

**SD 63.8****Brahm'āyu Sutta**

The Brahm'āyu Discourse

**M 91**

Theme: The Buddha as an ideal being

Translated by Piya Tan 2010, ©2025

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References to authors' works are given on first occurrence only; thenceforth, only **name, year + paging** are given. Primary sources other than the Pali (eg Mahāvastu, Divyāvadāna, etc) are cited by **the editors' name, year and paging**. For details of works quoted, see the SD Guide.

# SD 63.8 Brahm'āyu Sutta

## The Brahm'āyu Discourse

M 91

### 1 Sutta summary and significance

#### 1.1 SUTTA SUMMARY

**1.1.1 The Brahm'āyu Sutta** (M 91) relates how the 120-year-old brahmin of Mithilā, **Brahm'āyu**, becomes a disciple of the Buddha. Brahm'āyu, through his knowledge of the 32 marks of the great man and their significance,<sup>1</sup> confirms the Buddha as having them, and learns Dharma from the Buddha. As a result, Brahm'āyu gains the path and dies a nonreturner.

#### 1.1.2 The brahmin Brahm'āyu

While the Buddha is staying at **Mithilā**, Brahm'āyu sends his student (*māṇava*), **Uttara**, to investigate whether the Buddha has all the 32 marks of the great man [§9; 2.1; 4 full list]. Uttara, after shadowing the Buddha for 7 months, confirms not only the Buddha as having all these marks, but that his conduct and speech are morally virtuous [§§10-22].

Impressed, Brahm'āyu at once sets out to meet the Buddha. On meeting the Buddha, Brahm'āyu sees the 32 marks for himself. Joyful in meeting the Buddha, he questions the Buddha regarding “good in the lives to come” [§32]. Listening to the teaching, Brahm'āyu attains streamwinning [§32-35]. Seeing Brahm'āyu's readiness, the Buddha then gives him a progressive Dharma talk, culminating in the teaching on the 4 noble truths, and Brahm'āyu becomes **a nonreturner** [§36].

Brahm'āyu then goes for refuge in the 3 jewels [§37], and offers alms to the Buddha and the sangha for 7 days [§38]. Soon after the Buddha has left Mithilā, Brahm'āyu dies, and the Buddha affirms Brahm'āyu's wisdom and nonreturning [§39].

#### 1.2 SUTTA PARALLELS AND RELATED SUTTAS

##### 1.2.1 Chinese parallels

**1.2.1.1** The Brahm'āyu Sutta has parallels in Chinese translation in the Madhyama Āgama and in an individual translation.<sup>2</sup> The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its two Chinese parallels report in similar terms that the brahmin Brahm'āyu sent his student Uttara to find out if the Buddha was endowed with the 32 marks of the great man (*maha, purisa, lakkhaṇa*).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This study has greatly benefitted from the detailed study of the 32 marks by **Analayo**, “MN 91 Brahmāyu-sutta,” in *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya*, Taipei, Dharma Drum Publishing Corp, 2011:527-545. Parts of it have been revised or expanded as appropriate for purposes of this sutta-based contemporary study.

<sup>2</sup> The parallels are **MĀ 161** (T1.685a-690a) and an individual tr. **T76** (T1.883b-886a). Both agree with **M 91** on the location and on the name of brahmin Brahm'āyu as their title (梵摩經 *fàn mó jīng* or 梵摩渝經 *fàn mó yú jīng*). According to the Taisho ed, T76 was tr by Zhi Qian (支謙 *zhī qiān*). MĀ 161 has been studied and tr by **THICH MINH CHAU**, *The Chinese Madhyama Agama and the Pali Majjhima Nikaya*, 1964:72, 166-172, 185-186, and 306-312. Brahm'āyu is also mentioned in a list of eminent brahmins known as the “6 oral traditionalists” (*ṣaḍ anuśravikāḥ*) in Saṅghabhedavastu (**R Gnoli**, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu* part 1, 1977:39,4).

<sup>3</sup> While **§4** (M 2:134,2) and **MĀ 161** (T1.685a11) agree on the name Uttara 優多羅 *yōu duō luó*, **T76** (T1.883b-23) mentions him as 摩納 *mó nà*, “brahmin youth” (*maṇava*). A difference in regard to the qualities of Uttara is that, whereas according to **§4** he has mastered the 3 Vedas, *tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragu*, according to **MĀ 161** (T1.-685a13) he has mastered 4 Vedas, 四典經 *sì diǎn jīng*. **§2** (M 2:133,13) mentions only the 3 Vedas also in relation to Brahm'āyu (the parallel passage in MĀ 161 does not refer to Brahm'āyu's knowledge of the Vedas). **THICH MINH CHAU**, 1964:307 comments that the ref to 4 Vedas in the description of Uttara in MĀ 161 is a sign of later

**1.2.1.2** The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its two Chinese parallels list the 32 marks of the Buddha by proceeding *from feet to head*. The Sanskrit texts, such as **the Lalitavistara** and **the Mahāvvyutpatti**, however, treat the descriptions of these marks proceeding *from head to feet*. The idea of describing the marks starting with the great man's feet upwards is probably that the great man—the Buddha or the world monarch—being respectively the wisest and the most powerful of humans, is looked up to from below, especially for the viewer lying at his feet.<sup>4</sup>

### **1.2.2 Sanskrit parallels**

**1.2.2.1** Some lines of the Brahm'āyu Sutta have also been preserved in **Sanskrit fragments** found in Turfan, an important ancient trade hub located on the Silk Road in the centre of a fertile oasis, east of Xinjiang, China.<sup>5</sup> These valuable manuscript-fragments were collected and brought to Germany by 4 Royal Prussian Expeditions to Turfan in 1902-1914.<sup>6</sup> These Sanskrit fragments were then identified and assembled by a group of German scholars in a project known as the **Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden** (SHT) ["Sanskrit manuscripts from the Turfan finds"],<sup>7</sup> part of the Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland (VOHD) series.<sup>8</sup>

development. An otherwise unrelated discourse, **SĀ 255** (T2.63c12), still speaks just of 3 Vedas, 三典 *sān diǎn*. Influence of the later notion of 4 Vedas is also found in Pali comy, MA 3:362,15, according to which the subsequent ref in **§2** (M 2:133,15) to "*itihāsa* as the fifth," *itihāsa,pañcamānaṃ* (also stated in MĀ 161 (T1.685a14) as 五句說 *wǔ jù shuō*), seems to imply that in the preceding part 4 Vedas are intended, *athabbaṇa,vedarṃ catuttharṃ katvā ... iti,hāsa pañcamo* (MA 3:362,15-19). A description of a learned brahmin in the Jain Viyāhapaṇṇatti 2.18 in **K C Lalwani**, *Arya Sayyambhava's Dasavaikalika Sutra (Dasaveyalia Sutta)*, Delhi, 1973b:152,18 does indeed list the 4 Vedas followed by *itihāsapañcamānaṃ*. Yet, as M:ÑB 1995: 1297 n850 says, "it is more likely ... that the histories are called 'the fifth' in connection with the 4 branches of study auxiliary to the Vedas that precede them in the description," ie, as the 5<sup>th</sup> of the listing in **§2** (M 2:133,15): *nighaṇḍu,keṭubha,akkhara* and *pabheda* (a fourfold listing that has its counterpart in MĀ 161 (T1.685a13) in 深達因 *shēn dá yīn*, 緣正 *yuán zhèng*, 文 *wén*); cf **T W Rhys Davids**, 1899, D:RD 1:109 n2, and **M Winternitz**, *Geschichte der indischen Literatur*, Leipzig, 1908:110.

<sup>4</sup> **K Hokazono**, ラリタヴィスタラの研究 [A Study of the Lalitavistara], 1994:484,14; **S Lefmann**, *Lalita Vistara, Leben und Lehre des Çākya-Buddha*, 1902:105,11; **P L Vaidya**, *Lalita-vistara*, 1958b:74,22, and Mahavyutpatti no. 236 f (**R Sakaki**, 翻譯名義大集 *fānyì míngyì dà jí* [Mahāvvyutpatti], 1926:22-24); a difference in order was noted by **L A Waddell**, "Buddha's diadem or 'uṣṇīṣa,' Its origin, nature and functions," 1914:138. **W B Bollée**, "Physical aspects of some *Mahāpuruṣas*, descent, foetality and birth," 2005:23, explains that in the order of listing found, eg, in M 91 and its parallels, "the feet are dealt with first, [since] gods as well as great men like kings [are] being looked up to from below, for the viewer is lying at his [or their] feet." **E Waldschmidt**, "Die Entwicklungsgeschichte des Buddhabilde in Indien," 1930:271, and **C Weber**, *Wesen und Eigenschaften des Buddha in der Tradition des Hinayana Buddhismus*, 1994:43, hold the sequence in M 91 and its parallels to be the more original version; cf the survey in **E Burnouf**, "Appendice No VIII Sur les trente-deux signes caractéristiques d'un grand homme," 1852: 577. For refs to other occurrences of this order cf **S Dietz**, "Fragments containing lists of the 32 Mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa," 2006:153. For refs to the 32 marks in general, cf BHS 458-460; for a listing of these marks in an Uighur fragment, cf **A von Gabain**, *Türkische Turfan-Texte VIII*, 1954:52 f; on the practice of visualizing the 32 marks, as described in T643, cf **N Yamabe**, *The Sutra on the Ocean-Like Samadhi of the Visualization of the Buddha*, PhD thesis, 1999b:216-262. For a comparison of the marks in Lalitavistara with similar marks in Purāṇa texts cf **K A Nilakanta Sastri**, "Cakravartin," 1940:311-314; for a survey of comparable marks associated with Mahāvīra, cf **U P Shah**, *Jaina-Rūpa-Manḍana* (Jaina Iconography), 1987:95 f.

<sup>5</sup> SHT [*Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*] V 1148 (pp 146-147), SHT X 3269 (p 20), SHT X 3425 (p 73), SHT X 3962 (p 232, identified in SHT XI), SHT X 4094 (p 264), and SHT XI 4587 + 4617d, the former identified by Gudrun Melzer and the latter by Klaus Wille. Fragments that have preserved sections of listings of the 32 marks can also be found in SHT V 1045a (p 27), SHT VI 1453 (p 141), and SHT IX 2895 (p 301).

<sup>6</sup> The MSS are, for the most part, in the possession of the East German Academy of Sciences.

<sup>7</sup> SHT = Sanskrihandschriften aus den Turfanfunden ["Sanskrit manuscripts from the Turfan finds"], VOHD Band 10, Wiesbaden & Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1965-2017. For details on SHT, see SD Guide I b: SHT.

<sup>8</sup> VOHD = Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland: "Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts in Germany / Founded by Wolfgang Voigt in cooperation with the German Oriental Society. Continued by Dieter

**SHT** is a series of publications (published in Stuttgart and in Wiesbaden, 1965-2017) devoted to identifying and cataloguing of the Sanskrit texts from Turfan, often in highly fragmentary form. These include many parallels to early suttas, which however are almost all just a few words or sentences. They may occasionally help to clarify a term or reading, but they mainly serve to illustrate the spread of these texts in the Central Asian region.

The correspondence of **the Brahm'āyu Sutta** and its Sanskrit parallels have been collated thus:

<b>M 91,1-3/2:133</b>	the Sutta beginning	SHT X 3269;
<b>M 91,5 f/2:135</b>	Uttara's examination of the Buddha's 32 marks and his return to Brahm'āyu	SHT V 1148, SHT X 4094, SHT XI 4587;
<b>M 91,28/2:142 f</b>	parts of the report om how Brahm'āyu goes to the Buddha, investigates the 32 marks; reflects on what to ask the Buddha	SHT X 3425 (p 73).

**1.2.2.2** In the Brahm'āyu Sutta, the brahmin Brahm'āyu tells his student Uttara that “**the 32 marks of the great man have been handed down in our mantras**” [§5]. Although “mantras” (*mantā*) is usually understood as referring to the Vedas, here it broadly means brahminical lore. Brahm'āyu then says: “My dear Uttara, I am the giver of mantras; you are the receiver of mantras” [§5.4], meaning that they are custodians of brahminical lore and their task is to respect and realize its teachings.

The brahmin sage, **Asita**,<sup>9</sup> for example, prophesied that the child Siddhattha would surely go on to renounce the world and become buddha. Clearly then, the early brahmins remembered the prophecy of the great man, one who had all the 32 marks—that if he remained in the world he would become a world monarch (*cakka,vatti*); if he renounced the world, he would become a world-teacher, the Buddha, who frees the world from ignorance [§5.4].

Since the Buddha is present in the world, Brahm'āyu feels duty-bound to investigate that the Buddha is authentically the great man. After all, it should be noted that the Brahm'āyu Sutta and other suttas consider the ability to recognize these marks of the great man as an art to be learned by the brahmins. In fact, such ability is part of a stock description of the qualities of **a laudable brahmin** in the Pali suttas.<sup>10</sup>

Now, if the ability to recognize these 32 marks is a praiseworthy quality and requires previous training, it would follow that, at least in the way these marks were conceived at the time of the early suttas, they should not have been easily visible physical marks. In other words, the original conception of these marks would probably have intended nuances, perceptible only to a keen observer who was trained in the art of detecting them. They are neither abnormal nor pathological physical marks that are plainly visible.<sup>11</sup>

**1.2.2.3** Another point to be noted is that the suttas present the lore of the 32 marks as a brahminical tradition, since such concern with physical marks was an preoccupation peculiar to brahmins.<sup>12</sup>

George. Commissioned by the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Ed Hartmut-Ortwin Feistel. Part 10: Sanskrithandschriften aus den Turfan-Funden,” 1965-2017).

<sup>9</sup> On the sage Asita, **Assalayana S** (M 93/2:154), SD 40a.2, + SD 63.7 (1.3.1.1 n).

<sup>10</sup> **§2** (M 2:133,16) + **§4** (134,2) incl *mahā, purisa, lakkhaṇesu anavayo* in a list of praiseworthy qualities of Brahm'āyu and of his student Uttara. The same knowledge is, according to **Soṇa, daṇḍa S** (D 4/1:120,17), SD 30.5, part of the prerequisites that make up a true brahmin in the eyes of other brahmins. According to **(Tika) Jāṇussoṇī S** (A 3.59/1:166,20), this knowledge is required to be reckoned a *tevijjā* brahmin by other brahmins; and according to **Doṇa Brāhmaṇa S** (A 5.192/3:223,18), SD 36.14, such knowledge makes a brahmin worthy of respect by other brahmins.

<sup>11</sup> On the physical forms of the marks as symptoms of bodily pathology, see SD 36.9 (5).

<sup>12</sup> Those who wish to examine whether the Buddha has these marks are usually brahmins attempting to ascertain the Buddha's spiritual accomplishment, such as **Ambaṭṭha** (D 3/1:105,22), **Pokkharasāti** (Ambaṭṭha's teacher) (D 3/1:109,1), and **Sela** (M 92/2:146 = Sn 3:7/107,11). **Coomaraswamy**, “The Buddha's cūḍā, hair, uṣṇī-ṣa, and crown,” JRAS 1928a:816, remarks that these “conceptions of ideal form, expressed in terms of physiog-

According to **the Mahāvastu**, when the bodhisattva was about to be born, the devas of the pure abodes taught the 32 marks to brahmins in order to enable them to recognize the bodhisattva, a suggestion made also in the Pali commentary.<sup>13</sup>

These 32 marks thus are a tool to help the ancient brahmins of India appreciate the spiritual potential of the bodhisattva. In the suttas, the 32 marks fulfil the same purpose in regard to the spiritual accomplishment of the Buddha, since by verifying their existence, the brahmins develop the necessary faith to give ear to the Buddha's liberating teachings. Several suttas describe how prominent brahmins are told by their fellow brahmins that it is beneath their dignity to visit a wandering recluse like the Buddha.

In reply, brahmins like Sona,daṇḍa, Kūṭa,danta, and Caṅki highlight the qualities of the Buddha, among others, his possession of the 32 marks of the great man, thereby lending support to their conviction that it is proper for them to visit someone who is endowed with such excellent qualities. Thus, from the perspective of these suttas, the 32 marks of the great man function as a tool by means of which brahmins can be convinced to have respect for the Buddha, so that they become willing to approach the Buddha and learn from him.<sup>14</sup>

### 1.2.3 The Lakkhaṇa Sutta (D 30) and the 32 marks

**1.2.3.1 The Lakkhaṇa Sutta (D 30)** records that the Buddha once took up the topic of these 32 marks on his own.<sup>15</sup> The Lakkhaṇa Sutta's treatment differs from other suttas concerned with this topic in offering a Dharma-spirited perspective on these physical marks. The Sutta explains what particular karmic deeds of the past had caused the Buddha to be endowed with each of these 32 marks in his last life (that is, as the Buddha).

This karmic explanation shifts significance from the physical marks themselves to their conditioned nature and their relation to wholesome deeds, that is, highlighting the beneficial results to be expected of wholesome conduct.<sup>16</sup> The Lakkhaṇa Sutta in fact explicitly indicates that this shift of

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nomy ... are not so much of Buddhist as of brahminical (and ultimately of popular) origin." In fact, **Brahmajāla S** (D 1/1:9,4) reckons the art of making predictions based on the physical marks (*lakkhaṇa*) of a person to be "animal knowledge" (*tiracchāna,vijjā*), and a wrong type of livelihood. Comy explains this passage to refer to predicting that someone with certain marks will become king, etc: *lakkhaṇan ti iminā lakkhaṇena samannāgato rājā hoti* (DA 1:92,24).

<sup>13</sup> MA 3:364,12. For **Mahāvastu**: Basak 1963a:238,2 + 480,13; Senart 1882a:197,8 + 366,10.

<sup>14</sup> Sona,daṇḍa (D 4/1:116,8), SD 30.5; Kūṭa,danta (D 7/1:132,18), SD 22.8; and Caṅki (M 95/2:167,19), SD 21.15.

<sup>15</sup> **D 30/3:142-179** (SD 36.9). See further **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (7) The Buddha's body.

<sup>16</sup> **M D Radich**, *The Somatics of Liberation, Ideas about Embodiment in Buddhism from its Origins to the Fifth Century CE*, PhD thesis Harvard, 2007:322 notes that **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30) "contains in embryo the key features that ... characterise discourse about the marks in post-Pali canonical era: a complex allegorical reading of each mark, interpreted in terms of a vast economy of merit that centres around the Buddha as a kind of world-saviour." T W Rhys Davids (1921), **D 3:136**, takes a scholar's view: **the Lakkhaṇa S** "seems gravely ironical in the contrast it makes between the absurdity of the marks and the beauty of the ethical qualities they are supposed ... to mean." **B Wimalaratana**, *Concept of Great Man, Singapore*, 1994:29 says that "the importance of the Lakkhaṇa-sutta lies in the fact that it combines the concept of the Great Man with some of the fundamental tenets of Buddhism such as the doctrine[s] of kamma, rebirth, the law of causation." The parallel to Lakkhaṇa S, **MĀ 59** (T1.493c19), differs in this respect, as it only lists the marks of a superior being without giving the detailed relation to former deeds found in **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30), which may be a late addition to the Sutta. A treatment of the karmic deeds responsible for the marks of a superior being with which the Buddha was endowed can, however, be found in **T584** (T14.968a24), in **Lalitavistara** (Lefmann 1902:429,3; Vaidya 1958b:310,5), in a **Pañca-vimśatisahaśrika Prajñāpāramita** passage (Conze 1964:228,4), and in **Arthaviniścaya-sūtra** (M H Samtani 1971: 55,4). For a comparative study of the Arthaviniścaya-sūtra with **D 30** cf **Samtani**, "Fresh light on the interpretation of the thirty-two Mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇas of the Buddha," 1962. For a Khotanese fragment where a bodhisattva is encouraged to undertake those actions that will lead to being endowed with the corresponding mark in the future, cf **E Leumann**, *Buddhistische Literatur, Nordarisch und Deutsch*, 1920: 116-122.

emphasis marks the difference between the Buddha's explanation of these physical marks and the knowledge outsiders had of them.

### 1.2.3.2 The Lakkhaṇa Sutta (D 30) thus says:

Bhikshus, outside seers, too, remember these 32 marks of the great man,  
but they do not know:

"This (or that) mark has been obtained on account of the doing of this (or that) karma."<sup>17</sup>  
(D 30,1.3.4/3:145,18), SD 36.9

The Buddha then goes on to explain the kind of wholesome karma that he had performed or negative karma that he had abstained from, so that he was endowed with each of the 32 marks.

## 1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BRAHM'ĀYU SUTTA

### 1.3.1 Uttara's investigation of the Buddha

**1.3.1.1** A significant development in the Brahm'āyu Sutta is **Uttara's careful investigation of the Buddha's conduct**, shadowing him for 7 months [§8]. The purpose of his investigation is to ascertain whether the Buddha has all the 32 marks of the great man, and also whether the Buddha acts and speaks with moral integrity, reflecting his authentic embodiment of the marks.

On account of Uttara's diligence in investigating whether the Tathagata is "a buddha or not," he is said to be "**an investigator after the Buddha**" (*buddha, vīmamsaka*) (MA 3:371,11). Such an appellation refers to one who does not blindly follow a teacher or leader but who first ascertains that person's true goodness and wisdom.

**1.3.1.2** In the Buddha's presence, Uttara is able to verify 30 marks by his own observation, that is, except for the two "hidden" marks—those of his tongue and the "cloth-hidden." The Buddha then performs a feat of psychic wonder so that Uttara is able to verify these remaining two marks.<sup>18</sup> After following the Buddha for 7 months, Uttara is satisfied with the propriety of the Buddha's conduct. Uttara then returns to his teacher, Brahm'āyu, to give a detailed account of the Buddha's 32 marks and of various aspects of the Buddha's conduct.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.3.2 Brahm'āyu and the Buddha's 32 marks

**1.3.2.1** According to the Brahm'āyu Sutta and the individual Chinese translation [1.2.1.1], Brahm'āyu is so impressed on hearing Uttara's report on the Buddha that he spontaneously exults his homage to the Buddha.<sup>20</sup> In the Madhyama Āgama account, Uttara voices his wish to go forth under

<sup>17</sup> *Mahā, purisa, lakkhaṇāni bāhirakā pi isayo dhārenti, no ca kho te jānanti, imassa kammaṣa katattā idaṃ lakkhaṇaṃ paṭilabhatī ti* (D:Be 3:119,6 *kaṭattā*; D:Ce 3:240,8 *katattā imarṃ*; and D:Se 3:159,16: *katattā pe imarṃ*).

<sup>18</sup> T76 (T1.883c8) further enhances this feat of psychic wonder by describing that 5-coloured lights appear and circle thrice around the Buddha's body, a phenomenon that recurs in T76 (T1.884b21) in a description of how the Buddha would answer questions posed by his disciples.

<sup>19</sup> The versions differ on the duration during which Uttara follows the Buddha. **Brahm'āyu S §8** (M 2:135,23) says **7 months** (*satta māsaṇi*); according to Skt fragment SHT V 1148R2, **3 months**; the Chin versions: MĀ 161 (T1.686a13) **4 months**; and T76 (T1.883c14) **6 months**. Another difference is that in a Skt fragment and the 2 Chin versions, Uttara took his leave from the Buddha before departing, which is not mentioned in M 91.

<sup>20</sup> §23 (M 2:140,23) reports that Brahm'āyu thrice expresses his reverence for the Buddha (with the *namo tassa* formula); T76 (T1.884c16) says that he thrice bows down and takes refuge. T76 also notes that through his supernatural powers, the Buddha is aware of the brahmin's taking of refuge.

the Buddha. Brahm'āyu approves of Uttara's wish, so that Uttara returns to the Buddha and goes forth.<sup>21</sup>

On a later occasion, when the Buddha has come to the vicinity of Brahm'āyu's dwelling, Brahm'āyu visits the Buddha.<sup>22</sup> The three versions agree that Brahm'āyu sends one of his students ahead to announce his visit, which according to the Brahm'āyu Sutta and the individual Chinese translation, he does so as a matter of propriety. The Madhyama Āgama account, however, reports that Brahm'āyu has seen the great congregation that surrounds the Buddha and feels intimidated, hence he retreats to a nearby tree root and sends one of his students to announce his arrival.<sup>23</sup>

**1.3.2.2** The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its parallels agree in reporting that Brahm'āyu is able to see 30 of the Buddha's 32 marks of the great man, and requests in verse to be shown the remaining two. The Buddha readily acquiesces by displaying the two marks whose verification requires the Buddha's discretion.<sup>24</sup>

Having verified the 32 marks, Brahm'āyu inquires about the significance of various epithets that describe a spiritually accomplished person. The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its parallels show some minor differences on the epithets employed in this inquiry and in the Buddha's reply.<sup>25</sup> [§32.2 f]

According to all versions, Brahm'āyu asks about the significance of being **a true brahmin**.<sup>26</sup> Although this inquiry is found in all versions, only the Chinese versions give an explicit answer to this

<sup>21</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.687c7). Notably, according to MĀ 161 (T1.686a15), Uttara takes leave from the Buddha by addressing him as "Gotama," 瞿曇 *qú tán*, which suggests that he does not consider himself a disciple of the Buddha. Only when he approaches the Buddha again to go forth, MĀ 161 (T1.687c11), does he use the respectful address "Blessed One," 世尊 *shì zūn*. This is curious, since if Uttara has indeed been so inspired by the Buddha's qualities and deportment as to wish to go forth as a Buddhist monk, one would expect this inspiration to lead to a more respectful way of addressing the Buddha already when he is about to leave to report what he has seen to Brahm'āyu. However, it may also be that this passage is meant to show his more distant attitude while still being on the mission of inquiry given to him by his teacher Brahm'āyu, and only once he has received permission to go forth under the Buddha does he feel free to use "Blessed One" as the mode of address that expresses his new faith.

<sup>22</sup> §24 (M 2:140,31) and MĀ 161 (T1.687c15) note that the Buddha is staying in Makhā,deva's mango grove, where, according to **Makhā,deva S** (M 83/2:78,22) and its parallels, king Makhā,deva and his descendants had spent the final part of their lives in renunciation. On M 83, see Analayo 2011:466-474.

<sup>23</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.688a24). The 3 versions differ on the way the student Uttara is told to announce Brahm'āyu's visit. According to **MĀ 161** (T1.688a25), he is to inquire merely after the Buddha's health and announce Brahm'āyu's wish to come and visit, while according to **§26** (M 2:141,22) and **T76** (T1.885a4) it is part of his mission to inform the Buddha of the eminent status and the qualities of his teacher.

<sup>24</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.688c21) continues by reporting that the Buddha knows that Brahm'āyu is a sincere truth seeker and therefore decides to teach him "Abhidharma": "I would rather teach him the profound Abhidharma," 我寧可說彼甚深阿毘曇 *wǒ nìng kě shuō bǐ shēn shēn āpítán*. Yet, the exposition given by the Buddha to Brahm'āyu is a poetical description of what, according to the Buddha's teaching, are the implications of awakening, something that would not properly be called Abhidharma.

<sup>25</sup> **Brahm'āyu S** (M 91) lists 8 such epithets, while **MĀ 161** has 4 and **T76** 5. The 8 epithets in **§32** (M 2:144,12) are: a "[true] brahmin" (*brāhmaṇo*), one who has "attained (true) knowledge" (*veda,gū*), one who has the "3 knowledges" (*te,vijja*), one who is "a true scholar" (*sotthiya*), an "arhat (worthy)" (*arahato*), an "accomplished one" (*kevalī*); a "silent sage" (*muni*), and an "awakened one" (*buddho*). **MĀ 161** (T1.688c29) lists "[true] brahmin" 梵志 *fàn zhì*, one with the "threefold attainment" 三達 *sān dá*, one "without attachment" 無著 *wú zhuó*, and one "fully and totally awakened" 正盡覺 *zhèng jìn jué* (or, following a 聖 *shèng* variant that reads 真 *zhēn* instead of 盡 *jìn*, one "truly and perfectly awakened"). The epithets in **T76** (T1.885c1) are a "brahmin" 逝心 *shì xīn*, "[having attained] mastery" 通達 *tōng dá*, one "purified" 淨 *jìng*, one "appeased" 寂然 *jì rán*, and "buddha" 佛 *fó*. For a collation table of these epithets, see Analayo 2011: 543 Table 10.1.

<sup>26</sup> **§32** (M 2:144,12, **MĀ 161** (T1.688c29), and **T76** (T1.885c1). The cpd 逝心 *shì xīn* in T76 lit means "departed mind"; T76 (T1.883b11) says: "At that time there was a 逝心 called Brahm'āyu," and in T76 (T1.885a5), "the 逝心 Brahm'āyu is 120 years old," indicating that 逝心 stands for a "brahmin" (cf **PARK Jungnok**, "A new attribution of the authorship of T5 and T6 Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra," 2010:347). This is further supported by the fact that T76

inquiry. The Madhyama Āgama version explains that by overcoming evil and practising the holy life one deserves to be reckoned a “brahmin,”<sup>27</sup> while the individual translation [1.2.1.1] indicates that possession of the 3 knowledges makes one a “brahmin.”<sup>28</sup>

### 1.3.3 Brahm'āyu questions the Buddha

**1.3.3.1 The Brahm'āyu Sutta** (M 91) records that Brahm'āyu asks about the implication of being a sage (*muni*). Although this query is not found in the Madhyama Āgama version, the same discourse offers an explanation of *muni* similar to the Buddha's reply in M 91.<sup>29</sup> Thus it seems as if the Madhyama Āgama discourse may have lost Brahmāyū's inquiry after a sage (*muni*), while in the Brahm'āyu Sutta an explicit reply to what makes one a true brahmin appears to be missing,<sup>30</sup> so that in both versions the exchange (in verse) has apparently not been preserved in full.

(T1.883b22) introduces Uttara as “the 逝心 disciple”; cf T76 (T1.884c19+26), which lists the Buddha's visitors as “the king of the country, [his] ministers, 逝心 and householders.” Yet, T76 repeatedly uses the more common way of rendering brahmin as 梵志 *fàn zhì*; cf eg T76 (T1.885c1): “the 梵志 *fàn zhì* [Brahm'āyu] said”; T76 (T1.885c17): “the Buddha told the 梵志 [Brahm'āyu].” J Nattier, “The ten epithets of the Buddha in the translations of Zhi Qian 支謙,” 2003b:235, notes that “[V]ariety in translation terminology, often using multiple translations of a given term ... even within a single text” is a prominent characteristic of Zhi Qian's trs, which would explain why T76 has 2 modes of rendering “brahmin” side by side. The alternative rendering of 逝心 as “brahmin” is based on an etymology given in D 27/3:94,1: *pāpake akusale dhamme bāhentī ti kho ... brāhmaṇo*; in Dh 388: *bāhita, pāpo ti brāhmaṇo*; in U 1.5/4,8: *bāhitvā pāpake dhamme ... te ve lokasmiṃ brāhmaṇā* (U:Be 81,9; U:Se 78,1: *lokasmi*), and in Sn 519/3:6: *bāhetvā sabba, pāpakāni ... pavuccate (sa) brahmā* (Be-Sn 359,20: *bāhitvā*); ie, a [true] brahmin is one who discards evil. K R Norman, “The role of the layman according to the Jaina canon,” 1991c:275, explains that “in brahmanical Hinduism a brahman (<*br̥m̥h*, ‘to be strong’) was a brahman by birth, and was a kinsman of Brahmā,” in contrast to which “the Buddha ... by adopting a different etymology (< *br̥m̥h*, ‘to destroy’) ... was able to justify his view that a brahman was one who had destroyed evil”; on this “etymological” explanation, cf N Balbir, “Le discours étymologique dans l'hétérodoxie indienne,” 1991:133, K Bhattacharya, “Notes Bouddhiques,” *Journal Asiatique* 274,3, 1986:294, J Brough, *The Gāndhārī Dharmapada* 1962: 178, V Eltschinger, “Caste” et philosophie bouddhique. 2000:17, R Gombrich, *What the Buddha Thought*, 2009a: 181, A Mette, *Indische Kulturstiftungsberichte und ihr Verhältnis zur Zeitaltersage*, 1973:33, U Schneider, “Acht Etymologien aus dem Agganna-Sutta,” 1954: 578, O von Hinüber, “Linguistic Considerations on the Date of the Buddha,” 1995b: 188, and G von Simson, “Etymologie als Mittel ideologischer Auseinandersetzung, Bemerkungen zum Aggaññasutta des Dīghanikāya,” 1986:93. Thus, in the case of the expression used in T76, 逝 *shì* may render *bāheti*, “to discard, to keep away (from).” The use of 心 *xīn* is more difficult to explain; perhaps this is to render the *maṇa* component of *brāhmaṇa*, mistaken to be related to *manas*, “mind.” Alternatively, the idea may be that a true brahmin's “mind” has “departed from all evil.” Comy gives etym of “brahmin” as one who has “discarded evil,” explaining that the ref in §33 (M 2:144,20) to one who “knows the mind to be purified and free from lust,” *cittaṃ visuddhaṃ jānati, muttaṃ rāgehī ti*, ie, by “pushing away evil one is a brahmin,” *bāhita, pāpatā brāhmaṇo ti* (MA 3:397,24). A similar gloss is found in an ancient Indian comy to T76, of which Zhī Qian might have been aware. In fact, the same etym recurs in the other Chinese parallel to the present Sutta, MĀ 161 (T1.689a3), according to which “eradicating evil and unwholesome things ... by this, [one is] a brahmin,” 滅惡不善法 ... 以此為梵志 *miè è bùshàn fǎ ... yǐ cǐ wéi fàn zhì*. The same etym is found in Mahāvastu (Basak 1968: 237,16; Senart 1897:396,15: *bāhetvā sarvapāpakāni ... sa brahmā*, and in Śrāvākabhūmi (Shukla 1973: 340,13; Śrāvākabhūmi Study Group 2007:254,1) and T1579 (T30.447a12); cf S Baums, *A Gāndhārī Commentary on Early Buddhist Verses*, PhD thesis, U of Washington, 2009:337.

<sup>27</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.689a3); T1.689a8 offers a detailed description of “threefold attainment” (= 3 knowledges) and of being “without attachment” (= arhat).

<sup>28</sup> T76 (T1.885c3): “by attaining the 3 supernormal powers [one] is said to have become a brahmin,” 得三神足謂之逝心 *dé sān shénzú wèi zhī shì xīn*.

<sup>29</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.689a5) explains that by knowledge of the past and by eradicating ignorance one becomes a 牟尼 *mù ní*, similar to the explanation given for the equivalent term *muni* in §33 (M 2:144,19), an explanation found also in S 7.8/1:167,1 (= S2 194/1:357,10), S 7.13/1:175,22 (= S2 199/1:377,5), A 3.58/1:165,28, A 3.59/1:167,30, Dh 423, It 3.5.10/100,21, Sn 647/3.9 and Thī 63 f.

<sup>30</sup> According to MA 3:397,24, however, the inquiry regarding the brahmin is answered implicitly by reference to the purified mind in §33 (M 2:144,21).

In spite of these variations in terminology, in all versions Brahm'āyu goes from an examination of the marks of the great man to hearing the Buddha's explanation of what really defines the great man. This significant development highlights the Buddha's redefinition or re-evaluation of the concept of the "great man" (*mahā, purisa*).<sup>31</sup>

**1.3.3.2** According to all versions, Brahm'āyu is highly inspired by the Buddha's reply. While the Madhyama Āgama version only reports that he gets up and wants to worship the Buddha,<sup>32</sup> according to **the Brahm,āyu Sutta** and the individual Chinese translation, he actually kisses and caresses the Buddha's feet.<sup>33</sup> In all versions, Brahm'āyu's worship causes amazement among the assembly.

**1.3.3.3** The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its parallels report that the Buddha gives Brahm'āyu a **gradual teaching** that culminates in an exposition of the 4 noble truths, hearing which Brahm'āyu attains streamwinning.<sup>34</sup> Brahm'āyu then goes for refuge and invites the Buddha and the sangha for a meal the next day.<sup>35</sup> The Madhyama Āgama version reports that at the conclusion of the meal the Buddha utters a set of stanzas in praise of the superiority of a buddha,<sup>36</sup> a set of stanzas not found in **the Brahm'āyu Sutta** or in the individual Chinese translation [1.2.1.1].

<sup>31</sup> A similar re-evaluation can be seen in other Pali suttas. Thus, eg, **S 47.11**/5:158,14 defines the *mahā, purisa* as one whose mind is liberated, *vimutta, citta*. **A 4.35**/2:36,4: one who practises for the welfare of the many, has control over the mind, attains the 4 dhyanas, and has destroyed the influxes, deserves to be reckoned a *mahā, purisa*. **Dh 352**: one who bears his last body is a *mahā, purisa*. **Sn 1042**/5:3 one who has gone beyond craving is *mahā, purisa*. **Radich** 2007:313 holds such passages to be later than those where the *mahā, purisa* is depicted in terms of physical characteristics, since the above passages employ different terms and hence "nothing here gives the impression that we are dealing with a coherent ... conception of *mahāpurisa*; the impression is rather that in each case we see a more or less ad hoc appropriation of a valorised term, on the fly." This leads Radich (329) to assume "an 'ethical' reinterpretation of an originally corporeal notion." This conclusion fails to take into account that the above instances refer to the very same idea of a fully awakened one, only expressed in different terms. Moreover, a lack of stereotyping in orally transmitted material is actually a mark of *earliness and originality*, rather than an unequivocal sign of lateness.

<sup>32</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.689a13).

<sup>33</sup> **§34** (M 2:144,25) and T76 (T1.885c10). According to T76 he also sheds tears and proclaims his refuge-going. **Dhamma, cetiya S** (M 89) and **Kosala S 2** (A 10.30) similarly report king Pasenadi caressing and kissing the Buddha's feet, and then announcing his name twice. Pasenadi gives 10 reasons for this gesture of honour and love for the Buddha, but the items in the 2 lists differ (**M 89**/2:120,3; **A 10.30**/5:65,25). Cf M:H 2:xxv; Analayo 2011:511 n335.

<sup>34</sup> While **§36** (M 2:145,13 f) describes that he attains the Dharma-eye and **MĀ 161** (T1.689b23) that he has a personal vision of the 4 noble truths—both implying streamwinning—the description in **T76** (T1.885c28) is somewhat cryptic, but entails the same. T76 (T1.885c29) further indicates that Brahm'āyu's quick grasp is due to his observance of pure morality and respectful behaviour during past life encounters with past buddhas.

<sup>35</sup> On his taking of the 5 precepts in T76 (T1.886a9), cf **Park Jungnok** 2010:350.

<sup>36</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.689c14). A similar set of the Buddha's stanzas at the end of a meal is found in **Sn 568** f/3.7 and in **V 1**:246,33, with the difference that, while the Pali stanzas end in praising the sangha as the most profitable field of merit, in MĀ 161 the final stanza reckons the Buddha as supreme among all beings. **M Anesaki**, "Correspondence, Chinese Āgamas and Pāli Nikāyas," 1901:898 notes that this set of stanzas recurs frequently in the Āgamas. Although these stanzas are absent from the Chin counterpart to Sn 568 f/3.7, EĀ 49.6 (T2.800b19), similar stanzas occur in other Ekottarika Āgama discourses, eg EĀ 18.4 (T2.589b3), EĀ 26.6 (T2.637c2), EĀ 33.2 (T2.684a9), EĀ 34.5 (T2.694c13), EĀ 37.10 (T2.717a6), EĀ 44.9 (T2.768b27), and EĀ 45.7 (T2.775b21). A similar set of stanzas recurs in, eg SA2 52 (T2.391b17) (tr **Bingenheimer**, "More suttas on Sakka and why the Shorter Chinese Saṃyukta Āgama should not be attributed to the Kasyapiya school," 2009:150) and SĀ2 259 (T2.465a26, tr **CHOONG Mun-keat**, "A comparison of the Pali and Chinese versions of the Brāhmaṇa Saṃyutta, a collection of early Buddhist discourses on the priestly Brāhmaṇas," 2009a:377 n21), in the \*Karmavibhaṅgopadesa (**S Lévi**, *Mahākarmavibhaṅga (La Grande Classification des Actes) et Karmavibhaṅgopadeśa*, 1932a:156,1), in **Mahavastu** (Basak 1968:255,18; Senart 1897:426,6), in Saṅghabhedavastu (Gnoli, *The Gilgit Manuscript of the Saṅghabhedavastu*, part 2, 1978a:29,15, 253,15), and in Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, **T1435** (T23.192b16); for further refs and a detailed study of various versions of this stanza cf **P Skilling**, "On the Agnihotramukhā Yajñāḥ Verses," 2003.

**1.3.3.4** The three versions agree that not long after this meal Brahm'āyu passes away as a non-returner.<sup>37</sup> **The Brahmā'yu Sutta** and the individual Chinese translation conclude with the monks' rejoicing, to which the Madhyama Āgama version adds that Brahm'āyu (presumably earlier) also rejoices in the Buddha's teaching.<sup>38</sup>

## 1.4 BRAHMINS ADDRESSING THE BUDDHA AS *BHO*

### 1.4.1 Brahmin appellative *bho*

**1.4.1.1 The vocative *bho***<sup>39</sup> is commonly used by the brahmins in the Buddha's time to address one another as equals. The brahmins thus address the Buddha as *bho* as a gesture of taking him as an equal.<sup>40</sup> It is also possible that this respect for the Buddha is because he comes directly from the leading family of the elite Sakya kshatriya clan, Gotama.<sup>41</sup> Ironically, since the Buddha is not a brahmin, this mode of address seems to serve as polite reminder of his status (in the eyes of the brahmins), that he is an equal, nothing more.

As a rule, the brahmins address the Buddha as *bho gotama* when asking for and receiving teachings, and during refuge-going. Hence, the address form, *bho gotama*, or *bho*, for short, is a gesture of deep respect for the Buddha as a teacher, especially an awakened individual.<sup>42</sup> In the case of the brahmin Brahm'āyu, his addressing the Buddha as *bho gotama* also signifies his acceptance of the Buddha as the "great man" (*mahā, purisa*).

**1.4.1.2** On the other hand, when a brahmin disapproves of the Buddha, the brahmin would address the Buddha simply as *samaṇa*, "recluse," as in **the Asur'indaka Sutta** (S 7.3). The youngest of the Bhāra, dvāja brothers, Asur'indaka, angry that a brahmin of the Bhāra, dvāja clan has gone forth under the Buddha, approaches the Buddha and abuses him with harsh words, addressing him as *samaṇa*. When the Buddha calmly replies to him that "Patient endurance is true victory," Asur'indaka, reminded of his own dignity and the Buddha's virtue, at once respectfully addresses the Buddha as "master Gotama" (*bho gotama*).<sup>43</sup>

**1.4.1.3** In a humorous development, the Buddha, says **the Udaya Sutta** (S 7.12), approaches the brahmin Udaya for alms for 3 days in a row. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> occasion, the annoyed brahmin, complains to the Buddha, "This nuisance of the ascetic Gotama (*samaṇo gotamo*) keeps coming again and again!" The Buddha then, seeing the opportunity for a Dharma lesson, utters 4 quatrains mentioning "again and again" (*puna-p, punaṃ*) 14 times, reflecting on the samsaric cycle, ending with the lines: "On the

<sup>37</sup> §39 (M 2:146,16-18), MĀ 161 (T1.690a2), and T76 (T1.886a19).

<sup>38</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.690a4). **Тичи Minh Chau** 1964:207 expresses his puzzlement at this conclusion and adds that "this shows a great discrepancy" as Brahm'āyu "was already reported dead in the preceding paragraph" (312). Perhaps Brahm'āyu's joyful reaction comes originally right after the teaching given to him by the Buddha. In the course of transmission, the Sutta is given a more extensive conclusion in order to report what follows, the passage on the joyful response of the listeners (incl Brahm'āyu) would then have shifted to the end of the Sutta, without the reciters noticing that this may give the impression that Brahm'āyu rejoices in hearing the news of his own death! [1.4.2.3]. Cf Analayo 2011:209 n31.

<sup>39</sup> *Bho* is vocative of *bhavant*, "sir." The Buddha is recorded to have certain brahmins as being mere *bho, vādī*, "sir callers" (Sn 620), esp those who are worldly (*sakiñcana*) (Dh 396).

<sup>40</sup> A wild-card search of the CSCD using "bho gotama" yielded a total of 188 hits for Sīla-k, khandha, vaggā of Dīgha Nikāya alone, with smaller numbers of hits throughout the other Nikāyas.

<sup>41</sup> N **Wagle**, *Society at the Time of the Buddha*, Bombay, 1966:46 (also 46-50, 54, 75 f, 244-300 tables, 399 cases of modes of address, etc); 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 1995:49 (also 49-52, 70-72, 103).

<sup>42</sup> See eg **M 30/1:205,4**, **60/1:1:413,21**, **93/2:157,18**, **95/2:177,11**, **96/2:184,21**, **99/2:208,10**, **100/2:213,9**, **107/3:7,2**, and **135/3:206,26**.

<sup>43</sup> S 7.3/1:163 f.

path to no more rebirth, | one is not born again and again!”<sup>44</sup> The delighted brahmin gladly approves, addressing the Buddha as *bho gotama*.<sup>45</sup>

### **1.4.2 Addressing the Buddha as *bho* and more**

**1.4.2.1 The Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta** (M 27) records the brahmin Jāṇussoṇi being instructed on how to track a large elephant footprint so as to be sure to see the noble tusker living in all its secluded glory in the elephant forest. Similarly, the path of freedom should be carefully tracked so that one attains true freedom.

Jāṇussoṇi is impressed and goes for refuge. However, even after taking refuge, he keeps on addressing the Buddha by his clan name, Gotama.<sup>46</sup> This is the practice by brahmins as recorded in other Majjhima suttas; they continue to use *bho gotama* even when they take refuge as lay followers.

**1.4.2.2** A Chinese translation of the Cūḷa Hatthi, padôpama Sutta, **MĀ 146** (T1.658a22), preserves an unconventional development. Instead of continuing to address the Buddha by his clan, Gotama, 瞿曇 *qú tán*, when a brahmin takes refuge as a lay follower, he switches to the honorific “Blessed One,” *bhagavā* (T1.658a23): 世尊 *shìzūn* (world honoured one). This is one of the very rare occasions we have on record when a brahmin addresses the Buddha *both* conventionally as *bho gotama* and traditionally as *bhagavā*.

Like **M 27** [1.4.2.1], **the Bhaya Bherava Sutta** (M 4) reports that Jāṇussoṇi goes for refuge (again) by using the address *bho gotama*,<sup>47</sup> whereas in the Chinese parallel, **EĀ 31.1** (T2.666c27),<sup>48</sup> he uses the vocative “Blessed One” (*bhagavā*), followed, however, in T2.666c29 by Jāṇussoṇi reverting to the name Gotama. Perhaps the occurrences of the address “Blessed One” in MĀ 146 and in EĀ 31.1 could be due to the reciters or translators assuming that someone who takes refuge must be using an honorific form of address like “Blessed One.”<sup>49</sup>

Arguably, we may also conclude that both MĀ 146 and EĀ 31.1 are simply translating the original Prakrit texts which record those divergent modes of address by Jāṇussoṇi. Since the suttas recorded that Jāṇussoṇi goes for refuge at least 12 times [above], it is possible that either of these suttas—where Jāṇussoṇi addresses the Buddha traditionally as *bhagavā*—records his full and final refuge-going.<sup>50</sup>

**1.4.2.3** Another difference is that **MĀ 146** (T1.658a26) concludes with *both* the brahmins Jāṇussoṇi and Pilotika rejoicing in the Buddha’s exposition, whereas according to **M 27/1:184,10** only Jāṇussoṇi rejoices in the Buddha’s exposition. The narration in both versions gives the impression that Jāṇussoṇi has come alone to visit the Buddha, whereas Pilotika has already received an inspiring teaching from the Buddha and is on his way back to Sāvattṭhī when he meets Jāṇussoṇi. Thus the

<sup>44</sup> *Pakaṭṭhako yaṃ samaṇo gotamo punappunam āgacchatī ti. Pakaṭṭhaka*, from Skt *prakaṣaka*, “harasser, disquieter (name of the god of love),” from *prakaṣ*, to trouble, to disturb” (SED 654cd).

<sup>45</sup> S 7.12/1:173 f (SD 16.13(1)).

<sup>46</sup> M 27,27/1:184,11 (SD 40a.5).

<sup>47</sup> M 4/1:24,2 (SD 44.3). Jāṇussoṇi, in fact, goes for refuge at least 12 times, and every time addresses the Buddha as *bho gotama*: see SD 44.3 (2.4).

<sup>48</sup> Orig as Analayo, “Living in Seclusion and Facing Fear –The Ekottarika-āgama Counterpart to the Bhaya Bherava-sutta,” in *Buddhism as a Stronghold of Free Thinking? Social, Ethical and Philosophical Dimensions of Buddhism*, (edd) S C A Fay & I M Bruckner, Nuestdal: Edition Ubuntu, 2011:203-231. Analayo, *Ekottarika-āgama Studies*, Taipei: Dharma Drum, (EĀ 31.1 §35), 2016:9-30 (24).

<sup>49</sup> SHT I 164c+g, Waldschmidt et al, 1965:93 (identified by Schlingloff 1967:421), SHT IV 32 folio 33–41, Sander & Waldschmidt 1980: 30-134, SHT IV 165 folio 15–16, Sander & Waldschmidt 1980:190f, SHT IV 500 folio 4, Sander & Waldschmidt 1980: 22, and SHT IX 2401, Bechert and Wille 2004:195. A ref to the Sutta as (*bhaya*)-[*bh*]airavaparyāye is found in SHT I 36 A2, Waldschmidt et al, 1965:27, and in SHT IV 36 V2, Sander & Waldschmidt 1980:259.

<sup>50</sup> On the occasions for Jāṇussoṇi’s Dharma instructions and refuge-going, see SD 44.3 (2.4.1).

conclusion in **M 27** fits the situation better. It seems to be a recurrent pattern in Madhyama Āgama discourses that the conclusion reports the joy of those who at this juncture have already left [1.4.1.3].

### 1.4.3 Special usages of *bho*

**1.4.3.1 The Akkosaka Bhāra,dvāja Sutta** (S 7.2) records a unique case where a brahmin—Akkosaka Bhāra,dvāja—joyfully goes for refuge by addressing the Buddha as *bho gotama*. Then, when requesting for the going forth and ordination, he uses the form of address, *bhante*, “venerable sir.”<sup>51</sup> In the other records of refuge-going, the candidate presumably always uses the traditional mode of address, *bhante*, throughout. As we have noted, despite the uniqueness of Akkosaka’s situation, the usage of *bho gotama* by a brahmin is still a gesture of respect for the Buddha. [1.4.1.1]

**1.4.3.2** The brahmin **Brahm'āyu** too serves as a noteworthy example for the use of *bho gotama*, who, in **§37** (M 91/2:145,19) uses the address *bho gotama* even after he has prostrated before the Buddha and kissed the Buddha’s feet, an expression of deep humility that causes an uproar in the assembly witnessing this act. In fact, Brahm,āyu is by then already a streamwinner [§36 f].

## 2 The great man: His marks and traits

### **2.1 THE BUDDHA’S 32 MARKS** [§9]

#### **2.1.0 The 32 marks of the great man**<sup>52</sup>

Sources: Mahā’padāna Sutta (D 14,1.32-33/2:16-19, 136 f), SD 49.8; Lakkhaṇa Sutta (D 30,1.2-2/3:142-145) + SD 36.9 (3.2.3); Brahm'āyu Sutta (M 91,9/2:136 f), SD 63.8.

#### THE BUDDHA’S LIMBS [2.1.1]

- (1) His feet has a level tread (*suppatiṭṭhita,pāda*). [§1.4]
- (2) His soles have wheels, each with a thousand spokes, all rimmed and hubbed, complete in every way (*heṭṭhā,pāda,talesu cakkāni jātāni honti saḥassārāni sa,nemikāni sa,nābhikāni sabbā,kāra,-paripūrāni*). [§1.7]
- (3) He has projecting heels (*āyata,paṇhi*). [§1.10]
- (4) He has long fingers (*dīgh'aṅguli*). [§1.10]
- (5) He has soft, tender hands and feet (*mudu,taluna,hattha,pāda*). [§1.16]
- (6) His fingers and toes are net-like [reticulated, evenly spaced] (*jāla,hattha,pāda*). [§1.16]
- (7) His ankles are high-raised (*ussaṅkha,pāda*). [§1.19]
- (8) His legs are shapely like an antelope’s (*eṇi,jaṅgha*). [§1.22]
- (9) Without stooping, he can touch and rub his knees with both hands (*ṭhitako'va anonamanto ubhohi pāṇitalehi*). [§2.1]
- (10) His male organ is covered with a sheath (*kos'ohita,vattha,guyha*). [§1.31] [2.1.2]

#### THE BUDDHA’S SKIN, HAIR AND COMPLEXION [2.1.3]

- (11) He has a golden complexion, with skin like gold (*suvanṇa,vaṇṇo hoti kañcana,sannibha-t,taca*). [§1.18]
- (12) His skin is so delicate and smooth that neither dust nor dirt settles on it (*sukhuma-c,chavi hoti, sukhumattā chaviyā rajo,jallaṁ kāye na upalimpati*). [§1.25]
- (13) His body-hairs are separate, one to a pore (*ek'eka,loma hoti, ek'ekāni lomāni loma,kūpesu jātāni*). [§2.16]

<sup>51</sup> *Evaṁ vutte, akkosaka,bhāradvājo brāhmaṇo bhagavantaṁ etad avoca, “abhikkantaṁ, bho gotama ... pe ... eṣāhaṁ bhavantaṁ gotamaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi dhammañ ca bhikkhu,saṅghaṁ ca. Labheyyāhaṁ, bhante, bhoto gotamassa santike pabbajjaṁ, labheyyaṁ upasampadan ti.* (S 7.2/1:163)

<sup>52</sup> For a full list of the Buddha’s 32 marks, see SD 36.9 (4.1); for the 80 minor marks, see (4.3).

- (14) They grow upwards, bluish-black like collyrium, curling rightwise (*uddh,agga,lomo hoti, uddh,-aggāni lomāni jātāni nīlāni añjana,vaṇṇāni kuṇḍalā,vaṭṭāni dakkhiṇā,vaṭṭaka,jātāni*). [§1.19]

#### THE BUDDHA'S PHYSIQUE [2.1.4]

- (15) His body is perfectly straight (like Brahmā's) (*brahm'uju,gatta*). [§1.10]  
 (16) He has seven convex surfaces (on his hands, feet, shoulders, and trunk) (*satt'ussada*). [§1.13]  
 (17) The front of his body is like a lion's (*sīha,pubb'addha,kāya*). [§2.4]  
 (18) There is no furrow between his shoulders (*cit'antar'amsa*). [§2.4]  
 (19) His proportions are like a banyan tree: his arm-span equals his height (*nigrodha,parimaṇḍalo hoti, yāvataṅkassa kāyo tāvataṅkassa vyāma yāvataṅkassa vyāmo tāvataṅkassa kāyo*) [§2.1]  
 (20) The curve of his shoulders is evenly rounded (*sama,vatta-k,khandha*). [§2.4]

#### HIS MOUTH, JAW AND THROAT [2.1.5.1 F]

- (21) He has a perfect sense of taste (*ras'agga-s-aggī*). [§2.7]  
 (22) His jaw is like a lion's (*sīha,hanu*). [§2.25]  
 (23) He has 40 teeth (*cattālīsa,danta*). [§2.19]  
 (24) His teeth are even (*sama,danta*). [§2.18]  
 (25) There are no spaces between his teeth (they are perfect close-set) (*aviraḷa,danta*). [§2.19]  
 (26) His teeth are large and brilliantly white (*susukka,dāṭha*). [§2.18]  
 (27) His tongue is very wide, long and flexible (able to touch his forehead) (*pahūta,jivha*). [§2.22] [2.1.2]  
 (28) His perfect voice (like Brahmā's) is sweet like the sound of a karavīka [Indian cuckoo] (*brahma-s,-saro hoti karavīka,bhāṇi*). [§2.22]

#### THE BUDDHA'S FACE AND HEAD [2.1.5.3-2.1.5.5]

- (29) His eyes are a deep bluish-black (*abhinīla-netta*). [§2.10]  
 (30) His eye-lashes are (long and shapely) like a cow's (*go,pakkhuma*). [§2.10]  
 (31) The hair between his eyes-brows is white soft like cotton-down (*uṇṇā bhamuk'antare jātā hoti, odātā mudu,tūla,sannibhā*). [§2.16]  
 (32) His head is shaped like a royal turban (*uṇhīsa,sīsa*). [§2.13]

### **2.1.1 The Buddha's limbs (Marks nos. 1-9)**

**2.1.1.1** According to the description of these 32 marks in **the Brahm'āyu Sutta** [§9] and its parallels, a thousand-spoked wheel is found on the sole of each of the Buddha's feet.<sup>53</sup> A description of the feet of the Buddha in **the Mahāvastu** of the Mahāsaṅghika-Lokottaravāda Vinaya indicates that his soles are also decorated with swastikas.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> THICH MINH CHAU 1964:168 suggests that the preceding quality, according to which the Buddha sets his feet firmly on the ground, is not found in Madhyama Āgama version. The description of the 32 marks in **MĀ 161** (T1.686a25-c15) combines several marks into one, so that its actual listing covers only 28, which can easily lead to overlooking a quality when comparing the list in MĀ 161 with its counterparts in M 91 or T76. This may be why Minh Chau apparently did not notice the first quality in MĀ 161 (T1.686a25): 足安平立 *zú ān píng lì*, which corresponds to the 1<sup>st</sup> mark [§9 M 2:136,6]: *suppatitṭhita,pādo*, and in **T76** (T1.883c23): 足下安平正 *zú xià ān píng zhèng*, all of which describe the level tread of the Buddha's feet; on which cf **F Weller**, *Der chinesische Dharmasaṅgraha, Mit einem Anhang über das Lakkhaṇasuttanta des Dīghanikāya*, 1923:174 n27. **J Strong**, *The Buddha, A Short Biography*, 2001:41 explains the significance of this characteristic to be that "just as a cakravartin ... will encounter no obstacles or opposition as he conquers the world, so too a buddha will find none who can oppose him as he spreads the Dharma." Regarding another and presumably in some way related quality of the feet, *ussaṅkha,pāda*, judging from **W B Bollée**, "A note on evil and its conquest from Indra to Buddha," 1977a:375, the arches of the feet might represent having stepped on evil and thereby had overcome it.

<sup>54</sup> **Mahāvastu**: Basak 1965:415,16; Senart 1890:304,16: *pādatalā jata svastikairupasobhitāḥ*. On the marks on the Buddha's feet and their representations cf, eg, **Cicuzza** 2011; **A M Quagliotti**, *Buddhapadas*, 1998; **P Skill-ing**, "Symbols on the body, feet, and hands of a Buddha, Part I, Lists," **1992b** and "Symbols on the body, feet, and hands of a Buddha, Part II, Short Lists," **1996b**.

At a later point of its treatment, the individual translation [1.2.1.1] reports that the wheel-mark produced by the Buddha's footprints would continue to shine for 7 days and become the object of people's veneration.<sup>55</sup>

**The (Catukka) Doṇa Sutta** (A 4.36) and its Chinese and Gāndhārī parallels describe a brahmin's reaction on seeing the Buddha's footprints. This brahmin sees the imprint of the wheel-mark in the Buddha's footprints and is awe-struck, wondering what kind of a divine being could have such footprints. This motivates him to follow the footsteps until he comes to the Buddha's presence, who then teaches this brahmin on the nature of a buddha.<sup>56</sup>

**2.1.1.2** Another story related to the wheel-mark on the Buddha's feet is found in **the Saṅgha-bhedavastu** of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda Vinaya. This account says that after Ajātasattu usurps the throne, Devadatta approached him and requests to be recognized as the sangha leader, that is, the Buddha's successor. Ajātasattu replies that this is not possible, as Devadatta does not have wheel-marks on the soles of his feet.

This prompts Devadatta to approach a smith and have wheel-marks burnt onto his feet.<sup>57</sup> The wheel-mark on the Buddha's feet also play a central role in early Buddhist iconography, which initially did not depict the Buddha in human form but aniconically,<sup>58</sup> that is, symbolically indicate his presence by various means, one of these being footprints marked with a wheel.

**2.1.1.3** When describing **the length and softness** of the Buddha's hands and feet, the Pali tradition notes that his fingers and toes are "net-like."<sup>59</sup> The commentary on this characteristic draws attention to a Vinaya regulation, according to which someone whose fingers and toes are webbed together by skin should not be ordained.<sup>60</sup>

The commentary then concludes that the reference to the Buddha's "netted" fingers and toes should not be taken literally, but should be understood to imply that his feet and hands are marked with lines.<sup>61</sup> In fact, even though the Buddha is never formally ordained, it would be curious to represent him with a physical peculiarity that would bar a prospective candidate from ordination.

<sup>55</sup> T76 (T1.884a19), which actually reads 足不踏 *zú bù dǎo*, where the 不 *bù*, "no, not," could be a scribal error for 下 *xià*, "down," or else the idea could be that the wheel-imprints appeared without the Buddha's feet even touching the ground (an idea found, eg, in T807 (T17.751c6), cf P Harrison, "Some reflections on the personality of the Buddha," 1995:4.

<sup>56</sup> A 4.36 (2:37,26), SD 36.13; SĀ 101 (T2.28a23), SĀ2 267 (T2.467a29), and the British Library **Kharoṣṭhī fragment** 12 line 4 in M Allon, *Three Gāndhārī Ekottarikāgama-Type Sūtras, British Library Kharoṣṭhī Fragments 12 and 14*, Gandharan Buddhist Texts 2), U of Washington P, 2001:120. Another parallel, EĀ 38.3 (T2,717c21), does not mention the wheel sign, as it only reports that the brahmin sees that the Buddha's footprints are "excellent," 妙 *miào*. Wimalaratana 1994:138, notes that the wheel symbol as a mark of divine power is also found "on the hand of Visnu figures"; cf also P Horsch, "The wheel, An Indian pattern of world-interpretation," *Visvabharati*, 1957:73. K E Neumann, *Die Reden des Buddha*, Herrnschrot, 1896:1114 n242 interprets the thousand-spoke wheel to refer to the imprint left by the heel on dusty or wet ground; for a similar suggestion cf E Senart, *Essai sur la légende du Buddha, Son caractère et ses origines*, Paris, 1882b:90.

<sup>57</sup> Gnoli 1978a:165,3.

<sup>58</sup> On aniconism, see eg arguments put forth in V Dehejia, "Aniconism and the multivalence of emblems," 1991, and R Linrothe, "Inquiries into the origin of the Buddha image, a review," 1993.

<sup>59</sup> 99 (6) M 2:136,13: *jāla,hattha,pādo*. A listing of the marks of Mahāvīra in the Uvavāyīya 16 (E Leumann, *Das Aupapātika Sūtra*, 1883:30,6, similarly speaks of *jāla,paṇī*).

<sup>60</sup> V 1:91,11: *na phaṇa,hatthako pabbājetabbo* (reading supplemented, as Ee has abbreviated this part); cf also V:H 1:321 n2.

<sup>61</sup> MA 3:376,17. Wimalaratana 1994:89 explains that, since, according to another characteristic the fingers are of equal length, "the lines running across the fingers must be parallel," concluding that "the clear cut parallel lines running on the palms and toes would have shown as if the fingers were connected to each other." Instead of lines on the surface of the palm, according to Coomaraswamy ("The 'webbed finger' of the Buddha," 1931:21), the *jāla* could represent "a perfection of form demonstrated by the appearance of the reddish lines of light that may be seen between the parallel fingers when the hand is held up to the light ... such lines are

The Madhyama Āgama version follows a more literal interpretation of this quality, as it compares the Buddha's netted fingers and toes to a goose's feet.<sup>62</sup> This image suggests that the Buddha's fingers and toes are connected to each other through skin or membrane. The same idea recurs also in **the Divyāvadāna**,<sup>63</sup> **the Lalitavistara**,<sup>64</sup> and **the Mahāvastu**,<sup>65</sup> which describe that the fingers and toes are "connected" by a net.<sup>66</sup>

Several scholars have suggested that such an interpretation could have arisen from a misunderstanding of a feature found on Buddha statues, as sculpture makers tend to weld fingers and toes together so that they do not break off.<sup>67</sup>

**2.1.1.4** According to the Brahm'āyu Sutta and its parallels, when the Buddha stands erect he is able to touch and stroke his knees with the palms of his hands.<sup>68</sup> This characteristic would require

only ... seen when the fingers are regular (*eka-p, pamāṇā*) as well as delicate and long (which other *lakkhaṇas* require), if the joints are swollen, there will be places where the fingers are too closely pressed together to allow ... the passage of any light at all, and other spaces where the fingers are not quite in contact, and only clear daylight can be seen between the fingers. Hence the *jāla, lakkhaṇa* implies after all nothing but a perfection of form of the fingers." For critical remarks on this interpretation, cf J N **Banerjea**, "The 'webbed fingers' of Buddha" (2), 1931b. **Senart** 1882b:146 interprets this sign as orig referring to a form of luminescence of the hands and feet.

<sup>62</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.686b7): 沙門瞿曇手足網縷, 猶如鴈王 *shāmén qútán shǒuzú wǎng màn, yóurú yàn wáng*. The goose imagery recurs in **MĀ 59** (T1.493c27), paralleling a list of the 32 marks in **D 30/3:143,18**, in **DĀ 1** (T1.5b1), paralleling a list of the 32 marks in **D 14/2:17,23**, and in **Saṅghabhedavastu** (Gnoli 1977:50,8); for further occurrences cf E **Lamotte**, *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse de Nagarjuna* vol 1, 1944:274 n1; for a fig usage of the goose imagery in relation to the Buddha cf **Divyāvadāna** (Cowell 1886:148,12; Vaidya 1999:91,31). R **Regnier**, "Les mains du Buddha dans la légende et dans l'iconographie de l'Inde ancienne," 1997:576 notes that in ancient Indian literature the *hamsa* stands for nobility, making it only natural that characteristics of this animal are attr to a venerated person; cf detailed study by J P **Vogel**, *The Goose in Indian Literature and Art*, 1962. According to \*Mahāprajñāpāramitā-(upadeśa)śāstra, **T1509** (T25.90b9), this characteristic is only visible when the fingers are stretched apart, 張指則現, 不張則不現 *zhāng zhǐ zé xiàn, bù zhāng zé bú xiàn*, tr **Lamotte** 1944:273: "quand il écarte les doigts, la membrane apparaît; quand il n'écarte pas les doigts elle n'apparaît pas" ["when he spreads his fingers, the membrane appears; when he does not spread his fingers, it does not appear"]. This expl suggests the possibility that perhaps this characteristic refers only to the connecting skin found at the base of the fingers, as suggested by **Neumann** 1896:1146 n478. In the case of the Buddha, this skin may have been held to have differed from that of ordinary humans, perhaps being more prominent, so as to warrant mention as a special characteristic.

<sup>63</sup> Cowell 1886:56,21; Vaidya 1999:34,22.

<sup>64</sup> Lefmann 1902:318,14; Vaidya 1958b:232,25: *jālāvitānāvanaddha*.

<sup>65</sup> Senart 1890 vol 1:304,14: *jālāvitānāddha*; Basak 1965 vol 2:415,14.

<sup>66</sup> See §21.2 n "full"; cf also **Wimalaratana** 1994:87.

<sup>67</sup> J N **Banerjea**, "The 'webbed fingers' of Buddha" (1), 1930:725, examines this feature in the light of early Indian sculptures and concludes that the idea that the Buddha had a sort of skin between his fingers and toes is due to being misled by "a simple craftsman's device," cf A **Foucher**, *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra* vol 2, 1918:308, and **Lamotte**, "La légende du Buddha," 1946:66. J E van **Lohuizen-de Leeuw**, *The "Scythian" Period*, 1995:214 notes that the same characteristic can be found in painted Buddha images from 2<sup>nd</sup> cent CE. As in the case of paintings, the fingers would not need any support to prevent breaking off; this indicates that by that time the Buddha was indeed thought to have had some type of skin or web between his fingers. W F **Stutterheim**, "Le jālalakṣaṇa de l'image du Bouddha," 1929:235, quotes a passage from Kālidāsa in support of the hypothesis that the *jāla* characteristic refers to reddish lines of light seen between parallel fingers of the hand held against the sun (cf **Coomaraswamy** 1931:21 n19) [2.1.1.3 n "marked with lines"], and suggests that the connection between the fingers to be seen on sculptures and painted images could be an attempt to represent the effect created by these reddish lines of light.

<sup>68</sup> **§9 (9)** M 2:136,15: *ṭhitako kho pana so bhavaṃ gotamo anoṇamanto ubhohi pāṇitalehi jaṇṇukāni parimasati parimajjati* (M:Be 2:337,7, M:Ce 2:580,14 and M:Se 2:532,16 *anoṇamanto*; Ce *ṭhitako va*; Se *jannukāni*), **MĀ 161** (T1.686b20) 身不曲者, 平立伸手以摩其膝 *shēn bù qū zhě, píng lì shēn shǒu yǐ mó qí xī*, "standing straight without bending the body, stretching the hands out [they] rub the knee(s)," and **T76** (T1.884a2) 平住兩手摩膝 *píng zhù liǎng shǒu mó xī*: "standing straight both hands rub the knee(s)"; cf Mahāvādāna Sūtra fragment 420a-

disproportionally long arms and does not seem to be compatible with another of the 32 marks, that is, the height of the Buddha's body equals the span of his arms.<sup>69</sup>

Historically, it appears that the Buddha has never been iconographically represented in this manner. One exception is perhaps the Chinese Mahāyāna image of Amitābha Buddha, who is often depicted with arms whose finger-tips touch the knees.<sup>70</sup> The Amitabha Sutra of Pure Land Buddhism also speaks of Amitabha's "**long, broad tongue** covering everywhere in the three thousandfold world systems."<sup>71</sup> This symbolically means that the Dharma pervades the whole cosmos.

**2.1.1.5** Also in the ancient Indian oral tradition, we can imagine the notion of the Buddha having extraordinarily long arms symbolizes his great compassion. In popular Indian religious lore, such long arms are said to be *ajanubahu*,<sup>72</sup> a Sanskrit term describing a person whose arms are so long that their fingers touch their knees while standing. In popular Indian culture, this physical trait is often attributed to sacred or powerful figures such as gods, saints, kings, and great warriors like Rama and Krishna.<sup>73</sup>

## **2.1.2 The Buddha's "hidden" marks (Marks nos. 10 & 27)**

**2.1.2.1** Two of the 32 marks—the **sheathed cloth-hidden (male organ)**<sup>74</sup> and the **long tongue** [2.1.1.4]—are not perceptible in themselves, but require an act of demonstration by the Buddha. Regarding these demonstrations, it already strikes an odd note for the Buddha to stick out his tongue [2.1.1.4], but for him to *show off his genitals* seems even more bizarre.

The Brahm'āyu Sutta describes the concealed nature of **the Buddha's male organ**, a quality the Madhyama Āgama version compares to that of a horse.<sup>75</sup> This is one of the two qualities the Buddha

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R2-3 (Fukita 2003:81 (95.2 + 95.3)) which has preserved: (*ma*)*ārjati parimārjati*; Waldschmidt 1953:45 [*m*]ārjati *pari*[*mārjati*]. DĀ 1 (T1.5b5, parallel to D 14), says 平立垂手過膝 *píng lì chuí shǒu guò xī*, when standing straight, the hanging hands go past the knee(s).

<sup>69</sup> §9 (19) M 2:136,27: *yāvata, kvassa kāyo tāvata, kvassa vyāmo, yāvatakvassa vyāmo tāvatakvassa kāyo*, an incompatibility pointed out by E Kramrisch, "Emblems of the universal being," 1935:164 n2. Wimalaratana 1994:94 notes that "in brahminical literature ... long arms signify heroism ... and leadership."

<sup>70</sup> See eg this gilt-bronze figure of Amitabha Buddha, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> cent [Sotheby]. 15 Oct 2025.

<sup>71</sup> "The Amitabha Sutra," Fo Guang Shan International Translation Center, Hacienda Heights, CA, 2017:31.

<sup>72</sup> Termed *paṭṭurubāhatā* in Daśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā, "The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines," 2018, 2025: Glossary g109 [84,000] 15 Oct 2025.

<sup>73</sup> See Wikipedia: [ajanubahu](#). 15 Oct 2025.

<sup>74</sup> *Kos'ohita, vattha, guyho hoti* (D 40,1.2.2.(10)/3:143,23). See foll.

<sup>75</sup> §9 (10) M 2:136,17: *kos'ohita, vattha, guyho* (on the term: F Sferra, "Appendix, Kośagatavastiguhyatā," 2008), rendered in MĀ 161 (T1.686b16) and T76 (T1.883c26) as 陰馬藏, *yīn mǎ cáng*, an expression used also in DĀ 1 (T1.5b5), parallel to an occurrence of the same mark in D 14/2:17,28 (A Hirakawa, *Buddhist Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary*, 1997:1282, gives *kosa, gata, vasti, guyhata* for 馬藏相 *mǎ cáng xiàng*), to which MĀ 161 (T1.686-b16) adds "like an excellent horse king," 猶良馬王 *yóu liáng mǎ wáng*. The image of a horse-king recurs also in MĀ 59 (T1.494a5) (parallel to *kos'ohita, vattha, guyho* in D 30/3:143,24). Saṅghabhedavastu (Gnoli 1977:50,15) compares this characteristic to a well-bred horse and also to a well-bred elephant. N S Barnes, "Buddhism," in *Women in World Religions*, 1987: 120, explains that "a common Buddhist interpretation of the sheathed penis of the Buddha ... is ... that his penis is covered because he has abandoned sexuality completely." Dayal 1932: 305 similarly comments that "the covered male organ typifies lifelong chastity"; cf also G Verardi, "The Buddha-elephant," 1999:71, who suggests that this mark "indicates the sexually indistinct nature of any divine being, who, as such, embodies both the male and the female principles," comparable to the retracted penis of a horse or an elephant, whereby "outwardly, its sexual characteristics remain indistinct." That something of this type must be intended is also highlighted by J R Egge, "Interpretative strategies for seeing the body of the Buddha," 2003:205 n18, who points out that "the phrase *kosohitamvatthaguyham* is usually rendered as 'the genitals (lit, 'that which is to be hidden by a cloth') are enclosed in a sheath.' However, because *kosa* can mean foreskin, this mark thus understood is hardly distinctive." Perhaps the point of this mark is that the Buddha was able to

had to skillfully reveal by psychic manifestation to Uttara, as it would not have been possible for Uttara to ascertain this characteristic on his own.<sup>76</sup>

**2.1.2.2** The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its parallels agree that the Buddha did not actually show his private parts, but rather performed a psychic wonder to reveal these features.<sup>77</sup> In order to display the length of his tongue, according to the Brahm'āli Sutta and the individual Chinese translation [1.2.1.1], the Buddha stuck out his tongue to lick his ears and cover his whole face with his tongue!<sup>78</sup>

This act of demonstration has led to one of the dilemmas in **the Milinda, pañha** (Miln 167,26). In a discussion with king Milinda, the monk Nāgasena attempts to explain this act of demonstration by suggesting that the Buddha only projected an image and made this visible to the inquirer. When king Milinda still considers this to be inappropriate behaviour, Nagasena explains that a Tathagata is willing to go even to such an extent to lead beings to awakening:

“Great king, the Tathāgata does what is difficult in order to awaken beings ready for awakening” (*dukkarañ cāpi, mahā,rāja, tathāgato karoti bodhaneyye satte bodhetuṃ*, Miln 169,3).<sup>79</sup>

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retract his male organs, similar to horses and elephants; cf **Analayo**, “The conversion of the brahmin Sela in the Ekottarika-āgama,” 2010c. Another aspect associated by some scholars with this mark is that “the idea of a woman’s incapability to become a Buddha must have been derived from this 10<sup>th</sup> mark possessed by the Buddha, because even if the genitals are concealed, this mark necessitates that a Buddha must be a man,” cf Y **Kajiyama**, “Women in Buddhism,” 1982:65 (quoting E Ōchō, ed *Hokke Shisō*, 1986:98); cf also **Hae-ju Sunim**, “Can women achieve enlightenment?” 1999: 131, and C **Romberg**, “Women in engaged Buddhism,” 2002:164. For a reply to this suggestion cf **Analayo**, “The Bahudhātuka-sutta and its parallels on women’s inabilities,” 2009b: 181 f n54. On the possibility that the “sheathed cloth hidden” being intersex, see **Sujato**, “The politics of the Buddha’s genitals,” Apr 2017 [SuttaCentral] 4 Oct 2025.

<sup>76</sup> According to **Sn 1022/5.1**, the Buddha knew that the brahmin Bāvāri possessed these 2 marks (the Chin counterpart in **T202** (T4.433b13) attr only one of these 2 marks to Bāvāri, the long tongue, 廣長舌 *guǎng cháng shé*). The context shows that Bāvāri was not present and also gives the impression that the Buddha had not met Bāvāri before, which suggests that the Buddha was able to know these marks (or at least one of them) without needing to be in Bāvāri’s presence. This would set a contrast to other brahmins, who are not able to recognize these marks even when they are in the Buddha’s presence, needing the Buddha’s cooperation in order to verify that he possesses these two marks.

<sup>77</sup> **§7 M 2:135,14**; **MĀ 161** (T1.685c25); **T76** (T1.883c7).

<sup>78</sup> **§7 M 2:135,17** and **T76** (T1.883c8). **MĀ 161** (T1.685c28, however, does not mention any licking of the ears. **J Powers**, *A Bull of a Man*, 2008:14 notes that “the idea that a long, supple tongue is a desirable feature in men is also found in the classical medical text Caraka’s Medical Compendium”; cf A K **Coomaraswamy**, “The nature of Buddhist art,” Princeton, 1938:169, on what he sees as a related idea in the Rgveda. Regarding the symbolic significance of this characteristic, **Dayal** 1932:305 suggests that “the long tongue betokens success as a preacher.” **Kramrisch** 1935:165 n3 explains that the ability of the tongue to reach the ear symbolizes how the Buddha’s words reach the ears of the world. **Wimalaratana** 1994:121 comments that the “long and slender tongue could as well be symbolic of the Buddha’s tongue’s flexibility for clear accurate enunciation.” **Divyāvadāna** (Cowell, 1886:71,14; Vaidya, 1999:43,31) reports an occasion when the Buddha made a demonstration of his long tongue to a brahmin who is under the impression that the Buddha has spoken a falsehood. In this context, the display of the tongue to cover the whole face stands for truthfulness, confirming that it was impossible for a bearer of this mark to consciously speak a lie.

<sup>79</sup> According to \*Mahāprajñāpāramita(upadeśa-)śāstra, **T1509** (T25.90b21), cf **Lamotte** 1944:275, the Buddha would reveal this characteristic to his disciples by “creating [the magical apparition] of a horse treasure,” 化作馬寶, and then indicate that his male organ was like this.

### 2.1.3 The Buddha's skin, hair and complexion (Marks nos. 11-14)

**2.1.3.1** The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its two Chinese parallels concur that **the Buddha's skin** has a hue resembling gold,<sup>80</sup> and is of such nature that dirt will not stick to it.<sup>81</sup> The commentary concludes that the Buddha has no need to wash himself at all. The Brahm'āyu Sutta and its Chinese parallels, which record that the Buddha washes his feet,<sup>82</sup> and which also describe that after a meal the Buddha would clean his bowl in such a way that at the same time his hands are being washed.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, the suttas—such as **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26)—report the Buddha going down to the river to wash.<sup>84</sup>

From the commentarial perspective, however, the Buddha has no need to wash his hands and feet, although he may do so in order to refresh himself or set an example to others.<sup>85</sup> The Madhyama Āgama discourse explains that dust did not stick to the Buddha's skin due to his former wholesome conduct.<sup>86</sup>

**2.1.3.2** According to **the Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (D 30), the Buddha's dust-free skin is the result of the Buddha's practice, in former lives, of approaching ascetics and brahmins for instructions.<sup>87</sup> The connection the Lakkhaṇa Sutta makes between receiving instructions from an ascetic or brahmin and being free from dust brings to mind the standard descriptions of the attainment of streamwinning after a gradual teaching ending with the 4 noble truths given by the Buddha. This refers to the stream-winner's vision of truth arising as **the "dustless and stainless" Dharma-eye**,<sup>88</sup> although in this context the absence of dust is clearly symbolic.

<sup>80</sup> §9 (11) M 2:136,18: "[he is of] golden colour," *suvaṇṇa,vaṇṇa*, MĀ 161 (T1.686b22): "[his] body is of golden colour," 身黄金色 *shēn huáng jīn sè*, T76 (T1.883c26): "[his] body is golden," 身色紫金 *shēn sè zǐ jīn*. D 30/3: 143,25 further qualifies *suvaṇṇa,vaṇṇa* as *kañcana,sannibha*, "resembling gold," thereby making it clear that resemblance is intended with this characteristic (cf Dietz 2006:155, restoration of fragment 1r4, and Sn 551/3:7). Horner (M:H 2:331 n5) explains that golden is "the traditional colour symbol for immortality," A Huxley, "The Vinaya, Legal System or Performance-Enhancing Drug?" 1996:156 comments that "when the Buddha's skin shines forth brighter than gold [D 2:133], this recalls the iconography of Indian gods"; cf also R Otto Franke, "Der Dogmatische Buddha nach dem Dighanikaya," 1914b:350 and Nakamura, *Gotama Buddha* vol 2, 2000b: 221. J Powers, "Why practicing virtue is better than working out, bodies and ethics in Indian Buddhism," 2009: 136, notes that "a golden exterior is a pervasive motif in Indian Buddhist literature that indicates moral excellence." D 30/3:159,7 reckons the golden colour of the Buddha's skin to be the karmic fruit of past lives spent free from anger. Mahāvastu (Basak 1965:32,6; Senart 1890:23,7) notes that already at his birth the bodhisattva's body was of such golden colour, *sugataṃ vighraṃ iva jātarūpasya*. Saṅghabhedavastu (Gnoli 1978a: 163,24) takes this quality lit, as it describes that Devadatta had his body gilded by a goldsmith in order to imitate the golden colour of the Buddha's body; cf T1450 (T24.191c2) and S Matsunami, "Buddhist variants of two portions of the *Isibhāsiyāim*," 1979:335. The Vinaya also seems to take the colour of the Buddha's skin literally as its definition of "gold" (V 3:238,2: *jāta,rūpaṃ nāma satthu,vaṇṇo vuccati*).

<sup>81</sup> §9 (12) M 2:136,20: "dust and dirt do not stick to his body," *rajo,jallaṃ kāye na upalippati* (M:Be 2:337,13; M:Se 2:532,20: *upalimpati*), MĀ 161 (T1.686b10): "dust and water do not adhere [to it]," 塵水不著 *chén shuǐ bù zháo*, and T76 (T1.883c28): "dust and water do not adhere to [his] body," 塵水不著身 *chén shuǐ bù zháo shēn*.

<sup>82</sup> §20 M 2:139,26, MĀ 161 (T1.687b24), and T76 (T1.884b14).

<sup>83</sup> §13 M 2:138,15, MĀ 161 (T1.687b11), and T76 (T1.884a27).

<sup>84</sup> M 26,3.2/1:161 (SD 1.11).

<sup>85</sup> MA 3:378,2. For similar notions of the Buddha not needing to wash his feet or take a bath in a text of the Lokottara,vāda cf P Harrison, "Sanskrit fragments of a Lokottarvadin tradition," 1982:215,17. Ariya Pariyesanā S (M 26/1:161,5), SD 1.11, relates that the Buddha goes with Ānanda for a bath, then explains that this is just in order to refresh himself from the heat, *utu,gahaṇ'attha* (MA 2:166,6; DA 3:378).

<sup>86</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.687a16): 以本善行故 *yǐ běn shàn xíng gù*. MĀ 161 (T1.687a23 + b20) makes the same indication in relation to the composure of the Buddha's faculties.

<sup>87</sup> D 30/3:157,15.

<sup>88</sup> §36.2 M 2:145,13: *virajaṃ vītamalaṃ dhamma,cakkhurū udapādi*. R Gethin, "He who sees Dhamma sees Dhammas, Dhamma in early Buddhism," 2004b:517, in his detailed survey of the range of meanings of the

### **2.1.4 The Buddha's physique [Marks nos. 15-20]**

**2.1.4.1** Mark no. 15 says that **the Buddha's body** "is perfectly straight" like that of Brahmā's [§10]. The Commentary adds while most creatures bend at the shoulders, hips or knees, the Buddha, standing up tall, is like a high golden gateway of a deva city (MA 3:378,11-19). A later Sanskrit tradition elaborating on the 32 marks further describes the Buddha's body as being rounded (*vr̥tta,gātra*), smooth (*mṛṣṭa,gātra*), regular or slim (*anupūrva,gātra*), clean (*śūci,gātra*), tender (*mṛdu,gātra*), and stainless (*viśuddha,gātra*).<sup>89</sup>

Considering that the Buddha is from the warrior noble or *khattiya* class (anglicized as "kshatriya"), it is not surprising to envision him in such a perfect physical form. But then there are numerous other kshatriyas. Since the Buddha is not only unique but also the highest of beings, understandably, he is "perfect" (*brahma*), a high god in human form.<sup>90</sup>

**2.1.4.2** The lore of the Buddha's 32 marks should be viewed as a teaching whose meaning is implicit or indirect, and needs "to be teased out" (*neyy'attha*). For example, it is clear that the Buddha often speaks of *the impermanence, impurity and imperfections of the human body*. In contrast to this fundamental teaching, the Buddha's body with its 32 marks exemplifies the best and the highest that such a body can attain.<sup>91</sup>

It should thus be pointed out that despite having all the 32 marks, the Buddha, too, is subject to the universal law of **impermanence** which he often teaches about. In a very significant way, he is the "final" or supreme proof of the conditionality of impermanence, suffering and nonself; that the human body or any kind of existence, for that matter—whether it is Buddha or Brahmā—must all end, only to arise ever anew in the cycle that is samsara.

This is the teaching that is explicit (*nīt'attha*); we are directly seeing and knowing Dharma, true reality. This is what we need to observe and realize so that we awaken like the Buddha.<sup>92</sup>

### **2.1.5 The Buddha's head jaw and mouth (Marks nos. 21-28)**

**2.1.5.1** Amongst the 32 marks, one mark is unique in that it cannot be seen at all. The Brahmā-āyu Sutta and its parallels agree that the Buddha has a superior sense of **taste**.<sup>93</sup> To include the Buddha's sense of taste in a list of *physical* characteristics is puzzling, since it is not easy to imagine how anyone like Uttara is able to see or verify this quality.<sup>94</sup>

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term *dhamma* in Pali texts, explains that in the cpd *dhamma,cakkhu* the term *dhamma* stands for "truth," in the sense of a "vision of the truth."

<sup>89</sup> These minor marks form part of the 80 "minor signs" listed in the Chin tr of \*Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra, **T6.968a-969a**, tr Xuanzang 659; Milnṭ 17 f; BHSD 34. For refs on the 80 minor marks: SD 36.9 (3.2.3) + Biblio. On a list of the 32 marks and 80 minor marks, see J Powers, *A Bull of a Man*, Harvard, 2009: App 1.

<sup>90</sup> J R Haldar, *Early Buddhist Mythology*, 1977:131, notes various "characteristics of the Buddha [that] remind us of the supreme god of Brahmanical literature."

<sup>91</sup> This glorification of the Buddha's body evident in descriptions of its 32 marks has been studied by W Wüst, "Das Leibesproblem in der buddhistische Palilyrik," 1928:83, who notes that this stands in contrast to the negative attitude among early Buddhists towards the human body in general. [2.1.4.2]

<sup>92</sup> On this twofold teaching, see **Neyy'attha Nīt'attha Ss** (A 2.3.5+6), SD 2.6b.

<sup>93</sup> **§9 (21)** M 2:136,29: *ras'agga,saggi* (M:Se 2: 533,9: *ras'atta,saggi*), MĀ 161 (T1.686c4): 通味第一味 *tōng wèi dì yī wèi*, and T76 (T1.884a6): 味次第味 *wèi cì dì wèi*. Childers, 1875, DPL:401 sv *ras'aggasa*, tr *ras'agga,saggi* as "having the nerves of sensation meeting at the top"; cf Wimalaratana 1994:113, who suggests that this characteristic might refer to the "sensory taste receptors" found in the mouth.

<sup>94</sup> M:ÑB 1298 n856 comments that "it is difficult ... to understand either how this quality could be considered a physical characteristic or how it could be perceived by others." D Boucher, *Bodhisattvas of the Forest and the Formation of the Mahāyāna*, 2008:176 n12, similarly points out that "one might wonder why no doubt seems to have been expressed concerning the Buddha's exquisite sense of taste." D S Lopez, "Buddha," in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, 2005:20, sums up that the texts do not indicate how someone could have seen "the perfect sense of taste, the forty teeth, and only one body hair per follicle."

The Buddha's taste comes up again in §14 where the Buddha would taste food without feeling desire for the taste of food (*rasa,paṭisaṃvedī ... āhāraṃ āhāreti, no ca rasa,raga,paṭisaṃvedī*).<sup>95</sup> The same topic recurs in the Sanskrit **Saṅghabhedavastu** as a statement made by the Buddha when, on the occasion of his first visit home after awakening, his former wife attempts to lure him with tasty food (*aham ... rasa,pratisaṃvedī no tu rasa,rāga,pratisaṃvedī*).<sup>96</sup>

**2.1.5.2** The Pali and Chinese versions portray the Buddha with a **long tongue** [2.1.2.2] and with **40 white teeth**,<sup>97</sup> which would imply that the Buddha has 8 teeth more than the usual number of teeth in a human mouth.<sup>98</sup> They also compare his **jaw** to that of a lion's.<sup>99</sup> This is reminiscent of a well known sutta image, which compares the Buddha's teachings to a lion-roar.<sup>100</sup>

It does happen that some humans may have more than the normal 32 teeth, even up to 40 teeth. The extra teeth are said to be "supernumerary." Thus, it would be difficult to understand how this could have been considered a distinct mark of a superior being.<sup>101</sup>

**2.1.5.3** According to the Pali tradition, the Buddha's **head** is like an Indian turban.<sup>102</sup> The commentary explains this as referring to *the roundness of the Buddha's head*. The Commentary explains:

"According to one method of explanation, 'turban [like] head' means that his head is like a 'head wrapped with a turban,' according to a second method of explanation, 'turban-like head' means that his 'head is all round like a turban'" (*purima,nayena uṇhisa,veṭhitasāso viyā ti uṇhisa,sāso, dutiya,nayena uṇhisaṃ viya sabbattha parimaṇḍala,sāso ti uṇhisa,sāso*, MA 3:386,4).

<sup>95</sup> Cf **MĀ 161** (T1.687b5) and **T76** (T1.884b1).

<sup>96</sup> Gnoli 1978a: 37,27.

<sup>97</sup> **§9 (23)** M 2:137,1, MĀ 161 (T1.686c3), and T76 (T1.884a3).

<sup>98</sup> P R Myer, "Bodhisattvas and Buddhas, early Buddhist images from Mathura," 1986:129 includes this characteristic among "physical peculiarities or even abnormalities that may well have been considered auspicious." **Wimalaratana** 1994:115 explains that "in ancient India the possession of more than the common number of teeth was regarded as an auspicious characteristic," following "a common trend of Indian thought to increase qualities or characteristics numerically to denote the superiority of a person."

<sup>99</sup> **§9 (22)** M 2:136,30, MĀ 161 (T1.686b28), and T76 (T1.884a3); on the lion symbolism cf, eg, A **Bareau**, "The superhuman personality of the Buddha and its symbolism in the Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra of the Dharmaguptaka," 1971b:17; on associating the Buddha with the lion and the elephant in art, cf C **Bautze-Picron**, "Antagonistes et complémentaires, Le lion et l'éléphant dans la personnalité du Buddha," 2009.

<sup>100</sup> M 11/1:64,1: *sīhanādaṃ nadatha* and MĀ 103 (T1.590b10: 獅子吼 *shī zi hōu*; qu at \*Mahāvibhāṣā, cf T1545 (T27.341c5). J **Manné**, "*Sīhanāda*," 1996:32, surveying the occurrences of "lion's roars" in the suttas, explains them to be "utterances which the speaker is willing to defend in public," in line with "the Vedic tradition of challenges in debate." Another aspect is discussed by T **Brekke**, "The role of fear in Indian religious thought with special reference to Buddhism," 1999b:450, who explains that "the function of the Buddha in the simile of the lion is to create fear through his teaching ... and when this fear is effectively translated into religious motivation one will strive to attain nirvaṇa." Similarly, M **Heim**, "The aesthetics of excess," 2003: 546, notes that "the Tathagata delivering his teaching ... in exactly the same way that a lion's roar causes brutes of the forest to quake in fear ... suggests that some fear is valuable, in that it can replace complacency with urgency." On the lion in Buddhist texts, see F **Deleanu**, "Buddhist 'Ethology' in the Pali Canon," 2000:105-112. For a study of the motif of the lion's roar: **Analayo**, "The lion's roar in early Buddhism, a study based on the Ekottarika-āgama parallel to the Cūḷasīhanāda-sutta," 2009g.

<sup>101</sup> According to an explanation proposed by **Neumann** 1896:1115 n248, the reference to 40 teeth might only represent the beginning 4<sup>th</sup> decade and thus should be taken to mean "over thirty" teeth. Such an interpretation would be in line with an observation made by T **Nitta**, "The significance of the thirty-two lakṣhaṇas of a buddha," 2008:1099, regarding the 32 characteristics in general, in that some of these marks "seem very unnatural, leading us to wonder ... whether ancient Buddhists ... believed in them literally." See §9 (23) n.

<sup>102</sup> **§9 (32)** M 2:137,9: "turban [like] head," *uṇhisa,sāsa* (M:Se 2:533,17: *uṇhisa,sāsa*), a mark **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30/3:169,3) explains as the outcome of past lives spent in wholesome conduct, generosity, and respectful behaviour. The turban was one of the royal insignia of a head-anointed king; cf **Dhamma,cetiya S** (M 89/2:119,27), SD 64.10, where king Pasenadi takes off his turban (*uṇhisa*) as a mark of respect in the Buddha's presence.

In ancient Indian art, it was apparently a standard procedure to represent divine beings with **long hair**, at times depicted as being worn in a topknot.<sup>103</sup> J N **Banerjea** explains that:

wearing of long hair in different modes was a common custom among the males ... They not only carried these luxurious locks on their own heads in different shapes, but endowed their gods with this same characteristic. Thus the various gods depicted in the early Indian monuments of the pre-Christian period ... are shown with luxuriant hair dressed in various ways," with the hair worn in a topknot as "one of their most prominent adornments." When with the passage of time the Buddha was seen more and more as a divine being, "in the anthropomorphic representation of the Bhagavat, the depiction of the flowing tresses was quite natural."<sup>104</sup>

After surveying representations of the *uṇhīsa* in ancient Indian art, Banerjea concludes that the early representations were merely meant to show a **topknot**, but these representations were later misunderstood to represent a fleshy or even bony protuberance. The Chinese parallels, for example, render the topknot to be a real protuberance.<sup>105</sup> This could be a misunderstanding caused by a feature found on Buddha images.

Over time, the topknot in such representations was perceived or misunderstood as an actual protuberance on the Buddha's head. This feature soon became part of the Buddha iconography,<sup>106</sup> and was eventually also employed in depicting members of the Buddha's family.<sup>107</sup>

**2.1.5.4** According to **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26) and its parallel MĀ 204, the bodhisattva, upon renouncing, shaved his head.<sup>108</sup> **The Sundarika Bhāra, dvāja Sutta** (Sn 3.4) and its parallels SĀ 1184 and SĀ 2 99 describe how a brahmin sees the Buddha uncover his head and realizes that the Buddha's head is shaven, which indicates that the Buddha continues to shave his head.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>103</sup> **Coomaraswamy** 1928a:835, comes to the same conclusion: "we have no literary or iconographic evidence for the interpretation of the *uṇhīsa* as a bony protuberance previous to about AD 100 at the earliest." **Kramrisch** 1935: 157 explains that "the manifested power of divinity is shown in the growth of hair," which she relates not only to the sculptural representation of the Buddha with long hair, but also sees behind the traditional account of the bodhisattva's first aspiration to become a Buddha, suggesting that "when the future Sakyamuni spreads his hair before Dīpaṅkara Buddha to walk over it, the power of the previous Buddha is transmitted to the Buddha to be." **Lohuizen-de Leeuw** 1995:164 notes that "not only the Buddha but also gods show the *uṇhīsa* ... there is no doubt that it was intended to reproduce a hair-knot on top of the head ... not until much later was it understood as a protuberance of the skull"; cf **Foucher** 1918:297, who relates the arising of the idea of a protuberance to a change in the way the hair was being represented. **Waldschmidt** 1930:274 suggests that perhaps awareness of the fact that the Buddha had been shaven-headed caused the topknot to be interpreted as a protuberance.

<sup>104</sup> J B **Banerjea**, "Uṇhīsaśiraskatā in the early Buddhist images of India," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 7.3, 1931a: 510 + 512.

<sup>105</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.686c13) and T76 (T1.884a9): 肉髻 *ròu jì*, lit, "flesh [like] a topknot."

<sup>106</sup> C **Wikramagama**, "The history, iconography and iconometry of the Buddha image in Sri Lanka," 2005: 293 points out that early Buddha images belonging to the Sri Lankan Mahavihara tradition "have no abnormal protuberance on top of their heads," but "from about the second century AC" one can find instances of the "Buddha Image with a slight bump on the top of the head."

<sup>107</sup> Miln 169,3: "Great king, the Tathāgata does what is difficult in order to awaken beings capable of being led to awakening," *dukkaraṇ cāpi, mahārāja, tathāgato karoti bodhaneyye satte bodhetum*. According to \***Mahā-prajñāpāramita-(upadeśa)-śāstra**, T1509 (T25.90b21), cf Lamotte 1944:275, the Buddha would reveal this characteristic to his disciples by "creating [the magical apparition] of a horse treasure," 化作馬寶 *huà zuò mǎ bǎo*, and then indicate that his male organ was like this.

<sup>108</sup> M 26/1:163,30, SD 1.11; MĀ 204 (T1.766b4).

<sup>109</sup> Sn 3.4/p80,2; SĀ 1184 (T2.320b28); SĀ 2 99 (T2.409a3). M **Taddei**, "Ancora sul Buddha Gāndhārīco," 1996: 429 views that this is the only canonical evidence for the Buddha keeping his head shaven—this is not correct. **Burnouf** 1852:562, thinks that there is no evidence that the Buddha shaved his head. On the contrary, the early texts often say that the Buddha is "shaven-headed," *muṇḍa* (V 4:91,20; S 1:168; Sn p80). Again, in **Sn 456/3.4** the

Although the suttas are clear that the Buddha is **shaven-headed** just like other monks,<sup>110</sup> post-Buddha artists took licence in portraying him with long hair, thereby implying the semi-divine, even divine, status he acquired by that time [5]. With Greek influence, especially in the Gandhāra (Swat) after Alexander the Great's invasion, Buddha images in the northwest of India were seen to have wavy Greek hair style.

**2.1.5.5** The earliest Buddha images from both Gandhāra (NW of India) and Mathurā (capital of Surasena, in modern Uttar Pradesh) invariably bear large topknots on their heads. The reason for this anomaly is that they initially represented Sakyamuni as a bodhisattva—that is, Siddhattha in his pre-awakening days.

When Siddhattha renounces the world, he is said to have taken off his turban and other adornments. The visualization of Sakyamuni in this form apparently inspired the creation of the iconographic images of the bodhisattva in Gandhāra and Mathurā. When images of the Buddha in the proper sense were first made in Gandhāra, the large topknot was kept to ensure iconographic continuity from the earlier bodhisattva images.

Considerations regarding the aesthetic and symbolic advantages of keeping long hair must also have influenced the creators of these images. Gandhāra Buddhists were aware of the problem of the topknot remaining on the Buddha's head. Thus, they tried to cut the hair on the upper part of the head and render it as snail-shell whorls in some Buddha images of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

However, in the majority of Buddha images created in Gandhāra, the long hair and the large topknot continued to be favored. In contrast, Buddhists in India proper, especially in Mathurā and Amarā-

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Buddha says of himself that he has his head-hair shaved off, *nivutta,kesa*. Thus, D Schlingloff, *Die Religion des Buddhismus* II, 1963b:55, is right when he concludes that according to the early tradition the Buddha shaved his hair and beard. Moreover, several passages indicate that the Buddha was not easily distinguishable from other monks, which he would have been if he had not been shaven-headed. **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2/1:50,15), SD 8.10, and its parallel DĀ 27 (T1.108a4), tell us that king Ajatasattu needs help to recognize the Buddha among the assembled monks. **M 31** /1:205,20, **M 128**/3:155,15, **MĀ 72** (T1.536b8), **MĀ 185** (T1.729c22), and **EĀ 24.8** (T2.-629b6) report that the park guardian wherein 3 monks are living stops the Buddha from entering this park, evidently not recognizing the Buddha. According to **M 140**/3:238,8 and its parallels **MĀ 162** (T1.690a27) and **T511** (T14.779c15), on the monk Pukkusāti, on meeting the Buddha by chance, is unable to recognize him. The background story to **pācittiya 92** (V 4:173,6) records that other monks mistake Nanda for the Buddha, as the robe he is wearing is similar in length to the Buddha's robe. A similar account is found in the account of the corresponding **pātayantika 90** in Dharmaguptaka Vinaya, T1428 (T22.695b15), and in Sarvāstivāda Vinaya, T1435 (T23.130-b28). These instances suggest that the Buddha does not have longer hair than other monks or any other physical mark that would have made it easy for others to recognize him immediately; cf **Guang Xing**, "The concept of the Buddha in early Buddhism," 2002b:10 and "Filial Piety in Early Buddhism," 2005:14. Regarding the Buddha being shaven-headed, according to **Mahāvastu** (Basak 1968:110,1; Senart 1897:179,11), Upāli is responsible for shaving the Buddha's head; for additional sources cf A **Bareau**, "La construction et le culte des stupa d'après les Vinayapīṭaka," 1960:262.

<sup>110</sup> Y **Krishan**, "The hair on the Buddha's head and uṣṇīṣa," 1966:1, notes that the early Indian sculptural representations depicted Jain saints with hair, even though according to Jain textual sources these saints had plucked out their hair on going forth (281); Krishan adds that the sculptural representations of the Buddha was modelled after Brahmā, who "in Indian iconography is invariably endowed with locks of hair" (282). Krishan notes the suttas often take Brahmā as a model for representing the Buddha, such as the Buddha's complexion is like that of Brahmā; eg, **Caṅkī S** (M 95/2:166,32), SD 21.15: "the recluse Gotama is handsome ... with a Brahmā-like complexion and stature," *samaṇo khalu, bho, gotamo abhirūpo ... brahma,vaṇṇī brahma,vaccasī* (M:Be 2:379,5; M:Se 2:596,1: *brahma,vacchasi*). Similarly, suttas, such as **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18/1:111,13), SD 6.14, qualify the Buddha as "become Brahmā" (*brahma,bhūto*), and according to **Sn 508**/3.5, on seeing the Buddha, a brahmin exclaims, "Brahmā has been seen by me today!" (*bhagavā hi me sakki brahm'ajja diṭṭho*), followed by explaining that the Buddha is "like Brahmā," *brahma,samo*. Although these instances originally may not have been taken in a literal sense, a more literal understanding of such passages could well have, in due course, influenced artistic representation of the Buddha, esp in sculpture.

vatī, adopted snail-shell whorls covering the entire head beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, and this became a standard throughout virtually the entire Buddhist world.<sup>111</sup>

## 2.2 THE BUDDHA'S TRAITS

### 2.2.1 The 8 factors regarding food

**2.2.1.1 The Brahm'āyu Sutta** and its parallels, having completed their survey of the 32 marks, go on to describe various aspects of the Buddha's conduct and speech.<sup>112</sup> Similar to the description of the proper way of partaking of food in **the Sabb'āsava Sutta** (M 91/1:10,9), the Brahm'āyu Sutta notes that the Buddha would not take food in 8 ways [§15 (3+4)].

The 8 ways (or factors) and summary for reflectively taking food as listed in **M 91/2:138,29** (SD 30.3) is as follows:

(1) <i>n'eva davāya,</i>	“not for amusement”;
(2) <i>na madaya,</i>	“not for intoxication”;
(3) <i>na maṇḍanāya,</i>	“not for fattening”;
(4) <i>na vibhūsanāya,</i>	“not for beautifying”;
(5) <i>yāvad eva imassa kāyassa ṭhitiyā,</i>	“just for the endurance of this body”;
(6) <i>yāpanāya,</i>	“for its sustenance”;
(7) <i>vihimsūparatiyā</i> <sup>113</sup>	“for ending discomfort”;
(8) <i>brahma, cariyānuggahāya,</i>	“for assisting the holy life”;
<i>iti purāṇañ ca vedanaṃ paṭihanākhāmi,</i>	“in this way I shall overcome former feelings”;
<i>navañ ca vedanaṃ na uppadesāmi,</i>	“I shall not arouse new feelings”;
<i>yātrā ca me bhavissati anavajjatā ca,</i>	“so that I will be blame-free”;
<i>phāsu, vihāro ca ti,</i>	“and live at ease.”

Counting the qualities one by one yields 12 qualities. Grouping them together into subjects according to the “waxing compound” principle<sup>114</sup> results in 4 sets of key topics:

(1-4) <i>davāya ... pe ... vibhūsanāya,</i>	improper purposes for hedonic or worldly ends;
(5-7) <i>ṭhitiyā ... pe ... brahma, cariyānuggahāya,</i>	for physical health to practise the holy life;
(8a) <i>paṭihanākhāmi ... uppadesāmi,</i>	the proper way of dealing with feelings;
(8b) <i>anavajjatā ... phāsu, vihāro,</i>	the benefits of taking food in this way.

We can thus see purposes and benefits behind the 8 aspects of reflective partaking of food by monastics, which with appropriate adjustments, also apply to partaking of food by the laity, that is for good health and diligence in a wholesome life and spiritual practice.

**2.2.1.2** Two of the 8 factors on mindful taking of food are “not for fattening” (*na maṇḍanāya*) and “not for beautifying” (*na vibhūsanāya*) [2.2.1.1]. In his early works, Analayo (2011) has rendered *maṇḍana* and *vibhūsana* literally as “ornament” and “adornment” respectively.<sup>115</sup> As a result he has

<sup>111</sup> See E Mazard, “The Buddha was bald,” *New Mandala*, 30 Dec 2010. 15 Oct 2025.

<sup>112</sup> For a detailed comparison of the descriptions of the Buddha's conduct in M 91 and MĀ 161 cf **Thich Minh Chau**, 1964:168-172.

<sup>113</sup> M:Se 2:535,19, *vihimsūparatiyā*.

<sup>114</sup> According to the waxing compound (or syllable) rule, the elements of a compound are arranged in ascending order according to the syllable length: SD 55.7 (1.3.2.6).

<sup>115</sup> Besides the 8 aspects of the Buddha's mindful partaking of food, the qualities of the Buddha's voice is also said to have 8 qualities: **§21.2** (M 2:140,5), **MĀ 161** (T1.687b28), and **T76** (T1.884b23). These 8 qualities are in fact those of Brahmā's voice (*brahma-s, sara*), a term that describes the Buddha's voice in **§9 (28)** (M 2:137,5), and parallels, MĀ 161 (T1.686c5) 梵音 *fàn yīn*, and T76 (T1.884a6) 聲如梵聲 *shēng rú fàn shēng*. **Basu**, *The Con-*

to discuss some unnecessarily sticky and unrelated difficulties [2011: 539 f].<sup>116</sup> The Madhyama Āgama version agrees with the Brahm'āyu Sutta,<sup>117</sup> whereas the individual translation [1.2.1.1] understandably does not mention *maṇḍana* and *vibhūsana* in relation to food.<sup>118</sup>

Notably, both **M 2,14/1:10,9** and its parallel, **MĀ 10** (T1.432b23), associate the issue of avoiding “ornament (*maṇḍanāya*) or adornment (*vibhūsanāya*)” to partaking of food. MĀ 161 (T1.687b6) also refers to not taking alms food for the sake of wealth, 不為財物. Clearly, the import here is that the monastic robes should not be used for financial gains and worldliness.

**2.2.1.3** The Chinese version of **M 2** has been translated by Analayo as “**The Discourse on the Cessation of Taints**” (MĀ 10) in *The Madhyama Āgama* (2013).<sup>119</sup> This translation was done some 2 years after his PhD thesis, *A Comparative Study of the Majjhima-nikāya* (2006), was revised and published (2011).

The new MĀ 10 translation by Analayo concurs more closely with the Pali suttas. In *The Madhyama Āgama* (2013), he translates the passage on **the reflection on food** (M 2,14 and M 91,15)—as follows:

若用飲食。非為利故。	He does not use food and drink for the sake of gain,
非以貢高故。非為肥悅故。	nor out of pride, <b>nor for the pleasure of growing stout</b> , <sup>120</sup>
但為令身久住除煩惱憂感故。	but to maintain the body and remove distress, vexation,
	dejection, and sorrow;
以行梵行故。	for the sake of living the holy life,
欲令故病斷新病不生故。	out of a wish to overcome former discomfort and prevent
	the arising of new discomfort;
久住安隱無病故也。	for the sake of living peacefully and without disease.
	<b>MĀ 10</b> (T1.432b23 (2013:60))

## **2.2.2 The Buddha in the monastery**

**2.2.2.1** The Brahm'āyu Sutta describes that the Buddha, on returning to **the monastery**, would sit down cross-legged and establish mindfulness before him, “thinking” of the welfare of the whole world as he thus sits.<sup>121</sup> While the first part of this description highlights the practice of meditation, the verb “to think” (*cinteti*) suggests a more conceptual type of mental activity. According to the parallel passage in the Madhyama Āgama version, **T76**, the Buddha would take his sitting mat and enter a room to sit in meditation. The same version reports that, on emerging from meditation, the Buddha's face would be radiant.<sup>122</sup>

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*cept of Brahma*, 1986:117, notes a parallelism between the qualities associated with Brahma's voice and the requirement that at a sacrifice the “superintending priest [must be] having ... a good and sweet voice.” On the problems with *tr maṇḍana* and *vibhūsana* as “adornment ... ornament” respectively, see **Sabb'āsava S** (M 2,13) + SD 30.3 (2.3.1.3).

<sup>116</sup> This issue is resolved in SD 30.3 (2.3.1.3).

<sup>117</sup> **MĀ 161**: T1.687a9 (robes) and T1.687b6 (food): 不為自飾, 不為莊嚴 *bù wéi zì shì, bù wéi zhuāng yán*.

<sup>118</sup> **T76** (T1.884b2).

<sup>119</sup> *The Madhyama Āgama (Middle-Length Discourses)* volume 1 (Taishō vol 1, no 26), ed M Bingenheimer, co-ed Analayo & R S Bucknell, Moraga, CA: Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai America, Inc, 2013.

<sup>120</sup> Here, “nor for the pleasure of growing stout” freely covers Pali *na maṇḍanāya* (not for fattening) and *na vibhūsanāya* (*na vubhūsanāya*).

<sup>121</sup> **§20 M 2:139,28**: *nisīdati pallaṅkam abhujitvā ujum kāyam paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetvā ... sabba,loka,hitam eva so bhavaṃ gotamo cintento nisinno hoti*.

<sup>122</sup> **MĀ 161** (T1.687b26): “when arising from sitting meditation, the complexion of [his] face is brilliant,” 從宴坐起, 面色光澤 *cóng yàn zuò qǐ, miàn sè guāng zé*.

Clearly, in **T76** the Buddha engages in actual meditation, which is also suggested by the description given in the individual Chinese translation [1.2.1.1].<sup>123</sup> T76 explains that it was precisely the Buddha's meditation practice that was for the welfare of the whole world.<sup>124</sup> That the Buddha was in this way setting an example to be emulated would be a conclusion Uttara could indeed draw based on his observations.

We may wonder how Uttara knew that the Buddha would sit down to “think” about the welfare of the whole world; it would require Uttara to be able to read the Buddha's mind! On the other hand, he could well have asked the monks about the Buddha's daily meditative habits, since this practice of the Buddha is well known to the sangha.

### 3 The Buddha's apotheosis

#### **3.1 THE BUDDHA AS THE IDEAL OF HUMAN AWAKENING**

##### **3.1.1 Not making something of anything**

**3.1.1.1** That the Buddha was born a **human** and attained awakening as a human shows that we, as humans, despite our physical frailties, our total dependence on our senses and the mind, and the limitations of this body of 6 “senses,” can, by understanding these very faculties, awake to be free from their limitations. By taming the body and its faculties, we are able to know the mind. The body freed from the distractions and limits of the physical senses conduces to the arising of a calm and clear mind.

A **calm and clear mind** is able to see true reality and understand it, that is, to see impermanence. Understanding impermanence, one sees and knows how all existence, from the lowest suffering state to the highest heaven are all conditioned. Whatever is conditioned is subject to change; hence, it is never satisfactory. This means that we can and should never identify with these states and say, for example, “That I am.”

**3.1.1.2** When we do fall into such self-identification, we are thus driven by **delusion**. We are then caught in the rise and fall of cyclic existence as subhumans, humans and gods. Only when we see through this delusion—making nothing of anything, and not seeking that something to identify with—we begin to see our true “self,” what we really are. This is called “**awakening**” (*bodhi*).

##### **3.1.2 The Buddha as exemplar**

**3.1.2.1** While the Buddha lives, he teaches Dharma and serves as their exemplar by his own “wisdom and conduct” (*vijjā, caraṇa*), meaning that he is wise by his own practice; he speaks from true experience. “As he speaks, so he does; as he does, so he speaks” (*yathā, vādī tathā, kāri, yathā, kāri tathā, vadī*).<sup>125</sup> The Buddha is true to his word, and his word is true—and thus liberating.

<sup>123</sup> **T76** (T1.884b15) indicates that “[when he] sits to meditate, [he] quickly [attains] signlessness,” 其坐禪定，霍然無相 *qí zuò chán dìng, huò rán wú xiàng* (adopting the 宋 *sòng*, 元 *yuán*, and 明 *míng*, 元, and 明 variant reading 相 *xiàng*, found in fact at T1.884b17 instead of 想 *xiǎng*; on variations between these two characters: Anala-yo 2011:274 n54. T76 (T1.884b9), moreover, reports that the Buddha never slept: “day and night [he] does not sleep, yet he is not drowsy nor does he yawn,” 晝夜不眠，亦無睡欠 *zhòu yè bù mián, yì wú shuì qiàn*. Nowhere in the suttas is it said that the Buddha never sleeps. Even the dhutaṅga rule 13 regarding sleeping only says that the practitioner does not lie down to sleep, but at best sleeps in *a sitting (or inclined) posture*. See **Bakkula S** (M 124,35 f) & SD 3.15 (2).

<sup>124</sup> MĀ 161 (T1.687b25): “for the sake of the welfare of the whole world the recluse Gotama enters a dwelling to sit in meditation,” 沙門瞿曇饒益世間故，入房宴坐 *shāmén qútán ráo yī dhì jiān gù, rù fáng yàn zuò*.

<sup>125</sup> **D 19,11/2:224, 26/2:229, 29,29/3:135; A 4.23/2:24; It 4.13/122; Sn 357** (Nigrodha,kappa); **J 326/3:89; MA 1:51**. See SD 29.6a (7.3.2); SD 55.2 (2.2.2.4); SD 55.10a (1.1.3.2).

The Buddha's teaching is founded on his own awakening experience, and he teaches others so that they will awaken themselves by their own effort. Hence, he declares:

By you yourself must the effort be made:       the Tathagata is one who shows the way.  
By your practice, through meditation,       you are freed from Māra's bonds.       (Dh 276)<sup>126</sup>

**3.1.2.2** As an experienced and effective teacher, the Buddha was famous and respected even while he lived [§3]. After the Buddha's passing, he lived on, as it were, in the Dharma he has taught. In this sense, he continues to teach and guide conscientious sangha members and the laity. In this sense, the Buddha is idealized (kept in mind) and serves as our ideal (as our goal), that of human awakening. In the early centuries, sangha members continued to keep the Buddha in mind by keeping to the Dharma-Vinaya, such as explained in **the Gopaka Moggallāna Sutta** (M 108).<sup>127</sup>

While the Buddha lived, he himself looked up to the Dharma, as he explains in **the Gārava Sutta** (S 6.2).<sup>128</sup> In his last days, as recorded in **the Mahā,parinibbāna Sutta** (D 16), the Buddha similarly admonishes us that "the Dharma and Vinaya will, at my passing, be your refuge."<sup>129</sup> In this spirit, the Dharma spreads and the sangha grows spiritually.

However, as the centuries passed, time dimmed the memories of Buddhists and seekers. They forget or revise the Buddha's pragmatic advice on self-reliance. "With the passage of time the Buddha became less an object of emulation and more an object of devotion, growing in stature as memories faded."<sup>130</sup> In the half-light of faith, more and more followers *idealized* the Buddha not as a teacher and guide, but as a superhuman being, even as some kind of god.<sup>131</sup>

## 3.2 THE BUDDHA AS THE GREAT MAN

### 3.2.1 The human body and the 32 marks

**3.2.1.1** One of the key contributing factors for the tendency to attribute the Buddha with divine status is the lore of the Buddha's **32 marks of the great man** (*mahā, purisa, lakkhaṇa*). While the Buddha lived—as related in **the Brahm'āyu Sutta** (M 91), he was able to teach Dharma directly to those who saw him as an idealized figure, a unique "great man" of destiny. However, over time, the "Buddha was gradually shorn of human characteristics and superhuman qualities were bestowed on him. He was deified."<sup>132</sup>

The attribution of the 32 marks to the Buddha thus sets him apart from other humans. The Buddha was a world-renouncer, one who transcends the world *spiritually*: the Buddha was free from the limits of the senses and the mind. However, in due course, he is perceived as one who *literally* transcends the world; he becomes the very world he has transcended—he is everywhere and everything. Thus, "despite its anti-theistic dogma ... early Buddhism had all the ingredients of a theistic cult."<sup>133</sup> Today, we often see the dark shadows cast by the light of early Buddhism, with the "shadow Buddhists" blinded by the light, lost in the darkness.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>126</sup> SD 49.21 (2.1.4.4).

<sup>127</sup> M 107/3:7-15 (SD 33.5).

<sup>128</sup> S 6.2/1:138-140 (SD 12.3), nearly identical with **Uruvela S 1** (A 4.21/2:20 f).

<sup>129</sup> D 16,6.1/2:154 (SD 9).

<sup>130</sup> P **Harrison**, "Buddhanusmṛti in the Pratyutpanna-buddha-saṁmukhavasthitasamādhī-Sūtra," *J of Indian Philosophy* 6, 1978a:37.

<sup>131</sup> U **Karunaratne**, "Buddhology" (Ency Bsm), 1973:496 explains that the Buddha "was respected, adored and idealised. This tendency ... culminated in the belief that the Buddha was not a human being, but a superhuman being, a deva."

<sup>132</sup> A **Chaudhary**, "Causes of variety in Buddhist thought," in *Essays on Buddhism and Pali Literature*, Delhi, 1994a:65.

<sup>133</sup> P S **Jaini**, "Sramaṇas, their conflict with brahmanical society," *Collected Papers on Buddhist Studies*, Delhi, 1970:87.

<sup>134</sup> Further on "Reasons for the deification of the Buddha," see SD 36.9 (4.6).

**3.2.1.2** “[T]he Buddha ceases to be an ordinary human being, and is elevated to the status of a person greater than some of the great gods of the Vedic mythology.”<sup>135</sup> The 32 marks, originally describing the Buddha’s special virtues to be emulated transmogrified into superhuman attributes, turning him into a divine being. Thus, the Buddha’s “turban-like head” (*uṇhīsa*) was taken as representing the Buddha’s God-like omniscience: *uṇhīsan ti ... tam sabbaññuta,ñāṇam nāma ratana,makuṭam*, “the *uṇhīsa* ... this precious crown is called ‘omniscient knowledge’” (Cicuzza, 2011:43).<sup>136</sup>

**3.2.1.3** It was common even in the Buddha’s time for others to see him as a divine being. However, “investing a being with divine attributes was common in ancient India and by no means carried with it the dramatic implications which we assume in a monotheistic culture ... it was natural to refer to the Buddha in terms also used of gods. Such indicated little more than an attitude of deep respect and humility on the part of his followers.”<sup>137</sup>

In the early texts, the Buddha “was in every respect regarded merely as a superior man,” but posthumously, “as a consequence of the gradual process of deification ... he works wonders, he is omniscient.”<sup>138</sup> Thus, even while the Buddha lived, he was often seen by outsiders as some kind of god—such as depicted in **the (Pāda) Doṇa Sutta** (A 4.36).<sup>139</sup>

Suttas, such as **the Madhu,piṇḍika Sutta** (M 18), depict the Buddha as “become Brahmā” (*brahma,bhūto*),<sup>140</sup> and **Sn 508** tells us of a brahmin who, on seeing the Buddha, exclaimed, “Brahmā has been seen by me today!” (*bhagavā hi me sakkhi brahm’ajja diṭṭho*); in other words, the Buddha was “like Brahmā,” *brahma,samo*.

**3.2.1.4** The fact that people do attribute divine qualities to the Buddha even in his own lifetime, implies that there was an underpinning tradition that encouraged such a view of the Buddha. While the Buddha lived, he was able to correct such an unhelpful misattribution. After the Buddha’s death, the Buddha’s image was left to the faith and imagination of the followers and the unawakened. We begin to see the Buddha depicted as having greater powers and divinity, even in the imagination of the commentators.

Commentarial stories about the Buddha thus tend to depict him as being more than a normal person, and the drift of their stories—such as those about his past lives (the Jātakas)—tend to attribute some kind of divinity to the bodhisattva.<sup>141</sup>

In **the Cullaka Setṭhi Jātaka** (J 4), for example, the Buddha is said to have “bestowed ... arahatship” (*arahattam adāsi*) on Cūḷa Panthaka (Little Wayman).<sup>142</sup> Similarly, in the Dhammapada Commentary version of the story (DhA 2.3), the Buddha is recorded to have said , “Just now I made him [Cūḷa Panthaka] master of that which transcends the world” (*sāmikam akāsim, idāni lok’uttara,kuṭumbassa*).<sup>143</sup>

These stories use the language of story-telling, that is, the “**implicit**” (*neyya’ttha*) approach, for the benefit of the common masses. It was a culture that easily attributed (and still attributes) divinity to goodness, greatness,<sup>144</sup> and even human physiological and medical oddity (as suggested by some

<sup>135</sup> B G Gokhale, “Bhakti in Early Buddhism,” in *New Light on Early Buddhism*, Bombay, 1994a:71.

<sup>136</sup> Cf, eg, *Buddhapādamaṅgala* in Claudio **Cicuzza**, *A Mirror Reflecting the Entire World, The Pali Buddhapādamaṅgala or “Auspicious Signs on the Buddha’s Feet,” Critical Edition with English Translation*, 2011:37,8.

<sup>137</sup> P Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism, The Doctrinal Foundations*, London, 1989:169 f, cf 219 f; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed 2009:174.

<sup>138</sup> H **Nakamura**, “The deification of Gotama the man,” *Proceedings of the IXth International Congress for the History of Religion*, Tokyo, 1960:152 + 157. For details: Nakamura 2005:213-225.

<sup>139</sup> Also called **(Catukka) Doṇa S** (A 4.36/2:37 f), SD 36.13.

<sup>140</sup> M 18/1:111,13 (SD 6.14).

<sup>141</sup> A J Behm, “The eschatology of the Jatakas,” *Numen* 18,1 1971:30-44 (41) finds “definite and unmistakable signs of the divinisation of the Buddha.”

<sup>142</sup> J 4/1:119,17 (tr *The Jātaka*, 1895, 1981, J:C 1:18).

<sup>143</sup> DhA 2.3/1:250,13-15 (tr *Buddhist Legends*, 1921, 1979, 1:306).

<sup>144</sup> On an Indian farmer from Konne, Telengana, who daily worshipped a living US President as a deity, see SD 60.1c (11.1.5) n. A L **Basham** quips, “Divinity was cheap in ancient India” (*The Wonder that Was India*, 1954:

of the 32 marks).<sup>145</sup> These are provisional stories that are bridges for those wise enough to cross over into the Dharma garden of **explicit** beauty to enjoy greater and brighter varieties of trees, plants and flowers, and fresh air and open space. But worldly business and the competitive religious market simply prevent the crowd from even seeing the bridge, much less crossing it.

### **3.2.2 Upping the religious ante**

**3.2.2.1** While the Buddha lives and teaches, he would often address his audience using the terms of their religions and beliefs, and speak the language of stories and worldly idiom. Based on such ideas and stories, he would then present them with Buddhist values and methods. The Buddha was famously declared to have converted Brahmanism's highest God, **Brahmā** (he became a nonreturner),<sup>146</sup> and Vedic religion's most popular and mischievous god, **Indra**, better known as Sakra (P *sakka*), a streamwinner.<sup>147</sup> The greatest of the respected Indian gods became Buddhist saints.

Har Dayal, in his study of the Bodhisattva doctrine, observes that "the competition of the rival Indian sects and movements also led the Buddhists to advance new claims on behalf of their leader ... they transformed him into a living immortal, powerful and gracious deva."<sup>148</sup> The Buddha and the various gods of popular religion thus became products in the competitive religious market, where deities were copied, remodelled, garbed in new roles, and marketed.

**3.2.2.2** The religious conversion and marketing process works both ways. The Indian theologians were like Pygmalion creating his statue of Galatea<sup>149</sup> and falling in love with her. When they see the Buddhist images were more attractive, they simply pilfered them, and painted them over with their own colours, dressed them in new raiments, even names.

Sometimes **the name** itself was adopted, deified and glorified in captivating Indian religious art and iconography. The term **śiva** (Vedic *śiva*), "auspicious, happy, fortunate, blessed" is, for example, an epithet of arhathood and nirvana.<sup>150</sup> In Hinduism, it is the name of the most popular god of the Hindu trinity, Śiva (the destroyer)—the other 2 being Brahmā (the creator) and Vishnu (the preserver).

Māra, the antithesis of the Buddha, in the form of **Kaṇhā**, the dark one, became Krishna, the most beloved of the modern Hindu gods. He veritably replaces Indra (Buddhist Sakra) as the Hindu "Apollo." We can thus see how the gods (or demons) themselves are given new roles, even opposite to those they had in Buddhism.

The greatest conversion by the Hindus was clearly that of the Buddha himself. As early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE, the Vedic theologians invented and invoked the ideology of **avatars** (*avatāra*)—the incarnations of Vishnu.<sup>151</sup> By the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Buddha was regarded by the Hindus as the 9<sup>th</sup> and penultimate incarnation of Viṣṇu.<sup>152</sup>

### **3.2.3 The effects of the Buddha's death**

**3.2.3.1** Scholars have observed that after the Buddha's death, the image of the historical Buddha grew dimmer. Images of the Buddha bigger-than-life began to emerge and proliferate. Often, these

86; 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, London: 1967:88). Both kings and brahmins claimed divinity; the kings were often challenged and toppled. The brahmins were rejected by the recluses (*samaṇa*).

<sup>145</sup> On "The 32 marks: a medical evaluation," see SD 36.9 (5).

<sup>146</sup> **Ghaṭikāra S** (M 81) + SD 49.3 (4.2.1). Brahmā's conversion to Buddhism was so successful that the Hindus rejected him: SD 49.8b (9.2.2.3).

<sup>147</sup> On Sakra as a streamwinner, see SD 54.8 (1.2.4). See also **Sakka,pañha S** (D 21), SD 54.8.

<sup>148</sup> H **Dayal**, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, 1932:28 f.

<sup>149</sup> See SD 17.6 (3.1.3.6); SD 51.18 (2.3.1.5); SD 56.1 (4.3.1.3); SD 60.1d (7.7.5.5).

<sup>150</sup> **S 7.18/701\*/1:181** arhathood, **43.7/4:370**; **Sn 478**; **Tha 520**, 1140; **Thī 137**; **J 27\*/1:5,3**; **Pv 4:33** (PvA 250 *sivo ti anuppadvo* (trouble-free).

<sup>151</sup> SD 49.8b (2.3.7.3).

<sup>152</sup> SD 57.1 (3.3.1.5); SD 63.5 (2.1.2.2 f).

images assumed the qualities and gestures of the gods and demons of local beliefs, and are even depicted as worldly ideals, such as the pot-bellied “Laughing Buddha.”<sup>153</sup>

“The activity of the earthly Buddha, originally a living memory, has become, as it were, the *līlā* of a deity.”<sup>154</sup>

“Buddha was gradually shorn of human characteristics and superhuman qualities were bestowed on him. He was deified.”<sup>155</sup>

“[T]he idea of Gotama as a god ... came more and more to be in the air ... as his life on earth receded into the past ... the urge to worship required some outlet in the present.”<sup>156</sup>

With the Buddha’s death, the Buddhists themselves became more alienated from the historical Buddha. He was “elevated to the plane of a superman, and then made into a great divinity.”<sup>157</sup> Over time, especially in later sectarian Buddhism, we see an “elevation of the Buddha to a cosmic figure, if not a virtual deity.”<sup>158</sup>

**3.2.3.2** Following **the Buddha’s death**, Buddhists, especially sectarians, apparently, had difficulty accepting that such a superhuman could die, or they simply forgot or chose to ignore the early Buddhist teachings of the Buddha as way-shower (*akkhāta*, Dh 276) [3.1.2.1]. And so began an extended mourning wake for the dead Buddha.

Sectarian Buddhists introduced the view that the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni, who “died” was but simply an “emanation” (*nirmaṇa, kāya*)—a docetic form—of the Eternal Buddha or Dharmakāya. Some even call him the “First Buddha” (*ādi, buddha*)—like a First Cause. Further, there are numerous other Buddhas, as many as the Ganges sand, each with his own subtle “Enjoyment Body” (*sambhoga-kāya*) (seen only by Bodhisattvas), their own timeless Buddha-field or “Paradise,” the best known being “Western Paradise” or Sukhāvati of Amitābha Buddha.<sup>159</sup>

We only need, it seems, to recite Amitābha’s name with faith to join his Paradise upon dying. There is no need for any path to enlightenment—no streamwinning, no once-returning, no nonreturning, no arhathood; that’s old school—but this is a quantum leap of faith, the Great Vehicle (*mahā-yāna*). After all, since the Bodhisattva is already awakened, there is no need for arhathood or even historical Buddha.

While the spirit of early Buddhism is that **to live is to be impermanent**, the mourning Buddhists see the Buddha’s death as “immortality.” The Buddha does not need divinity; he is eternal and of immeasurable life (*amitāyus*) and omniscience (*sarvajñā*). The dogma of the Buddha’s Three Bodies (*trikāya*) also suggests that the Buddha is omnipresent and omnipotent. The notion of “Buddha seed” (*tathāgata, garbha*) means that we are already enlightened but do not know it: we only need to have faith that we are enlightened!

Alongside all these amazing qualities is the belief that these Buddhas are all embodiment of “**great compassion**,” that is, boundless grace and eternal love. To that extent, we have the best conceived of theistic religions, far outshining the Western conception of Almighty God and his human propensity for anger and cosmic devastation.

<sup>153</sup> The popular, pot-bellied image emerged in China during the Five Dynasties (907-960 CE) and became the dominant representation of bodhisattva Maitreya, the next Buddha. The figure is inspired by a Chinese monk named Budai (布袋), who lived during the Later Liang Dynasty. See SD 36.10 (4.1.2).

<sup>154</sup> A K Coomaraswamy, “The Buddha’s cūḍā, hair, uṣṇīṣa, and crown,” *J of the Royal Asiatic Soc*, 1928a:838.

<sup>155</sup> A Chaudhary, “Causes of variety in Buddhist thought,” 1994a:65.

<sup>156</sup> I B Horner, *The Early Buddhist Theory of Man Perfected*, London, 1936:203.

<sup>157</sup> WANG Pachow, “Gautama Buddha, man or superman?” in *Malalasekera Commemoration Volume*, Colombo, 1976:267.

<sup>158</sup> K Werner, “Enlightenment and arahatship, from early Buddhism to early Mahāyāna,” *Middle Way* 66, 1991: 16; cf A Bateau, “Le Parinirvāṇa du Buddha et la naissance de la religion bouddhique,” *Bulletin de l’École Française d’Extrême Orient* 61, 1974b:276.

<sup>159</sup> See SD 36.2 (7.2) Cosmic Buddhas.

### 3.2.4 Conclusion

**3.2.4.1** We began our study of the **Brahm'āyu Sutta** with the attribution of the 32 marks upon the Buddha, which affirms the fact that he was “the great man” (*mahā, purisa*), in the sense that if he were not to become the Buddha (if he had remained as a householder), he would have been a world-monarch, like Alexander the Great (356-323 BCE), just over a century after the Buddha's time.

In fact, even as a child, Alexander's mother Olympias, told him that he was “the son of Zeus,” a claim affirmed by his pilgrimage to the oracle at Siwa,<sup>160</sup> which declared him the son of the god Amun-Zeus.<sup>161</sup> He was also depicted in coins and art with divine symbols, such as horns, and enjoyed deified status by which he was worshipped in the state cults of his empire.

**3.2.4.2** The Buddha is depicted in the suttas—such as the **Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (D 30) and the **Brahm'āyu Sutta** (M 91)—as affirming he had all the 32 marks of the great man. This ancient lore of the 32 marks affirmed the Buddha not only as world-teacher, but “**the teacher of gods and humans**” (*sattā deva, manussānaṃ*)<sup>162</sup> this is especially to attract and influence non-Buddhists.

We see in the **Brahm'āyu Sutta** the 120-year-old brahmin profoundly inspired on hearing that the “great man” had indeed arisen in the world as the Buddha [§§1-2]. Brahm'āyu sends his pupil, Uttara, to investigate whether the Buddha has all the 32 marks, as claimed [§§4-8]. Uttara not only affirms the Buddha's 32 marks but also spends 7 months shadowing the Buddha closely watching that the teacher not only *has* the status of the great man, but *is* one spiritually worthy of them [§§8.3-22]. Brahm'āyu, on hearing this remarkable news, at once joyfully sets out to meet the Buddha himself [§§23-31].

Brahm'āyu, convinced and inspired that the Buddha is indeed the great man, goes on to question the Buddha on the spiritual life [§§32-35]. Since Brahm'āyu is spiritually ready, the Buddha teaches him the whole of the progressive Dharma talk, resulting in Brahm'āyu's gaining streamwinning [36]. Brahm'āyu then offers sangha-alms for 7 days in his own residence [§§37-38]. The Sutta closes with the Buddha leaving Mithilā and continuing his Dharma walk in Videha country. Brahm'āyu dies soon after that, and the Buddha declares that he is a nonreturner [§39].

**The Brahm'āyu Sutta** is thus a happy success story of the meeting between Brahm'āyu, who represents the old brahminical order (that shows proper respect for the old faith with wisdom) which prepares him to renew himself spiritually by practising and realizing the liberating Dharma taught by the Buddha. In this case, the 32 marks, far from presenting the Buddha's status, was the bridge that Brahm'āyu and Uttara cross over to awakening.

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<sup>160</sup> Siwa is situated between the Qattara Depression and the Great Sand Sea in the Western Desert, 50 km (31 mi) east of the Egypt-Libya border and 560 km (350 mi) from the Egyptian capital city of Cairo.

<sup>161</sup> Amun-Zeus was a syncretic deity comprising **Amun**, the supreme god in ancient Egypt, often depicted with ram's horns or a ram's head, which symbolized fertility and power. He was also associated with the sun god Ra as Amun-Ra. **Zeus**, king of the gods in Greek mythology, was the ruler of Mount Olympus, and the god of the sky and thunder.

<sup>162</sup> SD 15.7 (3.7); SD 54.2 (4.1.1.4).

## SD 63.8

# Brahm'āyu Sutta

## The Brahm'āyu Discourse

M 91

[133]

1 Thus have I heard.

At one time the Blessed One was walking in stages (on a teaching tour)<sup>163</sup> in Videhā<sup>164</sup> with a large community of monks, numbering some 500.

2 Now at that time, **the brahmin Brahm'āyu** was living in Mithilā.<sup>165</sup>

He was old, aged, great in years, well advanced in age, had reached the last stage of life—he was 120 years old. He was<sup>166</sup> a master<sup>167</sup> of the three Vedas,<sup>168</sup> along with their lexicon [glossary], ritual rules, phonology and etymology, and the Iti,hāsa Purāṇas as the fifth; learned in the vedic padas;<sup>169</sup> a grammarian;<sup>170</sup> well versed in nature lore<sup>171</sup> and the marks of the great man.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>163</sup> “Wandering in stages ...,” *cārikam caramāno*, lit, “walking the walk,” ie, wandering about teaching the Dharma and ministering to the people. For details, see **D 13,1 n** (SD 1.8).

<sup>164</sup> **Videhā**, a country and its people (DA 2:482; MA 1:226); orig a kingdom but by the Buddha’s time an aristocratic republic. Videhā was then one of the 2 important principalities of the Vajjī confederacy, with its capital at Mithilā. The country bordered on the Ganges, opposite Magadha; neighbouring Kosala and Kāsī (M 1:225; MA 2:265). Today this is Bihar (N India) and the Terai region of Nepal. **Gandhāra J** (J 406/3:364 f, 489/4:316) says that Videhā was 300 yojanas in extent, with 16,000 villages, well filled storehouses and 16,000 dancing girls. Videha was a great trade centre with merchants coming from Sāvattthī to sell their wares there (PvA 227).

<sup>165</sup> **Mithilā** was the capital of Videhā [prec n].

<sup>166</sup> “A master of the three Vedas ... the marks of the great man”: *tiṇṇam vedānam pāragū sa, nighaṇḍu, keṭu-bhānam sakkhara-p, pabhedānam iti, hāsa, pañcamānam padako veyyākaraṇo lokāyata, mahā, purisa. lakkhaṇesu anavayo*. This is the shorter brahmin pericope, as at **Assalāyana S** (M 93,3/2:147), SD 40a.2. Cf Tha 1171 (“a master of the three Vedas,” *tiṇṇam vedāna pāragu*); also Miln 10, Divy 619.20, 620.19. The longer brahmin pericope has the preliminary qualities, “a mantra-reciter, a mantra-expert” (*ajjhāyako manta, dharo*): **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3,1.3/1:88), **Soṇa, daṇḍa S** (D 4,5(3)/1:114), **Kūṭa, danta S** (D 5,6(7)/1:130); **Ti, kaṇṇa S** (A 3.58,1/1:163), (**Tevij-ja**) **Jāṇussoṇī S** (A 3.59,1/1:166), **Doṇa S** (A 5.192,2/3:223). The omission of these 2 qualities of the brahmin pericope for Brahm'āyu prob reflects his old age, so that he does not recite the Vedic texts as he did before. On the full stock & n, see **Doṇa Brāhmaṇ** (A 5.192,2.4)+n, SD 36.14.

<sup>167</sup> “**Master**,” *pāra, gū*, lit, “a goer to the beyond,” ie, (brahminical) expert who has fully mastered or understood to the utmost extent: D 1:885; M 2:144,22\* (MA 3:397,32 f); Dh 384; U 5,8; (UA 68,25 ff); Sn 699; J 166,18; B 2:200; ThaA 2:94,2. Buddhist usage, “one who has reached the far shore or the beyond (nirvana)”: S 1:195,8\*; Dh 348; It 33,1\*; Sn 771; cf Nm 1:10,10 f, *pāram vuccati amataṃ nibbānam*, “the deathfree nirvana is called ‘the beyond’.”

<sup>168</sup> The suttas and Comys mention only three Vedas—R̥gveda, Yajurveda and Sāmaveda (*irubbedā, yajubbedā, sāmavedānam*—DA 247; MA 3:362; AA 2:261; DhA 1:291; SnA 447; NcA:Be 14. The 4<sup>th</sup> Veda, the Atharva, is not mentioned, but these Comys say its existence is implied since the Itihāsa (oral tradition of brahminical legends of kings and sages) is called “the fifth,” ie, of the works regarded as authoritative by the brahmins. However, it is more likely that the legends are called “the fifth” [see text] in connection with the 4 branches of study related to the Vedas. See **Te, vijja S** (D 13), SD 1.8 (2.1).

<sup>169</sup> *Padako veyyākaraṇo*, ie, well versed in the *pada, pāṭha* of Sanskrit grammar. Technically, this refers to the *pada* (or literal, word for word) method of reciting (or writing) Veda sentences, ie, “a method of arranging each word of a Vedic text separately in its original form [cf *pada*] without regard to the rules of [sandhi]; cf *krama- and sarṃhitā-pāṭha*.” (SED). By itself, *pada* can here be translated as “word or word structure.”

<sup>170</sup> On *veyyākaraṇa*, see BHSD: sv *vyākaraṇa*, = *vaiyākaraṇa* (p517).

<sup>171</sup> *Lokāyata*. This seems to be the early meaning of the term. Its reference as the materialistic philosophy of Cārvāka is apparently later: see T W Rhys Davids, D:RD 1:166-172. See **Lokāyatikā Brāhmaṇā S** (A 9.38/4:428-432), SD 35.2. See also Jayatilleke, *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge*, 1963:48-58 (§§55-67).

<sup>172</sup> The 32 marks are given in §9; also **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3/1:87), SD 21,3; **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30/3:142), SD 36.9; **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14/2:17-20), SD 49.8a. Cf *mahā, purisa* as a spiritual ideal: **Mahā, purisa S** (S 47.11/5:158); **Vassakāra S** (A 4.35/2:35-57). Comys: The marks of the great man were a lore (*sattha*; Skt *śāstra*) based on

3 Now the brahmin Brahm'āyu heard thus:

"It is said that the recluse Gotama,<sup>173</sup> the Sakya son, who went forth from a Sakya family, is walking in stages (on a teaching tour) in Videhā with a large community of monks, numbering some 500.

3.2 Now a good report about that master Gotama has been going around thus:<sup>174</sup>

'So too, is he the Blessed One: for, he is arhat, fully self-awakened, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable people, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people, he makes it known to others.

He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter.

He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

It is good to see arhats such as these."<sup>175</sup>

[134]

4 Now at that time, the brahmin Brahm'āyu's resident pupil was the brahmin youth<sup>176</sup> Uttara. He was a master of the three Vedas, along with their invocations and rituals, phonology and etymology, and the *Iti, hāsa Purāṇas* as the fifth; learned in the vedic padas, a grammarian, and well versed in nature lore and the marks of the great man. [§2]

4.2 Then the brahmin Brahm'āyu addressed the brahmin youth Uttara:

"Dear Uttara, there is this recluse Gotama, the Sakya son, who went forth from a Sakya family, who is walking in stages (on a teaching tour) in Videhā with a large community of monks, numbering some 500. [§3]

4.3 Now a good report about that master Gotama has been going around thus:

'So too, is he the Blessed One: for, he is arhat, fully self-awakened, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable people, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.

Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people, he makes it known to others.

He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter.

He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.

It is good to see arhats such as these.' [§3.2]

4.4 Dear Uttara, go before the recluse Gotama and find out whether the report spread about him is true or not, and whether master Gotama is one such as this or not.

Thus through you we shall know master Gotama."

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12,000 works explaining the characteristics of great men, such as buddhas, pratyeka buddhas, chief disciples, great disciples, and wheel-turning monarchs. These works included 16,000 verses called "the Buddha mantra" (DA 1:248; MA 3:362; AA 2:262; NcA 15). Apparently, this lore has been expunged from brahminical texts or were not found therein. For details, see *Buddhānussati*, SD 15.7(4.1) n & *Lakkhaṇa S* (D 30/3:142-179), SD 36.9.

<sup>173</sup> This is a stock passage to show that the brahmin householders are well acquainted with the Buddha's background. This paragraph denotes the Buddha's social *status* (in the minds of the brahmins and the world), which adds a significant sense of charisma to his personality.

<sup>174</sup> For details on the recollection of the Buddha's virtues, see *Buddhānussati*, SD 15.7.

<sup>175</sup> *Sādhu kho pana tathā, rūpānaṃ arahataṃ dassanaṃ hotī ti. Arahataṃ* is 3 gen pl. For details on this statement, see *Kesa,puttiya S* (A 3.65/1:188-193), SD 35.4a (comy n 1d).

<sup>176</sup> "Brahmin youth," *māṇava*, a special term for a "brahmin student," usu a brahmin youth (Sn 1022, 1027, 1028; J 4:391 (*brāhmaṇa*°); DA 1:36, *satto pi coro pi taruṇo pi*, "a being who is a youth or thief,"; DhA 1:89 (pl) *māṇavā*, "men," Thī 112, spelt *mānava*, also at Sn 456, 589; Pv 1:87 (PvA 41, *kumāra*, "boy, youth"). On *māṇava*: §26.2 n.

5 “But how shall I know, sir, whether the report spread about master Gotama is true or not, and whether master Gotama is one such as this or not?”

5.2 “My dear Uttara, the 32 marks of the great man have been handed down in our mantras [§5.4], and the great man who is endowed with them has only 2 possible destinies, no other.<sup>177</sup>

5.3 If he lives the home life, he becomes a **wheel-turning monarch**, a just king who rules by Dharma (by law and justice), lord of the 4 quarters, all-victorious, who has stabilised his country and possesses the 7 treasures.

He has these **7 treasures**: The wheel-treasure,<sup>178</sup> the elephant-treasure, the horse-treasure, the jewel-treasure, the woman-treasure, the steward-treasure, and the counsellor-treasure as the 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>179</sup>

His children, more than a thousand, are brave and heroic, who crush the armies of others; over this earth bounded by the ocean, he rules with neither rod nor sword, but by means of Dhamma.

5.4 But if he goes forth from the home life into homelessness, he becomes the arhat [worthy], **fully self-awakened buddha**, who draws back the veil (of ignorance) in the world.<sup>180</sup>

Dear Uttara, I am the giver of mantras;<sup>181</sup> you are the receiver of mantras.”<sup>182</sup>

6 “Yes, sir,” replied the brahmin youth Uttara to the brahmin Brahm’āyu. Then, Uttara rose from his seat, and after paying homage to the brahmin Brahm’āyu, keeping him on his right, he left, walking in stages, heading for Videha country.

6.2 There, the brahmin youth Uttara approached the Blessed One, [135] saluted him, and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was concluded, the brahmin youth Uttara sat down at one side and looked for the 32 marks of the great man on the Blessed One’s body.

6.3 The brahmin youth Uttara saw, more or less, the 32 marks of the great man on the Blessed One’s body, except for two.

He was doubtful and uncertain about two of the marks, and he could not decide and make up his mind about them, that is, about the cloth-covered (male organ) enclosed in a sheath and about the largeness of the tongue.

<sup>177</sup> On this prophecy of the great man, see SD 63.7 (2.1.1.1) Asita.

<sup>178</sup> Comy: “**Wheel treasure**,” such as the wheel that is the jewel for the benefit of generating joy (*cakka,ratanan ti ādisu cakkāñ ca tan rati,janan-aṭṭhena ratanañ ca ti cakka,ratanam*, MA 3:365,25 f); ie, if he governs with the 4 wheels of prosperity (*sampatti*): dwelling in a suitable place (*paṭirūpa,desa,vāso*), relying on good persons (*sappurisūpassaya*), right self-aspiration (*atta,sammā,pañidhi*), and merits done in the past (*pubbe ca kata,puññatā*). Sn 360 mentions 3 of the 4 wheels; the 4<sup>th</sup>, “relying on good persons,” corresponds to “associating with the wise” (*paṇḍitānañ ca sevanā*) at Sn 359.

<sup>179</sup> The 7 treasures are given in **Bāla,paṇḍita S** (M 129,34-41), SD 2.22. The “wheel-turning monarch” (*cakka,-vatti rāja*) on account of possessing the wheel jewel (*cakka,ratana*) (DA 1:250; MA 3:366; KhpA 175; SnA 278; ItA 1:77).

<sup>180</sup> “Who draws back the veil (of ignorance) in the world,” *loke vivatta-c,chaddo*. On the origin and meaning of this phrase, see K R Norman, *Group of Discourses II*, 1992:217 n372. Comy: The world, shrouded in the darkness of the defilements, is covered by 7 veils: lust, hate, delusion, conceit, views, ignorance, and immoral conduct. Having removed these veils, the Buddha abides emanating light all around. Thus, he is one who draws back the veil in the world. Or else *vivatta-c,chada* can be resolved as *vivatta + vicchadda*; that is, he is devoid of the round (*vaṭṭa,rahita*) and devoid of veils (*chadana,rahita*). By the absence of the round (*saṁsāra*) he is an arhat; by the absence of veils, a fully self-awakened. (MA 3:367). On Asita’s prophecy, see SD 63.7 (2.1.1.2).

<sup>181</sup> “**Mantras**” (*mantā*) here refers to the verses of the 3 Vedas (MA 3:364,11; DhA 1:291), ie, R̥gveda, Yajurveda and Sāmaveda (*irurveda,yajurveda,sāmavedānaṁ*, NcA:Be 14). In Buddhist usage, *mantā* refers to “wisdom” (*paññā*) (DA 3:892; DhA 1:204; ApA 275). On “mantra” as “prayer” for classes of priests, warriors and poets, and as “magical formula” for the masses, see R N Dandekar, “Cultural background of the Veda,” *U of Ceylon Review* 11,3+4, 1953: 135-151. According to Dandekar, there are “about 10,560 (R̥gvedic) mantras, and some 1,028 non-Vedic mantras.

<sup>182</sup> *Aham kho pana tāta uttara mantānaṁ dātā, tvam mantānaṁ paṭiggahetā ti*. The same is said by Pokkharasāti to his *mānava*, **Ambaṭṭha** (D 3/1:89), SD 21.3. This statement reflects the brahmin Brahm’āyu’s sense of responsibility to carry out his scriptural teachings.

6.4 Then it occurred to the Blessed One:

“This brahmin youth Uttara sees, *more or less, the 32 marks of the great man on me, except for two. He is doubtful and uncertain about two of the marks, and he cannot decide and make up his mind about them, that is, about the cloth-covered enclosed in a sheath and about the largeness of the tongue.*” [§30+n]

7 Then the Blessed One projected a psychic wonder<sup>183</sup> so the brahmin youth Uttara saw the Blessed One's **cloth-covered** that was enclosed in a sheath.

7.2 Then, the Blessed One thrust out his **tongue**, and with it, he repeatedly touched both ear-openings and both nostrils, and he covered the whole of his forehead with his tongue.<sup>184</sup>

8 Then the brahmin youth Uttara thought:

“The recluse Gotama is endowed with the 32 marks of the great man.

8.2 Suppose I were to follow the recluse Gotama and observe **his conduct?**”<sup>185</sup>

Then, he followed the Blessed One for 7 months like a shadow, never leaving him.<sup>186</sup>

8.3 At the end of the 7 months in Videha country, the brahmin youth Uttara set out, walking in stages, heading for **Mithilā**.

There, the brahmin youth Uttara saluted the brahmin Brahm'āyu and sat down at one side.

As he was thus sitting at one side, the brahmin Brahm'āyu asked him:

“Well, my dear Uttara, is the report that has been spread about master Gotama [136] true or not? And is master Gotama one such as this or not?”

### Uttara's feedback to Brahm'āyu

#### THE BUDDHA'S 32 MARKS [2.0.1]

9 “The report that has been spread about master Gotama is indeed true, sir, and not otherwise; and master Gotama is one such as this and not otherwise; and he possesses **the 32 marks of the great man.**”<sup>187</sup>

(1) Master Gotama sets his foot with well-placed level tread.<sup>188</sup>

(2) On the **soles** of the great man's feet are wheels, each with a thousand spokes, all rimmed and hubbed, complete in every way.

(3) Master Gotama has projecting heels.

(4) Master Gotama has long fingers.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>183</sup> Comy explains that the Buddha performed this psychic wonder and thrust out his tongue after ascertaining that Uttara's teacher, Brahm'āyu, had the potential for attaining the fruit of recluseship (viz, the fruit of nonreturning, §39), and that his path-attainment depended on the dispelling of Uttara's doubts about the Buddha. (MA 3:369.3-11)

<sup>184</sup> It should be understood that both these displays of the great-man's marks are not actual physical objects but the ability of certain seers or religious virtuosi to envision them in connection with the Buddha or a world monarch. See [1.2.2.2].

<sup>185</sup> On account of Uttara's diligence in investigating whether the Tathagata is “a buddha or not,” he is said to be “an investigator after the Buddha” (*buddha, vīmaṃsaka*) (MA 3:371,11).

<sup>186</sup> “Like a shadow, never leaving him,” Be Ee *chāyā va anapāyini* (Se ... *anupāyini*; only Ce *jāya va ...*); as at S 1:72\*x2. 93\*; Dh 2, Tha 1041-1043; Ap Tha 10.1/1:52.

<sup>187</sup> While the Buddha has all 32 marks, some others, such as Bāvarī (Sn 1022) and Nanda (the Buddha's half-brother) (UA 168) had some of them. Further on these 32 marks, see **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30,1.2.2), SD 36.9. Kvu 283 discusses whether the bodhisattva has all or only some of the marks. See SD 36.9 (2.1.3).

<sup>188</sup> *Suppatiṭṭhita, pādo*. Comy: He puts the whole foot down on the ground with a single movement—neither the big toe first nor the heel (MA 3:376,1-11).

<sup>189</sup> *Dīgh'āṅgulī*. *Āṅgulī* usu means only the fingers. Comy incl the toes as well, and says that the digits are all thick at the root and taper off to slender tips (MA 3:376,8-12).

- (5) Master Gotama has soft, tender hands and feet.
- (6) Master Gotama's hands and feet are net-like [evenly spaced].<sup>190</sup>
- (7) Master Gotama's ankles are high-raised.<sup>191</sup>
- (8) Master Gotama's legs are like those of an antelope's.<sup>192</sup>
- (9) Master Gotama, without stooping, can touch and rub his knees with both hands at once.
- (10) Master Gotama's cloth-covered (male organ) is enclosed in a sheath.
- (11) Master Gotama has a golden complexion, a gold-like skin.<sup>193</sup>
- (12) Master Gotama's skin is so delicate and smooth that neither dust nor dirt can settle on it.
- (13) Master Gotama's body-hairs are separate, one to a pore.
- (14) Master Gotama's body-hairs grow upwards, bluish-black like collyrium, curling to the right.
- (15) Master Gotama's body is perfectly [divinely] straight (like Brahmā's).
- (16) Master Gotama has 7 convex surfaces (on the hands, feet, shoulders, and trunk).<sup>194</sup>
- (17) Master Gotama's body-front is like a lion's.<sup>195</sup>
- (18) Master Gotama has no furrow between his shoulders.<sup>196</sup>
- (19) Master Gotama's proportions are like a banyan tree: his arm-span equals his height.
- (20) Master Gotama's bust is evenly rounded.<sup>197</sup>
- (21) Master Gotama has a perfect sense of taste.
- (22) Master Gotama's jaw is like a lion's. [137]
- (23) Master Gotama has 40 teeth.<sup>198</sup>
- (24) Master Gotama's teeth are even.
- (25) Master Gotama has no spaces between his teeth.<sup>199</sup>
- (26) Master Gotama's teeth are large and brilliantly white [bright].
- (27) Master Gotama's tongue is very long and large (able to touch his forehead).
- (28) Master Gotama has a perfect [divine] voice (like Brahmā's, §21.2) that is sweet [resonant] like the sound of a *karavīka* [Indian cuckoo].<sup>200</sup>
- (29) Master Gotama's eyes are deeply dark [dark black].
- (30) Master Gotama's eye-lashes are (long and shapely) like a cow's.
- (31) Master Gotama has hair between his eye-brows that is white, soft like cotton-down.

<sup>190</sup> *Jāla,hattha,pādo*. Comy: "The 4 fingers of the tathagata's hands and the 5 toes of his feet are of an equal measure" (MA 3:376,17-23)—spaced evenly apart (with no swellings) as is the network (*jāla*) of a latticed window made by a skilled carpenter. A person whose fingers are "webbed" like a snake's hood (*phaṇa,hatthaka*, ie, overgrown together with skin like that of a bat's wing, VA 1027) is not fit to go forth (V 1:91,11, qu at MA 3:376,18). See A K Coomaraswamy, "The webbed finger of the Buddha," *Indian Historical Quarterly* 7, 1931:20.

<sup>191</sup> *Ussaṅkha,pādo*. The ankles are not low near the heels, as in other people (MA 3:377,1-9). Comy: The soles can be seen as they walk because "the ankles are fixed high" (DA 2:446,28 ff). Cf BHSD: ucchaṅka. See K Hoffman, "Ved. *Ucchva ṅ ká-, ucchla khá-, Pāli ussa ṅ khá-,*" *Indo-Iranian J* 4,2-3 June 1960:111-118.

<sup>192</sup> Ie with flesh all around, not in a lump at one side; meaning "straight-limbed." Cf S 1.30/76\*/1:16; Sn 165.

<sup>193</sup> A "golden" complexion symbolizes beauty, health and longevity.

<sup>194</sup> The "7 convex surfaces" (*satt'ussāda*) refers to well-formed parts of the 4 limbs, both shoulders, and the back (MA 3:378,20 ff).

<sup>195</sup> Comy: The Buddha's body-front is fully formed "like a lion's," and his posterior half is also well-formed; not curved like that of a lion's (MA 3:379,6-24).

<sup>196</sup> Comy: From the small of the back up to the shoulders, the fleshy covering is like a smooth golden slab (MA 3:380,1-7).

<sup>197</sup> In modern lingo, this prob means that the Buddha's pectoral muscles are well-formed, giving him a deep warrior's chest. This prob refers to the aesthetic roundness and symmetry of muscles that are visible.

<sup>198</sup> He has 20 teeth in each jaw (MA 3:381,15). A normal adult has 32 teeth (16 in each jaw). The presence of 40 teeth in a normal human is a condition known as **hyperdontia**. The extra 8 teeth are called **supernumerary teeth**, and they can be visible or impacted (hidden under the gums). On the marks and health, see SD 36.9 (5.2).

<sup>199</sup> Comy: 20 teeth in each jaw (MA 3:381,14 ff).

<sup>200</sup> MA 3:382,13 ff; see Kvu 467. The Buddha's remarkable voice is due to his large lungs (mark no 20), well developed chest (mark no. 17), breath awareness (through breath meditation), and awakened mind.

(32) Master Gotama's **head** is shaped like a royal turban.<sup>201</sup>

These are the marks of the great man of master Gotama.<sup>202</sup>

With these, master Gotama is fully endowed with the 32 marks of the great man.

#### THE BUDDHA'S BODILY AND VOCAL DEPARTMENT

**10** When master Gotama **walks**, he steps forth with the right foot first.<sup>203</sup>  
 He neither stretches his foot too far nor puts it down too near.  
 He walks neither too quickly nor too slowly.  
 He walks without his knees knocking together.  
 He walks without his ankles knocking together.  
 He walks neither raising nor lowering his thighs, nor bringing them together nor spreading them apart.<sup>204</sup>

When master Gotama walks, he moves only the lower part; he does not walk with bodily force.<sup>205</sup>

When master Gotama turns to look, he turns around his whole body.<sup>206</sup>

He neither looks up nor looks down nor looks around. He does not walk staring about.<sup>207</sup>

He looks a plough-yoke's length before him;<sup>208</sup> beyond that his knowledge and vision are unhindered.<sup>209</sup>

**11** When he **enters a house**,<sup>210</sup> he neither raises nor lowers his body; he neither bends it forwards nor backwards. **[138]**

He turns round neither too far from the seat nor too near it.

He does not lean on the seat with his hand.

<sup>201</sup> Ie, it is absolutely symmetrical.

<sup>202</sup> This refrain should undoubtedly recur after the naming of each mark. While omitted in our text it occurs in **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30,1.2.2/2:17-19), SD 36.9.

<sup>203</sup> The overall purpose of these descriptions of the Buddha's deportment (gestures and postures or "kinetics") is to show the grace of his bodily movements, which inspires charm and charisma.

<sup>204</sup> The tetrad of verbs, "raising, lowering, bringing together, spreading apart" *unnāmeti, onāmeti, sannāmeti, vināmeti*, occurs 5 times in this Sutta [§§10, 11, 13, 14, 16]. The idea is that the Buddha moves not awkwardly but graciously, in an apparently flowing gait.

<sup>205</sup> Comy: Sweat exudes from the body when one keeps on flinging out one's arms (MA 3:388,7 f).

<sup>206</sup> This is called the "elephant gaze" (*nāgāpalokana*, **D 16**,4.1/2:122; **M 50**,21/1:337). See MA 2:420, 3:133 *nāga, vilokana* (this latter is referred to at MA 3:388,9 f).

<sup>207</sup> *Na ca vipekkhamāno gacchati* (the reading is somewhat corrupt). Comy: He walks about without looking here and there as though not seeing elephants, horses, etc (MA 3:388,13 f)—which may mean "he walks without staring about." But the next phrase, "he looks a plough's length before him" (*yuga, mattaṇ ca pekkhati*) suggests "not without observing," ie, he walks mindfully. Clearly this implies mindfulness and clear awareness.

<sup>208</sup> Comy: He fixes his eyes some 9 spans (*vidatthi*) before him when he is walking (MA 3:388,15-17). A "span" is the distance between the tips of the thumb and of the little finger extended, which means one looks about 2 m (about 7 ft) or about 45° downwards in front of oneself. See Sn 410.

<sup>209</sup> "Unhindered," *an-āvaṭṭam* (as at **S 2.14**/295\*/1:52). Comy: "It would not be said that he does not see beyond a plough's length, since no wall or door or bush or creeper is able to obstruct him. Thus because of unhindered (*anavarāṇa*) knowledge, various thousands of world-systems are reckoned as one" (MA 3:388,18-21); ie, he is able to see and know them all together with "unhindered" insights with his buddha-wisdom.

<sup>210</sup> *Antara, ghara*, usu means the place before a house or between houses (of a village) (V 4:176,18), ie, "in a village or amongst houses" = *anto, gāme* (V 1:40,5; M 2:7,31); ie beyond the "village or town pillar" (*inda, khīla*). But here it means "in a house" (*anto, ghare*, V 1:341,1; S 3:121,13), ie, from the threshold or door-step (*ummāra*), beyond the house entrance, which is contextually also called *ummāra* (of the village or town) (Pāc 83.2.1 @ V 4:160).

He does not throw<sup>211</sup> his body onto the seat.<sup>212</sup>

**12** When **seated in a house**, he neither fidgets with his hands nor fidgets with his feet.<sup>213</sup>

He neither sits with his knees crossed nor with his ankles crossed.

He does not sit with his hand holding his chin.

When seated indoors he is never afraid nor shivers nor trembles, nor is he nervous.

Being unafraid, not shivering, not trembling, not nervous, his hair does not stand up.

When seated amongst houses, he is intent on seclusion.

**13** When he receives **water for the bowl**,<sup>214</sup> he neither raises the bowl nor lowers it, neither tips it forwards nor tips it backwards.

He receives neither too little nor too much water for the bowl.

He washes the bowl without making a clatter,<sup>215</sup> without twirling it around.<sup>216</sup>

He does not put the bowl on the floor to wash his hands: when his hands are washed, the bowl is washed; and when the bowl is washed, his hands are washed.

He pours the water for the bowl neither too far nor too near, and he does not spill it about.<sup>217</sup>

**14** When he receives **rice**, he neither raises nor lowers the bowl, neither tips it forwards nor tips it backwards.

He receives neither too little rice nor too much rice.

He adds curry<sup>218</sup> in the right proportion; he does not exceed the right amount of curry in a morsel.

He turns the morsel over two or three times in his mouth and then swallows it.

No rice grain enters his body unchewed, and no rice grain remains in his mouth; then he takes another morsel.

Master Gotama takes food experiencing the taste without experiencing greed for the taste.

**15** The food master Gotama takes has **8 factors**; that is to say, it is:<sup>219</sup>

- (1) not for amusement,
- (2) not for intoxication,
- (3) not for fattening,
- (4) not for beautifying,
- (5) but only for keeping this body going and enduring,
- (6) for ending hunger pangs,

<sup>211</sup> *Pakkhipati*. Comy says that the Buddha does not place himself down by way of his upper limbs or by way of his lower limbs, but sits down gently (*saṇīkaṃ*) (MA 3: 389,12-18).

<sup>212</sup> On monastic rules regarding deportment "among houses" (*antara,ghara*) [§11]: **Sekh 1-56** (V 4:185-199).

<sup>213</sup> Comy: He does not scrape or grind his feet on the ground (MA 3:389,22 f).

<sup>214</sup> This whole section repeats for "when he has eaten and receives water for the bowl" [§16].

<sup>215</sup> Be Ee Se *na khulu,khulu,kāraṇaṃ*; Ce *na bulu,bulu,kāraṇaṃ* (Comy is silent). PED khulukhulu-kāraṇaṃ, "so as to make the sound *khulu, khulu,*" ie, clattering or bumping about. DP sv: making a "rattling noise." Cf BHSD khura,khura- (Skt *khurakhurāyate*, "makes a rattling sound in the throat."

<sup>216</sup> Comy: He does not twirl his bowl around, or splash out drops of water, or tear the leaf-cover of a fly-whisk or fan (MA 3:389,19-21).

<sup>217</sup> This describes washing the almsbowl before a meal. §16 describes washing the bowl after a meal.

<sup>218</sup> "Curry," *vyañjana* (Cv 8.4.4 @ V 2:214,14; A 3:49 *odano aneka,sūpo aneka,vyañjano*, "rice with various soups and curries"; Pv 2:1,15 *bhatta,vyañjana*, "rice with curries"; PvA 50,8 *sa-b,byañjanam bhojanam*, "food with curries"). Comy: The Buddha takes 3 portions of rice to one of curry (*vyañjana,mattāyā ti vyañjanassa nattā bāna odanato catuttha,bhāgo*, MA 3:391,7-9). "Curry" here refers broadly any side-dish that goes with rice (main dish); Malay *lauk*. It is used in a special sense of "spicy curry" locally, ie, a dish whose main ingredient is curry powder and other condiments.

<sup>219</sup> Comy (MA 3:392,1-3) refers to **Sabbāsava S** (M 2,14)+n, SD 30.3, and Vism 1.89-94/31-35. See also M 1:355, 2:10; S 4:104; A 3:388, 4:167.

(7) for the sake of supporting the holy life, [139]

(8) considering, "Thus I shall get rid of an old feeling, and not let a new feeling arise, and, in this way, I will be blameless, and live at ease."

**16** When he **has eaten** and receives water for the bowl, [§13] *he neither raises nor lowers the bowl, neither tips it forwards nor tips it backwards.*

*He receives neither too little nor too much water for the bowl.*

*He washes the bowl without making a clatter.*

*He washes the bowl without twirling it around.*

*He does not put the bowl on the floor to wash his hands: when his hands are washed, the bowl is washed; and when the bowl is washed, his hands are washed.*

*He pours the water for the bowl neither too far nor too near, and he does not spill it about.<sup>220</sup>*

**17** When he has eaten, he places the bowl on the ground neither too far nor too near; and he is neither careless about the bowl nor over-careful about it.<sup>221</sup>

When he has eaten, he sits in silence for a while, but he does not let pass the time for giving thanks [the blessing].<sup>222</sup>

When he has eaten, he gives thanks. He does so neither criticizing the meal nor expecting another meal. He instructs, inspires, rouses, and gladdens<sup>223</sup> the audience with talk on Dhamma. Having done so, he rises from his seat and departs.

**18** He **walks** neither too fast nor too slowly, and he does not go as one anxious to get away.<sup>224</sup>

**19** Master Gotama's **robe** is worn neither too high nor too low on his body,<sup>225</sup> nor does it stick to his body,<sup>226</sup> nor hang too loose on his body.<sup>227</sup> The wind does not blow master Gotama's robe about on his body.<sup>228</sup>

Dust and dirt do not cling to master Gotama's body.

**20** When he **has gone to the monastery**, he sits down on an appointed seat.

Having sat down, he washes his feet,<sup>229</sup> but master Gotama does so without concern over grooming them.

Having washed his feet, he seats himself cross-legged, sets his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.

He does not occupy his mind with self-affliction, or the affliction of others, or the affliction of both.<sup>230</sup>

Master Gotama sits with his mind set on his own welfare, on the welfare of others, and on the welfare of both, even on the welfare of the whole world. [140]

<sup>220</sup> This describes washing the almsbowl after a meal. See §13 for washing the almsbowl before a meal.

<sup>221</sup> He is not indifferent to it and takes care of it; not like someone who once, having washed his bowl, put it on a bowl-stand without wiping it dry and lets dust gather on it without bothering about it (MA 3:392,8-10).

<sup>222</sup> The blessing (*anumodanā*) is a short inspirational talk following the meal, instructing the donors and audience in some practical aspect of Dharma and expressing the wish that their meritorious karma will bring them abundant fruit. In the modern context, this is a "merit-dedicating" gesture when, with a mind of lovingkindness, we wish significant others well and happy, and dedicate merits to deceased.

<sup>223</sup> Cf **Pāruleyya S** (S 22.81,9+ n), SD 6.1.

<sup>224</sup> Comy: He does not hurry away (MA 3:393,8-10).

<sup>225</sup> Comy: Neither as high as the jaw nor as low as the ankles (MA 3:393,11-16).

<sup>226</sup> Comy: Because he does not sweat as other people do (MA 3:393,17 f).

<sup>227</sup> Comy: It does not stand free like a cloak smeared with oil (*khali,sāṭaka*) (MA 3:393,19 f).

<sup>228</sup> Reading *Se kāyasmim* for *Be Ce Ee kāyamhā*. The wind does not ruffle his robe (MA 3:393,21 f).

<sup>229</sup> *Pāde pakkhāleti*. V 1:9, 227; D 3:208, 209; M 1:354, 414, 2:139; S 1:107, 4:183; U 59, 86.

<sup>230</sup> Cf **M 61,9/1:415**, **110,18/3:23**; **S 42.12/4:339**; **A 3.53/1:157**.

**21** When he has gone to the monastery, he teaches Dhamma to an assembly.

He neither flatters nor berates that assembly; he *instructs, inspires, rouses, and gladdens* that assembly with talk on Dharma.

21.2 **The speech** that issues from master Gotama's mouth has **8 qualities**:<sup>231</sup> it is distinct, clear, charming, audible, pleasant, full,<sup>232</sup> fluent, deep, and resonant.

But while master Gotama's speech is intelligible as far as the audience extends, his voice does not carry beyond the audience.

When the people have been *instructed, inspired, roused, and gladdened* by him, they rise from their seats and depart reluctantly, gazing only at him.

**22** We, sir, have seen master Gotama *walking*, we have seen him *standing*, we have seen him *entering indoors*, we have seen him *indoors seated in silence*, we have seen him *eating indoors*, we have seen him *seated in silence after eating*, we have seen him *giving thanks* after eating, we have seen him *going to the monastery*, we have seen him in the monastery *seated in silence*, we have seen him in the monastery *teaching Dharma* to an audience.

Such and such is master Gotama; and more than that."<sup>233</sup>

### Brahm'āyu's response

**23** When this was said, the brahmin Brahm'āyu (at once) rose from his seat, and, after arranging his upper robe on one shoulder, he raised his hands clasped in reverence towards the Blessed One and uttered this exclamation three times:

"Homage to that Blessed One, arhat, fully self-awakened!

Homage to that Blessed One, arhat, fully self-awakened!

Homage to that Blessed One, arhat, fully self-awakened!

Perhaps somewhere, sometime or other we may meet master Gotama, perhaps we may have some conversation with him."

**24** Then, the Blessed One, walking in stages arrived at **Mithilā**.

There the Blessed One stayed in Makhā,deva's mango grove.

The brahmin householders of Mithilā heard: **[141]**

[53] "It is said that the recluse Gotama, the Sakya son, who went forth from a Sakya family, is walking in stages (on a teaching tour) in Videhā with a large community of monks, numbering some 500.

24.2 Now a good report about that master Gotama has been going around thus:

'So too, is he the Blessed One: for, he is arhat, fully self-awakened, accomplished in wisdom and conduct, well-farer, knower of worlds, peerless guide of tamable people, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.

<sup>231</sup> The 8 qualities of the Buddha's voice (*aṭṭha, samannāgata sara*): distinct (*vissatṭha*), clear (*viññeyya*), charming (*mañju*), pleasant (*savanīya*), full (*bindu*) [full], fluent (*avisarī*), deep (*gambhīra*) and resonant (*ninnā-dī*). Cf Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra's voice: **Jana,vasabha S** (D 18,19/2:211), SD 62,3; **Mahā Govinda S** (D 19,18/2:227). Hence, the Buddha's voice is said to be "Brahma-like" (*brahma-s, sara*), eg, **Lakkhaṇa S** (D 30,2.22.3), SD 36.9.

<sup>232</sup> "Full," *bindu*, which Comy explains as *sampiṇḍita*, "connected" (MA 3:394,13). Cf *bindu-s, saraa*, "full rounded voice" (Sn 350; of a *mahā, purisa*, SnA 1:349); Pv 3.34 (text *vindu*°, vl *bindu*°; PvA 189: *avisata-s, sara sampiṇḍita-s, sara*, "continuous, well-rounded voice"); J 2:439 (Comy, *bindhunā avisaṭṭena piṇḍitena sarena samannāgata*, "with full, rounded, continuous voice"), 5:204, 299 *sampiṇḍita, ghana-s, sara*, "rounded, compact voice"), 6:518 = 581 (comy *piṇḍita-s, sara*, "rounded voice").

<sup>233</sup> Comy: This is the meaning: "The excellent qualities of master Gotama I have not described are far more numerous than those I have described. His excellent qualities are like the great earth and the great ocean; expounded in detail they are unending and immeasurable like the sky." (MA 3:395,13-18)

*Having realized by his own direct knowledge this world with its gods, its Māras and its Brahmās, this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its rulers and people, he makes it known to others.*

*He teaches the Dharma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, both in the spirit and in the letter.*

*He proclaims the holy life that is entirely complete and pure.*

*It is good to see arhats such as these.”*

**25** Then the brahmin householders of Mithilā approached the Blessed One.

Having approached the Blessed One, some exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and friendly exchange was concluded, they sat down at one side.

Some greeted the Blessed One with their palms together, and then sat down at one side.

Some announced their name and clan before the Blessed One, and then sat down at one side.

Some kept silent and sat down at one side.<sup>234</sup>

**26** The brahmin Brahm'āyu heard:

“The recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyas who went forth from the Sakya clan, is staying in Makhā,deva’s mango grove outside Mithilā.”

Then the brahmin Brahm'āyu went to Makhā,deva’s mango grove with a number of brahmin youths [students]. When he arrived at the mango grove, he thought:

“It is not proper that I should approach the recluse Gotama without first being announced.”

26.2 Then, he addressed a certain brahmin youth:

“Come now, māṇavaka,<sup>235</sup> go to the recluse Gotama and ask in my name whether the recluse Gotama has good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and abides in comfort,<sup>236</sup> saying:

‘Master Gotama, the brahmin Brahm'āyu asks *whether master Gotama has good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and abides in comfort,*’ and say this:

[§2] ‘*The brahmin Brahm'āyu, master Gotama, is old, aged, great in years, well advanced in age, has reached the last stage of life; he is 120 years old.*

*He is a master of the three Vedas, along with their invocations and rituals, phonology and etymology, and the Iti,hāsa Purāṇas as the fifth; learned in the vedic padas, a grammarian, and well versed in nature lore and the marks of the great man.*

26.3 Of all the brahmin householders who live in Mithilā, the brahmin Brahm'āyu is declared the foremost of them in wealth, in knowledge of the mantras, [142] and in age and fame.

He wishes to meet master Gotama.”

## Brahm'āyu meets the Buddha

### BRAHM'ĀYU APPROACHES THE BUDDHA

26.4 “Yes, sir,” the brahmin youth replied.

<sup>234</sup> *Appekacce tunhī,bhūtā ekam-antarā nisīdimisu.* Also at **Soṇa,daṇḍa S** (D 4,9/1:118), 30.5; **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5,8.2/1:134), SD 22.8; **Pāyāsi S** (D 23,4/2:319), SD 39.4; **Āṭānāṭiya S** (D 32,1/3:194, 11/206×2), SD 101.1; **Cūḷa Saccaka S** (M 35,8/1:229), SD 26.5; **Sāleyyaka S** (M 41,3/1:285, 291), SD 5.7; **Apañṇaka S** (M 60,3/1:401), SD 35.5; **Raṭṭha,pāla S** (M 82,3/2:55), SD 92.5; **Brahm'āyu** (M 91,25/2:141), SD 63.8; **Nagara,vindeyya S** (M 150,3/3:291), SD 96.6; **Veḷu,dvāreyya S** (S 55.7,3/5:353), SD 1.5; **Venāga,pura S** (A 3.63,2/1:181), SD 21.1; **Kesa,puttiya S** (A 3.65,1.5/1:188), SD 35.4a; Mv 1.22.3 @ V 1:36,7 (the Buddha’s first meeting with Bimbisāra after the awakening). See also SD 38.41 (5.3.1.1).

<sup>235</sup> *Māṇavaka* (voc) is a diminutive of *māṇava*, prob evoking a sense of endearment, esp as a vocative. [§4.1 n “brahmin youth.”]

<sup>236</sup> *App'ābādham app'ātāṅkam lahuṭ,ṭhānam balaṃ phasu,vihāram,* lit, “free from illness, not indisposed, in a buoyant state, strong, dwelling at ease.” This is stock: **Subha S** (D 10,1.2/1:204,10 f), SD 40a.13, (DA); **Mahā,-parinibbāna S** (D 16,1.2/2:72,10), SD 9; **Bodhi Rāja,kumara S** (M 85,3/2:91,9), SD 55.2; **Piya,jātika S** (M 87,6-/2:108,6); **Kaṇṇa,katthala S** (M 90,2/2:125,14); **Pv** 551; **Miln** 14,16-29.

**The brahmin youth** approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him, and when this courteous and amiable conversation was concluded, he stood at one side.

Standing at one side, the brahmin youth said this to the Blessed One:

“The brahmin Brahm’āyu asks after master Gotama, saying:

[26.2] ‘Master Gotama, the brahmin Brahm’āyu asks *whether master Gotama has good health, mental ease, vigour, strength and abides in comfort,*’ and says this:

[§2] ‘*The brahmin Brahm’āyu, master Gotama, is old, aged, great in years, well advanced in age, has reached the last stage of life; he is 120 years old.*

*He is a master of the three Vedas, along with their invocations and rituals, phonology and etymology, and the Iti, hāsa Purāṇas as the fifth; learned in the vedic padas, a grammarian, and well versed in nature lore and the marks of the great man.*

[§26.3] *Of all the brahmin householders who live in Mithilā, the brahmin Brahm’āyu is declared the foremost of them in wealth, in knowledge of the mantras, and in age and fame.*

*He wishes to meet master Gotama.’*

[The Blessed One said:]

“Māṇava, let the brahmin Brahm’āyu do what he considers timely to do so.”<sup>237</sup>

**27** Then the brahmin youth went to the brahmin Brahm’āyu and said this:

“Permission has been granted<sup>238</sup> by the recluse Gotama. You may, sir, *do what you consider timely to do.*”

27.2 Then, the brahmin Brahm’āyu approached to the Blessed One.

The assembly saw him coming in the distance, and they at once made way for him<sup>239</sup> as for one who was well known and famous.

Then the brahmin Brahm’āyu said to the assembly:

“Enough, sirs, let each sit down in his own seat. I shall sit here next to the recluse Gotama.”

#### BRAHM’ĀYU SEES THE BUDDHA’S 32 MARKS

**28** Then the brahmin Brahm’āyu approached the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him, and when this courteous and cordial conversation was concluded,

he sat down at one side and looked for the 32 marks of the great man on the Blessed One’s body. [143]

[§6.3] The brahmin Brahm’āyu *saw, more or less, the 32 marks of the great man on the Blessed One’s body, except for two.*

*He was doubtful and uncertain about two of the marks, and he could not decide and make up his mind about them, that is, about the cloth-covered (male organ) enclosed in a sheath and about the largeness of the tongue.*

[§6.4] Then it occurred to the Blessed One:

“This brahmin Brahm’āyu sees, *more or less, the 32 marks of the great man on me, except for two. He is doubtful and uncertain about two of the marks, and he cannot decide and make up his mind about them, that is, about the cloth-covered enclosed in a sheath and about the largeness of the tongue.*”

<sup>237</sup> *Yassa dāni māṇava brahm’āyu brāhmaṇo kālaṃ maññatī ti.* This is stock, usu as a polite response to the departure formula [SD 60.7 (1.1.3)]. Here the Buddha uses it as assenting to the brahmin Brahm’āyu’s visit. See **SD 60.7** (refs: 1.2); **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,103) n, SD 8.10; SD 60.6 (3.3.1).

<sup>238</sup> *Kat’āvakaṣo kho’mhi. Amhi = atthi (Skt asmi), “there is.”* Lit, “there is an opportunity made (or given here).”

<sup>239</sup> “They at once made way for him,” Be *oramiya okāsam akāsi*; Ce *atha nam okāsam akāsi*; Ee Ke Se *oram attha okāsam akāsi*; Comy (Ee) *oram attha nam okāsam akāsi*; vll Ka *oramati*. Be notes: **Oramiyā ti pana tvāpaccayan, tattha, samvaṇṇanānurūpaṃ visodhita, padaṃ.** Comy: “Getting up quickly, having divided into two (sides), they made room for him (to pass)” (MA 3:396,8 f). On *oramati*, see *J of the PTS* 2, 1887:154 f.

29 Then the brahmin Brahm'āyu addressed the Blessed One in verse:

<p>The 32 marks I have heard I still do not see two of them What is the cloth-covered, Though called by a feminine name,<sup>240</sup></p>	<p>that are the signs of the great man, upon your body, master Gotama. hid in a sheath, greatest of men? surely your tongue is a manly one.<sup>241</sup></p>
--	---

<p>Perhaps your tongue is large, Please thrust it out a bit, for welfare in this very life And so we seek leave to ask</p>	<p>according to what we've heard. and so, O seer, heal our doubt, and happiness in lives to come. of what that we aspire to know.</p>
--	---

30 Then it occurred to the Blessed One:

[§6.4] "This brahmin Brahm'āyu sees, *more or less*, the 32 marks of the great man on me, except for two. He is doubtful and uncertain about two of the marks, and he cannot decide and make up his mind about them, that is, about the cloth-covered enclosed in a sheath and about the largeness of the tongue."<sup>242</sup>

[§7] Then the Blessed One projected a psychic wonder so the brahmin Brahm'āyu saw the Blessed One's **cloth-covered** that was enclosed in a sheath.

Then, the Blessed One thrust out his **tongue**, and with it, he repeatedly touched both ear-openings and both nostrils, and he covered the whole of his forehead with his tongue.<sup>243</sup>

31 Then the Blessed One replied to the brahmin Brahm'āyu in verse:

<p>The 32 marks you've heard can all be found on my body—</p> <p>What should be known I've directly known.<sup>244</sup> What should be abandoned I've abandoned—</p>	<p>that are the signs of the great man so, brahmin, doubt them not.</p> <p>What should be developed I've developed. therefore, brahmin, I am buddha.<sup>245</sup> <b>[144]</b></p>
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<sup>240</sup> Be *nārī,samana,savhayā*; Ce *nāri,sahanāma savhayā*; Ee Se *nārīsaha nāma savhayā*. An allusion to the tongue, *jivhā*, which is of the feminine gender. (MA 3:396,11-13)

<sup>241</sup> Be Ee Se *kacci jivhā narassikā*; Ce *kacci jivhā na rassikā*, "surely (your) tongue is not short."

<sup>242</sup> On the ethical problem of such a display, see Miln 167.

<sup>243</sup> As the case with the brahmin youth Uttara [§7], where Comy explains that this act is to clear Uttara of all doubts, this done so that Brahm'āyu realizes his potential for attaining nonreturning (MA 3:364 f).

<sup>244</sup> This whole stanza: *Abhiññeyyam abhiññātām | bhāvetabbañca bhāvitām | pahātabbam pahīnam me | tasmā buddho'smi brāhmaṇa: Sela S* (M 92,19.2 = Sn 558, SD 45.7a) = Tha 828. Qu at: VA 1:115,21 f; UA 84,29 f; Pm A 1:215,92; Vism 7.26/201. See foll n.

<sup>245</sup> M 92,19.2/2:109 = Sn 558 (SD 45.7a); A 4.36/2:39; see prec n. Cf M 1:171, V 1:8. Comy: Here *buddha* specifically *Tasmā buddho'smi* refers to the "fully self-awakened" (*sammā,sambuddha*), described as follows: (1) who is "fully accomplished" (*pāragata*) in what is to be directly known or understood (*abhiññeyya*), ie, all things or states, mundane and supermundane; (2) who is accomplished in abandoning what is to be abandoned (*pahāna,-pāragū*), ie, by mastering the 5 aggregates, (3) who has overcome all defilements, so that he is accomplished in the development of what is to be developed (*bhāvanā,pāragū*), ie, the 4 noble paths (streamwinning, etc), (4) leading to the accomplishment of the ending of all attainments (*samāpatti,pāragū*), ie, cessation (*nirodha*) or nirvana (MA 3:397,12-22). This is a summary of the 12 aspects of **the 4 noble truths**, ie, **its 4 modes (the truths) each in 3 phases (theory, practice, realization)**, thus: (1-3) suffering, it should be *understood*, it has been understood; (4-6) arising of suffering (craving), it should be *abandoned*, it has been abandoned; (7-9) the path, it should be *cultivated*, it has been cultivated; (10-12) ending of suffering (nirvana), it should be *realized*, it has been realized: SD 1.1 (6.2); cf ItA 149,2-17. On the 4 truths arranged as 1-2-4-3 (practice model), see **Mahā Saḷ-āyatanika S** (M 149,11 etc) + SD 41.9 (2.4), SD 53.26 (2).

For welfare in this very life  
since leave is given you—please ask

and happiness in lives to come—  
whatever you aspire to know.

#### BRAHM'ĀYU QUESTIONS THE BUDDHA

**32** Then the brahmin Brahm'āyu thought:

“Permission has been granted me by the recluse Gotama. Which should I ask him: about good in this life or good in the lives to come?”

Then he thought:

“I am skilled in the good of this life, and others too ask me about good in this life. Why shouldn't I ask him only about **good in the lives to come?**”

Then he addressed the Blessed One in verse:

- |      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| 32.2 | How does one become a brahmin?<br>How does one attain to (true) knowledge?<br>How sir has one the 3 knowledges?                                  | <i>kathaṃ kho <b>brāhmaṇo</b><sup>246</sup> hoti<br/>kathaṃ bhavati <b>veda,gū</b><br/><b>tevijjo</b> bho kathaṃ hoti</i>                      |
| 33.3 | How sir does one become an arhat?<br>How does one gain fulfillment?<br>How sir is one a silent sage?<br>How is one called buddha? <sup>247</sup> | <i><b>arahaṃ</b> bho kathaṃ hoti<br/>kathaṃ bhavati <b>kevalī</b><br/><b>muni</b> ca bho kathaṃ hoti<br/><b>buddho</b> kinti pavuccatī ti.</i> |

**33** Then the Blessed One replied within verse:

- |      |   |  |
|------|---|--|
| 33.2 | Who knows his former lives,<br>sees heaven and states of deprivation,<br>and has also arrived at birth's destruction <sup>248</sup> —<br>a sage who's gained direct knowledge.  | <i>pubbe,nivāsaṃ yo vedi<br/>saggāpāyaṃ ca passati<br/>atho jāti-k,khayaṃ patto<br/>abhiññā vosito muni</i>  |
| 33.2 | Who knows his mind is purified,<br>who is freed from all lust,<br>who has abandoned birth and death, <sup>249</sup><br>who has fulfilled the holy life,<br>who has transcended all <sup>250</sup> things [states] <sup>251</sup> —<br>one such as this is called buddha. <sup>252</sup> | <i>cittaṃ visuddhaṃ jānāti<br/>muttaṃ rāgehi sabbaso<br/>pahīna,jāti,marāṇo<br/>brahma,cariyassa kevalī<br/>pāra,gū sabba,dhammānaṃ<br/>buddho tādī pavuccatī ti</i> |

<sup>246</sup> *Brāhmaṇa, veda,gū, tevijja* and *sottiya* refer to ideals in Brahmanism: see **Mahā Assa,pura S** (M 39,24, 26 and 27), SD 10.13. The term *kevalī* is an important Jain term referring to one who has gained omniscience and thus is fully free from karma. *Muni* is a common non-Vedic religious ideal. We see here the Buddha uses these terms in a Buddhist sense for Dharma-based teachings and practices. On the Buddha's "natural adaptation" of popular religious terms giving them Buddhist significance, see natural adaptation. See SD 12.1 (6).

<sup>247</sup> Although Brahm'āyu prob uses *buddha* specifically to refer to Gotama, the term in the Buddha's reply clearly refers to any fully self-awakened one (ie as a generic term).

<sup>248</sup> S 1:167; A 1:165; Thī 63 f; Iti 100. Cf Dh 423; Sn 647 of a brahmin.

<sup>249</sup> This and next line: A 4.22/2:23.

<sup>250</sup> "All" (*sabba*) refers to whatever is experienced through the 5 physical senses and the mind: **Sabba S** (S 35.23), SD 7.1.

<sup>251</sup> See A 4.22/2:23.

<sup>252</sup> For Comy's scholastic analyses of Brahm'āyu's 8 questions in these 2 verses, see MA 3:397 f,

BRAHM'ĀYU SEE DHARMA

**34** When this was said, the brahmin Brahm'āyu rose from his seat, and, after arranging his upper robe on one shoulder, he prostrated himself with his head at the Blessed One's feet, and he covered the Blessed One's feet with kisses and caressed them with his hands, announcing his name.<sup>253</sup>

"I am the brahmin Brahm'āyu, master Gotama! I am the brahmin Brahm'āyu, master Gotama!"

**35** Those in the assembly were filled with wonder and marvel, and they said:

"It is wonderful, indeed, sirs, it is marvellous, indeed, what great power and great might the recluse Gotama has, for the well-known and famous brahmin Brahm'āyu to make such a display of humility!"

35.2 Then the Blessed One said to the brahmin Brahm'āyu: **[145]**

"Enough, brahmin, rise! Sit in your own seat since your mind has faith in me."

The brahmin Brahm'āyu then rose and sat down in his own seat.

### The progressive Dharma talk

BRAHM'ĀYU MASTERS DHARMA

**36** The Blessed One then gave him a **progressive talk**<sup>254</sup>—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'ānisamsa*

36.2 When the Blessed One perceived that brahmin Brahm'āyu's mind was ready, pliant, hindrance-free, elevated and lucid;

then, he explained to him the teaching peculiar to the Buddhas,<sup>255</sup> that is to say, **suffering, its arising, its ending, and the path.**<sup>256</sup>

<sup>253</sup> As at M 89,9/2:120. Cf S 1:178, 193. See M:H xxv.

<sup>254</sup> This is the "progressive talk" (*ānupubbi,kathā*) pericope [very often spelt *anupubbi*]: **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3,- 2.21/1:110), SD 21.3; **Kūṭa,danta S** (D 5,29/1:148), SD 22.8; **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.15.2/2:41 + 3.19/2:43 + 3.23.2/2:44), SD 49.8; **Upāli (Gaha,pati) S** (M 56,18/1:380), SD 27.1; **Brahm'āyu S** (M 91,36/2:145), SD 63.8; **(Licchavī) Sīha S** (A 8.12/4:186), SD 71.5; **(Vesālika) Ugga S** (A 8.21/4:210), SD 70.3; **(Hatthi,-gāmika) Ugga S** (A 8.22/4:213), SD 45.15; **Suppabuddha Kuṭṭhi S** (U 43/49), SD 70.4; **V 1:16** (§10, to Yasa), SD 11.2(7); **V 1:16** (to Yasa's father), 1:18 (to Yasa's mother and ex-wife), 1:19 (to Yasa's 4 friends); 1:20 (Yasa's 50 friends), 1:23 (the 30 youths), 1:37 (to Bimbisāra and entourage), 1:181 (80,000 village heads), 2:156 (Anātha,piṇḍika), 2:192 (a would-be assassin of the Buddha sent by Ajāta,sattu).

<sup>255</sup> *Buddhānarāṇ sāmukkaṃsīkā dhamma,desanā*. This is an occasion when the Buddha teaches the 4 noble truths directly to the laity; for stock passage, see **V 1:16** (the youth Yasa), 16 (Yasa's father, the seth houselord), 18 (to Yasa's mother and former wife), 19 (Yasa's 5 friends), 20 (Yasa's 50 friends), 23 (to the group of 30 lucky youths, *bhadda,vagga*), 37 (to 12 "myriad" (*nahuta*) of brahmins and householders of Magadha, headed by Bimbisāra), 181 (Bimbisāra's 80,000 village headmen), 226 (Belatṭha Kaccāna, between Rajagaha and Andhaka,-vinda); **D 3,2.21/1:110** (to Pokkhara,sāti), **5,29/1:148** (to Kūṭa,danta), **14,3.11/2:41** (to prince Khaṇḍa and Tissa the chaplain's son), 14.3.15/2:43 (a crowd of 84,000), **14,3.19/2:44** (another similar crowd); **M 56,18/ 1:379 f** (to Upāli), **91,36/2:145** (to Brahmāyu); **A 8.12,9/4:186** (to general Sīha), **8.21,5-6/4:209** (to the houselord Ugga of Vesālī), **8.22,5-6/4:213** (to the houselord of Hatthi,gāma), **U 5.3/49** (to the leper Suppa,buddha).

<sup>256</sup> This is stock: D 1:110, 148, 2:41; M 1:379; A 3:184, 4:186, 209; U 49.

36.3 And just as a clean cloth, free of stains, would take dye well,  
even so, in the brahmin Brahm'āli, while seated right there,  
there arose the dust-free stainless Dharma-eye [vision of truth],<sup>257</sup> thus:  
"All that is of the nature of arising is of the nature of ending."<sup>258</sup>

36.4 Then the brahmin Brahm'āyu,  
having seen the Dharma, having mastered the Dharma, having known the Dharma,  
having immersed himself in the Dharma,  
having crossed over doubt, having cleared away uncertainty,  
having won moral courage, independent of others,  
dwell in the Teacher's teaching.<sup>259</sup>

#### BRAHM'ĀYU'S REFUGE-GOING<sup>260</sup>

**37** Then the brahmin Brahm'āyu said to the Blessed One:  
"Excellent, master Gotama! Excellent, master Gotama!  
Just as if one were to place upright what had been overturned,  
or were to reveal what was hidden,  
or were to show the way to one who was lost,  
or were to hold up a lamp in the dark so that those with eyes could see forms,  
in the same way, in numerous ways, the Dharma has been declared by master Gotama.  
37.2 I go to master Gotama for refuge and to the Dharma and to the sangha of monks.  
From today let master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life.  
37.3 Let the Blessed One, together with the community of monks, consent to accept  
tomorrow's meal from me."

The Blessed One consented by his silence.

Then, knowing that the Blessed One had consented, the brahmin Brahm'āyu rose from his seat,  
and after paying homage to the Blessed One, keeping him on his right, he departed.

**38** Then, when the night had passed, the brahmin Brahm'āyu prepared exquisite foods, hard  
and soft, at his own residence, and he had the time announced to the Blessed One:  
"It is time, master Gotama, the meal is ready."<sup>261</sup> [146]

<sup>257</sup> *Evam eva pokkhara, sātissa brāhmaṇassa tasmim̐ yeva āsane virajam̐ vīta, malam̐ dhamma, cakkhum̐ udapādi.* Comy says that the "Dharma-eye" (*dhamma, cakkhu*) is the path of stream-winning: in **Brahmāyu S** (M 91,36/2:145), it refers to the 3 paths (*tiṇṇam̐ maggānam̐*), ie culminating in nonreturning; in **Cūḷa Rāhul'ovāda S** (M 147,9/3:280), the destruction of influxes (*āsava-k, khaya*). The full sentence: "All that is subject to arising is subject to ending," shows the mode in which the path arises. The path takes ending (nirvana) as its object, but its function is to penetrate all conditioned states as being subject to arising and ending. (MA 3:92)

<sup>258</sup> *Yam̐ kiñci samudaya, dhammam̐ sabbantarim̐ nirodha, dhamman ti.*

<sup>259</sup> *Atha kho brahm'āyu brāhmaṇo diṭṭha, dhammo patta, dhammo vidita, dhammo pariyo, gāḷha, dhammo tiṇṇa, vicikiccho vigata, katham̐. katham̐ vesāraja-p, patta apara-p, paccayo satthu, sāsane.* This is stock stating the attaining of streamwinning: Aññasi Koṇḍañña (**Mv 1.6.32** @ V 1:12); Yasa's father (**Mv 1.7.10** @ V 1:16), SD 11.2; king Bimbisāra (**Mv 1.22.9** @ V 1:37); Belaṭṭha Kaccana (**Mv 1.16.9** @ V 1:226); Anātha, piṇḍika (**Cv 6.4.5** @ V 2:157); a certain person (**Cv 7.3.7** @ V 2:192); Pokkharasāti (**D 3/1:110**), SD 21.3; Kūṭa, danta (**D 5/2:488**), SD 22.8; Upāli *gahapati* (**M 56/1:380**), SD 27.1; the wanderer Dīgha, nakha (**M 74/1:501**), SD 16.1; general Sīha (**A 8.12/4:186**); the leper Suppabuddha (**U 5.3/49**). Cf **Nakula, pitu S** (A 6.16, 2.7+4), SD 5.2; (**Aṭṭhaka**) **Ugga S 1** (A 8.21/ 4:209); (**Aṭṭhaka**) **Ugga S 2** (A 8.22/4:213), SD 45.15.

<sup>260</sup> On the refuge-going formula, see SD 45.11 (3).

<sup>261</sup> This passage is stock (with variations in the venue): brahmin **Soṇa, daṇḍa** (D 4/1:125), SD 30.5; brahmin **Lohicca** (D 12/2:448), SD 34.8; **Cunda** the smith (D 16/2:127 = U 8.5/81), SD 9; **Kiki**, king of Kāsī (M 81/2:50), SD 49.3; **Ratṭha, pāla's father** (M 82/2:63); prince **Bodhi** (M 85/2:92), SD 55.2; **Nanda, mātā upāsikā** (A 7.53/4:64); general **Sīha** (A 8.12/4:187); **Gopālaka** (U 4.4/38); brahmin **Verañja** (Pār 1.4 @ V 3:11).

Then, in the morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went with the community of monks to the brahmin Brahm'āyu's residence and sat down on the prepared seat.

38.2 Then, for a week, the brahmin Brahm'āyu, with his own hands, served and satisfied the community of monks led by the Buddha with various kinds of exquisite food.

#### BRAHM'ĀYU ATTAINS NONRETURNING

39 At the end of that week, the Blessed One set out, walking in stages, in Videha country. Soon after he had departed, the brahmin Brahm'āyu died.

39.2 Then a number of monks approached the Blessed One, and having saluted him, they sat down at one side and said this to the Blessed One:

“Bhante, the brahmin Brahm'āyu has died. What is his destination? What is his future course?”

“Bhikkhus, the brahmin Brahm'āyu was wise, he entered the path of Dharma in accordance with the Dharma;<sup>262</sup> and did not trouble me concerning the Dharma.<sup>263</sup>

39.3 With the destruction of the 5 lower fetters, he has arisen **spontaneously** (in the pure abodes) and will there attain final nirvana, without ever returning (to earth) from that world.”<sup>264</sup>

The Blessed One said this. The monks were satisfied and rejoiced in the Blessed One's word.

— evaṃ —

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<sup>262</sup> Be Ce Ee *paccapādi dhammassānudhammaṃ*; Se ... *dhammaṃ sānudhammaṃ*. Comy: “In this sutta *dhamma* means the ‘arhat path’ (*arahatta, magga*), and *anudhamma* means the fruits of recluseship and the 3 lower paths, that one attains in successive order” (MA 3:398,11-13).

<sup>263</sup> *Paṇḍito bhikkhave brahm'āyu brāhmaṇo paccapādi dhammassānudhammaṃ, na ca maṃ dhamma-dhikaraṇaṃ viheseṣi*. Instead of *na ca maṃ ... viheseṣi* (Be; Comy), Ee *navamaṃ ... viheseṣi*, Se *n'eva maṃ ...*. See M:H 3:332 n2.

<sup>264</sup> *Brahm'āyu bhikkhave brāhmaṇo pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī, anāvatti, dhammo tasmā lokā ti*. Cf M 3:247, 270; S 4:63, 5:346; U 8, 50.