

SD 64.12d (Duka) Dakkhiṇeyya Sutta

The (Twos) Discourse on Those Worthy of Offerings

A 2.34

Theme: Those truly worthy of offerings

0.1 Sutta summary

The (Duka) Dakkhiṇeyya Sutta (A 2.34) is a short discourse on what kinds of people are truly worthy of offerings (*dakkhiṇeyya*). The Buddha then states that there are 2 kinds of people who are truly worthy of offerings, that is, the learners (*sekha*) (the streamwinner, the once-returner and the nonreturner) and the spiritual adept (*asekha*), that is, the arhat, on account of their impeccable moral lives.

1 Giving (*dāna*)

1.1 KINDS OF GIVING

1.1.1 Material giving

1.1.1.1 The Commentary explains that here the term **worthy of offerings** (*dakkhiṇeyya*) refers to how many kinds (*kati*)¹ of persons are suitable for receiving offerings; for “offerings” (*dakkhiṇa*) means giving or alms (*dāna*)² (AA 2:123,26 f). Primarily, **giving** here refers to alms-giving since monastics as renunciants live itinerant lives, taking food merely to sustain themselves for their practice and for living a moral life. They, as a rule, live on only one meal a day, taken only within the “proper time” (*kālena*), that is, usually only one meal between dawn and noon.

By “offerings” here are meant primarily those of the 4 supports, that is, *almsfood, robes (or cloth for robes), shelter (for dwelling or for resting), and healthcare (including medicines)*. Such offerings are said to be “**material giving**” (*āmisa, dāna*),³ which is contrasted with “non-material giving” [1.1.2]. Certain “extra” (*atireka*) offerings (such as an extra robe or some medicine) are allowable during the proper time.

1.1.1.2 The offerings given to monastics should be **allowable** (*kappiya*),⁴ that is, they do not breach any of the Vinaya rules or the precepts in the letter or in the spirit. Such offerings should be *properly gotten, properly given and properly used by the recipient*. Expensive objects such as branded watches and jewelry as personal gifts are clearly unallowable and demeritorious since they represent opulence.

Proper giving entails the following: one gives in faith, with respect, at the right time, with a hospitable heart, and without harming anyone.⁵ **Proper usage** of the gift includes the recipient not hoarding or storing such gifts over the allowable duration,⁶ that certain gifts (like robes, food and shelter) should be freely shared when needed,⁷ and they should be used with mindfulness and moderation.⁸

¹ I read this as *kati, vidha*, since we are not seeking a statistical total but rather considering what kinds of people are “worthy of offerings.”

² *Dakkhiṇeyyā ti dakkhiṇā vuccatī dānaṃ, tassa paṭiggahaṇa, yuttā kati puggalā ti pucchati.*

³ Also *s’āmisa-*; opp *nirāmisa*. See **Udākūpama S** (A 7.15), SD 28.6 (1.2.4.3). As temporal needs, contrasted with *dhmma*: A 1:91 = It 98; MA 1:89,5 f; ItA 2:144,11.

⁴ SD 62.4b (2.2.1.8).

⁵ For details, see **Sappurisa Dāna S** (M 113/3:37-45), SD 23.7.

⁶ Ghee, butter, oil, honey and molasses, eg, though allowed as “medicines,” can only be kept for 7 days. See Pāc 23 @ V 3:251; V 1:199 f, 209; VA 3:718,5 f.

⁷ See eg **Kosambiya S** (M 48,6(4)) + SD 64.1 (2.1.4).

⁸ See eg **Dhammaññū S** (A 7.64,6), SD 30.10.

1.1.2 Non-material giving

1.1.2.1 Offerings may also be made in a non-physical way. “**Non-material giving**” (*nirāmisa dāna*), can take forms such as giving of one’s time, labour or expertise, and include spiritual counselling, attending to the sick or needy, building a meditation hut (*kuṭi*), or cleaning a shrine (*cetiya*).⁹ Such giving of course should be given not only to renunciants, monasteries and Buddhist centres, but also for the good of the many as **voluntary services** or **social work**. Such types of work should, strictly speaking, be done only by the laity, since it involves engaging with the world.

1.1.2.2 In modern times, we often hear of Buddhist monastics going into various kinds of social work for various reasons. The early Vinaya was introduced by the Buddha strictly for a life of **renunciation** and non-engagement with the world. This is a decision one makes before renouncing and is clearly stated in the ordination act, that is, one renounces the world *for only one purpose*, that of attaining liberation from the world and from suffering.

In modern times, we see a strong tide of **secularism** sweeping over monastic groups that tend to take a laxer view of the Vinaya, taking the robe as merely a status symbol, or new interpretations of the teachings. Thus, most who are, for any reason, “unable to meditate,” may take up scholarly or scholastic study of Buddhism, do translation work, or other intellectual activities. The problem of monastics doing social work is clear: it would be difficult for such monastics to fully keep to the Vinaya. Monastics with such difficulties need to be under permanent training and tutelage.

One attempt at such a marriage of monastics with social work is to claim that these “socially engaged” priests or the “New Society” Order Members are being “both lay and ordained,” or “neither lay nor ordained.” Assuming such order members do keep to the rules of celibacy and poverty (or simplicity), they may, for various reasons—with a command of large temples and various buildings, wealth and charisma—work more effectively than the laity doing similar work.

However, one who is seriously seeking awakening by way of the Buddha’s teachings of renunciation, that is, the work of letting go of the world, would probably prefer to turn to the forest monastic tradition which is still extant today. The approval of the world does not work to direct one to the path of awakening, but rather to remain and revel in the world. Ironically, by way of appearance, we can see many modern monastics dressing and keeping their hair ever more like their worldly supporters. We should of course not judge others by their looks alone; for still waters run deep with water monsters.

1.1.3 “Field” (*khetta*)

1.1.3.1 According to the suttas and Commentaries, the term **field** (*khetta*) here means the ground, the foundation, the place for growth of merit.¹⁰ The imagery of the “field” is apt here since it reflects such (1) giving as related (2) to the idea of “sowing merit” and harvesting its fruits, and (3) that the recipients of such giving are worthy, that is, capable of making the giving efficacious.

(1) We have already discussed the nature of **giving** (*dāna*) that it should be allowable, respectfully given, and properly used [1.1.1.2].

(2) **The sowing of merit** refers to one’s intention (*cetanā*) of giving that must be rooted in at least non-greed and non-hatred, that is, the offering is joyfully prepared, with charity (*cāga*) and love (*mettā*), thus joyfully given, and feeling thus after the giving.¹¹

⁹ On the giving of Dharma as the highest gift, see SD 64.9 (2.2.2.2).

¹⁰ *Khettan ti vatthu patitṭhā, puññassa viruhana-t, thānan ti attho* (AA 2:123,28 f).

¹¹ On feeling joyful before, during and after the giving, see (**Sumana**) **Dāna S** (A 6.37,2), SD 22.1; SD 22.10b (3.4).

(3) “**Worthy** recipients” refers to those who are (1) true renunciants and those on the path of awakening, that is, the streamwinners and so forth, and (2) who are needy, that is those who, on account of the giving, uplift their lives to be able to be morally virtuous, charitable and mindful themselves. The giver’s karmic goodness, as it were, lives on through these beneficiaries and recipients creating and growing a network of common karmic goodness benefiting everyone that the network encompasses, including oneself (the giver).

1.1.3.2 Giving with **non-delusion** needs some explanation; it basically means giving with wisdom, that is, properly understanding the nature of wholesome giving, its purpose, its process and its benefits. **The Dāna Vatthu Sutta** (A 8.33) is instructive here in listing 8 motivations of giving in which the first 4 are spiritually unwholesome, the next 3 only beneficial in a worldly sense, while the 8th and last is the best motivation for giving.¹²

The 8 motivations for giving are:

(1) love, (2) hate, (3) delusion, (4) fear, (5) tradition, (6) heavenly rebirth, (7) for calming the mind, and (8) “adorning the mind.” (SD 6.6c).

The first 4 motivations for giving are spiritually unwholesome for the simple reason that one gives with a **psychological bias** (*agati*),¹³ that is, (1) out of love or desire (*chanda*), (2) out of hatred (*dosa*), (3) out of delusion (*moha*), or (4) out of fear (*bhaya*). The Commentary glosses the first motive, *chanda*, as *pema*, “(worldly) love” (AA 4:123).

(1) **Giving out of love or desire** simply means one gives due to some kind of attachment towards the recipient that is not based on lovingkindness. Even when one is giving to someone one “loves,” it should be properly done, be enriched with lovingkindness, with unattached joy, rejoicing in the *opportunity* rather than in the person.

(2) R E A Johansson explains: “How can one give from **hatred**? The most reasonable explanation seems to be that it refers to the hatred and aggression concealed in the unconscious id of a person. One can hate monks and what they stand for because of some frustrations with them or because of one’s own failure in religious life. But by means of **reaction formation** this hatred can be transformed into the opposite attitude unconsciously. Maybe the act of giving will then be performed more demonstratively or even fanatically than would seem natural. Or the hatred behind the generosity could be directed towards the self. A man hating himself unconsciously could **compensate** this by generosity. In these cases, there would be no conscious knowledge of the real motive behind the gifts. But it is also possible to feel hatred and *express* it by giving in an ironic or condescending way.”¹⁴

(3) **Giving out of delusion** means that one lacks charity, love or wisdom, and regards one’s giving as bringing one a good reputation or social standing, or that one is simply returning a favour done so that one owes “nothing,” or that one, giving a “better” gift, feels superior to the receiver (and rejecting “inferior” gifts from certain “lesser” people).

(4) **Giving out of fear or obligation** may arise out of a fear of being blamed by others or out of the fear of a painful rebirth (AA 4:123). However, when such a fear arises from moral shame (*hiri*) and moral fear (*ottappa*) respectively, the fear may work beneficially with some wisdom.

¹² A 8.33/4:236-239 (SD 6.6c).

¹³ In the 4 biases (*agati*), *chanda* replaces *lobha*, “greed,” which is a near-synonym; as *chandâgati*, *dosâgati*, *mohâgati* and *bhayâgati* they are called the “4 motives” (*thāna*): **Sigal’ovāda S** (D 31,5), SD 4.1; **Agati S 1** (A 4.17), SD 89.7; **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5,6.4) n, SD 2.21; SD 31.12 (6.4.1.3); SD 53.5 (2.2.1.1).

¹⁴ “Defense mechanisms according to psychoanalysis and the Pāli *Nikāyas*.” In *Buddhist and Western Psychology*, Boulder, CO, 1983:11-24 (16 f).

On the other hand, it is also possible that we could give out of mortal fear, that is, a fear of losing something precious or even our lives.¹⁵

The next 3 kinds of giving are beneficial only in a worldly sense, that is, as stated in **the Dāna Maha-p,phala Sutta** (A 7.49):

(5) one gives thinking, “**It would not be right for me to let this old family custom die!**” [1.2.3]

(6) one gives hoping to “**be reborn in a heavenly world**” [1.2.1], and

(7) one gives so that one “**calms the mind**” [1.2.6].

In both Suttas, the best motivation for giving is that:

(8) one gives “**for the sake of adorning the mind, as a support for the mind**” [1.2.7].

1.2 MOTIVATIONS FOR GIVING

1.2.0 Dāna Maha-p,phala Sutta (A 7.49)¹⁶

1.2.0.1 The Dāna Maha-p,phala Sutta (A 7.49), a teaching given by the Buddha through the elder Sāriputta for our benefit, discusses 7 reasons why people make offerings during the Buddha’s time. Since these ancient religions, including Buddhism, have persisted and evolved to this day, we can say that these reasons continue to serve as a study of the various motivations for religious people or those conditioned by tradition to continue to make offerings even today.

1.2.0.2 In modern terms, the 7 reasons for giving may be said to be as follows:¹⁷ [1.1.3.2 for 8 reasons]:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| (1) for a good rebirth; | [1.2.1] |
| (2) on account of ethics; | [1.2.2] |
| (3) on account of tradition; | [1.2.3] |
| (4) on account of compassion; | [1.2.4] |
| (5) on account of religious belief; | [1.2.5] |
| (6) for the sake of mental calm; | [1.2.6] |
| (7) as “an adornment for the mind.” | [1.2.7] |

Of all these reasons for giving, any of the first 6 may bring the giver a good rebirth, but when that karmic fruit is exhausted the giver returns to this world, that is, including the subhuman realms. This is like a game of cosmic snakes-and-ladders,¹⁸ where the players are swallowed up by the cosmic serpent and keep falling back to square one.

The Sutta closes with the Buddha declaring that the best reason for giving is **the 7th**, that is, as “**an adornment for the mind, the benefit of a support for the mind**” [1.2.7], which means to beautify the mind through working to minimize, even remove, the unwholesome roots. This type of giving ensures that one does not return to the sense-world, that is, one goes on to awaken.

¹⁵ A literary example can be seen in Pearl S Buck’s *The Good Earth* (1931 ch 14), where a decadent rich man, fearing for his life, was so terrified at suddenly seeing the novel’s hero, Wang Lung, thinking he was part of the mob that had attacked the palace, that he gave him all his money, which actually marks a turning-point in the story.

¹⁶ **Dāna Maha-p,phala S** (A 7.49/4:59-63), SD 2.3.

¹⁷ Cp the 8 grounds of giving listed in **Dāna Vatthu S** (A 8.33/4:236 f), SD 6.6c. [1.1.3.2]

¹⁸ On snakes-and-ladder as an ancient Indian game based on karma, rebirth and samsara, see SD 48.1 (6.3.1.5); SD 61.3 (2.4.1.1).

1.2.1 Giving for a good rebirth

1.2.1.1 The Dāna Maha-p,phala Sutta (A 7.49) says that **the 1st person** makes a gift, seeking his own profit, with a mind attached to the merits, seeking to store them up for himself, thinking, **“I’ll enjoy this after death”** [A 7.49,3.3]. In this case, the giver clearly believes in an afterlife in the form of heavens and of suffering states.

He makes his gift—food or drink; cloth, vehicle; garland, perfume or ointment; bedding, shelter or lighting accessories—to a brahmin or a recluse. In this case, we may understand “brahmin” as referring to any non-Buddhist religious person, while “recluse” (*samaṇa*) refers to a Buddhist monastic. In fact, in the case of the first 6 reasons for giving, the giver can be anyone, not necessarily a Buddhist.

1.2.1.2 The Buddha then goes on to say that the giver, having made his gift for the sake of **a good rebirth**, dies and is reborn in the host of **the 4 great kings** (*cātum, mahā, rājika*). This heaven is cosmologically the closest to our world, and is the lowest of the 6 sense-world heavens. In fact, we see that the 2nd giver [1.2.2] is reborn in the heaven just above the 4 great kings, and so on, progressively, with the 7th kind of giver [1.2.7] reborn in the brahma-heaven just above that of the 6th sense-world heaven. This progression of rebirth in the heavens suggest that these types of giving are listed in an ascending order of karmic benefits, with the 7th reason for giving as the best, since it can free the giver from samsara [1.2.7].

1.2.1.3 The Sutta continues by relating how the giver, “having exhausted that, that power, that status, that sovereignty, **he is a returner** (*āgāmī*), coming back to this world” (A 7.49,3.7). In other words, with the ending of his lifespan in the heaven of the 4 great kings (which is not more than 500 celestial years),¹⁹ the giver falls (*cavati*) from that heaven and is reborn back on earth according to his past karma (bad and good).

In fact, broadly, in the phrase “coming back to this world” [A 7.49,3.7], this world includes not only the human world, but also the 4 subhuman planes, that is, the asuras, the pretas, the animals and the hell-beings.²⁰ In other words, he may also fall into any of these subhuman states!

Clearly then, giving for the sake of a “good rebirth”—despite its benefit of rebirth in the heaven of the 4 great kings—still brings one back into the human state or a suffering state. Thus giving for the sake of heavenly rebirths, after all, is not a good motivation for giving.

1.2.1.4 Indeed we see this same situation where the giving brings one to an even higher heaven (for all the first 6 motivations of giving) but with the end-result that, with the exhaustion of the giver’s karmic fruit, he “falls back” to this world of humans and subhumans. Only the 7th reason for giving frees one from samsara.

Let me state the lesson of the Sutta—given in connection with the 7th kind of giver—here and now so that it is well noted as we go through the Sutta. If we were to merely read this Sutta, we are likely to forget it, especially its lesson. That vital lesson is that we should work to attain at least **streamwinning** in this life itself, as taught in **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (S 25.1).²¹

¹⁹ On a “celestial year,” see **(Tad-ah’) Uposatha S** (A 3.70,18-23), SD 4.18 (calculations); SD 52.1 (9.1.1.1). The lifespans here follow the Vibhaṅga scheme: see SD 54.3a (2.2.1.1).

²⁰ For a chart of the 31 planes of existence, see SD 1.7 (App) or DEB (App).

²¹ **S 25.1/3:225** (SD 16.7) or any of the other 9 suttas of the same **Okkanta Saṃyutta** (S 25).

1.2.2 Ethical giving: “Giving is good!”

1.2.2.1 The Dāna Maha-p,phala Sutta (A 7.49) goes on to say that **the 2nd person**, neither attached to merits nor desiring a good rebirth, thinks, “**Giving is good**” [A 7.49,4.2]. In this case, the giver probably believes in karma and wholesome actions, and in an afterlife in the form of some heaven and suffering states. He makes his gifts of things as described for the 1st person [1.2.1.1].

1.2.2.2 Upon dying, he is reborn in a higher heaven than the 1st giver [1.2.1.2], that is, amongst **the devas of the 33** (*tāva, timsa*). This is the 2nd of the 2 “earthbound” heavens (the other being that of the heaven of the 4 great kings) [1.2.1.2]. The heaven of the 33 is lorded by the most famous of the devas, Sakra. The Sutta continues as before (for the 1st giver) by simply stating the refrain: “having exhausted that, that power, that status, that sovereignty, **he is a returner** (*āgāmī*), coming back to this world” [A 7.49,4.6].

In other words, with the ending of his lifespan in the heaven of the 33 (which is not more than 1,000 celestial years), as stated for the 1st giver, the 2nd giver too falls (*cavati*) from that heaven and is reborn back on earth according to his past karma (bad and good), and may be reborn even in one of the sub-human states. [1.2.1.3]

Clearly then, even giving with the view that “giving is good”—despite its benefit of rebirth in the heaven of the 33—still brings one back into the human state or a suffering state. Thus giving for the sake of giving, after all, does not free one from suffering.

1.2.3 Giving out of family tradition

1.2.3.1 The 3rd person makes a gift, thinking, “It would not be right for me to let this old family custom die!” (A 7.49,5.2). In this case, the giver probably is family-centred and has a deep sense of filial piety, with belief in karma and an afterlife in the form of heavens and suffering states. He makes his gifts of things as described for the first 2 givers [1.2.1.1].

1.2.3.2 Upon dying, he is reborn in a higher heaven than the 2nd giver, that is, amongst **the Yāma devas**, whose lifespan may go up to 2,000 celestial years [1.2.2.2]. The 3rd giver too falls (*cavati*) from that heaven and is reborn back on earth according to his past karma (bad and good), and may be reborn even in one of the subhuman states. [1.2.1.3]

Clearly then, even giving with the view of “keeping the family tradition”—despite its benefit of rebirth in the Yāma heaven—still brings one back into the human state or a suffering state. Thus, giving for the sake of family tradition, because of its worldliness, does not free one from suffering.

1.2.4 Giving out of compassion: “I cook, but they do not cook”

1.2.4.1 The 4th person makes a gift, thinking, “I cook, but they (being recluses) do not cook [do not keep house] [A 7.49,6.2]. It would not be proper for me when I do cook not to give to those who do not.” In this case, the giver probably is compassionate with respect for renunciants. He makes his gifts of things as described for the first 3 givers [1.2.1.1].

1.2.4.2 Upon dying, he is reborn in a higher heaven than the 3rd giver, that is, amongst **the Tusita devas**, whose lifespan may go up to 4,000 celestial years [1.2.2.2]. The 4th giver too falls (*cavati*) from that heaven and is reborn back on earth according to his past karma (bad and good), and may be reborn even in one of the subhuman states. [1.2.1.3]

Clearly then, even giving to recluses since “they do not cook”—and despite its benefit of rebirth in the Tusita heaven—still brings one back into the human state or a suffering state. Thus giving out of compassion, still does not free one from suffering.

1.2.5 Giving out of faith, like the sacrifices of ancient sages

1.2.5.1 The 5th person makes a gift, thinking of the past great sages of the religion who made great sacrifices (A 7.49,7.2). In this case, the giver probably is pious, with respect for his religion. He makes his gifts of things as described for the first 4 givers [1.2.1.1].

1.2.5.2 Upon dying, he is reborn in a higher heaven than the 4th giver, that is, amongst **the Nimmāna, ratī devas**, whose lifespan may go up to 8,000 celestial years [1.2.2.2]. The 5th giver too falls (*cavati*) from that heaven and is reborn back on earth according to his past karma (bad and good), and may be reborn even in one of the subhuman states. [1.2.1.3]

Clearly then, even giving out of deep piety in the name of one’s religion—and despite its benefit of rebirth in the Nimmāna, ratī heaven—still brings one back into the human state or a suffering state. Thus giving out of deep faith, still does not free one from suffering.

1.2.6 For the sake of mental calm

1.2.6.1 The 6th person makes a gift, thinking, “It calms the mind” [A 7.49,7.2]. In this case, the giver is probably a moral person, even one who meditates. He makes his gifts of things as described for the first 5 givers [1.2.1.1].

1.2.6.2 Upon dying, he is reborn in a heaven higher than the 5th giver, that is, amongst **the Para, nimmita, vasavatti devas**, whose lifespan may go up to 16,000 celestial years [1.2.2.2]. The 6th giver too falls (*cavati*) from that heaven and is reborn back on earth according to his past karma (bad and good), and may be reborn even in one of the subhuman states. [1.2.1.3]

Clearly then, even giving for the sake of mental calm—and despite its benefit of rebirth in the Para, nimmita, vasavatti heaven—still brings one back into the human state or a suffering state. Thus, for calming the mind, even with deep faith, may bring blessings but still does not free one from suffering.

1.2.7 “An adornment for the mind”

1.2.7.1 The 7th and last person makes a gift, thinking, “This is an adornment for the mind, the benefit of a support for the mind”²² (A 7.49,9.1). In this case, the giver well understands the Dharma, keeps the precepts and is constantly mindful. He makes his gifts of things as described for the first 6 givers [1.2.1.1]. When he passes away, he is reborn in **the company of Brahma’s retinue** (*brahmā, pārisajja*),²³ the lowest of the 3 Brahma realms constituting the 1st-dhyana Brahma world, with a lifespan of ¼ aeon.²⁴

“Then, having exhausted that karma, that power, that status, that sovereignty, **he is a nonreturner**. He does not come back to this world.” (A 7.49,10.2). The usage of the term nonreturner (*anāgāmi*) here is uncharacteristic: it seems that he attains nonreturning in the brahma-world; the general idea is that he will not be reborn in the sense-world again. We will examine this further below [2.1.1.3].

²² *Cittālaṅkāraṃ citta, parikkhār’attham*. The meaning is that recollecting on charity (*cāgānussati*) is helpful to our meditation: see **Sambādh’okāsa S** (A 6.26/3:314 f), SD 15.6. See (1.1.2).

²³ On the realm of Brahmā’s Retinue, see SD 1.7 (Appendix).

²⁴ An aeon (*kappa*) is a world-cycle: see SD 2.19 (8 f) & SD 49.8 (15.2).

1.2.7.2 As we have noted at the start [1.2.0.2], **the first 6 motivations for giving** are not spiritually helpful in freeing us from the suffering world; the karmic benefits of these kinds of giving still “return” us to the suffering world to be caught up in karma, good and bad, and so we remain in the samsaric cycle.

Only the 7th and last motivation for giving—that of good karma as “**an adornment for the mind, the benefit of a support for the mind**”—brings us rebirth in a dhyanic realm, such as that of the form brahmas, where we become nonreturners (*anāgāmi*). We do not return to the sense-world but are reborn in one of **the pure abodes** (*suddh’āvāsa*),²⁵ where only nonreturners abide working for their liberation as arhats.

2 Worthy recipients of offerings

2.1 THE LEARNERS (SEKHA)

2.1.1 Returning and nonreturning

2.1.1.1 In the explanations for each of **the first 6 kinds of givers** and their aspirations, they are all said to be “returners” (*āgāmi*), that is, despite their giving and enjoyment of its good karma, with the exhaustion of these karmic fruits they will all still return to this world without gaining the path. However, not all who return to this world will be reborn in the subhuman planes; they are the **learners** or trainees (*sekha*), that is, those who are on the path of awakening, short of the full-fledged arhat.

We thus have **the 4 path-saints**, that is, the streamwinner, the once-returner, the nonreturner and the arhat. Each of these 4 kinds of saints are further divided into the 4 pairs of individuals (*cattari purisa, -yugāni*),²⁶ that is, as noble individuals “on the path” (*magga*) and the noble individuals of “fruition” (*phala*). They are respectively *the saints-to-be* and *the saints-become*. [2.1.1.2]

2.1.1.2 This pairing becomes clear in the model of **the 8 noble individuals** (*aṭṭha ariya puggala*),²⁷ that is, listed in the ascending order, thus:

(1) the streamwinner on the path,	that is,	the streamwinner-to-be;
(2) the streamwinner (fruition),	that is,	the full-fledged streamwinner;
(3) the once-returner on the path,	that is,	the once-returner-to-be;
(4) the once-returner (fruition),	that is,	the full-fledged once-returner;
(5) the nonreturner on the path,	that is,	the nonreturner-to-be;
(6) the nonreturner (fruition),	that is,	the full-fledged nonreturner;
(7) the arhat on the path,	that is,	the arhat-to-be; and
(8) the arhat (fruition),	that is,	the full-fledged arhat.

The first of these 7 noble individuals are called “**learners**” (*sekha*, “trainee”), as they have yet to become arhats. The last, the 8th, the arhat, is called an “**adept**” (*asekha*, “non-trainee”),²⁸ as he is fully liberated

²⁵ The pure abodes (*suddh’āvāsa*) are the 5 highest heavens of the form world (*rūpa, loka*) where only nonreturners work to become arhats and attain nirvana. These abodes are Āviha (“non-declining”), Ātappa (“unworried”), Sudassā (“clearly visible”), Sudassī (“clear-visioned”) and Akaniṭṭha (“highest”) (D 3:237, M 3:103, Vbh 425, Pug 42-46).

²⁶ See **Aṭṭha Puggala S 2** (A 8.60), SD 15.10a(1.5).

²⁷ See SD 15.10a(1).

²⁸ *Asekha* = *na* + *sekha*, “one who is not a learner.”

and has nothing more to learn in terms of liberation. He is one who is fully accomplished in all the 15 qualities of conduct (*caraṇa*) and the 3 knowledges (*vijjā*).²⁹

2.1.1.3 Apparently, when “**nonreturning**” (*anāgāmī*) is used in contrast with “**returning**” (*āgāmī*), it is to highlight the fact that giving with the wrong or improper motive. Giving with a wrong or improper motive will still reward one with heavenly rebirth, but one subsequently “returns” to the sense-world. *Nonreturning* here has a non-technical sense simply meaning “not returning to the sense-world,” but one is not yet a nonreturner. However, one will in due course attain the path of nonreturning in the 1st dhyana brahma world (where one is able to easily get into dhyana to remove the 3 unwholesome roots). Falling from that brahma heaven as a nonreturner, one then arises in one of the pure abodes [1.2.7.2].

It is also possible that if such a person arises amongst Brahma’s retinue (*brahmā, pārisajja*), one will gain the nonreturner-path there. The giving in itself does not bring one nonreturning. However, having arisen in the brahma-realm, one gains dhyana. With the dhyanic concentration, one then reflects on the past act of giving, “This is an adornment for the mind, the benefit of a support for the mind” [1.2.7], which primes one for the attaining of nonreturning.

It is likely that this individual dies in that brahma-realm as a nonreturner of the path and arises in a pure abode as a nonreturner of fruition, that is, a full-fledged nonreturner.

2.1.2 The good worldling

2.1.2.1 Awakening to true reality and liberation from suffering, that is, not being reborn in any sub-human states, differentiates the noble individuals—the streamwinner, the once-returner, the nonreturner and the arhat-to-be—from the unawakened **worldlings** (*puthujjana*). There is an important “middle category” of those who, although unawakened, are willing, even ready, for the path of Dharma training.

Those who are willing and ready for the path of Dharma training are those who habitually and wisely keep to the precepts (including the Vinaya in the case of true monastics), keep up mindfulness and awareness, and seek to see and understand true reality. Such a being is said to be **a good worldling** (*kalyāṇa puthujjana*).³⁰

Thus the Commentaries explain that there are 2 kinds of worldlings:

Therein, one who has neither learning, questioning, hearing, retaining, nor reviewing in the aggregates, the elements, the sense-bases, and so on, is **a blind worldling** [ordinary person] (*andha puthujjana*)

One who has these is **a good worldling** (*kalyāṇa puthujjana*).

Thus, they are of 2 kinds (of worldlings):

On account of the generation of a crowd of things, he is **a blind worldling**.

Because of falling into the state of ordinary people, he is called a blind worldling.”

For he is an ordinary person on account of generating numerous defilements, and so on.³¹

²⁹ **Sekha S** (M 53), SD 21.14, gives a very definite list of the arhat’s conduct and knowledge—§§7-18 and 20-22 respectively—and the same list appears in a briefer form in **Ambaṭṭha S** (D 3,2.1-2/1:99-101), SD 21.3.

³⁰ SD 56.13a (7.1.1.2).

³¹ *Tattha yassa khandha, dhatu, āyatan’ādīsu uggaha, paripucchā, savana, dhāraṇa, paccavekkhaṇāni n’atthi, ayaṃ andha, puthujjano. Yassa tāni atthi, so kalyāṇa, puthujjano. Duvidho pi paṇ’esa—Puthūnaṃ janana’ādīhi, kāraṇehi puthujjano; Puthujjanant’ogadhata, puthu, vāyaṃ jano iti. So hi puthūnaṃ nāna-p, pakāraṇaṃ kiles’ādīnaṃ janana’-ādīhi kāraṇehi puthujjano.* (DA 1:59; PmA 1:266)

In the suttas, the blind worldling is said to be one who is “an untutored worldling” (*assutavā puthuj-jano*) while a good worldling is said to be “a tutored worldling” (*sutavā puthujjano*).³² In practical terms, when we are still unawakened, we should at least live as “good worldlings” so that we will gain the path in this life itself and not fall into the subhuman states, where it is rare to have the opportunity to study or practise Dharma, or progress spiritually.

2.1.2.2 The Commentaries sometimes include the good worldling in their categorization of the various kinds of individuals. Thus **the Vinaya Commentary** defines **a learner** (*sekha*) as follows:

A *sekha* is any of those undergoing the 3 trainings (in moral conduct, mental cultivation and insight wisdom), who is (one of) the 7 noble ones [2.1.1.2], along with the good worldling [2.1.2.1].

Sekho ti puthujjana, kalyāṇakena saddhiṃ satta ariyā tisso sikkhā sikkhantī ti sekhā.

(VA 1:242)

Why is a good worldling included amongst the “learners” although yet unawakened, one is not technically a learner? The answer is found in **the (Anicca) Cakkhu Sutta** (A 25.1), where the Buddha guarantees us that when we constantly reflect on the impermanence of senses, we will be sure to attain streamwinning in this life itself, if not surely with our last breath.³³

2.2 THE ONE WITH NO NEED FOR FURTHER LEARNING (ASEKHA)

2.2.1 An *asekha* has no need for further training

2.2.1.1 An adept (*asekha*), one who has no further training in the path and is fully liberated, is the arhat. The Vinaya Commentary thus says: “One who has transcended the training and is established in the foremost fruition, with nothing further to be trained in, and having developed the qualities that lead to the destruction of influxes, he is called **an adept** (*asekha*). (VA 1:242)³⁴

As an adept, the arhat is fully accomplished in moral training, mental cultivation and insight wisdom, which also includes the knowledge and vision of true reality, and full awakening (like the Buddha), except that the Buddha is the first arhat to arise in the world and declares the teaching and path to the world.³⁵

2.2.1.2 When we lay out the 3 trainings, along with the arhat’s right knowledge and right freedom, we have what is called **the 10 rightnesses** (*sammatta*) or the tenfold state of the adept (*asekha, dhamma*). These 10 qualities are also listed in **the Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta** (M 117) but without mention of the term *asekha* though it is implied, thus:

³² M 1:1,12 opp *sutavā ariya, sāvako*, 7,17, 135,28; 300,5, 433,22, 3:17,23 = Dhs 1003 (DhsA 348,24 = MA 1:20,-19; Dhs 1217; S 2:94,5 (95,29); SA 2:97,22; A 1:10,12 f, 3:54,18.

³³ **S 25.1/3:225** (SD 16.7) or any of the other 9 suttas of the same **Okkanta Saṃyutta** (S 25).

³⁴ *Sekha, dhamme atikkamma agga, phale t̥hito, tato uttari sikkhitabbā, bhāvato khīṇāsavo asekho ti vuccati* (VA 1:242).

³⁵ See **Pavāraṇā S** (S 8.7,5/1:191), SD 49.11; **Sambuddha S** (S 22.58,22/3:66), SD 49.10.

- (1) In this regard, bhikshus, right view comes *first*.
 And, bhikshus, how does right view come first?
- (2) From right view comes right intention;³⁶
 (3) from right intention comes right speech;
 (4) from right speech comes right action;
 (5) from right action comes right livelihood;
 (6) from right livelihood comes right effort;
 (7) from right effort comes right mindfulness;
 (8) from right mindfulness comes right concentration;
 (9) from right concentration comes right knowledge;
 (10) from right knowledge comes right freedom.
- Thus, bhikshus, the learner on the path is endowed with 8 limbs, but the arhat with 10 limbs.³⁷
 (M 117,34/3:75 f), SD 6.10³⁸

2.2.2 An asekhā is the arhat

2.2.2.1 The adept or arhat is thus said to have “**destroyed the influxes**” (*khīṇ’āsava*), which are the defilements that bring sensual lust (*kām’āsava*), existence (*bhav’āsava*), and ignorance (*avijjāsava*) to a complete end, freeing the being from suffering.³⁹ Since the arhat has broken all desire for the senses (*kāma*), he does not arise in the sense-world any more; he does not “return” in any form rooted in the senses.

Since the arhat has overcome even birth in the form world and the formless world, he will not take any new existence (*bhava*); nor does he have any desire for **anything**, not even “gain, honour, praise” (*lābha sakkāram siloka*)⁴⁰ which a worldly person often desires. Nor does an arhat hold any speculative views (*diṭṭhi*) since he has uprooted ignorance (*avijjā*) by fully understanding the nature of suffering, its arising and ending, and having cut off suffering like a palm-tree cut off at its root.⁴¹

2.2.2.2 In terms of **awakening**, an arhat is just like the Buddha himself. The main difference is that the Buddha arises first in the world and declares the liberating Dharma to the world, as stated in **the Pavāraṇā Sutta** (S 8.7,5) and **the Sambuddha Sutta** (S 22.58) [2.2.1.1]. Moreover, the Buddha is unique in having all the 10 powers (*dasā bala*), which include supreme powers of the mind and knowledge of true reality.⁴²

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³⁶ Comy: For one with right view of the path (*magga*), the right intention of the path arises. Similarly, for one with the right view of the fruition (*phala*), the right intention of the fruition arises. The other factors (except the last two) apply in the same way as the supramundane path. (MA 4:134)

³⁷ The additional two factors are those of the arhat. Right knowledge (*sammā ñāṇa*) is the review knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa ñāṇa*) that he has destroyed all defilements, and right freedom (*sammā vimutti*) is his experience of deliverance from defilements. (MA 4:135). This tenfold set is called “the tenfold rightness” (*dasā sammatta*) (D 3:271, 292; M 1:42; A 5:212).

³⁸ **Saṅgīti S** (D 33,3.3(6)); **Das’uttara S** (D 34,2.2(10)); **Micchatta S** (A 10.103); SD 10.16 (1.2.2).

³⁹ **D 2,99.1 n** (SD 8.10); **M 11,9 n** (SD 7.13). The later list adds the influx of views (*diṭṭh’āsava*) as no. 3 in a list of 4 influxes: SD 30.3 (1.3.2).

⁴⁰ **Bhindi S** (S 17.33), SD 46.24; SD 61.5 (3.1.3).

⁴¹ See eg **Tika Mūla S** (A 3.69,11/1:204), SD 18.2.

⁴² See **Dasabala S 1** (S 12.21), SD 63.14; **Dasbala S 2** (S 12.22), SD 63.15.

(Duka) Dakkhiṇeyya Sutta

The (Twos) Discourse on Those Worthy of Offerings

A 2.34

2 Then the householder **Anāthapiṇḍika** approached the Blessed One, [63] saluted him, sat down at one side, and said to him:

“**How many** in the world, bhante, are **worthy of offerings**, and **where is a gift to be given?**”⁴³

3 “There are, householder, two in the world **worthy of offerings**:
the learner (*sekha*)⁴⁴ and the non-learner (*asekha*) [the one without need of further training].

These are the two in the world worthy of offerings and a gift is to be given to them.”

This is what the Blessed One said.

Having said this, the welcome one, the teacher, further said this:

“In this world **the learner** and **one beyond learning**
are worthy of the gifts of those practising charity.
Upright in body, speech, and mind,
they are the field for those practising charity;
what is given to them brings great fruit.”

*sekho asekha imasmim loke
āhuneyyā yajamānānaṃ honti
te uju, bhūtā⁴⁵ kāyena vācāya cetasā
khettaṃ taṃ yajamānānaṃ
ettha dinnam maha-p, phalaṃ*

—evaṃ—

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⁴³ *Kati nu kho bhante loke dakkhiṇeyyā, kattha ca dānaṃ dātabban ti.*

⁴⁴ Comy: “The learner (*sekha*) refers to the 7 “trainees” [from the one on the path of streamwinning to the one on the path of arhathood], ie, the path-saints short of the arhat. However, the virtuous worldling (*sīlavanta puthuj-jana*) may be incl under the streamwinner.” (AA 2:123,24 f). See also SA 1:166,1; UA 363,2-10; ItA 2:21,21; DhsA 44,24-28. See SD 64.12d (2.1).

⁴⁵ Be Ce Ee *uju, bhūtā*; Se Ke Ka *uju, bhūtā*.