipline and art of teaching and spreading the Dharma, of reaching out to others. From the Buddha’s statement on the assemblies, we can see that he is clearly capable of blending with the crowd and effectively communicating with his listeners Dharmawise.

For the ordinary Buddhist there are a number of suttas that teach us the basic principles and methods of teaching Dharma to others, such as **the (Aṭṭhaka) Alaṃ Sutta** (A 8.62). Another text, **the (Pañcaka) Udayī Sutta** (A 5.159), gives compassionate guidance on the minimal qualities of a Buddhist worker.<sup>122</sup>

### 3 The wheel in early Buddhism

#### **3.1 SYMBOLISM OF THE WHEEL**

##### **3.1.1 Existential wheels**

**3.1.1.1 The wheel** (*cakka*, Skt *cakra*) is often used as a metaphor in a positive way and a negative way in the early texts. Positively, the wheel represents the Dharma as teaching and as training; negatively, it may refer to suffering or to samsara itself (as a cycle of births and deaths). Thus the wheel is used as a teaching tool both in a physical way as well as in non-physical (including moral and spiritual) ways.<sup>123</sup> The wheel is round, has spokes, often works with other wheels, and, it must turn to work. These qualities are used in different ways to represent various positive or various negative elements in life. They are metaphorically used as a single wheel or in sets, such as 3 wheels<sup>124</sup> or 4 wheels.<sup>125</sup>

**The wheel** was universally used in ancient India, as clearly evident from the Pali texts, that is, as the wheel of a cart or carriage,<sup>126</sup> or a chariot.<sup>127</sup> In such cases, the wheel is used to refer to the idea of *turning, moving or following one*.<sup>128</sup> When one uses a wheel or wheels, the wheel turns, it moves (with people and things), or it follows one; hence, it is, for example, used to symbolize one’s karma (Dh 1 f).

<sup>121</sup> *Tattha*, lit, “in that place.”

<sup>122</sup> A 8.62/4:296-299 (SD 46.5); A 5.159/3:184 (SD 46.1). See also Piya Tan, *The Teaching Methods of the Buddha*, 2001 (unpublished MS): <https://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Teaching-Methods-of-the-Buddha.pdf>.

<sup>123</sup> For lexical meanings and usages of *cakka*, see DP: cakka.

<sup>124</sup> **(Tika) Ratha, kāra S** (A 3.15/1:110-113), SD 17.7, the 3 kinds of karma (*abhisāṅkhāra*) of body, speech and mind.

<sup>125</sup> **(Catukka) Cakka S** (A 4.32), SD 36.10 (2.1.1).

<sup>126</sup> V 1:231,37; D 2:343,14; A 1:111,11.

<sup>127</sup> S 35.198,4/4:176 (SD 55.14).

<sup>128</sup> Dh 1.

**3.1.1.2** As an emblematic symbol, the wheel is visualized by ancient Indians as a circle with spokes (usually 8 in number), with all the spokes meeting at the hub of the wheel. The ancient Indians imagined the world or universe as galaxy of systems and worlds (*cakka, vāḷa*) revolving around its hub that is Mount Sumeru, the *axis mundi* (the world axis). Just as the ancient Greeks viewed Mount Olympus as their *axis mundi*, the ancient Indians viewed Mount Sumeru (or Meru) as the cosmic hub. Jambu, dīpa, ancient India, lay south of this sacred mountain. The other quadrants appeared distant enough in the Indian imagination to be viewed as distant quadrants of their world or universe.<sup>129</sup>



**Fig 3.1.1.3** The wheel of existence

The 2<sup>nd</sup> of the great man's 32 marks is "**a 1000-spoked wheels, all rimmed and hubbed**" on the Buddha's feet (even as bodhisattva).<sup>130</sup> This clearly is a symbol of the thousandfold world-system. It is difficult to visualize a wheel with so many spokes, but this is a cosmic wheel of a thousand worlds; "thousand here is not exactly a number but an attribute in mythical language of the many worlds, of which the Buddha is the most evolved as the awakened one. Like all the other great-man marks, this wheel is to be *visualized or imagined* rather than seen.

**3.1.1.3** Numerologically, the wheel (*cakka*) is seen as a circle,<sup>131</sup> signifying zero or emptiness, that is, *samsara* (*sam-sāra*), the cycle of lives, of rebirths and redeaths. This means that all that exists, all that *is* *samsara*, is impermanent and empty. If we are to seek *something* or make *anything* if it, we will meet with suffering. And if we hope that we will get something out of it, or worse, we think we have found something in it, that is delusion.

When *samsara* is depicted visually in didactic art (as a painting or carving), it is called **the wheel of life or existence** (*bhava, cakka*).<sup>132</sup> The wheel is comprised of 3 concentric circles. The outermost ring contains 12 sectors representing the 12 links of dependent arising. The 2<sup>nd</sup> inner circle depicts

the 6 realms (top half:) devas, asuras, and humans, (lower half:) animals, pretas and hell-beings. The 3<sup>rd</sup> inner (smaller) circle depicts karmic regress (poorly dressed or naked beings falling downwards in darkness led into hell) and karmic progress (well dressed beings rising in the light led into heaven). The hub contains 3 animals (the 3 unwholesome roots): a black pig (ignorance), a green snake (hatred), and a red rooster or dove (greed), each biting the other's tail reflecting their neurotic dependence. The demon holding and devouring the wheel is Time (*mahā, kāla*) personified.

The wheel of existence is a radical vision of time that transcends the usual way we perceive time—albeit only momentarily—as being linear. We tend to regard time as a line stretching from a finite past to a finite future. Buddhism, however, views time as a circle or cycle, and our life, reflected as such, is repeated over and over as an endless continuum. Just as time has neither beginning nor ending, life rolls on as an endless loop, with death as only a temporary end to an endless cycle.

<sup>129</sup> On the ancient Indian view of the universe, incl metaverses, see **Kosala S 1** (A 10.29) SD 16.15.

<sup>130</sup> For the 32 marks of the great man, see SD 63.8 (4).

<sup>131</sup> Miln 51,10 f.

<sup>132</sup> *Bhava, cakka* is not found in the suttas. Mentioned only in Comys, it refers to dependent arising (ThaA 2:178; VbhA 138, 189, 190, 193-199 *passim*). For further details, SD 5.16 (8, 15-17).

**3.1.1.4** The wheel imagery is also used in sutta teachings. In **the (Tika) Ratha,kāra Sutta** (A 3.15), the Buddha, using the wheel metaphor, relates how a wheelwright makes 2 wheels for a war-chariot for a king for a battle that will occur in 6 months' time. The first wheel was completed 6 months less 6 days before the battle day.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> wheel was done in 6 days. When the king is unable to notice the difference between the two, the wheelwright shows him how the faulty wheel has a crooked rim, crooked spokes and a crooked hub and so does not work well.

Identifying himself as the wheelwright, the Buddha states that one must be free from *all crookedness of the body, of speech, and of mind*, that is, be free from any kind of unwholesome intention and action. That way one will not fall away from the Dharma-Vinaya.<sup>133</sup>

**3.1.1.5** In **the (Catukka) Cakka Sutta** (A 4.31), the Buddha declares thus:

The 4 wheels turn for those gods and humans who are accomplished. Being accomplished, the gods and humans would gain greatness and abundance in wealth in no long time at all.

What are the four?

- (1) Living in the conducive place.
- (2) Associating with true individuals.
- (3) Setting the self [the mind] on the right course.
- (4) The merit of good done in the past.

**A 4.31/2:32,2 f** (SD 36.10(2.1.1))<sup>134</sup>

**3.1.1.6** A key social application of the wheel symbolism is the depiction of **the 2 wheels**, that of the wheel of Dharma (*dhama,cakka*) and the wheel of power (*āṇā,cakka*), that is, traditionally, the sangha and the state. While the Buddha lived, **the sangha** was very much able to hold itself up as a community of renunciants, apart from the world. It was populated by numerous arhats, those on the path, those working to reach the path, and numerous lay followers who kept the precepts.

Just 2 months after the Buddha's passing, when king Ajāta,sattu of Magadha was formally told by the monks 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>135</sup>

### **3.1.2 The divine wheel (brahma,cakka)**

**3.1.2.1 The "divine wheel"** (*brahma,cakka*) [§2] is a common term for both the Buddha's awakening, by which he fully and perfectly encompassed all that is to be known about true reality, and his teaching which is the path open to those who would listen to the Dharma. Thus the Commentary to the Dasa,bala Sutta 2 glosses *brahma* as *seṭṭha* (the best),<sup>136</sup> *uttama* (the highest), and explains the *brahma,cakka* (divine wheel) as the purified wheel of Dharma (*visuddha,dhama,cakka*).<sup>137</sup>

The divine wheel is of two kinds: the knowledge of realization (*paṭivedha,ñāṇa*) and the knowledge of teaching (*desanā,ñāṇa*). The former arises from the Buddha's **wisdom** of his awakening; the latter arises from **compassion** and enables him to teach in such a way that his listeners will attain the noble fruits.

<sup>133</sup> **A 3.15/1:110 3 f** (SD 17.7); **D 30,1.9/3:149,11\***; **Sn 554, 684**; **B 2:211**.

<sup>134</sup> See also **D 34,1.5(1)/3:276,5**; cf **Sn 260**.

<sup>135</sup> VA 1:1014 f = KhpA 95,2-4; cf in connection with Sakra and Brahma: DA 1:264,23-25 = MA 2:278,6-12. See also SD 36.10 (5.4.1.2); SD 59.15 (2.2.3); SD 60.1c (1.9.6.3); SD 61.17 (4.1.2.1).

<sup>136</sup> AA 3:225.

<sup>137</sup> SA 3:298; AA 3:73.

**3.1.2.2** The Buddha's **knowledge of realization** is supramundane (*lok'uttara*); it is his own awakening. The Buddha's **knowledge of the teaching** is mundane (*lokiya*); it is a worldly expression of his awakening as a path so that those in the world may enter the path and be free from suffering. Both are self-realized types of knowledge belonging exclusively to the buddhas, not held in common with others.<sup>138</sup>

The meaning of the above statement is that the Buddha has himself realized the truth, but when he teaches it, he is inviting others to “come and see” (*ehi, passika*) the “well taught” (*svākkhata*) and “timeless” (*akālika*) Dharma. When this Dharma is “seen for oneself” (*sandiṭṭhika*), it will “lead one onward” (*opanayika*). For the diligent one with an open mind that Dharma is then “personally known by the wise” (*paccattarṃ veditabbo viññūhi*).<sup>139</sup> This is the mundane path but the one who traverses it becomes supramundane by becoming the path himself as a streamwinner and so on.

### 3.2 THE 5 AGGREGATES AS A WHEEL

#### 3.2.1 The aggregates, their arising, their passing away

**3.2.1.1** **The 5 aggregates**—form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—function as like a wheel with the 5 spokes; or technically with 4 spokes, that is, the conscious body, feeling, perception and formations, with consciousness as the hub; or the wheel itself is the body with 4 spokes that are the mental aggregates. The whole wheel works as an integra; whole. This imagery depends on how we choose to explain the aggregates.

The stock meditation formula on **the 5 aggregates**<sup>140</sup> [§3]—the aggregate, its arising, and its passing away—recurs in various contexts in the following suttas:

<b>Upanisā Sutta</b>	S 12.23,3/2:29	necessary condition for destroying influxes	SD 6.12,
<b>(Anicca) Sīha Sutta</b>	S 22.78,7.2/3:85	as a reflection on impermanence	SD 42.10,
<b>Khemaka Sutta</b>	S 22.89,23.2	for overcoming the “I am” conceit	SD 14.13,
<b>Vāsijaṭṭa Sutta</b>	S 22.101,3/3:152 f	for the destruction of the influxes	SD 15.2.

The above 5-aggregate stock formula also recurs in **the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (D 22),<sup>141</sup> and **the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta** (M 10).<sup>142</sup> In both these Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas, the formula constitutes the practice of the contemplation of dharma in the dharmas (*dhammānupassanā*).<sup>143</sup>

**3.2.1.2** The **arising** (*samudaya*) and the **passing away** (*atthaṅgama*) of the 5 aggregates are explained from the standpoint of conditionality over time (diachronic conditionality) in:

**the (Khandha) Samādhī Sutta** (S 22.5/3:13-15), SD 7.16;

and from the standpoint of conditionality in the present moment (synchronic conditionality) in:

**the Upādāna Parivaṭṭa Sutta** (S 22.56/3:58-61), SD 3.7, and

**the Satta-ṭṭhāna Sutta** (S 22.57/3:61-65), SD 29.2.

<sup>138</sup> SA 2:46,24-25,6.

<sup>139</sup> On the terms here, see **Dhajagga S** (S 11.3,13/1:220), SD 15.5; **Dharmānussati**, SD 15.9.

<sup>140</sup> On **the 5 aggregates**, see SD 17.

<sup>141</sup> D 22,14/2:301,29-302,13). SD 13.2.

<sup>142</sup> M 10,38/1:61,3-8), SD 13.3.

<sup>143</sup> On the contemplation of dharma in the dharmas, see SD 30.3 (2.6.2).

### 3.2.2 Suffering and the aggregates

**3.2.2.1 The 5 aggregates** themselves represent the key stages or aspects of existential experience, beginning with **form** (*rūpa*), the body with its senses and mind. When the body is examined synchronically, that is, in the present moment (or at any point in time), we see it as being composed of the 4 elements or the 5 sense-faculties. On examining these sense-faculties, we will notice that with every sense-experience there is likely to be **feeling** (*vedanā*); we feel a pleasant sensation or an unpleasant one, or one that is neither pleasant nor unpleasant.

As unawakened beings, we **perceive** (*saññā*) by framing them within our memory of something pleasant or something unpleasant, and react according to the present perception. When we do so intentionally, we create **karmic formations** (*saṅkhāra*) of the body, speech or mind. When these formations are rooted in *greed, hatred or delusion*, they are unwholesome; otherwise, rooted in *charity, love or wisdom*, they are wholesome. All these phenomena that arise from the past play out in the present and continue to shape and colour our **consciousness** (*viññāṇa*).

**3.2.2.2** Any of these aggregates may be examined in itself in the present moment. **The (Nidāna) Dukkha Sutta** (S 12.43),<sup>144</sup> for example, describes **how suffering arises** through any of the 5 sense faculties or the mind. The basic format for the dependent arising of each sense (including the mind) follows this format:

Dependent on <b>the eye</b> and forms,	<u>eye-consciousness</u> arises.
The meeting of the three is	<b>contact</b> .
With contact as condition,	<b>feeling</b> (arises).
With feeling as condition,	<b>craving</b> (arises).
This is the arising of	suffering.

The same pattern applies with the underscored replaced with each of the following set:

Dependent on <b>the ear</b> and sounds,	ear-consciousness arises ...
Dependent on <b>the nose</b> and smells,	nose-consciousness arises ...
Dependent on <b>the tongue</b> and tastes,	tongue-consciousness arises ...
Dependent on <b>the body</b> and sounds,	body-consciousness arises ...
Dependent on <b>the mind</b> and mental states,	mind-consciousness arises ...

In essence, the dependent arising of suffering can be depicted in this flow-chart:

Sense-experience → sense-consciousness → contact → feeling → craving → suffering.

**3.2.2.3 The (Nidāna) Dukkha Sutta** (S 12.43) then explains that **the dependent ending** of suffering begins with the uprooting of craving, thus:

[Sense + sense-object → sense-consciousness → contact → feeling → craving.]  
 But with the remainderless fading away and ending of that very same **craving** comes the ending of clinging.  
 With the ending of **clinging**, ending of existence  
 With the ending of **existence**, ending of birth

<sup>144</sup> S 12.43/2:72 f (SD 108.14).

With the ending of **birth, decay-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair** end.

Such is the ending of this whole mass of suffering. This is the ending of suffering.

Now the ending of craving is the effective ending of “the whole mass of suffering.” This is the result of proper mindfulness and meditation, which can generally be difficult for the average lay person who is neither well trained nor committed to regular meditation and renunciation.

**3.2.2.4** For such an “untutored” or worldly person, there is the practice of “**habitual ending**” to suffering, that is, to work mindfully with **feeling** as soon as it arises. One should not react to the feeling whether pleasant or unpleasant—doing so would be a “subjective” reaction—thus, when one likes it, one feeds **the latent tendency of lust**; when one dislikes it, one feeds **the latent tendency of repulsion**. One would then turn that *subjective reaction* into a “reactive habit,” a habitual bad karma rooted in greed and hatred.

Instead, we should practise “**objective response**,” that is, mindfully regarding the sense-object or thought *just as it is*: as merely “seeing,” “hearing” (or “sound”), “smelling,” “tasting,” “touching,” or “thinking.” Then one retreats into the safety of the “object-free” mind. This is the kind of “retreat” worth keeping until we awaken to total mental freedom.

**3.2.2.5** The Commentary and Subcommentary on **the (Nidāna) Dukkha Sutta** (S 12.43) explain the meanings of “suffering,” “arising,” and “passing away,” as follows:

“**Suffering**” (*dukkha*) (here) is the suffering of the round (*vaṭṭa, dukkha*) [that is, the samsaric cycle of rebirths and redeaths].

There are 2 kinds of **arising** (*samudaya*): momentary origin (*khāṇika, samudaya*) and arising through conditions (*paccaya, samudaya*). The former is when we apply insight into the experience and let go of the unwholesome state. The latter is the meditative process of ending the unwholesome state. One who sees momentary arising also sees conditional arising.

“**Passing away**” (*aṭṭhaṅgama*) is also twofold: final passing away (*accant’atthaṅgama*) [non-occurrence, cessation, nirvana, *appavatti nirodho nibbānaṃ*, SAPṬ:Be 2:87] and passing away by way of breaking up (*bhed’atthaṅgama*) [the momentary cessation (of formations), *khaṇika, nirodho*, SAPṬ:Be 2:87]. One who sees final passing away also sees passing away by way of the breaking up of things.<sup>145</sup>

### 3.3 SPECIFIC CONDITIONALITY

#### 3.3.1 General function

**Specific conditionality** (*idap, paccayatā*) or “causal conditionality”<sup>146</sup> is the formula for the basic functioning of **dependent arising**:

*Iti imasmim sati, idaṃ hoti;  
imass’uppādā, idaṃ uppajjati.*

Thus when this is, that is;  
with the arising of this, that arises.

*Imasmim asati idaṃ na hoti;  
imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati.*

When this is not, that is not;  
with the ending of this, that ends.

<sup>145</sup> SA 2:74,12-19; cf 1:63, 94, 194

<sup>146</sup> See SD 39.5 (1.1.2.4).

With the ending of the pleasant contact, the pleasant feeling that arose in dependent on that pleasant contact, also ceases.<sup>147</sup> **The Visuddhi,magga Tīkā** (Param’attha Mañjūsā), commenting on “the ground in which wisdom grows” (*paññā.bhūmi,niddesa,vaṇṇanā*) (Vism ch 17), states that the above presentation is sometimes applied to a single link of dependent arising, for example, **contact** (*phassa*), such as in **the Assutava Sutta 2** (S 12.62), where it is stated:

As such, bhikkhus, the instructed noble disciple closely and wisely attends to dependent arising itself, thus:

When this is,	that is;	with this arising,	that arises.
When this is not,	that is not;	with this ending,	that ends.

Bhikkhus, dependent on pleasant contact, a pleasant feeling arises.

(S 12.62/2:96 f), SD 20.3

In this case, it is called “a single limbed dependent arising” (*ek’aṅga paṭicca,samuppāda*). This explanation corresponds to the term “specific conditionality” (*idap,paccayatā*).<sup>148</sup>

### 3.3.2 The aggregates and dependent arising

The Saṃyutta Subcommentary explains that what is meant by **existence**—represented by the verb “is” (*sati* and *hoti*) in the first part of the formula—is not actual presence as such but “the state of *not* having been brought to cessation by the path.” Similarly, what is meant by **non-existence** (*asati* and *na hoti*) in the second part of the formula is not mere absence as such but “the state of having been brought to *ending* by the path.”<sup>149</sup>

The Subcommentary gives only a brief explanation of the formula, which is elaborated in some detail in the Udāna Commentary, **UA 38-42**.<sup>150</sup> The formula here immediately follows the aggregates, connecting their arising and ending to dependent arising, showing that *the aggregates should be understood in terms of dependent arising*.<sup>151</sup>

## 3.4 DEPENDENT ARISING AS A WHEEL

### 3.4.1 The presentations of dependent arising

**3.4.1.1** The Buddha presented the teaching of **dependent arising** (*paṭicca,samuppāda*)<sup>152</sup> in 2 ways, that is as a wheel or cycle, thus:

- (1) the functional principles of dependent arising (*idap,paccayatā*) or a general presentation [§4], and
- (2) the structural cycle or “detailed presentation,” listing each link in a connected sequence [§5].

The latter presentation has various versions.<sup>153</sup> The detailed cycle is found frequently in the suttas, usually alone, without the general presentation.

<sup>147</sup> Bodhi renders it more technically accurate, thus: “Bhikkhus, in dependence on a contact to be experienced as pleasant, a pleasant feeling arises. With the cessation of that contact to be experienced as pleasant, the corresponding feeling—the pleasant feeling that arose in dependence on that contact to be experienced as pleasant—ceases and subsides.” The same applies mutatis mutandis to the foll 2 passages. See SD 63.14 (3.3.1).

<sup>148</sup> VismT:Be 2:246,1-8.

<sup>149</sup> SAṬ:Be 2:60,10-15; cf UA 38 f.

<sup>150</sup> Tr Masefield, UA:M 1:66-72.

<sup>151</sup> On specific conditionality, see SD 5.16 (2).

<sup>152</sup> On dependent arising, see SD 5.16.

<sup>153</sup> On the various versions of dependent arising formulas, see SD 5.16 (4 f).

Both of these presentations or formats can each be divided into 2 parts of the same cycle—the process of arising and the process of ending. The former sequence is called the arising cycle (*samudaya,-vāra*); it is also known as the forward sequence (*anuloma paṭicca,samuppāda*) and is equivalent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> noble truth, the arising of suffering (*dukkha,samudaya*). The latter sequence is called the ending cycle (*nirodha,vāra*) or the reverse sequence (*paṭiloma paṭicca,samuppāda*); it corresponds to the 3<sup>rd</sup> noble truth: the ending of suffering (*dukkha,nirodha*). The closing statements of the detailed presentation indicate that dependent arising deals with the arising and ending of suffering. Most of the sutta references to dependent arising end with these statements.

**3.4.1.2** There are, however, passages that close with the arising and ending of the “world,” thus:

**The (Nidāna) Loka Sutta** (S 12.44), SD 7.5

This, bhikkhus, is the arising of the world; this, bhikkhus, is the ending of the world;  
*ayaṃ kho bhikkhave lokassa samudayo; ayaṃ kho bhikkhave lokassa atthaṅgamo.* (S 12.44/2:73).

**The Ariya,sāvaka Sutta 1** (S 12.49)

In such a way the world arises, in such a way the world ends.  
*evam ayaṃ loko samudayati; evam ayaṃ loko nirujjhati.* (S 12.49/2:78).

Here the words “suffering” (*dukkha*) and “world” (*loka*) are synonymous and interchangeable. This is based on the teaching of the 3 worlds (*loka*) [2.1.4.3]; here “**world**” refers to *saṅkhāra,loka, the world as formations*, that is, **the 5 aggregates**. It is also stated in **the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta** (S 56.11), for example, that by “suffering” (*dukkha*) is meant the “5 aggregates” (*pañca-k,khandha*).<sup>154</sup>

**3.4.2 Dependent arising: The detailed presentation (structural cycle)**

**3.4.2.1** The detailed presentation of dependent arising contains 12 links, which are part of an interconnected cycle, with neither a beginning nor an end; there is no “first cause” (*mūla,kāraṇa*). For the sake of convenience, the Buddha uses “ignorance” (*avijjā*) for the 1<sup>st</sup> link of dependent arising. This does not imply that ignorance is a first cause. To prevent any misunderstanding that ignorance may be the “first cause,” the Buddha declares in **the Sammā,diṭṭhi Sutta** (M 9):

With the arising of the influxes, ignorance arises; with the ending of the influxes, ignorance ends.  
*āsava,samudayā avijjā samudayo, āsava.nirodhā avijjā nirodho.* (M 9,70/1:55). SD 11.14

The influxes or flow of sense-data and thoughts into our mind result in an increase in *sense-desire, existence and ignorance*. When we see something, we want to *see* more of it, and to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch, and to think about it. These are called sense-desire. Far from “knowing things” in a liberating way, we are overwhelmed with sense-data, which become a cage, a prison, that limits us to what we see, hear, sense and know (*diṭṭha,suta,muta,viññāta*).<sup>155</sup> Proper study of the suttas trains us to free ourselves from this “straightjacket” knowledge, and to think outside independently of incoming sense-data. [3.5.2.1]

**3.4.2.2** These influxes (*āsava*)—*sense-desire, existence and ignorance* [2.1.0]—work during our waking moments to increase and perpetuate themselves, which are in turn the conditions for profound

<sup>154</sup> S 56.11,5/1:420 (SD 1.1).

<sup>155</sup> SD 3.13 (5.2); SD 53.5 (2 f). On *viññāta*, “the known,” see SD 3.13 (5.2.1.4-5.2.1.5).

ignorance and a continuation of the cycle. In general, when presenting this *detailed or structural format* of dependent arising (comprising the entire 12 links), the Buddha mentions the forward sequence only as an introduction.

When he wishes to stress the direct human experience of suffering, he usually presents dependent arising in the reverse sequence. In fact, all buddhas teach this same teaching. The opening chapter of **the Nidāna Saṃyutta**, the chapter on buddhas (*buddha, vaggā*), the 6 past buddhas and Gotama himself—the 7 buddhas of recent cosmic time—the **(Nidāna) Vipassī Sutta** (S 12.4), **the (Nidāna) Sikhi Sutta** (S 12.5), **the (Nidāna) Vessābhū Sutta** (S 12.6), **the (Nidāna) Kakusandha Sutta** (S 12.7), **the (Nidāna) Koṇāgamana Sutta** (S 12.8), **the (Nidāna) Kassapa Sutta** (S 12.9), and **the (Nidāna) Gotama Sutta** (S 12.10)<sup>156</sup>—and **the Parivāraṃsana Sutta** (S 12.81) all contain this passage on the reverse sequence of dependent arising:

*jarā, maraṇa* ← *jāti* ← *bhava* ← *upādāna* ← *taṇhā* ← *vedanā* ← *phassa* ← *saḷāyatana*  
← *nāma, rūpa* ← *viññāṇa* ← *saṅkhāra* ← *avijjā*.

(S 12.4-10/2:5-11) + 12.51/2:81 (SD 11.5)

**3.4.2.3** Occasionally, to highlight a particular link, the Buddha begins the detailed presentation with *one of the intermediate links*. The presentation may, for example, begin:

with <b>birth</b> ( <i>jāti</i> )	<b>Kaḷāra Sutta</b>	S 12.32/2:52	SD 83.6;
with <b>feeling</b> ( <i>vedanā</i> )	<b>Moliya Phagguna Sutta</b>	S 12.12/2:14	SD 20.5;
with <b>consciousness</b> ( <i>viññāṇa</i> )	<b>Madhu, piṇḍika Sutta</b>	M 18,16/1:112	SD 6.14.

and followed by the subsequent links until the cycle reaches decay-and-death (for the forward sequence), or traced back to ignorance (for the reverse sequence). Occasionally, the process begins with a link or problem not included in the 12 links, and is then connected to the process of dependent arising.<sup>157</sup>

In summary, the presentation of dependent arising is versatile and does not always mention all the 12 links. Although the 12 links are said to be *interdependent* and act as *conditions* for one another, this is not saying that they are “causes” for one another. By way of a metaphor: there are more conditions other than only the seed itself that allow **a plant** to grow: soil, water, fertilizer, temperature, weather, and, of course, our effort to till the soil, to weed it, and so on, too, play a vital part. These interrelated conditions do not need to follow a set temporal sequence. Similarly, the floor acts as a condition for the placing and stability of **a table**; but the floor is not a cause—certainly not *the* cause—for the table.<sup>158</sup>

### 3.5 DEPENDENT ENDING: BREAKING THE WHEEL

#### 3.5.1 Helpful new term

**3.5.1.1 Paṭicca,nirodha**, “dependent ending,”<sup>159</sup> is a non-canonical term, found apparently only in the Saṃyutta Commentary (SA 2:135,16 f) as *paticca nirodha, samāpatti*, “the attainment of dependent ending.” So the sense is there; this sense attracts the neologism, *paṭicca,nirodha*.

The term *nirodha* means “ending, cessation, extinction.” When the Pali sense is understood, the English translation that we use should be capable of being “back translated” so that we have a good idea of the Pali sense. Such terms, however, can be problematic for some of us when we lack the curiosity to look beyond the letter into the Dharma. When we only read the words, we are likely to be at a loss for

<sup>156</sup> Fully, **Mahā Sakya, muni Gotama S** (S 12.10), SD 14.3.

<sup>157</sup> **Atthi, raga S** (S 12.64/2:101), SD 26.10.

<sup>158</sup> Abhidhamma, in its 7<sup>th</sup> book, Paṭṭhāna, mentions 24 conditions (*paccaya*): SD 60.1e (13.12 f).

<sup>159</sup> On dependent arising and ending, see **Titth’āyatana S** (A 3.61,11 f/1:177), SD 6.8; SD 6.12 (2).

words. When we closely see the words and let them, as it were, speak Dharma to us, then we are more likely to understand its spirit, the intended teaching. [3.4.2.1]

The word “**ending**” or “**cessation**” in English generally means the destruction or non-existence of something that has already arisen. *Nirodha* in dependent arising (and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> noble truth, *dukkha, nirodha ariya, sacca*), however, means that something does not arise or does not arise again because no conditions exist for it to do so. Thus, the phrase *avijjā, nirodhā saṅkhāra, nirodho* translates as: “With the ending of ignorance, volitional formations end.”

As **Chaokhun Prayudh** notes: “In fact, this phrase means that because ignorance does not exist, or does not arise, or there are no problems associated with ignorance, volitional formations do not exist, do not arise, and there are no problems associated with volitional formations. It does not necessarily mean that existing ignorance must be terminated in order to terminate existing volitional formations.” (2021 1:371)

**3.5.1.2** There are occasions when *nirodha* is accurately translated as “ending” or “cessation,” for instance, when referring to the nature of conditioned phenomena, and when used as a synonym for *bhaṅga* (“breaking up”), *anicca* (“impermanence”), *khaya* (“destruction”), and *vaya* (“decay”). For example, in **the Gelaṅṅa Sutta 2** (S 36.8), the Buddha explains thus:

Bhikkhus, these 3 feelings [pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral] are impermanent, conditioned, dependently arisen, subject to destruction, subject to dissolution, subject to vanishing, subject to cessation.

*Imā kho bhikkhave tisso vedanā aniccā saṅkhatā paṭicca, samuppannā khaya, dhammā vaya, dhammā virāga, dhammā nirodha, dhammā.* (S 36.8/4:214)

Indeed, every link of dependent arising has these attributes mentioned in the quote. Having arisen, conditioned phenomena naturally must fall away, according to the nature of conditioned existence. One need not try to make them fall away or end; they will end of their own accord. The practical application of this teaching is to see that all that arises must cease.

When we do not see this nature of impermanence, we tend to see “something” in that experience, as if to take a snapshot or video of that moment. We keep gazing at these frozen and fractured flickers of time past as if it were “real,” that is, happening now; but there is “nothing” there. This is the meaning of “**making something**” out of nothing. We are trying to resurrect the dead; we even believe that the dead has been resurrected! We should leave the past where it is, dead, buried and gone, and live in the present.

### **3.5.2 Words and contexts**

**3.5.2.1** Although *nirodha* describes a natural, objective process, the teaching of the 3<sup>rd</sup> noble truth (“the ending cycle of dependent arising,” *paṭicca, samuppāda nirodha, vāra*) stresses on a practical application of wisdom in life. There are 2 interpretations of *nirodha* in this context (Vism 16.18/494 f): the 1<sup>st</sup> derives from the prefix *ni-*, “non-existence, without,” + *rodha* (= *cāraka*, “prison, confinement, restriction, obstruction, impediment”), translated as “free from limitation, from restriction, from confinement”—that is, free from samsara, awakened.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> interpretation equates *nirodha* with *an-uppāda*, “non-arising.”<sup>160</sup> In this context, *nirodha* does not mean cessation or dissolution (*bhaṅga*). Although the translation of *nirodha* as “ending” or “cessation” is not always accurate, it is difficult to find a better English translation for it. We are thus left with a

<sup>160</sup> VismṬ:Be 2:192,6 (Indriya.sacca, niddesa, vaṇṇanā sacca, vitthāra.katha, vaṇṇanā).

provisional translation, even a near-synonym, a meaning pointer. It is important, however, to understand the meaning of this word—its Pali sense—in its different contexts. This is our right effort in reading the Pali sense in English words, terms and translation to see the Dharma, our on-going task as an inspired Buddhist. [3.4.2.1]

**3.5.2.2** For this reason, these **alternative translations** for the ending cycle of dependent arising are valid and helpful:<sup>161</sup>

“With an absence of ignorance, there is an absence of volitional formations.”

“With freedom from ignorance, there is freedom from volitional formations.”

“When ignorance no longer bears fruit, volitional formations cease to bear fruit.”

“When no problems exist as a consequence of ignorance, no problems exist as a consequence of volitional formations.”

Often, what we know or think we know can be a hindrance to learning when we see our knowledge as statistical fact and defining truth. Our mastery of even just one language can be a bridge to having insight into another, that is, when we let the two languages play together like musical passages in a beautiful symphony. Most Pali words, especially Dharma terms, are **polysemous**; they can have more than one sense, all of which may apply at the same time, and we have to reflect on the various possible applications or usages to understand the context, the wisdom behind the words. The Dharma, in other words, is **the living word** of the Buddha.

**3.5.2.3** One helpful strategy in properly knowing the Dharma is a “**deep reading**” of the early Buddhist texts and teachings in any language (even in Pali). Deep reading means to be mindful of the fact that what we have to “listen to” are the Buddhist texts as orally composed and transmitted messages from the Buddha himself or his disciples. They are living words, not dead letters; they are natural realities, not canonized dogmas. It helps further when we imagine that we are hearing live recordings of the early teachings. It’s like enjoying good music; it’s not just the sound and acoustics; it is how we *feel and connect* with the music.

In the right spirit, we would not read or hear such teachings like we do the daily news: we look at the words or hear them, and then often forget about them. We must constantly and habitually ask ourselves, “What does this mean?” “What is the Buddha saying here?” “How does this help me better understand other teachings?” “How does this work to make me a better person?” and so on.

We thus need to connect our present text—**the Dasa,bala Sutta 1**—to the teachings we are familiar with that we can recall. Interestingly, when we have this open mind and inquiring spirit, we will recall better all the good and liberating things we have learned from the Dharma, to see and feel how they all truly and beautifully fit together in our own lives, filling us with joy and light.

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<sup>161</sup> Prayudh Payutto, *Buddhadhamma*, 2021:372.

# Dasa,bala Sutta 1

## The First Discourse on the 10 Powers

S 12.21

1 (The Blessed One was) residing at Sāvattihī.

2 “Bhikshus, accomplished in the 10 powers<sup>162</sup> and the 4 kinds of moral courage,<sup>163</sup> the Tathagata claims the place of the lordly bull,<sup>164</sup> roars his lion-roar<sup>165</sup> in assemblies,<sup>166</sup> and sets in motion the divine wheel<sup>167</sup> thus: [28]

### 3 Conditionality of the 5 aggregates<sup>168</sup>

Such is <b>form</b> .	Such is the <u>arising</u> <sup>169</sup> of <i>form</i> .	Such is the <u>ceasing</u> <sup>170</sup> of <i>form</i> .
Such is <b>feeling</b> .	Such is the <u>arising</u> of <i>feeling</i> .	Such is the <u>ceasing</u> of <i>feeling</i> .
Such are <b>formations</b> .	Such is the <u>arising</u> of <i>formations</i> .	Such is the <u>ceasing</u> of <i>formations</i> .
Such is <b>perception</b> .	Such is the <u>arising</u> of <i>perception</i> .	Such is the <u>ceasing</u> of <i>perception</i> .
Such is <b>consciousness</b> .	Such is the <u>arising</u> of <i>consciousness</i> .	Such is the <u>ceasing</u> of <i>consciousness</i> .

### 4 Specific conditionality (*idap-paccayatā*)<sup>171</sup>

Thus,		<i>iti</i>	
when this is,	that is;	<i>imasmim̐ sati</i>	<i>idaṃ hoti</i>
with this arising,	that arises.	<i>imass'uppādā</i>	<i>idaṃ uppajjati</i>
When this is not,	that is not;	<i>imasmim̐ asati</i>	<i>idaṃ na hoti</i>
with this ending,	that ends.	<i>imassa nirodhā</i>	<i>idaṃ nirujjhati</i>

### 5 Dependent arising (*paticca,samuppāda*)<sup>172</sup>

With <b>ignorance</b> as condition, there are volitional formations;	<i>avijjā,paccayā</i>	<i>saṅkhārā</i>
with <b>volitional formations</b> as condition, there is consciousness;	<i>saṅkhāra,paccayā</i>	<i>viññāṇaṃ</i>
with <b>consciousness</b> as condition, there is name-and-form;	<i>viññāṇa,paccayā</i>	<i>nāma,rūpaṃ</i>
with <b>name-and-form</b> as condition, there are the 6 sense-bases;	<i>nāma,rūpa,paccayā</i>	<i>saḷ'āyatanaṃ</i>
with <b>the 6 sense-bases</b> as condition, there is contact;	<i>saḷ'āyatana,paccayā</i>	<i>phassa</i>
with <b>contact</b> as condition, there is feeling;	<i>phassa,paccayā</i>	<i>vedanā</i>
with <b>feeling</b> as condition, there is craving;	<i>vedanā,paccayā</i>	<i>taṇhā</i>
with <b>craving</b> as condition, there is clinging;	<i>taṇhā,paccayā</i>	<i>upādānaṃ</i>

<sup>162</sup> On the Buddha's 10 powers (*dasa,bala*), see [2.1].

<sup>163</sup> On the Buddha's moral courage (*vesārajja*), see [2.3].

<sup>164</sup> On the lordly bull (*āsabha*), see [2.4.1].

<sup>165</sup> On the lion roar (*siha,nāda*), see [2.4.2].

<sup>166</sup> On the assemblies (*parisa*), see [2.4.3].

<sup>167</sup> On the divine wheel (*brahma,cakka*), see [3.1].

<sup>168</sup> On the 5 aggregates (*pañca-k,khandha*), see [3.2].

<sup>169</sup> On seeing the arising of an aggregate, see SD 42.10 (2.6).

<sup>170</sup> On seeing the ending of an aggregate, see SD 42.10 (2.7).

<sup>171</sup> On specific conditionality (*idap,paccayatā*), see [3.3].

<sup>172</sup> On dependent arising (*paticca,samuppāda*), see [3.4].

with **clinging** as condition, there is existence;  
 with **existence** as condition, there is birth;  
 with **birth** as condition there arise **decay-and-death**,  
 sorrow, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair.

Such is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

### **6 Dependent ending (*paṭicca,nirodha*)<sup>173</sup>**

But with the remainderless fading away  
 and ending of **ignorance**, volitional formations end;  
 with the ending of **volitional formations**, consciousness ends;  
 with the ending of **consciousness**, name-and-form ends;  
 with the ending of **name-and-form**, the 6 sense-bases end;  
 with the ending of **the 6 sense-bases**, contact ends;  
 with the ending of **contact**, feeling ends;  
 with the ending of **feeling**, craving ends;  
 with the ending of **craving**, clinging ends;  
 with the ending of **clinging**, existence ends;  
 with the ending of **existence**, birth ends;  
 with the ending of **birth**, there end **decay-and-death**,  
 sorrow, lamentation, physical pain,  
 mental pain and despair.  
 —Such is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.”

*upādāna, paccayā bhavo  
 bhava, paccayā jāti  
 jāti, paccayā jarā, maraṇam  
 soka, parideva, dukkha, -  
 domanass'upāyasā sambhavanti—  
 evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-k, -  
 khandhassa samudayo hoti*

*avijjāya tveva asesā, virāga, nirodhā  
 saṅkhāra, nirodho  
 saṅkhāra, nirodhā viññāṇa, nirodho  
 viññāṇa, nirodhā nāma, rūpa, nirodho  
 nāma, rūpa, nirodhā saḷāyatana, nirodho  
 saḷāyatana, nirodhā phassa, nirodho  
 phassa, nirodhā vedanā, nirodho  
 vedanā, nirodhā taṇhā, nirodho  
 taṇhā, nirodhā upādāna, nirodho  
 upādāna, nirodhā bhava, nirodho  
 bhava, nirodhā jāti, nirodho  
 jāti, nirodhā jarā, maraṇam  
 soka parideva, dukkha, -  
 domanass'upāyasā nirujjhanti  
 evam-etassa kevalassa dukkha-k, -  
 khandhassa nirodho hoti ti*

—evaṃ—

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<sup>173</sup> On dependent ending, see [3.5].