

# **The Digha Nikaya**

Translated by Ajahn Sujato

# A Summary of the 34 Suttas

## Part One: Sīlakkhandha Vagga

1. While others may praise or criticize the Buddha, they tend to focus on trivial details. The Buddha presents an analysis of 62 kinds of wrong view, seeing through which one becomes detached from meaningless speculations.
2. The newly crowned King Ajātasattu is disturbed by the violent means by which he achieved the crown. He visits the Buddha to find peace of mind, and asks him about the benefits of spiritual practice. This is one of the greatest literary and spiritual texts of early Buddhism.
3. A young brahmin student attacks the Buddha's family, but is put in his place.
4. A reputed brahmin visits the Buddha, despite the reservations of other brahmins. They discuss the true meaning of a brahmin, and the Buddha skillfully draws him around to his own point of view.
5. A brahmin wishes to undertake a great sacrifice, and asks for the Buddha's advice. The Buddha tells a legend of the past, in which a king is persuaded to give up violent sacrifice, and instead to devote his resources to supporting the needy citizens of his realm. However, even such a beneficial and non-violent sacrifice pales in comparison to the spiritual sacrifice of giving up attachments.
6. The Buddha explains to a diverse group of lay people how the results of meditation depend on the manner of development.
7. This discourse is mostly quoted by the Buddha in the previous.

8. The Buddha is challenged by a naked ascetic on the topic of spiritual austerities. He points out that it is quite possible to perform all kinds of austere practices without having any inner purity of mind.
9. The Buddha discusses with a wanderer the nature of perception and how it evolves through deeper states of meditation. None of these, however, should be identified with a self or soul.
10. Shortly after the Buddha's death, Venerable Ānanda is invited to explain the core teachings.
11. The Buddha refuses to perform miracles, explaining that this is not the right way to inspire faith. He goes on to tell the story of a monk whose misguided quest for answers led him as far as Brahmā.
12. A brahmin has fallen into the idea that there is no point in trying to offer spiritual help to others. The Buddha goes to see him, and persuades him of the genuine benefits of spiritual teaching.
13. A number of brahmins are discussing the true path to Brahmā. Contesting the claims to authority based on the Vedas, the Buddha insists that only personal experience can lead to the truth.

### **Part Two: Mahā Vagga**

14. The Buddha teaches about the six Buddhas of the past, and tells a lengthy account of one of those, Vipassī.
15. Rejecting Venerable Ānanda's claim to easily understand dependent origination, the Buddha presents a complex and demanding analysis, revealing hidden nuances and implications of this central teaching.

16. The longest of all discourses, this extended narrative tells of the events surrounding the Buddha's death. Full of vivid and moving details, it is an ideal entry point into knowing the Buddha as a person, and understanding how the Buddhist community coped with his passing
17. An elaborate story of a past life of the Buddha as a legendary king how renounced all to practice meditation.
18. Beginning with an account of the fates of disciples who had recently passed away, the scene shifts to a discussion of Dhamma held by the gods.
19. A minor deity informs the Buddha of the conversations and business of the gods.
20. When deities from all realms gather in homage to the Buddha, he gives a series of verses describing them. These verses, which are commonly chanted in Theravadin countries, give one of the most detailed descriptions of the deities worshiped at the time of the Buddha.
21. After hearing a love song from a god of music, the Buddha engages in a deep discussion with Sakka on the conditioned origin of attachment and suffering.
22. The Buddha details the seventh factor of the noble eightfold path, mindfulness meditation. This discourse is essentially identical to MN 10, with the addition of an extended section on the four noble truths derived from MN 141.
23. This is a long and entertaining debate between a monk and a skeptic, who went to elaborate and bizarre lengths to prove that there is no such thing as an afterlife. The discourse contains a colorful series of parables and examples.

### **Part Three: Pāthika Vagga**

24. When Sunakkhatta threatens to disrobe, the Buddha is unimpressed. Rejecting showy displays of asceticism or wondrous powers, he demonstrates his pre-eminence.
25. This discourse gives a specially good example of dialog between religions. The Buddha insists that he is not interested to make anyone give up their teacher or practices, but only to help people let go of suffering.
26. In illustration of his dictum that one should rely on oneself, the Buddha gives a detailed account of the fall of a kingly lineage of the past, and the subsequent degeneration of society. This process, however, is not over, as the Buddha predicts that eventually society will fall into utter chaos. But far in the future, another Buddha, Metteyya, will arise in a time of peace and plenty.
27. In contrast with the brahmin's self-serving mythologies of the past, the Buddha presents an account of evolution that shows how human choices are an integral part of the ecological balance, and how excessive greed destroys the order of nature.
28. Shortly before he passes away, Venerable Sāriputta visits the Buddha and utters a moving eulogy of his great teacher.
29. Following the death of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, the leader of the Jains, the Buddha emphasizes the stability and maturity of his own community. He encourages the community to come together after his death and recite the teachings in harmony.
30. This presents the brahmanical prophecy of the Great Man, and explains the 32 marks in detail. This discourse contains some of the latest and most complex verse forms in the canon.

31. The Buddha encounters a young man who honors his dead parents by performing rituals. The Buddha recasts the meaningless rites in terms of virtuous conduct. This is the most detailed discourse on ethics for lay people.
32. Mighty spirits hold a congregation, and warn the Buddha that, since not all spirits are friendly, the mendicants should learn verses of protection.
33. The Buddha encourages Venerable Sāriputta to teach the mendicants, and he offers an extended listing of Buddhist doctrines arranged in numerical sequence.
34. This is similar to the previous, but with a different manner of exposition. These two discourses anticipate some of the methods of the Abhidhamma.

## 1. Brahmajāla Sutta

The All-embracing Net of Views

### 1. Talk on Wanderers

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was traveling along the road between Rājagaha and Nālanda together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants. The wanderer Suppiya was also traveling along the same road, together with his pupil, the brahmin student Brahmadata. Meanwhile, Suppiya criticized the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in many ways, but his pupil Brahmadata praised them in many ways. And so both teacher and pupil followed behind the Buddha and the Saṅgha of mendicants directly contradicting each other.

Then the Buddha took up residence for the night in the royal rest-house in Ambalaṭṭhikā together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. And Suppiya and Brahmadata did likewise. There too, Suppiya criticized the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in many ways, but his pupil Brahmadata praised them in many ways. And so both teacher and pupil kept on directly contradicting each other.

Then several mendicants rose at the crack of dawn and sat together in the pavilion. The topic of evaluation came up: “It’s incredible, reverends, it’s amazing how the diverse beliefs of sentient beings have been clearly comprehended by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. For this Suppiya criticizes the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha in many ways, while his pupil Brahmadata praises them in many ways. And so both teacher and pupil followed behind the Buddha and the Saṅgha of mendicants directly contradicting each other.”

When the Buddha found out about this discussion on evaluation among the mendicants, he went to the pavilion, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just

now? What conversation was left unfinished?” The mendicants told him what had happened, adding: “This was our conversation that was unfinished when the Buddha arrived.”

“Mendicants, if others criticize me, the teaching, or the Saṅgha, don’t make yourselves resentful, bitter, and exasperated. You’ll get angry and upset, which would be an obstacle for you alone. If others were to criticize me, the teaching, or the Saṅgha, and you got angry and upset, would you be able to understand whether they spoke well or poorly?” “No, sir.”

“If others criticize me, the teaching, or the Saṅgha, you should explain that what is untrue is in fact untrue: ‘This is why that’s untrue, this is why that’s false. There’s no such thing in us, it’s not found among us.’

If others praise me, the teaching, or the Saṅgha, don’t make yourselves thrilled, elated, and excited. You’ll get thrilled, elated, and excited, which would be an obstacle for you alone. If others praise me, the teaching, or the Saṅgha, you should acknowledge that what is true is in fact true: ‘This is why that’s true, this is why that’s correct. There is such a thing in us, it is found among us.’

## **2. Ethics**

### **2.1. The Shorter Section on Ethics**

When an ordinary person speaks praise of the Realized One, they speak only of trivial, insignificant details of mere ethics. And what are the trivial, insignificant details of mere ethics that an ordinary person speaks of?

‘The ascetic Gotama has given up killing living creatures. He has renounced the rod and the sword. He’s scrupulous and kind, living full of compassion for all creatures.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘The ascetic Gotama has given up stealing. He takes only what’s given, and expects only what’s given. He keeps himself clean by not thieving.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘The ascetic Gotama has given up unchastity. He is celibate, set apart, avoiding the common practice of sex.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘The ascetic Gotama has given up lying. He speaks the truth and sticks to the truth. He’s honest and trustworthy, and doesn’t trick the world with his words.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘The ascetic Gotama has given up divisive speech. He doesn’t repeat in one place what he heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, he reconciles those who are divided, supporting unity, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘The ascetic Gotama has given up harsh speech. He speaks in a way that’s mellow, pleasing to the ear, lovely, going to the heart, polite, likable and agreeable to the people.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘The ascetic Gotama has given up talking nonsense. His words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. He says things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘The ascetic Gotama refrains from injuring plants and seeds.’

‘He eats in one part of the day, abstaining from eating at night and food at the wrong time.’

‘He refrains from dancing, singing, music, and seeing shows.’

‘He refrains from beautifying and adorning himself with garlands, perfumes, and makeup.’

‘He refrains from high and luxurious beds.’

‘He refrains from receiving gold and money,

raw grains,

raw meat,

women and girls,

male and female bondservants,

goats and sheep,

chickens and pigs,

elephants, cows, horses, and mares,

and fields and land.’

‘He refrains from running errands and messages;

buying and selling;

falsifying weights, metals, or measures;

bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity;

mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

The shorter section on ethics is finished.

## **2.2. The Middle Section on Ethics**

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in injuring plants and seeds. These include plants propagated from roots, stems, cuttings, or joints; and those from regular seeds as the fifth. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such injury to plants and seeds.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in storing up goods for their own enjoyment. This includes such things as food, drink, clothes, vehicles, bedding, fragrance, and material possessions. The ascetic Gotama refrains from storing up such goods.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in seeing shows. This includes such things as dancing, singing, music, performances, and story telling; clapping, gongs, and kettle-drums; art exhibitions and acrobatic displays; battles of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, chickens, and quails; staff-fights, boxing, and wrestling; combat, roll calls of the armed forces, battle-formations, and regimental reviews. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such shows.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in gambling that causes negligence. This includes such things as checkers, draughts, checkers in the air, hopscotch, spillikins, board-games, tip-cat, drawing straws, dice, leaf-flutes, toy ploughs, somersaults, pinwheels, toy measures, toy carts, toy bows, guessing words from syllables, and guessing another’s thoughts. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such gambling.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still make use of high and luxurious bedding. This includes such things as sofas, couches, woolen covers—shag-piled, colorful, white, embroidered with flowers, quilted, embroidered with animals, double- or single-fringed—and silk covers studded with gems, as well as silken sheets, woven carpets, rugs for elephants, horses, or chariots, antelope hide rugs, and spreads of fine deer hide, with a canopy above and red cushions at both ends. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such bedding.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in beautifying and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. This includes such things as applying beauty products by anointing, massaging, bathing, and rubbing; mirrors, ointments, garlands, fragrances, and makeup; face-powder, foundation, bracelets, head-bands, fancy walking-sticks or containers, rapiers, parasols, fancy sandals, turbans, jewelry, choweries, and long-fringed white robes. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such beautification and adornment.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in unworthy talk. This includes such topics as talk about kings, bandits, and ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that state of existence. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy talk.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in arguments. They say such things as: “You don’t understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You’re practicing wrong. I’m practicing right. I stay on topic, you don’t. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you’ve thought so much about has

been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You're trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!” The ascetic Gotama refrains from such argumentative talk.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in running errands and messages. This includes running errands for rulers, ministers, aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or princes who say: “Go here, go there. Take this, bring that from there.” The ascetic Gotama refrains from such errands.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in deception, flattery, hinting, and belittling, and using material possessions to pursue other material possessions. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such deception and flattery.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

The middle section on ethics is finished.

### **2.3. The Large Section on Ethics**

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes such fields as limb-reading, omenology, divining celestial portents, interpreting dreams, divining bodily marks, divining holes in cloth gnawed by mice, fire offerings, ladle offerings, offerings of husks, rice powder, rice, ghee, or oil; offerings from the mouth, blood sacrifices, palmistry; geomancy for building sites, fields, and cemeteries; exorcisms, earth magic, snake charming, poisons; the crafts of the scorpion, the rat, the bird, and the crow; prophesying life span, chanting for protection, and animal cries. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This

includes reading the marks of gems, cloth, clubs, swords, spears, arrows, weapons, women, men, boys, girls, male and female bondservants, elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, cows, goats, rams, chickens, quails, monitor lizards, rabbits, tortoises, or deer. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood.' Such is an ordinary person's praise of the Realized One.

'There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes making predictions that the king will march forth or march back; or that our king will attack and the enemy king will retreat, or vice versa; or that our king will triumph and the enemy king will be defeated, or vice versa; and so there will be victory for one and defeat for the other. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood.' Such is an ordinary person's praise of the Realized One.

'There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes making predictions that there will be an eclipse of the moon, or sun, or stars; that the sun, moon, and stars will be in conjunction or in opposition; that there will be a meteor shower, a fiery sky, an earthquake, thunder; that there will be a rising, a setting, a darkening, a brightening of the moon, sun, and stars. And it also includes making predictions about the results of all such phenomena. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood.' Such is an ordinary person's praise of the Realized One.

'There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes predicting whether there will be plenty of rain or drought; plenty to eat or famine; an abundant harvest or a bad harvest; security or peril; sickness or health. It also includes such occupations as computing, accounting, calculating, poetry, and cosmology. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy branches of

knowledge, such wrong livelihood.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes making arrangements for giving and taking in marriage; for engagement and divorce; and for scattering rice inwards or outwards at the wedding ceremony. It also includes casting spells for good or bad luck, curses to prevent conception, bind the tongue, or lock the jaws; charms for the hands and ears; questioning a mirror, a girl, or a god as an oracle; worshiping the sun, worshiping the Great One, breathing fire, and invoking Siri, the goddess of luck. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

‘There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes rites for propitiation, for fulfilling wishes, for ghosts, for the earth, for rain, for property settlement, and for preparing and consecrating house sites, and rites involving rinsing and bathing, and oblations. It also includes administering emetics, purgatives, expectorants, and phlegmagogues; administering ear-oils, eye restoratives, nasal medicine, ointments, and counter-ointments; surgery with needle and scalpel, treating children, prescribing root medicines, and binding on herbs. The ascetic Gotama refrains from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood.’ Such is an ordinary person’s praise of the Realized One.

These are the trivial, insignificant details of mere ethics that an ordinary person speaks of when they speak praise of the Realized One.

The longer section on ethics is finished.

## 3. Views

### 3.1. Theories About the Past

There are other principles—deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of reason, subtle, comprehensible to the astute—which the Realized One makes known after realizing them with his own insight. Those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things. And what are these principles?

There are some ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the past, and assert various hypotheses concerning the past on eighteen grounds. And what are the eighteen grounds on which they rely?

#### 3.1.1. Eternalism

There are some ascetics and brahmins who are eternalists, who assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal on four grounds. And what are the four grounds on which they rely?

It's when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect their many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the cosmos contracting, many eons of the cosmos evolving, many eons of the cosmos contracting and evolving. They remember: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

They say: ‘The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise. Why is that? Because by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus I experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that I recollect my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

Because of this I know: “The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise.’ This is the first ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal.

And what is the second ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect their many kinds of past lives. That is: one eon of the cosmos contracting and evolving; two, three, four, five, or ten eons of the cosmos contracting and evolving. They remember: ‘There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.’ And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

They say: ‘The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise. Why is that? Because by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus I experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that I recollect my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

Because of this I know: “The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise.” This is the second ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal.

And what is the third ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect their many kinds of past lives. That is: ten eons of the cosmos contracting and evolving; twenty, thirty, or forty eons of the cosmos contracting and evolving. They remember: ‘There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.’ And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

They say: ‘The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise. Why is that? Because by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus I experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that I recollect my many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

Because of this I know: “The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise.” This is the third ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal.

And what is the fourth ground on which they rely? It's when some ascetic or brahmin relies on logic and inquiry. They speak of what they have worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing their own perspective: 'The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise.' This is the fourth ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal.

These are the four grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal do so on one or other of these four grounds. Outside of this there is none.

The Realized One understands this: 'If you hold on to and attach to these grounds for views it leads to such and such a destiny in the next life.' He understands this, and what goes beyond this. Yet since he does not misapprehend that understanding, he has realized extinguishment within himself. Having truly understood the origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape from feelings, the Realized One is freed through not grasping.

These are the principles—deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of reason, subtle, comprehensible to the astute—which the Realized One makes known after realizing them with his own insight. And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### **3.1.2. Partial Eternalism**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who are partial eternalists, who assert that the self and the cosmos are partially eternal and partially not eternal on four grounds. And what are the four grounds on which they rely?

There comes a time when, after a very long period has passed, this cosmos contracts. As the cosmos contracts, sentient beings are mostly headed for the realm of streaming radiance. There they are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-

luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

There comes a time when, after a very long period has passed, this cosmos expands. As it expands an empty mansion of Brahmā appears. Then a certain sentient being—due to the running out of their life-span or merit—passes away from that group of radiant deities and is reborn in that empty mansion of Brahmā. There they are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

But after staying there all alone for a long time, they become dissatisfied and anxious: ‘Oh, if only another being would come to this state of existence.’ Then other sentient beings—due to the running out of their life-span or merit—pass away from that group of radiant deities and are reborn in that empty mansion of Brahmā in company with that being. There they too are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

Now, the being who was reborn there first thinks: ‘I am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born. These beings were created by me! Why is that? Because first I thought: “Oh, if only another being would come to this state of existence.” Such was my heart’s wish, and then these creatures came to this state of existence.’

And the beings who were reborn there later also think: ‘This must be Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born. And we have been created by him. Why is that? Because we see that he was reborn here first, and we arrived later.’

And the being who was reborn first is more long-lived, beautiful, and illustrious than those who arrived later.

It's possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect that past life, but no further.

They say: 'He who is Brahmā—the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born—is permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, remaining the same for all eternity. We who were created by that Brahmā are impermanent, not lasting, short-lived, perishable, and have come to this state of existence. This is the first ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are partially eternal.

And what is the second ground on which they rely? There are gods named 'depraved by play.' They spend too much time laughing, playing, and making merry. And in doing so, they lose their mindfulness, and they pass away from that group of gods.

It's possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect that past life, but no further.

They say: 'The gods not depraved by play don't spend too much time laughing, playing, and making merry. So they don't lose their mindfulness, and don't pass away from that group of gods. They are permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, remaining the same for all eternity. But we who were depraved by

play spent too much time laughing, playing, and making merry. In doing so, we lost our mindfulness, and passed away from that group of gods. We are impermanent, not lasting, short-lived, perishable, and have come to this state of existence.’ This is the second ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are partially eternal.

And what is the third ground on which they rely? There are gods named ‘malevolent’. They spend too much time gazing at each other, so they grow angry with each other, and their bodies and minds get tired. They pass away from that group of gods.

It’s possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect that past life, but no further.

They say: ‘The gods who are not malevolent don’t spend too much time gazing at each other, so they don’t grow angry with each other, their bodies and minds don’t get tired, and they don’t pass away from that group of gods. They are permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, remaining the same for all eternity. But we who were malevolent spent too much time gazing at each other, we grew angry with each other, our bodies and minds got tired, and we passed away from that group of gods. We are impermanent, not lasting, short-lived, perishable, and have come to this state of existence.’ This is the third ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are partially eternal.

And what is the fourth ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin relies on logic and inquiry. They speak of what they have worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing their own perspective: ‘That which is called “the eye” or “the ear” or “the nose” or “the tongue” or “the body”’: that self is impermanent, not lasting, transient, perishable. That which is called “mind” or “sentience” or “consciousness”’: that self is permanent, everlasting, eternal,

imperishable, remaining the same for all eternity.’ This is the fourth ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos are partially eternal.

These are the four grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self and the cosmos are partially eternal and partially not eternal. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert that the self and the cosmos are partially eternal and partially not eternal do so on one or other of these four grounds. Outside of this there is none.

The Realized One understands this: ‘If you hold on to and attach to these grounds for views it leads to such and such a destiny in the next life.’ He understands this, and what goes beyond this. Yet since he does not misapprehend that understanding, he has realized extinguishment within himself. Having truly understood the origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape from feelings, the Realized One is freed through not grasping.

These are the principles—deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of reason, subtle, comprehensible to the astute—which the Realized One makes known after realizing them with his own insight. And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### **3.1.3. The Cosmos is Finite or Infinite**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who theorize about size, and assert that the cosmos is finite or infinite on four grounds. And what are the four grounds on which they rely?

It’s when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they meditate perceiving the cosmos as finite.

They say: ‘The cosmos is finite and bounded. Why is that? Because by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus I experience an

immersion of the heart of such a kind that I meditate perceiving the cosmos as finite. Because of this I know: “The cosmos is finite and bounded.” This is the first ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the cosmos is finite or infinite.

And what is the second ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they meditate perceiving the cosmos as infinite.

They say: ‘The cosmos is infinite and unbounded. The ascetics and brahmins who say that the cosmos is finite are wrong. The cosmos is infinite and unbounded. Why is that? Because by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus I experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that I meditate perceiving the cosmos as infinite. Because of this I know: “The cosmos is infinite and unbounded.”’ This is the second ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the cosmos is finite or infinite.

And what is the third ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they meditate perceiving the cosmos as finite vertically but infinite horizontally.

They say: ‘The cosmos is both finite and infinite. The ascetics and brahmins who say that the cosmos is finite are wrong, and so are those who say that the cosmos is infinite. The cosmos is both finite and infinite. Why is that? Because by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus I experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that I meditate perceiving the cosmos as finite vertically but infinite horizontally. Because of this I know: “The cosmos is both finite and infinite.”’ This is the third ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the cosmos is finite or infinite.

And what is the fourth ground on which they rely? It's when some ascetic or brahmin relies on logic and inquiry. They speak of what they have worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing their own perspective: 'The cosmos is neither finite nor infinite. The ascetics and brahmins who say that the cosmos is finite are wrong, as are those who say that the cosmos is infinite, and also those who say that the cosmos is both finite and infinite. The cosmos is neither finite nor infinite.' This is the fourth ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the cosmos is finite or infinite.

These are the four grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert that the cosmos is finite or infinite. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert that the cosmos is finite or infinite do so on one or other of these four grounds. Outside of this there is none.

The Realized One understands this: 'If you hold on to and attach to these grounds for views it leads to such and such a destiny in the next life.' He understands this, and what goes beyond this. Yet since he does not misapprehend that understanding, he has realized extinguishment within himself. Having truly understood the origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape from feelings, the Realized One is freed through not grasping.

These are the principles—deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of reason, subtle, comprehensible to the astute—which the Realized One makes known after realizing them with his own insight. And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

#### **3.1.4. Equivocators**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who are equivocators. Whenever they're asked a question, they resort to evasiveness and equivocation on four grounds. And what are the four grounds on which they rely?

It's when some ascetic or brahmin doesn't truly understand what is skillful and what is unskillful. They think: 'I don't truly understand what is skillful and what is

unskillful. If I were to declare that something was skillful or unskillful I might be wrong. That would be stressful for me, and that stress would be an obstacle.’ So from fear and disgust with false speech they avoid stating whether something is skillful or unskillful. Whenever they’re asked a question, they resort to evasiveness and equivocation: ‘I don’t say it’s like this. I don’t say it’s like that. I don’t say it’s otherwise. I don’t say it’s not so. And I don’t deny it’s not so.’ This is the first ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely when resorting to evasiveness and equivocation.

And what is the second ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin doesn’t truly understand what is skillful and what is unskillful. They think: ‘I don’t truly understand what is skillful and what is unskillful. If I were to declare that something was skillful or unskillful I might feel desire or greed or hate or repulsion. That would be grasping on my part. That would be stressful for me, and that stress would be an obstacle.’ So from fear and disgust with grasping they avoid stating whether something is skillful or unskillful. Whenever they’re asked a question, they resort to evasiveness and equivocation: ‘I don’t say it’s like this. I don’t say it’s like that. I don’t say it’s otherwise. I don’t say it’s not so. And I don’t deny it’s not so.’ This is the second ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely when resorting to evasiveness and equivocation.

And what is the third ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin doesn’t truly understand what is skillful and what is unskillful. They think: ‘I don’t truly understand what is skillful and what is unskillful. Suppose I were to declare that something was skillful or unskillful. There are clever ascetics and brahmins who are subtle, accomplished in the doctrines of others, hair-splitters. You’d think they live to demolish convictions with their intellect. They might engage, press, and examine me about that. I’d be stumped by such examination. That would be stressful for me, and that stress would be an obstacle.’ So from fear and disgust with examination they avoid stating whether something is skillful or unskillful. Whenever they’re asked a question, they resort to evasiveness and equivocation: ‘I don’t say it’s like this. I don’t say it’s like that. I don’t say it’s otherwise. I don’t say it’s not so. And I don’t deny it’s not so.’ This is the third

ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely when resorting to evasiveness and equivocation.

And what is the fourth ground on which they rely? It's when some ascetic or brahmin is dull and stupid. Because of that, whenever they're asked a question, they resort to evasiveness and equivocation: 'Suppose you were to ask me whether there is another world. If I believed there was, I would say so. But I don't say it's like this. I don't say it's like that. I don't say it's otherwise. I don't say it's not so. And I don't deny it's not so. Suppose you were to ask me whether there is no other world ... whether there both is and is not another world ... whether there neither is nor is not another world ... whether there are beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there are not beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there both are and are not beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there neither are nor are not beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there is fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether there is not fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether there both is and is not fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether there neither is nor is not fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether a Realized One exists after death ... whether a Realized One doesn't exist after death ... whether a Realized One both exists and doesn't exist after death ... whether a Realized One neither exists nor doesn't exist after death. If I believed there was, I would say so. But I don't say it's like this. I don't say it's like that. I don't say it's otherwise. I don't say it's not so. And I don't deny it's not so.' This is the fourth ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely when resorting to evasiveness and equivocation.

These are the four grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins who are equivocators resort to evasiveness and equivocation whenever they're asked a question. Any ascetics and brahmins who resort to equivocation do so on one or other of these four grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### 3.1.5. Doctrines of Origination by Chance

There are some ascetics and brahmins who theorize about chance. They assert that the self and the cosmos arose by chance on two grounds. And what are the two grounds on which they rely?

There are gods named ‘non-percipient beings’. When perception arises they pass away from that group of gods. It’s possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect the arising of perception, but no further. They say: ‘The self and the cosmos arose by chance. Why is that? Because formerly I didn’t exist. Now, having not been, I’ve sprung into existence.’ This is the first ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos arose by chance.

And what is the second ground on which they rely? It’s when some ascetic or brahmin relies on logic and inquiry. They speak of what they have worked out by logic, following a line of inquiry, expressing their own perspective: ‘The self and the cosmos arose by chance.’ This is the second ground on which some ascetics and brahmins rely to assert that the self and the cosmos arose by chance.

These are the two grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins who theorize about chance assert that the self and the cosmos arose by chance. Any ascetics and brahmins who theorize about chance do so on one or other of these two grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

These are the eighteen grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the past assert various hypotheses concerning the past. Any ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the past do so on one or other of these eighteen grounds. Outside of this there is none.

The Realized One understands this: ‘If you hold on to and attach to these grounds for views it leads to such and such a destiny in the next life.’ He understands this, and what goes beyond this. Yet since he does not misapprehend that understanding, he has realized extinguishment within himself. Having truly understood the origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape from feelings, the Realized One is freed through not grasping.

These are the principles—deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of reason, subtle, comprehensible to the astute—which the Realized One makes known after realizing them with his own insight. And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### **3.2. Theories About the Future**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the future, and assert various hypotheses concerning the future on forty-four grounds. And what are the forty-four grounds on which they rely?

#### **3.2.1. Percipient Life After Death**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who say there is life after death, and assert that the self lives on after death in a percipient form on sixteen grounds. And what are the sixteen grounds on which they rely?

They assert: ‘The self is sound and percipient after death, and it is physical ...

non-physical ...

both physical and non-physical ...

neither physical nor non-physical ...

finite ...

infinite ...

both finite and infinite ...

neither finite nor infinite ...

of unified perception ...

of diverse perception ...

of limited perception ...

of limitless perception ...

experiences nothing but happiness ...

experiences nothing but suffering ...

experiences both happiness and suffering ...

experiences neither happiness nor suffering.'

These are the sixteen grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self lives on after death in a percipient form. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert that the self lives on after death in a percipient form do so on one or other of these sixteen grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### **3.2.2. Non-Percipient Life After Death**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who say there is life after death, and assert that the self lives on after death in a non-percipient form on eight grounds. And what are the eight grounds on which they rely?

They assert: ‘The self is sound and non-percipient after death, and it is physical ...

non-physical ...

both physical and non-physical ...

neither physical nor non-physical ...

finite ...

infinite ...

both finite and infinite ...

neither finite nor infinite.’

These are the eight grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self lives on after death in a non-percipient form. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert that the self lives on after death in a non-percipient form do so on one or other of these eight grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### **3.2.3. Neither Percipient Nor Non-Percipient Life After Death**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who say there is life after death, and assert that the self lives on after death in a neither percipient nor non-percipient form on eight grounds. And what are the eight grounds on which they rely?

They assert: ‘The self is sound and neither percipient nor non-percipient after death, and it is physical ...

non-physical ...

both physical and non-physical ...

neither physical nor non-physical ...

finite ...

infinite ...

both finite and infinite ...

neither finite nor infinite.'

These are the eight grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self lives on after death in a neither percipient nor non-percipient form. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert that the self lives on after death in a neither percipient nor non-percipient form do so on one or other of these eight grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### **3.2.4. Annihilationism**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who are annihilationists. They assert the annihilation, eradication, and extermination of an existing being on seven grounds. And what are the seven grounds on which they rely?

There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: 'This self is physical, made up of the four primary elements, and produced by mother and father. Since it's annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn't exist after death, that's how this self becomes rightly annihilated.' That is how some assert the annihilation of an existing being.

But someone else says to them: 'That self of which you speak does exist, I don't deny it. But that's not how this self becomes rightly annihilated. There is another self that is divine, physical, sensual, consuming solid food. You don't know or see

that. But I know it and see it. Since this self is annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn't exist after death, that's how this self becomes rightly annihilated.' That is how some assert the annihilation of an existing being.

But someone else says to them: 'That self of which you speak does exist, I don't deny it. But that's not how this self becomes rightly annihilated. There is another self that is divine, physical, mind-made, complete in all its various parts, not deficient in any faculty. You don't know or see that. But I know it and see it. Since this self is annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn't exist after death, that's how this self becomes rightly annihilated.' That is how some assert the annihilation of an existing being.

But someone else says to them: 'That self of which you speak does exist, I don't deny it. But that's not how this self becomes rightly annihilated. There is another self which has gone totally beyond perceptions of form. With the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that "space is infinite", it's reborn in the dimension of infinite space. You don't know or see that. But I know it and see it. Since this self is annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn't exist after death, that's how this self becomes rightly annihilated.' That is how some assert the annihilation of an existing being.

But someone else says to them: 'That self of which you speak does exist, I don't deny it. But that's not how this self becomes rightly annihilated. There is another self which has gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite space. Aware that "consciousness is infinite", it's reborn in the dimension of infinite consciousness. You don't know or see that. But I know it and see it. Since this self is annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn't exist after death, that's how this self becomes rightly annihilated.' That is how some assert the annihilation of an existing being.

But someone else says to them: 'That self of which you speak does exist, I don't deny it. But that's not how this self becomes rightly annihilated. There is another self that has gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness. Aware

that “there is nothing at all”, it’s been reborn in the dimension of nothingness. You don’t know or see that. But I know it and see it. Since this self is annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn’t exist after death, that’s how this self becomes rightly annihilated.’ That is how some assert the annihilation of an existing being.

But someone else says to them: ‘That self of which you speak does exist, I don’t deny it. But that’s not how this self becomes rightly annihilated. There is another self that has gone totally beyond the dimension of nothingness. Aware that “this is peaceful, this is sublime”, it’s been reborn in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. You don’t know or see that. But I know it and see it. Since this self is annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn’t exist after death, that’s how this self becomes rightly annihilated.’ That is how some assert the annihilation of an existing being.

These are the seven grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert the annihilation, eradication, and extermination of an existing being. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert the annihilation, eradication, and extermination of an existing being do so on one or other of these eight grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

### **3.2.5. Extinguishment in the Present Life**

There are some ascetics and brahmins who speak of extinguishment in the present life. They assert the ultimate extinguishment of an existing being in the present life on five grounds. And what are the five grounds on which they rely?

There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: ‘When this self amuses itself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, that’s how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life.’ That is how some assert the extinguishment of an existing being in the present life.

But someone else says to them: ‘That self of which you speak does exist, I don’t deny it. But that’s not how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life. Why is that? Because sensual pleasures are impermanent, suffering, and perishable. Their decay and perishing give rise to sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, this self enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. That’s how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life.’ That is how some assert the extinguishment of an existing being in the present life.

But someone else says to them: ‘That self of which you speak does exist, I don’t deny it. But that’s not how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life. Why is that? Because the placing of the mind and the keeping it connected there are coarse. But when the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, this self enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. That’s how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life.’ That is how some assert the extinguishment of an existing being in the present life.

But someone else says to them: ‘That self of which you speak does exist, I don’t deny it. But that’s not how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life. Why is that? Because the rapture and emotional excitement there are coarse. But with the fading away of rapture, this self enters and remains in the third absorption, where it meditates with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, “Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss”. That’s how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life.’ That is how some assert the extinguishment of an existing being in the present life.

But someone else says to them: ‘That self of which you speak does exist, I don’t deny it. But that’s not how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life. Why is that? Because the bliss and enjoyment there are coarse. But giving up

pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, this self enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. That's how this self attains ultimate extinguishment in the present life.' That is how some assert the extinguishment of an existing being in the present life.

These are the five grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins assert the ultimate extinguishment of an existing being in the present life. Any ascetics and brahmins who assert the ultimate extinguishment of an existing being in the present life do so on one or other of these five grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

These are the forty-four grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the future assert various hypotheses concerning the future. Any ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the future do so on one or other of these forty-four grounds. Outside of this there is none. The Realized One understands this ... And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

These are the sixty-two grounds on which those ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the past and the future assert various hypotheses concerning the past and the future.

Any ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the past or the future do so on one or other of these sixty-two grounds. Outside of this there is none.

The Realized One understands this: 'If you hold on to and attach to these grounds for views it leads to such and such a destiny in the next life.' He understands this, and what goes beyond this. Yet since he does not misapprehend that understanding, he has realized extinguishment within himself. Having truly understood the origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape from feelings, the Realized One is freed through not grasping.

These are the principles—deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of reason, subtle, comprehensible to the astute—which the Realized One makes known after realizing them with his own insight. And those who genuinely praise the Realized One would rightly speak of these things.

## **4. The Grounds For Assertions About the Self and the Cosmos**

### **4.1. Anxiety and Evasiveness**

Now, these things are only the feeling of those who do not know or see, the agitation and evasiveness of those under the sway of craving. Namely, when those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal on four grounds ...

partially eternal on four grounds ...

finite or infinite on four grounds ...

or they resort to equivocation on four grounds ...

or they assert that the self and the cosmos arose by chance on two grounds ...

they theorize about the past on these eighteen grounds ...

or they assert that the self lives on after death in a percipient form on sixteen grounds ...

or that the self lives on after death in a non-percipient form on eight grounds ...

or that the self lives on after death in a neither percipient nor non-percipient form on eight grounds ...

or they assert the annihilation of an existing being on seven grounds ...

or they assert the ultimate extinguishment of an existing being in the present life on five grounds ...

they theorize about the future on these forty-four grounds ...

When those ascetics and brahmins theorize about the past and the future on these sixty-two grounds, these things are only the feeling of those who do not know or see, the agitation and evasiveness of those under the sway of craving.

#### **4.2. Conditioned by Contact**

Now, these things are conditioned by contact. Namely, when those ascetics and brahmins assert that the self and the cosmos are eternal on four grounds ...

partially eternal on four grounds ...

finite or infinite on four grounds ...

or they resort to equivocation on four grounds ...

or they assert that the self and the cosmos arose by chance on two grounds ...

they theorize about the past on these eighteen grounds ...

or they assert that the self lives on after death in a percipient form on sixteen grounds ...

or that the self lives on after death in a non-percipient form on eight grounds ...

or that the self lives on after death in a neither percipient nor non-percipient form on eight grounds ...

or they assert the annihilation of an existing being on seven grounds ...

or they assert the ultimate extinguishment of an existing being in the present life on five grounds ...

they theorize about the future on these forty-four grounds ...

When those ascetics and brahmins theorize about the past and the future on these sixty-two grounds, that too is conditioned by contact.

### **4.3. Not Possible**

Now, when those ascetics and brahmins theorize about the past and the future on these sixty-two grounds, it is not possible that they should experience these things without contact.

### **4.4. Dependent Origination**

Now, when those ascetics and brahmins theorize about the past and the future on these sixty-two grounds, all of them experience this by repeated contact through the six fields of contact. Their feeling is a condition for craving. Craving is a condition for grasping. Grasping is a condition for continued existence. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be.

## **5. The End of the Round**

When a mendicant truly understands the six fields of contacts' origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape, they understand what lies beyond all these things.

All of these ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the past or the future are trapped in the net of these sixty-two grounds, so that wherever they emerge they are caught and trapped in this very net.

Suppose an expert fisherman or his apprentice were to cast a fine-meshed net over a small pond. They'd think: 'Any sizable creatures in this pond will be trapped in

the net. Wherever they emerge they are caught and trapped in this very net.’ In the same way, all of these ascetics and brahmins who theorize about the past or the future are trapped in the net of these sixty-two grounds, so that wherever they emerge they are caught and trapped in this very net.

The Realized One’s body remains, but his attachment to being reborn has been cut off. As long as his body remains he will be seen by gods and humans. But when his body breaks up, after life has ended, gods and humans will see him no more.

When the stalk of a bunch of mangoes is cut, all the mangoes attached to the stalk will follow along. In the same way, the Realized One’s body remains, but his attachment to being reborn has been cut off. As long as his body remains he will be seen by gods and humans. But when his body breaks up, after life has ended, gods and humans will see him no more.”

When he had spoken, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! What is the name of this exposition of the teaching?” “Well, then, Ānanda, you may remember this exposition of the teaching as ‘The Net of Meaning’, or else ‘The Net of the Teaching’, or else ‘The Prime Net’, or else ‘The Net of Views’, or else ‘The Supreme Victory in Battle’.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said. And while this discourse was being spoken, the galaxy shook.

## 2. Sāmaññaphala Sutta

The Fruits of Recluseship

### 1. A Discussion With the King's Ministers

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha in the Mango Grove of Jīvaka Komārabhacca, together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants. Now, at that time it was the sabbath—the Komudi full moon on the fifteenth day of the fourth month—and King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Magadha was sitting upstairs in the stilt longhouse surrounded by his ministers. Then Ajātasattu spoke these words of inspiration: “Oh, sirs, this moonlit night is so very delightful, so beautiful, so glorious, so lovely, so striking. Now, what ascetic or brahmin might I pay homage to today, paying homage to whom my mind might find peace?”

When he had spoken, one of the king's ministers said to him: “Sire, Pūraṇa Kassapa leads an order and a community, and teaches a community. He's a well-known and famous religious founder, regarded as holy by many people. He is of long standing, long gone forth; he is advanced in years and has reached the final stage of life. Let Your Majesty pay homage to him. Hopefully in so doing your mind will find peace.” But when he had spoken, the king remained silent.

Another of the king's ministers said to him: “Sire, Makkhali Gosāla leads an order and a community, and teaches a community. He's a well-known and famous religious founder, regarded as holy by many people. He is of long standing, long gone forth; he is advanced in years and has reached the final stage of life. Let Your Majesty pay homage to him. Hopefully in so doing your mind will find peace.” But when he had spoken, the king remained silent.

Another of the king's ministers said to him: “Sire, Ajita Kesakambala leads an order and a community, and teaches a community. He's a well-known and famous religious founder, regarded as holy by many people. He is of long standing, long gone forth; he is advanced in years and has reached the final stage of life. Let Your

Majesty pay homage to him. Hopefully in so doing your mind will find peace.” But when he had spoken, the king remained silent.

Another of the king’s ministers said to him: “Sire, Pakudha Kaccāyana leads an order and a community, and teaches a community. He’s a well-known and famous religious founder, regarded as holy by many people. He is of long standing, long gone forth; he is advanced in years and has reached the final stage of life. Let Your Majesty pay homage to him. Hopefully in so doing your mind will find peace.” But when he had spoken, the king remained silent.

Another of the king’s ministers said to him: “Sire, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta leads an order and a community, and teaches a community. He’s a well-known and famous religious founder, regarded as holy by many people. He is of long standing, long gone forth; he is advanced in years and has reached the final stage of life. Let Your Majesty pay homage to him. Hopefully in so doing your mind will find peace.” But when he had spoken, the king remained silent.

Another of the king’s ministers said to him: “Sire, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta leads an order and a community, and teaches a community. He’s a well-known and famous religious founder, regarded as holy by many people. He is of long standing, long gone forth; he is advanced in years and has reached the final stage of life. Let Your Majesty pay homage to him. Hopefully in so doing your mind will find peace.” But when he had spoken, the king remained silent.

## **2. A Discussion With Jīvaka Komārabhacca**

Now at that time Jīvaka Komārabhacca was sitting silently not far from the king. Then the king said to him: “But my dear Jīvaka, why are you silent?” “Sire, the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha is staying in my mango grove together with a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’

Let Your Majesty pay homage to him. Hopefully in so doing your mind will find peace.”

“Well then, my dear Jīvaka, have the elephants readied.” “Yes, Your Majesty,” replied Jīvaka. He had around five hundred female elephants readied, in addition to the king’s bull elephant for riding. Then he informed the king: “The elephants are ready, sire. Please go at your convenience.”

Then King Ajātasattu had women mounted on each of the five hundred female elephants, while he mounted his bull elephant. With attendants carrying torches, he set out in full royal pomp from Rājagaha to Jīvaka’s mango grove.

But as he drew near the mango grove, the king became frightened, scared, his hair standing on end. He said to Jīvaka: “My dear Jīvaka, I hope you’re not deceiving me! I hope you’re not betraying me! I hope you’re not turning me over to my enemies! For how on earth can there be no sound of coughing or clearing throats or any noise in such a large Saṅgha of 1,250 mendicants?”

“Do not fear, great king, do not fear! I am not deceiving you, or betraying you, or turning you over to your enemies. Go forward, great king, go forward! Those are lamps shining in the pavilion.”

### **3. The Question About the Fruits of the Ascetic Life**

Then King Ajātasattu rode on the elephant as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the pavilion door on foot, where he asked Jīvaka: “But my dear Jīvaka, where is the Buddha?” “That is the Buddha, great king, that is the Buddha! He’s sitting against the central column facing east, in front of the Saṅgha of mendicants.”

Then the king went up to the Buddha and stood to one side. He looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were so very silent, like a still, clear lake, and spoke these words of inspiration: “May my son, Prince Udāyibhadda, be blessed with such peace as the Saṅgha of mendicants now enjoys!” “Has your mind gone to one you

love, great king?” “I love my son, sir, Prince Udāyibhadda. May he be blessed with such peace as the Saṅgha of mendicants now enjoys!”

Then the king bowed to the Buddha, raised his joined palms toward the Saṅgha, and sat down to one side. He said to the Buddha: “Sir, I’d like to ask you about a certain point, if you’d take the time to answer.” “Ask what you wish, great king.”

“Sir, there are many different professional fields. These include elephant riders, cavalry, charioteers, archers, bannermen, adjutants, food servers, warrior-chiefs, princes, chargers, great warriors, heroes, leather-clad soldiers, and sons of bondservants. They also include bakers, barbers, bathroom attendants, cooks, garland-makers, dyers, weavers, basket-makers, potters, accountants, finger-talliers, or those following any similar professions. All these live off the fruits of their profession which are apparent in the present life. With that they bring happiness and joy to themselves, their parents, their children and partners, and their friends and colleagues. And they establish an uplifting teacher’s offering for ascetics and brahmins that’s conducive to heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven. Sir, can you point out a fruit of the ascetic life that’s likewise apparent in the present life?”

“Great king, do you recall having asked this question of other ascetics and brahmins?” “I do, sir.” “If you wouldn’t mind, great king, tell me how they answered.” “It’s no trouble when someone such as the Blessed One is sitting here.” “Well, speak then, great king.”

### **3.1. The Doctrine of Pūraṇa Kassapa**

“One time, sir, I approached Pūraṇa Kassapa and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, I sat down to one side, and asked him the same question.

He said to me: ‘Great king, the one who acts does nothing wrong when they punish, mutilate, torture, aggrieve, oppress, intimidate, or when they encourage others to do the same. They do nothing wrong when they kill, steal, break into

houses, plunder wealth, steal from isolated buildings, commit highway robbery, commit adultery, and lie. If you were to reduce all the living creatures of this earth to one heap and mass of flesh with a razor-edged chakram, no evil comes of that, and no outcome of evil. If you were to go along the south bank of the Ganges killing, mutilating, and torturing, and encouraging others to do the same, no evil comes of that, and no outcome of evil. If you were to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving and sacrificing and encouraging others to do the same, no merit comes of that, and no outcome of merit. In giving, self-control, restraint, and truthfulness there is no merit or outcome of merit.'

And so, when I asked Pūraṇa Kassapa about the fruits of the ascetic life apparent in the present life, he answered with the doctrine of inaction. It was like someone who, when asked about a mango, answered with a breadfruit, or when asked about a breadfruit, answered with a mango. I thought: 'How could one such as I presume to rebuke an ascetic or brahmin living in my realm?' So I neither approved nor dismissed that statement of Pūraṇa Kassapa. I was displeased, but did not express my displeasure. Neither accepting what he said nor contradicting it, I got up from my seat and left.

### **3.2. The Doctrine of Makkhali Gosāla**

One time, sir, I approached Makkhali Gosāla and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, I sat down to one side, and asked him the same question.

He said: 'Great king, there is no cause or condition for the corruption of sentient beings. Sentient beings are corrupted without cause or condition. There's no cause or condition for the purification of sentient beings. Sentient beings are purified without cause or condition. One does not act of one's own volition, one does not act of another's volition, one does not act from a person's volition. There is no power, no energy, no manly strength or vigor. All sentient beings, all living creatures, all beings, all souls lack control, power, and energy. Molded by destiny, circumstance, and nature, they experience pleasure and pain in the six classes of rebirth. There are 1.4 million main wombs, and 6,000, and 600. There are 500

deeds, and five, and three. There are deeds and half-deeds. There are 62 paths, 62 sub-eons, six classes of rebirth, and eight stages in a person's life. There are 4,900 Ājīvaka ascetics, 4,900 wanderers, and 4,900 naked ascetics. There are 2,000 faculties, 3,000 hells, and 36 realms of dust. There are seven percipient embryos, seven non-percipient embryos, and seven embryos without attachments. There are seven gods, seven humans, and seven goblins. There are seven lakes, seven winds, 700 winds, seven cliffs, and 700 cliffs. There are seven dreams and 700 dreams. There are 8.4 million great eons through which the foolish and the astute transmigrate before making an end of suffering. And here there is no such thing as this: "By this precept or observance or mortification or spiritual life I shall force unripened deeds to bear their fruit, or eliminate old deeds by experiencing their results little by little," for that cannot be. Pleasure and pain are allotted. Transmigration lasts only for a limited period, so there's no increase or decrease, no getting better or worse. It's like how, when you toss a ball of string, it rolls away unraveling. In the same way, after transmigrating the foolish and the astute will make an end of suffering.'

And so, when I asked Makkhali Gosāla about the fruits of the ascetic life apparent in the present life, he answered with the doctrine of purification through transmigration. It was like someone who, when asked about a mango, answered with a breadfruit, or when asked about a breadfruit, answered with a mango. I thought: 'How could one such as I presume to rebuke an ascetic or brahmin living in my realm?' So I neither approved nor dismissed that statement of Makkhali Gosāla. I was displeased, but did not express my displeasure. Neither accepting what he said nor contradicting it, I got up from my seat and left.

### **3.3. The Doctrine of Ajita Kesakambala**

One time, sir, I approached Ajita Kesakambala and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, I sat down to one side, and asked him the same question.

He said: 'Great king, there is no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There's no obligation

to mother and father. No beings are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is well attained and practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight. This person is made up of the four primary elements. When they die, the earth in their body merges and coalesces with the main mass of earth. The water in their body merges and coalesces with the main mass of water. The fire in their body merges and coalesces with the main mass of fire. The air in their body merges and coalesces with the main mass of air. The faculties are transferred to space. Four men with a bier carry away the corpse. Their footprints show the way to the cemetery. The bones become bleached. Offerings dedicated to the gods end in ashes. Giving is a doctrine of morons. When anyone affirms a positive teaching it's just baseless, false nonsense. Both the foolish and the astute are annihilated and destroyed when their body breaks up, and don't exist after death.'

And so, when I asked Ajita Kesakambala about the fruits of the ascetic life apparent in the present life, he answered with the doctrine of annihilationism. It was like someone who, when asked about a mango, answered with a breadfruit, or when asked about a breadfruit, answered with a mango. I thought: 'How could one such as I presume to rebuke an ascetic or brahmin living in my realm?' So I neither approved nor dismissed that statement of Ajita Kesakambala. I was displeased, but did not express my displeasure. Neither accepting what he said nor contradicting it, I got up from my seat and left.

### **3.4. The Doctrine of Pakudha Kaccāyana**

One time, sir, I approached Pakudha Kaccāyana and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, I sat down to one side, and asked him the same question.

He said: 'Great king, these seven substances are not made, not derived, not created, without a creator, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They don't move or deteriorate or obstruct each other. They're unable to cause pleasure, pain, or neutral feeling to each other. What seven? The substances of earth, water, fire, air; pleasure, pain, and the soul is the seventh. These seven

substances are not made, not derived, not created, without a creator, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They don't move or deteriorate or obstruct each other. They're unable to cause pleasure, pain, or neutral feeling to each other. And here there is no-one who kills or who makes others kill; no-one who learns or who educates others; no-one who understands or who helps others understand. If you chop off someone's head with a sharp sword, you don't take anyone's life. The sword simply passes through the gap between the seven substances.'

And so, when I asked Pakudha Kaccāyana about the fruits of the ascetic life apparent in the present life, he answered with something else entirely. It was like someone who, when asked about a mango, answered with a breadfruit, or when asked about a breadfruit, answered with a mango. I thought: 'How could one such as I presume to rebuke an ascetic or brahmin living in my realm?' So I neither approved nor dismissed that statement of Pakudha Kaccāyana. I was displeased, but did not express my displeasure. Neither accepting what he said nor contradicting it, I got up from my seat and left.

### **3.5. The Doctrine of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta**

One time, sir, I approached Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, I sat down to one side, and asked him the same question.

He said: 'Great king, consider a Jain ascetic who is restrained in the fourfold restraint. And how is a Jain ascetic restrained in the fourfold restraint? It's when a Jain ascetic is obstructed by all water, devoted to all water, shaking off all water, pervaded by all water. That's how a Jain ascetic is restrained in the fourfold restraint. When a Jain ascetic is restrained in the fourfold restraint, they're called a knotless one who is self-realized, self-controlled, and steadfast.'

And so, when I asked Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta about the fruits of the ascetic life apparent in the present life, he answered with the fourfold restraint. It was like someone who, when asked about a mango, answered with a breadfruit, or when

asked about a breadfruit, answered with a mango. I thought: ‘How could one such as I presume to rebuke an ascetic or brahmin living in my realm?’ So I neither approved nor dismissed that statement of Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta. I was displeased, but did not express my displeasure. Neither accepting what he said nor contradicting it, I got up from my seat and left.

### **3.6. The Doctrine of Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta**

One time, sir, I approached Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, I sat down to one side, and asked him the same question.

He said: ‘Suppose you were to ask me whether there is another world. If I believed there was, I would say so. But I don’t say it’s like this. I don’t say it’s like that. I don’t say it’s otherwise. I don’t say it’s not so. And I don’t deny it’s not so.

Suppose you were to ask me whether there is no other world ... whether there both is and is not another world ... whether there neither is nor is not another world ... whether there are beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there are no beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there both are and are not beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there neither are nor are not beings who are reborn spontaneously ... whether there is fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether there is no fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether there both is and is not fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether there neither is nor is not fruit and result of good and bad deeds ... whether a Realized One exists after death ... whether a Realized One doesn’t exist after death ... whether a Realized One both exists and doesn’t exist after death ... whether a Realized One neither exists nor doesn’t exist after death. If I believed there was, I would say so. But I don’t say it’s like this. I don’t say it’s like that. I don’t say it’s otherwise. I don’t say it’s not so. And I don’t deny it’s not so.’

And so, when I asked Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta about the fruits of the ascetic life apparent in the present life, he answered with evasiveness. It was like someone who, when asked about a mango, answered with a breadfruit, or when asked about a breadfruit, answered with a mango. I thought: ‘This is the most foolish and stupid

of all these ascetics and brahmins! How on earth can he answer with evasiveness when asked about the fruits of the ascetic life apparent in the present life?’ I thought: ‘How could one such as I presume to rebuke an ascetic or brahmin living in my realm?’ So I neither approved nor dismissed that statement of Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta. I was displeased, but did not express my displeasure. Neither accepting what he said nor contradicting it, I got up from my seat and left.

## 4. The Fruits of the Ascetic Life

### 4.1. The First Fruit of the Ascetic Life

And so I ask the Buddha: Sir, there are many different professional fields. These include elephant riders, cavalry, charioteers, archers, bannermen, adjutants, food servers, warrior-chiefs, princes, chargers, great warriors, heroes, leather-clad soldiers, and sons of bondservants. They also include bakers, barbers, bathroom attendants, cooks, garland-makers, dyers, weavers, basket-makers, potters, accountants, finger-talliers, or those following any similar professions. All these live off the fruits of their profession which are apparent in the present life. With that they bring happiness and joy to themselves, their parents, their children and partners, and their friends and colleagues. And they establish an uplifting teacher’s offering for ascetics and brahmins that’s conducive to heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven. Sir, can you point out a fruit of the ascetic life that’s likewise apparent in the present life?”

“I can, great king. Well then, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, great king? BB’s “ever on the lookout to see that you are satisfied” is not correct, see mukhaṃ ulloketī at MN 79, SN 56.39 VAR: kammakāro → kammakaro (bj, s1-3, km, pts1) VAR: mukhullokako → mukhullokiko (s1-3, km, mr) Suppose you had a person who was a bondservant, a worker. They get up before you and go to bed after you, and are obliging, behaving nicely and speaking politely, and gazing up at your face. They’d think: ‘The outcome and result of good deeds is just so incredible, so amazing! For this King Ajātasattu is a human being, and so am I. Yet he amuses himself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation as if he were a god. Whereas

I'm his bondservant, his worker. I get up before him and go to bed after him, and am obliging, behaving nicely and speaking politely, and gazing up at his face. I should do good deeds. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?'

After some time, that is what they do. Having gone forth they'd live restrained in body, speech, and mind, living content with nothing more than food and clothes, delighting in seclusion. And suppose your men were to report all this to you. Would you say to them: 'Bring that person to me! Let them once more be my bondservant, my worker?'

"No, sir. Rather, I would bow to them, rise in their presence, and offer them a seat. I'd invite them to accept robes, alms-food, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. And I'd arrange for their lawful guarding and protection."

"What do you think, great king? If this is so, is there a fruit of the ascetic life apparent in the present life or not?" "Clearly, sir, there is." "This is the first fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life, which I point out to you."

#### **4.2. The Second Fruit of the Ascetic Life**

"But sir, can you point out another fruit of the ascetic life that's likewise apparent in the present life?" "I can, great king. Well then, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, great king? Suppose you had a person who was a farmer, a householder, a hard worker, someone who builds up their capital. They'd think: 'The outcome and result of good deeds is just so incredible, so amazing! For this King Ajātasattu is a human being, and so am I. Yet he amuses himself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation as if he were a god. Whereas I'm a farmer, a householder, a hard worker, someone who builds up their capital. I should do good deeds. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?'

After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They'd shave off hair and beard, dress in ochre robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Having gone forth they'd live restrained in body, speech, and mind, living content with nothing more than food and clothes, delighting in seclusion. And suppose your men were to report all this to you. Would you say to them: 'Bring that person to me! Let them once more be a farmer, a householder, a hard worker, someone who builds up their capital'?"

"No, sir. Rather, I would bow to them, rise in their presence, and offer them a seat. I'd invite them to accept robes, alms-food, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. And I'd arrange for their lawful guarding and protection."

"What do you think, great king? If this is so, is there a fruit of the ascetic life apparent in the present life or not?" "Clearly, sir, there is." "This is the second fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life, which I point out to you."

### **4.3. The Finer Fruits of the Ascetic Life**

"But sir, can you point out a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than these?" "I can, great king. Well then, listen and pay close attention, I will speak." "Yes, sir," replied the king.

The Buddha said this: "Consider when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure.

A householder hears that teaching, or a householder's child, or someone reborn in some clan. They gain faith in the Realized One, and reflect: 'Living in a house is

cramped and dirty, but the life of one gone forth is wide open. It's not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don't I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?'

After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

Once they've gone forth, they live restrained in the code of conduct, with appropriate behavior and means of collecting alms. Seeing danger in the slightest flaw, they keep the rules they've undertaken. They act skillfully by body and speech. They're purified in livelihood and accomplished in ethical conduct. They guard the sense doors, have mindfulness and situational awareness, and are content.

### **4.3.1. Ethics**

#### ***4.3.1.1. The Shorter Section on Ethics***

And how, great king, is a mendicant accomplished in ethics? It's when a mendicant gives up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of compassion for all creatures. This pertains to their ethics.

They give up stealing. They take only what's given, and expect only what's given. They keep themselves clean by not thieving. This pertains to their ethics.

They give up unchastity. They are celibate, set apart, avoiding the common practice of sex. This pertains to their ethics.

They give up lying. They speak the truth and stick to the truth. They're honest and trustworthy, and don't trick the world with their words. This pertains to their ethics.

They give up divisive speech. They don't repeat in one place what they heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, they reconcile those who are divided, supporting unity, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. This pertains to their ethics.

They give up harsh speech. They speak in a way that's mellow, pleasing to the ear, lovely, going to the heart, polite, likable and agreeable to the people. This pertains to their ethics.

They give up talking nonsense. Their words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. They say things at the right time which are valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial. This pertains to their ethics.

They refrain from injuring plants and seeds. They eat in one part of the day, abstaining from eating at night and food at the wrong time. They avoid dancing, singing, music, and seeing shows. They refrain from beautifying and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. They avoid high and luxurious beds. They avoid receiving gold and money, raw grains, raw meat, women and girls, male and female bondservants, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, elephants, cows, horses, and mares, and fields and land. They refrain from running errands and messages; buying and selling; falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence. This pertains to their ethics.

The shorter section on ethics is finished.

#### ***4.3.1.2. The Middle Section on Ethics***

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in injuring plants and seeds. These include plants propagated from roots, stems, cuttings, or joints; and those from regular seeds as the fifth. They refrain from such injury to plants and seeds. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in storing up goods for their own enjoyment. This includes such things as food, drink, clothes, vehicles, bedding, fragrance, and material possessions. They refrain from storing up such goods. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in seeing shows. This includes such things as dancing, singing, music, performances, and story telling; clapping, gongs, and kettle-drums; art exhibitions and acrobatic displays; battles of elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, goats, rams, chickens, and quails; staff-fights, boxing, and wrestling; combat, roll calls of the armed forces, battle-formations, and regimental reviews. They refrain from such shows. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in gambling that causes negligence. This includes such things as checkers, draughts, checkers in the air, hopscotch, spillikins, board-games, tip-cat, drawing straws, dice, leaf-flutes, toy ploughs, somersaults, pinwheels, toy measures, toy carts, toy bows, guessing words from syllables, and guessing another's thoughts. They refrain from such gambling. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still make use of high and luxurious bedding. This includes such things as sofas, couches, woolen covers—shag-piled, colorful, white, embroidered with flowers, quilted, embroidered with animals, double-or single-fringed—and silk covers studded with gems, as well as silken sheets, woven carpets, rugs for elephants, horses, or chariots, antelope hide rugs, and spreads of fine deer hide, with a canopy above and red cushions at both ends. They refrain from such bedding. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in beautifying and adorning themselves with garlands, fragrance, and makeup. This includes such things as applying beauty products by anointing, massaging, bathing, and rubbing; mirrors, ointments, garlands, fragrances, and

makeup; face-powder, foundation, bracelets, head-bands, fancy walking-sticks or containers, rapiers, parasols, fancy sandals, turbans, jewelry, choweries, and long-fringed white robes. They refrain from such beautification and adornment. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in unworthy talk. This includes such topics as talk about kings, bandits, and ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that state of existence. They refrain from such unworthy talk. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in arguments. They say such things as: ‘You don’t understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You’re practicing wrong. I’m practicing right. I stay on topic, you don’t. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you’ve thought so much about has been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You’re trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!’ They refrain from such argumentative talk. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in running errands and messages. This includes running errands for rulers, ministers, aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or princes who say: ‘Go here, go there. Take this, bring that from there.’ They refrain from such errands. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still engage in deception, flattery, hinting, and belittling, and using material possessions

to pursue other material possessions. They refrain from such deception and flattery. This pertains to their ethics.

The middle section on ethics is finished.

#### ***4.3.1.3. The Long Section on Ethics***

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes such fields as limb-reading, omenology, divining celestial portents, interpreting dreams, divining bodily marks, divining holes in cloth gnawed by mice, fire offerings, ladle offerings, offerings of husks, rice powder, rice, ghee, or oil; offerings from the mouth, blood sacrifices, palmistry; geomancy for building sites, fields, and cemeteries; exorcisms, earth magic, snake charming, poisons; the crafts of the scorpion, the rat, the bird, and the crow; prophesying life span, chanting for protection, and animal cries. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes reading the marks of gems, cloth, clubs, swords, spears, arrows, weapons, women, men, boys, girls, male and female bondservants, elephants, horses, buffaloes, bulls, cows, goats, rams, chickens, quails, monitor lizards, rabbits, tortoises, or deer. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes making predictions that the king will march forth or march back; or that our king will attack and the enemy king will retreat, or vice versa; or that our king will triumph and the enemy king will be defeated, or vice versa; and so there will be victory for one and defeat for the other. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes making predictions that there will be an eclipse of the moon, or sun, or stars; that the sun, moon, and stars will be in conjunction or in opposition; that there will be a meteor shower, a fiery sky, an earthquake, thunder; that there will be a rising, a setting, a darkening, a brightening of the moon, sun, and stars. And it also includes making predictions about the results of all such phenomena. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes predicting whether there will be plenty of rain or drought; plenty to eat or famine; an abundant harvest or a bad harvest; security or peril; sickness or health. It also includes such occupations as computing, accounting, calculating, poetry, and cosmology. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes making arrangements for giving and taking in marriage; for engagement and divorce; and for scattering rice inwards or outwards at the wedding ceremony. It also includes casting spells for good or bad luck, curses to prevent conception, bind the tongue, or lock the jaws; charms for the hands and ears; questioning a mirror, a girl, or a god as an oracle; worshipping the sun, worshipping the Great One, breathing fire, and invoking Siri, the goddess of luck. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes rites for propitiation, for fulfilling wishes, for ghosts, for the earth, for rain, for property settlement, and for preparing and consecrating house sites, and

rites involving rinsing and bathing, and oblations. It also includes administering emetics, purgatives, expectorants, and phlegmagogues; administering ear-oils, eye restoratives, nasal medicine, ointments, and counter-ointments; surgery with needle and scalpel, treating children, prescribing root medicines, and binding on herbs. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their ethics.

A mendicant thus accomplished in ethics sees no danger in any quarter in regards to their ethical restraint. It's like a king who has defeated his enemies. He sees no danger from his foes in any quarter. In the same way, a mendicant thus accomplished in ethics sees no danger in any quarter in regards to their ethical restraint. When they have this entire spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves. That's how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics.

The longer section on ethics is finished.

### **4.3.2. Immersion**

#### ***4.3.2.1. Sense Restraint***

And how does a mendicant guard the sense doors? When a noble disciple sees a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of desire and aversion would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears ... When they smell an odor with their nose ... When they taste a flavor with their tongue ... When they feel a touch with their body ... When they know a thought with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of desire and aversion would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. When they have this noble sense restraint, they experience an unsullied bliss inside themselves. That's how a mendicant guards the sense doors.

#### **4.3.2.2. Mindfulness and Situational Awareness**

And how does a mendicant have mindfulness and situational awareness? It's when a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent. That's how a mendicant has mindfulness and situational awareness.

#### **4.3.2.3. Contentment**

And how is a mendicant content? It's when a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and alms-food to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. They're like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and alms-food to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. That's how a mendicant is content.

#### **4.3.2.4. Giving Up the Hindrances**

When they have this noble spectrum of ethics, this noble sense restraint, this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, and this noble contentment, they frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. After the meal, they return from alms-round, sit down cross-legged with their body straight, and establish mindfulness right there.

Giving up desire for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of desire, cleansing the mind of desire. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of compassion for all creatures, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and

remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

Suppose a man who has gotten into debt were to apply himself to work, and his efforts proved successful. He would pay off the original loan and have enough left over to support his partner. Thinking about this, he'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose there was a person who was sick, suffering, gravely ill. They'd lose their appetite and get physically weak. But after some time they'd recover from that illness, and regain their appetite and their strength. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose a person was imprisoned in a jail. But after some time they were released from jail, safe and sound, with no loss of wealth. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose a person was a bondservant. They belonged to someone else and were unable to go where they wish. But after some time they'd be freed from servitude and become their own master, an emancipated individual able to go where they wish. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose there was a person with wealth and property who was traveling along a desert road, which was perilous, with nothing to eat. But after some time they crossed over the desert safely, reaching the neighborhood of a village, a sanctuary free of peril. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

In the same way, as long as these five hindrances are not given up inside themselves, a mendicant regards them thus as a debt, a disease, a prison, slavery, and a desert crossing.

But when these five hindrances are given up inside themselves, a mendicant regards this as freedom from debt, good health, release from prison, emancipation, and sanctuary.

Seeing that the hindrances have been given up in them, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed.

#### ***4.3.2.5. First Absorption***

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread their body with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion.

It's like when an expert bathroom attendant or their apprentice pours bath powder into a bronze dish, sprinkling it little by little with water. They knead it until the ball of bath powder is soaked and saturated with moisture, spread through inside and out; yet no moisture oozes out. In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. This, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### ***4.3.2.6. Second Absorption***

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without applying the mind and keeping it connected. In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion.

It's like a deep lake fed by spring water. There's no inlet to the east, west, north, or south, and no rainfall to replenish it from time to time. But the stream of cool water welling up in the lake drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads throughout the lake.

There's no part of the lake that's not spread through with cool water. In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### ***4.3.2.7. Third Absorption***

Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' They drench, steep, fill, and spread their body with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture.

It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. From the tip to the root they're drenched, steeped, filled, and soaked with cool water. There's no part of them that's not soaked with cool water. In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### ***4.3.2.8. Fourth Absorption***

Furthermore, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

It's like someone sitting wrapped from head to foot with white cloth. There's no part of the body that's not spread over with white cloth. In the same way, they sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

### **4.3.3. The Eight Knowledges**

#### ***4.3.3.1. Knowledge and Vision***

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge and vision. They understand: 'This body of mine is physical. It's made up of the four primary elements, produced by mother and father, built up from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away and erosion, to breaking up and destruction. And this consciousness of mine is attached to it, tied to it.'

Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, with expert workmanship, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And it was strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown. And someone with good eyesight were to take it in their hand and examine it: 'This beryl gem is naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, with expert workmanship, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And it's strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown.' In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge and vision. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### ***4.3.3.2. Mind-Made Body***

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it

and project it toward the creation of a mind-made body. From this body they create another body, physical, mind-made, complete in all its various parts, not deficient in any faculty.

Suppose a person was to draw a reed out from its sheath. They'd think: 'This is the reed, this is the sheath. The reed and the sheath are different things. The reed has been drawn out from the sheath.' Or suppose a person was to draw a sword out from its scabbard. They'd think: 'This is the sword, this is the scabbard. The sword and the scabbard are different things. The sword has been drawn out from the scabbard.' Or suppose a person was to draw a snake out from its slough. They'd think: 'This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake and the slough are different things. The snake has been drawn out from the slough.' In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward the creation of a mind-made body. From this body they create another body, physical, mind-made, complete in all its various parts, not deficient in any faculty. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### **4.3.3.3. *Psychic Powers***

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward psychic power. They wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again; going unimpeded through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the Brahmā realm.

Suppose an expert potter or their apprentice had some well-prepared clay. They could produce any kind of pot that they like. Or suppose an expert ivory-carver or their apprentice had some well-prepared ivory. They could produce any kind of ivory item that they like. Or suppose an expert goldsmith or their apprentice had

some well-prepared gold. They could produce any kind of gold item that they like. In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward psychic power. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### **4.3.3.4. Clairaudience**

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward clairaudience. With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and divine, whether near or far.

Suppose there was a person traveling along the road. They'd hear the sound of drums, clay drums, horns, kettledrums, and tom-toms. They'd think: 'That's the sound of drums,' and 'that's the sound of clay-drums,' and 'that's the sound of horns, kettledrums, and tom-toms.' In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward clairaudience. With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and divine, whether near or far. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### **4.3.3.5. Comprehending the Minds of Others**

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward comprehending the minds of others. They understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having comprehended them with their own mind. They understand mind with greed as 'mind with greed', and mind without greed as 'mind without greed'. They understand mind with hate ... mind without hate ... mind with delusion ... mind without delusion ... contracted mind ...

scattered mind ... expansive mind ... unexpansive mind ... mind that is not supreme ... mind that is supreme ... immersed mind ... unimmersed mind ... freed mind ... They understand unfreed mind as 'unfreed mind'.

Suppose there was a woman or man who was young, youthful, and fond of adornments, and they check their own reflection in a clean bright mirror or a clear bowl of water. If they had a spot they'd know 'I have a spot,' and if they had no spots they'd know 'I have no spots.' In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward comprehending the minds of others. They understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having comprehended them with their own mind. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that's apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### **4.3.3.6. *Recollection of Past Lives***

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives, that is, one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world evolving, many eons of the world contracting and evolving. They remember: 'There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.' And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

Suppose a person was to leave their home village and go to another village. From that village they'd go to yet another village. And from that village they'd return to their home village. They'd think: 'I went from my home village to another village.

There I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. From that village I went to yet another village. There too I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. And from that village I returned to my home village.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward recollection of past lives. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that’s apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### **4.3.3.7. Clairvoyance**

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understood how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds: ‘These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They spoke ill of the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they acted out of that wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never spoke ill of the noble ones; they had right view; and they acted out of that right view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.’ And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds.

Suppose there was a stilt longhouse at the central square. A person with good eyesight standing there might see people entering and leaving a house, walking along the streets and paths, and sitting at the central square. They’d think: ‘These are people entering and leaving a house, walking along the streets and paths, and sitting at the central square.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable,

workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend and project it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that’s apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones.

#### **4.3.3.8. *Ending of Defilements***

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice leading to the cessation of suffering’. They truly understand: ‘These are defilements’ ... ‘This is the origin of defilements’ ... ‘This is the cessation of defilements’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements’. Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When freed, they know ‘it is freed’. They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is no return to any state of existence.’

Suppose that in a mountain glen there was a lake that was transparent, clear, and unclouded. A person with good eyesight standing on the bank would see the mussel shells, gravel and pebbles, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still. They’d think: ‘This lake is transparent, clear, and unclouded. And here are the mussel shells, gravel and pebbles, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. This too, great king, is a fruit of the ascetic life that’s apparent in the present life which is better and finer than the former ones. And, great king, there is no other fruit of the ascetic life apparent in the present life which is better and finer than this.”

## 5. Ajātasattu Declares Himself a Lay Follower

When the Buddha had spoken, King Ajātasattu said to him: “Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, so too the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life. I have made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of me to take the life of my father, a just and principled king, for the sake of sovereignty. Please, sir, accept my mistake for what it is, so I will restrain myself in future.”

“Indeed, great king, you made a mistake. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of you to take the life of your father, a just and principled king, for the sake of sovereignty. But since you have recognized your mistake for what it is, and have dealt with it properly, I accept it. For it is growth in the training of the noble one to recognize a mistake for what it is, deal with it properly, and commit to restraint in the future.”

When the Buddha had spoken, King Ajātasattu said to him: “Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do.” “Please, great king, go at your convenience.” Then the king, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled him, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

Soon after the king had left, the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “The king is broken, mendicants, he is ruined. If he had not taken the life of his father, a just and principled king, the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma would have arisen in him in that very seat.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

### 3. Ambaṭṭha Sutta

To Ambaṭṭha

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Kosalan brahmins named Icchānaṅgala. He stayed on in a forest near Icchānaṅgala.

#### 1. The Section on Pokkharasāti

Now at that time the brahmin Pokkharasāti was living in Ukkaṭṭhā. It was a crown property given by King Pasenadi of Kosala, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal endowment of the highest quality.

Pokkharasāti heard: “It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Icchānaṅgala and is staying in a forest nearby. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. It’s good to see such perfected ones.”

#### 2. The Brahmin Student Ambaṭṭha

Now at that time Pokkharasāti had a student named Ambaṭṭha. He was one who recited and remembered the hymns, and was an expert in the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. He knew philology and grammar, and was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. He had been authorized as a master in his own teacher’s scriptural heritage of the three Vedas with the words: “What I know, you know. And what you know, I know.”

Then Pokkharasāti addressed Ambaṭṭha: “Dear Ambaṭṭha, the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Icchānaṅgala and is staying in a forest nearby. ... It’s good to see such perfected ones. Please, dear

Ambaṭṭha, go to the ascetic Gotama and find out whether or not he lives up to his reputation. Through you I shall learn about Master Gotama.”

“But sir, how shall I find out whether or not the ascetic Gotama lives up to his reputation?”

“Dear Ambaṭṭha, the thirty-two marks of a great man have been handed down in our hymns. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world. But, dear Ambaṭṭha, I am the one who gives the hymns, and you are the one who receives them.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Ambaṭṭha. He got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled Pokkharasāti, keeping him to his right. He mounted a mare-drawn chariot and, together with several students, set out for the forest near Icchānaṅgala. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and entered the monastery on foot. At that time several mendicants were walking meditation in the open air. Then the student Ambaṭṭha went up to those mendicants and said: “Gentlemen, where is Master Gotama at present? For we have come here to see him.”

Then those mendicants thought: “This Ambaṭṭha is from a well-known family, and he is the pupil of the well-known brahmin Pokkharasāti. The Buddha won’t mind having a discussion together with such respectable persons.” They said to Ambaṭṭha: “Ambaṭṭha, that’s his dwelling, with the door closed. Approach it quietly, without hurrying; go onto the porch, clear your throat, and knock with the latch. The Buddha will open the door.”

So he approached the Buddha’s dwelling and knocked, and the Buddha opened the door. Ambaṭṭha and the other students entered the dwelling. The other students exchanged greetings with the Buddha, and when the greetings and polite conversation were over, sat down to one side. But while the Buddha was sitting, Ambaṭṭha spoke some polite words or other while walking around or standing.

So the Buddha said to him: “Ambaṭṭha, is this how you hold a discussion with elderly and senior brahmins, the teachers of teachers: walking around or standing while I’m sitting, speaking some polite words or other?”

## **2.1. The First Use of the Word “Riffraff”**

“No, Master Gotama. For it is proper for one brahmin to converse with another while both are walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. But as to these shavelings, fake ascetics, riffraff, black spawn from the feet of our Kinsman, I converse with them as I do with Master Gotama.” “But Ambaṭṭha, you must have come here for some purpose. You should focus on that. Though this Ambaṭṭha is unqualified, he thinks he’s qualified. What is that but lack of qualifications?”

When he said this, Ambaṭṭha became angry and upset with the Buddha because of being described as unqualified. He even attacked and badmouthed the Buddha himself, saying: “The ascetic Gotama will be worsted!” He said to the Buddha: “Master Gotama, the Sakyans are rude, harsh, touchy, and argumentative. Riffraff they are, and riffraff they remain! They don’t honor, respect, revere, worship, or venerate brahmins. It is neither proper nor appropriate that the Sakyans—riffraff that they are—don’t honor, respect, revere, worship, or venerate brahmins.” And that’s how Ambaṭṭha denigrated the Sakyans with the word “riffraff” for the first time.

## **2.2. The Second Use of the Word “Riffraff”**

“But Ambaṭṭha, how have the Sakyans wronged you?” “This one time, Master Gotama, my teacher, the brahmin Pokkharasāti, went to Kapilavatthu on some business. He approached the Sakyans in their meeting hall. Now at that time several Sakyans and Sakyans princes were sitting on high seats, poking each other with their fingers, giggling and playing together. In fact, they even presumed to giggle at me, and didn’t invite me to a seat. It is neither proper nor appropriate that the Sakyans—riffraff that they are—don’t honor, respect, revere, worship, or venerate brahmins.” And that’s how Ambaṭṭha denigrated the Sakyans with the word “riffraff” for the second time.

## **2.3. The Third Use of the Word “Riffraff”**

“Even a little quail, Ambaṭṭha, speaks as she likes in her own nest. Kapilavatthu is the Sakyans own place, Ambaṭṭha. It’s not worthy of the Venerable Ambaṭṭha to lose his temper over such a small thing.” “Master Gotama, there are these four

castes: aristocrats, brahmins, merchants, and workers. Three of these castes—aristocrats, merchants, and workers—in fact succeed only in serving the brahmins. It is neither proper nor appropriate that the Sakyans—riffraff that they are—don't honor, respect, revere, worship, or venerate brahmins.” And that's how Ambaṭṭha denigrated the Sakyans with the word “riffraff” for the third time.

#### **2.4. The Word “Son of Bondservants” is Used**

Then it occurred to the Buddha: “This Ambaṭṭha puts the Sakyans down too much by calling them riffraff. Why don't I ask him about his own clan?” So the Buddha said to him: “What is your clan, Ambaṭṭha?” “I am a Kaṇhāyana, Master Gotama.” “But, recollecting the ancient name and clan of your mother and father, the Sakyans were the children of the masters, while you're descended from the son of a female bondservant of the Sakyans. But the Sakyans claim King Okkāka as their grandfather.

Once upon a time, King Okkāka, wishing to divert the royal succession to the son of his most beloved queen, banished the elder princes from the realm—Okkāka, Karakaṇḍa, Hatthinika, and Sinisūra. They made their home beside a lotus pond on the slopes of the Himalayas, where there was a large teak grove. For fear of diluting their lineage, they slept with their own sisters.

Then King Okkāka addressed his ministers and counselors: ‘Where, sirs, have the princes settled now?’ ‘Sire, there is a lotus pond on the slopes of the Himalayas, by a large grove of sāka, the teak tree. They've settled there. For fear of diluting their lineage, they are sleeping with their own (saka) sisters.’ Then, Ambaṭṭha, King Okkāka spoke these words of inspiration: ‘The princes are indeed Sakyans! The princes are indeed the best Sakyans!’ From that day on the Sakyans were recognized, and he was their founder.

Now, King Okkāka had a female bondservant named Disā. She gave birth to a black boy. When he was born, Black Boy said: ‘Wash me, mum, bathe me! Get this filth off of me! I will be useful for you!’ Whereas these days when people see goblins they know them as goblins, in those days they knew goblins as ‘blackboys’. They said: ‘He spoke as soon as he was born—a blackboy is born! A goblin is born!’ From that day on the Kaṇhāyanas were recognized, and he was their founder. That's how, recollecting the ancient name and clan of your mother and father, the Sakyans were the children of the masters, while you're descended from the son of a female bondservant of the Sakyans.”

When he said this, those students said to him: “Master Gotama, please don’t put Ambaṭṭha down too much by calling him the son of a bondservant. He’s well-born, respectable, learned, a good speaker, and astute. He’s capable of having a dialogue with Master Gotama about this.”

So the Buddha said to them: “Well, students, if you think that Ambaṭṭha is ill-born, not respectable, uneducated, a poor speaker, witless, and not capable of having a dialogue with me about this, then leave him aside and you can have a dialogue with me. But if you think that he’s well-born, respectable, learned, a good speaker, astute, and capable of having a dialogue with me about this, then you should stand aside and let him have a dialogue with me.”

“He is capable of having a dialogue. We will be silent, and let Ambaṭṭha have a dialogue with Master Gotama.”

So the Buddha said to Ambaṭṭha: “Well, Ambaṭṭha, there’s a legitimate question that comes up. You won’t like it, but you ought to answer anyway. If you don’t answer, but dodge the issue, remain silent, or simply leave, your head will explode into seven pieces right here. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? According to what you have heard from elderly and senior brahmins, the teachers of teachers, what is the origin of the Kaṇhāyanas, and who is their founder?”

When he said this, Ambaṭṭha kept silent. For a second time, the Buddha put the question, and for a second time Ambaṭṭha kept silent. So the Buddha said to him: “Answer now, Ambaṭṭha. Now is not the time for silence. If someone fails to answer a legitimate question when asked three times by the Buddha, their head explodes into seven pieces there and then.”

Now at that time the spirit Vajirapāṇi, holding a massive iron spear, burning, blazing, and glowing, stood in the sky above Ambaṭṭha, thinking: “If this Ambaṭṭha doesn’t answer when asked a third time, I’ll blow his head into seven pieces there and then!” And both the Buddha and Ambaṭṭha could see Vajirapāṇi.

Ambaṭṭha was terrified, shocked, and awestruck. Looking to the Buddha for shelter, protection, and refuge, he sat down close by the Buddha and said: “What did you say? Please repeat the question.”

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? According to what you have heard from elderly and senior brahmins, the teachers of teachers, what is the origin of the Kaṇhāyanas,

and who is their founder?” “I have heard, Master Gotama, that it is just as you say. That’s the origin of the Kaṇhāyanas, and that’s who their founder is.”

## **2.5. The Discussion of Ambaṭṭha’s Heritage**

When he said this, those students made an uproar: “It turns out Ambaṭṭha is ill-born, not respectable, son of a Sakyan bondservant, and that the Sakyans are sons of his masters! And it seems that the ascetic Gotama spoke only the truth, though we presumed to rebuke him!”

Then it occurred to the Buddha: “These students put Ambaṭṭha down too much by calling him the son of a bondservant. Why don’t I get him out of this?” So the Buddha said to the students: “Students, please don’t put Ambaṭṭha down too much by calling him the son of a bondservant. That Black Boy was an eminent sage. He went to a southern country and memorized the Prime Spell. Then he approached King Okkāka and asked for the hand of his daughter Maddarūpī. The king said to him: ‘Who the hell is this son of a bondservant to ask for the hand of my daughter!’ Angry and upset he fastened a razor-tipped arrow. But he wasn’t able to either shoot it or to relax it.

Then the ministers and counselors approached the sage Black Boy and said: ‘Spare the king, sir, spare him!’ ‘The king will be safe. But if he shoots the arrow downwards, there will be an earthquake across the entire realm.’ ‘Spare the king, sir, and spare the country!’ ‘Both king and country will be safe. But if he shoots the arrow upwards, there will be no rain in the entire realm for seven years.’ ‘Spare the king, sir, spare the country, and let there be rain!’ ‘Both king and country will be safe, and the rain will fall. And if the king aims the arrow at the crown prince, he will be safe and untouched.’ So the ministers said to Okkāka: ‘Okkāka must aim the arrow at the crown prince. He will be safe and untouched.’ So King Okkāka aimed the arrow at the crown prince. And he was safe and untouched. Then the king was terrified, shocked, and awestruck. Scared by the prime punishment, he gave the hand of his daughter Maddarūpī. Students, please don’t put Ambaṭṭha down too much by calling him the son of a bondservant. That Black Boy was an eminent sage.”

## **3. The Supremacy of the Aristocrats**

Then the Buddha addressed Ambaṭṭha: “What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose an aristocrat boy was to sleep with a brahmin girl, and they had a son. Would he receive a seat and water from the brahmins?” “He would, Master Gotama.” “And would the brahmins feed him at an offering of food for ancestors, an offering of a

dish of milk-rice, a sacrifice, or a feast for guests?” “They would.” “And would the brahmins teach him the hymns or not?” “They would.” “And would he be kept from the women or not?” “He would not.” “And would the aristocrats anoint him as king?” “No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because his maternity is unsuitable.”

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose a brahmin boy was to sleep with an aristocrat girl, and they had a son. Would he receive a seat and water from the brahmins?” “He would, Master Gotama.” “And would the brahmins feed him at an offering of food for ancestors, an offering of a dish of milk-rice, a sacrifice, or a feast for guests?” “They would.” “And would the brahmins teach him the hymns or not?” “They would.” “And would he be kept from the women or not?” “He would not.” “And would the aristocrats anoint him as king?” “No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because his paternity is unsuitable.”

“And so, Ambaṭṭha, the aristocrats are superior and the brahmins inferior, whether comparing women with women or men with men. What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose the brahmins for some reason were to shave a brahmin’s head, inflict him with a sack of ashes, and banish him from the nation or the city. Would he receive a seat and water from the brahmins?” “No, Master Gotama.” “And would the brahmins feed him at an offering of food for ancestors, an offering of a dish of milk-rice, a sacrifice, or a feast for guests?” “No, Master Gotama.” “And would the brahmins teach him the hymns or not?” “No, Master Gotama.” “And would he be kept from the women or not?” “He would be.”

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose the aristocrats for some reason were to shave an aristocrat’s head, inflict him with a sack of ashes, and banish him from the nation or the city. Would he receive a seat and water from the brahmins?” “He would, Master Gotama.” “And would the brahmins feed him at an offering of food for ancestors, an offering of a dish of milk-rice, a sacrifice, or a feast for guests?” “They would.” “And would the brahmins teach him the hymns or not?” “They would.” “And would he be kept from the women or not?” “He would not.”

“At this point, Ambaṭṭha, that aristocrat has reached rock bottom, with head shaven, inflicted with a sack of ashes, and banished from city or nation. Yet still the aristocrats are superior and the brahmins inferior. Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra also spoke this verse:

‘The aristocrat is best of those people  
who take clan as the standard.

But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
is best of gods and humans.’

That verse was well sung by Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, not poorly sung; well spoken, not poorly spoken, beneficial, not harmful, and it was approved by me. For I also say this:

The aristocrat is best of those people  
who take clan as the standard.  
But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
is best of gods and humans.”

#### **4. Knowledge and Conduct**

“But what, Master Gotama, is that conduct, and what is that knowledge?”  
“Ambaṭṭha, in the supreme knowledge and conduct there is no discussion of ancestry or clan or pride— ‘You deserve me’ or ‘You don’t deserve me.’ Wherever there is giving and taking in marriage there is such discussion. Whoever is attached to questions of ancestry or clan or pride, or to giving and taking in marriage, is far from the supreme knowledge and conduct. The realization of supreme knowledge and conduct occurs when you’ve given up such things.”

“But what, Master Gotama, is that conduct, and what is that knowledge?”  
“Ambaṭṭha, it’s when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. A householder hears that teaching, or a householder’s child, or someone reborn in some clan. They gain faith in the Realized One, and reflect ...

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption ... This pertains to their conduct.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption ... This pertains to their conduct.

Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption ... This pertains to their conduct.

Furthermore, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption ... This pertains to their conduct. This is that conduct.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge and vision. This pertains to their knowledge. ... They understand: ‘There is no return to any state of existence.’ This pertains to their knowledge. This is that knowledge.

This mendicant is said to be ‘accomplished in knowledge’, and also ‘accomplished in conduct’, and also ‘accomplished in knowledge and conduct’. And, Ambaṭṭha, there is no accomplishment in knowledge and conduct that is better or finer than this.

## **5. Four Drains**

There are these four drains that affect this supreme knowledge and conduct. What four? Firstly, take some ascetic or brahmin who, not managing to obtain this supreme knowledge and conduct, plunges into a wilderness region carrying their stuff with a shoulder-pole, thinking they will get by eating fallen fruit. In fact they succeed only in serving someone accomplished in knowledge and conduct. This is the first drain that affects this supreme knowledge and conduct.

Furthermore, take some ascetic or brahmin who, not managing to obtain this supreme knowledge and conduct or to get by eating fallen fruit, plunges into a wilderness region carrying a spade and basket, thinking they will get by eating tubers and fruit. In fact they succeed only in serving someone accomplished in knowledge and conduct. This is the second drain that affects this supreme knowledge and conduct.

Furthermore, take some ascetic or brahmin who, not managing to obtain this supreme knowledge and conduct, or to get by eating fallen fruit, or to get by eating

tubers and fruit, sets up a fire chamber in the neighborhood of a village or town and dwells there serving the sacred flame. In fact they succeed only in serving someone accomplished in knowledge and conduct. This is the third drain that affects this supreme knowledge and conduct.

Furthermore, take some ascetic or brahmin who, not managing to obtain this supreme knowledge and conduct, or to get by eating fallen fruit, or to get by eating tubers and fruit, or to serve the sacred flame, sets up a fire chamber in the central square and dwells there, thinking: ‘When an ascetic or brahmin comes from the four quarters, I will honor them as best I can.’ In fact they succeed only in serving someone accomplished in knowledge and conduct. This is the fourth drain that affects this supreme knowledge and conduct. These are the four drains that affect this supreme knowledge and conduct.

What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Is this supreme knowledge and conduct seen in your own tradition?” “No, Master Gotama. Who am I and my tradition compared with the supreme knowledge and conduct? We are far from that.”

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Since you’re not managing to obtain this supreme knowledge and conduct, have you with your tradition plunged into a wilderness region carrying your stuff with a shoulder-pole, thinking you will get by eating fallen fruit?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Have you with your tradition ... plunged into a wilderness region carrying a spade and basket, thinking you will get by eating tubers and fruit?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Have you with your tradition ... set up a fire chamber in the neighborhood of a village or town and dwelt there serving the sacred flame?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Have you with your tradition ... set up a fire chamber in the central square and dwelt there, thinking: ‘When an ascetic or brahmin comes from the four quarters, I will honor them as best I can?’” “No, Master Gotama.”

“So you with your tradition are not only inferior to the supreme knowledge and conduct, you are even inferior to the four drains that affect the supreme knowledge and conduct. But you have been told this by your teacher, the brahmin Pokkharasāti: ‘Who are these shavelings, fake ascetics, riffraff, black spawn from

the feet of our Kinsman compared with conversation with the brahmins of the three knowledges?” Yet he himself has not even fulfilled one of the drains! See, Ambaṭṭha, how your teacher Pokkharasāti has wronged you.

## 6. Being Like the Sages of the Past

But Pokkharasāti lives off an endowment provided by King Pasenadi of Kosala. But the king won’t even grant him an audience face to face. When he consults, he does so behind a curtain. Why wouldn’t the king grant a face to face audience with someone who’d receive his legitimate presentation of food? See, Ambaṭṭha, how your teacher Pokkharasāti has wronged you.

What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? Suppose King Pasenadi was holding consultations with warrior-chiefs or chieftains while sitting on an elephant’s neck or on horseback, or while standing on the mat in a chariot. And suppose he’d get down from that place and stand aside. Then along would come a worker or their bondservant, who’d stand in the same place and continue the consultation: ‘This is what King Pasenadi says, and this too is what the king says.’ Though he spoke the king’s words and gave the king’s advice, does that qualify him to be the king or the king’s minister?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“In the same way, Ambaṭṭha, the brahmin seers of the past were Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamadaggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu. They were the authors and propagators of the hymns, whose hymnal was sung and propagated and compiled in ancient times. These days, brahmins continue to sing and chant it. They continue chanting what was chanted and teaching what was taught. You might imagine that, since you’ve learned their hymns by heart in your own tradition, that makes you a seer or someone on the path to becoming a seer. But that is not possible.

What do you think, Ambaṭṭha? According to what you have heard from elderly and senior brahmins, the teachers of teachers, did those brahmin seers of the past — nicely bathed and anointed, with hair and beard dressed, bedecked with jewels, earrings, and bracelets, dressed in white—amuse themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, like you do today in your tradition?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Did they eat boiled fine rice, garnished with clean meat, with the dark grains picked out, served with many soups and sauces, like you do today in your tradition?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Did they amuse themselves with girls wearing thongs that show off their curves, like you do today in your tradition?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Did they drive about in chariots drawn by mares with plaited manes, whipping and lashing them onward with long goads, like you do today in your tradition?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Did they get men with long swords to guard them in fortresses with moats dug and barriers in place, like you do today in your tradition?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“So, Ambaṭṭha, in your own tradition you are neither seer nor someone on the path to becoming a seer. Whoever has any doubt or uncertainty about me, let them ask me and I will clear up their doubts with my answer.”

## **7. Seeing the Two Marks**

Then the Buddha came out of his dwelling and proceeded to begin walking meditation, and Ambaṭṭha did likewise. Then while walking beside the Buddha, Ambaṭṭha searched his body for the thirty-two marks of a great man. He saw all of them except for two, which he had doubts about: whether the private parts are retracted, and the largeness of the tongue.

Then it occurred to the Buddha: “This brahmin student Ambaṭṭha sees all the marks except for two, which he has doubts about: whether the private parts are retracted, and the largeness of the tongue.” Then the Buddha used his psychic power to will that Ambaṭṭha would see his retracted private parts. And he stuck out his tongue and stroked back and forth on his ear holes and nostrils, and covered his entire forehead with his tongue. Then Ambaṭṭha thought: “The ascetic Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks completely, lacking none.” He said to the Buddha: “Well, now, sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do.” “Please, Ambaṭṭha, go at your convenience.” Then Ambaṭṭha mounted his mare-drawn chariot and left.

Now at that time the brahmin Pokkharasāti had come out from Ukkatṭhā together with a large group of brahmins and was sitting in his own park just waiting for Ambaṭṭha. Then Ambaṭṭha entered the park. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the brahmin Pokkharasāti on foot. He bowed and sat down to one side, and Pokkharasāti said to him:

“I hope, dear Ambaṭṭha, you saw the Master Gotama?” “I saw him, sir.” “Well, does he live up to his reputation or not?” “He does, sir. Master Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks completely, lacking none.” “And did you have some discussion with him?” “I did.” “And what kind of discussion did you have with him?” Then Ambaṭṭha informed Pokkharasāti of all they had discussed.

Then Pokkharasāti said to Ambaṭṭha: “Oh, our bloody fake scholar, our fake expert, our fake student of the three Vedas! A man who behaves like this ought, when their body breaks up, after death, to be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. It’s only because you repeatedly attacked Master Gotama like that that he kept bringing up charges against us!” Angry and upset, he kicked Ambaṭṭha over, and wanted to go and see the Buddha right away.

## **8. Pokkharasāti Visits the Buddha**

Then those brahmins said to Pokkharasāti: “It’s much too late to visit the ascetic Gotama today. You can visit him tomorrow.” So Pokkharasāti had a variety of delicious foods prepared in his own home. Then he mounted a carriage and, with attendants carrying torches, set out from Ukkaṭṭhā for the forest near Icchānaṅgala. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and entered the monastery on foot. He went up to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:

“Master Gotama, has my pupil, the student Ambaṭṭha, come here?” “Yes he has, brahmin.” “And did you have some discussion with him?” “I did.” “And what kind of discussion did you have with him?” Then the Buddha informed Pokkharasāti of all they had discussed. Then Pokkharasāti said to the Buddha: “Ambaṭṭha is a fool, Master Gotama. Please forgive him.” “May the student Ambaṭṭha be happy, brahmin.”

Then Pokkharasāti searched the Buddha’s body for the thirty-two marks of a great man. He saw all of them except for two, which he had doubts about: whether the private parts are retracted, and the largeness of the tongue.

Then it occurred to the Buddha: “Pokkharasāti sees all the marks except for two, which he has doubts about: whether the private parts are retracted, and the largeness of the tongue.” Then the Buddha used his psychic power to will that Brahmāyu would see his retracted private parts. And he stuck out his tongue and

stroked back and forth on his ear holes and nostrils, and covered his entire forehead with his tongue.

Pokkharasāti thought: “The ascetic Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks completely, lacking none.” He said to the Buddha: “Would Master Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept today’s meal from me?” The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, Pokkharasāti announced the time to him: “It’s time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready.” Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Pokkharasāti together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Pokkharasāti served and satisfied the Buddha with his own hands with a variety of delicious foods, while his students served the Saṅgha. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Pokkharasāti took a low seat and sat to one side.

Then the Buddha taught him step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He explained the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of renunciation. And when the Buddha knew that Pokkharasāti’s mind was ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, joyful, and confident he explained the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in the brahmin Pokkharasāti: “Everything that has a beginning has an end.”

## **9. Pokkharasāti Declares Himself a Lay Follower**

Then Pokkharasāti saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. He went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher’s instructions. He said to the Buddha: “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, just so has Master Gotama made the Teaching clear in many ways. Together with my children, wives, retinue, and ministers, I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life. Just as Master Gotama visits other devoted families in Ukkatṭhā, may he visit mine. The brahmin boys and girls there will bow to you, rise in your presence, give you a seat and water, and gain confidence in their hearts. That will

be for their lasting welfare and happiness.” “That’s good of you to say, householder.”

## 4. Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta

To Soṇadaṇḍa

### 1. The Brahmins and Householders of Campā

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Aṅgas together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants when he arrived at Campā, where he stayed on the banks of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond. Now at that time the brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa was living in Campā. It was a crown property given by King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal endowment of the highest quality.

The brahmins and householders of Campā heard: “It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Campā and is staying on the banks of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. It’s good to see such perfected ones.” Then, having departed Campā, they formed into companies and headed to the Gaggarā Lotus Pond.

Now at that time the brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa had retired to the upper floor of his stilt longhouse for his midday nap. He saw the brahmins and householders heading for the lotus pond, and addressed his steward: “My steward, why are the brahmins and householders headed for the Gaggarā Lotus Pond?” “The ascetic Gotama has arrived at Campā and is staying on the banks of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme

guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ They’re going to see that Master Gotama.” “Well then, go to the brahmins and householders and say to them: ‘Sirs, the brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa asks you to wait, as he will also go to see the ascetic Gotama.’” “Yes, sir,” replied the steward, and did as he was asked.

## **2. The Qualities of Soṇadaṇḍa**

Now at that time around five hundred brahmins from abroad were residing in Campā on some business. They heard that the brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa was going to see the ascetic Gotama. They approached Soṇadaṇḍa and said to him: “Is it really true that you are going to see the ascetic Gotama?” “Yes, gentlemen, it is true.”

“Please don’t, master Soṇadaṇḍa! It’s not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama. For if you do so, your reputation will diminish and his will increase. For this reason it’s not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it’s appropriate that he comes to see you.

You are well born on both your mother’s and father’s side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. For this reason it’s not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it’s appropriate that he comes to see you.

You’re rich, affluent, and wealthy. ...

You recite and remember the hymns, and are an expert in the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. You know philology and grammar, and are well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. ...

You are attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. You are magnificent, splendid, remarkable to behold. ...

You are ethical, mature in ethical conduct. ...

You're a good speaker, with a polished, clear, and articulate voice that expresses the meaning. ...

You teach the teachers of many, and teach three hundred students to recite the hymns. Many students come from various districts and countries for the sake of the hymns, wishing to learn the hymns. ...

You're old, elderly and senior, advanced in years, and have reached the final stage of life. The ascetic Gotama is young, and has newly gone forth. ...

You're honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by King Bimbisāra of Magadha ...

and the brahmin Pokkharasāti. ...

You live in Campā, a crown property given by King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal endowment of the highest quality. For this reason, too, it's not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it's appropriate that he comes to see you.

### **3. The Qualities of the Buddha**

When they had spoken, Soṇadaṇḍa said to those brahmins:

“Well then, gentlemen, listen to why it's appropriate for me to go to see the ascetic Gotama, and it's not appropriate for him to come to see me. He is well born on both his mother's and father's side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. For this reason it's not appropriate for the ascetic Gotama to come to see me; rather, it's appropriate for me to go to see him.

When he went forth he abandoned a large family circle. ...

When he went forth he abandoned abundant gold coin and bullion stored in dungeons and towers. ...

He went forth from the lay life to homelessness while still a youth, young, black-haired, blessed with youth, in the prime of life. ...

Though his mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces, he shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. ...

He is attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. He is magnificent, splendid, remarkable to behold. ...

He is ethical, possessing ethical conduct that is noble and skillful. ...

He's a good speaker, with a polished, clear, and articulate voice that expresses the meaning. ...

He's a teacher of teachers. ...

He has ended sensual desire, and is rid of caprice. ...

He teaches the efficacy of deeds and action. He doesn't wish any harm upon the community of brahmins. ...

He went forth from an eminent family of unbroken aristocratic lineage. ...

He went forth from a rich, affluent, and wealthy family. ...

People come from distant lands and distant countries to question him. ...

Many thousands of deities have gone for refuge for life to him. ...

He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ ...

He has the thirty-two marks of a great man. ...

He is welcoming, congenial, polite, smiling, open, the first to speak. ...

He’s honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by the four assemblies.  
...

Many gods and humans are devoted to him. ...

While he is residing in a village or town, non-human entities do not harass them.  
...

He leads an order and a community, and teaches a community, and is said to be the best of the various religious founders. He didn’t come by his fame in the same ways as those other ascetics and brahmins. Rather, he came by his fame due to his supreme knowledge and conduct. ...

King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. ...

King Pasenadi of Kosala and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. ...

The brahmin Pokkharasāti and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. ...

He’s honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by King Bimbisāra of Magadha ...

King Pasenadi of Kosala ...

and the brahmin Pokkharasāti.

The ascetic Gotama has arrived at Campā and is staying at the Gaggarā Lotus Pond. Any ascetic or brahmin who comes to stay in our village district is our guest, and should be honored and respected as such. For this reason, too, it's not appropriate for Master Gotama to come to see me; rather, it's appropriate for me to go to see him. This is the extent of Master Gotama's praise that I have learned. But his praises are not confined to this, for the praise of Master Gotama is limitless."

When he had spoken, those brahmins said to him: "According to Soṇadaṇḍa's praises, if Master Gotama were staying within a hundred leagues, it'd be worthwhile for a faithful person of good family to go to see him, even if they had to carry their own provisions in a shoulder bag." "Well then, gentlemen, let's all go to see the ascetic Gotama."

#### **4. Soṇadaṇḍa's Second Thoughts**

Then Soṇadaṇḍa together with a large group of brahmins went to see the Buddha. But as he reached the far side of the forest, this thought came to mind: "Suppose I was to ask the ascetic Gotama a question. He might say to me: 'Brahmin, you shouldn't ask your question like that. This is how you should ask it.' And the assembly might disparage me for that: 'Soṇadaṇḍa is foolish and incompetent. He's not able to properly ask the ascetic Gotama a question.' And when you're disparaged by the assembly, your reputation diminishes. When your reputation diminishes, your wealth also diminishes. But my wealth relies on my reputation. Or if the ascetic Gotama asks me a question, I might not satisfy him with my answer. He might say to me: 'Brahmin, you shouldn't answer the question like that. This is how you should answer it.' And the assembly might disparage me for that: 'Soṇadaṇḍa is foolish and incompetent. He's not able to satisfy the ascetic Gotama's mind with his answer.' And when you're disparaged by the assembly, your reputation diminishes. When your reputation diminishes, your wealth also

diminishes. But my wealth relies on my reputation. On the other hand, if I were to turn back after having come so far without having seen the ascetic Gotama, the assembly might disparage me for that: ‘Soṇadaṇḍa is foolish and incompetent. He’s stuck-up and scared. He doesn’t dare to go and see the ascetic Gotama. For how on earth can he turn back after having come so far without having seen the ascetic Gotama!’ And when you’re disparaged by the assembly, your reputation diminishes. When your reputation diminishes, your wealth also diminishes. But my wealth relies on my reputation.”

Then Soṇadaṇḍa went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Before sitting down to one side, some of the brahmins and householders of Campā bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their joined palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent.

But while sitting there, Soṇadaṇḍa continued to be plagued by many second thoughts. He thought: “If only the ascetic Gotama would ask me about my own teacher’s scriptural heritage of the three Vedas! Then I could definitely satisfy his mind with my answer.”

## **5. What Makes a Brahmin**

Then the Buddha, knowing what Soṇadaṇḍa was thinking, thought: “This brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa is worried by his own thoughts. Why don’t I ask him about his own teacher’s scriptural heritage of the three Vedas?” So he said to Soṇadaṇḍa: “Brahmin, how many factors must a brahmin possess for the brahmins to describe him as a brahmin; and so that when he says ‘I am a brahmin’ he speaks rightly, without falling into falsehood?”

Then Soṇadaṇḍa thought: “The ascetic Gotama has asked me about exactly what I wanted, what I wished for, what I desired, what I yearned for; that is, my own scriptural heritage. I can definitely satisfy his mind with my answer.”

Then Soṇadaṇḍa straightened his back, looked around the assembly, and said to the Buddha: “Master Gotama, a brahmin must possess five factors for the brahmins to describe him as a brahmin; and so that when he says ‘I am a brahmin’ he speaks rightly, without falling into falsehood. What five? It’s when a brahmin is well born on both his mother’s and father’s side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. He recites and remembers the hymns, and is an expert in the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. He knows philology and grammar, and is well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. He is attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. He is magnificent, splendid, remarkable to behold. He is ethical, mature in ethical conduct. He’s astute and clever, being the first or second to hold the sacrificial ladle. These are the five factors which a brahmin must possess for the brahmins to describe him as a brahmin; and so that when he says ‘I am a brahmin’ he speaks rightly, without falling into falsehood.”

“But brahmin, is it possible to set aside one of these five factors and still rightly describe someone as a brahmin?” “It is possible, Master Gotama. We could leave appearance out of the five factors. For what does appearance matter? A brahmin must possess the remaining four factors for the brahmins to rightly describe him as a brahmin.”

“But brahmin, is it possible to set aside one of these four factors and still rightly describe someone as a brahmin?” “It is possible, Master Gotama. We could leave the hymns out of the five factors. For what do the hymns matter? A brahmin must possess the remaining three factors for the brahmins to rightly describe him as a brahmin.”

“But brahmin, is it possible to set aside one of these three factors and still rightly describe someone as a brahmin?” “It is possible, Master Gotama. We could leave birth out of the five factors. For what does birth matter? It’s when a brahmin is ethical, mature in ethical conduct; and he’s astute and clever, being the first or

second to hold the sacrificial ladle. A brahmin must possess these two factors for the brahmins to rightly describe him as a brahmin.”

When he had spoken, those brahmins said to him: “Please don’t say that, Master Soṇadaṇḍa, please don’t say that! You’re just condemning appearance, the hymns, and birth! You’re totally going over to the ascetic Gotama’s doctrine!”

So the Buddha said to them: “Well, brahmins, if you think that Soṇadaṇḍa is uneducated, a poor speaker, witless, and not capable of having a dialogue with me about this, then leave him aside and you can have a dialogue with me. But if you think that he’s learned, a good speaker, astute, and capable of having a dialogue with me about this, then you should stand aside and let him have a dialogue with me.”

When he said this, Soṇadaṇḍa said to the Buddha: “Let it be, Master Gotama, be silent. I myself will respond to them in a legitimate manner.” Then he said to those brahmins: “Don’t say this, gentlemen, don’t say this: ‘You’re just condemning appearance, the hymns, and birth! You’re totally going over to the ascetic Gotama’s doctrine!’ I’m not condemning appearance, hymns, or birth.”

Now at that time Soṇadaṇḍa’s nephew, the student Aṅgaka was sitting in that assembly. Then Soṇadaṇḍa said to those brahmins: “Gentlemen, do you see my nephew, the student Aṅgaka?” “Yes, sir.” “Aṅgaka is attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. He is magnificent, splendid, remarkable to behold. There’s no-one in this assembly so good-looking, apart from the ascetic Gotama. Aṅgaka recites and remembers the hymns, and is an expert in the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. He knows philology and grammar, and is well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. And I am the one who teaches him the hymns. Aṅgaka is well born on both his mother’s and father’s side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. And I know his mother and father. But if Aṅgaka were to kill living creatures, steal, commit adultery, lie, and drink alcohol, then what’s the use of his

appearance, his hymns, or his birth? It's when a brahmin is ethical, mature in ethical conduct; and he's astute and clever, being the first or second to hold the sacrificial ladle. A brahmin must possess these two factors for the brahmins to rightly describe him as a brahmin."

## **6. The Discussion of Ethics and Wisdom**

"But brahmin, is it possible to set aside one of these two factors and still rightly describe someone as a brahmin?" "No, Master Gotama. For wisdom is cleansed by ethics, and ethics are cleansed by wisdom. Ethics and wisdom always go together. An ethical person is wise, and a wise person ethical. And ethics and wisdom are said to be the best things in the world. It's just like when you clean one hand with the other, or clean one foot with the other. In the same way, wisdom is cleansed by ethics, and ethics are cleansed by wisdom. Ethics and wisdom always go together. An ethical person is wise, and a wise person ethical. And ethics and wisdom are said to be the best things in the world." "That's so true, brahmin, that's so true! For wisdom is cleansed by ethics, and ethics are cleansed by wisdom. Ethics and wisdom always go together. An ethical person is wise, and a wise person ethical. And ethics and wisdom are said to be the best things in the world. It's just like when you clean one hand with the other, or clean one foot with the other. In the same way, wisdom is cleansed by ethics, and ethics are cleansed by wisdom. Ethics and wisdom always go together. An ethical person is wise, and a wise person ethical. And ethics and wisdom are said to be the best things in the world.

But what, brahmin, is that ethical conduct? And what is that wisdom?" "That's all I know about this matter, Master Gotama. May Master Gotama himself please clarify the meaning of this." "Well then, brahmin, listen and pay close attention, I will speak." "Yes sir," Soṇadaṇḍa replied. The Buddha said this: "It's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... That's how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. This, brahmin, is that ethical conduct. ... They enter and remain in the first absorption ... second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption ... They extend and project the mind toward knowledge and vision ... This pertains to their wisdom. ... They understand: '...

there is no return to any state of existence.’ This pertains to their wisdom. This, brahmin, is that wisdom.”

## **7. Soṇadaṇḍa Declares Himself a Lay Follower**

When he had spoken, Soṇadaṇḍa said to the Buddha: “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, just so has he made the Teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life. Would you and the Order of monks please accept a meal from me tomorrow?” The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, Soṇadaṇḍa got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. And when the night had passed Soṇadaṇḍa had a variety of delicious foods prepared in his own home. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying: “It’s time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready.” Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Soṇadaṇḍa together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Soṇadaṇḍa served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with a variety of delicious foods.

When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Soṇadaṇḍa took a low seat and sat to one side. Seated to one side he said to the Buddha: “Master Gotama, if, when I have gone to an assembly, I rise from my seat and bow to the Buddha, that assembly might disparage me for that. And when you’re disparaged by the assembly, your reputation diminishes. When your reputation diminishes, your wealth also diminishes. But my wealth relies on my reputation. If, when I have gone to an assembly, I raise my joined palms, please take it that I have risen from my seat. And if I undo my turban, please take it that I have bowed. And Master Gotama, if, when I am in a carriage, I rise from my seat and bow to the Buddha, that assembly might disparage me for that. If, when I am in a carriage, I hold up

my goad, please take it that I have got down from my carriage. And if I lower my sunshade, please take it that I have bowed.”

Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired the brahmin Soṇadaṇḍa with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat and left.

## 5. Kūṭadanta Sutta

To Kūṭadanta

### 1. The Brahmins and Householders of Khāṇumata

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Magadhans together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Magadhan brahmins named Khāṇumata. There he stayed nearby at Ambalaṭṭhikā. Now at that time the brahmin Kūṭadanta was living in Khāṇumata. It was a crown property given by King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal endowment of the highest quality. Now at that time Kūṭadanta had prepared a great sacrifice. Bulls, bullocks, heifers, goats and rams—seven hundred of each—had been led to the post for the sacrifice.

The brahmins and householders of Khāṇumataka heard: “It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Khāṇumataka and is staying in a forest nearby. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. It’s good to see such perfected ones.”

Then, having departed Khāṇumataka, they formed into companies and headed to Ambalaṭṭhikā.

Now at that time the brahmin Kūṭadanta had retired to the upper floor of his stilt longhouse for his midday nap. He saw the brahmins and householders heading for Ambalaṭṭhikā, and addressed his steward: “My steward, why are the brahmins and householders headed for Ambalaṭṭhikā?”

“The ascetic Gotama has arrived at Khāṇumataka and is staying at Ambalaṭṭhikā. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world,

supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ They’re going to see that Master Gotama.”

Then Kūṭadanta thought: “I’ve heard that the ascetic Gotama knows how to accomplish the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen accessories. I don’t know about that, but I wish to perform a great sacrifice. Why don’t I ask him how to accomplish the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen accessories?”

Then Kūṭadanta addressed his steward: “Well then, go to the brahmins and householders and say to them: ‘Sirs, the brahmin Kūṭadanta asks you to wait, as he will also go to see the ascetic Gotama.’” “Yes, sir,” replied the steward, and did as he was asked.

## **2. The Qualities of Kūṭadanta**

Now at that time several hundred brahmins were residing in Khāṇumata thinking to participate in Kūṭadanta’s sacrifice. They heard that Kūṭadanta was going to see the ascetic Gotama. They approached Kūṭadanta and said to him:

“Is it really true that you are going to see the ascetic Gotama?” “Yes, gentlemen, it is true.”

“Please don’t! It’s not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama. For if you do so, your reputation will diminish and his will increase. For this reason it’s not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it’s appropriate that he comes to see you.

You are well born on both your mother’s and father’s side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. For this reason it’s not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it’s appropriate that he comes to see you.

You’re rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of property and assets, and lots of money and grain ...

You recite and remember the hymns, and are an expert in the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. You know philology and grammar, and are well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. ...

You are attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. You are magnificent, splendid, remarkable to behold. ...

You are ethical, mature in ethical conduct. ...

You're a good speaker, with a polished, clear, and articulate voice that expresses the meaning. ...

You teach the teachers of many, and teach three hundred students to recite the hymns. Many students come from various districts and countries for the sake of the hymns, wishing to learn the hymns. ...

You're old, elderly and senior, advanced in years, and have reached the final stage of life. The ascetic Gotama is young, and has newly gone forth. ...

You're honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by King Bimbisāra of Magadha ...

and the brahmin Pokkharasāti. ...

You live in Khāṇumata, a crown property given by King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal endowment of the highest quality. For this reason it's not appropriate for you to go to see the ascetic Gotama; it's appropriate that he comes to see you."

### **3. The Qualities of the Buddha**

When they had spoken, Kūṭadanta said to those brahmins:

"Well then, gentlemen, listen to why it's appropriate for me to go to see the ascetic Gotama, and it's not appropriate for him to come to see me. He is well born on both his mother's and father's side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. For this reason it's not appropriate for the ascetic Gotama to come to see me; rather, it's appropriate for me to go to see him.

When he went forth he abandoned a large family circle. ...

When he went forth he abandoned abundant gold coin and bullion stored in dungeons and towers. ...

He went forth from the lay life to homelessness while still a youth, young, black-haired, blessed with youth, in the prime of life. ...

Though his mother and father wished otherwise, weeping with tearful faces, he shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. ...

He is attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. He is magnificent, splendid, remarkable to behold. ...

He is ethical, possessing ethical conduct that is noble and skillful. ...

He's a good speaker, with a polished, clear, and articulate voice that expresses the meaning. ...

He's a teacher of teachers. ...

He has ended sensual desire, and is rid of caprice. ...

He teaches the efficacy of deeds and action. He doesn't wish any harm upon the community of brahmins. ...

He went forth from an eminent family of unbroken aristocratic lineage. ...

He went forth from a rich, affluent, and wealthy family. ...

People come from distant lands and distant countries to question him. ...

Many thousands of deities have gone for refuge for life to him. ...

He has this good reputation: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' ...

He has the thirty-two marks of a great man. ...

He is welcoming, congenial, polite, smiling, open, the first to speak. ...

He's honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by the four assemblies.  
...

Many gods and humans are devoted to him. ...

While he is residing in a village or town, non-human entities do not harass them.  
...

He leads an order and a community, and teaches a community, and is said to be the best of the various religious founders. He didn't come by his fame in the same ways as those other ascetics and brahmins. Rather, he came by his fame due to his supreme knowledge and conduct. ...

King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. ...

King Pasenadi of Kosala and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. ...

The brahmin Pokkharasāti and his wives and children have gone for refuge for life to the ascetic Gotama. ...

He's honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by King Bimbisāra of Magadha ...

King Pasenadi of Kosala ...

and the brahmin Pokkharasāti.

The ascetic Gotama has arrived at Khāṇumata and is staying at Ambalaṭṭhikā. Any ascetic or brahmin who comes to stay in our village district is our guest, and should be honored and respected as such. For this reason, too, it's not appropriate for Master Gotama to come to see me, rather, it's appropriate for me to go to see him. This is the extent of Master Gotama's praise that I have learned. But his praises are not confined to this, for the praise of Master Gotama is limitless."

When he had spoken, those brahmins said to him: "According to Kūṭadanta's praises, if Master Gotama were staying within a hundred leagues, it'd be worthwhile for a faithful person of good family to go to see him, even if they had

to carry their own provisions in a shoulder bag.” “Well then, gentlemen, let’s all go to see the ascetic Gotama.”

#### **4. The Story of King Mahāvijita’s Sacrifice**

Then Kūṭadanta together with a large group of brahmins went to see the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Before sitting down to one side, some of the brahmins and householders of Khāṇumataka bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their joined palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent.

Kūṭadanta said to the Buddha: “Master Gotama, I’ve heard that you know how to accomplish the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen accessories. I don’t know about that, but I wish to perform a great sacrifice. Please teach me how to accomplish the sacrifice with three modes and sixteen accessories.”

“Well then, brahmin, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes sir,” Kūṭadanta replied. The Buddha said this: Once upon a time, brahmin, there was a king named Mahāvijita. He was rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, lots of money and grain, and a full treasury and storehouses. Then as King Mahāvijita was in private retreat this thought came to his mind: ‘I have achieved human wealth, and reign after conquering this great land. Why don’t I hold a large sacrifice? That will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.’

Then he summoned the brahmin high priest and said to him: ‘Just now, brahmin, as I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: “I have achieved human wealth, and reign after conquering this great land. Why don’t I perform a great sacrifice? That will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.” Brahmin, I wish to perform a great sacrifice. Please instruct me. It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.’

When he had spoken, the brahmin high priest said to him: ‘Sir, the king’s realm is harried and oppressed. Bandits have been seen raiding villages, town, and cities, and infesting the highways. But if the king were to extract more taxes while his realm is thus harried and oppressed, he would not be doing his duty. Now the king might think: “I’ll uproot this barbarian obstacle by execution or imprisonment or condemnation or banishment!” But that’s not the right way to uproot this barbarian obstacle. Those who remain after the killing will return to harass the king’s realm. Rather, here is a plan, relying on which the barbarian obstacle will be properly

uprooted. So let the king provide seed and fodder for those in the realm who work in farming and raising cattle. Let the king provide funding for those who work in trade. Let the king guarantee food and wages for those in government service. Then the people, occupied with their own work, will not harass the realm. The king's revenues will be great. When the country is secured as a sanctuary, free of being harried and oppressed, the happy people, with joy in their hearts, dancing with children at their breast, will dwell as if their houses were wide open.' The king agreed with the high priest's advice and followed his recommendation. Then the king summoned the brahmin high priest and said to him: 'I have uprooted the barbarian obstacle. And relying on your plan my revenue is now great. Since the country is secured as a sanctuary, free of being harried and oppressed, the happy people, with joy in their hearts, dancing with children at their breast, dwell as if their houses were wide open. Brahmin, I wish to perform a great sacrifice. Please instruct me. It will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.'

#### **4.1. The Four Accessories**

'In that case, let the king announce this throughout the realm to the aristocrat vassals, ministers and counselors, well-to-do brahmins, and householders of substance, both of town and country: "I wish to perform a great sacrifice. Please grant your approval, gentlemen; it will be for my lasting welfare and happiness." The king agreed with the high priest's advice and followed his recommendation. And all of the people who were thus informed responded by saying: 'May the king perform a sacrifice! It is time for a sacrifice, great king.' And so these four consenting factions became accessories to the sacrifice.

#### **4.2. The Eight Accessories**

King Mahāvijita possessed eight factors. He was well born on both his mother's and father's side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. He was attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. He was magnificent, splendid, remarkable to behold. He was rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, lots of money and grain, and a full treasury and storehouses. He was powerful, having an army of four divisions that was obedient and carried out instructions. He'd probably beat his enemies just with his reputation. He was faithful, generous, a donor, his door always open. He was a well-spring of support, making merit with ascetics and brahmins, for paupers, vagrants, travelers, and beggars. He was very learned in diverse fields of learning. He understood the meaning of diverse statements, saying: 'This is what that statement means; that is what this statement means.' He was astute, competent, and intelligent, able to think

issues through as they bear upon the past, future, and present. These are the eight factors that King Mahāvijita possessed. And so these eight factors also became accessories to the sacrifice.

### **4.3. Four More Accessories**

And the brahmin high priest had four factors. He was well born on both his mother's and father's side, of pure descent, irrefutable and impeccable in questions of ancestry back to the seventh paternal generation. He recited and remembered the hymns, and was an expert in the three Vedas, together with their vocabularies, ritual, phonology and etymology, and the testament as fifth. He knew philology and grammar, and was well versed in cosmology and the marks of a great man. He was ethical, mature in ethical conduct. He was astute and clever, being the first or second to hold the sacrificial ladle. These are the four factors that the brahmin high priest possessed. And so these four factors also became accessories to the sacrifice.

### **4.4. The Three Modes**

Next, before the sacrifice, the brahmin high priest taught the three modes to the king. 'Now, though the king wants to perform a great sacrifice, he might have certain regrets, thinking: "I shall lose a great fortune," or "I am losing a great fortune," or "I have lost a great fortune." But the king should not harbor such regrets.' These are the three modes that the brahmin high priest taught to the king before the sacrifice.

### **4.5. The Ten Respects**

Next, before the sacrifice, the brahmin high priest dispelled the king's regret regarding the recipients in ten respects: 'There will come to the sacrifice those who kill living creatures and those who refrain from killing living creatures. As to those who kill living creatures, the outcome of that is theirs alone. But as to those who refrain from killing living creatures, it is for their sakes that the king should sacrifice, relinquish, rejoice, and gain confidence in his heart. There will come to the sacrifice those who steal ... commit sexual misconduct ... lie ... use divisive speech ... use harsh speech ... talk nonsense ... are covetous ... have ill will ... have wrong view and those who have right view. As to those who have wrong view, the outcome of that is theirs alone. But as to those who have right view, it is for their sakes that the king should sacrifice, relinquish, rejoice, and gain confidence in his heart.' These are the ten respects in which the high priest dispelled the king's regret regarding the recipients before the sacrifice.

## 4.6. The Sixteen Respects

Next, while the king was performing the great sacrifice, the brahmin high priest educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired the king's mind in sixteen respects: 'Now, while the king is performing the great sacrifice, someone might say: "King Mahāvijita performs a great sacrifice, but he did not announce it to the aristocrat vassals of town and country. That's the kind of great sacrifice that this king performs." Those who speak against the king in this way have no legitimacy. For the king did indeed announce it to the aristocrat vassals of town and country. Let the king know this as a reason to sacrifice, relinquish, rejoice, and gain confidence in his heart.

While the king is performing the great sacrifice, someone might say: "King Mahāvijita performs a great sacrifice, but he did not announce it to the ministers and counselors, well-to-do brahmins, and householders of substance, both of town and country. That's the kind of great sacrifice that this king performs." Those who speak against the king in this way have no legitimacy. For the king did indeed announce it to all these people. Let the king know this too as a reason to sacrifice, relinquish, rejoice, and gain confidence in his heart.

While the king is performing the great sacrifice, someone might say that he does not possess the eight factors.

Those who speak against the king in this way have no legitimacy. For the king does indeed possess the eight factors. Let the king know this too as a reason to sacrifice, relinquish, rejoice, and gain confidence in his heart.

While the king is performing the great sacrifice, someone might say that the high priest does not possess the four factors.

Those who speak against the king in this way have no legitimacy. For the high priest does indeed possess the four factors. Let the king know this too as a reason to sacrifice, relinquish, rejoice, and gain confidence in his heart.' These are the sixteen respects in which the high priest educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired the king's mind while he was performing the sacrifice.

And brahmin, in that sacrifice no cattle were killed, no goats were killed, and no chickens or pigs were killed. There was no slaughter of various kinds of creatures. No trees were felled for the sacrificial post. No grass was reaped to strew over the place of sacrifice. No bondservants, employees, or workers did their jobs under

threat of punishment and danger, weeping with tearful faces. Those who wished to work did so, while those who did not wish to did not. They did the work they wanted to, and did not do what they didn't want to. The sacrifice was completed with just ghee, oil, butter, curds, honey, and molasses.

Then the aristocrat vassals, well-to-do brahmins, and householders of substance of both town and country came to the king bringing abundant wealth and said: 'Sire, this abundant wealth is specially for you alone; may Your Highness accept it!' 'There's enough raised for me through regular taxes. Let this be for you; and here, take even more!' When the king turned them down, they withdrew to one side to think up a plan: 'It wouldn't be proper for us to take this abundant wealth back to our own homes. King Mahāvijita is performing a great sacrifice. Let us make an offering as an auxiliary sacrifice.'

Then the aristocrat vassals of town and country set up gifts to the east of the sacrificial pit. The ministers and counselors of town and country set up gifts to the south of the sacrificial pit. The well-to-do brahmins of town and country set up gifts to the west of the sacrificial pit. The householders of substance of town and country set up gifts to the north of the sacrificial pit.

And brahmin, in that sacrifice too no cattle were killed, no goats were killed, and no chickens or pigs were killed. There was no slaughter of various kinds of creatures. No trees were felled for the sacrificial post. No grass was reaped to strew over the place of sacrifice. No bondservants, employees, or workers did their jobs under threat of punishment and danger, weeping with tearful faces. Those who wished to work did so, while those who did not wish to did not. They did the work they wanted to, and did not do what they didn't want to. The sacrifice was completed with just ghee, oil, butter, curds, honey, and molasses.

And so there were four consenting factions, eight factors possessed by king Mahāvijita, four factors possessed by the high priest, and three modes. Brahmin, this is called the sacrifice accomplished with three modes and sixteen accessories."

When he said this, those brahmins made an uproar: "Hooray for such sacrifice! Hooray for the accomplishment of such sacrifice!" But the brahmin Kūṭadanta sat in silence. So those brahmins said to him: "How can you not applaud the ascetic Gotama's fine words?" "It's not that I don't applaud what he said. If anyone didn't applaud such fine words, their head would explode! But, gentlemen, it occurs to me that the ascetic Gotama does not say: 'So I have heard' or 'It ought to be like this.' Rather, he just says: 'So it was then, this is how it was then.' It occurs to me

that the ascetic Gotama at that time must have been King Mahāvijita, the owner of the sacrifice, or else the brahmin high priest who facilitated the sacrifice for him. Does Master Gotama recall having performed such a sacrifice, or having facilitated it, and then, when his body broke up, after death, being reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm?” “I do recall that, brahmin. For at that time I was the brahmin high priest who facilitated the sacrifice.”

### **5. A Regular Gift as an Ongoing Family Sacrifice.**

“But Master Gotama, apart from that sacrifice accomplished with three modes and sixteen accessories, is there any other sacrifice that has fewer requirements and undertakings, yet is more fruitful and beneficial?”

“There is, brahmin.”

“But what is it?”

“The regular gifts as ongoing family sacrifice given specially to ethical renunciates; this sacrifice, brahmin, has fewer requirements and undertakings, yet is more fruitful and beneficial.”

“What is the cause, Master Gotama, what is the reason why those regular gifts as ongoing family sacrifice have fewer requirements and undertakings, yet are more fruitful and beneficial, compared with the sacrifice accomplished with three modes and sixteen accessories?”

“Because neither perfected ones nor those who have entered the path to perfection will attend such a sacrifice. Why is that? Because beatings and throttlings are seen there. But the regular gifts as ongoing family sacrifice given specially to ethical renunciates; perfected ones and those who have entered the path to perfection will attend such a sacrifice. Why is that? Because no beatings and throttlings are seen there. This is the cause, brahmin, this is the reason why those regular gifts as ongoing family sacrifice have fewer requirements and undertakings, yet are more fruitful and beneficial, compared with the sacrifice accomplished with three modes and sixteen accessories.”

“But Master Gotama, apart from that sacrifice accomplished with three modes and sixteen accessories and those regular gifts as ongoing family sacrifice, is there any other sacrifice that has fewer requirements and undertakings, yet is more fruitful and beneficial?”

“There is, brahmin.”

“But what is it?”

“When someone gives a dwelling specially for the Saṅgha of the four quarters.”

“But is there any other sacrifice that has fewer requirements and undertakings, yet is more fruitful and beneficial?”

“When someone with confident heart goes for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha.”

“But is there any other sacrifice that has fewer requirements and undertakings, yet is more fruitful and beneficial?”

“When someone with a confident heart undertakes the training rules to refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and alcoholic drinks that cause negligence.”

“But is there any other sacrifice that has fewer requirements and undertakings, yet is more fruitful and beneficial?”

“There is, brahmin.

It’s when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... That’s how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. ... They enter and remain in the first absorption ... This sacrifice has fewer requirements and undertakings than the former, yet is more fruitful and beneficial. ...

They enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. This sacrifice has fewer requirements and undertakings than the former, yet is more fruitful and beneficial. ... They extend and project the mind toward knowledge and vision ... This sacrifice has fewer requirements and undertakings than the former, yet is more fruitful and beneficial. They understand: ‘... there is no return to any state of existence.’ This sacrifice has fewer requirements and undertakings than the former, yet is more fruitful and beneficial. And, brahmin, there is no other accomplishment of sacrifice which is better and finer than this.”

## 6. Kūṭadanta Declares Himself a Lay Follower

When he had spoken, Kūṭadanta said to the Buddha: “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, just so have you made the Teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life. And these bulls, bullocks, heifers, goats, and rams—seven hundred of each—I release them, I grant them life! Let them eat green grass and drink cool water, and may a cool breeze blow upon them!”

## 7. The Realization of the Fruit of Stream-Entry

Then the Buddha taught Kūṭadanta step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He explained the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of renunciation. And when he knew that Kūṭadanta’s mind was ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, joyful, and confident he explained the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in the brahmin Kūṭadanta: “Everything that has a beginning has an end.”

Then Kūṭadanta saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. He went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher’s instructions. He said to the Buddha: “Would Master Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from me?” The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, Kūṭadanta got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. And when the night had passed Kūṭadanta had a variety of delicious foods prepared in his own home. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying: “It’s time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready.”

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Kūṭadanta together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out.

Then Kūṭadanta served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with a variety of delicious foods. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Kūṭadanta took a low seat and sat to one side. Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat and left.

## 6. Mahāli Sutta

With Mahāli

### 1. On the Brahmin Emissaries

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof. Now at that time several brahmin emissaries from Kosala and Magadha were residing in Vesālī on some business. They heard: “It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—is staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. It’s good to see such perfected ones.”

Then they went to the hall with the peaked roof in the Great Wood to see the Buddha. Now, at that time Venerable Nāgita was the Buddha’s attendant. The brahmin emissaries went up to him and said: “Master Nāgita, where is Master Gotama at present? For we want to see him.” “It’s the wrong time to see the Buddha; he is on retreat.” So the brahmin emissaries sat down to one side, thinking: “We’ll go only after we’ve seen Master Gotama.”

### 2. On Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi

Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi together with a large assembly of Licchavis also approached Nāgita at the hall with the peaked roof. He bowed, stood to one side, and said to Nāgita: “Master Nāgita, where is the Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha? For we want to see him.” “It’s the wrong time to see the Buddha; he is on retreat.” So Oṭṭhaddha also sat down to one

side, thinking: “I’ll go only after I’ve seen the Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha.”

Then the novice Sīha approached Nāgita. He bowed, stood to one side, and said to Nāgita: “Sir, Kassapa, these several brahmin emissaries from Kosala and Magadha, and also Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi together with a large assembly of Licchavis, have come here to see the Buddha. It’d be good if these people got to see the Buddha.”

“Well then, Sīha, tell the Buddha yourself.” “Yes, sir,” replied Sīha. He went to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and told him of the people waiting to see him, adding: “Sir, it’d be good if these people got to see the Buddha.” “Well then, Sīha, spread out a seat in the shade of the dwelling.” “Yes, sir,” replied Sīha, and he did so.

Then the Buddha came out of his dwelling and sat in the shade of the dwelling on the seat spread out. Then the brahmin emissaries went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side. Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi together with a large assembly of Licchavis also went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Oṭṭhaddha said to the Buddha: “Sir, a few days ago Sunakkhatta the Licchavi came to me and said:

‘Mahāli, soon I will have been living in dependence on the Buddha for three years. I see heavenly sights that are pleasant, sensual, and arousing, but I don’t hear heavenly sounds that are pleasant, sensual, and arousing.’ The heavenly sounds that Sunakkhatta cannot hear: do such sounds really exist or not?”

## **2.1. One-Sided Immersion**

“Such sounds really do exist, but Sunakkhatta cannot hear them.” “What is the cause, sir, what is the reason why Sunakkhatta cannot hear them, even though they really do exist?”

“Mahāli, take a mendicant who has developed one-sided immersion to the eastern quarter so as to see heavenly sights but not to hear heavenly sounds. When they have developed immersion for that purpose, they see heavenly sights but don’t hear heavenly sounds. Why is that? Because that is how it is for a mendicant who develops immersion in that way.

Furthermore, take a mendicant who has developed one-sided immersion to the southern quarter ... western quarter ... northern quarter ... above, below, across ... That is how it is for a mendicant who develops immersion in that way.

Take a mendicant who has developed one-sided immersion to the eastern quarter so as to hear heavenly sounds but not to see heavenly sights. When they have developed immersion for that purpose, they hear heavenly sounds but don’t see heavenly sights. Why is that? Because that is how it is for a mendicant who develops immersion in that way.

Furthermore, take a mendicant who has developed one-sided immersion to the southern quarter ... western quarter ... northern quarter ... above, below, across ... That is how it is for a mendicant who develops immersion in that way.

Take a mendicant who has developed two-sided immersion to the eastern quarter so as to both hear heavenly sounds and see heavenly sights. When they have developed immersion for that purpose, they both see heavenly sights and hear heavenly sounds. Why is that? Because that is how it is for a mendicant who develops immersion in that way.

Furthermore, take a mendicant who has developed two-sided immersion to the southern quarter ... western quarter ... northern quarter ... above, below, across ... That is how it is for a mendicant who develops immersion in that way. This is the cause, Mahāli, this is the reason why Sunakkhatta cannot hear heavenly sounds that are pleasant, sensual, and arousing, even though they really do exist.”

“Surely the mendicants must live the spiritual life under the Buddha for the sake of realizing such a development of immersion?” “No, Mahāli, the mendicants don’t live the spiritual life under me for the sake of realizing such a development of immersion. There are other things that are finer, for the sake of which the mendicants live the spiritual life under me.”

## **2.2. The Four Noble Fruits**

“But sir, what are those finer things?” “Firstly, Mahāli, with the ending of three fetters a mendicant is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening. This is one of the finer things for the sake of which the mendicants live the spiritual life under me.

Furthermore, a mendicant—with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion—is a once-returner. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. This too is one of the finer things.

Furthermore, with the ending of the five lower fetters, a mendicant is reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world. This too is one of the finer things.

Furthermore, a mendicant has realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and lives having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. This too is one of the finer things. These are the finer things, for the sake of which the mendicants live the spiritual life under me.”

## **2.3. The Noble Eightfold Path**

“But, sir, is there a path and a practice for realizing these things?” “There is, Mahāli.”

“Well, what is it?” “It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is the path and the practice for realizing these things.

## 2.4. On the Two Renunciates

This one time, Mahāli, I was staying near Kosambi, in Ghosita's Monastery. Then two renunciates—the wanderer Muṇḍiya and Jāliya the pupil of Dārupattika—came and exchanged greetings with me. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they stood to one side and said to me: 'Reverend Gotama, are the soul and the body the same thing, or they are different things?'

'Well then, reverends, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.' 'Yes, reverend,' they replied. I said this: 'Take the case when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... That's how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. ...

They enter and remain in the first absorption. When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: "The soul and the body are the same thing" or "The soul and the body are different things"?' 'It would, reverend.' 'But reverends, I know and see like this. Nevertheless, I do not say: "The soul and the body are the same thing" or "The soul and the body are different things". ... They enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: "The soul and the body are the same thing" or "The soul and the body are different things"?' 'It would, reverend.' 'But reverends, I know and see like this. Nevertheless, I do not say: "The soul and the body are the same thing" or "The soul and the body are different things". ... They extend and project the mind toward knowledge and vision ... When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: "The soul and the body are the same thing" or "The soul and the body are different things"?' 'It would, reverend.' 'But reverends, I know and see like this. Nevertheless, I do not say: "The soul and the body are the same thing" or "The soul and the body are different things". ...

They understand: "... there is no return to any state of existence." When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: "The soul and the body are the same thing" or "The soul and the body are different things"?' 'It would not, reverend.' 'But reverends, I know and see like this.

Nevertheless, I do not say: “The soul and the body are the same thing” or “The soul and the body are different things”.’”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Oṭṭhaddha the Licchavi was happy with what the Buddha said.

## 7. Jāliya Sutta

With Jāliya

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Kosambi, in Ghosita's Monastery. Now at that time two renunciates—the wanderer Muṇḍiya and Jāliya the pupil of Dārupattika—came to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they stood to one side and said to the Buddha: “Reverend Gotama, are the soul and the body the same thing, or they are different things?”

“Well then, reverends, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, reverend,” they replied. The Buddha said this: “Take the case when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... That's how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. ...

They enter and remain in the first absorption ... When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things?’” “It would, reverend.” “But reverends, I know and see like this. Nevertheless, I do not say: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things’. ... They enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things?’” “It would, reverend.” “But reverends, I know and see like this. Nevertheless, I do not say: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things’. ... They extend and project the mind toward knowledge and vision ... When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things?’” “It would, reverend.” “But reverends, I know and see like this. Nevertheless, I do not say: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things’. ...

They understand: ‘... there is no return to any state of existence.’ When a mendicant knows and sees like this, would it be appropriate to say of them: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things?’” “It would not, reverend.” “But reverends, I know and see like this. Nevertheless, I do not say: ‘The soul and the body are the same thing’ or ‘The soul and the body are different things’.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the two renunciates were happy with what the Buddha said.

## 8. Mahāsīhanāda Sutta

The Longer Discourse on the Lion's Roar

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Ujuñña, in the deer park at Kaṇṇakatthala. Then the naked ascetic Kassapa went up to the Buddha and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he stood to one side, and said to the Buddha: “Master Gotama, I have heard the following: ‘The ascetic Gotama criticizes all forms of mortification. He categorically condemns and denounces those self-mortifiers who live rough.’ Do those who say this repeat what the Buddha has said, and not misrepresent him with an untruth? Is their explanation in line with the teaching? Are there any legitimate grounds for rebuke and criticism? For we don’t want to misrepresent Master Gotama.”

“Kassapa, those who say this do not repeat what I have said. They misrepresent me with what is false, baseless, and untrue. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I see some self-mortifier who lives rough reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. But I see another self-mortifier who lives rough reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

I see some self-mortifier who takes it easy reborn in a place of loss. But I see another self-mortifier who takes it easy reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. Since I truly understand the coming and going, dying and rebirth of these self-mortifiers in this way, how could I criticize all forms of mortification, or categorically condemn and denounce those self-mortifiers who live rough?

There are some clever ascetics and brahmins who are subtle, accomplished in the doctrines of others, hair-splitters. You’d think they live to demolish convictions with their intellect. They agree with me in some matters and disagree in others. Some of the things that they applaud, I also applaud. Some of the things that they don’t applaud, I also don’t applaud. But some of the things that they applaud, I don’t applaud. And some of the things that they don’t applaud, I do applaud.

Some of the things that I applaud, others also applaud. Some of the things that I don't applaud, they also don't applaud. But some of the things that I don't applaud, others do applaud. And some of the things that I do applaud, others don't applaud.

## 1. Examination

I go up to them and say: 'Let us leave aside those matters on which we disagree. But there are some matters on which we agree. Regarding these, sensible people, engaging, pressing, and examining, would compare teacher with teacher or community with community: "There are things that are unskillful, blameworthy, not to be cultivated, unworthy of the noble ones, and dark—and are reckoned as such. Who behaves like they've totally given these things up: the ascetic Gotama, or the teachers of other communities?"'

It's possible that they might say: 'The ascetic Gotama behaves like he's totally given those unskillful things up, compared with the teachers of other communities.' And that's how, when sensible people examine the matter, they will mostly praise us.

In addition, sensible people, engaging, pressing, and examining, would compare teacher with teacher or community with community: 'There are things that are skillful, blameless, worth cultivating, worthy of the noble ones, and bright—and are reckoned as such. Who proceeds having totally undertaken these things: the ascetic Gotama, or the teachers of other communities?'

It's possible that they might say: 'The ascetic Gotama proceeds having totally undertaken these things, compared with the teachers of other communities.' And that's how, when sensible people examine the matter, they will mostly praise us.

In addition, sensible people, engaging, pressing, and examining, would compare teacher with teacher or community with community: 'There are things that are unskillful, blameworthy, not to be cultivated, unworthy of the noble ones, and dark

—and are reckoned as such. Who behaves like they’ve totally given these things up: the ascetic Gotama’s disciples, or the disciples of other teachers?’

It’s possible that they might say: ‘The ascetic Gotama’s disciples behave like they’ve totally given those unskillful things up, compared with the disciples of other teachers.’ And that’s how, when sensible people examine the matter, they will mostly praise us.

In addition, sensible people, engaging, pressing, and examining, would compare teacher with teacher or community with community: ‘There are things that are skillful, blameless, worth cultivating, worthy of the noble ones, and bright—and are reckoned as such. Who proceeds having totally undertaken these things: the ascetic Gotama’s disciples, or the disciples of other teachers?’

It’s possible that they might say: ‘The ascetic Gotama’s disciples proceed having totally undertaken those skillful things, compared with the disciples of other teachers.’ And that’s how, when sensible people examine the matter, they will mostly praise us.

## **2. The Noble Eightfold Path**

There is, Kassapa, a path, there is a practice, practicing in accordance with which you will know and see for yourself: ‘Only the ascetic Gotama’s words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training.’ And what is that path? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is the path, this is the practice, practicing in accordance with which you will know and see for yourself: ‘Only the ascetic Gotama’s words are timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training.’”

## **3. Practicing Self-Mortification**

When he had spoken, Kassapa said to the Buddha: “Reverend Gotama, those ascetics and brahmins consider these practices of self-mortification to be what makes someone a true ascetic or brahmin. They go naked, ignoring conventions.

They lick their hands, and don't come or wait when asked. They don't consent to food brought to them, or food prepared on purpose for them, or an invitation for a meal. They don't receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or who has a man in her home; or where there's a dog waiting or flies buzzing. They accept no fish or meat or liquor or wine, and drink no beer. They go to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. They feed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers a day. They eat once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. They live committed to the practice of eating food at set intervals.

Those ascetics and brahmins also consider these practices of self-mortification to be what makes someone a true ascetic or brahmin. They eat herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice bran, scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. They survive on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit.

Those ascetics and brahmins also consider these practices of mortification to be what makes someone a true ascetic or brahmin. They wear robes of sunn hemp, mixed hemp, corpse-wrapping cloth, rags, lodh tree bark, antelope hide (whole or in strips), kusa grass, bark, wood-chips, human hair, horse-tail hair, or owls' wings. They tear out hair and beard, committed to this practice. They constantly stand, refusing seats. They squat, committed to persisting in the squatting position. They lie on a mat of thorns, making a mat of thorns their bed. They make their bed on a plank, or the bare ground. They lie only on one side. They wear dust and dirt. They stay in the open air. They sleep wherever they lay their mat. They eat unnatural things, committed to the practice of eating unnatural foods. They don't drink, committed to the practice of not drinking liquids. They're committed to the practice of immersion in water three times a day, including the evening.”

#### 4. The Uselessness of Self-Mortification

“Kassapa, someone may practice all those forms of self-mortification, but if they haven’t developed and realized any accomplishment in ethics, mind, and wisdom, they are far from being a true ascetic or brahmin. But take a mendicant who develops a heart of love, free of enmity and ill will. And they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. When they achieve this, they’re called a mendicant who is a ‘true ascetic’ and also ‘a true brahmin’.

When he had spoken, Kassapa said to the Buddha: “It’s hard, Master Gotama, to be a true ascetic or a true brahmin.” “It’s typical, Kassapa, in this world to think that it’s hard to be a true ascetic or brahmin. But someone might practice all those forms of self-mortification. And if it was only because of just that much, only because of that self-mortification that it was so very hard to be a true ascetic or brahmin, it wouldn’t be appropriate to say that it’s hard to be a true ascetic or brahmin.

For it would be quite possible for a householder or a householder’s child—or even the bonded maid who carries the water-jar— to practice all those forms of self-mortification.

It’s because there’s something other than just that much, something other than that self-mortification that it’s so very hard to be a true ascetic or brahmin. And that’s why it is appropriate to say that it’s hard to be a true ascetic or brahmin. Take a mendicant who develops a heart of love, free of enmity and ill will. And they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. When they achieve this, they’re called a mendicant who is a ‘true ascetic’ and also ‘a true brahmin’.

When he had spoken, Kassapa said to the Buddha: “It’s hard, Master Gotama, to know a true ascetic or a true brahmin.” “It’s typical in this world to think that it’s hard to know a true ascetic or brahmin. But someone might practice all those forms

of self-mortification. And if it was only by just that much, only by that self-mortification that it was so very hard to know a true ascetic or brahmin, it wouldn't be appropriate to say that it's hard to know a true ascetic or brahmin.

For it would be quite possible for a householder or a householder's child—or even the bonded maid who carries the water-jar— to know that someone is practicing all those forms of self-mortification.

It's because there's something other than just that much, something other than that self-mortification that it's so very hard to know a true ascetic or brahmin. And that's why it is appropriate to say that it's hard to know a true ascetic or brahmin. Take a mendicant who develops a heart of love, free of enmity and ill will. And they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. When they achieve this, they're called a mendicant who is a 'true ascetic' and also 'a true brahmin'."

## **5. The Accomplishment of Ethics, Immersion, and Wisdom**

When he had spoken, Kassapa said to the Buddha: "But Master Gotama, what is that accomplishment in ethics, in mind, and in wisdom?" "It's when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... Seeing danger in the slightest flaw, a mendicant keeps the rules they've undertaken. They act skillfully by body and speech. They're purified in livelihood and accomplished in ethical conduct. They guard the sense doors, have mindfulness and situational awareness, and are content.

And how is a mendicant accomplished in ethics? It's when a mendicant gives up killing living creatures. They renounce the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of compassion for all creatures. This pertains to their accomplishment in ethics. ...

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. ... They

refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. This pertains to their accomplishment in ethics.

A mendicant thus accomplished in ethics sees no danger in any quarter in regards to their ethical restraint. It's like a king who has defeated his enemies. He sees no danger from his foes in any quarter. In the same way, a mendicant thus accomplished in ethics sees no danger in any quarter in regards to their ethical restraint. When they have this entire spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves. That's how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. This, Kassapa, is that accomplishment in ethics. ... They enter and remain in the first absorption ... This pertains to their accomplishment in mind. ... They enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. This pertains to their accomplishment in mind. This, Kassapa, is that accomplishment in mind.

When their mind is immersed like this, they extend and project it toward knowledge and vision ... This pertains to their accomplishment in wisdom. ... They understand: '... there is no return to any state of existence.' This pertains to their accomplishment in wisdom. This, Kassapa, is that accomplishment in wisdom.

And, Kassapa, there is no accomplishment in ethics, mind, and wisdom that is better or finer than this.

## **6. The Lion's Roar**

There are, Kassapa, some ascetics and brahmins who teach ethics. They praise ethical conduct in many ways. But as far as the highest noble ethics goes, I don't see anyone who's my equal, still less my superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher ethics.

There are, Kassapa, some ascetics and brahmins who teach mortification in disgust of sin. They praise mortification in disgust of sin in many ways. But as far as the highest noble mortification in disgust of sin goes, I don't see anyone who's my

equal, still less my superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher mortification in disgust of sin.

There are, Kassapa, some ascetics and brahmins who teach wisdom. They praise wisdom in many ways. But as far as the highest noble wisdom goes, I don't see anyone who's my equal, still less my superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher wisdom.

There are, Kassapa, some ascetics and brahmins who teach freedom. They praise freedom in many ways. But as far as the highest noble freedom goes, I don't see anyone who's my equal, still less my superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher freedom.

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetic Gotama only roars his lion's roar in an empty hut, not in an assembly.' They should be told, 'Not so!' What should be said is this: 'The ascetic Gotama roars his lion's roar, and he roars it in an assembly.'

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetic Gotama roars his lion's roar, and he roars it in an assembly. But he doesn't roar it boldly.' They should be told, 'Not so!' What should be said is this: 'The ascetic Gotama roars his lion's roar, he roars it in an assembly, and he roars it boldly.'

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetic Gotama roars his lion's roar, he roars it in an assembly, and he roars it boldly. But they don't question him. ... Or he doesn't answer their questions. ... Or his answers are not satisfactory. ... Or they don't think him worth listening to. ... Or they're not confident after listening. ... Or they don't show their confidence. ... Or they don't practice accordingly. ... Or they don't succeed in their practice.' They should be told, 'Not so!' What should be said is this: 'The ascetic Gotama roars his lion's roar; he roars it in an assembly; he roars it boldly; they question him; he answers their questions; his answers are satisfactory; they think him worth listening to;

they're confident after listening; they show their confidence; they practice accordingly; and they succeed in their practice.'

## **7. The Probation For One Previously Ordained**

Kassapa, this one time I was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. There a certain practitioner of self-mortification named Nigrodha asked me about the higher mortification in disgust of sin. I answered his question. He was extremely happy with my answer." "Sir, who wouldn't be extremely happy after hearing the Buddha's teaching? For I too am extremely happy after hearing the Buddha's teaching! Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what's there, so too the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?"

"Kassapa, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they'll give the going forth, the ordination into monkhood. However, I have recognized individual differences in this matter." "Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I'll spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the ordination into monkhood."

And the naked ascetic Kassapa received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Kassapa, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which people from good families rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is no return to any state of existence." And Venerable Kassapa became one of the perfected.



## 9. Poṭṭhapāda Sutta

With Poṭṭhapāda

### 1. On the Wanderer Poṭṭhapāda

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. Now at that time the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda was residing together with three hundred wanderers in Mallikā’s single-halled monastery for group debates, set among the flaking pale-moon ebony trees. Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattthī for alms.

Then it occurred to him: “It’s too early to wander for alms in Sāvattthī. Why don’t I go to Mallikā’s monastery to visit the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda?” So that’s what he did.

Now at that time, Poṭṭhapāda was sitting together with a large assembly of wanderers making an uproar, a dreadful racket. They engaged in all kinds of unworthy talk, such as talk about kings, bandits, and ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that state of existence.

Poṭṭhapāda saw the Buddha coming off in the distance, and hushed his own assembly: “Be quiet, good sirs, don’t make a sound. Here comes the ascetic Gotama. The venerable likes quiet and praises quiet. Hopefully if he sees that our assembly is quiet he’ll see fit to approach.” Then those wanderers fell silent.

Then the Buddha approached Poṭṭhapāda, who said to him: “Come, Blessed One! Welcome, Blessed One! It’s been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please, sir, sit down, this seat is ready.”

The Buddha sat on the seat spread out, while Poṭṭhapāda took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha said to him: “Poṭṭhapāda, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was unfinished?”

### **1.1. On the Cessation of Perception**

When he said this, the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda said to the Buddha: “Sir, leave aside what we were sitting talking about just now. It won’t be hard for you to hear about that later. Sir, a few days ago several ascetics and brahmins who follow various other paths were sitting together at the debating hall, and this discussion came up among them: ‘How does the cessation of perception happen?’ Some of them said: ‘A person’s perceptions arise and cease without cause or reason. When they arise, you become percipient. When they cease, you become non-percipient.’ That’s how some describe the cessation of perception.

But someone else says: ‘That’s not how it is, gentlemen! Perception is a person’s self, When it enters, you become percipient. When it departs, you become non-percipient.’ That’s how some describe the cessation of perception.

But someone else says: ‘That’s not how it is, gentlemen! There are ascetics and brahmins of great power and might. They insert and extract a person’s perception. When they insert it, you become percipient. When they extract it, you become non-percipient.’ That’s how some describe the cessation of perception.

But someone else says: ‘That’s not how it is, gentlemen! There are deities of great power and might. They insert and extract a person’s perception. When they insert it, you become percipient. When they extract it, you become non-percipient.’ That’s how some describe the cessation of perception.

That reminded me of the Buddha: ‘Surely it must be the Blessed One, the Holy One who is so skilled in such matters.’ The Buddha is skilled and well-versed in the cessation of perception. How does the cessation of perception happen?”

## 1.2. Perception Arises With a Cause

“Regarding this, Poṭṭhapāda, those ascetics and brahmins who say that a person’s perceptions arise and cease without cause or reason are wrong from the start. Why is that? Because a person’s perceptions arise and cease with cause and reason. With training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease.

And what is that training?” said the Buddha. “It’s when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... That’s how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. ... Seeing that the hindrances have been given up in them, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. The sensual perception that they had previously ceases. At that time they have a subtle and true perception of the rapture and bliss born of seclusion. That’s how, with training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease. And this is that training,” said the Buddha.

“Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. The subtle and true perception of the rapture and bliss born of seclusion that they had previously ceases. At that time they have a subtle and true perception of the rapture and bliss born of immersion. That’s how, with training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease. And this is that training,” said the Buddha.

“Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’ The subtle and true perception of the rapture and bliss born of immersion that they had previously ceases. At that time they have

a subtle and true perception of equanimous bliss. That's how, with training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease. And this is that training," said the Buddha.

"Furthermore, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. The subtle and true perception of equanimous bliss that they had previously ceases. At that time they have a subtle and true perception of neutral feeling. That's how, with training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease. And this is that training," said the Buddha.

"Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. The perception of luminous form that they had previously ceases. At that time they have a subtle and true perception of the dimension of infinite space. That's how, with training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease. And this is that training," said the Buddha.

"Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', enters and remains in the dimension of infinite consciousness. The subtle and true perception of the dimension of infinite space that they had previously ceases. At that time they have a subtle and true perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness. That's how, with training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease. And this is that training," said the Buddha.

"Furthermore, a mendicant, going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', enters and remains in the dimension of nothingness. The subtle and true perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness that they had previously ceases. At that time they have a subtle and true perception of the dimension of nothingness. That's how, with

training, certain perceptions arise and certain perceptions cease. And this is that training,” said the Buddha.

“Poṭṭhapāda, from the time a mendicant here takes responsibility for their own perception, they proceed from one stage to the next, gradually reaching the peak of perception. Standing on the peak of perception they think: ‘Intentionality is bad for me, it’s better to be free of it. For if I were to intend and choose, these perceptions would cease in me, and other coarser perceptions would arise. Why don’t I neither make a choice nor form an intention?’ They neither make a choice nor form an intention. Those perceptions cease in them, and other coarser perceptions don’t arise. They touch cessation. And that, Poṭṭhapāda, is how the gradual cessation of perception is attained with awareness.

Bhagavā avoca What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? Have you ever heard of this before?” “No, sir. This is how I understand what the Buddha said: ‘From the time a mendicant here takes responsibility for their own perception, they proceed from one stage to the next, gradually reaching the peak of perception. Standing on the peak of perception they think: “Intentionality is bad for me, it’s better to be free of it. For if I were to intend and choose, these perceptions would cease in me, and other coarser perceptions would arise. Why don’t I neither make a choice nor form an intention?” Those perceptions cease in them, and other coarser perceptions don’t arise. They touch cessation. And that is how the gradual cessation of perception is attained with awareness.’” “That’s right, Poṭṭhapāda.”

“Does the Buddha describe just one peak of perception, or many?” “I describe the peak of perception as both one and many.” “But sir, how do you describe it as one peak and as many?” “I describe the peak of perception according to the specific manner in which one reaches cessation. That’s how I describe the peak of perception as both one and many.”

“But sir, does perception arise first and knowledge afterwards? Or does knowledge arise first and perception afterwards? Or do they both arise at the same time?”

“Perception arises first and knowledge afterwards. The arising of perception leads

to the arising of knowledge. They understand: ‘My knowledge arose from a specific condition.’ That is a way to understand how perception arises first and knowledge afterwards; that the arising of perception leads to the arising of knowledge.”

### **1.3. Perception and the Self**

“Sir, is perception a person’s self, or are perception and self different things?” “But Poṭṭhapāda, do you believe in a self?” “I believe in a substantial self, sir, which is physical, made up of the four primary elements, and consumes solid food.”

“Suppose there were such a substantial self, Poṭṭhapāda. In that case, perception would be one thing, the self another. Here is another way to understand how perception and self are different things. So long as that substantial self remains, still some perceptions arise in a person and others cease. That is a way to understand how perception and self are different things.”

“Sir, I believe in a mind-made self which is complete in all its various parts, not deficient in any faculty.” “Suppose there were such a mind-made self, Poṭṭhapāda. In that case, perception would be one thing, the self another. Here is another way to understand how perception and self are different things. So long as that mind-made self remains, still some perceptions arise in a person and others cease. That too is a way to understand how perception and self are different things.”

“Sir, I believe in a non-physical self which is made of perception.” “Suppose there were such a non-physical self, Poṭṭhapāda. In that case, perception would be one thing, the self another. Here is another way to understand how perception and self are different things. So long as that non-physical self remains, still some perceptions arise in a person and others cease. That too is a way to understand how perception and self are different things.”

“But, sir, am I able to know whether perception is a person’s self, or whether perception and self are different things?” “It’s hard for you to understand this, since you have a different view, creed, belief, practice, and tradition.”

“Well, if that’s the case, sir, then is this right: ‘The cosmos is eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is wrong’?” “This has not been declared by me, Poṭṭhapāda.”

“Then is this right: ‘The cosmos is not eternal. This is the only truth, anything else is wrong’?” “This too has not been declared by me.”

“Then is this right: ‘The cosmos is finite ...’ ... ‘The cosmos is infinite ...’ ... ‘The soul and the body are the same thing ...’ ... ‘The soul and the body are different things ...’ ... ‘A Realized One exists after death ...’ ... ‘A Realized One doesn’t exist after death ...’ ... ‘A Realized One both exists and doesn’t exist after death ...’ ... ‘A Realized One neither exists nor doesn’t exist after death. This is the only truth, anything else is wrong’?” “This too has not been declared by me.”

“Why haven’t these things been declared by the Buddha?” “Because they’re not beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They don’t lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That’s why I haven’t declared them.”

“Then what has been declared by the Buddha?” “I have declared this: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice leading to the cessation of suffering’.”

“Why have these things been declared by the Buddha?” “Because they are beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That’s why I have declared them.” “That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One! Please, sir, go at your convenience.” Then the Buddha got up from his seat and left.

Soon after the Buddha left, those wanderers gave Poṭṭhapāda a comprehensive tongue-lashing: “No matter what the ascetic Gotama says, Poṭṭhapāda agrees with him: ‘That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One!’ We understand that

the ascetic Gotama didn't make any definitive statement at all regarding whether the cosmos is eternal and so on.”

When they said this, Poṭṭhapāda said to them: “I too understand that the ascetic Gotama didn't make any definitive statement at all regarding whether the cosmos is eternal and so on. Nevertheless, the practice that he describes is true, real, and accurate. It is the regularity of natural principles, the invariance of natural principles. So how could a sensible person such as I not agree that what was well spoken by the ascetic Gotama was in fact well spoken?”

## **2. On Citta Hatthisāriputta**

Then after two or three days had passed, Citta Hatthisāriputta and Poṭṭhapāda went to see the Buddha. Citta Hatthisāriputta bowed and sat down to one side. But the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda exchanged greetings with the Buddha, and when the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Poṭṭhapāda told the Buddha what had happened after he left. The Buddha said:

“All those wanderers, Poṭṭhapāda, are blind and sightless. You are the only one who sees. For I have taught and pointed out both things that are definitive and things that are not definitive.

And what things have I taught and pointed out that are not definitive? ‘The cosmos is eternal’ ... ‘The cosmos is not eternal’ ... ‘The cosmos is finite’ ... ‘The cosmos is infinite’ ... ‘The soul is the same thing as the body’ ... ‘The soul and the body are different things’ ... ‘A Realized One exists after death’ ... ‘A Realized One doesn't exist after death’ ... ‘A Realized One both exists and doesn't exist after death’ ... ‘A Realized One neither exists nor doesn't exist after death.’

And why haven't I taught and pointed out such things that are not definitive? Because those things aren't beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They don't lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That's why I haven't taught and pointed them out.

## 2.1. Things That Are Definitive

And what things have I taught and pointed out that are definitive? ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering’.”

And why have I taught and pointed out such things that are definitive? Because they are beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. They lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That’s why I have taught and pointed them out.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: ‘The self is exclusively happy and is sound after death.’ I go up to them and say: ‘Is it really true that this is the venerables’ view?’ And they answer, ‘Yes’. I say to them: ‘But do you meditate knowing and seeing an exclusively happy world?’ Asked this, they say, ‘No.’

I say to them: ‘But have you perceived an exclusively happy self for a single day or night, or even half a day or night?’ Asked this, they say, ‘No.’

I say to them: ‘But do you know a path and a practice to realize an exclusively happy world?’ Asked this, they say, ‘No.’

I say to them: ‘But have you ever heard the voice of the deities reborn in an exclusively happy world saying: “Practice well, dear sirs, practice directly so as to realize an exclusively happy world. For this is how we practiced, and we were reborn in an exclusively happy world”?’ Asked this, they say, ‘No.’

What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being so, doesn’t what they say turn out to have no demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, sir.”

“Suppose, Poṭṭhapāda, a man were to say: ‘Whoever the finest lady in the land is, it is her that I want, her that I desire!’ They’d say to him: ‘Mister, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know whether she’s an aristocrat, a brahmin, a

merchant, or a worker?’ Asked this, he’d say, ‘No.’ They’d say to him: ‘Mister, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know her name or clan? Whether she’s tall or short or medium? Whether her skin is black, brown, or tawny? What village, town, or city she comes from?’ Asked this, he’d say, ‘No.’ They’d say to him: ‘Mister, do you desire someone who you’ve never even known or seen?’ Asked this, he’d say, ‘Yes.’

What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being so, doesn’t that man’s statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, sir.”

“In the same way, the ascetics and brahmins who have those various doctrines and views ...

Doesn’t what they say turn out to have no demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, sir.”

“Suppose a man was to build a ladder at the crossroads for climbing up to a stilt longhouse. They’d say to him: ‘Mister, that stilt longhouse that you’re building a ladder for—do you know whether it’s to the north, south, east, or west? Or whether it’s tall or short or medium?’ Asked this, he’d say, ‘No.’ They’d say to him: ‘Mister, are you building a ladder for a longhouse that you’ve never even known or seen?’ Asked this, he’d say, ‘Yes.’

What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being so, doesn’t that man’s statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, sir.”

“In the same way, the ascetics and brahmins who have those various doctrines and views ...

Doesn’t what they say turn out to have no demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, sir.”

## 2.2. Three Kinds of Reincarnation

“Poṭṭhapāda, there are these three kinds of reincarnation: a substantial reincarnation, a mind-made reincarnation, and a non-physical reincarnation. And what is a substantial reincarnation? It is physical, made up of the four primary elements, and consumes solid food. What is a mind-made reincarnation? It is physical, mind-made, complete in all its various parts, not deficient in any faculty. What is a non-physical reincarnation? It is non-physical, made of perception.

I teach the Dhamma for the giving up of these three kinds of reincarnation: ‘When you practice accordingly, corrupting qualities will be given up in you and cleansing qualities will grow. You’ll enter and remain in the fullness and abundance of wisdom, having realized it with your own insight in this very life.’ Poṭṭhapāda, you might think: ‘Corrupting qualities will be given up and cleansing qualities will grow. One will enter and remain in the fullness and abundance of wisdom, having realized it with one’s own insight in this very life. But such a life is suffering.’ But you should not see it like this. Corrupting qualities will be given up and cleansing qualities will grow. One will enter and remain in the fullness and abundance of wisdom, having realized it with one’s own insight in this very life. And there will be only joy and happiness, tranquility, mindfulness and awareness. Such a life is blissful.

If others should ask us: ‘But reverends, what is that substantial reincarnation?’  
We’d answer like this: ‘This is that substantial reincarnation.’

If others should ask us: ‘But reverends, what is that mind-made reincarnation?’  
We’d answer like this: ‘This is that mind-made reincarnation.’

If others should ask us: ‘But reverends, what is that non-physical reincarnation?’  
We’d answer like this: ‘This is that non-physical reincarnation.’

What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being so, doesn’t that statement turn out to have a demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, sir.”

“Suppose a man were to build a ladder for climbing up to a stilt longhouse right underneath that longhouse. They’d say to him: ‘Mister, that stilt longhouse that you’re building a ladder for—do you know whether it’s to the north, south, east, or west? Or whether it’s tall or short or medium?’ He’d say: ‘This is that stilt longhouse for which I’m building a ladder, right underneath it.’

What do you think, Poṭṭhapāda? This being so, doesn’t that man’s statement turn out to have a demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, sir.”

When the Buddha had spoken, Citta Hatthisāriputta said: “Sir, while in a substantial reincarnation, are the mind-made and non-physical reincarnations fictitious, and only the substantial reincarnation real? While in a mind-made reincarnation, are the substantial and non-physical reincarnations fictitious, and only the mind-made reincarnation real? While in a non-physical reincarnation, are the substantial and mind-made reincarnations fictitious, and only the non-physical reincarnation real?”

“While in a substantial reincarnation, it’s not referred to as a mind-made or non-physical reincarnation, only as a substantial reincarnation. While in a mind-made reincarnation, it’s not referred to as a substantial or non-physical reincarnation, only as a mind-made reincarnation. While in a non-physical reincarnation, it’s not referred to as a substantial or mind-made reincarnation, only as a non-physical reincarnation.

Citta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘Did you exist in the past? Will you exist in the future? Do you exist now?’ How would you answer?”

“Sir, if they were to ask me this, I’d answer like this: ‘I existed in the past. I will exist in the future. I exist now.’ That’s how I’d answer.”

“But Citta, suppose they were to ask you: ‘Is the reincarnation you had in the past your only real one, and those of the future and present fictitious? Is the reincarnation you will have in the future your only real one, and those of the past

and present fictitious? Is the reincarnation you have now your only real one, and those of the past and future fictitious?’ How would you answer?”

“Sir, if they were to ask me this, I’d answer like this: ‘The reincarnation I had in the past was real at that time, and those of the future and present fictitious. The reincarnation I will have in the future will be real at the time, and those of the past and present fictitious. The reincarnation I have now is real at this time, and those of the past and future fictitious.’ That’s how I’d answer.”

“In the same way, while in any one of the three reincarnations, it’s not referred to as the other two, only under its own name.

From a cow comes milk, from milk comes curds, from curds come butter, from butter comes ghee, and from ghee comes cream of ghee. And the cream of ghee is said to be the best of these. While it’s milk, it’s not referred to as curds, butter, ghee, or cream of ghee. It’s only referred to as milk. While it’s curd or butter or ghee or cream of ghee, it’s not referred to as anything else, only under its own name. In the same way, while in any one of the three reincarnations, it’s not referred to as the other two, only under its own name. These are the world’s usages, terms, expressions, and descriptions, which the Realized One uses without misapprehending them.”

When he had spoken, the wanderer Poṭṭhapāda said to the Buddha: “Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, so too the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

### **2.3. The Ordination of Citta Hatthisāriputta**

But Citta Hatthisāriputta said to the Buddha: “Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he were righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to

the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what's there, so too the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?"

And Citta Hatthisāriputta received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Citta Hatthisāriputta, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which people from good families rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is no return to any state of existence." And Venerable Citta Hatthisāriputta became one of the perfected.

## 10. Subha Sutta

With Subha

So I have heard. At one time Venerable Ānanda was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. It was not long after the Buddha had become finally extinguished. Now at that time the brahmin student Subha, Todeyya's son, was residing in Sāvattḥī on some business.

Then he addressed a certain student: "Here, student, go to the ascetic Ānanda and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then say:

'Sir, please visit the student Subha, Todeyya's son, at his home out of compassion.'" "Yes, sir," replied the student, and did as he was asked.

When he had spoken, Venerable Ānanda said to him: "It's not the right time, student. I've drunk sufficient refreshments for today. But hopefully tomorrow I'll get a chance to visit him."

"Yes, sir," replied the student. He went back to Subha, and told him what had happened, adding: "This much, sir, I managed to do. At least Master Ānanda will take the opportunity to visit tomorrow."

Then when the night had passed, Ānanda robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went with Venerable Cetaka as his second monk to Subha's home, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Subha went up to Ānanda, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to Ānanda:

"Master Ānanda, you were Master Gotama's attendant. You were close to him, living in his presence. You ought to know what things Master Gotama praised, and

in which he encouraged, settled, and grounded all these people. What were those things?”

“Student, the Buddha praised three sets of things, and that’s what he encouraged, settled, and grounded all these people in. What three? The entire spectrum of noble ethics, immersion, and wisdom. These are the three sets of things that the Buddha praised.”

## **1. The Entire Spectrum of Ethics**

“But what was that noble spectrum of ethics that the Buddha praised?”

“Student, it’s when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed. He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. A householder hears that teaching, or a householder’s child, or someone reborn in some clan. They gain faith in the Realized One, and reflect: ‘Living in a house is cramped and dirty, but the life of one gone forth is wide open. It’s not easy for someone living at home to lead the spiritual life utterly full and pure, like a polished shell. Why don’t I shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness?’ After some time they give up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Once they’ve gone forth, they live restrained in the code of conduct, with appropriate behavior and means of collecting alms. Seeing danger in the slightest flaw, they keep the rules they’ve undertaken. They act skillfully by body and speech. They’re purified in livelihood and accomplished in ethical conduct. They guard the sense doors, have mindfulness and situational awareness, and are content.

And how is a mendicant accomplished in ethics? It's when a mendicant gives up killing living creatures. They renounce the rod and the sword. They're scrupulous and kind, living full of compassion for all creatures. ... This pertains to their ethics.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who, while enjoying food given in faith, still earn a living by unworthy branches of knowledge, by wrong livelihood. This includes rites for propitiation, for fulfilling wishes, for ghosts, for the earth, for rain, for property settlement, and for preparing and consecrating house sites, and rites involving rinsing and bathing, and oblations. It also includes administering emetics, purgatives, expectorants, and phlegmagogues; administering ear-oils, eye restoratives, nasal medicine, ointments, and counter-ointments; surgery with needle and scalpel, treating children, prescribing root medicines, and binding on herbs. They refrain from such unworthy branches of knowledge, such wrong livelihood. ... This pertains to their ethics.

A mendicant thus accomplished in ethics sees no danger in any quarter in regards to their ethical restraint. It's like a king who has defeated his enemies. He sees no danger from his foes in any quarter. A mendicant thus accomplished in ethics sees no danger in any quarter in regards to their ethical restraint. When they have this entire spectrum of noble ethics, they experience a blameless happiness inside themselves. That's how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics.

This is that noble spectrum of ethics that the Buddha praised. But there is still more to be done.”

“It's incredible, Master Ānanda, it's amazing, This noble spectrum of ethics is complete, not lacking anything! Such a complete spectrum of ethics cannot be seen among the other ascetics and brahmins. Were other ascetics and brahmins to see such a complete spectrum of noble ethics in themselves, they'd be delighted with just that much: 'At this point it's enough; at this point our work is done. We've reached the goal of our ascetic life. There is nothing more to be done.' And yet you say: 'But there is still more to be done.'

## 2. The Spectrum of Immersion

But what, Master Ānanda, was that noble spectrum of immersion that the Buddha praised?”

“And how, student, does a mendicant guard the sense doors? When a mendicant sees a sight with their eyes, they don’t get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of desire and aversion would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears ... When they smell an odor with their nose ... When they taste a flavor with their tongue ... When they feel a touch with their body ... When they know a thought with their mind, they don’t get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of desire and aversion would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. When they have this noble sense restraint, they experience an unsullied bliss inside themselves. That’s how a mendicant guards the sense doors.

And how does a mendicant have mindfulness and situational awareness? It’s when a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent. That’s how a mendicant has mindfulness and situational awareness.

And how is a mendicant content? It’s when a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and alms-food to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. They’re like a bird: wherever it flies, wings are its only burden. In the same way, a mendicant is content with robes to look after the body and alms-food to look after the belly. Wherever they go, they set out taking only these things. That’s how a mendicant is content.

When they have this noble spectrum of ethics, this noble sense restraint, this noble mindfulness and situational awareness, and this noble contentment, they frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. After the meal, they return from alms-round, sit down cross-legged with their body straight, and establish mindfulness right there.

Giving up desire for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of desire, cleansing the mind of desire. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of compassion for all creatures, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

Suppose a man who has gotten into debt were to apply himself to work, and his efforts proved successful. He would pay off the original loan and have enough left over to support his partner. Thinking about this, he'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose there was a person who was sick, suffering, gravely ill. They'd lose their appetite and get physically weak. But after some time they'd recover from that illness, and regain their appetite and their strength. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose a person was imprisoned in a jail. But after some time they were released from jail, safe and sound, with no loss of wealth. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose a person was a bondservant. They belonged to someone else and were unable to go where they wish. But after some time they'd be freed from servitude

and become their own master, an emancipated individual able to go where they wish. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

Suppose there was a person with wealth and property who was traveling along a desert road, which was perilous, with nothing to eat. But after some time they crossed over the desert safely, reaching the neighborhood of a village, a sanctuary free of peril. Thinking about this, they'd be filled with joy and happiness.

In the same way, as long as these five hindrances are not given up inside themselves, a mendicant regards them as a debt, a disease, a prison, slavery, and a desert crossing.

But when these five hindrances are given up inside themselves, a mendicant regards this as freedom from debt, good health, release from prison, emancipation, and sanctuary.

Seeing that the hindrances have been given up in them, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed.

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, they enter and remain in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread their body with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion.

It's like when an expert bathroom attendant or their apprentice pours bath powder into a bronze dish, sprinkling it little by little with water. They knead it until the ball of bath powder is soaked and saturated with moisture, spread through inside and out; yet no moisture oozes out. In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. There's no

part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of seclusion. This pertains to their immersion.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. They drench, steep, fill, and spread their body with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion.

It's like a deep lake fed by spring water. There's no inlet to the east, west, north, or south, and no rainfall to replenish it from time to time. But the stream of cool water welling up in the lake drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads throughout the lake. There's no part of the lake that's not spread through with cool water. In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with rapture and bliss born of immersion. There's no part of the body that's not spread with rapture and bliss born of immersion. This pertains to their immersion.

Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' They drench, steep, fill, and spread their body with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture.

It's like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. From the tip to the root they're drenched, steeped, filled, and soaked with cool water. There's no part of them that's not soaked with cool water. In the same way, a mendicant drenches, steeps, fills, and spreads their body with bliss free of rapture. There's no part of the body that's not spread with bliss free of rapture. This pertains to their immersion.

Furthermore, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. They sit spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of the body that's not spread with pure bright mind.

It's like someone sitting wrapped from head to foot with white cloth. There's no part of the body that's not spread over with white cloth. In the same way, a mendicant sits spreading their body through with pure bright mind. There's no part of their body that's not spread with pure bright mind. This pertains to their immersion.

This is that noble spectrum of immersion that the Buddha praised. But there is still more to be done.”

“It's incredible, Master Ānanda, it's amazing! This noble spectrum of immersion is complete, not lacking anything! Such a complete spectrum of immersion cannot be seen among the other ascetics and brahmins. Were other ascetics and brahmins to see such a complete spectrum of noble immersion in themselves, they'd be delighted with just that much: ‘At this point it's enough; at this point our work is done. We've reached the goal of our ascetic life. There is nothing more to be done.’ And yet you say: ‘But there is still more to be done.’

### **3. The Spectrum of Wisdom**

But what, Master Ānanda, was that noble spectrum of wisdom that the Buddha praised?”

“When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge and vision. They understand: ‘This body of mine is physical. It's made up of the four primary elements, produced by mother and father, built up from rice and porridge, liable to impermanence, to wearing away

and erosion, to breaking up and destruction. And this consciousness of mine is attached to it, tied to it.’

Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, with expert workmanship, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And it was strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown. And someone with good eyesight were to take it in their hand and examine it: ‘This beryl gem is naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, with expert workmanship, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And it’s strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge and vision. This pertains to their wisdom.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward the creation of a mind-made body. From this body they create another body, physical, mind-made, complete in all its various parts, not deficient in any faculty.

Suppose a person was to draw a reed out from its sheath. They’d think: ‘This is the reed, this is the sheath. The reed and the sheath are different things. The reed has been drawn out from the sheath.’ Or suppose a person was to draw a sword out from its scabbard. They’d think: ‘This is the sword, this is the scabbard. The sword and the scabbard are different things. The sword has been drawn out from the scabbard.’ Or suppose a person was to draw a snake out from its slough. They’d think: ‘This is the snake, this is the slough. The snake and the slough are different things. The snake has been drawn out from the slough.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward the creation of a mind-made body. This pertains to their wisdom.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward psychic power. They wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again; going unimpeded through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the Brahmā realm.

Suppose an expert potter or their apprentice had some well-prepared clay. They could produce any kind of pot that they like. Or suppose an expert ivory-carver or their apprentice had some well-prepared ivory. They could produce any kind of ivory item that they like. Or suppose an expert goldsmith or their apprentice had some well-prepared gold. They could produce any kind of gold item that they like. In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward psychic power. This pertains to their wisdom.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward clairaudience. With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and divine, whether near or far. Suppose there was a person traveling along the road. They'd hear the sound of drums, clay drums, horns, kettledrums, and tom-toms. They'd think: 'That's the sound of drums,' and 'that's the sound of clay-drums,' and 'that's the sound of horns, kettledrums, and tom-toms.' In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward clairaudience. This pertains to their wisdom.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it

and project it toward comprehending the minds of others. They understand mind with greed as ‘mind with greed’, and mind without greed as ‘mind without greed’. They understand mind with hate ... mind without hate ... mind with delusion ... mind without delusion ... contracted mind ... scattered mind ... expansive mind ... unexpansive mind ... mind that is not supreme ... mind that is supreme ... immersed mind ... unimmersed mind ... freed mind ... They understand unfreed mind as ‘unfreed mind’.

Suppose there was a woman or man who was young, youthful, and fond of adornments, and they check their own reflection in a clean bright mirror or a clear bowl of water. If they had a spot they’d know ‘I have a spot,’ and if they had no spots they’d know ‘I have no spots.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward comprehending the minds of others. This pertains to their wisdom.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward recollection of past lives. They recollect many kinds of past lives, that is, one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world evolving, many eons of the world contracting and evolving. They remember: ‘There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. Passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere, and there I had such a name, such a family, such appearance, such food, such experience of happiness and suffering, and such a life-span. Passing away from there, I was reborn here.’ And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

Suppose a person was to leave their home village and go to another village. From that village they’d go to yet another village. And from that village they’d return to their home village. They’d think: ‘I went from my home village to another village.

There I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. From that village I went to yet another village. There too I stood like this, sat like that, spoke like this, or kept silent like that. And from that village I returned to my home village.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward recollection of past lives. This pertains to their wisdom.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds. ‘These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They spoke ill of the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never spoke ill of the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.’ And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds.

Suppose there was a stilt longhouse at the central square. A person with good eyesight standing there might see people entering and leaving a house, walking along the streets and paths, and sitting at the central square. They’d think: ‘These are people entering and leaving a house, walking along the streets and paths, and sitting at the central square.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable,

workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend and project it toward knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings. This pertains to their wisdom.

When their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. They truly understand: ‘This is suffering’ ... ‘This is the origin of suffering’ ... ‘This is the cessation of suffering’ ... ‘This is the practice leading to the cessation of suffering’. They truly understand: ‘These are defilements’ ... ‘This is the origin of defilements’ ... ‘This is the cessation of defilements’ ... ‘This is the practice that leads to the cessation of defilements’. Knowing and seeing like this, their mind is freed from the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance. When freed, they know ‘it is freed’. They understand: ‘Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is no return to any state of existence.’

Suppose that in a mountain glen there was a lake that was transparent, clear, and unclouded. A person with good eyesight standing on the bank would see the mussel shells, gravel and pebbles, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still. They’d think: ‘This lake is transparent, clear, and unclouded. And here are the mussel shells, gravel and pebbles, and schools of fish swimming about or staying still.’ In the same way, when their mind has become immersed in samādhi like this—purified, bright, spotless, rid of taints, pliable, workable, steady, and imperturbable—they extend it and project it toward knowledge of the ending of defilements. This pertains to their wisdom.

This is that noble spectrum of wisdom that the Buddha praised. And there is nothing more to be done.”

“It’s incredible, Master Ānanda, it’s amazing! This noble spectrum of wisdom is complete, not lacking anything! Such a complete spectrum of wisdom cannot be seen among the other ascetics and brahmins. And there is nothing more to be done. Excellent, Master Ānanda! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or

revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what's there, Master Ānanda has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Ānanda remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

# 11. Kevaṭṭa Sutta

With Kevaddha

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Nālandā in Pāvārika's mango grove. Then the householder Kevaddha went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: "Sir, this Nālandā is successful and prosperous and full of people. Sir, please direct a mendicant to perform a demonstration of superhuman psychic power. Then Nālandā will become even more devoted to the Buddha!" When he said this, The Buddha said: "Kevaddha, I do not teach the mendicants like this: 'Come now, mendicants, perform a demonstration of superhuman psychic power for the white-clothed laypeople.'"

For a second time, Kevaddha made the same request, and the Buddha gave the same answer.

For a third time, Kevaddha made the same request, and the Buddha said this:

## 1. The Demonstration of Psychic Power

"Kevaddha, there are three kinds of demonstration, which I declare having realized them with my own insight. What three? The demonstration of psychic power, the demonstration of revealing, and the demonstration of instruction.

And what is the demonstration of psychic power? It's a mendicant who wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again; going unimpeded through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it were water; walking on water as if it were earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the Brahmā realm.

Then someone with faith and confidence sees that mendicant performing those superhuman feats.

They tell someone else who lacks faith and confidence: ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! The ascetic has such psychic power and might! I saw him myself, performing all these superhuman feats!’

But the one lacking faith and confidence would say to them: ‘There’s a spell named Gandhārī. Using that a mendicant can perform such superhuman feats.’

What do you think, Kevaddha? Wouldn’t someone lacking faith speak like that?”  
“They would, sir.” “Seeing this drawback in psychic power, I’m horrified, repelled, and disgusted by demonstrations of psychic power.

## **2. The Demonstration of Revealing**

And what is the demonstration of revealing? In one case, someone reveals the mind, mentality, thoughts, and reflections of other beings and individuals: ‘This is what you’re thinking, such is your thought, and thus is your state of mind.’

Then someone with faith and confidence sees that mendicant revealing another person’s thoughts. They tell someone else who lacks faith and confidence: ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! The ascetic has such psychic power and might! I saw him myself, revealing the thoughts of another person!’

But the one lacking faith and confidence would say to them: ‘There’s a spell named Māṇikā. Using that a mendicant can reveal another person’s thoughts.’

What do you think, Kevaddha? Wouldn’t someone lacking faith speak like that?”  
“They would, sir.” “Seeing this drawback in psychic power, I’m horrified, repelled, and disgusted by demonstrations of psychic power.

### **3. The Demonstration of Instruction**

And what is the demonstration of instruction? It's when a mendicant instructs others like this: 'Think like this, not like that. Focus your mind like this, not like that. Give up this, and live having achieved that.' This is called the demonstration of instruction.

Furthermore, a Realized One arises in the world ... That's how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. ... They enter and remain in the first absorption ... This is called the demonstration of instruction. They enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. This too is called the demonstration of instruction. They extend and project the mind toward knowledge and vision ... This too is called the demonstration of instruction. They understand: '... there is no return to any state of existence.' This too is called the demonstration of instruction.

These, Kevaddha, are the three kinds of demonstration, which I declare having realized them with my own insight.

### **4. On the Mendicant In Search of the Cessation of Being**

Once it so happened, Kevaddha, that a mendicant in this very Saṅgha had the following thought: 'Where do these four primary elements cease without anything left over, namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air?'

Then that mendicant attained a state of immersion such that a path to the gods appeared. Then he approached the Gods of the Four Great Kings and said: 'Reverends, where do these four primary elements cease without anything left over, namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air?'

When he said this, those gods said to him: 'Mendicant, we too do not know this. But the Four Great Kings are our superiors. They might know.'

Then he approached the Four Great Kings and asked the same question. But they also said to him: ‘Mendicant, we too do not know this. But the gods of the Thirty-Three ...

Sakka, the lord of gods ...

the gods of Yāmā ... the god named Suyāma ... the Joyful gods ... the god named Santussita ... the gods who delight in creation ... the god named Sunimmita ... the gods who control the creation of others ... the god named Vasavattī ...

the gods of Brahmā’s Group. They might know.’

Then that mendicant attained a state of immersion such that a path to Brahmā appeared. Then he approached those gods and said: ‘Reverends, where do these four primary elements cease without anything left over, namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air?’ But they also said to him: ‘Mendicant, we too do not know this. But there is Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born. He is our superior. He might know.’

‘But reverends, where is that Brahmā now?’ ‘We also don’t know where he is or what way he lies. But by the signs that are seen—light arising and radiance appearing—we know that Brahmā will appear. For this is the precursor for the appearance of Brahmā, namely light arising and radiance appearing.’ Not long afterwards, the Great Brahmā appeared.

Then that mendicant approached the Great Brahmā and said to him: ‘Reverend, where do these four primary elements cease without anything left over, namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air?’ The Great Brahmā said to him: ‘I am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born.’

For a second time, that mendicant said to the Great Brahmā: ‘Reverend, I am not asking you whether you are Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born. I am asking where these four primary elements cease without anything left over.’

For a second time, the Great Brahmā said to him: ‘I am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born.’ For a third time, that mendicant said to the Great Brahmā: ‘Reverend, I am not asking you whether you are Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born. I am asking where these four primary elements cease without anything left over.’

Then the Great Brahmā took that mendicant by the arm, led him off to one side, and said to him: ‘Mendicant, these gods think that there is nothing at all that I don’t know and see and understand and realize. That’s why I didn’t answer in front of them. But I too do not know where these four primary elements cease with nothing left over. Therefore, mendicant, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone, in that you passed over the Buddha and searched elsewhere for an answer to this question. Mendicant, go to the Buddha and ask him this question. You should remember it in line with his answer.’

Then that mendicant, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in front of me. Then he bowed, sat down to one side, and said to me: ‘Sir, where do these four primary elements cease without anything left over, namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air?’

## 4.1. The Simile of the Land-Spotting Bird

When he said this, I said to him: ‘Once upon a time, mendicant, some sea-merchants set sail for the ocean deeps, taking with them a land-spotting bird. When their ship was out of sight of land, they released the bird. It flew right away to the east, the west, the north, the south, upwards, and in-between. If it saw land on any side, it went there and stayed. But if it saw no land on any side it returned to the ship. In the same way, after failing to get an answer to this question even after searching as far as the Brahmā realm, you’ve returned to me. Mendicant, this is not how the question should be asked: “Sir, where do these four primary elements cease without anything left over, namely, the elements of earth, water, fire, and air?”’

This is how the question should be asked:

“Where do water and earth,  
fire and air find no footing;  
where do long and short,  
fine and coarse, beautiful and ugly;  
where does name and form  
cease with nothing left over?”

And the answer to that is:

“Consciousness that’s invisible,  
infinite, radiant all round.  
Here’s where water and earth,  
fire and air find no footing;  
  
here’s where long and short,  
fine and coarse, beautiful and ugly;  
here’s where name and form  
cease with nothing left over—  
with the cessation of consciousness,

that's where this ceases.”””

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the householder Kevaddha was happy with what the Buddha said.

## 12. Lohicca Sutta

With Lohicca

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants when he arrived at Sālavatikā. Now at that time the brahmin Lohicca was living in Sālavatikā. It was a crown property given by King Pasenadi of Kosala, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal endowment of the highest quality.

Now at that time Lohicca had the following harmful misconception: “Should an ascetic or brahmin achieve some skillful quality, they ought not inform anyone else. For what can one person do for another? Suppose someone cut off an old bond, only to create another new bond. That’s the consequence of such a wicked, greedy deed, I say. For what can one person do for another?”

Lohicca heard: “It seems the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—has arrived at Sālavatikā, together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ He has realized with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and he makes it known to others. He teaches Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he reveals a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. It’s good to see such perfected ones.”

Then Lohicca addressed his barber Rosika: “Here, dear Rosika, go to the ascetic Gotama and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then ask him whether he,

together with the mendicant Saṅgha, might accept tomorrow’s meal from the brahmin Lohicca.”

“Yes, sir,” Rosika replied. He did as he was asked, and the Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, Rosika got up from his seat, went to Lohicca, and said to him: “I gave the Buddha your message, and he accepted.”

And when the night had passed Lohicca had a variety of delicious foods prepared in his own home. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying: “Here, dear Rosika, go to the ascetic Gotama and announce the time, saying: ‘It’s time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready.’” “Yes, sir,” Rosika replied. He did as he was asked.

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to Sālavatikā together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Now, Rosika was following behind the Buddha, and told him of Lohicca’s views, adding: “Sir, please dissuade him from that harmful misconception.” “Hopefully that’ll happen, Rosika, hopefully that’ll happen.”

Then the Buddha approached Lohicca’s home, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Lohicca served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with his own hands with a variety of delicious foods.

### **1. Questioning Lohicca**

When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Lohicca took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha said to him: “Is it really true, Lohicca, that you have such a harmful misconception: ‘Should an ascetic or brahmin achieve some skillful quality, they ought not inform anyone else. For what can one person do for another? Suppose someone cut off an old bond, only to create another new bond. That’s the consequence of such a wicked, greedy deed, I say. For what can one person do for another?’” “Yes, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Lohicca? Do you reside in Sālavatikā?” “Yes, Master Gotama.” “Lohicca, suppose someone were to say: ‘The brahmin Lohicca reigns over Sālavatikā. He alone should enjoy the revenues produced in Sālavatikā and not share them with anyone else.’ Would the person who spoke like that make it difficult for those whose living depends on you or not?”

“They would, Master Gotama.” “But is someone who creates difficulties for others acting kindly or unkindly?” “Unkindly, sir.” “But does an unkind person have love in their heart or hostility?” “Hostility, sir.” “And when the heart is full of hostility, is there right view or wrong view?” “Wrong view, Master Gotama.” “An individual with wrong view is reborn in one of two places, I say: hell or the animal realm.

What do you think, Lohicca? Does King Pasenadi reign over Kāsī and Kosala?” “Yes, Master Gotama.” “Lohicca, suppose someone were to say: ‘King Pasenadi reigns over Kāsī and Kosala. He alone should enjoy the revenues produced in Kāsī and Kosala and not share them with anyone else.’ Would the person who spoke like that make it difficult for yourself and others whose living depends on King Pasenadi or not?”

“They would, Master Gotama.” “But is someone who creates difficulties for others acting kindly or unkindly?” “Unkindly, sir.” “But does an unkind person have love in their heart or hostility?” “Hostility, sir.” “And when the heart is full of hostility, is there right view or wrong view?” “Wrong view, Master Gotama.” “An individual with wrong view is reborn in one of two places, I say: hell or the animal realm.

So it seems, Lohicca, that should someone say such a thing either of Lohicca or of King Pasenadi, that is wrong view. In the same way, suppose someone were to say: ‘Should an ascetic or brahmin achieve some skillful quality, they ought not inform anyone else. For what can one person do for another? Suppose someone cut off an old bond, only to create another new bond. That’s the consequence of such a wicked, greedy deed, I say. For what can one person do for another?’ Now, there are respectable persons who, relying on the teaching and training proclaimed by

the Realized One, achieve a high distinction such as the following: they realize the fruit of stream-entry, the fruit of once-return, the fruit of non-return, or the fruit of perfection. And in addition, there are those who ripen the seeds for rebirth in a heavenly state. The person who spoke like that makes it difficult for them. They're acting unkindly, their heart is full of hostility, and they have wrong view. An individual with wrong view is reborn in one of two places, I say: hell or the animal realm.

## **2. Three Teachers Who Deserve to Be Reprimanded**

Lohicca, there are three kinds of teachers in the world who deserve to be reprimanded. When someone reprimands such teachers, the reprimand is true, substantive, legitimate, and blameless. What three? Firstly, take a teacher who has not reached the goal of the ascetic life for which they went forth from the lay life to homelessness. They teach their disciples: 'This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.' But their disciples don't want to listen. They don't pay attention or apply their minds to understand. They proceed having turned away from the teacher's instruction. That teacher deserves to be reprimanded: 'Venerable, you haven't reached the goal of the ascetic life; and when you teach disciples they proceed having turned away from the teacher's instruction. It's like a man who makes advances on a woman though she pulls away, or embraces her though she turns her back. That's the consequence of such a wicked, greedy deed, I say. For what can one do for another?' This is the first kind of teacher who deserves to be reprimanded.

Furthermore, take a teacher who has not reached the goal of the ascetic life for which they went forth from the lay life to homelessness. They teach their disciples: 'This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.' Their disciples do want to listen. They pay attention and apply their minds to understand. They don't proceed having turned away from the teacher's instruction. That teacher deserves to be reprimanded: 'Venerable, you haven't reached the goal of the ascetic life; and when you teach disciples they don't proceed having turned away from the teacher's instruction. It's like someone who abandons their own field and presumes to weed someone else's field. That's the consequence of such a wicked, greedy deed, I say.

For what can one do for another?’ This is the second kind of teacher who deserves to be reprimanded.

Furthermore, take a teacher who has reached the goal of the ascetic life for which they went forth from the lay life to homelessness. They teach their disciples: ‘This is for your welfare. This is for your happiness.’ But their disciples don’t want to listen. They don’t pay attention or apply their minds to understand. They proceed having turned away from the teacher’s instruction. That teacher deserves to be reprimanded: ‘Venerable, you have reached the goal of the ascetic life; yet when you teach disciples they proceed having turned away from the teacher’s instruction. Suppose someone cut off an old bond, only to create another new bond. That’s the consequence of such a wicked, greedy deed, I say. For what can one person do for another?’ This is the third kind of teacher who deserves to be reprimanded. These are the three kinds of teachers in the world who deserve to be reprimanded. When someone reprimands such teachers, the reprimand is true, substantive, legitimate, and blameless.”

### **3. A Teacher Who Does Not Deserve to Be Reprimanded**

When he had spoken, Lohicca said to the Buddha: “But Master Gotama, is there a teacher in the world who does not deserve to be reprimanded?” “There is, Lohicca.” “But who is that teacher?”

“It’s when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... That’s how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. ... They enter and remain in the first absorption ... A teacher under whom a disciple achieves such a high distinction is one who does not deserve to be reprimanded. When someone reprimands such a teacher, the reprimand is false, baseless, illegitimate, and blameworthy.

They enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. A teacher under whom a disciple achieves such a high distinction is one who does not deserve to be reprimanded. ...

They extend and project the mind toward knowledge and vision ... A teacher under whom a disciple achieves such a high distinction is one who does not deserve to be reprimanded. ...

They understand: ‘... there is no return to any state of existence.’ A teacher under whom a disciple achieves such a high distinction is one who does not deserve to be reprimanded. When someone reprimands such a teacher, the reprimand is false, baseless, illegitimate, and blameworthy.”

When he had spoken, Lohicca said to the Buddha: “Suppose, Master Gotama, a person was on the verge of falling off a cliff, and another person were to grab them by the hair, pull them up, and place them on firm ground. In the same way, when I was falling off a cliff Master Gotama pulled me up and placed me on safe ground. Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, just so has Master Gotama made the Teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

## 13. Tevijja Sutta

### The Three Knowledges

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants when he arrived at a village of the Kosalan brahmins named Manasākaṭa. He stayed on in a mango grove on a bank of the river Aciravatī to the north of Manasākaṭa.

Now at that time several very well-known well-to-do brahmins were residing in Manasākaṭa. They included the brahmins Caṅkī, Tārukka, Pokkharasāti, Jāṇussoṇi, Todeyya, and others.

Then as the students Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja were going for a walk they began a discussion regarding the variety of paths. Vāseṭṭha said this: “This is the only straight path, the direct route that leads someone who practices it to the company of Brahmā; namely, that explained by the brahmin Pokkharasāti.” Bhāradvāja said this: “This is the only straight path, the direct route that leads someone who practices it to the company of Brahmā; namely, that explained by the brahmin Tārukka.” But neither was able to persuade the other.

So Vāseṭṭha said to Bhāradvāja: “Bhāradvāja, the ascetic Gotama—a Sakyan, gone forth from a Sakyan family—is staying in a mango grove on a bank of the river Aciravatī to the north of Manasākaṭa. He has this good reputation: ‘That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.’ Come, let’s go to see him and ask him about this matter. As he answers, so we’ll remember it.” “Yes, sir,” replied Bhāradvāja.

## 1. The Variety of Paths

So they went to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they sat down to one side and Vāseṭṭha told him of their conversation, adding: “In this matter we have a dispute, a disagreement, a difference of opinion.”

“So, Vāseṭṭha, it seems that you say that the straight path is that explained by Pokkharasāti, while Bhāradvāja says that the straight path is that explained by Tārukkha. But what exactly is your disagreement about?”

“About the variety of paths, Master Gotama. Even though brahmins describe different paths—the Addhariya brahmins, the Tittiriya brahmins, the Chandoka brahmins, and the Bavhadija brahmins—all of them lead someone who practices them to the company of Brahmā.

It’s like a village or town that has many different roads nearby, yet all of them meet at that village. In the same way, even though brahmins describe different paths—the Addhariya brahmins, the Tittiriya brahmins, the Chandoka brahmins, and the Bavhadija brahmins—all of them lead someone who practices them to the company of Brahmā.”

## 2. Questioning Vāseṭṭha

“Do you say, ‘they lead someone,’ Vāseṭṭha?” “I do, Master Gotama.” “Do you say, ‘they lead someone,’ Vāseṭṭha?” “I do, Master Gotama.” “Do you say, ‘they lead someone,’ Vāseṭṭha?” “I do, Master Gotama.”

“Well, of the brahmins who are expert in the three Vedas, Vāseṭṭha, is there even a single one who has seen Brahmā with their own eyes?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Well, has even a single one of their teachers seen Brahmā with their own eyes?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Well, has even a single one of their teachers’ teachers seen Brahmā with their own eyes?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Well, has anyone back to the seventh generation of teachers seen Brahmā with their own eyes?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Well, what of the ancient seers of the brahmins, namely Aṭṭhaka, Vāmaka, Vāmadeva, Vessāmitta, Yamadaggi, Aṅgīrasa, Bhāradvāja, Vāseṭṭha, Kassapa, and Bhagu? They were the authors and propagators of the hymns, whose hymnal was sung and propagated and compiled in ancient times. These days, brahmins continue to sing and chant it. They continue chanting what was chanted and teaching what was taught. Did they say: ‘We know and see where Brahmā is or what way he lies’?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“So it seems that none of the brahmins have seen Brahmā with their own eyes, and not even the ancient seers claimed to know where he is. Yet the brahmins expert in the three Vedas say: ‘We teach the path to the company of that which we neither know nor see. This is the only straight path, the direct route that leads someone who practices it to the company of Brahmā.’

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? This being so, doesn’t their statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, Master Gotama.”

“Good, Vāseṭṭha. For it is impossible that they should teach the path to that which they neither know nor see.

Suppose there was a queue of blind men, each holding the one in front: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. In the same way, it seems to me that the brahmins’ statement turns out to be comparable to a queue of blind men: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. Their statement turns out to be a joke—mere words, void and hollow.

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Do the brahmins expert in the three Vedas see the sun and moon just as other folk do? And do they pray to them and beseech them, following their course from where they rise to where they set with joined palms held in worship?”

“Yes, Master Gotama.”

“What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Though this is so, are the brahmins expert in the three Vedas able to teach the path to the company of the sun and moon, saying: ‘This is the only straight path, the direct route that leads someone who practices it to the company of the sun and moon?’” “No, Master Gotama.”

“So it seems that even though the brahmins expert in the three Vedas see the sun and moon, they are not able to teach the path to the company of the sun and moon.

But it seems that even though they have not seen Brahmā with their own eyes, they still claim to teach the path to the company of that which they neither know nor see.

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? This being so, doesn’t their statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?” “Clearly that’s the case, Master Gotama.”

“Good, Vāseṭṭha. For it is impossible that they should teach the path to that which they neither know nor see.

## **2.1. The Simile of the Finest Lady in the Land**

Suppose a man were to say: ‘Whoever the finest lady in the land is, it is her that I want, her that I desire!’ They’d say to him: ‘Mister, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know whether she’s an aristocrat, a brahmin, a merchant, or a worker?’ Asked this, he’d say, ‘No.’

They’d say to him: ‘Mister, that finest lady in the land who you desire—do you know her name or clan? Whether she’s tall or short or medium? Whether her skin

is black, brown, or tawny? What village, town, or city she comes from?' Asked this, he'd say, 'No.' They'd say to him: 'Mister, do you desire someone who you've never even known or seen?' Asked this, he'd say, 'Yes.'

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? This being so, doesn't that man's statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?" "Clearly that's the case, sir."

"In the same way,

doesn't those brahmins' statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?" "Clearly that's the case, Master Gotama."

"Good, Vāseṭṭha. For it is impossible that they should teach the path to that which they neither know nor see.

## **2.2. The Simile of the Ladder**

Suppose a man was to build a ladder at the crossroads for climbing up to a stilt longhouse. They'd say to him: 'Mister, that stilt longhouse that you're building a ladder for—do you know whether it's to the north, south, east, or west? Or whether it's tall or short or medium?' Asked this, he'd say, 'No.'

They'd say to him: 'Mister, are you building a ladder for a longhouse that you've never even known or seen?' Asked this, he'd say, 'Yes.'

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? This being so, doesn't that man's statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?" "Clearly that's the case, sir."

"In the same way,

doesn't those brahmins' statement turn out to have no demonstrable basis?" "Clearly that's the case, Master Gotama."

“Good, Vāseṭṭha. For it is impossible that they should teach the path to that which they neither know nor see.

### **2.3. The Simile of the River Aciravatī**

Suppose the river Aciravatī was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Then along comes a person who wants to cross over to the far shore. Standing on the near shore, they’d call out to the far shore: ‘Come here, far shore! Come here, far shore!’

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Would the far shore of the Aciravatī river come over to the near shore because of that man’s call, request, desire, or expectation?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“In the same way, Vāseṭṭha, the brahmins expert in the three Vedas proceed having given up those things that make one a true brahmin, and having undertaken those things that make one not a true brahmin. Yet they say: ‘We call upon Inda! We call upon Soma! We call upon Īsāna! We call upon Pajāpati! We call upon Brahmā! We call upon Mahiddhi! We call upon Yama!’

So long as they proceed in this way it’s impossible that they will, when the body breaks up, after death, be reborn in the company of Brahmā.

Suppose the river Aciravatī was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Then along comes a person who wants to cross over to the far shore. But while still on the near shore, their arms are tied tightly behind their back with a strong chain.

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Could that person cross over to the far shore?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“In the same way, the five kinds of sensual stimulation are called ‘chains’ and ‘fetters’ in the training of the noble one. What five? Sights known by the eye that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear ... Smells known by the nose ... Tastes known by the tongue ... Touches

known by the body that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing.

These are the five kinds of sensual stimulation that are called ‘chains’ and ‘fetters’ in the training of the noble one. The brahmins expert in the three Vedas enjoy these five kinds of sensual stimulation tied, stupefied, attached, blind to the drawbacks, and not understanding the escape. So long as they enjoy them it’s impossible that they will, when the body breaks up, after death, be reborn in the company of Brahmā.

Suppose the river Aciravatī was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Then along comes a person who wants to cross over to the far shore. But they’d lie down wrapped in cloth from head to foot.

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Could that person cross over to the far shore?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“In the same way, the five hindrances are called ‘obstacles’ and ‘hindrances’ and ‘coverings’ and ‘shrouds’ in the training of the noble one. What five? The hindrances of sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. These five hindrances are called ‘obstacles’ and ‘hindrances’ and ‘coverings’ and ‘shrouds’ in the training of the noble one.

The brahmins expert in the three Vedas are hindered, obstructed, covered, and shrouded by these five hindrances. So long as they are so obstructed it’s impossible that they will, when the body breaks up, after death, be reborn in the company of Brahmā.

### **3. Converging**

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Have you heard that the brahmins who are elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, say whether Brahmā is possessive or not?”

“That he is not, Master Gotama.” “Is his heart full of enmity or not?” “It is not.”

“Is his heart full of ill will or not?” “It is not.” “Is his heart corrupted or not?” “It is not.” “Does he wield power or not?” “He does.”

“What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Are the brahmins expert in the three Vedas possessive or not?” “They are.” “Are their hearts full of enmity or not?” “They are.” “Are their hearts full of ill will or not?” “They are.” “Are their hearts corrupted or not?” “They are.” “Do they wield power or not?” “They do not.”

“So it seems that the brahmins expert in the three Vedas are possessive, but Brahmā is not. But would brahmins who are possessive come together and converge with Brahmā, who isn’t possessive?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Good, Vāseṭṭha! It’s impossible that the brahmins who are possessive will, when the body breaks up, after death, be reborn in the company of Brahmā, who isn’t possessive.

And it seems that the brahmins have enmity, ill will, corruption, and do not wield power, while Brahmā is the opposite in all these things. But would brahmins who are opposite to Brahmā in all things come together and converge with him?” “No, Master Gotama.”

“Good, Vāseṭṭha! It’s impossible that such brahmins will, when the body breaks up, after death, be reborn in the company of Brahmā.

But here the brahmins expert in the three Vedas sink down where they have sat, only to be torn apart; all the while imagining that they’re crossing over to drier ground. That’s why the three Vedas of the brahmins are called a ‘salted land’ and a ‘barren land’ and a ‘disaster’.”

When he said this, Vāseṭṭha said to the Buddha: “I have heard, Master Gotama, that you know the path to company with Brahmā.” “What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Is the village of Manasākaṭa nearby?” “Yes it is.”

“What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? Suppose a person was born and raised in Manasākaṭa. And as soon as they left the town some people asked them for the road to Manasākaṭa. Would they be slow or hesitant to answer?” “No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because they were born and raised in Manasākaṭa. They’re well acquainted with all the roads to the village.”

“Still, it’s possible they might be slow or hesitant to answer. But the Realized One is never slow or hesitant when questioned about the Brahmā realm or the practice that leads to the Brahmā realm. I understand Brahmā, the Brahmā realm, and the practice that leads to the Brahmā realm, practicing in accordance with which one is reborn in the Brahmā realm.”

When he said this, Vāseṭṭha said to the Buddha: “I have heard, Master Gotama, that you teach the path to company with Brahmā. Please teach us that path and elevate this generation of brahmins.” “Well then, Vāseṭṭha, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” replied Vāseṭṭha.

#### **4. Teaching the Path to Brahmā**

The Buddha said this: “It’s when a Realized One arises in the world, perfected, a fully awakened Buddha ... That’s how a mendicant is accomplished in ethics. ... Seeing that the hindrances have been given up in them, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, they feel bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed.

They meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

Suppose there was a powerful horn blower. They’d easily make themselves heard in the four directions. In the same way, when the heart’s release by love has been

developed and cultivated like this, any limited deeds they've done don't remain or persist there. This is a path to companionship with Brahmā.

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of compassion ... They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing ... They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

Suppose there was a powerful horn blower. They'd easily make themselves heard in the four directions. In the same way, when the heart's release by equanimity has been developed and cultivated like this, any limited deeds they've done don't remain or persist there. This too is a path to companionship with Brahmā.

What do you think, Vāseṭṭha? When a mendicant meditates like this, are they possessive or not?" "They are not." "Is their heart full of enmity or not?" "It is not." "Is their heart full of ill will or not?" "It is not." "Is their heart corrupted or not?" "It is not." "Do they wield power or not?" "They do."

"So it seems that that mendicant is not possessive, and neither is Brahmā. Would a mendicant who is not possessive come together and converge with Brahmā, who isn't possessive?" "Yes, Master Gotama." "Good, Vāseṭṭha! It's possible that a mendicant who is not possessive will, when the body breaks up, after death, be reborn in the company of Brahmā, who isn't possessive."

And it seems that that mendicant has no enmity, ill will, corruption, and does wield power, while Brahmā is the same in all these things. Would a mendicant who is the same as Brahmā in all things come together and converge with him?" "Yes, Master Gotama." "Good, Vāseṭṭha! It's possible that that mendicant will, when the body breaks up, after death, be reborn in the company of Brahmā."

When he had spoken, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja said to him: “Excellent, Master Gotama! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, Master Gotama has made the teaching clear in many ways. We go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Gotama remember us as lay followers who have gone for refuge for life.”

## 14. Mahāpadāna Sutta

The Harvest of Deeds

### 1. On Past Lives

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattihī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, in the hut by the kareri tree. Then after the meal, on return from alms-round, several senior mendicants sat together in the pavilion by the kareri tree and this Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives came up among them. "So it was in a past life; such it was in a past life."

With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, the Buddha heard that discussion among the mendicants. So he got up from his seat and went to the pavilion, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: "Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was unfinished?"

The mendicants told him what had happened, adding: "This is the conversation that was unfinished when the Buddha arrived."

"Would you like to hear a Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives?" "Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha give a Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives. The mendicants will listen and remember it." "Well then, mendicants, listen and pay close attention, I will speak." "Yes, sir," they replied. The Buddha said this:

"Ninety-one eons ago, the Buddha Vipassī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. Thirty-one eons ago, the Buddha Sikhī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. In the same thirty-first eon, the Buddha Vessabhū arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. In the present fortunate eon, the Buddhas Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa arose in the world, perfected and fully

awakened. And in the present fortunate eon, I have arisen in the world, perfected and fully awakened.

The Buddhas Vipassī, Sikhī, and Vessabhū were born as aristocrats into aristocrat families. The Buddhas Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa were born as brahmins into brahmin families. I was born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family.

Koṇḍañña was the clan of Vipassī, Sikhī, and Vessabhū. Kassapa was the clan of Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa. Gotama is my clan.

Vipassī lived for 80,000 years. Sikhī lived for 70,000 years. Vessabhū lived for 60,000 years. Kakusandha lived for 40,000 years. Koṇāgamana lived for 30,000 years. Kassapa lived for 20,000 years. For me these days the life-span is short, brief, and fleeting. A long-lived person lives for a century or a little more.

Vipassī was awakened at the root of a trumpet flower tree. Sikhī was awakened at the root of a white-mango tree. Vessabhū was awakened at the root of a sal tree. Kakusandha was awakened at the root of an acacia tree. Koṇāgamana was awakened at the root of a cluster fig tree. Kassapa was awakened at the root of a banyan tree. I was awakened at the root of a peepul tree.

Vipassī had a fine pair of chief disciples named Khaṇḍa and Tissa. Sikhī had a fine pair of chief disciples named Abhibhū and Sambhava. Vessabhū had a fine pair of chief disciples named Soṇa and Uttara. Kakusandha had a fine pair of chief disciples named Vidhura and Sañjīva. Koṇāgmana had a fine pair of chief disciples named Bhiyyosa and Uttara. Kassapa had a fine pair of chief disciples named Tissa and Bhāradvāja. I have a fine pair of chief disciples named Sāriputta and Moggallāna.

Vipassī had three gatherings of disciples—one of 6,800,000, one of 100,000, and one of 80,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Sikhī had three gatherings of disciples—one of 100,000, one of 80,000, and one of 70,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Vessabhū had three gatherings of disciples—one of 80,000, one of 70,000, and one of 60,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Kakusandha had one gathering of disciples—40,000 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Koṇāgamana had one gathering of disciples—30,000 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Kassapa had one gathering of disciples—20,000 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

I have had one gathering of disciples—1,250 mendicants who had ended their defilements.

Vipassī had as chief attendant a mendicant named Asoka. Sikhī had as chief attendant a mendicant named Khemaṅkara. Vessabhū had as chief attendant a mendicant named Upasanta. Kakusandha had as chief attendant a mendicant named Buddhija. Koṇāgamana had as chief attendant a mendicant named Soṭṭhija. Kassapa had as chief attendant a mendicant named Sabbamitta. I have as chief attendant a mendicant named Ānanda.

Vipassī's father was King Bandhuma, his birth mother was Queen Bandhumatī, and their capital city was named Bandhumatī.

Sikhī's father was King Aruṇa, his birth mother was Queen Pabhāvatī, and their capital city was named Aruṇavatī.

Vessabhū's father was King Suppatīta, his birth mother was Queen Vassavatī, and their capital city was named Suppatīta.

Kakusandha’s father was the brahmin Aggidatta, and his birth mother was the brahmin lady Visākhā. At that time the king was Khema, whose capital city was named Khemavatī.

Koṇāgamana’s father was the brahmin Yaññadatta, and his birth mother was the brahmin lady Uttarā. At that time the king was Sobha, whose capital city was named Sobhavatī.

Kassapa’s father was the brahmin Brahmadata, and his birth mother was the brahmin lady Dhanavatī. At that time the king was Kikī, whose capital city was named Benares.

My father was King Suddhodana, my birth mother was Queen Māyā, and our capital city was Kapilavatthu.” That is what the Buddha said. When he had spoken, the Holy One got up from his seat and entered his dwelling.

Soon after the Buddha left, those mendicants discussed among themselves: “It’s incredible, reverends, it’s amazing, the power and might of a Realized One! For he is able to recollect the caste, names, clans, life-span, chief disciples, and gatherings of disciples of the Buddhas of the past who have become completely extinguished, cut off proliferation, cut off the track, finished off the cycle, and transcended suffering. He knows the caste they were born in, and also their names, clans, conduct, qualities, wisdom, meditation, and freedom.

Is it because the Realized One has clearly comprehended the principle of the teachings that he can recollect all these things? Or did deities tell him?” But this conversation among those mendicants was left unfinished.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat and went to the pavilion by the kareri tree, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, what were you sitting talking about just now? What conversation was unfinished?”

The mendicants told him what had happened, adding: “This was our conversation that was unfinished when the Buddha arrived.”

“It is because the Realized One has clearly comprehended the principle of the teachings that he can recollect all these things. And the deities also told me.

Would you like to hear more Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives?” “Now is the time, Blessed One! Now is the time, Holy One! Let the Buddha give more Dhamma talk on the subject of past lives. The mendicants will listen and remember it.” “Well then, mendicants, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Ninety-one eons ago, the Buddha Vipassī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. He was born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family. His clan was Koṇḍañña. He lived for 80,000 years. He was awakened at the root of a trumpet flower tree. He had a fine pair of chief disciples named Khaṇḍa and Tissa. He had three gatherings of disciples— one of 6,800,000, one of 100,000, and one of 80,000— all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements. He had as chief attendant a mendicant named Asoka. His father was King Bandhuma, his birth mother was Queen Bandhumatī, and their capital city was named Bandhumatī.

## **2. What’s Normal For One Intent on Awakening**

When Vipassī, the being intent on awakening, passed away from the group of Joyful Gods, he was conceived in his mother’s womb, mindful and aware. This is normal in such a case.

It’s normal that, when the being intent on awakening passes away from the group of Joyful Gods, he’s conceived in his mother’s womb. And then—in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes

no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: ‘So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!’ And this galaxy shakes and rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods. This is normal in such a case.

It’s normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, four deities approach to guard the four directions, so that no human or non-human or anyone at all shall harm the being intent on awakening or his mother. This is normal in such a case.

It’s normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, she becomes naturally ethical. She refrains from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and alcoholic drinks that cause negligence. This is normal in such a case.

It’s normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, she no longer feels sexual desire for men, and she cannot be violated by a man of lustful intent. This is normal in such a case.

It’s normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, she obtains the five kinds of sensual stimulation and amuses herself, supplied and provided with them. This is normal in such a case.

It’s normal that, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother’s belly, no afflictions beset her. She’s happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, complete with all his various parts, not deficient in any faculty. Suppose there was a beryl gem that was naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, with expert workmanship, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And it was strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown. And someone with good eyesight were to take it in their hand and examine it: ‘This beryl gem is naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, with expert workmanship, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed

with all good qualities. And it's strung with a thread of blue, yellow, red, white, or golden brown.' In the same way, when the being intent on awakening is conceived in his mother's belly, no afflictions beset her. She's happy and free of bodily fatigue. And she sees the being intent on awakening in her womb, complete with all his various parts, not deficient in any faculty. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, seven days after the being intent on awakening is born, his mother passes away and is reborn in the group of Joyful Gods. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, while other women carry the infant in the womb for nine or ten months before giving birth, not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She gives birth after exactly ten months. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, while other women give birth while sitting or lying down, not so the mother of the being intent on awakening. She only gives birth standing up. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, gods receive him first, then humans. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, before he reaches the ground, four deities receive him and place him before his mother, saying: 'Rejoice, O Queen! An illustrious child is born to you.' This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, he emerges already clean, unsoiled by waters, mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean. Suppose a jewel-treasure was placed on a cloth from Kāsi. The jewel would not soil the cloth, nor would the cloth soil the jewel. Why is that? Because of the cleanliness of them both. In the same way, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, he emerges already

clean, unsoiled by waters, mucus, blood, or any other kind of impurity, pure and clean. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb, two streams of water appear in the sky, one cool, one warm, for bathing the being intent on awakening and his mother. This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, as soon as he's born, the being intent on awakening stands firm with his own feet on the ground. Facing north, he takes seven strides with a white parasol held above him, surveys all quarters, and makes this dramatic statement: 'I am the foremost in the world! I am the eldest in the world! I am the best in the world! This is my last rebirth. Now there are no more future lives.' This is normal in such a case.

It's normal that, when the being intent on awakening emerges from his mother's womb then—in this world with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. Even in the boundless desolation of interstellar space—so utterly dark that even the light of the moon and the sun, so mighty and powerful, makes no impression—an immeasurable, magnificent light appears, surpassing the glory of the gods. And the sentient beings reborn there recognize each other by that light: 'So, it seems other sentient beings have been reborn here!' And this galaxy shakes and rocks and trembles. And an immeasurable, magnificent light appears in the world, surpassing the glory of the gods. This is normal in such a case.

### **3. The Thirty-Two Marks of a Great Man**

When Prince Vipassī was born, they announced it to King Bandhumata: 'Sire, your son is born! Let your majesty examine him!' When the king had examined the prince, he had the brahmin soothsayers summoned and said to them: 'Gentlemen, please examine the prince.' When they had examined him they said to the king: 'Rejoice, O King! An illustrious son is born to you. You are fortunate, so very fortunate, to have a son such as this born in this family!' For the prince has the

thirty-two marks of a great man. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world.

And what are the marks which he possesses? After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword.

He has well-planted feet.

On the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail.

He has projecting heels.

He has long fingers.

His hands and feet are tender.

His hands and feet cling gracefully.

His feet are arched.

His calves are like those of an antelope.

When standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees.

His private parts are retracted.

He is gold colored; his skin has a golden sheen.

He has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don't stick to his body.

His hairs grow one per pore.

His hairs stand up; they're blue-black and curl clockwise.

His body is as straight as Brahmā's.

He has bulging muscles in seven places.

His chest is like that of a lion.

The gap between the shoulder-blades is filled in.

He has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree: the span of his arms equals the height of his body.

His torso is cylindrical.

He has an excellent sense of taste.

His jaw is like that of a lion.

He has forty teeth.

His teeth are even.

His teeth have no gaps.

His teeth are perfectly white.

He has a large tongue.

He has the voice of Brahmā, like a cuckoo's call.

His eyes are deep blue.

He has eyelashes like a cow's.

Between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool.

His head is shaped like a turban.

These are the thirty-two marks of a great man that the prince has. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world.'

#### **4. How He Came to be Known as Vipassī**

Then King Bandhuma had the brahmin soothsayers dressed in fresh clothes and satisfied all their needs. Then the king appointed nurses for Prince Vipassī. Some suckled him, some bathed him, some held him, and some carried him on their hip. From when he was born, a white parasol was held over him night and day, with the thought: 'Don't let cold, heat, grass, dust, or damp bother him.' He was dear and beloved by many people, like a blue water lily, or a pink or white lotus. He was always passed from hip to hip.

From when he was born, his voice was charming, graceful, sweet, and lovely. It was as sweet as the song of a cuckoo-bird found in the Himalayas.

From when he was born, Prince Vipassī had the power of clairvoyance which manifested as a result of past deeds. He could see for a league all around both by day and by night.

And he was unblinkingly watchful, like the gods of the Thirty-Three. And because it was said that he was unblinkingly watchful, he came to be known as ‘Vipassī’.

Then while King Bandhuma was sitting in judgment, he’d sit Prince Vipassī in his lap and explain the case to him. And sitting there in his father’s lap, Vipassī would thoroughly consider the case and draw a conclusion using a logical procedure. So this was all the more reason for him to be known as ‘Vipassī’.

Then King Bandhuma had three stilt longhouses built for him—one for the winter, one for the summer, and one for the rainy season, and provided him with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. Prince Vipassī stayed in a stilt longhouse without coming downstairs for the four months of the rainy season, where he was entertained by musicians—none of them men.

## **5. The Old Man**

Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī addressed his charioteer: ‘My dear charioteer, harness the finest chariots. We will go to a park and see the scenery.’ ‘Yes, sir,’ replied the charioteer. He harnessed the chariots and informed the prince: ‘Sire, the finest chariots are harnessed. Please go at your convenience.’ Then Prince Vipassī mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out for the park.

Along the way he saw an elderly man, bent double, crooked, leaning on a staff, trembling as he walked, ailing, past his prime. He addressed his charioteer: ‘My dear charioteer, what has that man done? For his hair and his body are unlike those of other men.’ ‘That, Your Majesty, is called an old man.’ ‘But why is he called an old man?’ ‘He’s called an old man because now he has not long to live.’ ‘But my dear charioteer, am I liable to grow old? Am I not exempt from old age?’ ‘Everyone is liable to grow old, Your Majesty, including you. No-one is exempt

from old age.’ ‘Well then, my dear charioteer, that’s enough of the park for today. Let’s return to the royal compound.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so. Back at the royal compound, the prince, miserable and sad, was brooding: ‘Damn this thing called rebirth, since old age will come to anyone who’s born.’

Then King Bandhuma summoned the charioteer and said: ‘My dear charioteer, I hope the prince enjoyed himself at the park? I hope he was happy there?’ ‘No, Your Majesty, the prince didn’t enjoy himself at the park.’ ‘But what did he see on the way to the park?’ And the charioteer told the king about seeing the old man and the prince’s reaction.

## **6. The Sick Man**

Then King Bandhuma thought:

‘Prince Vipassī must not renounce the throne. He must not go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And the words of the brahmin soothsayers must not come true.’ To prevent this he provided the prince with even more of the five kinds of sensual stimulation,

with which the prince amused himself. Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī had his charioteer drive him to the park once more.

Along the way he saw a man who was ill, suffering, gravely ill, collapsed in his own urine and feces, being picked up by some and put down by others. He addressed his charioteer: ‘My dear charioteer, what has that man done? For his eyes and his voice are unlike those of other men.’ ‘That, Your Majesty, is called a sick man.’ ‘But why is he called a sick man?’ ‘He’s called an sick man because hopefully he will recover from that illness.’ ‘But my dear charioteer, am I liable to fall sick? Am I not exempt from sickness?’ ‘Everyone is liable to fall sick, Your Majesty, including you. No-one is exempt from sickness.’ ‘Well then, my dear charioteer, that’s enough of the park for today. Let’s return to the royal compound.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so. Back at the royal compound,

the prince, miserable and sad, was brooding: ‘Damn this thing called rebirth, since old age and sickness will come to anyone who’s born.’

Then King Bandhuma summoned the charioteer and said: ‘My dear charioteer, I hope the prince enjoyed himself at the park? I hope he was happy there?’ ‘No, Your Majesty, the prince didn’t enjoy himself at the park.’ ‘But what did he see on the way to the park?’ And the charioteer told the king about seeing the sick man and the prince’s reaction.

## 7. The Dead Man

Then King Bandhuma thought: ‘Prince Vipassī must not renounce the throne. He must not go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And the words of the brahmin soothsayers must not come true.’ To prevent this he provided the prince with even more of the five kinds of sensual stimulation,

with which the prince amused himself. Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī had his charioteer drive him to the park once more.

Along the way he saw a large crowd gathered making a bier out of garments of different colors. He addressed his charioteer: ‘My dear charioteer, why is that crowd making a bier?’ ‘That, Your Majesty, is for someone who’s departed.’ ‘Well then, drive the chariot up to the departed.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer, and did so. When the prince saw the corpse of the departed, he addressed the charioteer: ‘But why is he called departed?’ ‘He’s called departed because now his mother and father, his relatives and kin shall see him no more, and he shall never again see them.’ ‘But my dear charioteer, am I liable to die? Am I not exempt from death? Will the king and queen and my other relatives and kin see me no more? And shall I never again see them?’ ‘Everyone is liable to die, Your Majesty, including you. No-one is exempt from death. The king and queen and your other relatives and kin shall see you no more, and you shall never again see them.’ ‘Well then, my dear charioteer, that’s enough of the park for today. Let’s return to the royal compound.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so. Back at the royal compound, the prince, miserable and sad, was brooding:

‘Damn this thing called rebirth, since old age, sickness, and death will come to anyone who’s born.’

Then King Bandhuma summoned the charioteer and said: ‘My dear charioteer, I hope the prince enjoyed himself at the park? I hope he was happy there?’ ‘No, Your Majesty, the prince didn’t enjoy himself at the park.’ ‘But what did he see on the way to the park?’ And the charioteer told the king about seeing the dead man and the prince’s reaction.

## **8. The Renunciate**

Then King Bandhuma thought: ‘Prince Vipassī must not renounce the throne. He must not go forth from the lay life to homelessness. And the words of the brahmin soothsayers must not come true.’ To prevent this he provided the prince with even more of the five kinds of sensual stimulation,

with which the prince amused himself. Then, after many thousand years had passed, Prince Vipassī had his charioteer drive him to the park once more. ‘Sire, the finest chariots are harnessed’.

Along the way he saw a man, a renunciate with shaven head, wearing an ochre robe. He addressed his charioteer: ‘My dear charioteer, what has that man done? For his head and his clothes are unlike those of other men.’ ‘That, Your Majesty, is called a renunciate.’ ‘But why is he called a renunciate?’ ‘He is called a renunciate because he celebrates principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures.’ ‘Then I celebrate the one called a renunciate, who celebrates principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures! Well then, drive the chariot up to that renunciate.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer, and did so. Then Prince Vipassī said to that renunciate: ‘My good man, what have you done? For your head and your clothes are unlike those of other men.’ ‘Sire, I am what is called a renunciate.’ ‘But why are you called a renunciate?’ ‘I am called a renunciate because I celebrate principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures.’ ‘Then I celebrate the

one called a renunciate, who celebrates principled and fair conduct, skillful actions, good deeds, harmlessness, and compassion for living creatures!’

## **9. The Going Forth**

Then the prince addressed the charioteer: ‘Well then, my dear charioteer, take the chariot and return to the royal compound. I shall shave off my hair and beard right here, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the charioteer and did so. Then Prince Vipassī shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness.

## **10. A Great Crowd Goes Forth**

A large crowd of 84,000 people in the capital of Bandhumatī heard that Vipassī had gone forth. It occurred to them: ‘This must be no ordinary teaching and training, no ordinary going forth in which Prince Vipassī has gone forth. If even the prince goes forth, why don’t we do the same?’

Then that great crowd of 84,000 people shaved off their hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and followed the one intent on awakening, Vipassī, by going forth from the lay life to homelessness. Escorted by that assembly, Vipassī wandered on tour among the villages, towns, and capital cities.

Then as he was in private retreat this thought came to his mind: ‘It’s not appropriate for me to live in a crowd. Why don’t I live alone, withdrawn from the group?’ After some time he withdrew from the group to live alone. The 84,000 went one way, but Vipassī went another.

## **11. Vipassī’s Reflections**

Then as Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, was in private retreat this thought came to his mind: ‘Alas, this world has fallen into trouble. It’s born, grows old, dies, passes away, and is reborn, yet it doesn’t understand how to escape from this suffering, from old age and death. Oh, when will an escape be found from this suffering, from old age and death?’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there old age and death? What is a condition for old age and death?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When rebirth exists there’s old age and death. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there rebirth? What is a condition for rebirth?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When continued existence exists there’s rebirth. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there continued existence? What is a condition for continued existence?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When grasping exists there’s continued existence. Grasping is a condition for continued existence.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there grasping? What is a condition for grasping?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When craving exists there’s grasping. Craving is a condition for grasping.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there craving? What is a condition for craving?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When feeling exists there’s craving. Feeling is a condition for craving.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there feeling? What is a condition for feeling?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When contact exists there’s feeling. Contact is a condition for feeling.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there contact? What is a condition for contact?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When the six sense fields exist there’s contact. The six sense fields are a condition for contact.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists are there the six sense fields? What is a condition for the six sense fields?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When name and form exist there’s the six sense fields. Name and form are a condition for the six sense fields.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there name and form? What is a condition for name and form?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When consciousness exists there’s name and form. Consciousness is a condition for name and form.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what exists is there consciousness? What is a condition for consciousness?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When name and form exist there’s consciousness. Name and form are a condition for consciousness.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘This consciousness turns back from name and form, and doesn’t go beyond that.’ It is to this extent that one may be reborn, grow old, die, pass away, or reappear. That is: name and form is a condition for consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for name and form. Name and form is a condition for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are conditions for contact. Contact is a condition for feeling. Feeling is a condition for craving. Craving is a condition for grasping. Grasping is a condition for continued existence. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.’

‘Origination, origination.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no old age and death? When what ceases do old age and death cease?’ Then, through proper attention,

Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When rebirth doesn’t exist there’s no old age and death. When rebirth ceases, old age and death cease.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no rebirth? When what ceases does rebirth cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When continued existence doesn’t exist there’s no rebirth. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no continued existence? When what ceases does continued existence cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When grasping doesn’t exist there’s no continued existence. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no grasping? When what ceases does grasping cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When craving doesn’t exist there’s no grasping. When craving ceases, grasping ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no craving? When what ceases does craving cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When feeling doesn’t exist there’s no craving. When feeling ceases, craving ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no feeling? When what ceases does feeling cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When contact doesn’t exist there’s no feeling. When contact ceases, feeling ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no contact? When what ceases does contact cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When the six sense fields don’t exist there’s no contact. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist are there no six sense fields? When what ceases do the six sense fields cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When name and form don’t exist there are no six sense fields. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no name and form? When what ceases do name and form cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When consciousness doesn’t exist there’s no name and form. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘When what doesn’t exist is there no consciousness? When what ceases does consciousness cease?’ Then, through proper attention, Vipassī comprehended with wisdom: ‘When name and form don’t exist there’s no consciousness. When name and form cease, consciousness ceases.’

Then Vipassī thought: ‘I have discovered the path to awakening. That is: When name and form cease, consciousness ceases. When consciousness ceases, name and form cease. When name and form cease, the six sense fields cease. When the six sense fields cease, contact ceases. When contact ceases, feeling ceases. When feeling ceases, craving ceases. When craving ceases, grasping ceases. When grasping ceases, continued existence ceases. When continued existence ceases, rebirth ceases. When rebirth ceases, old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress cease. That is how this entire mass of suffering ceases.’

‘Cessation, cessation.’ Such was the vision, knowledge, wisdom, realization, and light that arose in Vipassī, the one intent on awakening, regarding teachings not learned before from another.

Some time later Vipassī meditated observing rise and fall in the five grasping aggregates. ‘Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the ending of form. Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling, such is the ending of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the ending of perception. Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the ending of choices. Such is

consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the ending of consciousness.’ Meditating like this his mind was soon freed from defilements by not grasping.

## **12. The Appeal of Brahmā**

Then the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, thought: ‘Why don’t I teach the Dhamma?’ Then he thought: ‘This principle I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the scope of reason, subtle, comprehensible to the astute. But people like attachment, they love it and enjoy it. It’s hard for them to see this thing; that is, specific conditionality, dependent origination. It’s also hard for them to see this thing; that is, the stilling of all activities, the letting go of all attachments, the ending of craving, fading away, cessation, extinguishment. And if I were to teach the Dhamma, others might not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome for me.’

And then these verses, which were neither supernaturally inspired, nor learned before in the past, occurred to him:

‘I’ve struggled hard to realize this,  
enough with trying to explain it!  
This teaching is not easily understood  
by those mired in greed and hate.

Those caught up in greed can’t see  
what’s subtle, going against the stream,  
deep, hard to see, and very fine,  
for they’re shrouded in a mass of darkness.’

So, as the Buddha Vipassī reflected like this, his mind inclined to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.

Then a certain Great Brahmā, knowing what the Buddha Vipassī was thinking, thought: ‘Oh my goodness! The world will be lost, the world will perish! For the mind of the Realized One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, inclines to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.’ Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in front of the Buddha Vipassī. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, raised his joined palms toward the Buddha Vipassī, and said: ‘Sir, let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma! Let the Holy One teach the Dhamma! There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They’re in decline because they haven’t heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching!’

When he said this, the Buddha Vipassī said to him: ‘I too thought this, Brahmā: “Why don’t I teach the Dhamma?” Then it occurred to me: “If I were to teach the Dhamma, others might not understand me, which would be wearying and troublesome for me.

So, as I reflected like this, my mind inclined to remaining passive, not to teaching the Dhamma.”

For a second time, and a third time that Great Brahmā begged the Buddha to teach.

Then, understanding Brahmā’s invitation, the Buddha Vipassī surveyed the world with the eye of a Buddha, because of his compassion for sentient beings. And he saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes; with keen faculties and with weak faculties, with good qualities and with bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach. And some of them lived seeing the danger in the flaw to do with the next world, while others did not. It’s like a pool with blue water lilies, or pink or white lotuses. Some of them sprout and grow in the water without rising above it, thriving underwater. Some of them sprout and grow in the water reaching the water’s surface. And some of them sprout and grow in the water but rise up above the water and stand with no water clinging to them.

In the same way, the Buddha Vipassī saw sentient beings with little dust in their eyes, and some with much dust in their eyes.

Then that Great Brahmā, knowing what the Buddha Vipassī was thinking, addressed him in verse:

‘Standing high on a rocky mountain,  
you can see the people all around.  
In just the same way, all-seer, wise one,  
ascend the palace built of Dhamma!  
You’re free of sorrow; but look at these people  
overwhelmed with sorrow, oppressed by rebirth and old age.

Rise, hero! Victor in battle, leader of the caravan,  
wander the world without obligation.  
Let the Blessed One teach the Dhamma!  
There will be those who understand!’

Then the Buddha Vipassī addressed that Great Brahmā in verse:

‘Flung open are the doors to the deathless!  
Let those with ears to hear decide their faith.  
Thinking it would be troublesome, Brahmā, I did not teach  
the sophisticated, sublime Dhamma among humans.’

Then the Great Brahmā, knowing that his request for the Buddha Vipassī to teach the Dhamma had been granted, bowed and respectfully circled him, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.

### **13. The Chief Disciples**

Then the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, thought: ‘Who should I teach first of all? Who will quickly understand this teaching?’ Then he thought: ‘That Khaṇḍa, the king’s son, and Tissa, the high

priest's son, are astute, competent, clever, and have long had little dust in their eyes. Why don't I teach them first of all? They will quickly understand this teaching.'

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the tree of awakening and reappeared near the capital city of Bandhumatī, in the deer park named Sanctuary. Then the Buddha Vipassī addressed the park keeper: 'My dear park keeper, please enter the city and say this to the king's son Khaṇḍa and the high priest's son Tissa: Sirs, the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, has arrived at Bandhumatī and is staying in the deer park named Sanctuary. He wishes to see you.' 'Yes, sir,' replied the park keeper, and did as he was asked.

Then the king's son Khaṇḍa and the high priest's son Tissa had the finest carriages harnessed. Then they mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Bandhumatī for the Sanctuary. They went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha Vipassī on foot. They bowed and sat down to one side.

The Buddha Vipassī taught them step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He explained the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of renunciation. And when he knew that their minds were ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, joyful, and confident he explained the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in the king's son Khaṇḍa and the high priest's son Tissa: 'Everything that has a beginning has an end.'

They saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. They went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instructions. They said to the Buddha Vipassī: 'Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good

eyes can see what's there, so too the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. We go for refuge to the Blessed One, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may we receive the going forth and ordination in the Buddha's presence?'

And they received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha Vipassī's presence. Then the Buddha Vipassī educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk. He explained the drawbacks of conditioned phenomena, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of extinguishment. Being taught like this their minds were soon freed from defilements by not grasping.

#### **14. The Going Forth of the Large Crowd**

A large crowd of 84,000 people in the capital of Bandhumatī heard that the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, had arrived at Bandhumatī and was staying in the deer park named Sanctuary. And they heard that the king's son Khaṇḍa and the high priest's son Tissa had shaved off their hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and gone forth from the lay life to homelessness in the Buddha's presence. It occurred to them: 'This must be no ordinary teaching and training, no ordinary going forth in which the king's son Khaṇḍa and the high priest's son Tissa have gone forth. If even they go forth, why don't we do the same?' Then those 84,000 people left Bandhumatī for the Sanctuary, where they approached the Buddha Vipassī, bowed and sat down to one side.

The Buddha Vipassī taught them step by step, with a talk on giving, ethical conduct, and heaven. He explained the drawbacks of sensual pleasures, so sordid and corrupt, and the benefit of renunciation. And when he knew that their minds were ready, pliable, rid of hindrances, joyful, and confident he explained the special teaching of the Buddhas: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. Just as a clean cloth rid of stains would properly absorb dye, in that very seat the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in those 84,000 people: 'Everything that has a beginning has an end.'

They saw, attained, understood, and fathomed the Dhamma. They went beyond doubt, got rid of indecision, and became self-assured and independent of others regarding the Teacher's instructions. They said to the Buddha Vipassī: 'Excellent, sir! Excellent!' And just like Khaṇḍa and Tissa they asked for and received ordination. Then the Buddha taught them further.

Being taught like this their minds were soon freed from defilements by not grasping.

### **15. The 84,000 Who Had Gone Forth Previously**

The 84,000 people who had gone forth previously also heard: 'It seems the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, has arrived at Bandhumatī and is staying in the deer park named Sanctuary. And he is teaching the Dhamma!' Then they too went to see the Buddha Vipassī, realized the Dhamma, went forth, and became freed from defilements.

### **16. The Allowance to Wander**

Now at that time a large Saṅgha of 6,800,000 mendicants were residing at Bandhumatī. As the Buddha Vipassī was in private retreat this thought came to his mind: 'The Saṅgha residing at Bandhumatī now is large. What if I was to urge them: "Wander forth, mendicants, for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. Let not two go by one road. Teach the Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And reveal a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They're in decline because they haven't heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching! But when six years have passed, you must all come to Bandhumatī to recite the code of conduct.'"

Then a certain Great Brahmā, knowing what the Buddha Vipassī was thinking, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in front of the Buddha Vipassī. He arranged his robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, raised his joined palms toward the

Buddha Vipassī, and said: ‘That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One! The Saṅgha residing at Bandhumatī now is large. Please urge them to wander, as you thought. And sir, I’ll make sure that when six years have passed the mendicants will return to Bandhumatī to recite the code of conduct.’ That’s what that Great Brahmā said. Then he bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha Vipassī, keeping him on his right side, before vanishing right there.

Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha Vipassī came out of retreat and addressed the mendicants, telling them all that had happened. Then he said:

‘Wander forth, mendicants, for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. Let not two go by one road. Teach the Dhamma that’s good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And reveal a spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes. They’re in decline because they haven’t heard the teaching. There will be those who understand the teaching! But when six years have passed, you must all come to Bandhumatī to recite the code of conduct.’ Then most of the mendicants departed to wander the country that very day.

Now at that time there were 84,000 monasteries in India. And when the first year came to an end the deities raised the cry: ‘Good sirs, the first year has ended. Now five years remain. When five years have passed, you must all go to Bandhumatī to recite the code of conduct.’ And when the second year ... the third year ... the fourth year ... the fifth year came to an end, the deities raised the cry: ‘Good sirs, the fifth year has ended. Now one year remains. When one year has passed, you must all go to Bandhumatī to recite the code of conduct.’ And when the sixth year came to an end the deities raised the cry: ‘Good sirs, the sixth year has ended. Now is the time that you must go to Bandhumatī to recite the code of conduct.’ Then that very day the mendicants went to Bandhumatī to recite the code of conduct. Some went by their own psychic power, and some by the psychic power of the deities.

And there the Blessed One Vipassī, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, recited the code of conduct thus:

‘Patient acceptance is the highest austerity.  
Extinguishment is the highest, say the Buddhas.  
No true renunciate injures another,  
nor does an ascetic hurt another.

Not to do any evil;  
to undertake the good;  
to purify one’s mind:  
this is the instruction of the Buddhas.

Not speaking ill nor doing harm;  
restraint in the code of conduct;  
moderation in eating;  
staying in remote lodgings;  
commitment to the higher mind—  
This is the instruction of the Buddhas.’

## **17. Being Informed by Deities**

At one time, mendicants, I was staying near Ukkaṭṭhā, in the Subhaga Forest at the root of a magnificent sal tree. As I was in private retreat this thought came to mind: ‘It’s not easy to find any realm that I haven’t previously dwelt in in all this long time, except for the gods of the pure abodes. Why don’t I go to see them?’ Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, I vanished from the Subhaga Forest and reappeared with the Aviha gods. In that order of gods, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of deities approached me, bowed, stood to one side, and said to me: ‘Ninety-one eons ago, good sir, the Buddha Vipassī arose in the world, perfected and fully awakened. He was born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family. Koṇḍañña was his clan. He lived for 80,000 years. He was awakened at the root of a trumpet flower tree. He had a fine pair of chief disciples named Khaṇḍa and Tissa. He had three gatherings of disciples—one of 6,800,000,

one of 100,000, and one of 80,000—all of them mendicants who had ended their defilements. He had as chief attendant a mendicant named Asoka. His father was King Bandhuma, his birth mother was Queen Bandhumatī, and their capital city was named Bandhumatī. And such was his renunciation, such his going forth, such his striving, such his awakening, and such his rolling forth of the wheel of Dhamma. And good sir, after leading the spiritual life under that Buddha Vipassī we lost interest in desire for sensual pleasures and were reborn here.’ And other deities came and similarly recounted the details of the Buddhas Sikhī, Vessabhū, Kakusandha, Koṇāgamana, and Kassapa.

In that order of gods, many hundreds of deities approached me, bowed, stood to one side, and said to me: ‘In the present fortunate eon, good sir, you have arisen in the world, perfected and fully awakened. You were born as an aristocrat into an aristocrat family. Gotama is your clan. For you the life-span is short, brief, and fleeting. A long-lived person lives for a century or a little more. You were awakened at the root of a peepul tree. You have a fine pair of chief disciples named Sāriputta and Moggallāna. You have had one gathering of disciples—1,250 mendicants who had ended their defilements. You have as chief attendant a mendicant named Ānanda. Your father is King Suddhodana, your birth mother was Queen Māyā, and your capital city was Kapilavatthu. And such was your renunciation, such your going forth, such your striving, such your awakening, and such your rolling forth of the wheel of Dhamma. And good sir, after leading the spiritual life under you we lost interest in desire for sensual pleasures and were reborn here.’

Then together with the Aviha gods I went to see the Atappa gods ... the Gods Fair to See ... and the Fair Seeing Gods. Then together with all these gods I went to see the Gods of Akaniṭṭha, where we had a similar conversation.

And that is how the Realized One is able to recollect the caste, names, clans, life-span, chief disciples, and gatherings of disciples of the Buddhas of the past who have become completely extinguished, cut off proliferation, cut off the track,

finished off the cycle, and transcended suffering. It is both because I have clearly comprehended the principle of the teachings,

and also because the deities also told me.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

# 15. Mahānidāna Sutta

The Great Discourse on Causation

## 1. Dependent Origination

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kurus, near the Kuru town named Kammāsadamma. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, in that this dependent origination is deep and appears deep, yet to me it seems as plain as can be.” “Don’t say that, Ānanda, don’t say that! This dependent origination is deep and appears deep. It is because of not understanding and not comprehending this teaching that this population has become tangled like string, knotted like a ball of thread, and matted like rushes and reeds, and it doesn’t escape the places of loss, the bad places, the underworld, transmigration.

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for old age and death?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for old age and death?’ you should answer, ‘Rebirth is a condition for old age and death.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for rebirth?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for rebirth?’ you should answer, ‘continued existence is a condition for rebirth.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for continued existence?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for continued existence?’ you should answer, ‘Grasping is a condition for continued existence.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for grasping?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for grasping?’ you should answer, ‘Craving is a condition for grasping.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for craving?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for craving?’ you should answer, ‘Feeling is a condition for craving.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for feeling?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for feeling?’ you should answer, ‘Contact is a condition for feeling.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for contact?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for contact?’ you should answer, ‘Name and form is a condition for contact.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for name and form?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for name and form?’ you should answer, ‘Consciousness is a condition for name and form.’

When asked, ‘Is there a specific condition for consciousness?’ you should answer, ‘There is.’ If they say, ‘What is a condition for consciousness?’ you should answer, ‘Name and form is a condition for consciousness.’

So: name and form are a condition for consciousness. Consciousness is a condition for name and form. Name and form is a condition for the six sense fields. The six sense fields are conditions for contact. Contact is a condition for feeling. Feeling is a condition for craving. Craving is a condition for grasping. Grasping is a condition for continued existence. Continued existence is a condition for rebirth. Rebirth is a condition for old age and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress to come to be. That is how this entire mass of suffering originates.

‘Rebirth is a condition for old age and death’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no rebirth for anyone anywhere. That is, there were no rebirth of sentient beings into their various realms—of gods, fairies, spirits, creatures, humans, quadrupeds, birds, or reptiles, each into their own realm. When there’s no rebirth at all, with the

cessation of rebirth, would old age and death still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of old age and death, namely rebirth.

‘continued existence is a condition for rebirth’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no continued existence for anyone anywhere. That is, continued existence in the sensual realm, the realm of luminous form, or the formless realm. When there’s no continued existence at all, with the cessation of continued existence, would rebirth still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of rebirth, namely continued existence.

‘Grasping is a condition for continued existence’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no grasping for anyone anywhere. That is, grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and theories of a self. When there’s no grasping at all, with the cessation of grasping, would rebirth still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of continued existence, namely grasping.

‘Craving is a condition for grasping’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no craving for anyone anywhere. That is, craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts. When there’s no craving at all, with the cessation of craving, would grasping still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of grasping, namely craving.

‘Feeling is a condition for craving’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no feeling for anyone anywhere. That is, feeling born of contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. When there’s no feeling at all, with the cessation of feeling, would craving still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of craving, namely feeling.

So it is, Ānanda, that feeling is a cause of craving. Craving is a cause of seeking. Seeking is a cause of gaining material possessions. Gaining material possessions is a cause of assessing. Assessing is a cause of desire and lust. Desire and lust is a cause of attachment. Attachment is a cause of possessiveness. Possessiveness is a cause of stinginess. Stinginess is a cause of safeguarding. Owing to safeguarding, many bad, unskillful things come to be: taking up the rod and the sword, quarrels, arguments, and fights, accusations, divisive speech, and lies.

‘Owing to safeguarding, many bad, unskillful things come to be: taking up the rod and the sword, quarrels, arguments, and fights, accusations, divisive speech, and lies’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no safeguarding for anyone anywhere. When there’s no safeguarding at all, with the cessation of safeguarding, would those many bad, unskillful things still come to be?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition for the origination of those many bad, unskillful things, namely safeguarding.

‘Stinginess is a cause of safeguarding’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no stinginess for anyone anywhere. When there’s no stinginess at all, with the cessation of stinginess, would safeguarding still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of safeguarding, namely stinginess.

‘Possessiveness is a cause of stinginess’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no possessiveness for anyone anywhere. When there’s no possessiveness at all, with the cessation of possessiveness, would stinginess still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of stinginess, namely possessiveness.

‘Attachment is a cause of possessiveness’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no attachment for anyone anywhere. When there’s no attachment at all, with the cessation of

attachment, would possessiveness still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of possessiveness, namely attachment.

‘Desire and lust is a cause of attachment’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no desire and lust for anyone anywhere. When there’s no desire and lust at all, with the cessation of desire and lust, would attachment still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of attachment, namely desire and lust.

‘Assessing is a cause of desire and lust’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no assessing for anyone anywhere. When there’s no assessing at all, with the cessation of assessing, would desire and lust still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of desire and lust, namely assessing.

‘Gaining material possessions is a cause of assessing’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no gaining of material possessions for anyone anywhere. When there’s no gaining of material possessions at all, with the cessation of gaining material possessions, would assessing still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of assessing, namely the gaining of material possessions.

‘Seeking is a cause of gaining material possessions’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no seeking for anyone anywhere. When there’s no seeking at all, with the cessation of seeking, would the gaining of material possessions still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of gaining material possessions, namely seeking.

‘Craving is a cause of seeking’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no craving for anyone anywhere. That is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving to exterminate existence. When there’s no craving at all, with the

cessation of craving, would seeking still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of seeking, namely craving. And so, Ānanda, these two things are united by the two aspects of feeling.

‘Contact is a condition for feeling’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were totally and utterly no contact for anyone anywhere. That is, contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. When there’s no contact at all, with the cessation of contact, would craving still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of feeling, namely contact.

‘Name and form is a condition for contact’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. Suppose there were none of the features, attributes, signs, and details by which the category of mental phenomena is found. Would linguistic contact still be found in the category of physical phenomena?” “No, sir.” “Suppose there were none of the features, attributes, signs, and details by which the category of physical phenomena is found. Would impingement contact still be found in the category of mental phenomena?” “No, sir.” “Suppose there were none of the features, attributes, signs, and details by which the categories of mental or physical phenomena are found. Would either linguistic contact or impingement contact still be found?” “No, sir.” “Suppose there were none of the features, attributes, signs, and details by which name and form are found. Would contact still be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of contact, namely name and form.

‘Consciousness is a condition for mental and physical phenomena’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. If consciousness were not conceived in the mother’s womb, would name and form coagulate there?” “No, sir.” “If consciousness, after being conceived in the mother’s womb, were to be miscarried, would name and form be born into this state of existence?” “No, sir.” “If the consciousness of a young boy or girl were to be cut off, would name and form achieve growth, increase, and maturity?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of name and form, namely consciousness.

‘Name and form is a condition for consciousness’—that’s what I said. And this is a way to understand how this is so. If consciousness were not to become established in name and form, would the coming to be of the origin of suffering—of rebirth, old age, and death in the future—be found?” “No, sir.” “That’s why this is the cause, source, origin, and condition of consciousness, namely name and form. This is the extent to which one may be reborn, grow old, die, pass away, or reappear. This is how far the scope of language, terminology, and description extends; how far the sphere of wisdom extends; how far the cycle of rebirths continues so that this state of existence is to be found; namely, name and form together with consciousness.

## **2. Describing the Self**

How do those who describe the self describe it? They describe it as physical and limited: ‘My self is physical and limited.’ Or they describe it as physical and infinite: ‘My self is physical and infinite.’ Or they describe it as formless and limited: ‘My self is formless and limited.’ Or they describe it as formless and infinite: ‘My self is formless and infinite.’

Now, take those who describe the self as physical and limited. They describe the self as physical and limited in the present; or in some future life; or else they think: ‘Though it is not like that, I will ensure it is provided with what it needs to become like that.’ This being so, it’s appropriate to say that a view of self as physical and limited underlies them.

Now, take those who describe the self as physical and infinite ...

formless and limited ...

formless and infinite. They describe the self as formless and infinite in the present; or in some future life; or else they think: ‘Though it is not like that, I will ensure it is provided with what it needs to become like that.’ This being so, it’s appropriate

to say that a view of self as formless and infinite underlies them. That's how those who describe the self describe it.

### **3. Not Describing the Self**

How do those who don't describe the self not describe it? They don't describe it as physical and limited ... physical and infinite ... formless and limited ... formless and infinite: 'My self is formless and infinite.'

Now, take those who don't describe the self as physical and limited ...

physical and infinite ...

formless and limited ...

formless and infinite. They don't describe the self as formless and infinite in the present; or in some future life; and they don't think: 'Though it is not like that, I will ensure it is provided with what it needs to become like that.' This being so, it's appropriate to say that a view of self as formless and infinite doesn't underlie them. That's how those who don't describe the self don't describe it.

### **4. Regarding a Self**

How do those who regard the self regard it? They regard feeling as self: 'Feeling is my self.' Or they regard it like this: 'Feeling is definitely not my self. My self does not experience feeling.' Or they regard it like this: 'Feeling is definitely not my self. But it's not that my self does not experience feeling. My self feels, for my self is liable to feel.'

Now, as to those who say: 'Feeling is my self.' You should say this to them: 'Reverend, there are three feelings: pleasant, painful, and neutral. Which one of these do you regard as self?' Ānanda, at a time when you feel a pleasant feeling, you don't feel a painful or neutral feeling; you only feel a pleasant feeling. At a time when you feel a painful feeling, you don't feel a pleasant or neutral feeling;

you only feel a painful feeling. At a time when you feel a neutral feeling, you don't feel a pleasant or painful feeling; you only feel a neutral feeling.

Pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and neutral feelings are all impermanent, conditioned, dependently originated, liable to end, vanish, fade away, and cease. When feeling a pleasant feeling they think: 'This is my self.' When their pleasant feeling ceases they think: 'My self has disappeared.' When feeling a painful feeling they think: 'This is my self.' When their painful feeling ceases they think: 'My self has disappeared.' When feeling a neutral feeling they think: 'This is my self.' When their neutral feeling ceases they think: 'My self has disappeared.' So those who say 'feeling is my self' regard as self that which is evidently impermanent, a mixture of pleasure and pain, and liable to rise and fall. That's why it's not acceptable to regard feeling as self.

Now, as to those who say: 'Feeling is definitely not my self. My self does not experience feeling.' You should say this to them: 'But reverend, where there is nothing felt at all, would the thought "I am" occur there?'" "No, sir." "That's why it's not acceptable to regard self as that which does not experience feeling.

Now, as to those who say that 'Feeling is definitely not my self. But it's not that my self does not experience feeling. My self feels, for my self is liable to feel.' You should say this to them: 'Suppose feelings were to totally and utterly cease without anything left over. When there's no feeling at all, with the cessation of feeling, would the thought "I am this" occur there?'" "No, sir." "That's why it's not acceptable to regard self as that which is liable to feel.

Not regarding anything in this way, they don't grasp at anything in the world. Not grasping, they're not anxious. Not being anxious, they personally become extinguished. They understand: 'Rebirth is ended, the spiritual journey has been completed, what had to be done has been done, there is no return to any state of existence.' It wouldn't be appropriate to say that a mendicant whose mind is freed like this holds the following views: 'A Realized One exists after death'; 'A Realized One doesn't exist after death'; 'A Realized One both exists and doesn't

exist after death'; 'A Realized One neither exists nor doesn't exist after death'. Why is that? A mendicant is freed by directly knowing this: how far language and the scope of language extend; how far terminology and the scope of terminology extend; how far description and the scope of description extend; how far wisdom and the sphere of wisdom extend; how far the cycle of rebirths and its continuation extend. It wouldn't be appropriate to say that a mendicant freed by directly knowing this holds the view: 'There is no such thing as knowing and seeing.'

## 5. Planes of Consciousness

Ānanda, there are seven planes of consciousness and two dimensions. What seven? There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and diverse in perception, such as human beings, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. This is the first plane of consciousness. There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and unified in perception, such as the gods reborn in Brahmā's Group through the first absorption. This is the second plane of consciousness. There are sentient beings that are unified in body and diverse in perception, such as the gods of streaming radiance. This is the third plane of consciousness. There are sentient beings that are unified in body and unified in perception, such as the gods replete with glory. This is the fourth plane of consciousness. There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond perceptions of form. With the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fifth plane of consciousness. There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite space. Aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the sixth plane of consciousness. There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness. Aware that 'there is nothing at all', they have been reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is the seventh plane of consciousness. Then there's the dimension of non-percipient beings, and secondly, the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Now, regarding these seven planes of consciousness and two dimensions, is it appropriate for someone who understands them—and their origin, ending,

gratification, drawback, and escape—to take pleasure in them?” “No, sir.” “When a mendicant, having truly understood the origin, ending, gratification, drawback, and escape regarding these seven planes of consciousness and these two dimensions, is freed by not grasping, they’re called a mendicant who is freed by wisdom.

## **6. The Eight Liberations**

Ānanda, there are these eight liberations. What eight? Being physical, they see visions. This is the first liberation. Not perceiving form internally, they see visions externally. This is the second liberation. They’re focused only on beauty. This is the third liberation. Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite’, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fourth liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite’, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth liberation. These are the eight liberations.

When a mendicant enters into and withdraws from these eight liberations—in forward order, in reverse order, and in forward and reverse order—wherever they wish, whenever they wish, and for as long as they wish; and when they realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements, they’re called a mendicant who is freed both ways. And, Ānanda, there is no other freedom both ways that is better or finer than this.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Ānanda was happy with what the Buddha said.



## 16. Mahāparinibbāna Sutta

The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. Now at that time King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Māgadha wanted to invade the Vajjis. He declared: "I will wipe out these Vajjis, so mighty and powerful! I will destroy them, and lay ruin and devastation upon them!"

And then King Ajātasattu addressed Vassakāra the brahmin minister of Māgadha: "Please, brahmin, go to the Buddha, and in my name bow with your head to his feet. Ask him if he is healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. And then say: 'Sir, King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Māgadha wants to invade the Vajjis. He says: "I will wipe out these Vajjis, so mighty and powerful! I will destroy them, and lay ruin and devastation upon them!"' Remember well how the Buddha answers and tell it to me. For Realized Ones say nothing that is not so."

### 1. The Brahmin Vassakāra

"Yes, sir," Vassakāra replied. He had the finest carriages harnessed. Then he mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Rājagaha for the Vulture's Peak Mountain. He went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha on foot, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha: "Master Gotama, King Ajātasattu Vedehiputta of Māgadha bows with his head to your feet. He asks if you are healthy and well, nimble, strong, and living comfortably. Master Gotama, King Ajātasattu wants to invade the Vajjis. He has declared: 'I will wipe out these Vajjis, so mighty and powerful! I will destroy them, and lay ruin and devastation upon them!'"

## 2. Principles That Prevent Decline

Now at that time Venerable Ānanda was standing behind the Buddha fanning him. Then the Buddha said to him: “Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis meet frequently and have many meetings?” “I have heard that, sir.” “As long as the Vajjis meet frequently and have many meetings, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis meet in harmony, leave in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony?” “I have heard that, sir.” “As long as the Vajjis meet in harmony, leave in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis don’t make new decrees or abolish existing decrees, but proceed having undertaken the traditional Vajjian principles as they have been decreed?” “I have heard that, sir.” “As long as the Vajjis don’t make new decrees or abolish existing decrees, but proceed having undertaken the traditional Vajjian principles as they have been decreed, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate Vajjian elders, and think them worth listening to?” “I have heard that, sir.” “As long as the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate Vajjian elders, and think them worth listening to, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjians don’t rape or abduct women or girls from their families and force them to live with them?” “I have heard that, sir.” “As long as the Vajjians don’t rape or abduct women or girls from their families and force them to live with them, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the Vajjian shrines, whether inner or outer, not neglecting the proper spirit-offerings that were given and made in the past?” “I have heard that, sir.” “As long as the Vajjis honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the Vajjian shrines, whether inner or

outer, not neglecting the proper spirit-offerings that were given and made in the past, they can expect growth, not decline.

Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjis arrange for proper protection, shelter, and security for perfected ones, so that more perfected ones might come to the realm and those already here may live in comfort?” “I have heard that, sir.” “As long as the Vajjis arrange for proper protection, shelter, and security for perfected ones, so that more perfected ones might come to the realm and those already here may live in comfort, they can expect growth, not decline.”

Then the Buddha said to Vassakāra: “Brahmin, this one time I was staying near Vesālī at the Sarandada woodland shrine. There I taught the Vajjis these seven principles that prevent decline. As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the Vajjians, and as long as the Vajjians are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.”

When the Buddha had spoken, Vassakāra said to him: “Master Gotama, if the Vajjis follow even a single one of these principles they can expect growth, not decline. How much more so all seven! King Ajātasattu cannot defeat the Vajjis in war, unless by diplomacy or by sowing dissension. Well, now, Master Gotama, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do.” “Please, brahmin, go at your convenience.” Then Vassakāra the brahmin, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, got up from his seat and left.

### **3. Principles That Prevent Decline Among the Mendicants**

Soon after he had left, the Buddha said to Ānanda: “Go, Ānanda, gather all the mendicants staying in the vicinity of Rājagaha together in the assembly hall.” “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. He did what the Buddha asked. Then he went back, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him: “Sir, the mendicant Sangha has assembled. Please, sir, go at your convenience.”

Then the Buddha went to the assembly hall, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, I will teach you these seven principles that

prevent decline. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

As long as the mendicants meet frequently and have many meetings, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants meet in harmony, leave in harmony, and carry on their business in harmony, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants don't make new decrees or abolish existing decrees, but undertake and follow the ancient Vajjian principles as they have been decreed, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants honor, respect, esteem, and venerate the senior mendicants—of long standing, long gone forth, fathers and leaders of the Saṅgha—and think them worth listening to, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants don't fall under the sway of arisen craving for future lives, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants take care to live in wilderness lodgings, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants individually establish mindfulness, so that more good-hearted spiritual companions might come, and those that have already come may live comfortably, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ...

As long as the mendicants don't relish work, loving it and liking to relish it, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as they don't enjoy talk ...

sleep ...

company ...

they don't have wicked desires, falling under the sway of wicked desires ...

they don't have bad friends, companions, and associates ...

they don't stop half-way after achieving some insignificant distinction, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ... As long as the mendicants are faithful ... conscientious ... prudent ... learned ... energetic ... mindful ... wise, they can expect growth, not decline. As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ...

As long as the mendicants develop the awakening factors of mindfulness ... investigation of principles ... energy ... rapture ... tranquility ... immersion ... equanimity, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that prevent decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you seven more principles that prevent decline. ...

As long as the mendicants develop the perceptions of impermanence ... not-self ... ugliness ... drawbacks ... giving up ... fading away ... cessation, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these seven principles that guard against decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.

I will teach you six principles that guard against decline. ...

As long as the mendicants consistently treat their spiritual companions with bodily kindness ...

verbal kindness ... and mental kindness both in public and in private, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants share without reservation any material possessions they have gained by legitimate means, even the food placed in the alms-bowl, using them in common with their ethical spiritual companions, they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants live according to the precepts shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private—such precepts as are uncorrupted, unflawed, unblemished, untainted, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion—they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as the mendicants live according to the view shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private—the view that is noble and emancipating, and leads one who practices it to the complete end of suffering—they can expect growth, not decline.

As long as these six principles that guard against decline last among the mendicants, and as long as the mendicants are seen following them, they can expect growth, not decline.”

And while staying there at the Vulture’s Peak the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: “Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

When the Buddha had stayed in Rājagaha as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Ambalaṭṭhikā.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Ambalaṭṭhikā, where he stayed in the royal rest-house. And while staying there, too, he often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: “Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

When the Buddha had stayed in Ambalaṭṭhikā as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Nālandā.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Nālandā, where he stayed in Pāvārika’s mango grove.

#### 4. Sāriputta's Lion's Roar

Then Sāriputta went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Sir, I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there’s no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.” “That’s a grand and dramatic statement, Sāriputta. You’ve roared a definitive, categorical lion’s roar, saying: ‘I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there’s no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.’”

What about all the Perfected Ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who lived in the past? Have you comprehended their minds to know that those Buddhas had such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?” “No, sir.”

“And what about all the Perfected Ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who will live in the future? Have you comprehended their minds to know that those Buddhas will have such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?” “No, sir.”

“And what about me, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha at present? Have you comprehended my mind to know that I have such ethics, or such teachings, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?” “No, sir.”

“Well then, Sāriputta, given that you don’t comprehend the minds of Buddhas past, future, or present, what exactly are you doing, making such a grand and dramatic statement, roaring such a definitive, categorical lions roar?”

“Sir, though I don’t comprehend the minds of Buddhas past, future, and present, still I understand this by inference from the teaching. Suppose there was a king’s frontier citadel with fortified embankments, ramparts, and arches, and a single gate. And it has a gatekeeper who is astute, competent, and intelligent. He keeps strangers out and lets known people in. As he walks around the patrol path, he

doesn't see a hole or cleft in the wall, not even one big enough for a cat to slip out. He thinks: 'Whatever sizable creatures enter or leave the citadel, all of them do so via this gate.' In the same way, I understand this by inference from the teaching: 'All the perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas—whether past, future, or present—give up the five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Their mind is firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. They correctly develop the seven awakening factors. And they wake up to the supreme perfect awakening.'”

And while staying at Nālandā, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: “Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it's very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it's very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

## **5. The Drawbacks of Unethical Conduct**

When the Buddha had stayed in Nālandā as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let's go to Pāṭaligāma.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Pāṭaligāma. The lay followers of Pāṭaligāma heard that he had arrived. So they went to see him, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Sir, please consent to come to our guest house.” The Buddha consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, the lay followers of Pāṭaligāma got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right. Then they went to the guest house, where they spread carpets all over, prepared seats, set up a water jar, and placed a lamp. Then they went back to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and told him of their preparations, saying: “Please, sir, come at your convenience.” Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the guest house together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Having washed his feet he entered the town hall and sat against the central column facing east. The Saṅgha of mendicants also washed their feet, entered the town hall, and sat against the west wall facing east, with the Buddha right in front of them. The

lay followers of Pāṭaligāma also washed their feet, entered the town hall, and sat against the east wall facing west, with the Buddha right in front of them.

Then the Buddha addressed them: “Householders, there are these five drawbacks for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics. What five? Firstly, an unethical person loses substantial wealth on account of negligence. This is the first drawback for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics.

Furthermore, an unethical person gets a bad reputation. This is the second drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person enters any kind of assembly timid and embarrassed, whether it’s an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person dies feeling lost. This is the fourth drawback.

Furthermore, an unethical person, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is the fifth drawback. These are the five drawbacks for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics.

## **6. The Benefits of Ethical Conduct**

There are these five benefits for an ethical person because of their accomplishment in ethics. What five? Firstly, an ethical person gains substantial wealth on account of diligence. This is the first benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person gets a good reputation. This is the second benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person enters any kind of assembly bold and self-assured, whether it’s an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third benefit.

Furthermore, an ethical person dies not feeling lost. This is the fourth benefit.

Furthermore, when an ethical person's body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is the fifth benefit. These are the five benefits for an ethical person because of their accomplishment in ethics."

The Buddha spent most of the night educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the lay followers of Pāṭaligāma with a Dhamma talk. Then he dismissed them: "The night is getting late, householders. Please go at your convenience." "Yes, sir," replied the lay followers of Pāṭaligāma. They got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before leaving. Soon after they left the Buddha entered an empty hut.

## **7. Building a Citadel**

Now at that time the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra were building a citadel at Pāṭaligāma to keep the Vajjians out. At that time thousands of deities were taking possession of building sites in Pāṭaligāma. Illustrious rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by illustrious deities. Middling rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by middling deities. Lesser rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by lesser deities. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, the Buddha saw those deities taking possession of building sites in Pāṭaligāma. The Buddha rose at the crack of dawn and addressed Ānanda:

"Ānanda, who is building a citadel at Pāṭaligāma?" "Sir, the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra are building a citadel to keep the Vajjians out." "It's as if they were building the citadel in consultation with the gods of the Thirty-Three. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, I saw those deities taking possession of building sites. Illustrious rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by illustrious deities. Middling rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by middling deities. Lesser rulers or royal ministers inclined to build houses at sites possessed by lesser deities. As far as the civilized region extends, as far as the trading zone extends, this will be the

chief city: the Pāṭaliputta trade center. But Pāṭaliputta will face three threats: from fire, flood, and dissension.”

Then the Magadhan ministers Sunidha and Vassakāra approached the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, they stood to one side and said: “Would Master Gotama together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept today’s meal from me?” The Buddha consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, they went to their own guest house, where they had a variety of delicious foods prepared. Then they had the Buddha informed of the time, saying: “It’s time, Master Gotama, the meal is ready.”

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to their guest house, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Sunidha and Vassakāra served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with their own hands with a variety of delicious foods. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hand and bowl, Sunidha and Vassakāra took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha expressed his appreciation with these verses:

“In the place he makes his dwelling,  
having fed the astute  
and the virtuous here,  
the restrained spiritual practitioners,

he should dedicate an offering  
to the deities there.  
Venerated, they venerate him;  
honored, they honor him.

After that they have compassion for him,  
like a mother for the child at her breast.  
A man beloved of the deities  
always sees nice things.”

When the Buddha had expressed his appreciation to Sunidha and Vassakāra with these verses, he got up from his seat and left.

Sunidha and Vassakāra followed behind the Buddha, thinking: “The gate through which the ascetic Gotama departs today shall be named the Gotama Gate. The ford at which he crosses the Ganges River shall be named the Gotama Ford.”

Then the gate through which the Buddha departed was named the Gotama Gate. Then the Buddha came to the Ganges River. Now at that time the Ganges was full to the brim so a crow could drink from it. Wanting to cross from the near to the far shore, some people were seeking a boat, some a dinghy, while some were tying up a raft. Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, the Buddha, together with the mendicant Saṅgha, vanished from the near shore and landed on the far shore.

He saw all those people wanting to cross over.

Then, knowing the meaning of this, on that occasion the Buddha spoke these words of inspiration:

“Some cross a river or stream  
having built a bridge or drained the swamps.  
While one man is still tying a raft,  
intelligent people have already crossed over.”

## **8. Talk on the Noble Truths**

Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Koṭigāma.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Koṭigāma, and stayed on there. There he addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, not understanding and not comprehending four noble truths, both you and I have wandered and transmigrated for such a very long time. What four? The noble truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. These noble truths of suffering, origin, cessation, and the path have been understood and comprehended. Craving to be reborn has been cut off; the attachment to being reborn is ended; now there are no more future lives.” That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Because of not truly seeing  
the four noble truths,  
we have transmigrated for a long time  
from one rebirth to the next.

But now that these truths have been seen,  
the attachment to being reborn is undone.  
The root of suffering is cut off,  
now there are no more future lives.”

And while staying at Koṭṭigāma, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: “Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

## **9. The Deaths in Nāḍika**

When the Buddha had stayed in Koṭṭigāma as long as he wished, he said to Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Nāḍika.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Nāḍika, where he stayed in the brick house. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Sir, the monk named Sāḷha has passed away in Nāḍika. Where has he been reborn in his next life? The nun named Nandā, the

layman named Sudatta, and the laywoman named Sujātā have passed away in Nādika. Where have they been reborn in the next life? The laymen named Kakkāṭa, Kaḷibha, Nikata, Kaṭissaha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda, and Subhadda have passed away in Nādika. Where have they been reborn in the next life?”

“Ānanda, the monk Sālha had realized the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, having realized it with his own insight due to the ending of defilements. The nun Nandā had ended the five lower fetters. She’s been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world. The layman Sudatta had ended three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion. He’s a once-returner; he will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. The laywoman Sujātā had ended three fetters. She’s a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening. The laymen Kakkāṭa, Kaḷibha, Nikata, Kaṭissaha, Tuṭṭha, Santuṭṭha, Bhadda, and Subhadda had ended the five lower fetters. They’ve been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world. Over fifty laymen in Nādika have passed away having ended the five lower fetters. They’ve been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world. More than ninety laymen in Nādika have passed away having ended three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion. They’re once-returners, who will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. In excess of five hundred laymen in Nādika have passed away having ended three fetters. They’re stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.

## **10. The Mirror of the Teaching**

It’s hardly surprising that a human being should pass away. But if you should come and ask me about it each and every time someone passes away, that would be a bother for me. So Ānanda, I will teach you the explanation of the Dhamma called ‘the mirror of the teaching’. A noble disciple who has this may declare of themselves: ‘I’ve finished with rebirth in hell, the animal realm, and the ghost realm. I’ve finished with all places of loss, bad places, the underworld. I am a

stream-enterer! I'm not liable to be reborn in the underworld, and am bound for awakening.'

And what is that mirror of the teaching?

It's when a noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.'

They have experiential confidence in the teaching: 'The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—realizable in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.'

They have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is practicing the way that's good, straightforward, methodical, and proper. It consists of the four pairs, the eight individuals. This Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a teacher's offering, and worthy of greeting with joined palms. It is a supreme field of merit for the world.'

And a noble disciple's ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones, uncorrupted, unflawed, unblemished, untainted, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion.

This is that mirror of the teaching."

And while staying there in Nāḍika the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: "Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it's very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it's very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance."

When the Buddha had stayed in Nāḍika as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Vesālī.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Vesālī, where he stayed in Ambapālī’s mango grove. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants, a mendicant should live mindful and aware. This is my instruction to you. And how is a mendicant mindful? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. That’s how a mendicant is mindful.

And how is a mendicant aware? It’s when a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent. That’s how a mendicant is aware. A mendicant should live mindful and aware. This is my instruction to you.”

## **11. Ambapālī the Courtesan**

Ambapālī the courtesan heard that the Buddha had arrived and was staying in her mango grove. She had the finest carriages harnessed. Then she mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Vesālī for her own park. She went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and entered the monastery on foot. She bowed and sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired her with a Dhamma talk. Then she said to the Buddha: “Sir, may the Buddha together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from me.” The Buddha consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, Ambapālī got up from her seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on her right, before leaving.

The Licchavis of Vesālī also heard that the Buddha had arrived and was staying in Ambapālī’s mango grove. They had the finest carriages harnessed. Then they mounted a fine carriage and, along with other fine carriages, set out from Vesālī. Some of the Licchavis were in blue, of blue color, clad in blue, adorned with blue. And some were similarly colored in yellow, red, or white. Then Ambapālī the courtesan collided with those Licchavi youths, axle to axle, wheel to wheel, yoke to yoke. The Licchavis said to her: “What the hell, Ambapālī, are you doing colliding with us axle to axle, wheel to wheel, yoke to yoke?” “Well, my lords, it’s because I’ve invited the Buddha for tomorrow’s meal together with the mendicant Saṅgha.” “Girl, give us that meal for a hundred thousand!” “My lords, even if you were to give me Vesālī with her fiefdoms, I still wouldn’t give that meal to you.” Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers, saying: “We’ve been beaten by the mango-matron! We’ve been beaten by the mango-matron!”

Then the Licchavis continued on to Ambapālī’s grove. The Buddha saw them coming off in the distance, and addressed the mendicants: “Any of the mendicants who’ve never seen the gods of the Thirty-Three, just have a look at the assembly of Licchavis. See the assembly of Licchavis, check them out: they’re just like the Thirty-Three!” The Licchavis went by carriage as far as the terrain allowed, then descended and approached the Buddha on foot. They bowed to the Buddha, sat down to one side, and the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk. Then they said to the Buddha: “Sir, may the Buddha together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow’s meal from us.” Then the Buddha said to the Licchavis: “I have already accepted tomorrow’s meal from Ambapālī the courtesan.” Then the Licchavis snapped their fingers, saying: “We’ve been beaten by the mango-matron! We’ve been beaten by the mango-matron!” And then those Licchavis approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. They got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before leaving.

And when the night had passed Ambapālī had a variety of delicious foods prepared in her own home. Then she had the Buddha informed of the time, saying: “Sir, it’s

time. The meal is ready.” Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Ambapālī together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out. Then Ambapālī served and satisfied the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha with her own hands with a variety of delicious foods. When the Buddha had eaten and washed his hands and bowl, Ambapālī took a low seat, sat to one side, and said to the Buddha: “Sir, I present this park to the mendicant Saṅgha headed by the Buddha.” The Buddha accepted the park. Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired her with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat and left.

And while staying at Vesālī, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: “Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

## **12. Commencing the Rains at Beluva**

When the Buddha had stayed in Ambapālī’s grove as long as he wished, he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to the little village of Beluva.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at the little village of Beluva, and stayed on there. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, please enter the rainy season residence with whatever friends or acquaintances you have around Vesālī. I’ll commence the rainy season residence right here in the little village of Beluva.” “Yes, sir,” those mendicants replied. They did as the Buddha said, while the Buddha commenced the rainy season residence right there in the little village of Beluva.

After the Buddha had commenced the rainy season residence, he fell severely ill, struck by dreadful pains, close to death. But he endured with mindfulness and situational awareness, without worrying. Then it occurred to the Buddha: “It would not be appropriate for me to become finally extinguished before informing my

attendants and taking leave of the mendicant Saṅgha. Why don't I forcefully suppress this illness, stabilize the life force, and live on?" So that is what he did. Then the Buddha's illness died down. Soon after the Buddha had recovered from that sickness, he came out from his dwelling and sat in the shade of the porch on the seat spread out. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: "Sir, it's fantastic that the Buddha is comfortable and well. Because when the Buddha was sick, my body felt like it was drugged. I was disorientated, and the teachings weren't clear to me. Still, at least I was consoled by the thought that the Buddha won't become finally extinguished without making some statement regarding the Saṅgha of mendicants."

"But what could the mendicant Saṅgha expect from me, Ānanda? I've taught the Dhamma without making any distinction between secret and public teachings. The Realized One doesn't have the closed fist of a teacher when it comes to the teachings. If there's anyone who thinks 'I'll take charge of the Saṅgha of mendicants,' or 'the Saṅgha of mendicants is meant for me,' let them make a statement regarding the Saṅgha. But the Realized One doesn't think like this, so why should he make some statement regarding the Saṅgha? I'm now old, elderly and senior. I'm advanced in years and have reached the final stage of life. I'm currently eighty years old. Just as a decrepit cart keeps going by relying on straps, in the same way, the Realized One's body keeps going by relying on straps, or so you'd think. Sometimes the Realized One, not focusing on any signs, and with the cessation of certain feelings, enters and remains in the signless immersion of the heart. Only then does the Realized One's body become more comfortable. So Ānanda, be your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge. And how does a mendicant do this? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. That's how a mendicant is their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge. That's how the teaching is their island and their refuge, with no other refuge. Whether now or after I have passed, any of my mendicants who shall live as their own island, their own refuge, with no

other refuge; with the teaching as their island and their refuge, with no other refuge, shall be among the best of the best—any who want to train.”

### 13. An Obvious Hint

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. Then, after the meal, on his return from alms-round, he addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Ānanda, get your sitting cloth. Let’s go to the Cāpāla tree shrine for the day’s meditation.” “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Taking his sitting cloth he followed behind the Buddha. Then the Buddha went up to the Cāpāla shrine, where he sat on the seat spread out. Ānanda bowed to the Buddha and sat down to one side.

The Buddha said to him: “Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Sattamba, Bahuputta, Sārandada, and Cāpāla tree shrines are all lovely. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon.” But Ānanda didn’t get it, even though the Buddha dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. He didn’t beg the Buddha: “Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.” For his mind was as if possessed by Māra.

For a second time ... And for a third time, the Buddha said to Ānanda: “Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Sattamba, and Bahuputta, Sārandada, and Cāpāla tree shrines are all lovely. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon, or what’s left of it. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up,

consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon, or what's left of it." But Ānanda didn't get it, even though the Buddha dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. He didn't beg the Buddha: "Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans." For his mind was as if possessed by Māra. Then the Buddha got up and said to Venerable Ānanda: "Go now, Ānanda, at your convenience." "Yes, sir," replied Ānanda. He rose from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before sitting at the root of a tree close by.

#### **14. The Appeal of Māra**

And then, not long after Ānanda had left, Māra the Wicked went up to the Buddha, stood to one side, and said to him: "Sir, may the Blessed One now become finally extinguished! May the Holy One now become finally extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become finally extinguished. Sir, you once made this statement: 'Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have monk disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned, have memorized the teachings, and practice in line with the teachings. Not until they practice properly, living in line with the teaching. Not until they've learned their tradition, and explain, teach, assert, establish, disclose, analyze, and make it clear. Not until they can legitimately and completely refute the doctrines of others that come up, and teach with a demonstrable basis.' Today you do have such monk disciples. May the Blessed One now become finally extinguished! May the Holy One now become finally extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become finally extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: 'Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have nun disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned ...' ... Today you do have such nun disciples. May the Blessed One now become finally extinguished! May the Holy One now become finally extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become finally extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have layman disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned ...’ ... Today you do have such layman disciples. May the Blessed One now become finally extinguished! May the Holy One now become finally extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become finally extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have laywoman disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned ...’ ... Today you do have such laywoman disciples. May the Blessed One now become finally extinguished! May the Holy One now become finally extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become finally extinguished.

Sir, you once made this statement: ‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until my spiritual life is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans.’ Today your spiritual life is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans. May the Blessed One now become finally extinguished! May the Holy One now become finally extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become finally extinguished.”

When this was said, the Buddha said to Māra: “Relax, Wicked One. The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.”

## **15. Surrendering the Life Force**

So at the Cāpāla tree shrine the Buddha, mindful and aware, surrendered the life force. When he did so there was a great earthquake, awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky. Then, knowing the meaning of this, on that occasion the Buddha spoke these words of inspiration:

“Comparing the incomparable with an extension of life,

the sage surrendered the life force.  
Happy inside, immersed,  
he broke his extended existence like a suit of armor.”

## **16. The Causes of Earthquakes**

Then Venerable Ānanda thought: “How incredible, how amazing! That was a really big earthquake! That was really a very big earthquake; awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky! What’s the cause, what’s the reason for a great earthquake?”

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “How incredible, sir, how amazing! That was a really big earthquake! That was really a very big earthquake; awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky! What’s the cause, what’s the reason for a great earthquake?”

“Ānanda, there are these eight causes and reasons for a great earthquake. What eight? This great earth is grounded on water, the water is grounded on air, and the air stands in space. At a time when a great wind blows, it stirs the water, and the water stirs the earth. This is the first cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, there is an ascetic or brahmin with psychic power who has achieved mastery of the mind, or a god who is mighty and powerful. They’ve developed a limited perception of earth and a limitless perception of water. They make the earth shake and rock and tremble. This is the second cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the being intent on awakening passes away from the group of Joyful Gods, he’s conceived in his mother’s belly, mindful and aware. Then the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the third cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the being intent on awakening comes out of his mother's belly mindful and aware, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the fourth cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One realizes the supreme perfect awakening, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the fifth cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One rolls forth the supreme Wheel of Dhamma, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the sixth cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One, mindful and aware, surrenders the life force, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the seventh cause and reason for a great earthquake.

Furthermore, when the Realized One becomes fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over, the earth shakes and rocks and trembles. This is the eighth cause and reason for a great earthquake. These are the eight causes and reasons for a great earthquake.

## **17. Eight Assemblies**

There are, Ānanda, these eight assemblies. What eight? The assemblies of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and ascetics. An assembly of the gods of the Four Great Kings. An assembly of the gods of the Thirty-Three. An assembly of Māras. An assembly of Brahmās. I recall having approached an assembly of hundreds of aristocrats. There I used to sit with them, converse, and engage in discussion. And my appearance and voice became just like theirs. I educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk. But when I spoke they didn't know: 'Who is this that speaks? Is it a god or a human?' And when my Dhamma talk was finished I vanished. But when I vanished they didn't know: 'Who was that who vanished? Was it a god or a human?' I recall having approached an assembly of hundreds of brahmins ... householders ... ascetics ...

the gods of the Four Great Kings ... the gods of the Thirty-Three ... Māras ... Brahmās. There too I used to sit with them, converse, and engage in discussion. And my appearance and voice became just like theirs. I educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired them with a Dhamma talk. But when I spoke they didn't know: 'Who is this that speaks? Is it a god or a human?' And when my Dhamma talk was finished I vanished. But when I vanished they didn't know: 'Who was that who vanished? Was it a god or a human?' These are the eight assemblies.

### **18. Eight Dimensions of Mastery**

Ānanda, there are these eight dimensions of mastery. What eight? Not perceiving form internally, they see visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the first dimension of mastery.

Perceiving form internally, they see visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the second dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, they see visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the third dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, they see visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the fourth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. They're like a flax flower that's blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the fifth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. They're like a champak flower that's yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the sixth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. They're like a scarlet mallow flower that's red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the seventh dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. They're like the morning star that's white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. In the same way, not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the eighth dimension of mastery. These are the eight dimensions of mastery.

## **19. The Eight Liberations**

Ānanda, there are these eight liberations. What eight? Having form, they see visions. This is the first liberation. Not perceiving form internally, they see visions externally. This is the second liberation. They're focused only on beauty. This is the third liberation. Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is

the fourth liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite’, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh liberation. Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth liberation. These are the eight liberations.

Ānanda, this one time, when I was first awakened, I was staying near Uruvelā at the goatherd’s banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River. Then Māra the wicked approached me, stood to one side, and said: ‘Sir, may the Blessed One now become finally extinguished! May the Holy One now become finally extinguished! Now is the time for the Buddha to become finally extinguished.’ When he had spoken, I said to Māra:

‘Wicked One, I will not become fully extinguished until I have monk disciples ...

nun disciples ...

layman disciples ...

laywoman disciples who are competent, educated, assured, learned.

Not until my spiritual life is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans.’

Today, just now at the Cāpāla shrine Māra the Wicked approached me once more with the same request, reminding me of my former statement, and saying that those conditions had been fulfilled.

When he had spoken, I said to Māra: ‘Relax, Wicked One. The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.’ So today, just now at the Cāpāla tree shrine, mindful and aware, I surrendered the life force.”

## **20. The Appeal of Ānanda**

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”

“Enough now, Ānanda. Do not beg the Realized One. Now is not the time to beg the Realized One.” For a second time ... For a third time, Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”

“Ānanda, do you have faith in the Realized One’s awakening?” “Yes, sir.” “Then why do you keep pressing me up to the third time?” “Sir, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: ‘Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon.’” “Do you have faith, Ānanda?” “Yes, sir.” Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone. For even though the Realized One dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign, you didn’t beg me to remain for the eon, or what’s left of it. If you had begged me, I would have refused you twice, but consented on the third time. Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone.

Ānanda, this one time I was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. There I said to you: ‘Ānanda, Rājagaha is lovely, and so is the Vulture’s Peak. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon. The Realized One has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon.’ But you didn’t get it, even though I dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. You didn’t beg me to remain for the eon, or what’s left of it. If you had begged me, I would have refused you twice, but consented on the third time. Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone.

Ānanda, this one time I was staying right there near Rājagaha, at the Gotama banyan tree ... at Bandit’s Cliff ... in the Sattapaṇṇi cave on the slopes of Vebhara ... at the Black rock on the slopes of Isigili ... in the Cool Wood, under the Snake’s Hood Grotto ... in the Hot Springs Monastery ... in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels’ feeding ground ... in Jīvaka’s mango grove ... in the Maddakucchi deer park ... And in each place I said to you: ‘Ānanda, Rājagaha is lovely, and so are all these places. ... If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon.’ But you didn’t get it, even though I dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. You didn’t beg me to remain for the eon, or what’s left of it.

Ānanda, this one time I was staying right here near Vesālī, at the Udena shrine ...

at the Gotamaka shrine ... at the Sattamba shrine ... at the Many Sons shrine ... at the Sārandada shrine ... and just now, today at the Cāpāla shrine. There I said to you: ‘Ānanda, Vesālī is lovely. And the Udena, Gotamaka, Sattamba, and Bahuputta, Sārandada, and Cāpāla tree shrines are all lovely. Whoever has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power—made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them—may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what’s left of the eon. The Realized One

has developed and cultivated the four bases for psychic power, made them a vehicle and a basis, kept them up, consolidated them, and properly implemented them. If he wished, the Realized One could live on for the eon or what's left of the eon.' But you didn't get it, even though I dropped such an obvious hint, such a clear sign. You didn't beg me to remain for the eon, or what's left of it: 'Sir, may the Blessed One please remain for the eon! May the Holy One please remain for the eon! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.' If you had begged me, I would have refused you twice, but consented on the third time. Therefore, Ānanda, the misdeed is yours alone, the mistake is yours alone.

Did I not prepare for this when I explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart? The Realized One has discarded, eliminated, released, given up, relinquished, and surrendered the life force. He has definitively stated: 'The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.' It's not possible for the Realized One, for the sake of life, to take back the life force once it has been given up like that. Come, Ānanda, let's go to the Great Wood, the hall with the peaked roof." "Yes, sir," Ānanda replied.

So the Buddha went with Ānanda to the hall with the peaked roof, and said to him: "Go, Ānanda, gather all the mendicants staying in the vicinity of Vesālī together in the assembly hall." "Yes, sir," replied Ānanda. He did what the Buddha asked, went up to him, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him: "Sir, the mendicant Sangha has assembled. Please, sir, go at your convenience."

Then the Buddha went to the assembly hall, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed the mendicants: "So, mendicants, having carefully memorized those things I have taught you from my direct knowledge, you should cultivate, develop, and make much of them so that this spiritual practice may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. And what are those things I have taught from my

direct knowledge? They are: the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, the four right efforts, the four bases for psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path. These are the things I have taught from my direct knowledge. Having carefully memorized them, you should cultivate, develop, and make much of them so that this spiritual practice may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: “Come now, mendicants, I say to you all: Conditions fall apart. Persist with diligence. The final extinguishment of the Realized One will be soon. Three months from now the Realized One will finally be extinguished.” That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“I’ve reached a ripe old age,  
and little of my life is left.  
Having given it up, I’ll depart;  
I’ve made a refuge for myself.

Diligent and mindful,  
be of good virtues, mendicants!  
With well-settled thoughts,  
take good care of your minds.

Whoever meditates diligently  
in this teaching and training,  
giving up transmigration through rebirths,  
will make an end to suffering.”

## **21. The Elephant Look**

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. Then, after the meal, on his return from alms-round, he turned his whole body, the way that elephants do, to look back at Vesālī. He said to Venerable

Ānanda: “Ānanda, this will be the last time the Realized One sees Vesālī. Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Bhaṇḍagāma.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Bhaṇḍagāma, and stayed on there. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, not understanding and not comprehending four things, both you and I have wandered and transmigrated for such a very long time. What four? Noble ethics, immersion, wisdom, and freedom. This noble ethics, immersion, wisdom, and freedom have been understood and comprehended. Craving to be reborn has been cut off; the attachment to being reborn is ended; now there are no more future lives.” That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Ethics, immersion, and wisdom,  
and the supreme freedom:  
these things have been understood  
by Gotama the renowned.

And so the Buddha, having insight,  
explained this teaching to the mendicants.  
The teacher made an end of suffering,  
seeing clearly, he is extinguished.”

And while staying there, too, he often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: “Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When immersion is imbued with ethics it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it’s very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

## **22. The Four Great References**

When the Buddha had stayed in Bhaṇḍagāma as long as he wished, he addressed Ānanda: Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Hatthigāma, to Jambugāma, to Bhoganagara.”

“Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Bhoganagara, where he stayed at the Ānanda shrine. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants, I will teach you the four great references. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Take a mendicant who says: ‘Reverend, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: this is the teaching, this is the training, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has been incorrectly memorized by that mendicant.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly memorized by that mendicant.’ You should remember it. This is the first great reference.

Take another mendicant who says: ‘In such-and-such monastery lives a Saṅgha with seniors and leaders. I’ve heard and learned this in the presence of that Saṅgha: this is the teaching, this is the training, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has been incorrectly memorized by that Saṅgha.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly memorized by that Saṅgha.’ You should remember it. This is the second great reference.

Take another mendicant who says: ‘In such-and-such monastery there are several senior mendicants who are very learned, knowledgeable in the scriptures, who have memorized the teachings, the texts on monastic training, and the outlines. I’ve heard and learned this in the presence of those senior mendicants: this is the teaching, this is the training, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the Vinaya, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has not been correctly memorized by those senior mendicants.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the discourses and found in the Vinaya, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly memorized by those senior mendicants.’ You should remember it. This is the third great reference.

Take another mendicant who says: ‘In such-and-such monastery there is a single senior mendicant who is very learned and knowledgeable in the scriptures, who has memorized the teachings, the texts on monastic discipline, and the outlines. I’ve heard and learned this in the presence of that senior mendicant: this is the teaching, this is the training, this is the Teacher’s instruction.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss that mendicant’s statement. Instead, you should carefully memorize those words and phrases, then check if they’re included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training. If they’re not included in the discourses or found in the texts on monastic training, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is not the word of the Buddha. It has been incorrectly memorized by that senior mendicant.’ And so you should reject it. If they are included in the discourses and found in the texts on monastic discipline, you should draw the conclusion: ‘Clearly this is the word of the Buddha. It has been correctly memorized by that senior mendicant.’ You should remember it. This is the fourth great reference. These are the four great references. You should remember them.”

And while staying at the Ānanda shrine, too, the Buddha often gave this Dhamma talk to the mendicants: “Such is ethics, such is immersion, such is wisdom. When

immersion is imbued with ethics it's very fruitful and beneficial. When wisdom is imbued with immersion it's very fruitful and beneficial. When the mind is imbued with wisdom it is rightly freed from the defilements, namely, the defilements of sensuality, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.”

### **23. On Cunda the Smith**

When the Buddha had stayed in Bhoganagara as long as he wished, he addressed Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let's go to Pāvā.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants arrived at Pāvā, where he stayed in Cunda the smith's mango grove. Cunda heard that the Buddha had arrived and was staying in his mango grove. Then he went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk. Then Cunda said to the Buddha: “Sir, may the Buddha together with the mendicant Saṅgha please accept tomorrow's meal from me.” The Buddha consented in silence. Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, Cunda got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

And when the night had passed Cunda had a variety of delicious foods prepared in his own home, and plenty of pork on the turn. Then he had the Buddha informed of the time, saying: “Sir, it's time. The meal is ready.” Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the home of Cunda together with the mendicant Saṅgha, where he sat on the seat spread out and addressed Cunda: “Cunda, please serve me with the pork on the turn that you've prepared. And serve the mendicant Saṅgha with the other foods.” “Yes, sir,” replied Cunda, and did as he was asked. Then the Buddha addressed Cunda: “Cunda, any pork on the turn that's left over, you should bury it in a pond. I don't see anyone in in this world—with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—who could properly digest it except for the Realized One.” “Yes, sir,” replied Cunda. He did as he was asked, then came back to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired him with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat and left.

After the Buddha had eaten Cunda’s meal, he fell severely ill with bloody dysentery, struck by dreadful pains, close to death. But he endured with mindfulness and situational awareness, without worrying. Then he addressed Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to Kusinārā.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

I’ve heard that after eating  
the meal of Cunda the smith,  
the sage fell severely ill,  
with pains, close to death.

A severe sickness attacked the Teacher  
who had eaten the pork on the turn.  
While still purging the Buddha said:  
“I’ll go to the citadel of Kusinārā.”

## 24. Bringing a Drink

Then the Buddha left the road and went to the root of a tree, where he addressed Ānanda: “Please, Ānanda, fold my outer robe in four and spread it out for me. I am tired and will sit down.” “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda, and did as he was asked. The Buddha sat on the seat spread out. When he was seated he said to Venerable Ānanda: “Please, Ānanda, fetch me some water. I am thirsty and will drink.” When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Sir, just now around five hundred carts have passed by. The shallow water has been churned up by their wheels, and it flows cloudy and murky. The Kakutthā river is not far away, with clear, sweet, cool water, clean, with smooth banks, delightful. There the Buddha can drink and cool his limbs.”

For a second time, the Buddha asked Ānanda for a drink, and for a second time Ānanda suggested going to the Kakutthā river.

And for a third time, the Buddha said to Ānanda: “Please, Ānanda, fetch me some water. I am thirsty and will drink.” “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Taking his bowl he

went to the river. Now, though the shallow water in that creek had been churned up by wheels, and flowed cloudy and murky, when Ānanda approached it flowed transparent, clear, and unclouded. Then Ānanda thought: “It’s incredible, it’s amazing! The Realized One has such psychic power and might! For though the shallow water in that creek had been churned up by wheels, and flowed cloudy and murky, when I approached it flowed transparent, clear, and unclouded.” Gathering a bowl of drinking water he went back to the Buddha, and said to him: “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! The Realized One has such psychic power and might! Just now, though the shallow water in that creek had been churned up by wheels, and flowed cloudy and murky, when I approached it flowed transparent, clear, and unclouded. Drink the water, Blessed One! Drink the water, Holy One!” So the Buddha drank the water.

## **25. On Pukkusa the Mallian**

Now at that time Pukkusa the Mallian, a disciple of Āḷāra Kālāma, was travelling along the road from Kusinārā and Pāvā. He saw the Buddha sitting at the root of a certain tree. He went up to him, bowed, sat down to one side, and said: “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! Those who have gone forth remain in such peaceful meditations. Once it so happened that Āḷāra Kālāma, while travelling along a road, left the road and sat at the root of a nearby tree for the day’s meditation. Then around five hundred carts passed by right next to Āḷāra Kālāma. Then a certain person coming behind those carts went up to Āḷāra Kālāma and said to him: ‘Sir, didn’t you see the five hundred carts pass by?’ ‘No, friend, I didn’t see them.’ ‘But sir, didn’t you hear a sound?’ ‘No, friend, I didn’t hear a sound.’ ‘But sir, were you asleep?’ ‘No, friend, I wasn’t asleep.’ ‘But sir, were you conscious?’ ‘Yes, friend.’ ‘So, sir, while conscious and awake you neither saw nor heard a sound as five hundred carts passed by right next to you? Why sir, even your outer robe is covered with dust!’ ‘Yes, friend.’ Then that person thought: ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! Those who have gone forth remain in such peaceful meditations, in that, while conscious and awake he neither saw nor heard a sound as five hundred carts passed by right next to him.’ And after declaring his lofty confidence in Āḷāra Kālāma, he left.”

“What do you think, Pukkusa? Which is harder and more challenging to do while conscious and awake: to neither see nor hear a sound as five hundred carts pass by right next to you? Or to neither see nor hear a sound as it’s raining and pouring, lightning’s flashing, and thunder’s cracking?” “What do five hundred carts matter, or six hundred, or seven hundred, or eight hundred, or nine hundred, or a thousand, or even a hundred thousand carts? It’s far harder and more challenging to neither see nor hear a sound as it’s raining and pouring, lightning’s flashing, and thunder’s cracking!”

“This one time, Pukkusa, I was staying near Ātumā in a threshing-hut. At that time it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking. And not far from the threshing-hut two farmers who were brothers were killed, as well as four oxen. Then a large crowd came from Ātumā to the place where that happened. Now at that time I came out of the threshing-hut and was walking meditation in the open near the door of the hut. Then having left that crowd, a certain person approached me, bowed, and stood to one side. I said to them: ‘Why, friend, has this crowd gathered?’ ‘Just now, sir, it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking. And two farmers who were brothers were killed, as well as four oxen. Then this crowd gathered here. But sir, where were you?’ ‘I was right here, friend.’ ‘But sir, did you see?’ ‘No, friend, I didn’t see anything.’ ‘But sir, didn’t you hear a sound?’ ‘No, friend, I didn’t hear a sound.’ ‘But sir, were you asleep?’ ‘No, friend, I wasn’t asleep.’ ‘But sir, were you conscious?’ ‘Yes, friend.’ ‘So, sir, while conscious and awake you neither saw nor heard a sound as it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking?’ ‘Yes, friend.’

Then that person thought: ‘It’s incredible, it’s amazing! Those who have gone forth remain in such peaceful meditations, in that, while conscious and awake he neither saw nor heard a sound as it was raining and pouring, lightning was flashing, and thunder was cracking.’ And after declaring their lofty confidence in me, they bowed and respectfully circled me, keeping me on their right, before leaving.”

When he said this, Pukkusa said to him: “Any confidence I had in Āḷāra Kālāma I sweep away as in a strong wind, or float away as down a swift stream. Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, so too the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

Then Pukkusa addressed a certain man: “Please, my man, fetch a pair of ready to wear polished golden garments.” “Yes, sir,” replied that man, and did as he was asked. Then Pukkusa brought the garments to the Buddha: “Sir, please accept this pair of ready to wear polished golden garments from me out of compassion.” “Well then, Pukkusa, clothe me in one, and Ānanda in the other.” “Yes, sir,” replied Pukkusa, and did so. Then the Buddha educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired Pukkusa the Mallian with a Dhamma talk, after which he got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha before leaving.

Then, not long after Pukkusa had left, Ānanda placed the pair of golden garments on the Buddha’s body. But when placed on the Buddha’s body they seemed to lose their shine. Then Ānanda said to the Buddha: “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing, how pure and bright is the color of the Realized One’s skin. When this pair of ready to wear polished golden garments is placed on the Buddha’s body they seem to lose their shine.” “That’s so true, Ānanda, that’s so true! There are two times when the color of the Realized One’s skin becomes extra pure and bright. What two? The night when a Realized One understands the supreme perfect awakening; and the night he becomes fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over. These are the are two times when the color of the Realized One’s skin becomes extra pure and bright. Today, Ānanda, in the last watch of the night, between a pair of sal trees in the sal forest of the Mallas at Upavattana near Kusinārā, shall be the Realized One’s full extinguishment. Come, Ānanda, let’s go to the Kakutthā River.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied.

A pair of golden polished garments  
was presented by Pukkusa;  
when the teacher was clothed with them,  
his golden skin glowed bright.

Then the Buddha together with a large Saṅgha of mendicants went to the Kakutthā River. He plunged into the river and bathed and drank. And when he had emerged, he went to the mango grove, where he addressed Venerable Cundaka: “Please, Cundaka, fold my outer robe in four and spread it out for me. I am tired and will lie down.”

“Yes, sir,” replied Cundaka, and did as he was asked. And then the Buddha lay down in the lion’s posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware, and focused on the time of getting up. But Cundaka sat down right there in front of the Buddha.

Having gone to Kakutthā Creek,  
whose water was transparent, sweet, and clear,  
the Teacher, being tired, plunged in,  
the Realized One, without compare in the world.

And after bathing and drinking the Teacher emerged.  
Before the group of mendicants, in the middle, the Buddha,  
the Teacher who rolled forth the present dispensation,  
the great sage went to the mango grove.

He addressed the mendicant named Cundaka:  
“Spread out my folded robe so I can lie down.”  
The self-developed one urged Cunda,  
who quickly spread the folded robe.  
Teacher, being tired, lay down,  
while Cunda sat there before him.

Then the Buddha said to Venerable Ānanda: “Now it may happen, Ānanda, that others may give rise to some regret for Cunda the smith: ‘It’s your loss, friend Cunda, it’s your misfortune, in that the Realized One became fully extinguished after eating his last meal from you.’ You should get rid of remorse in Cunda the smith like this: ‘You’re fortunate, friend Cunda, you’re so very fortunate, in that the Realized One became fully extinguished after eating his last meal from you. I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha. There are two meal offerings that have identical fruit and result, and are more fruitful and beneficial than other meal offerings. What two? The meal after eating which a Realized One understands the supreme perfect awakening; and the meal after eating which he becomes fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over. These two meal offerings have identical fruit and result, and are more fruitful and beneficial than other meal offerings. You’ve accumulated a deed that leads to long life, beauty, happiness, fame, heaven, and sovereignty.’ That’s how you should get rid of remorse in Cunda the smith.” Then, knowing the meaning of this, on that occasion the Buddha spoke these words of inspiration:

“A giver’s merit grows;  
emnity doesn’t build up when you have self-control.  
A skillful person gives up bad things—  
with the end of greed, hate, and delusion, they’re extinguished.”

## **26. The Pair of Sal Trees**

Then the Buddha said to Ānanda: “Come, Ānanda, let’s go to the far shore of the Golden River, and on to the sal forest of the Mallas at Upavattana near Kusinārā.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. And that’s where they went. Then the Buddha addressed Ānanda: “Please, Ānanda, set up a cot for me between the twin sal trees, with my head to the north. I am tired and will lie down.” “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda, and did as he was asked. And then the Buddha lay down in the lion’s posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware.

Now at that time the twin sal trees were in full blossom with flowers out of season. They sprinkled and bestrewed the Realized One's body in honor of the Realized One. And the flowers of the celestial Flame Tree fell from the sky, and they too sprinkled and bestrewed the Realized One's body in honor of the Realized One. And celestial sandalwood powder fell from the sky, and it too sprinkled and bestrewed the Realized One's body in honor of the Realized One. And celestial music played in the sky in honor of the Realized One. And celestial choirs sang in the sky in honor of the Realized One.

Then the Buddha pointed out to Ānanda what was happening, adding: “That's not how the Realized One is honored, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed. Any monk or nun or male or female lay follower who practices in line with the teachings, practicing properly, living in line with the teachings—they honor, respect, revere, venerate, and esteem the Realized One with the highest honor. So Ānanda, you should train like this: ‘We shall practice in line with the teachings, practicing properly, living in line with the teaching.’”

## **27. The Monk Upavāṇa**

Now at that time Venerable Upavāṇa was standing in front of the Buddha fanning him. Then the Buddha made him move: “Move over, mendicant, don't stand in front of me.” Ānanda thought: “This Venerable Upavāṇa has been the Buddha's attendant for a long time, close to him, living in his presence. Yet in his final hour the Buddha makes him move, saying: ‘Move over, mendicant, don't stand in front of me.’ What is the cause, what is the reason for this?”

Then Ānanda said to the Buddha: “This Venerable Upavāṇa has been the Buddha's attendant for a long time, close to him, living in his presence. Yet in his final hour the Buddha makes him move, saying: ‘Move over, mendicant, don't stand in front of me.’ What is the cause, sir, what is the reason for this?” “Most of the deities from ten solar systems have gathered to see the Realized One. For twelve leagues all around this sal grove there's no spot, not even a fraction of a hair's tip, that's not crowded full of illustrious deities. The deities are complaining: ‘We've come such a long way to see the Realized One! Only rarely do Realized Ones arise in the

world, perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas. This very day, in the last watch of the night, the Realized One will become fully extinguished. And this illustrious mendicant is standing in front of the Buddha blocking the view. We won't get to see the Realized One in his final hour!"

"But sir, what kind of deities are you thinking of?" "There are, Ānanda, deities—both in the sky and on the earth—who are percipient of the earth. With hair disheveled and arms raised, they fall down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamenting: 'Too soon the Blessed One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer will vanish from the world!'

But the deities who are free of desire endure, mindful and aware, thinking: 'Conditions are impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?'"

## **28. The Four Inspiring Places**

"Previously, sir, when mendicants had completed the rainy season residence in various districts they came to see the Realized One. We got to see the esteemed mendicants, and to pay homage to them. But when the Buddha has passed, we won't get to see the esteemed mendicants or to pay homage to them."

"Ānanda, a faithful person of good family should go to see these four inspiring places. What four? Thinking: 'Here the Realized One was born!'—that is an inspiring place. Thinking: 'Here the Realized One became awakened as a supreme fully awakened Buddha!'—that is an inspiring place. Thinking: 'Here the supreme Wheel of Dhamma was rolled forth by the Realized One!'—that is an inspiring place. Thinking: 'Here the Realized One became fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over!'—that is an inspiring place. These are the four inspiring places that a faithful person of good family should go to see.

Faithful monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen will come, and think: 'Here the Realized One was born!' and 'Here the Realized One became awakened as a

supreme fully awakened Buddha!’ and ‘Here the supreme Wheel of Dhamma was rolled forth by the Realized One!’ and ‘Here the Realized One became fully extinguished through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over!’ Anyone who passes away while on pilgrimage to these shrines will, when their body breaks up, after death, be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.”

## 29. Questions for Ānanda

“Sir, how do we proceed when it comes to females?” “Without seeing, Ānanda.”  
“But when seeing, how to proceed?” “Without getting into conversation, Ānanda.”  
“But when in a conversation, how to proceed?” “Be mindful, Ānanda.”

“Sir, how do we proceed when it comes to the Realized One’s corpse?” “Don’t get involved in the rites for venerating the Realized One’s corpse, Ānanda. Please, Ānanda, you must all strive and practice for your own goal! Meditate diligent, keen, and resolute for your own goal! There are astute aristocrats, brahmins, and householders who are devoted to the Realized One. They will perform the rites for venerating the Realized One’s corpse.”

“But sir, how to proceed when it comes to the Realized One’s corpse?” “Proceed in the same way as they do for the corpse of a wheel-turning monarch.” “But how do they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse?” “They wrap a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse with unworn cloth, then with uncarded cotton, then again with unworn cloth. In this way they wrap the corpse with five hundred double-layers. Then they place it in an iron case filled with oil and close it up with another case. Then, having built a funeral pyre out of all kinds of fragrant substances, they cremate the corpse. They build a monument for the wheel-turning monarch at the crossroads. That’s how they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse. Proceed in the same way with the Realized One’s corpse. A monument for the Realized One is to be built at the crossroads. When someone there lifts up garlands or fragrance or powder, or bows, or inspires confidence in their heart, that will be for their lasting welfare and happiness.

### **30. Persons Worthy of Monument**

Ānanda, these four are worthy of a monument. What four? A Realized One, a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha; a Buddha awakened for themselves; a disciple of a Realized One; and a wheel-turning monarch.

And for what reason is a Realized One worthy of a monument? So that many people will inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: ‘This is the monument for that Blessed One, perfected and fully awakened!’ And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a Realized One is worthy of a monument.

And for what reason is a Buddha awakened for themselves worthy of a monument? So that many people will inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: ‘This is the monument for that Buddha awakened for himself!’ And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a Buddha awakened for himself is worthy of a monument.

And for what reason is a Realized One’s disciple worthy of a monument? So that many people will inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: ‘This is the monument for that Blessed One’s disciple!’ And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a Realized One’s disciple is worthy of a monument.

And for what reason is a wheel-turning monarch worthy of a monument? So that many people will inspire confidence in their hearts, thinking: ‘This is the monument for that just and principled king!’ And having done so, when their body breaks up, after death, they are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is for this reason that a wheel-turning monarch is worthy of a monument. These four are worthy of a monument.”

### **31. Ānanda’s Incredible Qualities**

Then Venerable Ānanda entered a dwelling, and stood there leaning against the door-jamb and crying: “Oh! I’m still only a trainee with work left to do; and my

Teacher's about to become fully extinguished, he who is so kind to me!" Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: "Mendicants, where is Ānanda?" "Sir, Ānanda has entered a dwelling, and stands there leaning against the door-jamb and crying: 'Oh! I'm still only a trainee with work left to do; and my Teacher's about to become fully extinguished, he who is so kind to me!'" So the Buddha said to a certain monk: "Please, monk, in my name tell Ānanda that the teacher summons him." "Yes, sir," that monk replied. He went to Ānanda and said to him: "Reverend Ānanda, the teacher calls you." "Yes, reverend," Ānanda replied. He went to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

"Enough, Ānanda! Do not grieve, do not lament. Did I not prepare for this when I explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart, even the Realized One's body? For a long time, Ānanda, you've treated the Realized One with deeds of body, speech, and mind that are loving, beneficial, pleasant, whole-hearted, and limitless. You have done good deeds, Ānanda. Devote yourself to meditation, and you will soon be free of defilements."

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: "The Buddhas of the past or the future have attendants who are no better than Ānanda is for me. Ānanda is astute, he is intelligent. He knows the time for monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, king's ministers, religious founders, and the disciples of religious founders to visit the Realized One.

There are these four incredible and amazing things about Ānanda. What four? If an assembly of monks goes to see Ānanda, they're uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they've never had enough. If an assembly of nuns ... laymen ... or laywomen goes to see Ānanda, they're uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they've never had enough. These are the four incredible and amazing things about Ānanda.

There are these four incredible and amazing things about a wheel-turning monarch. What four? If an assembly of aristocrats goes to see a wheel-turning monarch, they're uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they've never had enough. If an assembly of brahmins ... householders ... or ascetics goes to see a wheel-turning monarch, they're uplifted by seeing him and uplifted by hearing him speak. And when he falls silent, they've never had enough. In the same way, there are those four incredible and amazing things about Ānanda.”

### **32. Teaching the Discourse on Mahāsudassana**

When he said this, Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: “Sir, please don't become fully extinguished in this little hamlet, this jungle hamlet, this branch hamlet. There are other great cities such as Campā, Rājagaha, Sāvattihī, Sāketa, Kosambī, and Benares. Let the Buddha become fully extinguished there. There are many well-to-do aristocrats, brahmins, and householders there who are devoted to the Buddha. They will perform the rites of venerating the Realized One's corpse.” “Don't say that Ānanda! Don't say that this is a little hamlet, a jungle hamlet, a branch hamlet.

Once upon a time there was a king named Mahāsudassana who was a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extended to all four sides, he achieved stability in the country, and he possessed the seven treasures. His capital was this Kusinārā, which at the time was named Kusāvātī. It stretched for twelve leagues east to west, and seven leagues north to south. The royal capital of Kusāvātī was successful, prosperous, populous, full of people, with plenty of food. It was just like Āḷakamandā, the royal capital of the gods, which is successful, prosperous, populous, full of spirits, with plenty of food. Kusāvātī was never free of ten sounds by day or night, namely: the sound of elephants, horses, chariots, drums, clay drums, arched harps, singing, horns, gongs, and handbells; and the cry ‘Eat, drink, be merry!’ as the tenth.

Go, Ānanda, into Kusinārā and inform the Mallians: ‘This very day, Vāseṭṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the Realized One will become fully extinguished. Come

forth, Vāseṭṭhas! Come forth, Vāseṭṭhas! Don't regret it later, thinking: 'The Realized One became fully extinguished in our own village district, but we didn't get a chance to see him in his final hour.'”” “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Then he robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Sāvattḥī with a companion.

### **33. The Mallians Pay Homage**

Now at that time the Mallians of Kusinārā were sitting together at the meeting hall on some business. Ānanda went up to them, and announced: “This very day, Vāseṭṭhas, in the last watch of the night, the Realized One will become fully extinguished. Come forth, Vāseṭṭhas! Come forth, Vāseṭṭhas! Don't regret it later, thinking: 'The Realized One became fully extinguished in our own village district, but we didn't get a chance to see him in his final hour.'”

When they heard what Ānanda had to say, the Mallians, their sons, daughters-in-law, and wives became distraught, saddened, and grief-stricken. And some, with hair disheveled and arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented: “Too soon the Blessed One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One will become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer will vanish from the world!” Then the Mallians, their sons, daughters-in-law, and wives, distraught, saddened, and grief-stricken went to the Mallian sal grove at Upavattana and approached Ānanda. Then Ānanda thought: “If I have the Mallians pay homage to the Buddha one by one, they won't be finished before first light. I'd better separate them family by family and then have them pay homage, saying: ‘Sir, the Mallian named so-and-so with children, wives, retinue, and ministers bows with his head at your feet.’” And so that's what he did. So by this means Ānanda got the Mallians to finish paying homage to the Buddha in the first watch of the night.

### **34. On Subhadda the Wanderer**

Now at that time a wanderer named Subhadda was residing near Kusinārā. He heard that that very day, in the last watch of the night, the ascetic Gotama would become fully extinguished. He thought: “I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, said: ‘Only rarely do

Realized Ones arise in the world, perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas.’ And this very day, in the last watch of the night, the ascetic Gotama will become fully extinguished. This state of uncertainty has come up in me. I am quite confident that the Buddha is capable of teaching me so that I can give up this state of uncertainty.”

Then Subhadda went to the Mallian sal grove at Upavattana, approached Ānanda, and said to him: “Master Ānanda, I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, said: ‘Only rarely do Realized Ones arise in the world, perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas.’ And this very day, in the last watch of the night, the ascetic Gotama will become fully extinguished. This state of uncertainty has come up in me. I am quite confident that the Buddha is capable of teaching me so that I can give up this state of uncertainty. Master Ānanda, please let me see the ascetic Gotama.” When he had spoken, Ānanda said: “Enough, Reverend Subhadda, do not trouble the Realized One. He is tired.” For a second time, and a third time, Subhadda asked Ānanda, and a third time Ānanda refused.

The Buddha heard that discussion between Ānanda and Subhadda. He said to Ānanda: “Enough, Ānanda, don’t obstruct Subhadda; let him see the Realized One. For whatever he asks me, he will only be looking for understanding, not trouble. And he will quickly understand any answer I give to his question.” Then Ānanda said to the wanderer Subhadda: “Go, Reverend Subhadda, the Buddha is taking the time for you.” Then the wanderer Subhadda went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha: “Master Gotama, there are those ascetics and brahmins who lead an order and a community, and teach a community. They’re well-known and famous religious founders, regarded as holy by many people. Namely: Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, Pakudha Kaccāyana, and Ajita Kesakambala. According to their own claim, did all of them have direct knowledge, or none of them, or only some?” “Enough, Subhadda, let that be. I shall teach you the Dhamma. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” Subhadda replied. The Buddha said this:

“Subhadda, in whatever teaching and training the noble eightfold path is not found, there is no true ascetic found, no second ascetic, no third ascetic, and no fourth ascetic. In whatever teaching and training the noble eightfold path is found, there is a true ascetic found, a second ascetic, a third ascetic, and a fourth ascetic. In this teaching and training the noble eightfold path is found. Only here is there a true ascetic, here a second ascetic, here a third ascetic, and here a fourth ascetic. Other sects are empty of ascetics. Were these mendicants to practice well, the world would not be empty of perfected ones.

I was twenty years of age, Subaddha,

It's been over fifty years  
since I went forth.

I am the one who points out the proper teaching:  
Outside of here there is no true ascetic.

Were these mendicants to practice well, the world would not be empty of perfected ones.”

When he had spoken, Subhadda said to the Buddha: “Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what's there, so too the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. Sir, may I receive the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha's presence?” “Subhadda, if someone formerly ordained in another sect wishes to take the going forth, the ordination in this teaching and training, they must spend four months on probation. When four months have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, they'll give the going forth, the ordination into monkhood. However, I have recognized individual differences in this matter.” “Sir, if four months probation are required in such a case, I'll spend four years on probation. When four years have passed, if the mendicants are satisfied, let them give me the going forth, the ordination into monkhood.”

Then the Buddha said to Ānanda: “Well then, Ānanda, give Subhadda the going forth.” “Yes, sir,” Ānanda replied. Then Subhadda said to Ānanda: “You’re so fortunate, Reverend Ānanda, so very fortunate, to be anointed here in the Teacher’s presence as his pupil!” And the wanderer Subhadda received the going forth, the ordination in the Buddha’s presence. Not long after his ordination, Venerable Subhadda, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which people from good families rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. He understood: “Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is no return to any state of existence.” And Venerable Subhadda became one of the perfected. He was the last personal disciple of the Buddha.

### **35. The Buddha’s Last Words**

Then the Buddha addressed Venerable Ānanda: “Now, Ānanda, some of you might think: ‘The teacher’s dispensation has passed. Now we have no Teacher.’ But you should not see it like this. The teaching and training that I have taught and pointed out for you shall be your Teacher after my passing. After my passing, mendicants ought not address each other as ‘reverend’, as they do today. A more senior mendicant ought to address a more junior mendicant by name or clan, or by saying ‘reverend’. A more junior mendicant ought to address a more senior mendicant using ‘sir’ or ‘venerable’. If it wishes, after my passing the Saṅgha may abolish the lesser and minor training rules. After my passing, give the prime punishment to the mendicant Channa.” “But sir, what is the prime punishment?” “Channa may say what he likes, but the mendicants should not advise or instruct him.”

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: “Perhaps even a single mendicant has doubt or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice. So ask, mendicants! Don’t regret it later, thinking: ‘We were in the Teacher’s presence and we weren’t able to ask the Buddha a question.’” When this was said, the mendicants kept silent. For a second time, and a third time the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Perhaps even a single mendicant has doubt or

uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice. So ask, mendicants! Don't regret it later, thinking: 'We were in the Teacher's presence and we weren't able to ask the Buddha a question.'" For a third time, the mendicants kept silent. Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: "Mendicants, perhaps you don't ask out of respect for the Teacher. So let a friend tell a friend." When this was said, the mendicants kept silent. Then Venerable Ānanda said to the Buddha: "It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! I am quite confident that there's not even a single mendicant in this Saṅgha who has doubt or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice." "Ānanda, you speak from faith. But the Realized One knows that there's not even a single mendicant in this Saṅgha who has doubt or uncertainty regarding the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the path, or the practice." Even the last of these five hundred mendicants is a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening."

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: "Come now, mendicants, I say to you all: Conditions fall apart. Persist with diligence." These were the Realized One's last words.

### **36. The Full Extinguishment**

Then the Buddha entered the first absorption. Emerging from that, he entered the second absorption. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the third absorption, the fourth absorption, the dimension of infinite space, the dimension of infinite consciousness, the dimension of nothingness, and the dimension of neither perception nor perception. Then he entered the cessation of perception and feeling.

Then Venerable Ānanda said to Venerable Anuruddha: "Venerable Anuruddha, has the Buddha become fully extinguished?" "No, Reverend Ānanda. He has entered the cessation of perception and feeling."

Then the Buddha emerged from the cessation of perception and feeling and entered the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Emerging from that, he

successively entered into and emerged from the dimension of nothingness, the dimension of infinite consciousness, the dimension of infinite space, the fourth absorption, the third absorption, the second absorption, and the first absorption. Emerging from that, he successively entered into and emerged from the second absorption and the third absorption. Then he entered the fourth absorption. Emerging from that the Buddha immediately became fully extinguished.

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, along with the full extinguishment there was a great earthquake, awe-inspiring and hair-raising, and thunder cracked the sky. When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Sakka the lord of gods recited this verse:

“All creatures in this world  
must lay their body down.  
For even a Teacher such as this,  
unrivaled in the world,  
the Realized One, attained to power,  
the Buddha became finally extinguished.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Sakka the lord of gods recited this verse:

“Oh! Conditions are impermanent,  
their nature is to rise and fall;  
having arisen, they cease;  
their stilling is true bliss.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Venerable Anuruddha recited this verse:

“There was no more breathing  
for the poised one of steady heart.  
Imperturbable, committed to peace,

the sage has done his time.

He put up with painful feelings  
without flinching.

The liberation of his heart  
was like the extinguishing of a lamp.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, Venerable Ānanda recited this verse:

“Then there was terror!

Then they had goose-bumps!

When the Buddha, endowed with all fine qualities,  
became fully extinguished.”

When the Buddha became fully extinguished, some of the mendicants there, with arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented: But the mendicants who were free of desire endured, mindful and aware, thinking: “Conditions are impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?”

Then Anuruddha addressed the mendicants: “Enough, reverends, do not grieve or lament. Did the Buddha not prepare us for this when he explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart? The deities are complaining.” “But sir, what kind of deities are you thinking of?”

“There are, Ānanda, deities—both in the sky and on the earth—who are percipient of the earth. With hair disheveled and arms raised, they fall down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamenting: ‘Too soon the Blessed One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer has vanished from the world!’ But the deities who are free of desire endure, mindful and aware, thinking: ‘Conditions are

impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?” Then Ānanda and Anuruddha spent the rest of the night talking about Dhamma.

Then Anuruddha said to Ānanda: “Go, Ānanda, into Kusinārā and inform the Mallians: ‘Vāseṭṭhas, the Buddha has become fully extinguished. Please come at your convenience.’” “Yes, sir,” replied Ānanda. Then, in the morning, he robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Kusinārā with a companion. Now at that time the Mallians of Kusinārā were sitting together at the meeting hall on some business. Ānanda went up to them, and announced: “Vāseṭṭhas, the Buddha has become fully extinguished. Please come at your convenience.” When they heard what Ānanda had to say, the Mallians, their sons, daughters-in-law, and wives became distraught, saddened, and grief-stricken. And some, with hair disheveled and arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented: “Too soon the Blessed One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer has vanished from the world!”

### **37. The Rites of Venerating the Buddha’s Corpse**

Then the Mallians ordered their men: “So then, my men, collect fragrances and garlands, and all the musical instruments in Kusinārā.” Then—taking those fragrances and garlands, all the musical instruments, and five hundred pairs of garments—they went to the Mallian sal grove at Upavattana and approached the Buddha’s corpse. They spent the day honoring, respecting, revering, and venerating the Buddha’s corpse with dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances, and making awnings and setting up pavilions.

Then they thought: “It’s too late to cremate the Buddha’s corpse today. Let’s do it tomorrow.” But they spent the next day the same way, and so too the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth days.

Then on the seventh day they thought: “Honoring, respecting, revering, and venerating the Buddha’s corpse with dance and song and music and garlands and

fragrances, let us carry it to the south of the town, and cremate it there outside the town.”

Now at that time eight of the leading Mallians, having bathed their heads and dressed in unworn clothes, said: “We shall lift the Buddha’s corpse.” But they were unable to do so. The Mallians said to Anuruddha: “What is the cause, Venerable Anuruddha, what is the reason why these eight Mallian leaders are unable to lift the Buddha’s corpse?” “Vāsetṭhas, you have one plan, but the deities have a different one.” “But sir, what is the deities’ plan?” “You plan to carry the Buddha’s corpse to the south of the town while venerating it with dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances, and cremate it there outside the town. The deities plan to carry the Buddha’s corpse to the north of the town while venerating it with celestial dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances. Then they plan to enter the town by the northern gate, carry it through the center of the town, leave by the eastern gate, and cremate it there at the Mallian shrine named Makuṭabandhana.” “Sir, let it be as the deities plan.”

Now at that time the whole of Kusinārā was covered knee-deep with the flowers of the Flame Tree, without gaps even on the filth and rubbish heaps. Then the deities and the Mallians of Kusinārā carried the Buddha’s corpse to the north of the town while venerating it with celestial and human dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances. Then they entered the town by the northern gate, carried it through the center of the town, left by the eastern gate, and deposited the corpse there at the Mallian shrine named Makuṭabandhana.

Then the Mallians said to Anuruddha: “Sir, how do we proceed when it comes to the Realized One’s corpse?” “Proceed in the same way as they do for the corpse of a wheel-turning monarch.” “But how do they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse?” “They wrap a wheel-turning monarch’s corpse with unworn cloth, then with uncarded cotton, then again with unworn cloth. In this way they wrap the corpse with five hundred double-layers. Then they place it in an iron case filled with oil and close it up with another case. Then, having built a funeral pyre out of all kinds of fragrant substances, they cremate the corpse. They build a

monument for the wheel-turning monarch at the crossroads. That's how they proceed with a wheel-turning monarch's corpse. Proceed in the same way with the Realized One's corpse. A monument for the Realized One is to be built at the crossroads. When someone there lifts up garlands or fragrance or powder, or bows, or inspires confidence in their heart, that will be for their lasting welfare and happiness." Then the Mallians ordered their men: "So then, my men, collect uncarded cotton."

So the Mallians wrapped the Buddha's corpse, and placed it in an iron case filled with oil. Then, having built a funeral pyre out of all kinds of fragrant substances, they lifted the corpse on to the pyre.

### **38. Mahākassapa's Arrival**

Now at that time Venerable Mahākassapa was travelling along the road from Pāvā to Kusinārā together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants. Then he left the road and sat at the root of a tree. Now at that time a certain ājīvaka ascetic had picked up a Flame Tree flower in Kusinārā and was travelling along the road to Pāvā. Mahākassapa saw him coming off in the distance and said to him: "Reverend, might you know about our Teacher?" "Yes, reverend. Seven days ago the ascetic Gotama became fully extinguished. From there I picked up this Flame Tree flower." Some of the mendicants there, with arms raised, falling down like their feet were chopped off, rolling back and forth, lamented: "Too soon the Blessed One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the Holy One has become fully extinguished! Too soon the seer has vanished from the world!" But the mendicants who were free of desire endured, mindful and aware, thinking: "Conditions are impermanent. How could it possibly be otherwise?"

Now at that time a monk named Subhadda, who had gone forth when old, was sitting in that assembly. He said to those mendicants: "Enough, reverends, do not grieve or lament. We're well rid of that Great Ascetic harassing us: 'This is allowable for you; this is not allowable for you.' Well, now we shall do what we want and not do what we don't want." Then Venerable Mahākassapa addressed the mendicants: "Enough, reverends, do not grieve or lament. Did the Buddha not

prepare us for this when he explained that we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved? How could it possibly be so that what is born, created, conditioned, and liable to fall apart should not fall apart, even the Realized One's body?"

Now at that time four of the leading Mallians, having bathed their heads and dressed in unworn clothes, said: "We shall light the Buddha's funeral pyre." But they were unable to do so. The Mallians said to Anuruddha: "What is the cause, Venerable Anuruddha, what is the reason why these four Mallian leaders are unable to light the Buddha's funeral pyre?" "Vāsetṭhas, the deities have a different plan." "But sir, what is the deities' plan?" "The deities plan is this. Venerable Mahākassapa is travelling along the road from Pāvā to Kusinārā together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants. The Buddha's funeral pyre shall not burn until he bows with his head at the Buddha's feet." "Sir, let it be as the deities plan."

The Venerable Mahākassapa came to the Mallian shrine named Makuṭabandhana at Kusinārā and approached the Buddha's funeral pyre. Arranging his robe over one shoulder and raising his joined palms, he respectfully circled the Buddha three times, keeping him on his right, and bowed with his head to the Buddha's feet. And the five hundred mendicants did likewise. And when Mahākassapa and the five hundred mendicants bowed the Buddha's funeral pyre burst into flames all by itself.

And when the Buddha's corpse was cremated no ash or soot was found from outer or inner skin, flesh, sinews, or synovial fluid. Only the relics remained. It's like when ghee or oil blaze and burn, and neither ashes nor soot are found. In the same way, when the Buddha's corpse was cremated no ash or soot was found from outer or inner skin, flesh, sinews, or synovial fluid. Only the relics remained. And of those five hundred pairs of garments only two were not burnt: the innermost and the outermost. But when the Buddha's corpse was consumed the funeral pyre was extinguished by a stream of water that appeared in the sky, by water dripping from the sal trees, and by the Mallians' fragrant water. Then the Mallians made a cage of

spears for the Buddha's relics in the meeting hall and surrounded it with a buttress of bows. For seven days they honored, respected, revered, and venerated them with dance and song and music and garlands and fragrances.

### **39. Distributing the Relics**

King Ajātasattu of Magadha heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. He sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so am I. I too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. I will build a large monument for them."

The Licchavis of Vesālī also heard that that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. We will build a large monument for them."

The Sakyans of Kapilavatthu also heard that that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The Buddha was our foremost relative. We too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. We will build a large monument for them."

The Bulas of Allakappa also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. We will build a large monument for them."

The Koḷiyans of Rāmagāma also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. We will build a large monument for them."

The brahmin of Veṭhadīpa also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. He sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The

Buddha was an aristocrat, and I am a brahmin. I too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. I will build a large monument for them."

The Mallians of Pāvā also heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. We will build a large monument for them."

When they had spoken, the Mallians of Kusinārā said to those various groups: "The Buddha became fully extinguished in our village district. We will not give away a share of his relics."

Then Doṇa the brahmin said to those various groups:

"Hear, sirs, a single word from me.  
Our Buddha's teaching was acceptance.  
It would not be good to fight over  
a share of the supreme person's relics.

Let us make eight portions, good sirs,  
rejoicing in unity and harmony.  
Let there be monuments far and wide,  
so many folk may gain faith in the Seer!"

"Well then, brahmin, you yourself should fairly divide the Buddha's relics in eight portions." "Yes, sirs," replied Doṇa to those various groups. He divided the relics as asked and said to them: "Sirs, please give me the urn, and I shall build a large monument for it." So they gave Doṇa the urn.

The Moras of Pippalivana heard that the Buddha had become fully extinguished at Kusinārā. They sent an envoy to the Mallians of Kusinārā: "The Buddha was an aristocrat, and so are we. We too deserve a share of the Buddha's relics. We will build a large monument for them." "There are no portion of the Buddha's relics

left, they have already been portioned out.” Here, take the embers.” So they took the embers.

#### 40. Venerating the Relics

Then King Ajātasattu of Magadha, the Licchavis of Vesālī, the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu, the Bulas of Allakappa, the Koḷiyans of Rāmagāma, the brahmin of Veṭhadīpa, the Mallians of Pāvā, the Mallians of Kusinārā, the brahmin Doṇa, and the Moriyas of Pippalivana built large monuments for their portions and held festivals in their honor. Thus there were eight monuments for the relics, a ninth for the urn, and a tenth for the embers. That is how it was in those days.

There were eight shares of the Seer’s relics.  
Seven were worshipped throughout India.  
But one share of the most excellent of men  
was worshipped in Rāmagāma by a dragon king.

One tooth is venerated by the gods of Thirty-Three,  
and one is worshipped in the city of Gandhāra;  
another one in the realm of the Kaliṅga King,  
and one is worshipped by a dragon king.

Through their glory this rich earth  
is adorned with the best of offerings.  
Thus the Seer’s corpse  
is well honored by the honorable.

It’s venerated by lords of gods, dragons, and spirits;  
and likewise venerated by the finest lords of men.  
Honor it with joined palms when you get the chance,  
for a Buddha is rare even in a hundred eons.

Altogether forty even teeth,  
and the body hair and head hair,

were carried off individually by gods  
across the universe.

## 17. Mahāsudassana Sutta

King Mahāsudassana

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying between a pair of sal trees in the sal forest of the Mallas at Upavattana near Kusinārā at the time of his final extinguishment. Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Sir, please don’t become fully extinguished in this little hamlet, this jungle hamlet, this branch hamlet. There are other great cities such as Campā, Rājagaha, Sāvattihī, Sāketa, Kosambī, and Benares. Let the Buddha become fully extinguished there. There are many well-to-do aristocrats, brahmins, and householders there who are devoted to the Buddha. They will perform the rites of venerating the Realized One’s corpse.”

“Don’t say that, Ānanda! Don’t say that this is a little hamlet, a jungle hamlet, a branch hamlet.

### 1. The Capital City of Kusāvati

Once upon a time there was a king named Mahāsudassana whose dominion extended to all four sides, and who achieved stability in the country. His capital was this Kusinārā, which at the time was named Kusāvati. It stretched for twelve leagues east to west, and seven leagues north to south. The royal capital of Kusāvati was successful, prosperous, populous, full of people, with plenty of food. It was just like Āḷakamandā, the royal capital of the gods, which is successful, prosperous, populous, full of spirits, with plenty of food. Kusāvati was never free of ten sounds by day or night, namely: the sound of elephants, horses, chariots, drums, clay drums, arched harps, singing, horns, gongs, and handbells; and the cry ‘Eat, drink, be merry!’ as the tenth.

Kusāvati was encircled by seven ramparts: one made of gold, one made of silver, one made of beryl, one made of crystal, one made of ruby, one made of emerald, and one made of all precious things. It had four gates, made of gold, silver, beryl,

and crystal. At each gate there were seven pillars, three fathoms deep and four fathoms high, made of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, emerald, and all precious things.

It was surrounded by seven rows of palm trees, made of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, emerald, and all precious things. The golden palms had trunks of gold, and leaves and fruits of silver. The silver palms had trunks of silver, and leaves and fruits of gold. The beryl palms had trunks of beryl, and leaves and fruits of crystal. The crystal palms had trunks of crystal, and leaves and fruits of beryl. The ruby palms had trunks of ruby, and leaves and fruits of emerald. The emerald palms had trunks of emerald, and leaves and fruits of ruby. The palms of all precious things had trunks of all precious things, and leaves and fruits of all precious things. When those rows of palm trees were blown by the wind they sounded graceful, tantalizing, sensuous, lovely, and intoxicating, like a quintet made up of skilled musicians who had practiced well and kept excellent rhythm. And any addicts, libertines, or drunkards in Kusāvātī at that time were entertained by that sound.

## **2. The Seven Treasures**

### **2.1. The Wheel Treasure**

King Mahāsudassana possessed seven treasures and four blessings. What seven? On a fifteenth day sabbath, King Mahāsudassana had bathed his head and gone upstairs in the stilt longhouse to observe the sabbath. And the heavenly wheel-treasure appeared to him, with a thousand spokes, with rim and hub, complete in every detail. Seeing this, the king thought: ‘I have heard that when the heavenly wheel-treasure appears to a king in this way, he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. Am I then a wheel-turning monarch?’

Then King Mahāsudassana, rising from his seat and arranging his robe over one shoulder, took a ceremonial vase in his left hand and besprinkled the wheel-treasure with his right hand, saying: ‘Roll forth, O wheel-treasure! Triumph, O wheel-treasure!’ Then the wheel-treasure rolled towards the east. And the king followed it together with his army of four divisions. In whatever place the wheel-

treasure stood still, there the king came to stay together with his army. And any opposing rulers of the eastern quarter came to him and said: ‘Come, great king! Welcome, great king! We are yours, great king, instruct us.’ The king said: ‘Do not kill living creatures. Do not steal. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not lie. Do not drink alcohol. Maintain the current level of taxation.’ And so the opposing rulers of the eastern quarter became his vassals. Then the wheel-treasure, having plunged into the eastern ocean and emerged again, rolled towards the south. ... Having plunged into the southern ocean and emerged again, it rolled towards the west. ... Having plunged into the western ocean and emerged again, it rolled towards the north, followed by the king together with his army of four divisions. In whatever place the wheel-treasure stood still, there the king came to stay together with his army. And any opposing rulers of the northern quarter came to him and said: ‘Come, great king! Welcome, great king! We are yours, great king, instruct us.’ The king said: ‘Do not kill living creatures. Do not steal. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not lie. Do not drink alcohol. Maintain the current level of taxation.’ And so the opposing rulers of the northern quarter became his vassals.

And then the wheel-treasure, having triumphed over this land surrounded by ocean, returned to the royal capital of Kusāvātī. There it stood still by the gate to Mahāsudassana’s royal compound at the High Court as if fixed to an axle, illuminating the royal compound. Such is the wheel-treasure that appeared to King Mahāsudassana.

## **2.2. The Elephant Treasure**

Next, the elephant-treasure appeared to King Mahāsudassana. It was all-white sky-walker with psychic power, touching the ground in seven places, a king of elephants named Sabbath. Seeing him, the king was impressed: ‘This would truly be a fine elephant vehicle, if he would submit to taming.’ Then the elephant-treasure submitted to taming, as if he was a fine thoroughbred elephant that had been tamed for a long time. Once it so happened that King Mahāsudassana, testing that same elephant-treasure, mounted him in the morning and traversed the land surrounded by ocean before returning to the royal capital in time for breakfast. Such is the elephant-treasure that appeared to King Mahāsudassana.

### **2.3. The Horse-Treasure**

Next, the horse-treasure appeared to King Mahāsudassana. It was an all-white sky-walker with psychic power, with head of black and mane like woven reeds, a royal steed named Thundercloud. Seeing him, the king was impressed: ‘This would truly be a fine horse vehicle, if he would submit to taming.’ Then the horse-treasure submitted to taming, as if he was a fine thoroughbred horse that had been tamed for a long time. Once it so happened that King Mahāsudassana, testing that same horse-treasure, mounted him in the morning and traversed the land surrounded by ocean before returning to the royal capital in time for breakfast. Such is the horse-treasure that appeared to King Mahāsudassana.

### **2.4. The Jewel Treasure**

Next, the jewel-treasure appeared to King Mahāsudassana. It was a beryl gem that was naturally beautiful, eight-faceted, with expert workmanship, transparent, clear, and unclouded, endowed with all good qualities. And the radiance of that jewel spread all-round for a league. Once it so happened that King Mahāsudassana, testing that same jewel-treasure, mobilized his army of four divisions and, with the jewel hoisted on his banner, set out in the dark of the night. Then the villagers around them set off to work, thinking that it was day. Such is the jewel-treasure that appeared to King Mahāsudassana.

### **2.5. The Woman Treasure**

Next, the woman-treasure appeared to King Mahāsudassana. She was attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. She was neither too tall nor too short; neither too thin nor too fat; neither too dark nor too light. She outdid human beauty without reaching divine beauty. And her touch was like a tuft of cotton-wool or kapok. When it was cool her limbs were warm, and when it was warm her limbs were cool. The fragrance of sandal floated from her body, and lotus from her mouth. She got up before the king and went to bed after him, and was obliging, behaving nicely and speaking politely. The woman-treasure did not betray the wheel-turning monarch even in thought, still less in deed. Such is the woman-treasure that appeared to King Mahāsudassana.

## **2.6. The Householder Treasure**

Next, the householder-treasure appeared to King Mahāsudassana. The power of clairvoyance manifested in him as a result of past deeds, by which he sees hidden treasure, both owned and ownerless. He approached the king and said: ‘Relax, sire. I will take care of the treasury.’ Once it so happened that the wheel-turning monarch, testing that same householder-treasure, boarded a boat and sailed to the middle of the Ganges river. Then he said to the householder-treasure: ‘Householder, I need gold coins and bullion.’ ‘Well then, great king, draw the boat up to one shore.’ ‘It’s right here, householder, that I need gold coins and bullion.’ Then that householder-treasure, immersing both hands in the water, pulled up a pot full of gold coin and bullion, and said to the king: ‘Is this sufficient, great king? Has enough been done, great king, enough offered?’ The king said: ‘That is sufficient, householder. Enough has been done, enough offered.’ Such is the householder-treasure that appeared to King Mahāsudassana.

## **2.7. The Counselor Treasure**

Next, the counselor-treasure appeared to King Mahāsudassana. He was astute, competent, intelligent, and capable of getting the king to appoint who should be appointed, dismiss who should be dismissed, and retain who should be retained. He approached the king and said: ‘Relax, sire. I shall issue instructions.’ Such is the counselor-treasure that appeared to King Mahāsudassana.

These are the seven treasures possessed by King Mahāsudassana.

## **3. The Four Blessings**

King Mahāsudassana possessed four blessings. And what are the four blessings? He was attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty, more so than other people. This is the first blessing.

Furthermore, he was long-lived, more so than other people. This is the second blessing.

Furthermore, he was rarely ill or unwell, and his stomach digested well, being neither too hot nor too cold, more so than other people. This is the third blessing.

Furthermore, he was as dear and beloved to the brahmins and householders as a father is to his children. And the brahmins and householders were as dear to the king as children are to their father.

Once it so happened that King Mahāsudassana went with his army of four divisions to visit a park. Then the brahmins and householders went up to him and said: ‘Slow down, Your Majesty, so we may see you longer!’ And the king addressed his charioteer: ‘Drive slowly, charioteer, so I can see the brahmins and householders longer!’ This is the fourth blessing. These are the four blessings possessed by King Mahāsudassana.

#### **4. Lotus Ponds in the Palace of Principle**

Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘Why don’t I have lotus ponds built between the palms, at intervals of a hundred bow lengths?’

So that’s what he did. The lotus ponds were lined with tiles of four colors, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.

And four flights of stairs of four colors descended into each lotus pond, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal. The golden stairs had posts of gold, and banisters and finials of silver. The silver stairs had posts of silver, and banisters and finials of gold. The beryl stairs had posts of beryl, and banisters and finials of crystal. The crystal stairs had posts of crystal, and banisters and finials of beryl. Those lotus ponds were surrounded by two balustrades, made of gold and silver. The golden balustrades had posts of gold, and banisters and finials of silver. The silver balustrades had posts of silver, and banisters and finials of gold.

Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘Why don’t I plant flowers in the lotus ponds such as blue water lilies, and lotuses of pink, yellow, and white, blooming all year round, and accessible to the public?’ So that’s what he did.

Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘Why don’t I appoint bath attendants to help bathe the people who come to bathe in the lotus ponds?’ So that’s what he did.

Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘Why don’t I set up charities on the banks of the lotus ponds, so that those in need of food, drink, clothes, vehicles, beds, women, gold, or silver can get what they need?’ So that’s what he did.

Then the brahmins and householders came to the king bringing abundant wealth and said: ‘Sire, this abundant wealth is specially for you alone; may Your Highness accept it!’ ‘There’s enough raised for me through regular taxes. Let this be for you; and here, take even more!’ When the king turned them down, they withdrew to one side to think up a plan: ‘It wouldn’t be proper for us to take this abundant wealth back to our own homes. Why don’t we build a home for King Mahāsudassana?’ They went up to the king and said: ‘We shall have a home built for you, sire!’ King Mahāsudassana consented in silence.

And then Sakka, the lord of gods, knowing what the king was thinking, addressed the god Vissakamma: ‘Come, dear Vissakamma, build a palace named Principle as a home for King Mahāsudassana.’ ‘Yes, lord,’ replied Vissakamma. Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the gods of the Thirty-Three and appeared in front of King Mahāsudassana. Vissakamma said to the king: ‘I shall build a palace named Principle as a home for you, sire.’ King Mahāsudassana consented in silence.

And so that’s what Vissakamma did. The Palace of Principle stretched for a league east to west, and half a league north to south. It was lined with tiles of four colors, three fathoms high, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.

It had 84,000 pillars of four colors, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal. It was covered with panels of four colors, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.

It had twenty-four staircases of four colors, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal. The golden stairs had posts of gold, and banisters and finials of silver. The silver stairs had posts of silver, and banisters and finials of gold. The beryl stairs had posts of beryl, and banisters and finials of crystal. The crystal stairs had posts of crystal, and banisters and finials of beryl.

It had 84,000 chambers of four colors, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal. In each chamber a couch was spread: in the golden chamber a couch of silver; in the silver chamber a couch of beryl; in the beryl chamber a couch of ivory; in the crystal chamber a couch of hardwood. At the door of the golden chamber stood a palm tree of silver, with trunk of silver, and leaves and fruits of gold. At the door of the silver chamber stood a palm tree of gold, with trunk of gold, and leaves and fruits of silver. At the door of the beryl chamber stood a palm tree of crystal, with trunk of crystal, and leaves and fruits of beryl. At the door of the crystal chamber stood a palm tree of beryl, with trunk of beryl, and leaves and fruits of crystal.

Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘Why don’t I build a grove of golden palm trees at the door to the great foyer, where I can sit for the day?’ So that’s what he did. The Palace of Principle was surrounded by two balustrades, made of gold and silver. The golden balustrades had posts of gold, and banisters and finials of silver. The silver balustrades had posts of silver, and banisters and finials of gold.

The Palace of Principle was surrounded by two nets of bells, made of gold and silver. The golden net had bells of silver, and the silver net had bells of gold. When those nets of bells were blown by the wind they sounded graceful, tantalizing, sensuous, lovely, and intoxicating, like a quintet made up of skilled musicians who had practiced well and kept excellent rhythm. And any addicts, libertines, or drunkards in Kusāvātī at that time were entertained by that sound. When it was finished, the palace was hard to look at, dazzling to the eyes, like the sun rising in a clear and cloudless sky in the last month of the rainy season.

Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘Why don’t I build a lotus pond named Principle in front of the palace?’ So that’s what he did. The Lotus Pond of Principle

stretched for a league east to west, and half a league north to south. It was lined with tiles of four colors, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal.

It had twenty-four staircases of four colors, made of gold, silver, beryl, and crystal. The golden stairs had posts of gold, and banisters and finials of silver. The silver stairs had posts of silver, and banisters and finials of gold. The beryl stairs had posts of beryl, and banisters and finials of crystal. The crystal stairs had posts of crystal, and banisters and finials of beryl.

It was surrounded by two balustrades, made of gold and silver. The golden balustrades had posts of gold, and banisters and finials of silver. The silver balustrades had posts of silver, and banisters and finials of gold.

It was surrounded by seven rows of palm trees, made of gold, silver, beryl, crystal, ruby, emerald, and all precious things. The golden palms had trunks of gold, and leaves and fruits of silver. The silver palms had trunks of silver, and leaves and fruits of gold. The beryl palms had trunks of beryl, and leaves and fruits of crystal. The crystal palms had trunks of crystal, and leaves and fruits of beryl. The ruby palms had trunks of ruby, and leaves and fruits of emerald. The emerald palms had trunks of emerald, and leaves and fruits of ruby. The palms of all precious things had trunks of all precious things, and leaves and fruits of all precious things. When those rows of palm trees were blown by the wind they sounded graceful, tantalizing, sensuous, lovely, and intoxicating, like a quintet made up of skilled musicians who had practiced well and kept excellent rhythm. And any addicts, libertines, or drunkards in Kusāvātī at that time were entertained by that sound.

When the palace and its lotus pond were finished, King Mahāsudassana served those who were reckoned as true ascetics and brahmins with all they desired. Then he ascended the Palace of Principle.

## 5. Attaining Absorption

Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘Of what deed of mine is this the fruit and result, that I am now so mighty and powerful?’ Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘It is the fruit and result of three kinds of deeds: giving, self-control, and restraint.’

Then he went to the great foyer, stood at the door, and spoke these words of inspiration: ‘Stop here, sensual, malicious, and cruel thoughts— no further!’

Then he entered the great foyer and sat on the golden couch. Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, he entered and remained in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected were stilled, he entered and remained in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, he entered and remained in the third absorption, where he meditated with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, ‘Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.’ With the giving up of pleasure and pain, and the ending of former happiness and sadness, he entered and remained in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

Then King Mahāsudassana left the great foyer and entered the golden chamber, where he sat on the golden couch. He meditated spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way he spread a heart full of love above, below, across, everywhere, all around, to everyone in the world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. He meditated spreading a heart full of compassion ... He meditated spreading a heart full of rejoicing ... He meditated spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, he spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

## 6. Of All Cities

King Mahāsudassana had 84,000 cities, with the royal capital of Kusāvati foremost. He had 84,000 palaces, with the Palace of Principle foremost. He had 84,000 chambers, with the great foyer foremost. He had 84,000 couches made of gold, silver, ivory, and hardwood. They were spread with woollen covers—shag-piled, pure white, or embroidered with flowers—and spread with a fine deer hide, with a canopy above and red pillows at both ends. He had 84,000 bull elephants with gold adornments and banners, covered with gold netting, with the royal bull elephant named Sabbath foremost. He had 84,000 horses with gold adornments and banners, covered with gold netting, with the royal steed named Thundercloud foremost. He had 84,000 chariots upholstered with the hide of lions, tigers, and leopards, and cream rugs, with gold adornments and banners, covered with gold netting, with the chariot named Triumph foremost. He had 84,000 jewels, with the jewel-treasure foremost. He had 84,000 women, with Queen Subhaddā foremost. He had 84,000 householders, with the householder-treasure foremost. He had 84,000 aristocrat vassals, with the counselor-treasure foremost. He had 84,000 milk-cows with silken reins and bronze pails. He had 8,400,000,000 fine cloths of linen, silk, wool, and cotton. He had 84,000 servings of food, which were presented to him as offerings in the morning and evening.

Now at that time his 84,000 royal elephants came to attend on him in the morning and evening. Then King Mahāsudassana thought: ‘What if instead half of the elephants took turns to attend on me at the end of each century?’ He instructed the counselor-treasure to do this, and so it was done.

## 7. The Visit of Queen Subhaddā

Then, after many years, many hundred years, many thousand years had passed, Queen Subhaddā thought: ‘It is long since I have seen the king. Why don’t I go to see him?’ Then the Queen addressed the ladies of the harem: ‘Come, bathe your heads and dress in yellow. It is long since we saw the king, and we shall go to see him.’ ‘Yes, ma’am,’ replied the ladies of the harem. They did as she asked and returned to the queen. Then the Queen addressed the counselor-treasure: ‘Dear counselor-treasure, please ready the army with four divisions. It is long since we

saw the king, and we shall go to see him.’ ‘Yes, my queen,’ he replied, and did as he was asked. He informed the queen: ‘My queen, the army with four divisions is ready, please go at your convenience.’ Then Queen Subhaddā together with the ladies of the harem went with the army to the Palace of Principle. She ascended the palace and went to the great foyer, where she stood leaning against a door-post. Hearing them, the king thought: ‘What’s that, it sounds like a big crowd!’ Coming out of the foyer he saw Queen Subhaddā leaning against a door-post and said to her: ‘Please stay there, my queen, don’t enter in here.’ Then he addressed a certain man: ‘Come, mister, bring the golden couch from the great foyer and set it up in the golden palm grove.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ that man replied, and did as he was asked. The king lay down in the lion’s posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware.

Then Queen Subhaddā thought: ‘The king’s faculties are so very clear, and the complexion of his skin is pure and bright. Let him not pass away!’ She said to him:

‘Sire, you have 84,000 cities, with the royal capital of Kusāvati foremost. Arouse desire for these! Take an interest in life!’ And she likewise urged the king live on by taking an interest in all his possessions as described above.

When the queen had spoken, the king said to her:

‘For a long time, my queen, you have spoken to me with loving, desirable, pleasant, and agreeable words. And yet in my final hour, your words are undesirable, unpleasant, and disagreeable!’ ‘Then how exactly, Your Majesty, am I to speak to you?’ ‘Like this, my queen: “Sire, we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved. Don’t pass away with concerns. Such concern is suffering, and it’s criticized. Sire, you have 84,000 cities, with the royal capital of Kusāvati foremost. Give up desire for these! Take no interest in life!” And so on for all the king’s possessions.

When the king had spoken, Queen Subhaddā cried and burst out in tears. Wiping away her tears, the queen said to the king:

‘Sire, we must be parted and separated from all we hold dear and beloved. Don’t pass away with concerns. Such concern is suffering, and it’s criticized. Sire, you have 84,000 cities, with the royal capital of Kusāvati foremost. Give up desire for these! Take no interest in life!’ And she continued, listing all the king’s possessions.

## **8. Rebirth in the Brahmā Realm**

Not long after that, King Mahāsudassana passed away. And the feeling he had close to death was like a householder or their child falling asleep after eating a delectable meal. When he passed away King Mahāsudassana was reborn in a good place, a Brahmā realm. Ānanda, King Mahāsudassana played children’s games for 84,000 years. He ruled as viceroy for 84,000 years. He ruled as king for 84,000 years. He led the spiritual life as a layman in the Palace of Principle for 84,000 years. And having developed the four Brahmā meditations, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a Brahmā realm.

Now, Ānanda, you might think: ‘Surely King Mahāsudassana must have been someone else at that time?’ But you should not see it like that. I myself was King Mahāsudassana at that time. Mine were the 84,000 cities, with the royal capital of Kusāvati foremost. And mine were all the other possessions.

Of those 84,000 cities, I only stayed in one, the capital Kusāvati. Of those 84,000 mansions, I only dwelt in one, the Palace of Principle. Of those 84,000 chambers, I only dwelt in the great foyer. Of those 84,000 couches, I only used one, made of gold or silver or ivory or heartwood. Of those 84,000 bull elephants, I only rode one, the royal bull elephant named Sabbath. Of those 84,000 horses, I only rode one, the royal horse named Thundercloud. Of those 84,000 chariots, I only rode one, the chariot named Triumph. Of those 84,000 women, I was only served by one, a maiden of the aristocratic or merchant classes. Of those 8,400,000,000 cloths, I only wore one pair, made of fine linen, cotton, silk, or wool. Of those 84,000 servings of food, I only had one, eating at most a serve of rice and suitable sauce.

See, Ānanda! All those conditioned phenomena have passed, ceased, and perished. So impermanent are conditions, so unstable are conditions, so unreliable are conditions. This is quite enough for you to become disillusioned, dispassionate, and freed from all conditions.

Six times, Ānanda, I recall having laid down my body at this place. And the seventh time was as a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king, at which time my dominion extended to all four sides, I achieved stability in the country, and I possessed the seven treasures. But Ānanda, I do not see any place in this world with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans where the Realized One would lay down his body for the eighth time.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Oh! Conditions are impermanent,  
their nature is to rise and fall;  
having arisen, they cease;  
their stilling is true bliss.”

# 18. Janavasabha Sutta

With Janavasabha

## 1. Declaring the Rebirths of People From Nādika and Elsewhere

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying at Nādika in the brick house. Now at that time the Buddha was explaining the rebirths of devotees all over the nations; the Kāsis and Kosalans, Vajjians and Mallians, Cetīs and Vaṃsas, Kurus and Pañcālas, Macchas and Sūrasenas. “This one is reborn here, while that one is reborn there. Over fifty devotees in Nādika have passed away having ended the five lower fetters. They’ve been reborn spontaneously, and will be extinguished there, not liable to return from that world. More than ninety devotees in Nādika have passed away having ended three fetters, and weakened greed, hate, and delusion. They’re once-returners, who will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. In excess of five hundred devotees in Nādika have passed away having ended three fetters. They’re stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.”

When the devotees of Nādika heard about the Buddha’s answers to those questions, they were uplifted and overjoyed, full of rapture and happiness.

Venerable Ānanda heard of the Buddha’s statements and the Nādikans’ happiness.

## 2. Ānanda’s Suggestion

Then Venerable Ānanda thought: “But there were also Magadhan devotees—many, and of long standing too—who have passed away. You’d think that Aṅga and Magadha were empty of devotees who have passed away! But they too had confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and had fulfilled their ethics. The Buddha hasn’t declared their passing. It would be good to do so, for many people would gain confidence, and so be reborn in a good place. That King Seniya Bimbisāra of Magadha was a just and principled king who benefited the brahmins and householders of town and country. People still sing his praises: ‘That

just and principled king, who made us so happy, has passed away. Life was good under his dominion.’ He too had confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and had fulfilled his ethics. People say: ‘Until his dying day, King Bimbisāra sang the Buddha’s praises!’ The Buddha hasn’t declared his passing. It would be good to do so, for many people would gain confidence, and so be reborn in a good place. Besides, the Buddha was awakened in Magadha; so why hasn’t he declared the rebirth of the Magadhan devotees? If he fails to do so, they will be dejected.”

After pondering the fate of the Magadhan devotees alone in private, Ānanda rose at the crack of dawn and went to see the Buddha. He bowed, sat down to one side, and told the Buddha of his concerns, finishing by saying: “Why hasn’t the Buddha declared the rebirth of the Magadhan devotees? If he fails to do so, they will be dejected.” Then Ānanda, after making this suggestion regarding the Magadhan devotees, got up from his seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving.

Soon after Ānanda had left, the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Nāḍika for alms. He wandered for alms in Nāḍika. After the meal, on his return from alms-round, he washed his feet and entered the brick house. Sitting on the seat spread out, he paid attention, focused, and concentrated wholeheartedly on the fate of Magadhan devotees: “I shall know their destiny, where they are reborn in the next life.” And he saw where they had been reborn. Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came out of retreat. Emerging from the brick house, he sat on the seat spread out in the shade of the porch.

Then Venerable Ānanda went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Sir, you look so serene; your face seems to shine owing to the clarity of your faculties. Have you been abiding in a peaceful meditation today, sir?”

The Buddha then recounted what had happened since speaking to Ānanda, revealing that he had seen the destiny of the Magadhan devotees. He continued:

### 3. Janavasabha the Spirit

“Then, Ānanda an invisible spirit called out: ‘I am Janavasabha, Blessed One! I am Janavasabha, Holy One!’ Ānanda, do you recall having previously heard such a name as Janavasabha?”

“No, sir. But when I heard the word, I got goosebumps! I thought: ‘This must be no ordinary spirit to bear such an exalted name as Janavasabha.’” “After making himself heard while invisible, Ānanda, a very beautiful spirit appeared in front of me. And for a second time he called out: ‘I am Bimbisāra, Blessed One! I am Bimbisāra, Holy One! This is the seventh time I have been reborn in the company of the Great King Vessavaṇa. After passing away from there, I am now able to become a king of non-humans.

Seven from here, seven from there—  
fourteen transmigrations in all.  
That’s how many past lives  
I can recollect.

For a long time I’ve known that I won’t be reborn in the underworld, but that I still hope to become a once-returner.’

‘It’s incredible and amazing that you, the venerable spirit Janavasabha, should say: “For a long time I’ve been aware that I won’t be reborn in the underworld” and also “But I still hope to become a once-returner.” But from what source do you know that you’ve achieved such a high distinction?’ ‘None other than the Blessed One’s instruction! None other than the Holy One’s instruction! From the day I had absolute devotion to the Buddha I have known that I won’t be reborn in the underworld, but that I still hope to become a once-returner. Just now, sir, I had been sent out by the great king Vessavaṇa to the great king Virūḷhaka’s presence on some business, and on the way I saw the Buddha giving his attention to the fate of the Magadhan devotees. But it comes as no surprise that I have heard and learned the fate of the Magadhan devotees in the presence of the great king Vessavaṇa as

he was speaking to his assembly. It occurred to me: “I shall see the Buddha and inform him of this.” These are the two reasons I’ve come to see the Buddha.

#### 4. The Council of the Gods

Sir, it was more than a few days ago—on the fifteenth day sabbath on the full moon day at the entry to the rainy season—when all the gods of the Thirty-Three were sitting together in the Hall of Justice. A large assembly of gods was sitting all around, and the Four Great Kings were there. The Great King Dhataratṭha was seated to the east, facing west, in front of his gods. The Great King Virūlhaka was seated to the south, facing north, in front of his gods. The Great King Virūpakkha was seated to the west, facing east, in front of his gods. The Great King Vessavaṇa was seated to the north, facing south, in front of his gods. When the gods of the Thirty-Three have a gathering like this, that is how they are seated. After that come our seats. Sir, those gods who had been recently reborn in the company of the Thirty-Three after leading the spiritual life under the Buddha outshone the other gods in beauty and glory. The gods of the Thirty-Three were uplifted and overjoyed at that, full of rapture and happiness, saying: “The heavenly hosts swell, while the demon hosts dwindle!” Seeing the joy of those gods, Sakka, lord of gods, celebrated with these verses:

“The gods rejoice—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching;

and seeing the new gods,  
so beautiful and glorious,  
who have come here after leading  
the spiritual life under the Buddha!

They outshine the others  
in beauty, glory, and lifespan.  
Here are the distinguished disciples

of he whose wisdom is vast.

Seeing this, they delight—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching.”

The gods of the Thirty-Three were even more uplifted and overjoyed at that, saying: “The heavenly hosts swell, while the demon hosts dwindle!” Then the gods of the Thirty-Three, having considered and deliberated about the matter for which they were seated together in the Hall of Justice, advised and instructed the Four Great Kings on the subject. And each stood at his own seat without departing.

The Kings were instructed,  
and heeded good advice.  
With clear and peaceful minds,  
they stood by their own seats.

Then in the northern quarter a magnificent light arose and radiance appeared, surpassing the glory of the gods. Then Sakka, the lord of gods, addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three: “As indicated by the signs—light arising and radiance appearing—Brahmā will appear. For this is the precursor for the appearance of Brahmā, namely light arising and radiance appearing.”

As indicated by the signs,  
Brahmā will appear.  
For this is the sign of Brahmā:  
a light vast and great.

## 5. On Sanaṅkumāra

Then the gods of the Thirty-Three sat in their own seats, saying: “We shall find out what has caused that light, and having realized it we shall go to it.” And the Four Great Kings did likewise. Hearing that, the gods of the Thirty-Three agreed in

unison: “We shall find out what has caused that light, and having realized it we shall go to it.”

When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, he does so after manifesting in a solid corporeal form. For the gods of the Thirty-Three aren’t able to see a Brahmā’s normal appearance. When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, he outshines the other gods in beauty and glory, as a golden statue outshines the human form. When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, not a single god in that assembly greets him by bowing down or rising up or inviting him to a seat. They all sit silently on their couches with their joined palms raised, thinking: “Now Brahmā Sanañkumāra will sit on the couch of whatever god he chooses.”

And the god on whose couch Brahmā sits is overjoyed and brimming with happiness, like a king on the day of his coronation. Then Brahmā Sanañkumāra manifested in a solid corporeal form, taking on the appearance of the youth Pañcasikha, and appeared to the gods of the Thirty-Three. Rising into the air, he sat cross-legged in the sky, like a strong man might sit cross-legged on a well-appointed couch or on level ground. Seeing the joy of those gods, Brahmā Sanañkumāra celebrated with these verses:

“The gods rejoice—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching;

and seeing the new gods,  
so beautiful and glorious,  
who have come here after leading  
the spiritual life under the Buddha!

They outshine the others  
in beauty, glory, and lifespan.

Here are the distinguished disciples  
of he whose wisdom is vast.

Seeing this, they delight—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching!”

That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanañkumāra spoke. And while he was speaking on that topic, his voice had eight qualities: it was clear, comprehensible, charming, audible, rounded, undistorted, deep, and resonant. He makes sure his voice is intelligible as far as the assembly goes, but it doesn't extend outside the assembly. When someone has a voice like this, they're said to have the voice of Brahmā.

Then Brahmā Sanañkumāra, having manifested thirty-three corporeal forms, sat down on the couches of each of the gods of the Thirty-Three and addressed them: “What do the good gods of the Thirty-Three think about how much the Buddha has acted for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans? For consider those who have gone for refuge to the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and have fulfilled their ethics. When their bodies break up, after death, some are reborn in the company of the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others, some with the Gods Who Love to Create, some with the Joyful Gods, some with the Gods of Yama, some with the Gods of the Thirty-Three, and some with the Gods of the Four Great Kings. And at the very least they swell the hosts of the fairies.”

That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanañkumāra spoke. And while he was speaking on that topic, each of the gods fancied: “The one sitting on my couch is the only one speaking.”

When one is speaking,  
all the forms speak.

When one sits in silence,  
they all remain silent.

But those gods imagine—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
that the one on their seat  
is the only one to speak.

The Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra merged into one corporeal form. Then he sat on the couch of Sakka, lord of gods, and addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three:

## **6. Developing the Bases of Psychic Power**

“What do the good gods of the Thirty-Three think about how much the four bases of psychic power have been clearly described by the Blessed One—the one who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha—for the multiplication, generation, and transformation of corporeal forms through psychic power? What four? It’s when a mendicant develops the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to higher mind, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort. These are the four bases of psychic power that have been clearly described by the Buddha, for the multiplication, generation, and transformation of corporeal forms through psychic power.

All the ascetics and brahmins in the past, future, or present who wield the many kinds of psychic power do so by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power. Gentlemen, do you see such psychic might and power in me?”

“Yes, Great Brahmā.” “I too became so mighty and powerful by developing and cultivating these four bases of psychic power.” That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra spoke. And having spoken about that, he addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three:

## **7. The Three Openings**

“What do the good gods of the Thirty-Three think about how much the Buddha has understood the three opportunities for achieving happiness? What three? First, take someone who lives mixed up with sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities. After some time they hear the noble teaching, properly attend to how it applies to them, and practice accordingly. They live aloof from sensual pleasures and unskillful qualities. That gives rise to pleasure, and more than pleasure, happiness, like the joy that’s born from gladness. This is the first opportunity for achieving happiness.

Next, take someone whose coarse physical, verbal, and mental processes have not died down. After some time they hear the noble teaching, properly attend to how it applies to them, and practice accordingly. Their coarse physical, verbal, and mental processes die down. That gives rise to pleasure, and more than pleasure, happiness, like the joy that’s born from gladness. This is the second opportunity for achieving happiness.

Next, take someone who doesn’t truly understand what is skillful and what is unskillful, what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what should be cultivated and what should not be cultivated, what is inferior and what is superior, and what is on the side of dark and the side of bright. After some time they hear the noble teaching, properly attend to how it applies to them, and practice accordingly. They truly understand what is skillful and what is unskillful, and so on. Knowing and seeing like this, ignorance is given up and knowledge arises. That gives rise to pleasure, and more than pleasure, happiness, like the joy that’s born from gladness. This is the third opportunity for achieving happiness. These are the three opportunities for achieving happiness that have been understood by the Buddha.” That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanañkumāra spoke. And having spoken about that, he addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three:

## **8. Mindfulness Meditation**

“What do the good gods of the Thirty-Three think about how much the Buddha has clearly described the four kinds of mindfulness meditation for achieving what is skillful? What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the

body internally—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. As they meditate in this way, they become rightly immersed in that, and rightly serene. Then they give rise to knowledge and vision of other people’s bodies externally. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings internally ... Then they give rise to knowledge and vision of other people’s feelings externally. They meditate observing an aspect of the mind internally ... Then they give rise to knowledge and vision of other people’s minds externally. They meditate observing an aspect of principles internally—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. As they meditate in this way, they become rightly immersed in that, and rightly serene. Then they give rise to knowledge and vision of other people’s principles externally. These are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation that the Buddha has clearly described for achieving what is skillful.” That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanañkumāra spoke. And having spoken about that, he addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three:

### **9. Seven Prerequisites of Immersion**

“What do the good gods of the Thirty-Three think about how much the Buddha has clearly described the seven prerequisites of immersion for the development and fulfillment of right immersion? What seven? Right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness.

Unification of mind with these seven factors as prerequisites is called noble right immersion ‘with its vital conditions’ and ‘with its prerequisites’. Right view gives rise to right thought. Right thought gives rise to right speech. Right speech gives rise to right action. Right action gives rise to right livelihood. Right livelihood gives rise to right effort. Right effort gives rise to right mindfulness. Right mindfulness gives rise to right immersion. Right immersion gives rise to right knowledge. Right knowledge gives rise to right freedom. So if anything should be rightly described as ‘a teaching that’s well explained by the Buddha, realizable in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves; and the doors to the deathless are flung open,’ it’s this. For the teaching is well explained by the Buddha—realizable in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves—and the doors of the deathless are flung open.

Whoever has experiential confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and has the ethical conduct loved by the noble ones; and whoever is spontaneously reborn, and is trained in the teaching; in excess of 2,400,000 such Magadhan devotees have passed away having ended three fetters. They're stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening. And there are once-returners here, too.

And as for other people  
who I think have shared in merit—  
I couldn't even number them,  
for fear of speaking falsely.”

That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra spoke. And while he was speaking on that topic, this thought came to the great king Vessavaṇa: “It's incredible, it's amazing! That there should be such a magnificent Teacher, and such a magnificent exposition of the teaching! And that such achievements of high distinction should be made known!” And then Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, knowing what the great king Vessavaṇa was thinking, said to him: “What does Great King Vessavaṇa think? In the past, too, there was such a magnificent Teacher, and such a magnificent exposition of the teaching! And such achievements of high distinction were made known! In the future, too, there will be such a magnificent Teacher, and such a magnificent exposition of the teaching! And such achievements of high distinction will be made known!”

That, sir, is the topic on which Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra spoke to the gods of the Thirty-Three. And the great king Vessavaṇa, having heard and learned it in the presence of Brahmā as he was speaking on that topic, informed his own assembly.”

And the spirit Janavasabha, having heard and learned it in the presence of the great king Vessavaṇa as he was speaking on that topic to his own assembly, informed the Buddha. And the Buddha, having heard and learned it in the presence of the spirit

Janavasabha, and also from his own direct knowledge, informed Venerable Ānanda. And Venerable Ānanda, having heard and learned it in the presence of the Buddha, informed the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. And that's how this spiritual life has become successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans.

# 19. Mahāgovinda Sutta

The Great Steward

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. Then, late at night, the fairy Pañcasikha, lighting up the entire Vulture’s Peak, went up to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and said to him: “Sir, I would tell you of what I heard and learned directly from the gods of the Thirty-Three.” “Tell me, Pañcasikha,” said the Buddha.

## 1. The Council of the Gods

“Sir, it was more than a few days ago—on the fifteenth day sabbath on the full moon day at the invitation to admonish held at the end of the rainy season—when all the gods of the Thirty-Three were sitting together in the Hall of Justice. A large assembly of gods was sitting all around, and the Four Great Kings were there. The Great King Dhataratṭha was seated to the east, facing west, in front of his gods. The Great King Virūlhaka was seated to the south, facing north, in front of his gods. The Great King Virūpakkha was seated to the west, facing east, in front of his gods. The Great King Vessavaṇa was seated to the north, facing south, in front of his gods. When the gods of the Thirty-Three have a gathering like this, that is how they are seated. After that come our seats.

Sir, those gods who had been recently reborn in the company of the Thirty-Three after leading the spiritual life under the Buddha outshine the other gods in beauty and glory. The gods of the Thirty-Three were uplifted and overjoyed at that, full of rapture and happiness, saying: ‘The heavenly hosts swell, while the demon hosts dwindle!’

Seeing the joy of those gods, Sakka, lord of gods, celebrated with these verses:

‘The gods rejoice—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—

revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching;

and seeing the new gods,  
so beautiful and glorious,  
who have come here after leading  
the spiritual life under the Buddha!

They outshine the others  
in beauty, glory, and lifespan.  
Here are the distinguished disciples  
of he whose wisdom is vast.

Seeing this, they delight—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching!’

The gods of the Thirty-Three were even more uplifted and overjoyed at that, full of rapture and happiness, saying: ‘The heavenly hosts swell, while the demon hosts dwindle!’

## **2. Eight Genuine Praises**

Seeing the joy of those gods, Sakka, the lord of gods, addressed them: ‘Gentlemen, would you like to hear eight genuine praises of the Buddha?’ ‘Indeed we would, sir.’ Then Sakka proffered these eight genuine praises of the Buddha:

‘What do the good gods of the Thirty-Three think about how much the Buddha has acted for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans? I don’t see any Teacher, past or present, who has such compassion for the world, apart from the Buddha.

Also, the Buddha has explained the teaching well—realizable in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves. I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who explains such a relevant teaching, apart from the Buddha.

Also, the Buddha has clearly described what is skillful and what is unskillful, what is blameworthy and what is blameless, what should be cultivated and what should not be cultivated, what is inferior and what is superior, and what is on the side of dark and the side of bright. I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who so clearly describes all these things, apart from the Buddha.

Also, the Buddha has clearly described the practice that leads to extinguishment for his disciples. And extinguishment and the practice come together, as the waters of the Ganges come together and converge with the waters of the Yamuna. I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who so clearly describes the practice that leads to extinguishment for his disciples, apart from the Buddha.

Also, possessions and popularity have accrued to the Buddha, so much that you'd think it would thrill even the aristocrats. But he takes his food free of vanity. I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who takes their food so free of vanity, apart from the Buddha.

Also, the Buddha has gained companions, both trainees who are practicing, and those with defilements ended who have completed their journey. The Buddha is committed to the joy of solitude, but doesn't send them away. I don't see any Teacher, past or present, so committed to the joy of solitude, apart from the Buddha.

Also, the Buddha does as he says, and says as he does, thus: he does as he says, and says as he does. I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who so practices in line with the teaching, apart from the Buddha.

Also, the Buddha has gone beyond doubt and got rid of uncertainty. He has achieved all he wished for regarding the fundamental purpose of the spiritual life. I don't see any Teacher, past or present, who has achieved these things, apart from the Buddha.'

These are the eight genuine praises of the Buddha proffered by Sakka. Hearing them, the gods of the Thirty-Three were even more uplifted and overjoyed. Then some gods thought: 'If only four fully awakened Buddhas might arise in the world and teach the Dhamma, just like the Blessed One! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans!' Other gods thought: 'Let alone four fully awakened Buddhas; if only three fully awakened Buddhas, or two fully awakened Buddhas might arise in the world and teach the Dhamma, just like the Blessed One! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans!'

When they said this, Sakka said: 'It's impossible, gentlemen, for two perfect ones, fully awakened Buddhas to arise in the same solar system at the same time. May that Blessed One be healthy and well, and remain with us for a long time! That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans!' Then the gods of the Thirty-Three, having considered and deliberated about the matter for which they were seated together in the Hall of Justice, advised and instructed the Four Great Kings on the subject. And each stood at their own seat without departing.

The Kings were instructed,  
and heeded good advice.  
With clear and peaceful minds,  
they stood by their own seats.

Then in the northern quarter a magnificent light arose and radiance appeared, surpassing the glory of the gods. Then Sakka, the lord of gods, addressed the gods

of the Thirty-Three: ‘As indicated by the signs—light arising and radiance appearing—Brahmā will appear. For this is the precursor for the appearance of Brahmā, namely light arising and radiance appearing.’

As indicated by the signs,  
Brahmā will appear.  
For this is the sign of Brahmā:  
a light vast and great.

### 3. On Sanañkumāra

Then the gods of the Thirty-Three sat in their own seats, saying: ‘We shall find out what has caused that light, and having realized it we shall go to it.’ And the Four Great Kings did likewise. Hearing that, the gods of the Thirty-Three agreed in unison: ‘We shall find out what has caused that light, and having realized it we shall go to it.’

When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, he does so after manifesting in a solid corporeal form, for the gods of the Thirty-Three aren’t able to see a Brahmā’s normal appearance. When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, he outshines the other gods in beauty and glory, as a golden statue outshines the human form. When Brahmā Sanañkumāra appears to the gods of the Thirty-Three, not a single god in that assembly greets him by bowing down or rising up or inviting him to a seat. They all sit silently on their couches with their joined palms raised, thinking: ‘Now Brahmā Sanañkumāra will sit on the couch of whatever god he chooses.’ And the god on whose couch Brahmā sits is overjoyed and brimming with happiness, like a king on the day of his coronation. Seeing the joy of those gods, Brahmā Sanañkumāra celebrated with these verses:

‘The gods rejoice—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching;

and seeing the new gods,  
so beautiful and glorious,  
who have come here after leading  
the spiritual life under the Buddha!

They outshine the others  
in beauty, glory, and lifespan.  
Here are the distinguished disciples  
of he whose wisdom is vast.

Seeing this, they delight—  
the Thirty-Three with their Lord—  
revering the Realized One,  
and the natural excellence of the teaching!’

That is the topic on which Brahmā Sanañkumāra spoke. And while he was speaking on that topic, his voice had eight qualities: it was clear, comprehensible, charming, audible, rounded, undistorted, deep, and resonant. He makes sure his voice is intelligible as far as the assembly goes, but it doesn’t extend outside the assembly. When someone has a voice like this, they’re said to have the voice of Brahmā. Then the gods of the Thirty-Three said to Brahmā Sanañkumāra: ‘Good, Great Brahmā! Knowing this, we rejoice. And there are the eight genuine praises of the Buddha spoken by Sakka— knowing them, too, we rejoice.’

#### **4. Eight Genuine Praises**

Then, sir, Brahmā said to Sakka: ‘It would be good, lord of gods, if I could also hear the eight genuine praises of the Buddha.’ Saying, ‘Yes, Great Brahmā,’ Sakka repeated the eight genuine praises for him.

Hearing them, Brahmā Sanañkumāra was uplifted and overjoyed, full of rapture and happiness. Then Brahmā Sanañkumāra manifested in a solid corporeal form, taking on the appearance of the youth Pañcasikha, and appeared to the gods of the

Thirty-Three. Rising into the air, he sat cross-legged in the sky, like a strong man might sit cross-legged on a well-appointed couch or on level ground. There he addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three:

## **5. The Story of the Steward**

‘What do the gods of the Thirty-Three think about the extent of the Buddha’s great wisdom?’

Once upon a time, there was a king named Disampati. He had a brahmin high priest named the Steward. Disampati’s son was the prince named Reṇu, while the Steward’s son was the student named Jotipāla. There were Reṇu the prince, Jotipāla the student, and six other aristocrats; these eight became friends. In due course the brahmin Steward passed away. At his passing, King Disampati lamented: “At a time when I have relinquished all my duties to the brahmin Steward and amuse myself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, he passes away!” When he said this, Prince Reṇu said to him: “Sire, don’t lament too much at the Steward’s passing. He has a son named Jotipāla, who is even more astute and expert than his father. He should manage the affairs that were managed by his father.” “Is that so, my prince?” “Yes, sire.”

## **6. The Story of the Great Steward**

So King Disampati addressed one of his men: “Please, mister, go to the student Jotipāla, and say to him: ‘Best wishes, Jotipāla! You are summoned by King Disampati; he wants to see you.’” “Yes, Your Majesty,” replied that man, and did as he was asked. Then Jotipāla went to the king and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and the king said to him: “May you, Jotipāla, manage my affairs—please don’t turn me down! I shall appoint you to your father’s position, and anoint you as Steward.” “Yes, sir,” replied Jotipāla. So the king anointed him as Steward and appointed him to his father’s position. After his appointment, the Steward Jotipāla managed both the affairs that his father had managed, and other affairs that his father had not managed. He organized both the works that his father had organized, and other works that his father had not organized. When people noticed this they said: “The

brahmin is indeed a Steward, a Great Steward!” And that’s how the student Jotipāla came to be known as the Great Steward.

### **6.1. Dividing the Realm**

Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats and said: “King Disampati is old, elderly and senior, advanced in years, and has reached the final stage of life. Who knows how long he has to live? It’s likely that when he passes away the king-makers will anoint Prince Reṇu as king. Come, sirs, go to Prince Reṇu and say: ‘Prince Reṇu, we are your friends, dear, beloved, and cherished. We have shared your joys and sorrows. King Disampati is old, elderly and senior, advanced in years, and has reached the final stage of life. Who knows how long he has to live? It’s likely that when he passes away the king-makers will anoint you as king. If you should gain kingship, share it with us.’” “Yes, sir,” replied the six aristocrats. They went to Prince Reṇu and put the proposal to him. The prince replied: “Who else, sirs, in my realm ought to prosper if not you? If I gain kingship, I will share it with you all.”

In due course King Disampati passed away. At his passing, the king-makers anointed Prince Reṇu as king. But after being anointed, King Reṇu amused himself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats and said: “King Disampati has passed away. But after being anointed, King Reṇu amused himself, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. Who knows the intoxicating power of sensual pleasures? Come, sirs, go to Prince Reṇu and say: ‘Sir, King Disampati has passed away, and you have been anointed as king. Do you remember what you said?’”

“Yes, sir,” replied the six aristocrats. They went to Prince Reṇu and said: “Sir, King Disampati has passed away, and you have been anointed as king. Do you remember what you said?” “I remember, sirs. Who is able to neatly divide into seven equal parts this great land, so broad in the north and narrow as the front of a cart in the south?” “Who else, sir, if not the Great Steward?” So King Reṇu addressed one of his men: “Please, mister, go to the brahmin Great Steward and

say that King Reṇu summons him.” “Yes, Your Majesty,” replied that man, and did as he was asked. Then the Great Steward went to the king and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side, and the king said to him: “Come, let the good Steward neatly divide into seven equal parts this great land, so broad in the north and narrow as the front of a cart in the south.” “Yes, sir,” replied the Great Steward, and did as he was asked. All were set up like the fronts of carts, with King Reṇu’s nation in the center.

Dantapura for the Kaliṅgas;

Potana for the Assakas;

Mahissati for the Avantis;

Roruka for the Sovīras;

Mithila for the Videhas;

Campā was made for the Aṅgas;

and Varanasi for the Kāsīs:

these were laid out by the Steward.

Then those six aristocrats were delighted with their respective gains, having achieved all they wished for: “We have received exactly what we wanted, what we wished for, what we desired, what we yearned for.”

Sattabhū and Brahmadata,

Vessabhū and Bharata,

Reṇu and the two Dhataratṭhas:

These are the seven Bhāratas.

The first recitation section is finished.

## 6.2. A Good Reputation

Then the six aristocrats approached the Great Steward and said: “Steward, just as you are King Reṇu’s friend, dear, beloved, and cherished, you are also our friend. Would you manage our affairs? Please don’t turn us down!” “Yes, sirs,” replied the

Great Steward. Then the Great Steward managed the realms of the seven kings. And he taught seven well-to-do brahmins, and seven hundred bathed initiates to recite the hymns.

After some time he got this good reputation: “The Great Steward sees Brahmā in person! The Great Steward discusses, converses, and consults with Brahmā in person!” Then the Great Steward thought: “I have the reputation of seeing Brahmā in person, and discussing with him in person. But I don’t. I have heard that brahmins of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, said: ‘Whoever goes on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practices the absorption on compassion sees Brahmā and discusses with him.’ Why don’t I do that?”

So the Great Steward went to King Reṇu and told him of the situation, saying: “Sir, I wish to go on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practice the absorption on compassion. No one should approach me, except for the one who brings my meal.” “Please do so, Steward, at your convenience.”

Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats to put the same proposal, and received the same reply.

He also went to the seven well-to-do brahmins and seven hundred bathed initiates and put to them the same proposal, adding: “Sirs, recite the hymns in detail as you have learned and memorized them, and teach each other how to recite.” And they too said: “Please do so, Steward, at your convenience.”

Then the Great Steward went to his forty equal wives to put the same proposal to them, and received the same reply.

Then the Great Steward had a new meeting hall built to the east of his citadel, where he went on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practiced the absorption on compassion. And no one approached him except the one who brought him meals. “I have heard that brahmins of the past said that whoever goes

on retreat for the four months of the rainy season and practices the absorption on compassion sees Brahmā and discusses with him. But I neither see Brahmā nor discuss with him.”

### **6.3. A Discussion With Brahmā**

And then Brahmā Sanañkumāra, knowing what the Great Steward was thinking, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, vanished from the Brahmā realm and reappeared in the Great Steward’s presence. At that, the Great Steward became frightened, scared, his hair standing on end, as he had never seen such a sight before. So he addressed Brahmā Sanañkumāra in verse:

“Who might you be, sir,  
so beautiful, glorious, majestic?  
Not knowing, I ask—  
how am I to know who you are?”

“In the Brahmā realm they know me  
as ‘The Eternal Youth’.  
All the gods know me thus,  
and so you should know me, Steward.”

“A Brahmā deserves a seat and water,  
foot-salve, and sweet cakes.  
Sir, I ask you to please accept  
these gifts of hospitality.”

“I accept the gifts of hospitality  
of which you speak.  
I grant you the opportunity  
to ask whatever you desire—  
about welfare and benefit in this life,  
or happiness in lives to come.”

Then the Great Steward thought: “Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra has granted me an opportunity. Should I ask him about what is beneficial for this life or lives to come?” Then the Great Steward thought: “I’m an expert in what is beneficial for this life, and others even ask me about it. Why don’t I ask Brahmā about the benefit that specifically applies to lives to come?” So he addressed Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra in verse:

“I’m in doubt, so I ask Brahmā—who is free of doubt—  
about things one may learn from another.  
Standing on what, training in what  
may a mortal reach the deathless Brahmā realm?”

“He among men, O brahmin, has given up possessions,  
become one, compassionate,  
free from the stench of decay, and refraining from sex.  
Standing on that, training in that  
a mortal may reach the deathless Brahmā realm.”

“Sir, I understand what ‘giving up possessions’ means. It’s when someone gives up a large or small fortune, and a large or small family circle. They shave off hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness. That’s how I understand ‘giving up possessions’.

Sir, I understand what ‘oneness’ means. It’s when someone frequents a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. That’s how I understand ‘oneness’.

Sir, I understand what ‘compassionate’ means. It’s when someone meditates spreading a heart full of compassion to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of compassion to the whole world—abundant,

expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. That's how I understand 'compassionate'. But I don't understand what you say about the stench of decay.

What among men, O Brahmā, is the stench of decay?  
I don't understand, so tell me, wise one:  
wrapped in what do people stink,  
headed for hell, shut out of the Brahmā realm?"

“Anger, lies, fraud, and deceit,  
miserliness, vanity, jealousy,  
desire, stinginess, harassing others,  
greed, hate, pride, and delusion—  
those bound to such things have the stench of decay;  
they're headed for hell, shut out of the Brahmā realm.”

“As I understand what you say about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home. I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness!” “Please do so, Steward, at your convenience.”

#### **6.4. Informing King Reṇu**

So the Great Steward went to King Reṇu and said: “Sir, please now find another high priest to manage the affairs of state for you. I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness. As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home. I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

“I announce to King Reṇu,  
the lord of the land:  
you must learn how to rule,  
for I no longer care for my ministry.”

“If you're lacking any pleasures,  
I'll supply them for you.

I'll protect you from any harm,  
for I command the nation's army.  
You are my father, I am your son!  
O Steward, please don't leave!"

"I'm lacking no pleasures,  
and no-one is harming me.  
I've heard a non-human voice,  
so I no longer care for lay life."

"What was that non-human like?  
What did he say to you,  
hearing which you would abandon  
our house and all our people?"

"Before entering this retreat,  
I only liked to sacrifice.  
I kindled the sacred flame,  
strewn about with kusa grass.

But then Brahmā appeared to me,  
the Eternal Youth from the Brahmā realm.  
He answered my question,  
hearing which I no longer care for lay life."

"I have faith, O Steward,  
in that of which you speak.  
Having heard a non-human voice,  
what else could you do?"

We will follow your example,  
Steward, be my Teacher!  
Like a gem of beryl—

flawless, immaculate, beautiful—  
that's how pure we shall live,  
in the Steward's dispensation.

If the Steward is going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too.  
Your destiny shall be ours.”

### **6.5. Informing the Six Aristocrats**

Then the Great Steward went to the six aristocrats and said: “Sirs, please now find another high priest to manage the affairs of state for you. I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness. As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it's not easy to quell while living at home. I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness!” Then the six aristocrats withdrew to one side and thought up a plan: “These brahmins are really greedy for wealth. Why don't we try to persuade him with wealth?” They returned to the Great Steward and said: “In these seven kingdoms there is abundant wealth. We'll get you as much as you want.” “Enough, sirs. I already have abundant wealth, owing to my lords. Giving up all that, I shall go forth.” Then the six aristocrats withdrew to one side and thought up a plan: “These brahmins are really greedy for women. Why don't we try to persuade him with women?” They returned to the Great Steward and said: “In these seven kingdoms there are many women. We'll get you as many as you want.” “Enough, sirs. I already have forty equal wives. Giving up all them, I shall go forth.”

“If the Steward is going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too.  
Your destiny shall be ours.”

“If you all give up sensual pleasures,  
to which ordinary people are attached,  
exert yourselves, being strong,  
and possessing the power of patience.

This path is the straight path,  
this path is supreme.

Guarded by the good, the true teaching  
leads to rebirth in the Brahmā realm.”

“Well then, sir, please wait for seven years. When seven years have passed, we shall go forth with you.”

“Seven years is too long, sirs. I cannot wait that long. Who knows what will happen to the living? We are heading to the next life. We must think about this and wake up! We must do what’s good and live the spiritual life, for no-one born can escape death. I shall go forth.” “Well then, sir, please wait for six years, five years, four years, three years, two years, one year,

seven months,

six months, five months, four months, three months, two months, one month, or even a fortnight. When a fortnight has passed, we shall go forth. Your destiny shall be ours.”

“A fortnight is too long, sirs. I cannot wait that long. Who knows what will happen to the living? We are heading to the next life. We must think about this and wake up! We must do what’s good and live the spiritual life, for no-one born can escape death. As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it’s not easy to quell while living at home. I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.”

“Well then, sir, please wait for a week, so that we can instruct our sons and brothers in kingship. When a week has passed, we shall go forth. Your destiny shall be ours.” “A week is not too long, sirs. I will wait that long.”

## **6.6. Informing the Brahmins**

Then the Great Steward also went to the seven well-to-do brahmins and seven hundred bathed initiates and said: “Sirs, please now find another teacher to teach you to recite the hymns. I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness. As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it’s not easy to quell while living at home. I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.” “Please don’t go

forth from the lay life to homelessness! The life of one gone forth is of little influence or profit. Whereas the life of a brahmin is of great influence and profit.” “Please, sirs, don’t say that. Who has greater influence and profit than myself? For now I am like a king to kings, like Brahmā to brahmins, like a deity to householders. Giving up all that, I shall go forth. As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it’s not easy to quell while living at home. I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.” “If the Steward is going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too. Your destiny shall be ours.”

### **6.7. Informing the Wives**

Then the Great Steward went to his forty equal wives and said: “Ladies, please do whatever you wish, whether returning to your own families, or finding another husband. I wish to go forth from the lay life to homelessness. As I understand what Brahmā says about the stench of decay, it’s not easy to quell while living at home. I shall go forth from the lay life to homelessness.” “You are the only family we want! You are the only husband we want! If you are going forth from the lay life to homelessness, we shall do so too. Your destiny shall be ours.”

### **6.8. The Great Steward Goes Forth**

When a week had passed, the Great Steward shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. And when he had gone forth, the seven anointed aristocrat kings, the seven brahmins with seven hundred initiates, the forty equal wives, and many thousands of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and many harem women shaved off their hair and beards, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. Escorted by that assembly, the Great Steward wandered on tour among the villages, towns, and capital cities. And at that time, whenever he arrived at a village or town, he was like a king to kings, like Brahmā to brahmins, like a deity to householders. And whenever people sneezed or tripped over they’d say: “Homage to the Great Steward! Homage to the high priest for the seven!”

And the Great Steward meditated spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above,

below, across, everywhere, all around, he spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. He meditated spreading a heart full of compassion ... rejoicing ... equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, he spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. And he taught his disciples the path to rebirth in the company of Brahmā.

Those of his disciples who completely understood the Great Steward's instructions, at the breaking up of the body, after death, were reborn in the Brahmā realm. Of those disciples who only partly understood the Great Steward's instructions, some were reborn in the company of the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others, while some were reborn in the company of the Gods Who Love to Create, or the Joyful Gods, or the Gods of Yama, or the Gods of the Thirty-Three, or the Gods of the Four Great Kings. And at the very least they swelled the hosts of the fairies. And so the going forth of all those respectable people was not in vain, was not wasted, but was fruitful and fertile.' Do you remember this, Blessed One?"

"I remember, Pañcasikha. I myself was the brahmin Great Steward at that time. And I taught those disciples the path to rebirth in the company of Brahmā. But that spiritual path of mine doesn't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. It only leads as far as rebirth in the Brahmā realm.

But this spiritual path does lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. And what is the spiritual path that leads to extinguishment? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. This is the spiritual path that leads to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

Those of my disciples who completely understand my instructions realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life. And they live

having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. Of those disciples who only partly understand my instructions, some, with the ending of the five lower fetters, become reborn spontaneously. They are extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world. Some, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, become once-returners. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. And some, with the ending of three fetters, become stream-enterers, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening. And so the going forth of all those respectable people was not in vain, was not wasted, but was fruitful and fertile.”

That is what the Buddha said. Delighted, the fairy Pañcasikha approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before vanishing right there.

## 20. Mahāsamaya Sutta

### The Great Congregation

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans, near Kapilavatthu in the Great Wood, together with a large Saṅgha of around five hundred mendicants, all of whom were perfected ones. And most of the deities from ten solar systems had gathered to see the Buddha and the Saṅgha of mendicants. Then four deities of the Pure Abodes, aware of what was happening, thought: “Why don’t we go to the Buddha and each recite a verse in his presence?”

Then, as easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, they vanished from the Pure Abodes and reappeared in front of the Buddha. They bowed to the Buddha and stood to one side. Standing to one side, one deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“There’s a great congregation in the woods,  
a host of gods have assembled.  
We’ve come to this righteous congregation  
to see the invincible Saṅgha!”

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“The mendicants there are immersed in samādhi,  
they’ve straightened out their own minds.  
Like a charioteer who has taken the reins,  
the astute ones protect their senses.”

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“Having cut the stake and cut the bar,  
they’re unmoved, with boundary post uprooted.  
They live pure and stainless,

the young dragons tamed by the seer.”

Then another deity recited this verse in the Buddha’s presence:

“Anyone who has gone to the Buddha for refuge  
won’t go to a plane of loss.  
After giving up this human body,  
they swell the hosts of gods.”

### **1. The Gathering of Deities**

Then the Buddha said to the mendicants: “Mendicants, most of the deities from ten solar systems have gathered to see the Realized One and the mendicant Saṅgha. The Buddhas of the past had, and the Buddhas of the future will have, gatherings of deities that are at most like the gathering for me now. I shall declare the names of the heavenly hosts; I shall extol the names of the heavenly hosts; I shall teach the names of the heavenly hosts. Listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” they replied.

The Buddha said this:

“I shall invoke a paean of praise!  
Where the earth-gods dwell,  
there, in mountain caves,  
resolute and composed,  
  
dwell many like lonely lions,  
who have mastered their fears.  
Their minds are bright and pure,  
clear and undisturbed.”

The teacher knew that over five hundred  
were in the wood at Kapilavatthu.  
Therefore he addressed

the disciples who love the teaching:

“The heavenly hosts have come forth;  
mendicants, you should be aware of them.”

Those monks became keen,  
hearing the Buddha’s instruction.

Knowledge manifested in them,  
seeing those non-human beings.  
Some saw a hundred,  
a thousand, even seventy thousand,

while some saw a hundred thousand  
non-human beings.  
But some saw an endless number  
spread out in every direction.

And all that was known  
and distinguished by the Seer.  
Therefore he addressed  
the disciples who love the teaching:

“The heavenly hosts have come forth;  
mendicants, you should be aware of them.  
I shall extol them for you,  
with lyrics in proper order.

There are seven thousand spirits,  
earth-gods of Kapilavatthu.  
They’re powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they’ve come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

From the Himalayas there are six thousand  
spirits of different colors.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

From Sātāgira there are three thousand  
spirits of different colors.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

And thus there are sixteen thousand  
spirits of different colors.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

From Vessamittā there are five hundred  
spirits of different colors.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

And there's Kumbhīra of Rājagaha,  
whose home is on Mount Vepulla.  
Attended by more than  
a hundred thousand spirits,

Kumbhīra of Rājagaha  
also came to the meeting in the wood.

King Dhataratṭha rules  
the eastern quarter.  
Lord of the fairies,  
he's a great king, glorious.

And he has many mighty sons  
all of them named Inda.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

King Virūḷha rules  
the southern quarter.  
Lord of the goblins,  
he's a great king, glorious.

And he has many mighty sons  
all of them named Inda.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

King Virūpakkha rules  
the western quarter.  
Lord of the dragons,  
he's a great king, glorious.

And he has many mighty sons

all of them named Inda.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

King Kuvera rules  
the northern quarter.  
Lord of spirits,  
he's a great king, glorious.

And he has many mighty sons  
all of them named Inda.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

Dhataratṭha in the east,  
Virūlhaka to the south,  
Virūpakkha to the west,  
and Kuvera in the north.

These Four Great Kings,  
all around in the four quarters,  
stood there dazzling  
in the wood at Kapilavatthu.

Their deceitful bondservants came,  
so treacherous and crafty—  
the deceivers Kuṭṭeṇḍu, Viṭṭeṇḍu,  
with Viṭucca and Viṭuḍa.

And Candana and Kāmaseṭṭha,  
Kinnughaṇḍu and Nighaṇḍu,  
Panāda and Opamañña,  
and Mātali, the god’s charioteer.

Cittasena the fairy came too,  
and the kings Nala and Janesabha,  
as well as Pañcasikha,  
Timbaru, and Suriyavaccasā.

These and other kings there were,  
the fairies with their kings.  
Rejoicing, they’ve come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

Then came dragons from Nābhasa,  
and Vesālī, with the Tacchakas.  
The Kambalas and Assataras came  
from Pāyāga with their kin.

From Yamunā the Dhataratṭha  
dragons came, so glorious.  
And Erāvaṇa the great dragon  
also came to the meeting in the wood.

Those who seize the dragon kings by force—  
divine, twice-born birds with piercing vision—  
swoop down to the wood from the sky;  
their name is ‘Rainbow Phoenix’.

But the dragon kings remained fearless,  
for the Buddha kept them safe from the phoenixes.  
Introducing each other with gentle words,

the dragons and phoenixes took the Buddha as their refuge.

Defeated by Vajirahattha,  
the demons live in the ocean.  
They're brothers of Vāsava,  
powerful and glorious.

There's the terrifying Kālakañjas,  
the Dānaveghasa demons,  
Vepacitti and Sucitti,  
Pahārāda with Namuci,

and a hundred of Bali's sons,  
all named after Veroca.  
Bali's army armed themselves  
and went up to the auspicious Rāhu, saying:  
'Now is the time, sir,  
for the meeting of mendicants in the wood.'

The gods of Water and Earth,  
and Fire and Wind came there.  
The Varuṇa and Vāruṇa gods,  
and Soma together with Yasa.

A host of the gods of Love  
and Compassion came, so glorious.  
These ten hosts of gods  
shone in all different colors.

They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

The Veṅhu and Sahali gods,  
and Asama, and the twin Yamas came.  
The gods living on the moon came,  
with the Moon before them.

The gods living on the sun came,  
with the Sun before them.  
And with the stars before them  
came the silly gods of clouds.

And Sakka came, the stronghold-giver,  
known as Vāsava, the best of the Vasus.  
These ten hosts of gods  
shone in all different colors.

They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

Then came the Sahabhū gods,  
blazing like a crested flame;  
and the Aritṭhakas and Rojas too,  
and the gods hued blue as flax.

The Varuṇas and Sahadhammas,  
the Accutas and Anejakas,  
the Sūleyyas and Ruciras all came,  
as did the Vāsavanesi gods.  
These ten hosts of gods  
shone in all different colors.

They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

The Samānas, Mahāsamānas,  
Mānusas, and Mānusuttamas all came,  
and the gods deprived by play,  
and those who are malevolent.

Then came the Hari gods,  
and the Lohitavāsīs.  
The Pāragas and Mahāpāragas came,  
such glorious gods.  
These ten hosts of gods  
shone in all different colors.

They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

The Sukkas, Karumhas, and Aruṇas  
came along with the Veghanasas.  
And the Odātagayhas came as chiefs  
of the Vicakkhaṇa gods.

The Sadāmattas and Hāragajas,  
and the glorious Missakas;  
Pajjuna came thundering,  
he who rains on all quarters.

These ten hosts of gods

shone in all different colors.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

The Khemiyas, Tusitas, Yāmas,  
and the glorious Kaṭṭhakas came;  
The Lambītakas, Lāmaseṭṭhas,  
those called the Jotis and Āsavas.  
The Gods Who Love to Create came too,  
and those who delight in the Creations of Others.

These ten hosts of gods  
shone in all different colors.  
They're powerful and brilliant,  
so beautiful and glorious.  
Rejoicing, they've come forth  
to the meeting of mendicants in the wood.

These sixty hosts of gods  
shone in all different colors.  
They came in order of their names,  
these and others likewise, thinking:

'We shall see those rid of rebirth, kind,  
the undefiled ones who have crossed the flood,  
and the dragon who brought them across,  
who like the Moon has overcome darkness.'

Subrahmā and Paramatta came,  
with sons of those powerful ones.  
Sanaṅkumāra and Tissa

also came to the meeting in the wood.

Of a thousand Brahmā realms,  
the Great Brahmā stands forth.  
He has arisen, resplendent,  
his formidable body so glorious.

The ten Issarās came there,  
each one of them wielding power,  
and in the middle of them came  
Hārīta with his escorts.”

When they had all come forth—  
the gods with their Lord, and the Brahmās—  
Māra’s army came forth too:  
see the stupidity of the Dark Lord!

“Come, seize them and bind them,” he said,  
“let them be bound by desire!  
Surround them on all sides,  
don’t let any escape!”

And so there the great general  
sent forth his dark army.  
He struck the ground with his fist  
to make a horrifying sound

like a storm cloud shedding rain,  
thundering and flashing.  
But then he retreated,  
furious, out of control.

And all that was known

and distinguished by the Seer.  
Therefore he addressed  
the disciples who love the teaching:

“Māra’s army has arrived;  
mendicants, you should be aware of them.”  
Those monks became keen,  
hearing the Buddha’s instruction.  
The army fled from those free of passion,  
and not a single hair was stirred!

“All are triumphant in battle,  
so fearless and glorious.  
They rejoice with all the spirits,  
the disciples well-known among men.”

## 21. Sakkapañha Sutta

### Sakka's Questions

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Magadhans; east of Rājagaha there's a brahmin village named Ambasaṇḍā, north of which, on Mount Vedyaka, is the Indasāla cave. Now at that time a keen interest in seeing the Buddha came over Sakka, lord of gods. He thought: "Where is the Blessed One at present, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?" He saw that the Buddha was at the Indasāla cave, and addressed the gods of the Thirty-Three: "Good sirs, the Buddha is staying in the land of the Magadhans at the Indasāla cave. What if we were to go and see that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?" "Yes, lord," replied the gods.

Then Sakka addressed the fairy Pañcasikha: "Dear Pañcasikha, the Buddha is staying in the land of the Magadhans at the Indasāla cave. What if we were to go and see that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha?" "Yes, lord," replied the fairy Pañcasikha. Taking his arched harp made from the pale timber of wood-apple, he went as Sakka's attendant.

Then Sakka went at the head of a retinue consisting of the gods of the Thirty-Three and the fairy Pañcasikha. As easily as a strong person would extend or contract their arm, he vanished from the heaven of the gods of the Thirty-Three and landed on Mount Vedyaka north of Ambasaṇḍā. Now at that time a dazzling light appeared over Mount Vedyaka and Ambasaṇḍā, as happens through the glory of the gods. People in the villages round about, terrified, shocked, and awestruck, said: "Mount Vedyaka must be on fire today, blazing and burning! Oh why has such a dazzling light appeared over Mount Vedyaka and Ambasaṇḍā?"

Then Sakka addressed the fairy Pañcasikha: "My dear Pañcasikha, it's hard for one like me to get near the Realized Ones while they are on retreat practicing absorption, enjoying absorption. But if you were to charm the Buddha first, then I could go to see him." "Yes, lord," replied the fairy Pañcasikha. Taking his arched

harp made from the pale timber of wood-apple, he went to the Indasāla cave. When he had drawn near, he stood to one side, thinking: “This is neither too far nor too near; and he’ll hear my voice.”

### 1. Pañcasikha’s Song

Standing to one side, Pañcasikha played his arched harp, and sang these verses on the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the perfected ones, and sensual love.

“My lady Suriyavaccasā, oh my Sunshine—  
I pay homage to your father Timbaru,  
through whom was born a lady so fine,  
to fill me with a joy I never knew.

As sweet as a breeze to one who’s sweating,  
or when thirsty, a sweet and cooling drink,  
so dear is your shining beauty to me,  
just like the teaching is to arahants!

Like a cure when you’re struck by fever dire,  
or food to ease the hunger pain,  
come on, darling, please put out my fire,  
quench me like water on a flame.

As elephants burning in the heat of summer,  
sink down in a lotus pond to rest,  
so cool, full of petals and of pollen—  
that’s how I would plunge into your breast.

Like elephants bursting bonds in rutting season,  
beating off the pricks of lance and pikes—  
I just don’t understand what is the reason  
I’m so crazy for your shapely thighs!

For you, my heart is full of passion,  
I'm in an altered state of mind.  
There is no going back, I'm just not able,  
I'm like a fish that's hooked up on the line.

Come on, my darling, hold me, fair of thighs!  
Embrace me, with your so bashful eyes!  
Take me in your arms, my lovely lady,  
that's all I'd ever want or could desire.

Ah, then my desire was such a small thing,  
my sweet, with your curling wavy hair;  
now, like to arahants an offering,  
it's grown so very much from there.

Whatever the merit I have forged  
by giving to such perfected beings—  
may that, my altogether gorgeous,  
ripen in togetherness with you.

Whatever the merit I have forged  
in the wide open circle of this earth—  
may that, my altogether gorgeous,  
ripen in togetherness with you.

Absorbed, the Sakyan meditates,  
at one, self-controlled, and just mindful,  
the sage aims right at the deathless state—  
like me, oh my Sunshine, aiming for you!

And just like the sage would be rejoicing,  
were he to awaken to the truth,  
so I'd be rejoicing, lady,

were I to end up as one with you.

If Sakka were to grant me just one wish,  
as Lord of the holy Thirty-Three,  
my darling, you're the only one I'd wish for,  
so strong is the love for you from me.

Like a freshly blossoming sal tree  
is your father, my lady so wise.  
I pay homage to him, bowing down humbly,  
to he whose daughter is of such a kind.”

When Pañcasikha had spoken, the Buddha said to him: “Pañcasikha, the sound of the strings and the sound of your voice blend well together, so that neither overpowers the other. But when did you compose these verses on the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, the perfected ones, and sensual love?” “This one time, sir, when you were first awakened, you were staying near Uruvelā at the goatherd’s banyan tree on the bank of the Nerañjarā River. And at that time I was in love with the lady named Bhaddā Suriyavaccasā, the daughter of the fairy king Timbaru. But the sister desired another— it was Mātali the charioteer’s son named Sikhaddī who she loved. Since I couldn’t win that sister by any means, I took my arched harp to Timbaru’s home, where I played those verses.

When I finished, Suriyavaccasā said to me: ‘Dear sir, I have not personally seen the Buddha. But I did hear about him when I went to dance for the gods of the Thirty-Three in the Hall of Justice. Since you extol the Buddha, let us meet up today.’ And that’s when I met up with that sister. But we have not met since.”

## **2. The Approach of Sakka**

Then Sakka, the lord of gods, thought: “Pañcasikha is exchanging pleasantries with the Buddha.” So he addressed Pañcasikha: “My dear Pañcasikha, please bow to the Buddha for me, saying: ‘Sir, Sakka, the lord of gods, with his ministers and retinue, bows with his head at your feet.’” “Yes, lord,” replied Pañcasikha. He

bowed to the Buddha and said: “Sir, Sakka, the lord of gods, with his ministers and retinue, bows with his head at your feet.” “So may Sakka with his ministers and retinue be happy, Pañcasikha,” said the Buddha, “for all want to be happy—whether gods, humans, demons, dragons, fairies, or any of the other diverse creatures there may be.”

For that is how the Realized Ones salute such illustrious spirits. And being saluted by the Buddha, Sakka entered the Indasāla cave, bowed to the Buddha, and stood to one side. And the gods of the Thirty-Three did likewise, as did Pañcasikha.

And at that time the uneven places were evened out, the cramped places were opened up, the darkness vanished and light appeared, as happens through the glory of the gods.

Then the Buddha said to Sakka: “It’s incredible and amazing that you, the venerable Kosiya, who has so many duties and so much to do, should come here.” “For a long time I’ve wanted to go and see the Buddha, but I wasn’t able, being prevented by my many duties and responsibilities for the gods of the Thirty-Three. This one time, sir, the Buddha was staying near Sāvattthī in the frankincense-tree hut. Then I went to Sāvattthī to see the Buddha. But at that time the Buddha was sitting immersed in some kind of meditation. And a divine maiden of Great King Vessavaṇa named Bhūjati was attending on the Buddha, standing there paying homage to him with joined palms. So I said to her: ‘Sister, please bow to the Buddha for me, saying: “Sir, Sakka, the lord of gods, with his ministers and retinue, bows with his head at your feet.”’ When I said this, she said to me: ‘It’s the wrong time to see the Buddha, as he’s in retreat.’ ‘Well then, sister, please convey my message when the Buddha emerges from that immersion.’ I hope that sister bowed to you? Do you remember what she said?” “She did bow, lord of gods, and I remember what she said. I also remember that it was the sound of your chariot wheels that pulled me out of that immersion.” “Sir, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the gods who were reborn in the host of the Thirty-Three before me: ‘When a Realized One arises in the world, perfected and fully awakened, the

heavenly hosts swell, while the demon hosts dwindle.’ And I have seen this with my own eyes.

## 2.1. The Story of Gopikā

Right here in Kapilavatthu there was a Sakyan lady name Gopikā who had confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and had fulfilled her ethics. She lost interest in femininity and developed masculinity. When her body broke up, after death, she was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. In the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three she became one of my sons. There they knew him as the god Gopaka. Meanwhile three others, mendicants who had led the spiritual life under the Buddha, were reborn in the inferior fairy realm. There they amused themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, and became my servants and attendants. At that, Gopaka scolded them: ‘Where on earth were you at, good sirs, when you heard the Buddha’s teaching! For while I was still a woman I had confidence in the Buddha, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and had fulfilled my ethics. I lost interest in femininity and developed masculinity. When my body broke up, after death, I was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. In the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three I became one of Sakka’s sons. Here they know me as the god Gopaka. But you, having led the spiritual life under the Buddha, were reborn in the inferior fairy realm.’ When scolded by Gopaka, two of those gods regained their mindfulness in the present, and the host of Brahmā’s Ministers. But one god remained attached to sensuality.

‘I was a laywoman disciple of the seer,  
and my name was Gopikā.  
I was devoted to the Buddha and the teaching,  
and I faithfully served the Saṅgha.

Because of the excellence of the Buddha’s teaching,  
I’m now a mighty, splendid son of Sakka,  
reborn among the Three and Thirty.  
And here they know me as Gopaka.

Then I saw some mendicants who I'd seen before,  
dwelling in the host of fairies.  
When I used to be a human,  
they were disciples of Gotama.

I served them with food and drink,  
and clasped their feet in my own home.  
Where on earth were they at  
when they learned the Buddha's teachings?

For each must know for themselves the teaching  
so well-taught, realized by the seer.  
I was one who followed you,  
having heard the fine words of the noble ones.

I'm now a mighty, splendid son of Sakka,  
reborn among the Three and Thirty.  
But you followed the best of men,  
and led the supreme spiritual life,

but still you're born in this lesser realm,  
a rebirth not befitting.  
It's a sorry sight I see, good sirs,  
fellow Buddhists in a lesser realm.

Reborn in the host of fairies,  
you only wait upon the gods.  
Meanwhile, I dwelt in a house—  
but see my distinction now!

Having been a woman now I'm a male god,  
blessed with heavenly sensual pleasures.'

Scolded by that disciple of Gotama,  
when they understood what Gopaka said, they came to their senses.

‘Let’s strive, let’s try hard—  
we won’t serve others any more!’  
Two of them aroused energy,  
recalling the Buddha’s instructions.

Right away they became dispassionate,  
seeing the drawbacks in sensual pleasures.  
The fetters and bonds of sensual pleasures—  
the ties of the Wicked One so hard to break—

they burst them like a bull elephant his ropes,  
and passed right over the Thirty-Three.  
The gods with Inda and Pajāpati  
were all gathered in the Hall of Justice.

As they sat there, they passed over them,  
the heroes desireless, practicing purity.  
Seeing them, Vāsava became inspired;  
the master of gods in the midst of the group said:

‘These were born in the lesser fairy realm,  
but now they pass us by!’  
Heeding the speech of one so inspired,  
Gopaka addressed Vāsava:

‘There is a Buddha, a lord of men, in the world.  
Known as the Sakyan Sage, he’s mastered the senses.  
Those sons of his were bereft of mindfulness;  
but when scolded by me they gained it back.

Of the three, there is one who remains  
dwelling in the host of fairies.  
But two, recollecting the path to awakening,  
immersed in meditation, spurn even the gods.’

The teaching’s explained in such a way  
that not a single disciple doubts it.  
We venerate the Buddha, the victor, lord of men,  
who has crossed the flood and cut off doubt.

Whoever understands this teaching here  
attains to distinction.  
Those two reached the distinction of  
the host of Brahmā’s Ministers.

We have come here, dear sir,  
to realize this same teaching.  
If the Buddha would give me a chance,  
I would ask a question, dear sir.”

Then the Buddha thought: “For a long time now this spirit has led a pure life. Any question he asks me will be beneficial, not useless. And he will quickly understand any answer I give to his question.”

So the Buddha addressed Sakka in verse:

“Ask me your question, Vāsava,  
whatever you want.  
I’ll solve each and every  
problem you have.”

The first recitation section is finished.

Having been granted an opportunity by the Buddha, Sakka asked the first question.

“Dear sir, what fetters bind the gods, humans, demons, dragons, fairies—and any of the other diverse creatures— so that, though they wish to be free of enmity, violence, hostility, and hate, they still have enmity, violence, hostility, and hate?” Such was Sakka’s question to the Buddha. And the Buddha answered him:

“Lord of gods, the fetters of envy and stinginess bind the gods, humans, demons, dragons, fairies—and any of the other diverse creatures— so that, though they wish to be free of enmity, violence, hostility, and hate, they still have enmity, violence, hostility, and hate.” Such was the Buddha’s answer to Sakka. Delighted, Sakka approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, saying: “That’s so true, Blessed One! That’s so true, Holy One! Hearing the Buddha’s answer, I’ve gone beyond doubt and got rid of indecision.”

And then, having approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, Sakka asked another question:

“But dear sir, what is the source, origin, birthplace, and root of envy and stinginess? When what exists is there envy and stinginess? When what doesn’t exist is there no envy and stinginess?” “The liked and the disliked, lord of gods, are the source of envy and stinginess. When the liked and the disliked exist there is envy and stinginess. When the liked and the disliked don’t exist there is no envy and stinginess.”

“But dear sir, what is the source of what is liked and disliked?” “Desire is the source of what is liked and disliked.”

“But what is the source of desire?” “Thought is the source of desire.”

“But what is the source of thought?” “Concepts of identity that emerge from the proliferation of perceptions are the source of thoughts.”

“But how does a mendicant appropriately practice for the cessation of concepts of identity that emerge from the proliferation of perceptions?”

## **2.2. Meditation on Feelings**

“Lord of gods, there are two kinds of happiness, I say: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. There are two kinds of sadness, I say: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. There are two kinds of equanimity, I say: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate.

Why did I say that there are two kinds of happiness? Take a happiness of which you know: ‘When I cultivate this kind of happiness, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not cultivate that kind of happiness. Take a happiness of which you know: ‘When I cultivate this kind of happiness, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.’ You should cultivate that kind of happiness. And that which is free of placing the mind and keeping it connected is better than that which still involves placing the mind and keeping it connected. That’s why I said there are two kinds of happiness.

Why did I say that there are two kinds of sadness? Take a sadness of which you know: ‘When I cultivate this kind of sadness, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not cultivate that kind of sadness. Take a sadness of which you know: ‘When I cultivate this kind of sadness, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.’ You should cultivate that kind of sadness. And that which is free of placing the mind and keeping it connected is better than that which still involves placing the mind and keeping it connected. That’s why I said there are two kinds of sadness.

Why did I say that there are two kinds of equanimity? Take an equanimity of which you know: ‘When I cultivate this kind of equanimity, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.’ You should not cultivate that kind of equanimity. Take an equanimity of which you know: ‘When I cultivate this kind of equanimity, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.’ You should

cultivate that kind of equanimity. And that which is free of placing the mind and keeping it connected is better than that which still involves placing the mind and keeping it connected. That's why I said there are two kinds of equanimity.

That's how a mendicant appropriately practices for the cessation of concepts of identity that emerge from the proliferation of perceptions." Such was the Buddha's answer to Sakka. Delighted, Sakka approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, saying: "That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! Hearing the Buddha's answer, I've gone beyond doubt and got rid of indecision."

### **2.3. Restraint in the Monastic Code**

And then Sakka asked another question:

"But dear sir, how does a mendicant practice for restraint in the code of conduct?"

"Lord of gods, I say that there are two kinds of bodily behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. I say that there are two kinds of verbal behavior: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. There are two kinds of search, I say: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate.

Why did I say that there are two kinds of bodily behavior? Take bodily conduct of which you know: 'When I cultivate this kind of bodily conduct, unskillful qualities grow, and skillful qualities decline.' You should not cultivate that kind of bodily conduct. Take bodily conduct of which you know: 'When I cultivate this kind of bodily conduct, unskillful qualities decline, and skillful qualities grow.' You should cultivate that kind of bodily conduct. That's why I said there are two kinds of bodily behavior.

Why did I say that there are two kinds of verbal behavior? You should not cultivate the kind of verbal behavior which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of verbal behavior which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. That's why I said there are two kinds of verbal behavior.

Why did I say that there are two kinds of search? You should not cultivate the kind of search which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of search which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. That's why I said there are two kinds of search.

That's how a mendicant practices for restraint in the code of conduct." Such was the Buddha's answer to Sakka. Delighted, Sakka approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, saying: "That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! Hearing the Buddha's answer, I've gone beyond doubt and got rid of indecision."

#### **2.4. Sense Restraint**

And then Sakka asked another question:

"But dear sir, how does a mendicant practice for restraint of the sense faculties?"  
"Lord of gods, I say that there are two kinds of sight known by the eye: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate. There are two kinds of sound known by the ear ... smells known by the nose ... tastes known by the tongue ... touches known by the body ... thoughts known by the mind: that which you should cultivate, and that which you should not cultivate."

When the Buddha said this, Sakka said to him:

"Sir, this is how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement: You should not cultivate the kind of sight known by the eye which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of sight known by the eye which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow. You should not cultivate the kind of sound, smell, taste, touch, or thought known by the mind which causes unskillful qualities to grow while skillful qualities decline. And you should cultivate the kind of thought known by the mind which causes unskillful qualities to decline while skillful qualities grow.

Sir, that's how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement. Hearing the Buddha's answer, I've gone beyond doubt and got rid of indecision."

And then Sakka asked another question:

"Dear sir, do all ascetics and brahmins have the same doctrine, ethics, desires, and attachments?" "No, lord of gods, they do not."

"Why not?" "The world has many and diverse elements. Whatever element sentient beings insist on in this world of many and diverse elements, they obstinately hold on to it, insisting that: 'This is the only truth, other ideas are stupid.' That's why not all ascetics and brahmins have the same doctrine, ethics, desires, and attachments."

"Dear sir, have all ascetics and brahmins reached the ultimate end, the ultimate sanctuary, the ultimate spiritual life, the ultimate goal?" "No, lord of gods, they have not."

"Why not?" "Those mendicants who are freed through the ending of craving have reached the ultimate end, the ultimate sanctuary, the ultimate spiritual life, the ultimate goal. That's why not all ascetics and brahmins have reached the ultimate end, the ultimate sanctuary, the ultimate spiritual life, the ultimate goal."

Such was the Buddha's answer to Sakka. Delighted, Sakka approved and agreed with what the Buddha said, saying: "That's so true, Blessed One! That's so true, Holy One! Hearing the Buddha's answer, I've gone beyond doubt and got rid of indecision."

And then Sakka asked another question:

"Passion, sir, is a disease, an abscess, a dart. Passion drags a person to be reborn in life after life. That's why a person finds themselves in states high and low.

Elsewhere, among other ascetics and brahmins, I wasn't even given a chance to ask these questions that the Buddha has answered. The dart of doubt and uncertainty has lain within me for a long time, but the Buddha has plucked it out."

"Lord of gods, do you recall having asked this question of other ascetics and brahmins?" "I do, sir." "If you wouldn't mind, lord of gods, tell me how they answered." "It's no trouble when someone such as the Blessed One is sitting here." "Well, speak then, lord of gods." "Sir, I approached those who I imagined were ascetics and brahmins living in the wilderness, in remote lodgings. But they could not answer, and they even questioned me in return: 'What is the venerable's name?' So I answered them: 'Dear sir, I am Sakka, lord of gods.' So they asked me another question: 'But lord of gods, what deed brought you to this position?' So I taught them the Dhamma as I had learned and memorized it. And they were pleased with just that much: 'We have seen Sakka, the lord of gods! And he answered our questions!' Invariably, they become my disciples, I don't become theirs. But sir, I am the Buddha's disciple, a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening."

## **2.5. On Feeling Happy**

"Lord of gods, do you recall ever feeling such joy and happiness before?" "I do, sir." "But how?"

"Once upon a time, sir, a battle was fought between the gods and the demons. In that battle the gods won and the demons lost. It occurred to me as victor: 'Now the gods shall enjoy both the nectar of the gods and the nectar of the demons.' But sir, that joy and happiness is in the sphere of the rod and the sword. It doesn't lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. But the joy and happiness I feel listening to the Buddha's teaching is not in the sphere of the rod and the sword. It does lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment."

"But lord of gods, what reason do you see for speaking of such joy and happiness?" "I see six reasons to speak of such joy and happiness, sir."

While staying right here,  
remaining in the godly form,  
I have gained an extended life:  
know this, dear sir.

This is the first reason.

When I fall from the heavenly host,  
leaving behind the non-human life,  
I shall consciously go to a new womb,  
wherever my mind delights.

This is the second reason.

Living happily under the guidance  
of the one of unclouded wisdom,  
I shall practice according to method,  
aware and mindful.

This is the third reason.

And if awakening should arise  
as I practice according to the method,  
I shall live as one who understands,  
and my end shall come right there.

This is the fourth reason.

When I fall from the human realm,  
leaving behind the human life,  
I shall become a god again,  
in the supreme heaven realm.

This is the fifth reason.

They are the finest of gods,  
the glorious Akaniṭṭhas.  
So long as my final life goes on,  
there my home will be.

This is the sixth reason.

Seeing these six reasons I speak of such joy and happiness.

My wishes unfulfilled,  
doubting and uncertain,  
I wandered for such a long time,  
in search of the Realized One.

I imagined that ascetics  
living in seclusion  
must surely be awakened,  
so I went to sit near them.

‘How is there success?  
How is there failure?’  
But they couldn’t answer such questions  
about the path and practice.

And when they found out that I  
was Sakka, come from the gods,  
they questioned me instead about  
the deed that brought me to this state.

I taught them the Dhamma

as I had learned it among men.  
They were delighted with that, saying:  
‘We’ve seen Vāsava!’

Now since I’ve seen the Buddha,  
who helps us get over doubt,  
today, free of fear,  
I pay homage to the awakened one.

Destroyer of the dart of craving,  
the Buddha is unrivaled.  
I bow to the great hero,  
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun.

Just as Brahmā is worshipped  
by the gods, dear sir,  
today we shall worship you—  
come, let us bow to you!

You alone are the Awakened!  
You are the Teacher supreme!  
In the world with its gods,  
there is no-one like you.”

Then Sakka addressed the fairy Pañcasikha: “Dear Pañcasikha, you were very helpful to me, since you first charmed the Buddha, after which I went to see him. I shall appoint you to your father’s position—you shall be king of the fairies. And I give you Bhaddā Suriyavaccasā, who you love so much.”

Then Sakka, touching the ground with his hand, spoke these words of inspiration three times:

“Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!

Homage to that Blessed One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha!”

And while this discourse was being spoken, the stainless, immaculate vision of the Dhamma arose in Sakka, lord of gods: “Everything that has a beginning has an end.” And also for another 80,000 deities. Such were the questions Sakka was invited to ask, and which were answered by the Buddha. And that’s why the name of this discussion is “Sakka’s Questions”.

## 22. Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta

### The Longer Discourse on Mindfulness Meditation

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Kurus, near the Kuru town named Kammāsadamma. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants!” “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Mendicants, the four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to complete the procedure, and to realize extinguishment.

What four? It’s when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world.

### 1. Observing the Body

#### 1.1. Mindfulness of Breathing

And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of the body? It’s when a mendicant—gone to a wilderness, or to the root of a tree, or to an empty hut—sits down cross-legged, with their body straight, and focuses their mindfulness right there. Just mindful, they breathe in. Mindful, they breathe out.

When breathing in heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing in heavily.’ When breathing out heavily they know: ‘I’m breathing out heavily.’

When breathing in lightly they know: 'I'm breathing in lightly.' When breathing out lightly they know: 'I'm breathing out lightly.'

They practice breathing in experiencing the whole body. They practice breathing out experiencing the whole body.

They practice breathing in stilling the body's motion. They practice breathing out stilling the body's motion.

It's like an expert carpenter or carpenter's apprentice. When making a deep cut they know: 'I'm making a deep cut,' and when making a shallow cut they know: 'I'm making a shallow cut.'

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing the body as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that the body exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

## **1.2. The Postures**

Furthermore, when a mendicant is walking they know: 'I am walking.' When standing they know: 'I am standing.' When sitting they know: 'I am sitting.' And when lying down they know: 'I am lying down.' Whatever posture their body is in, they know it.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing the body as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that the body exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

### **1.3. Situational Awareness**

Furthermore, a mendicant acts with situational awareness when going out and coming back; when looking ahead and aside; when bending and extending the limbs; when bearing the outer robe, bowl, and robes; when eating, drinking, chewing, and tasting; when urinating and defecating; when walking, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, and keeping silent.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally ... That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

### **1.4. Focusing on the Repulsive**

Furthermore, a mendicant examines their own body, up from the soles of the feet and down from the tips of the hairs, wrapped in skin and full of many kinds of filth. 'In this body there is head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.'

It's as if there were a bag with openings at both ends, filled with various kinds of grains, such as fine rice, wheat, mung beans, peas, sesame, and ordinary rice. And someone with good eyesight were to open it and examine the contents: 'These grains are fine rice, these are wheat, these are mung beans, these are peas, these are sesame, and these are ordinary rice.'

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally ... That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

### **1.5. Focusing on the Elements**

Furthermore, a mendicant examines their own body, whatever its placement or posture, according to the elements: 'In this body there is the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.'

It's as if an expert butcher or butcher's apprentice were to kill a cow and sit down at the crossroads with the meat cut into portions.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally ... That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

## **1.6. The Charnel Ground Contemplations**

Furthermore, suppose a mendicant were to see a corpse thrown in a charnel ground. And it had been dead for one, two, or three days, bloated, livid, and festering. They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally ... That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

Furthermore, suppose they were to see a corpse thrown in a charnel ground being devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, herons, dogs, tigers, leopards, jackals, and many kinds of little creatures. They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally ... That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

Furthermore, suppose they were to see a corpse thrown in a charnel ground, a skeleton with flesh and blood, held together by sinews ...

A skeleton without flesh but smeared with blood, and held together by sinews ...

A skeleton rid of flesh and blood, held together by sinews ...

Bones without sinews, scattered in every direction. Here a hand-bone, there a foot-bone, here a shin-bone, there a thigh-bone, here a hip-bone, there a rib-bone, here a back-bone, there an arm-bone, here a neck-bone, there a jaw-bone, here a tooth, there the skull ...

White bones, the color of shells ...

Decrepit bones, heaped in a pile ...

Bones rotted and crumbled to powder. They'd compare it with their own body: 'This body is also of that same nature, that same kind, and cannot go beyond that.' And so they meditate observing an aspect of the body internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing the body as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that the body exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. That too is how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body.

## **2. Observing the Feelings**

And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of feelings? It's when a mendicant who feels a pleasant feeling knows: 'I feel a pleasant feeling.'

When they feel a painful feeling, they know: 'I feel a painful feeling.'

When they feel a neutral feeling, they know: 'I feel a neutral feeling.'

When they feel a carnal pleasant feeling, they know: 'I feel a carnal pleasant feeling.'

When they feel a spiritual pleasant feeling, they know: 'I feel a spiritual pleasant feeling.'

When they feel a carnal painful feeling, they know: 'I feel a carnal painful feeling.'

When they feel a spiritual painful feeling, they know: 'I feel a spiritual painful feeling.'

When they feel a carnal neutral feeling, they know: 'I feel a carnal neutral feeling.'

When they feel a spiritual neutral feeling, they know: 'I feel a spiritual neutral feeling.'

And so they meditate observing an aspect of feelings internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing feelings as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that feelings exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of feelings.

### **3. Observing the Mind**

And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of the mind?

It's when a mendicant knows mind with greed as 'mind with greed,' and mind without greed as 'mind without greed.' They know mind with hate as 'mind with hate,' and mind without hate as 'mind without hate.' They know mind with delusion as 'mind with delusion,' and mind without delusion as 'mind without delusion.' They know contracted mind as 'contracted mind,' and scattered mind as 'scattered mind.' They know expansive mind as 'expansive mind,' and unexpansive mind as 'unexpansive mind.' They know mind that is not supreme as 'mind that is not supreme,' and mind that is supreme as 'mind that is supreme.' They know mind immersed in meditation as 'mind immersed in meditation,' and mind not immersed in meditation as 'mind not immersed in meditation.' They know freed mind as 'freed mind,' and unfreed mind as 'unfreed mind.'

And so they meditate observing an aspect of the mind internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing the mind as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that the mind exists, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything

in the world. That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the mind.

## **4. Observing Principles**

### **4.1. The Hindrances**

And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five hindrances. And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five hindrances?

It's when a mendicant who has sensual desire in them understands: 'I have sensual desire in me.' When they don't have sensual desire in them, they understand: 'I don't have sensual desire in me.' They understand how sensual desire arises; how, when it's already arisen, it's given up; and how, once it's given up, it doesn't arise again in the future.

When they have ill will in them, they understand: 'I have ill will in me.' When they don't have ill will in them, they understand: 'I don't have ill will in me.' They understand how ill will arises; how, when it's already arisen, it's given up; and how, once it's given up, it doesn't arise again in the future.

When they have dullness and drowsiness in them, they understand: 'I have dullness and drowsiness in me.' When they don't have dullness and drowsiness in them, they understand: 'I don't have dullness and drowsiness in me.' They understand how dullness and drowsiness arise; how, when they've already arisen, they're given up; and how, once they're given up, they don't arise again in the future.

When they have restlessness and remorse in them, they understand: 'I have restlessness and remorse in me.' When they don't have restlessness and remorse in them, they understand: 'I don't have restlessness and remorse in me.' They understand how restlessness and remorse arise; how, when they've already arisen,

they're given up; and how, once they're given up, they don't arise again in the future.

When they have doubt in them, they understand: 'I have doubt in me.' When they don't have doubt in them, they understand: 'I don't have doubt in me.' They understand how doubt arises; how, when it's already arisen, it's given up; and how, once it's given up, it doesn't arise again in the future.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing the principles as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that principles exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five hindrances.

#### **4.2. The Aggregates**

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five grasping aggregates. And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five grasping aggregates? It's when a mendicant contemplates: 'Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the ending of form. Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling, such is the ending of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the ending of perception. Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the ending of choices. Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the ending of consciousness.' And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally ... That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the five grasping aggregates.

#### **4.3. The Sense Fields**

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the six interior and exterior sense fields. And how does a mendicant

meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the six interior and exterior sense fields?

It's when a mendicant understands the eye, sights, and the fetter that arises dependent on both of these. They understand how the fetter that has not arisen comes to arise; how the arisen fetter comes to be abandoned; and how the abandoned fetter comes to not rise again in the future.

They understand the ear, sounds, and the fetter ...

They understand the nose, smells, and the fetter ...

They understand the tongue, tastes, and the fetter ...

They understand the body, touches, and the fetter ...

They understand the mind, thoughts, and the fetter that arises dependent on both of these. They understand how the fetter that has not arisen comes to arise; how the arisen fetter comes to be abandoned; and how the abandoned fetter comes to not rise again in the future.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally ... That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the six internal and external sense fields.

#### **4.4. The Awakening Factors**

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the seven awakening factors. And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the seven awakening factors? It's when a mendicant who has the awakening factor of mindfulness in them understands: 'I have the awakening factor of mindfulness in me.' When they don't have the awakening factor of mindfulness in them, they understand: 'I don't have the awakening factor of mindfulness in me.' They understand how the awakening

factor of mindfulness that has not arisen comes to arise; and how the awakening factor of mindfulness that has arisen becomes fulfilled by development.

When they have the awakening factor of investigation of principles ...

energy ...

rapture ...

tranquility ...

immersion ...

equanimity in them, they understand: 'I have the awakening factor of equanimity in me.' When they don't have the awakening factor of equanimity in them, they understand: 'I don't have the awakening factor of equanimity in me.' They understand how the awakening factor of equanimity that has not arisen comes to arise; and how the awakening factor of equanimity that has arisen becomes fulfilled by development.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing the principles as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that principles exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the seven awakening factors.

#### **4.5. The Truths**

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the four noble truths. And how does a mendicant meditate observing an aspect of principles with respect to the four noble truths? It's when a mendicant truly understands: 'This is suffering' ... 'This is the origin of suffering' ... 'This is

the cessation of suffering' ... 'This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.'

The first recitation section is finished.

#### ***4.5.1. The Truth of Suffering***

And what is the noble truth of suffering? Rebirth is suffering; old age is suffering; death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress are suffering; association with the disliked is suffering; separation from the liked is suffering; not getting what you wish for is suffering. In brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering.

And what is rebirth? The rebirth, inception, conception, reincarnation, manifestation of the sets of phenomena, and acquisition of the sense fields of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called rebirth.

And what is old age? The old age, decrepitude, broken teeth, grey hair, wrinkly skin, diminished vitality, and failing faculties of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called old age.

And what is death? The passing away, perishing, disintegration, demise, mortality, death, decease, breaking up of the aggregates, and laying to rest of the corpse of the various sentient beings in the various orders of sentient beings. This is called death.

And what is sorrow? The sorrow, sorrowing, state of sorrow, inner sorrow, inner deep sorrow in someone who has undergone misfortune, who has experienced suffering. This is called sorrow.

And what is lamentation? The wail, lament, wailing, lamenting, state of wailing and lamentation in someone who has undergone misfortune, who has experienced suffering. This is called lamentation.

And what is pain? Physical pain, physical displeasure, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from physical contact. This is called pain.

And what is sadness? Mental pain, mental displeasure, the painful, unpleasant feeling that's born from mental contact. This is called sadness.

And what is distress? The stress, distress, state of stress and distress in someone who has undergone misfortune, who has experienced suffering. This is called distress.

And what is association with the disliked is suffering? There are sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts that are unlikable, undesirable, and disagreeable. And there are those who want to harm, injure, disturb, and threaten you. The coming together with these, the joining, inclusion, mixing with them: this is called association with the disliked is suffering.

And what is separation from the liked is suffering? There are sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts that are likable, desirable, and agreeable. And there are those who want to benefit, help, comfort, and protect you. The division from these, the disconnection, segregation, and parting from them: this is called separation from the liked is suffering.

And what is 'not getting what you wish for is suffering'? In sentient beings who are liable to be reborn, such a wish arises: 'Oh, if only we were not liable to be reborn! If only rebirth would not come to us!' But you can't get that by wishing. This is 'not getting what you wish for is suffering.' In sentient beings who are liable to grow old ... fall ill ... die ... experience sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress, such a wish arises: 'Oh, if only we were not liable to experience sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress! If only sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness, and distress would not come to us!' But you can't get that by wishing. This is 'not getting what you wish for is suffering.'

And what is ‘in brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering’? They are the grasping aggregates that consist of form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness. This is called ‘in brief, the five grasping aggregates are suffering.’ This is called the noble truth of suffering.

#### ***4.5.2. The Origin of Suffering***

And what is the noble truth of the origin of suffering? It’s the craving that leads to future rebirth, mixed up with relishing and greed, looking for enjoyment in various different realms. That is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving to exterminate existence.

But where does that craving arise and where does it settle? Whatever in the world seems nice and pleasant, it is there that craving arises and settles.

And what in the world seems nice and pleasant? The eye in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles. The ear ... nose ... tongue ... body ... mind in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Sights ... sounds ... smells ... tastes ... touches ... thoughts in the world seem nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Eye consciousness ... ear consciousness ... nose consciousness ... tongue consciousness ... body consciousness ... mind consciousness in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Eye contact ... ear contact ... nose contact ... tongue contact ... body contact ... mind contact in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Feeling born of eye contact ... feeling born of ear contact ... feeling born of nose contact ... feeling born of tongue contact ... feeling born of body contact ...

feeling born of mind contact in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Perception of sights ... perception of sounds ... perception of smells ... perception of tastes ... perception of touches ... perception of thoughts in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Intention regarding sights ... intention regarding sounds ... intention regarding smells ... intention regarding tastes ... intention regarding touches ... intention regarding thoughts in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Craving for sights ... craving for sounds ... craving for smells ... craving for tastes ... craving for touches ... craving for thoughts in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Thoughts about sights ... thoughts about sounds ... thoughts about smells ... thoughts about tastes ... thoughts about touches ... thoughts about thoughts in the world seem nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles.

Considerations regarding sights ... considerations regarding sounds ... considerations regarding smells ... considerations regarding tastes ... considerations regarding touches ... considerations regarding thoughts in the world seem nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving arises and settles. This is called the noble truth of the origin of suffering.

#### ***4.5.3. The Cessation of Suffering***

And what is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering? It's the fading away and cessation of that very same craving with nothing left over; giving it away, letting it go, releasing it, and not clinging to it.

Whatever in the world seems nice and pleasant, it is there that craving is given up and ceases.

And what in the world seems nice and pleasant? The eye in the world seems nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving is given up and ceases. ...

Considerations regarding thoughts in the world seem nice and pleasant, and it is there that craving is given up and ceases. This is called the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.

#### **4.5.4. The Path**

And what is the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering? It is simply this noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

And what is right view? Knowing about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering. This is called right view.

And what is right thought? Thoughts of renunciation, love, and kindness. This is called right thought.

And what is right speech? The refraining from lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and talking nonsense. This is called right speech.

And what is right action? Refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct. This is called right action.

And what is right livelihood? It's when a noble disciple gives up wrong livelihood and earns a living by right livelihood. This is called right livelihood.

And what is right effort? It's when a mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm,

try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are completed by development. This is called right effort.

And what is right mindfulness? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of the mind—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. This is called right mindfulness.

And what is right immersion? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' Giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is called right immersion. This is called the noble truth of the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.

And so they meditate observing an aspect of principles internally, externally, and both internally and externally. They meditate observing the principles as liable to originate, as liable to vanish, and as liable to both originate and vanish. Or mindfulness is established that principles exist, to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything

in the world. That's how a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of principles with respect to the four noble truths.

Anyone who develops these four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way for seven years can expect one of two results: enlightenment in the present life, or if there's something left over, non-return.

Let alone seven years, anyone who develops these four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way for six years ... five years ... four years ... three years ... two years ... one year ... seven months ...

six months ... five months ... four months ... three months ... two months ... one month ... a fortnight ... Let alone a fortnight, anyone who develops these four kinds of mindfulness meditation in this way for seven days can expect one of two results: enlightenment in the present life, or if there's something left over, non-return.

'The four kinds of mindfulness meditation are the path to convergence. They are in order to purify sentient beings, to get past sorrow and crying, to make an end of pain and sadness, to complete the procedure, and to realize extinguishment.' That's what I said, and this is why I said it."

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

## 23. Pāyāsi Sutta

With Pāyāsi

So I have heard. At one time Venerable Kumāra Kassapa was wandering in the land of the Kosalans together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants when he arrived at a Kosalan citadel named Setavyā. He stayed on in the grove of Indian Rosewood to the north of Setavyā. Now at that time the chieftain Pāyāsi was living in Setavyā. It was a crown property given by King Pasenadi of Kosala, teeming with living creatures, full of hay, wood, water, and grain, a royal endowment of the highest quality.

### 1. On Pāyāsi

Now at that time Pāyāsi had the following harmful misconception: “There’s no afterlife. No beings are reborn spontaneously. There’s no fruit or result of good and bad deeds.” The brahmins and householders of Setavyā heard: “It seems the ascetic Kumāra Kassapa—a disciple of the ascetic Gotama—is staying in the grove of Indian Rosewood to the north of Setavyā. He has this good reputation: ‘He is astute, competent, intelligent, learned, a brilliant speaker, eloquent, mature, a perfected one.’ It’s good to see such perfected ones.” Then, having departed Setavyā, they formed into companies and headed north to the grove.

Now at that time the chieftain Pāyāsi had retired to the upper floor of his stilt longhouse for his midday nap. He saw the brahmins and householders heading north towards the grove, and addressed his steward: “My steward, why are the brahmins and householders heading north towards the grove?”

“The ascetic Kumāra Kassapa—a disciple of the ascetic Gotama—is staying in the grove of Indian Rosewood to the north of Setavyā. He has this good reputation: ‘He is astute, competent, intelligent, learned, a brilliant speaker, eloquent, mature, a perfected one.’ They’re going to see that Kumāra Kassapa.” “Well then, go to the brahmins and householders and say to them: ‘Sirs, the chieftain Pāyāsi asks you to

wait, as he will also go to see the ascetic Kumāra Kassapa.’ Before Kumāra Kassapa convinces those foolish and incompetent brahmins and householders that there is an afterlife, there are beings reborn spontaneously, and there is a fruit or result of good and bad deeds— for none of these things are true!” “Yes, sir,” replied the steward, and did as he was asked.

Then Pāyāsi escorted by the brahmins and householders, went up to Kumāra Kassapa, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side. Before sitting down to one side, some of the brahmins and householders of Setavyā bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their joined palms toward Kumāra Kassapa, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent.

## **2. Nihilism**

Seated to one side, the chieftain Pāyāsi said to Venerable Kumāra Kassapa: “Master Kassapa, this is my doctrine and view: ‘There’s no afterlife. No beings are reborn spontaneously. There’s no fruit or result of good and bad deeds.’” “Well, chieftain, I’ve never seen or heard of anyone holding such a doctrine or view. For how on earth can anyone say such a thing?

### **2.1. The Simile of the Moon and Sun**

Well then, chieftain, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, chieftain? Are the moon and sun in this world or the other world? Are they gods or humans?” “They are in the other world, Master Kassapa, and they are gods, not humans.” “By this method it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife, there are beings reborn spontaneously, and there is a fruit or result of good and bad deeds.”

“Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there’s no afterlife, no beings are reborn spontaneously, and there’s no fruit or result of good and bad deeds.” “Is there a method by which you can prove what you say?” “There is, Master Kassapa.” “How, exactly, chieftain?” “Well, I have friends and colleagues, relatives and kin who kill living creatures, steal, and commit sexual misconduct.

They use speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical. And they're covetous, malicious, with wrong view. Some time later they become sick, suffering, gravely ill. When I know that they will not recover from their illness, I go to them and say: 'Sirs, there are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: "Those who kill living creatures, steal, and commit sexual misconduct; use speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; and are covetous, malicious, and have wrong view—when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell." You do all these things. If what those ascetics and brahmins say is true, when your body breaks up, after death, you'll be reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. If that happens, sirs, come and tell me that there is an afterlife, there are beings reborn spontaneously, and there is a fruit or result of good and bad deeds. I trust you and believe you. Anything you see will be just as if I've seen it for myself.' They agree to this. But they don't come back to tell me, nor do they send a messenger. This is the method by which I prove that there's no afterlife, no beings are reborn spontaneously, and there's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds."

## **2.2. The Simile of the Bandit**

"Well then, chieftain, I'll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. What do you think, chieftain? Suppose they were to arrest a bandit, a criminal and present him to you, saying: 'Sir, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.' Then you'd say to them: 'Well then, my men, tie this man's arms tightly behind his back with a strong rope. Shave his head and march him from street to street and square to square to the beating of a harsh drum. Then take him out the south gate and there, at the place of execution to the south of the city, chop off his head.' Saying, 'Good,' they'd do as they were told, sitting him down at the place of execution. Could that bandit get the executioners to wait, saying: 'Please, good executioners! I have friends and colleagues, relatives and kin in such and such village or town. Wait until I've visited them, then I'll come back'? Or would they just chop off his head as he prattled on?" "They'd just chop off his head." "So even a human bandit couldn't get his human executioners to stay his execution. What then of your friends and colleagues, relatives and kin who are reborn in a lower realm after doing bad things? Could they get the wardens of hell to wait, saying:

‘Please, good wardens of hell! Wait until I’ve gone to the chieftain Pāyāsi to tell him that there is an afterlife, there are beings reborn spontaneously, and there is a fruit or result of good and bad deeds’? By this method, too, it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife, there are beings reborn spontaneously, and there is a fruit or result of good and bad deeds.”

“Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there’s no afterlife.” “Is there a method by which you can prove what you say?” “There is, Master Kassapa.” “How, exactly, chieftain?” “Well, I have friends and colleagues, relatives and kin who refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and committing sexual misconduct. They refrain from speech that’s false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical. And they’re content, kind-hearted, with right view. Some time later they become sick, suffering, gravely ill. When I know that they will not recover from their illness, I go to them and say: ‘Sirs, there are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: “Those who refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and committing sexual misconduct; who refrain from speech that’s false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; and are content, kind-hearted, with right view—when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.” You do all these things. If what those ascetics and brahmins say is true, when your body breaks up, after death, you’ll be reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. If that happens, sirs, come and tell me that there is an afterlife. I trust you and believe you. Anything you see will be just as if I’ve seen it for myself.’ They agree to this. But they don’t come back to tell me, nor do they send a messenger. This is the method by which I prove that there’s no afterlife.”

### **2.3. The Simile of the Sewer**

“Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Suppose there were a man sunk over his head in a sewer. Then you were to order someone to pull him out of the sewer, and they’d agree to do so. Then you’d tell them to carefully scrape the dung off that man’s body with bamboo scrapers, and they’d agree to do so. Then you’d tell them to carefully scrub that man’s body down with pale clay three times, and they’d do so. Then you’d tell them to smear that man’s body with oil, and

carefully wash him down with fine paste three times, and they'd do so. Then you'd tell them to dress that man's hair and beard, and they'd do so. Then you'd tell them to provide that man with costly garlands, makeup, and clothes, and they'd do so. Then you'd tell them to bring that man up to the stilt longhouse and set him up with the five kinds of sensual stimulation, and they'd do so.

What do you think, chieftain? Now that man is nicely bathed and anointed, with hair and beard dressed, bedecked with garlands and bracelets, dressed in white, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation upstairs in the stilt longhouse. Would he want to dive back into that sewer again?" "No, Master Kassapa. Why is that? Because that sewer is filthy, stinking, disgusting, and repulsive, and it's regarded as such." "In the same way, chieftain, to the gods, human beings are filthy, stinking, disgusting, and repulsive, and are regarded as such. The smell of humans reaches the gods even a hundred leagues away. What then of your friends and colleagues, relatives and kin who are reborn in a higher realm after doing good things? Will they come back to tell you that there is an afterlife? By this method, too, it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife."

"Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there's no afterlife." "Can you prove it?" "I can." "How, exactly, chieftain?" "Well, I have friends and colleagues, relatives and kin who refrain from killing living creatures and so on. Some time later they become sick, suffering, gravely ill. When I know that they will not recover from their illness, I go to them and say: 'Sirs, there are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: "Those who refrain from killing living creatures and so on are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm, in the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three." You do all these things. If what those ascetics and brahmins say is true, when your body breaks up, after death, you'll be reborn in the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three. If that happens, sirs, come and tell me that there is an afterlife. I trust you and believe you. Anything you see will be just as if I've seen it for myself.' They agree to this. But they don't come back to tell me, nor do they send a messenger. This is how I prove that there's no afterlife."

## **2.4. The Simile of the Gods of the Thirty-Three**

“Well then, chieftain, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. A hundred human years are equivalent to one day and night for the gods of the Thirty-Three. Thirty such days make a month, and twelve months make a year. The gods of the Thirty Three have a lifespan of a thousand such years. Now, as to your friends who are reborn in the company of the gods of the Thirty-Three after doing good things. If they think: ‘First I’ll amuse myself for two or three days, supplied and provided with the five kinds of heavenly sensual stimulation. Then I’ll go back to Pāyāsi and tell him that there is an afterlife.’ Would they come back to tell you that there is an afterlife?” “No, Master Kassapa. For I would be long dead by then. But Master Kassapa, who has told you that the gods of the Thirty-Three exist, or that they have such a long life span? I don’t believe you.”

## **2.5. Blind From Birth**

“Chieftain, suppose there was a person blind from birth. They couldn’t see sights that are dark or bright, or blue, yellow, red, or magenta. They couldn’t see even and uneven ground, or the stars, or the moon and sun. They’d say: ‘There’s no such thing as dark and bright sights, and no-one who sees them. There’s no such thing as blue, yellow, red, magenta, even and uneven ground, stars, moon and sun, and no-one who sees these things. I don’t know it or see it, therefore it doesn’t exist.’ Would they be speaking rightly?” “No, Master Kassapa. There are such things as dark and bright sights, and one who sees them. And those other things are real, too, as is the one who sees them. So it’s not right to say this: ‘I don’t know it or see it, therefore it doesn’t exist.’”

“In the same way, chieftain, when you tell me you don’t believe me you seem like the blind man in the simile. You can’t see the other world the way you think, with the eye of the flesh. There are ascetics and brahmins who live in the wilderness, frequenting remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest. Meditating diligent, keen, and resolute, they purify the divine eye, the power of clairvoyance. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see this world and the other world, and sentient beings who are spontaneously reborn. That’s how to see the

other world, not how you think, with the eye of the flesh. By this method, too, it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife.”

“Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there’s no afterlife.” “Can you prove it?” “I can.” “How, exactly, chieftain?” “Well, I see ascetics and brahmins who are ethical, of good character, who want to live and don’t want to die, who want to be happy and recoil from pain. I think to myself: ‘If those ascetics and brahmins knew that things were going to be better for them after death, they’d drink poison, slit their wrists, hang themselves, or throw themselves off a cliff. They mustn’t know that things are going to be better for them after death. That’s why they are ethical, of good character, wanting to live and not wanting to die, wanting to be happy and recoiling from pain.’ This is the method by which I prove that there’s no afterlife.”

## **2.6 The Simile of the Pregnant Woman**

“Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Once upon a time, a certain brahmin had two wives. One had a son ten or twelve years of age, while the other was pregnant and nearing her time. Then the brahmin passed away. So the youth said to his mother’s co-wife: ‘Lady, all the wealth, grain, silver, and gold is mine, and you get nothing. Transfer to me my father’s inheritance.’ But the brahmin lady said: ‘Wait, my dear, until I give birth. If it’s a boy, one portion shall be his. If it’s a girl, she will be your reward.’ But for a second time, and a third time, the youth insisted that the entire inheritance must be his.

So the brahmin lady took a knife, went to her bedroom, and sliced open her belly, thinking: ‘Until I give birth, whether it’s a boy or a girl!’ She destroyed her own life and that of the embryo, as well as any wealth. Being foolish and incompetent, she sought an inheritance irrationally and came to ruin and disaster. In the same way, chieftain, being foolish and incompetent, you’re seeking the other world irrationally and will come to ruin and disaster, just like that brahmin lady. Good ascetics and brahmins don’t force what is unripe to ripen; rather, they wait for it to ripen. For the life of clever ascetics and brahmins is beneficial. So long as they

remain, good ascetics and brahmins make much merit, and act for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. By this method, too, it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife.”

“Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there’s no afterlife.” “Can you prove it?” “I can.” “How, exactly, chieftain?” “Suppose they were to arrest a bandit, a criminal and present him to me, saying: ‘Sir, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.’ I say to them: ‘Well then, sirs, place this man in a pot while he’s still alive. Close up the mouth, bind it up with damp leather, and seal it with a thick coat of damp clay. Then lift it up on a stove and light the fire.’ They agree, and do what I ask. When we know that that man has passed away, we lift down the pot and break it open, uncover the mouth, and slowly peek inside, thinking: ‘Hopefully we’ll see his soul escaping.’ But we don’t see his soul escaping. This is how I prove that there’s no afterlife.”

## **2.7. The Simile of the Dream**

“Well then, chieftain, I’ll ask you about this in return, and you can answer as you like. Do you recall ever having a midday nap and seeing delightful parks, woods, meadows, and lotus ponds in a dream?” “I do, sir.” “At that time were you guarded by hunchbacks, dwarves, midgets, and younglings?” “I was.” “But did they see your soul entering or leaving?” “No they did not.” “So if they couldn’t even see your soul entering or leaving while you were still alive, how could you see the soul of a dead man? By this method, too, it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife, there are beings reborn spontaneously, and there is a fruit or result of good and bad deeds.”

“Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there’s no afterlife.” “Can you prove it?” “I can.” “How, exactly, chieftain?” “Suppose they were to arrest a bandit, a criminal and present him to me, saying: ‘Sir, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.’ I say to them: ‘Well then, sirs, weigh this man with scales while he’s still alive. Then strangle him with a bowstring, and when he’s dead, weigh him again.’ They agree, and do what I ask. So long as they are alive, they’re

lighter, softer, more flexible. But when they die they become heavier, stiffer, less flexible. This is how I prove that there's no afterlife."

## **2.8. The Simile of the Hot Iron Ball**

"Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Suppose a person was to heat an iron ball all day until it was burning, blazing, and glowing, and then they weigh it with scales. After some time, when it had cooled and become extinguished, they'd weigh it again. When would that iron ball be lighter, softer, and more workable—when it's burning or when it's cool?" "So long as the iron ball is full of heat and air—burning, blazing, and glowing—it's lighter, softer, and more workable. But when it lacks heat and air—cooled and extinguished—it's heavier, stiffer, and less workable." "In the same way, so long as this body is full of life and warmth and consciousness it's lighter, softer, and more flexible. But when it lacks life and warmth and consciousness it's heavier, stiffer, and less flexible. By this method, too, it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife."

"Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there's no afterlife." "Can you prove it?" "I can." "How, exactly, chieftain?" "Suppose they were to arrest a bandit, a criminal and present him to me, saying: 'Sir, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.' I say to them: 'Well then, sirs, take this man's life without injuring his outer skin, inner skin, flesh, sinews, bones, or marrow. Hopefully we'll see his soul escaping.' They agree, and do what I ask. When he's half-dead, I tell them to lay him on his back in hope of seeing his soul escape. They do so. But we don't see his soul escaping. I tell them to lay him bent over, to lay him on his side, to lay him on the other side; to stand him upright, to stand him upside down; to strike him with fists, stones, rods, and swords; and to give him a good shaking in hope of seeing his soul escape. They do all these things. But we don't see his soul escaping. For him the eye itself is present, and so are those sights. Yet he does not experience that sense-field. The ear itself is present, and so are those sounds. Yet he does not experience that sense-field. The nose itself is present, and so are those smells. Yet he does not experience that sense-field. The tongue itself is present, and so are those tastes. Yet he does not experience that sense-field. The body itself is

present, and so are those touches. Yet he does not experience that sense-field. This is how I prove that there's no afterlife."

## **2.9. The Simile of the Horn Blower**

"Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Once upon a time, a certain horn blower took his horn and traveled to a borderland, where he went to a certain village. Standing in the middle of the village, he sounded his horn three times, then placed it on the ground and sat down to one side. Then the people of the borderland thought: 'What is making this sound, so arousing, desirable, intoxicating, stupefying, and captivating?' They gathered around the horn blower and said: 'Mister, what is making this sound, so arousing, desirable, intoxicating, stupefying, and captivating?' 'The sound is made by this, which is called a horn.' They laid that horn on its back, saying: 'Speak, good horn! Speak, good horn!' But still the horn made no sound. Then they lay the horn bent over, they lay it on its side, they lay it on its other side; they stood it upright, they stood it upside down; they struck it with fists, stones, rods, and swords; and they gave it a good shake. 'Speak, good horn! Speak, good horn!' But still the horn made no sound.

So the horn blower thought: 'How foolish are these borderland folk! For how can they seek the sound of a horn so irrationally?' And as they looked on, he picked up the horn, sounded it three times, and took it away with him. Then the people of the borderland thought: 'So, it seems, when what is called a horn is accompanied by a person, effort, and wind, it makes a sound. But when these things are absent it makes no sound.' In the same way, so long as this body is full of life and warmth and consciousness it walks back and forth, stands, sits, and lies down. It sees sights with the eye, hears sounds with the ear, smells odors with the nose, tastes flavors with the tongue, feels touches with the body, and knows thoughts with the mind. But when it lacks life and warmth and consciousness it does none of these things. By this method, too, it ought to be proven that there is an afterlife."

"Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I think that there's no afterlife." "Can you prove it?" "I can." "How, exactly, chieftain?" "Suppose they were to arrest a

bandit, a criminal and present him to me, saying: ‘Sir, this is a bandit, a criminal. Punish him as you will.’ I say to them: ‘Well then, sirs, cut open this man’s outer skin. Hopefully we might see his soul.’ They cut open his outer skin, but we see no soul. I say to them: ‘Well then, sirs, cut open his inner skin, flesh, sinews, bones, or marrow. Hopefully we’ll see his soul.’ They do so, but we see no soul. This is how I prove that there’s no afterlife.”

## **2.10. The Simile of the Fire-Worshipping Matted-Hair Ascetic**

“Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Once upon a time, a certain fire-worshipping matted-hair ascetic settled in a leaf hut in a wilderness region. Then a caravan came out from a certain country. It stayed for one night not far from that ascetic’s hermitage, and then moved on. The ascetic thought: ‘Why don’t I go to that caravan’s campsite? Hopefully I’ll find something useful there.’ So he went, and he saw a young baby boy abandoned there. When he saw this he thought: ‘It’s not proper for me to look on while a human being dies. Why don’t I bring this boy back to my hermitage, nurse him, nourish him, and raise him?’ So that’s what he does. When the boy was ten or twelve years old, the ascetic had some business come up in the country. So he said to the boy: ‘My dear, I wish to go to the country. Serve the sacred flame. Do not extinguish it. But if you should extinguish it, here is the hatchet, the firewood, and the bundle of drill-sticks. Light the fire and serve it.’ And having instructed the boy, the ascetic went to the country. But the boy was so intent on his play, the fire went out.

He thought: ‘My father told me to serve the sacred flame. Why don’t I light it again and serve it?’ So he chopped the bundle of drill-sticks with the hatchet, thinking: ‘Hopefully I’ll get a fire!’ But he still got no fire. He split the bundle of drill-sticks into two, three, four, five, ten, or a hundred parts. He chopped them into splinters, pounded them in a mortar, and swept them away in a strong wind, thinking: ‘Hopefully I’ll get a fire!’ But he still got no fire.

Then the matted-hair ascetic, having concluded his business in the country, returned to his own hermitage, and said to the boy: ‘I trust, my dear, that the fire

didn't go out?' And the boy told him what had happened. Then the ascetic thought: 'How foolish is this boy, how incompetent! For how can he seek a fire so irrationally?' So while the boy looked on, he took a bundle of fire-sticks, lit the fire, and said: 'Dear boy, this is how to light a fire. Not the foolish and incompetent way you sought it so irrationally.' In the same way, chieftain, being foolish and incompetent, you seek the other world irrationally. Let go of this harmful misconception, chieftain, let go of it! Don't create lasting harm and suffering for yourself!"

"Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I'm not able to let go of that harmful misconception. King Pasenadi of Kosala knows my views, and so do foreign kings. If I let go of this harmful misconception, people will say: 'How foolish is the chieftain Pāyāsi, how incompetent, that he should hold on to a mistake!' I shall carry on with this view out of anger, contempt, and spite!"

### **2.11. The Simile of the Two Caravan Leaders**

"Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Once upon a time, a large caravan of a thousand wagons traveled from a country in the east to the west. Wherever they went they quickly used up the grass, wood, water, and the green foliage. Now, that caravan had two leaders, each in charge of five hundred wagons. They thought: 'This is a large caravan of a thousand wagons. Wherever we go we quickly use up the grass, wood, water, and the green foliage. Why don't we split the caravan in two halves?' So that's what they did. One caravan leader, having prepared much grass, wood, and water, started the caravan. After two or three days' journey he saw a dark man with red eyes coming the other way in a donkey cart with muddy wheels. He was armored with a quiver and wreathed with yellow lotus, his clothes and hair all wet. Seeing him, he said: 'Sir, where do you come from?' 'From such and such a country.' 'And where are you going?' 'To the country named so and so.' 'But has there been much rain in the desert up ahead?' 'Indeed there has, sir. The paths are sprinkled with water, and there is much grass, wood, and water. Toss out your grass, wood, and water. Your wagons will move swiftly when lightly-laden, so don't tire your draught teams.'

So the caravan leader addressed his drivers: ‘This man says that there has been much rain in the desert up ahead. He advises us to toss out the grass, wood, and water. The wagons will move swiftly when lightly-laden, and won’t tire our draught teams. So let’s toss out the grass, wood, and water and restart the caravan with lightly-laden wagons.’ ‘Yes, sir,’ the drivers replied, and that’s what they did. But in the caravan’s first campsite they saw no grass, wood, or water. And in the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh campsites they saw no grass, wood, or water. And all came to ruin and disaster. And the men and beasts in that caravan were all devoured by that non-human spirit. Only their bones remained.

Now, when the second caravan leader knew that the first caravan was well underway, he prepared much grass, wood, and water and started the caravan. After two or three days’ journey he saw a dark man with red eyes coming the other way in a donkey cart with muddy wheels. He was armored with a quiver and wreathed with yellow lotus, his clothes and hair all wet. Seeing him, he said: ‘Sir, where do you come from?’ ‘From such and such a country.’ ‘And where are you going?’ ‘To the country named so and so.’ ‘But has there been much rain in the desert up ahead?’ ‘Indeed there has, sir. The paths are sprinkled with water, and there is much grass, wood, and water. Toss out your grass, wood, and water. Your wagons will move swiftly when lightly-laden, so don’t tire your draught teams.’

So the caravan leader addressed his drivers: ‘This man says that there has been much rain in the desert up ahead. He advises us to toss out the grass, wood, and water. The wagons will move swiftly when lightly-laden, and won’t tire our draught teams. But this person is neither our friend nor relative. How can we proceed out of trust in him? We shouldn’t toss out any grass, wood, or water, but continue with our goods laden as before. We shall not toss out any old stock.’ ‘Yes, sir,’ the drivers replied, and they restarted the caravan with the goods laden as before. And in the caravan’s first campsite they saw no grass, wood, or water. And in the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh campsites they saw no grass, wood, or water. And they saw the other caravan that had come to ruin. And they

saw the bones of the men and beasts who had been devoured by that non-human spirit.

So the caravan leader addressed his drivers: ‘This caravan came to ruin, as happens when guided by a foolish caravan leader. Well then, sirs, toss out any of our merchandise that’s of little value, and take what’s valuable from this caravan.’ ‘Yes, sir’ replied the drivers, and that’s what they did. They crossed over the desert safely, as happens when guided by an astute caravan leader. In the same way, chieftain, being foolish and incompetent, you will come to ruin seeking the other world irrationally, like the first caravan leader. And those who think you’re worth listening to and trusting will also come to ruin, like the drivers. Let go of this harmful misconception, chieftain, let go of it! Don’t create lasting harm and suffering for yourself!”

“Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I’m not able to let go of that harmful misconception. King Pasenadi of Kosala knows my views, and so do foreign kings. I shall carry on with this view out of anger, contempt, and spite!”

## **2.12. The Simile of the Dung-Carrier**

“Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Once upon a time, a certain swineherd went from his own village to another village. There he saw a large pile of dry dung abandoned. He thought: ‘This pile of dry dung can serve as food for my pigs. Why don’t I carry it off?’ So he spread out his upper robe, shoveled the dry dung onto it, tied it up into a bundle, lifted it on to his head, and went on his way. While on his way a large sudden storm poured down. Smearing with leaking, oozing dung down to his fingernails, he kept on carrying the load of dung. When people noticed this they said: ‘Have you gone mad, sir? Have you lost your mind? For how can you, smeared with leaking, oozing dung down to your fingernails, keep on carrying that load of dung?’ ‘You’re the mad ones, sirs! You’re the ones who’ve lost your minds! For this will serve as food for my pigs.’ In the same way, chieftain, you seem like the dung carrier in the simile. Let go of this

harmful misconception, chieftain, let go of it! Don't create lasting harm and suffering for yourself!"

"Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I'm not able to let go of that harmful misconception. King Pasenadi of Kosala knows my views, and so do foreign kings. I shall carry on with this view out of anger, contempt, and spite!"

### **2.13. The Simile of the Gamblers**

"Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Once upon a time, two gamblers were playing with dice. One gambler, every time they made a bad throw, swallowed the dice. The second gambler saw him, and said: 'Well, my friend, you've won it all! Give me the dice, I will offer them as sacrifice.' 'Yes, my friend,' the gambler replied, and gave them. Having soaked the dice in poison, the gambler said to the other: 'Come, my friend, let's play dice.' 'Yes, my friend,' the other gambler replied. And for a second time the gamblers played with dice. And for the second time, every time they made a bad throw, that gambler swallowed the dice. The second gambler saw him, and said:

'The man swallows the dice without realizing  
they're smeared with burning poison.  
Swallow, you bloody cheat, swallow!  
Soon you'll know the bitter fruit!'

In the same way, chieftain, you seem like the gambler in the simile. Let go of this harmful misconception, chieftain, let go of it! Don't create lasting harm and suffering for yourself!"

"Even though Master Kassapa says this, still I'm not able to let go of that harmful misconception. King Pasenadi of Kosala knows my views, and so do foreign kings. I shall carry on with this view out of anger, contempt, and spite!"

## 2.14. The Simile of the Man Who Carried Hemp

“Well then, chieftain, I shall give you a simile. For by means of a simile some sensible people understand the meaning of what is said. Once upon a time, the inhabitants of a certain country emigrated. Then one friend said to another: ‘Come, my friend, let’s go to that country. Hopefully we’ll get some riches there!’ ‘Yes, my friend,’ the other replied. They went to that country, and to a certain place in a village. There they saw a pile of abandoned sunn hemp. Seeing it, one friend said to the other: ‘This is a pile of abandoned sunn hemp. Well then, my friend, you make up a bundle of hemp, and I’ll make one too. Let’s both take a bundle of hemp and go on.’ ‘Yes, my friend,’ he said. Carrying their bundles of hemp they went to another place in the village. There they saw much sunn hemp thread abandoned. Seeing it, one friend said to the other: ‘This pile of abandoned sunn hemp thread is just what we wanted the hemp for! Well then, my friend, let’s abandon our bundles of hemp, and both take a bundle of hemp thread and go on.’ ‘I’ve already carried this bundle of hemp a long way, and it’s well tied up. It’s good enough for me, you understand.’ So one friend abandoned their bundle of hemp and picked up a bundle of hemp thread.

They went to another place in the village. There they saw much sunn hemp cloth abandoned. Seeing it, one friend said to the other: ‘This pile of abandoned sunn hemp cloth is just what we wanted the hemp and hemp thread for! Well then, my friend, let’s abandon our bundles, and both take a bundle of hemp cloth and go on.’ ‘I’ve already carried this bundle of hemp a long way, and it’s well tied up. It’s good enough for me, you understand.’ So one friend abandoned their bundle of hemp thread and picked up a bundle of hemp cloth.

They went to another place in the village. There they saw a pile of flax, and further, linen thread, linen cloth, silk, silk thread, silk cloth, iron, copper, tin, lead, silver, and gold abandoned. Seeing it, one friend said to the other: ‘This pile of gold is just what we wanted all those other things for! Well then, my friend, let’s abandon our bundles, and both take a bundle of gold and go on.’ ‘I’ve already carried this bundle of hemp a long way, and it’s well tied up. It’s good enough for me, you

understand.’ So one friend abandoned their bundle of silver and picked up a bundle of gold.

Then they returned to their own village. When one friend returned with a bundle of sunn hemp, they didn’t please their parents, their partners and children, or their friends and colleagues. And they got no pleasure and happiness on that account. But when the other friend returned with a bundle of gold, they pleased their parents, their partners and children, and their friends and colleagues. And they got much pleasure and happiness on that account. In the same way, chieftain, you seem like the hemp-carrier in the simile. Let go of this harmful misconception, chieftain, let go of it! Don’t create lasting harm and suffering for yourself!”

### **3. Going for Refuge**

“I was delighted and satisfied with your very first simile, Master Kassapa! Nevertheless, I wanted to hear your various solutions to the problem, so I thought I’d oppose you in this way. Excellent, Master Kassapa! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what’s there, Master Kassapa has made the teaching clear in many ways. I go for refuge to Master Gotama, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may Master Kassapa remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.

Master Kassapa, I wish to perform a great sacrifice. Please instruct me so it will be for my lasting welfare and happiness.

### **4. On Sacrifice**

“Chieftain, take the kind of sacrifice where cattle, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and various kinds of creatures are slaughtered. And the recipients have wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. That kind of sacrifice is not very fruitful or beneficial or splendid or bountiful. Suppose a farmer was to enter a wood taking seed and plough. And on that barren field, that barren ground, with

uncleared stumps he sowed seeds that were broken, spoiled, weather-damaged, infertile, and ill kept. And the heavens don't provide enough rain when needed. Would those seeds grow, increase, and mature, and would the farmer get abundant fruit?" "No, Master Kassapa."

"In the same way, chieftain, take the kind of sacrifice where cattle, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and various kinds of creatures are slaughtered. And the recipients have wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion. That kind of sacrifice is not very fruitful or beneficial or splendid or bountiful.

But take the kind of sacrifice where cattle, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and various kinds of creatures are not slaughtered. And the recipients have right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. That kind of sacrifice is very fruitful and beneficial and splendid and bountiful. Suppose a farmer was to enter a wood taking seed and plough. And on that fertile field, that fertile ground, with well-cleared stumps he sowed seeds that were intact, unspoiled, not weather-damaged, fertile, and well kept. And the heavens provide plenty of rain when needed. Would those seeds grow, increase, and mature, and would the farmer get abundant fruit?" "Yes, Master Kassapa." "In the same way, chieftain, take the kind of sacrifice where cattle, goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and various kinds of creatures are not slaughtered. And the recipients have right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion. That kind of sacrifice is very fruitful and beneficial and splendid and bountiful."

## **5. On the Brahmin Student Uttara**

Then the chieftain Pāyāsi set up an offering for ascetics and brahmins, for paupers, vagrants, travelers, and beggars. At that offering such food as rough gruel with pickles was given, and heavy clothes with ball-tails. Now, it was a brahmin student named Uttara who organized that offering. When the offering was over he referred to it like this: "Through this offering may I be together with the chieftain Pāyāsi in this world, but not in the next." Pāyāsi heard of this, so he summoned Uttara and

said: “Is it really true, dear Uttara, that you referred to the offering in this way?” “Yes, sir.” “But why? Don’t we who seek merit expect some result from the offering?” “At your offering such food as rough gruel with pickles was given, which you wouldn’t even want to touch with your foot, much less eat. And also heavy clothes with ball-tails, which you also wouldn’t want to touch with your foot, much less wear. Sir, you’re dear and beloved to me. But how can I reconcile one so dear with something so disagreeable?” “Well then, dear Uttara, set up an offering with the same kind of food that I eat, and the same kind of clothes that I wear.” “Yes, sir,” replied Uttara, and did so.

So the chieftain Pāyāsi gave gifts carelessly, thoughtlessly, not with his own hands, giving the dregs. When his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in company with the gods of the Four Great Kings, in an empty palace of acacia. But the brahmin student Uttara who organized the offering gave gifts carefully, thoughtfully, with his own hands, not giving the dregs. When his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in company with the gods of the Thirty-Three.

## **6. The God Pāyāsi**

Now at that time Venerable Gavampati would often go to that empty acacia palace for the day’s meditation. Then the god Pāyāsi went up to him, bowed, and stood to one side. Gavampati said to him: “Who are you, reverend?” “Sir, I am the chieftain Pāyāsi.” “Didn’t you have the view that there’s no afterlife, no beings are reborn spontaneously, and there’s no fruit or result of good and bad deeds?” “It’s true, sir, I did have such a view. But Venerable Kumāra Kassapa dissuaded me from that harmful misconception.” “But the student named Uttara who organized that offering for you—where has he been reborn?” “Sir, Uttara gave gifts carefully, thoughtfully, with his own hands, not giving the dregs. When his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in company with the gods of the Thirty-Three. But I gave gifts carelessly, thoughtlessly, not with my own hands, giving the dregs. When my body broke up, after death, I was reborn in company with the gods of the Four Great Kings, in an empty palace of acacia. So, sir, when you’ve returned to the human realm, please announce this: ‘Give gifts carefully, thoughtfully, with your own hands, not giving the dregs. The chieftain Pāyāsi gave gifts carelessly,

thoughtlessly, not with his own hands, giving the dregs. When his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in company with the gods of the Four Great Kings, in an empty palace of acacia. But the brahmin student Uttara who organized the offering gave gifts carefully, thoughtfully, with his own hands, not giving the dregs. When his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in company with the gods of the Thirty-Three.’”

So when Venerable Gavampati returned to the human realm he made that announcement.

## 24. Pāthika Sutta

About Pāṭikaputta

### 1. On Sunakkhatta

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Mallas, near the Mallian town named Anupiya. Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Anupiya for alms. Then it occurred to him: “It’s too early to wander for alms in Anupiya. Why don’t I go to the wanderer Bhaggavagotta’s monastery to visit him?”

So that’s what he did. Then the wanderer Bhaggavagotta said to the Buddha: “Come, Blessed One! Welcome, Blessed One! It’s been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please, sir, sit down, this seat is ready.” The Buddha sat on the seat spread out, while Bhaggavagotta took a low seat, sat to one side, and said to the Buddha: “Sir, a few days ago Sunakkhatta the Licchavi came to me and said: ‘Now, Bhaggava, I have rejected the Buddha. Now I no longer live dedicated to him.’ Sir, is what Sunakkhatta said true?” “Indeed it is, Bhaggava.

A few days ago Sunakkhatta the Licchavi came to me, bowed, sat down to one side, and said: ‘Now I reject the Buddha! Now I shall no longer live dedicated to you.’ When Sunakkhatta said this, I said to him: ‘But Sunakkhatta, did I ever say to you: “Come, live dedicated to me”?’ ‘No, sir.’ ‘Or did you ever say to me: “Sir, I shall live dedicated to the Buddha”?’ ‘No, sir.’ ‘So it seems that I did not ask you to live dedicated to me, nor did you say you would live dedicated to me. In that case, you foolish man, are you really in a position to be rejecting anything? See how far you have strayed!’

‘But sir, the Buddha never performs any superhuman demonstrations of psychic power for me.’ ‘But Sunakkhatta, did I ever say to you: “Come, live dedicated to me and I will perform a superhuman demonstration of psychic power for you”?’

‘No, sir.’ ‘Or did you ever say to me: “Sir, I shall live dedicated to the Buddha, and the Buddha will perform a superhuman demonstration of psychic power for me”?’

‘No, sir.’ ‘So it seems that I did not ask this of you, and you did not require it of me. In that case, you foolish man, are you really in a position to be rejecting anything? What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Whether or not there is a demonstration of psychic power, does my teaching lead someone who practices it to the goal of the complete ending of suffering?’ ‘It does, sir.’ ‘So it seems that whether or not there is a demonstration of psychic power, my teaching leads someone who practices it to the goal of the complete ending of suffering. In that case, what is the point of superhuman demonstrations of psychic power? See how far you have strayed, you foolish man!’

‘But sir, the Buddha never describes the origin of the world to me.’ ‘But Sunakkhatta, did I ever say to you: “Come, live dedicated to me and I will describe the origin of the world to you”?’ ‘No, sir.’

‘Or did you ever say to me: “Sir, I shall live dedicated to the Buddha, and the Buddha will describe the origin of the world to me”?’ ‘No, sir.’

‘So it seems that I did not ask this of you, and you did not require it of me. In that case, you foolish man, are you really in a position to be rejecting anything? What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Whether or not the origin of the world is described, does my teaching lead someone who practices it to the goal of the complete ending of suffering?’ ‘It does, sir.’ ‘So it seems that whether or not the origin of the world is described, my teaching leads someone who practices it to the goal of the complete ending of suffering. In that case, what is the point of describing the origin of the world? See how far you have strayed, you foolish man!’

In many ways, Sunakkhatta, you have praised me like this in the Vajjian capital: “That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.”

In many ways you have praised the teaching like this in the Vajjian capital: “The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—realizable in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.”

In many ways you have praised the Saṅgha like this in the Vajjian capital: “The Saṅgha of the Buddha’s disciples is practicing the way that’s good, straightforward, methodical, and proper. It consists of the four pairs, the eight individuals. This Saṅgha of the Buddha’s disciples is worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a teacher’s offering, and worthy of greeting with joined palms. It is a supreme field of merit for the world.”

I declare this to you, Sunakkhatta, I announce this to you! There will be those who say that Sunakkhatta was unable to lead the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama. That’s why he rejected the training and returned to a lesser life. That’s what they’ll say.’

Though I spoke to Sunakkhatta like this, he still left this teaching and training, like someone on the highway to hell.

## **2. On Korakkhattiya**

Bhaggava, this one time I was staying in the land of the Thūlus where they have a town named Uttarakā. Then I robed up in the morning and, taking my bowl and robe, entered Uttarakā for alms with Sunakkhatta the Licchavi as my second monk. Now at that time the naked ascetic Korakkhattiya had taken a vow to behave like a dog. When food is tossed on the ground, he gets down on all fours, eating and devouring it just with his mouth. Sunakkhatta saw him doing this and thought: ‘That ascetic is a true holy man!’

Then, knowing what Sunakkhatta was thinking, I said to him: ‘Don’t you claim to be an ascetic, a follower of the Sakyan, you foolish man?’ ‘But why does the Buddha say this to me?’ ‘When you saw that naked ascetic Korakkhattiya, didn’t

you think: “That ascetic is a true holy man!”?’ ‘Yes, sir. But sir, are you jealous of the perfected ones?’

‘I’m not jealous of the perfected ones, you foolish man. Rather, you should give up this harmful misconception that has arisen in you. Don’t create lasting harm and suffering for yourself! That naked ascetic Korakkhattiya, who you imagine to be a true holy man, will die of flatulence in seven days. And when he dies, he’ll be reborn in the very lowest class of demons, named the Kālakañjas. And when he dies, they’ll throw him in the charnel ground on a clump of vetiver. If you wish, Sunakkhatta, go to Korakkhattiya and ask him whether he knows his own destiny. It’s possible that he will answer: “Reverend Sunakkhatta, I know my own destiny. I’ll be reborn in the very lowest class of demons, named the Kālakañjas.”’

So, Bhaggava, Sunakkhatta went to see Korakkhattiya and said to him: ‘Reverend Korakkhattiya, the ascetic Gotama has declared that you will die of flatulence in seven days. And when you die, you’ll be reborn in the very lowest class of demons, named the Kālakañjas. And when you die, they’ll throw you in the charnel ground on a clump of vetiver. But by eating just a little food and drinking just a little water, you’ll prove what the ascetic Gotama says to be false.’

Then Sunakkhatta counted up the days until the seventh day, as happens when you have no faith in the Realized One. But on the seventh day, the naked ascetic Korakkhattiya died of flatulence. And when he passed away, he was reborn in the very lowest class of demons, named the Kālakañjas. And when he passed away, they threw him in the charnel ground on a clump of vetiver.

Sunakkhatta the Licchavi heard about this. So he went to see Korakkhattiya in the charnel ground on the clump of vetiver. There he struck Korakkhattiya with his fist three times: ‘Reverend Korakkhattiya, do you know your destiny?’ Then Korakkhattiya got up, rubbing his back with his hands, and said: ‘Reverend Sunakkhatta, I know my own destiny. I’ve been reborn in the very lowest class of demons, named the Kālakañjas.’ After speaking, he fell flat right there.

Then Sunakkhatta came to me, bowed, and sat down to one side. I said to him: ‘What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Did the declaration I made about Korakkhattiya turn out to be correct, or not?’ ‘It turned out to be correct.’ ‘What do you think, Sunakkhatta? If that is so, has a superhuman demonstration of psychic power been performed or not?’ ‘Clearly, sir, a superhuman demonstration of psychic power has been performed.’ ‘Though I performed such a superhuman demonstration of psychic power you say this: “But sir, the Buddha never performs any superhuman demonstrations of psychic power for me.” See how far you have strayed!’ Though I spoke to Sunakkhatta like this, he still left this teaching and training, like someone on the highway to hell.

### **3. On the Naked Ascetic Kaḷāramaṭṭaka**

This one time, Bhaggava, I was staying near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof. Now at that time the naked ascetic Kaḷāramaṭṭaka was residing in Vesālī. And in the Vajjian capital he had reached the pinnacle of material possessions and fame. He had undertaken these seven vows. ‘As long as I live, I will be a naked ascetic, not wearing clothes. As long as I live, I will be celibate, not having sex. As long as I live, I will consume only meat and alcohol, not eating rice and porridge. And I will not go past the following tree shrines near Vesālī: the Udena shrine to the east, the Gotamaka to the south, the Sattamba to the west, and the Bahuputta to the north.’ And it was due to undertaking these seven vows that he had reached the pinnacle of material possessions and fame.

So, Bhaggava, Sunakkhatta went to see Kaḷāramaṭṭaka and asked him a question. But when he couldn’t answer it, he displayed irritation, hate, and bitterness. So Sunakkhatta thought: ‘I’ve offended the holy man, the perfected one, the ascetic. I mustn’t create lasting harm and suffering for myself!’

Then Sunakkhatta came to me, bowed, and sat down to one side. I said to him: ‘Don’t you claim to be an ascetic, a follower of the Sakyans, you foolish man?’ ‘But why does the Buddha say this to me?’ ‘Didn’t you go to see the naked ascetic Kaḷāramaṭṭaka and ask him a question? But when he couldn’t answer it, he displayed irritation, hate, and bitterness. Then you thought: “I’ve offended the holy

man, the perfected one, the ascetic. I mustn't create lasting harm and suffering for myself!" "Yes, sir. But sir, are you jealous of perfected ones?"

'I'm not jealous of the perfected ones, you foolish man. Rather, you should give up this harmful misconception that has arisen in you. Don't create lasting harm and suffering for yourself! That naked ascetic Kaḷāramaṭṭaka, who you imagine to be a true holy man, will shortly be clothed, living with a partner, eating rice and porridge, having gone past all the tree shrines near Vesālī. And he will die after losing all his fame.'

And that's exactly what happened.

Sunakkhatta heard about this. He came to me, bowed, and sat down to one side. I said to him: 'What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Did the declaration I made about Kaḷāramaṭṭaka turn out to be correct, or not?' 'It turned out to be correct.' 'What do you think, Sunakkhatta? If that is so, has a superhuman demonstration of psychic power been performed or not?' 'Clearly, sir, a superhuman demonstration of psychic power has been performed.' 'Though I perform such a superhuman demonstration of psychic power you say this: "But sir, the Buddha never performs any superhuman demonstrations of psychic power for me." See how far you have strayed!' Though I spoke to Sunakkhatta like this, he still left this teaching and training, like someone on the highway to hell.

#### **4. On the Naked Ascetic Pāṭikaputta**

This one time, Bhaggava, I was staying right there near Vesālī, at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof. Now at that time the naked ascetic Pāṭikaputta was residing in Vesālī. And in the Vajjian capital he had reached the pinnacle of material possessions and fame. He was telling a crowd in Vesālī: 'Both the ascetic Gotama and I speak from knowledge. One who speaks from knowledge ought to display a superhuman demonstration of psychic power to another who speaks from knowledge. If the ascetic Gotama meets me half-way, there we should both perform a superhuman demonstration of psychic power. If he performs one demonstration of psychic power, I'll perform two. If he performs two, I'll perform

four. If he performs four, I'll perform eight. However many demonstrations of psychic power the ascetic Gotama performs, I'll perform double.'

Then Sunakkhatta came to me, bowed, sat down to one side, and told me of all this.

I said to him: 'Sunakkhatta, the naked ascetic Pāṭikaputta is not capable of coming into my presence, unless he gives up that statement and that intention, and lets go of that view. If he thinks he can come into my presence without giving up those things, his head may explode.'

'Careful what you say, Blessed One! Careful what you say, Holy One!' 'But why do you say this to me, Sunakkhatta?' 'Sir, the Buddha has definitively asserted that Pāṭikaputta is not capable of coming into the Buddha's presence, otherwise his head may explode. But Pāṭikaputta might come into the Buddha's presence in disguise, proving the Buddha wrong.'

'Sunakkhatta, would the Realized One make an ambiguous statement?' 'But sir, did you make that statement after comprehending Pāṭikaputta's mind with your mind?

Or did deities tell you about it?'

'Both, Sunakkhatta.

For Ajita the Licchavi general has recently passed away and been reborn in the host of the Thirty-Three. He came and told me this: "The naked ascetic Pāṭikaputta is shameless, sir, he is a liar. For he has declared of me in the Vajjian capital: 'Ajita the Licchavi general has been reborn in the Great Hell.'

But that is not true—I have been reborn in the host of the Thirty-Three. The naked ascetic Pāṭikaputta is shameless, sir, he is a liar. Pāṭikaputta is not capable of coming into the Buddha's presence, otherwise his head may explode."

Thus I both made that statement after comprehending Pāṭikaputta's mind with my mind, and deities told me about it.

So Sunakkhatta, I'll wander for alms in Vesālī. After the meal, on my return from alms-round, I'll go to Pāṭikaputta's monastery for the day's meditation. Now you may tell him, if you so wish.'

## **5. On Demonstrations of Psychic Power**

Then, Bhaggava, I robed up in the morning and, taking my bowl and robe, entered Vesālī for alms. After the meal, on my return from alms-round, I went to Pāṭikaputta's monastery for the day's meditation. Then Sunakkhatta rushed into Vesālī to see the very well-known Licchavis and said to them: 'Sirs, after his alms-round, the Buddha has gone to Pāṭikaputta's monastery for the day's meditation. Come forth, sirs, come forth! There will be a superhuman demonstration of psychic power by the holy ascetics!' So the very well-known Licchavis thought: 'It seems there will be a superhuman demonstration of psychic power by the holy ascetics! Let's go!'

Then he went to see the very well-known well-to-do brahmins, rich householders, and ascetics and brahmins who follow various other paths, and said the same thing. They all said: 'It seems there will be a superhuman demonstration of psychic power by the holy ascetics! Let's go!'

Then all those very well-known people went to Pāṭikaputta's monastery. That assembly was large, Bhaggava; there were many hundreds, many thousands of them.

Pāṭikaputta heard: 'It seems that very well-known Licchavis, well-to-do brahmins, rich householders, and ascetics and brahmins who follow various other paths have come forth. And the ascetic Gotama is sitting in my monastery for the day's meditation.' When he heard that, he became frightened, scared, his hair standing on end. In fear he went to the Pale-Moon Ebony Trunk Monastery of the wanderers.

The assembly heard of this, and instructed a man:

‘Come, my man, go to see Pāṭikaputta at the Pale-Moon Ebony Trunk Monastery and say to him: “Come forth, Reverend Pāṭikaputta! All these very well-known people have come forth, and the ascetic Gotama is sitting in your monastery for the day’s meditation. For you stated this in the assembly at Vesālī: ‘Both the ascetic Gotama and I speak from knowledge. One who speaks from knowledge ought to display a superhuman demonstration of psychic power to another who speaks from knowledge. If the ascetic Gotama meets me half-way, there we should both perform a superhuman demonstration of psychic power. If he performs one demonstration of psychic power, I’ll perform two. If he performs two, I’ll perform four. If he performs four, I’ll perform eight. However many demonstrations of psychic power the ascetic Gotama performs, I’ll perform double.’ Come forth, Reverend Pāṭikaputta, half-way. The ascetic Gotama has come the first half, and is sitting in your monastery.”’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied that man, and delivered the message.

When he had spoken, Pāṭika said: ‘I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!’ But wriggle as he might, he couldn’t get up from his seat. Then that man said to Pāṭikaputta: ‘What’s up, Reverend Pāṭikaputta? Is your bottom stuck to the bench, or is the bench stuck to your bottom? You say “I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!” But wriggle as you might, you can’t get up from your seat.’ And as he was speaking, Pāṭika said: ‘I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!’ But wriggle as he might, he couldn’t get up from his seat.

When that man knew that Pāṭikaputta had lost, he returned to the assembly and said: ‘Pāṭikaputta has lost, sirs. He says “I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!” But wriggle as he might, he can’t get up from his seat.’ When he said this, I said to the assembly: ‘The naked ascetic Pāṭikaputta is not capable of coming into my presence, unless he gives up that statement and that intention, and lets go of that

view. If he thinks he can come into my presence without giving up those things, his head may explode.’

The first recitation section is finished.

Then, Bhaggava, a certain Licchavi minister stood up and said to the assembly: ‘Well then, sirs, wait a moment, I’ll go. Hopefully I’ll be able to lead Pāṭikaputta back to the assembly.’

So that minister went to see Pāṭikaputta and said: ‘Come forth, Reverend Pāṭikaputta! It’s best for you to come forth. All these very well-known people have come forth, and the ascetic Gotama is sitting in your monastery for the day’s meditation. You said you’d meet the ascetic Gotama half-way. The ascetic Gotama has come the first half, and is sitting in your monastery. The ascetic Gotama has told the assembly that you’re not capable of coming into his presence. Come forth, Pāṭikaputta! When you come forth we’ll make you win and the ascetic Gotama lose.’

When he had spoken, Pāṭikaputta said: ‘I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!’ But wriggle as he might, he couldn’t get up from his seat. Then the minister said to Pāṭikaputta: ‘What’s up, Reverend Pāṭikaputta? Is your bottom stuck to the bench, or is the bench stuck to your bottom? You say “I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!” But wriggle as you might, you can’t get up from your seat.’ And as he was speaking, Pāṭikaputta said: ‘I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!’ But wriggle as he might, he couldn’t get up from his seat.

When the Licchavi minister knew that Pāṭikaputta had lost, he returned to the assembly and said: ‘Pāṭikaputta has lost, sirs.’ When he said this, I said to the assembly: ‘Pāṭikaputta is not capable of coming into my presence, otherwise his head may explode. The good Licchavis might think: “Let’s bind Pāṭikaputta with straps and drag him with a pair of oxen!” But either the straps will break or Pāṭikaputta will.’

Then, Bhaggava, Jāliya, the pupil of the wood-bowl ascetic, stood up and said to the assembly: ‘Well then, sirs, wait a moment, I’ll go. Hopefully I’ll be able to lead Pāṭikaputta back to the assembly.’

So Jāliya went to see Pāṭikaputta and said: ‘Come forth, Reverend Pāṭikaputta! It’s best for you to come forth. All these very well-known people have come forth, and the ascetic Gotama is sitting in your monastery for the day’s meditation. You said you’d meet the ascetic Gotama half-way. The ascetic Gotama has come the first half, and is sitting in your monastery. The ascetic Gotama has told the assembly that you’re not capable of coming into his presence. And he said that even if the Licchavis try to bind you with straps and drag you with a pair of oxen, either the straps will break or you will. Come forth, Pāṭikaputta! When you come forth we’ll make you win and the ascetic Gotama lose.’

When he had spoken, Pāṭikaputta said: ‘I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!’ But wriggle as he might, he couldn’t get up from his seat. Then Jāliya said to Pāṭikaputta: ‘What’s up, Reverend Pāṭikaputta? Is your bottom stuck to the bench, or is the bench stuck to your bottom? You say “I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!” But wriggle as you might, you can’t get up from your seat.’ And as he was speaking, Pāṭikaputta said: ‘I’m coming, sir, I’m coming!’ But wriggle as he might, he couldn’t get up from his seat.

When Jāliya knew that Pāṭikaputta had lost, he said to him:

‘Once upon a time, Reverend Pāṭikaputta, it occurred to a lion, king of beasts: “Why don’t I make my lair near a certain forest? Towards evening I can emerge from my den, yawn, look all around the four directions, roar my lion’s roar three times, and set out on the hunt. Having slain the very best of the deer herd, and eaten the most tender flesh, I could return to my den.”

And so that’s what he did.

Now, there was an old jackal who had grown fat on the lion's leavings, becoming arrogant and strong. He thought: "What does the lion, king of beasts, have that I don't? Why don't I make my lair near a certain forest? Towards evening I can emerge from my den, yawn, look all around the four directions, roar my lion's roar three times, and set out on the hunt. Having slain the very best of the deer herd, and eaten the most tender flesh, I could return to my den."

And so that's what he did. But when he tried to roar a lion's roar, he only managed to squeal and yelp like a jackal. And what is a pathetic jackal's squeal next to the roar of a lion?

In the same way, reverend, while living on the harvest of the Holy One, enjoying the leftovers of the Holy One, you presume to attack the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha! Who are the pathetic Pāṭikaputtas to attack the Realized Ones, the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas?

When Jāliya couldn't get Pāṭikaputta to shift from his seat even with this simile, he said to him:

'Seeing himself as equal to the lion,  
the jackal presumed "I'm the king of the beasts!"  
But in reality he only managed to yelp,  
and what's a sad jackal's squeal to the roar of a lion?

In the same way, reverend, while living on the harvest of the Holy One, you presume to attack him!'

When Jāliya couldn't get Pāṭikaputta to shift from his seat even with this simile, he said to him:

'Following in the steps of another,  
seeing himself grown fat on scraps,  
until he doesn't even see himself,

the jackal presumes he's a tiger.

But in reality he only managed to yelp,  
and what's a sad jackal's squeal to the roar of a lion?

In the same way, reverend, while living on the harvest of the Holy One, you presume to attack him!'

When Jāliya couldn't get Pāṭikaputta to shift from his seat even with this simile, he said to him:

'Gorged on frogs, and mice from the barn,  
and carcasses tossed in the cemetery,  
thriving in the great, empty wood,  
the jackal presumed "I'm the king of the beasts!"  
But in reality he only managed to yelp,  
and what's a sad jackal's squeal to the roar of a lion?

In the same way, reverend, while living on the harvest of the Holy One, enjoying the leftovers of the Holy One, you presume to attack the Realized One, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha! Who are the pathetic Pāṭikaputtas to attack the Realized Ones, the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas?'

When Jāliya couldn't get Pāṭikaputta to shift from his seat even with this simile, he returned to the assembly and said: 'Pāṭikaputta has lost, sirs. He says "I'm coming, sir, I'm coming!" But wriggle as he might, he can't get up from his seat.'

When he said this, I said to the assembly: 'The naked ascetic Pāṭikaputta is not capable of coming into my presence, unless he gives up that statement and that intention, and lets go of that view. If he thinks he can come into my presence without giving up those things, his head may explode. The good Licchavis might think: "Let's bind Pāṭikaputta with straps and drag him with a pair of oxen!" But

either the straps will break or Pāṭikaputta will. Pāṭikaputta is not capable of coming into my presence, otherwise his head may explode.’

Then, Bhaggava, I educated, encouraged, fired up, and inspired that assembly with a Dhamma talk. I released that assembly from the great bondage, and lifted 84,000 beings from the great swamp. Next I entered upon the fire element, rose into the sky to the height of seven palm trees, and created a flame another seven palm trees high, blazing and smoking. Finally I landed at the Great Wood, in the hall with the peaked roof.

Then Sunakkhatta came to me, bowed, and sat down to one side. I said to him: ‘What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Did the declaration I made about Pāṭikaputta turn out to be correct, or not?’ ‘It turned out to be correct.’

‘What do you think, Sunakkhatta? If that is so, has a superhuman demonstration of psychic power been performed or not?’ ‘Clearly, sir, a superhuman demonstration of psychic power has been performed.’ ‘Though I perform such a superhuman demonstration of psychic power you say this: “But sir, the Buddha never performs any superhuman demonstrations of psychic power for me.” See how far you have strayed!’

Though I spoke to Sunakkhatta like this, he still left this teaching and training, like someone on the highway to hell.

## **6. On Describing the Origin of the World**

Bhaggava, I understand the origin of the world. I understand this, and what goes beyond it. Yet since I do not misapprehend that understanding, I have realized extinguishment within myself. Directly knowing this, the Realized One does not come to ruin.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who describe the origin of the world in their tradition as created by the Lord God, by Brahmā. I go up to them and say: ‘Is it really true that this is the venerables’ view?’ And they answer, ‘Yes’. I say to them:

‘But how do you describe in your tradition that the origin of the world came about as created by the Lord God, by Brahmā?’ But they cannot answer, and they even question me in return. So I answer them:

‘There comes a time when, reverends, after a very long period has passed, this cosmos contracts. As the cosmos contracts, sentient beings are mostly headed for the realm of streaming radiance. There they are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

There comes a time when, after a very long period has passed, this cosmos expands. As it expands an empty mansion of Brahmā appears. Then a certain sentient being—due to the running out of their life-span or merit—passes away from that group of radiant deities and is reborn in that empty mansion of Brahmā. There they are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

But after staying there all alone for a long time, they become dissatisfied and anxious: “Oh, if only another being would come to this state of existence.” Then other sentient beings—due to the running out of their life-span or merit—pass away from that group of radiant deities and are reborn in that empty mansion of Brahmā in company with that being. There they too are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

Now, the being who was reborn there first thinks: “I am Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born. Why is that? Because first I thought: ‘Oh, if only another being would come to this state of existence.’ Such was my heart’s wish, and then these creatures came to this state of existence.”

And the beings who were reborn there later also think: “This must be Brahmā, the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born. And we have been created by him. Why is that? Because we see that he was reborn here first, and we arrived later.”

And the being who was reborn first is more long-lived, beautiful, and illustrious than those who arrived later.

It’s possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect that past life, but no further.

They say: “He who is Brahmā—the Great Brahmā, the Undefeated, the Champion, the Universal Seer, the Wielder of Power, the Lord God, the Maker, the Author, the Best, the Begetter, the Controller, the Father of those who have been born and those yet to be born—is permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, remaining the same for all eternity. We who were created by that Brahmā are impermanent, not lasting, short-lived, perishable, and have come to this state of existence.” This is how you describe in your tradition that the origin of the world came about as created by the Lord God, by Brahmā.’ They say: ‘That is what we have heard, Reverend Gotama, just as you say.’

Bhaggava, I understand the origin of the world. I understand this, and what goes beyond it. Yet since I do not misapprehend that understanding, I have realized extinguishment within myself. Directly knowing this, the Realized One does not come to ruin.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who describe the origin of the world in their tradition as due to those depraved by play. I go up to them and say: ‘Is it really true

that this is the venerables' view?' And they answer, 'Yes'. I say to them: 'But how do you describe in your tradition that the origin of the world came about due to those depraved by play?' But they cannot answer, and they even question me in return. So I answer them:

'Reverends, there are gods named "depraved by play". They spend too much time laughing, playing, and making merry. And in doing so, they lose their mindfulness, and they pass away from that group of gods.

It's possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect that past life, but no further.

They say: "The gods not depraved by play don't spend too much time laughing, playing, and making merry. So they don't lose their mindfulness, and don't pass away from that group of gods. They are permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, remaining the same for all eternity. But we who were depraved by play spent too much time laughing, playing, and making merry. In doing so, we lost our mindfulness, and passed away from that group of gods. We are impermanent, not lasting, short-lived, perishable, and have come to this state of existence." This is how you describe in your tradition that the origin of the world came about due to those depraved by play.' They say: 'That is what we have heard, Reverend Gotama, just as you say.'

Bhaggava, I understand the origin of the world. Directly knowing this, the Realized One does not come to ruin.

There are some ascetics and brahmins who describe the origin of the world in their tradition as due to those who are malevolent. I go up to them and say: 'Is it really true that this is the venerables' view?' And they answer, 'Yes'. I say to them: 'But how do you describe in your tradition that the origin of the world came about due

to those who are malevolent?’ But they cannot answer, and they even question me in return. So I answer them:

There are some ascetics and brahmins who describe the origin of the world in their tradition as having arisen by chance. I go up to them and say: ‘Is it really true that this is the venerables’ view?’ And they answer, ‘Yes’. I say to them: ‘But how do you describe in your tradition that the origin of the world came about by chance?’ But they cannot answer, and they even question me in return. So I answer them:

‘Reverends, there are gods named “non-percipient beings”. When perception arises they pass away from that group of gods.

It’s possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect the arising of perception, but no further.

They say: “The self and the cosmos arose by chance. Why is that? Because formerly I didn’t exist. Now from not being I’ve changed into being.” This is how you describe in your tradition that the origin of the world came about by chance.’ They say: ‘That is what we have heard, Reverend Gotama, just as you say.’

I understand this, and what goes beyond it. Yet since I do not misapprehend that understanding, I have realized extinguishment within myself. Directly knowing this, the Realized One does not come to ruin.

Though I speak and explain like this, certain ascetics and brahmins misrepresent me with the false, baseless, lying, untruthful claim: ‘The ascetic Gotama has a distorted perspective, and so have his monks. He says: “When one enters and remains in the liberation of the beautiful, at that time one only perceives what is ugly.” But I don’t say that. I say this: “When one enters and remains in the liberation of the beautiful, at that time one only perceives what is beautiful.”’

‘They are the ones with a distorted perspective, sir, who regard the Buddha and the mendicants in this way. Sir, I am quite confident that the Buddha is capable of teaching me so that I can enter and remain in the liberation on the beautiful.’

‘It’s hard for you to enter and remain in the liberation on the beautiful, since you have a different view, creed, belief, practice, and tradition. Come now, Bhaggava, carefully nurture the confidence that you have in me.’ ‘If it’s hard for me to enter and remain in the liberation on the beautiful, since I have a different view, creed, belief, practice, and tradition, I shall carefully nurture the confidence that I have in the Buddha.’

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the wanderer Bhaggavagotta was happy with what the Buddha said.

‘Reverends, there are gods named “malevolent”. They spend too much time gazing at each other, so they grow angry with each other, and their bodies and minds get tired. They pass away from that group of gods.

It’s possible that one of those beings passes away from that group and is reborn in this state of existence. Having done so, they go forth from the lay life to homelessness. By dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus, they experience an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect that past life, but no further.

They say: ‘The gods who are not malevolent don’t spend too much time gazing at each other, so they don’t grow angry with each other, their bodies and minds don’t get tired, and they don’t pass away from that group of gods. They are permanent, everlasting, eternal, imperishable, remaining the same for all eternity. But we who were malevolent spent too much time gazing at each other, so our minds grew angry with each other, our bodies and minds got tired, and we passed away from that group of gods. We are impermanent, not lasting, short-lived, perishable, and have come to this state of existence.’ This is how you describe in your tradition

that the origin of the world came about due to those who are malevolent.' They say: 'That is what we have heard, Reverend Gotama, just as you say.'

Bhaggava, I understand the origin of the world. Directly knowing this, the Realized One does not come to ruin.

## 25. Udumbarika Sutta

The Lion's Roar at Udumbarikā's Monastery

### 1. On the Wanderer Nigrodha

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture's Peak Mountain. Now at that time the wanderer Nigrodha was residing in the lady Udumbarikā's monastery for wanderers, together with a large assembly of three thousand wanderers. Then the householder Sandhana left Rājagaha in the middle of the day to see the Buddha. Then it occurred to him: "It's the wrong time to see the Buddha, as he's in retreat. And it's the wrong time to see the esteemed mendicants, as they're in retreat. Why don't I visit the wanderer Nigrodha at the lady Udumbarikā's monastery for wanderers?" So he went to the monastery of the wanderers.

Now at that time, Nigrodha was sitting together with a large assembly of wanderers making an uproar, a dreadful racket. They engaged in all kinds of unworthy talk, such as talk about kings, bandits, and ministers; talk about armies, threats, and wars; talk about food, drink, clothes, and beds; talk about garlands and fragrances; talk about family, vehicles, villages, towns, cities, and countries; talk about women and heroes; street talk and well talk; talk about the departed; motley talk; tales of land and sea; and talk about being reborn in this or that state of existence.

Nigrodha saw Sandhāna coming off in the distance, and hushed his own assembly: "Be quiet, good sirs, don't make a sound. The householder Sandhāna, a disciple of the ascetic Gotama, is coming. He is included among the white-clothed lay disciples of the ascetic Gotama, who is residing near Rājagaha. Such venerables like the quiet, are educated to be quiet, and praise quiet. Hopefully if he sees that our assembly is quiet he'll see fit to approach." Then those wanderers fell silent.

Then Sandhāna went up to the wanderer Nigrodha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one

side and said to Nigrodha: “The way the wanderers make an uproar as they sit together and talk about all kinds of unworthy topics is one thing. It’s quite different to the way the Buddha frequents remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest that are quiet and still, far from the madding crowd, remote from human settlements, and appropriate for retreat.”

When Sandhāna said this, Nigrodha said to him: “Surely, householder, you should know better! With whom does the ascetic Gotama converse? With whom does he engage in discussion? With whom does he achieve proficiency in wisdom? Staying in empty huts has destroyed the ascetic Gotama’s wisdom. Not frequenting assemblies, he is unable to hold a discussion. He just lurks on the periphery. He’s just like the nilgai antelope, circling around and lurking on the periphery. Please, householder, let the ascetic Gotama come to this assembly. I’ll sink him with just one question! I’ll roll him over and wrap him up like an empty pot!”

With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, the Buddha heard this discussion between the householder Sandhāna and the wanderer Nigrodha. Then the Buddha descended Vulture’s Peak Mountain and went to the peacock’s feeding ground on the bank of the Sumāgadhā, where he practiced walking meditation in the open air. Nigrodha saw him, and hushed his own assembly: “Be quiet, good sirs, don’t make a sound. The ascetic Gotama is walking meditation on the bank of the Sumāgadhā. The venerable likes quiet and praises quiet. Hopefully if he sees that our assembly is quiet he’ll see fit to approach. If he comes, I’ll ask him this question: ‘Sir, what teaching do you use to guide your disciples, through which they claim solace in the fundamental purpose of the spiritual life?’” Then those wanderers fell silent.

## **2. Mortification in Disgust of Sin**

Then the Buddha went up to the wanderer Nigrodha, who said to him: “Come, Blessed One! Welcome, Blessed One! It’s been a long time since you took the opportunity to come here. Please, sir, sit down, this seat is ready.” The Buddha sat on the seat spread out, while Nigrodha took a low seat and sat to one side. The Buddha said to him: “Nigrodha, what were you sitting talking about just now?”

What conversation was unfinished?” Nigrodha said: “Well, sir, I saw you walking meditation and said: ‘If the ascetic Gotama comes, I’ll ask him this question: “Sir, what teaching do you use to guide your disciples, through which they claim solace in the fundamental purpose of the spiritual life?”’” This is the conversation that was unfinished when the Buddha arrived.”

“It’s hard for you to understand this, Nigrodha, since you have a different view, creed, belief, practice, and tradition. Please ask me a question about the higher mortification in disgust of sin in your own tradition: ‘How are the conditions for the mortification in disgust of sin completed, and how are they incomplete?’”

When he said this, those wanderers made an uproar: “It’s incredible, it’s amazing! The ascetic Gotama has such power and might! For he sets aside his own doctrine and invites discussion on the doctrine of others!”

Then Nigrodha, having quieted those wanderers, said to the Buddha: “Sir, we teach mortification in disgust of sin, regarding it as essential and clinging to it. How are the conditions for the mortification in disgust of sin completed, and how are they incomplete?”

“It’s when a mortifier goes naked, ignoring conventions. They lick their hands, and don’t come or wait when asked. They don’t consent to food brought to them, or food prepared on purpose for them, or an invitation for a meal. They don’t receive anything from a pot or bowl; or from someone who keeps sheep, or who has a weapon or a shovel in their home; or where a couple is eating; or where there is a woman who is pregnant, breast-feeding, or who has a man in her home; or where there’s a dog waiting or flies buzzing. They accept no fish or meat or liquor or wine, and drink no beer. They go to just one house for alms, taking just one mouthful, or two houses and two mouthfuls, up to seven houses and seven mouthfuls. They feed on one saucer a day, two saucers a day, up to seven saucers a day. They eat once a day, once every second day, up to once a week, and so on, even up to once a fortnight. They live committed to the practice of eating food at set intervals. They eat herbs, millet, wild rice, poor rice, water lettuce, rice bran,

scum from boiling rice, sesame flour, grass, or cow dung. They survive on forest roots and fruits, or eating fallen fruit. They wear robes of sunn hemp, mixed hemp, corpse-wrapping cloth, rags, lodh tree bark, antelope hide (whole or in strips), kusa grass, bark, wood-chips, human hair, horse-tail hair, or owls' wings. They tear out their hair and beard, committed to this practice. They constantly stand, refusing seats. They squat, committed to persisting in the squatting position. They lie on a mat of thorns, making a mat of thorns their bed. They make their bed on a plank, or the bare ground. They lie only on one side. They wear dust and dirt. They stay in the open air. They sleep wherever they lay their mat. They eat unnatural things, committed to the practice of eating unnatural foods. They don't drink, committed to the practice of not drinking liquids. They're committed to the practice of immersion in water three times a day, including the evening. What do you think, Nigrodha? If this is so, is the mortification in disgust of sin complete, or incomplete?" "Clearly, sir, if that is so the mortification in disgust of sin is complete, not incomplete." "But even such a completed mortification has many flaws, I say."

## **2.1. Flaws**

"But how does the Buddha say that even such a completed mortification has many flaws?"

"Firstly, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They're happy with that, as they've got all they wished for. This is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They become indulgent and stupefied and fall into negligence on account of that. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They generate possessions, honor, and popularity through that mortification. They're happy with that, as they've got all they wished for. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They generate possessions, honor, and popularity through that mortification. They glorify themselves and put others down on account of that. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They generate possessions, honor, and popularity through that mortification. They become indulgent and stupefied and fall into negligence on account of that. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier becomes fussy about food, saying: 'This agrees with me, this doesn't agree with me.' What doesn't agree with them they reluctantly give up. But what does agree with them they eat tied, stupefied, attached, blind to the drawbacks, and not understanding the escape. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification out of longing for possessions, honor, and popularity, thinking: 'Kings, royal ministers, aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and sectarians will honor me!' This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier rebukes a certain ascetic or brahmin: 'But what is this one doing, living in abundance! According to this ascetic's doctrine, everything—plants propagated from roots, stems, cuttings, or joints; and those from regular seeds as the fifth—is crunched together like the thunder of a tooth-hammer!' This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier sees a certain ascetic or brahmin being honored, respected, esteemed, and venerated among good families. They think: 'This one, who lives in abundance, is honored, respected, esteemed, and venerated among

good families. But I, a self-mortifier who lives rough, am not honored, respected, esteemed, and venerated among good families.’ Thus they give rise to envy and jealousy regarding families. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier sits meditation only when people can see them. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier sneaks about among families, thinking: ‘This is part of my mortification; this is part of my mortification.’ This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier sometimes behaves in an underhand manner. When asked whether something agrees with them, they say it does, even though it doesn’t. Or they say it doesn’t, even though it does. Thus they tell a deliberate lie. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier disagrees with the way that the Realized One or their disciple teaches Dhamma, even when they make a valid point. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

Furthermore, a mortifier is angry and hostile ...

offensive and contemptuous ... envious and stingy ... devious and deceitful ... obstinate and vain ... they have wicked desires, falling under the sway of wicked desires ... they have wrong view, being attached to an extremist view ... they’re attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go. This too is a flaw in that mortifier.

What do you think, Nigrodha? Are such mortifications flawed or not?” “Clearly, sir, they’re flawed. It’s possible that a mortifier might have all of these flaws, not to speak of one or other of them.”

## 2.2. On Reaching the Shoots

“Firstly, Nigrodha, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. But they’re not happy with that, as they still haven’t got all they wished for. So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They don’t glorify themselves or put others down on account of that. So they’re pure on that point.

They don’t become indulgent ...

Furthermore, a mortifier undertakes a practice of mortification. They generate possessions, honor, and popularity through that mortification. They’re not happy with that, as they still haven’t got all they wished for ...

They don’t glorify themselves and put others down on account of possessions, honor, and popularity ...

They don’t become indulgent because of it ... So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier doesn’t become fussy about food, saying: ‘This agrees with me, this doesn’t agree with me.’ What doesn’t agree with them they readily give up. But what does agree with them they eat without being tied, stupefied, attached, blind to the drawbacks, and not understanding the escape. So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier doesn’t undertake a practice of mortification out of longing for possessions, honor, and popularity ... ‘Kings, royal ministers, aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and sectarians will honor me!’ So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier doesn’t rebuke a certain ascetic or brahmin: ‘But what is this one doing, living in abundance! According to this ascetic’s doctrine, everything— plants propagated from roots, stems, cuttings, or joints; and those

from regular seeds as the fifth—is crunched together like the thunder of a tooth-hammer!’ So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier sees a certain ascetic or brahmin being honored, respected, esteemed, and venerated among good families. It never occurs to them: ‘This one, who lives in abundance, is honored, respected, esteemed, and venerated among good families. But I, a self-mortifier who lives rough, am not honored, respected, esteemed, and venerated among good families.’ Thus they don’t give rise to envy and jealousy regarding families. So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier doesn’t sit meditation only when people can see them. So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier doesn’t sneak about among families, thinking: ‘This is part of my mortification; this is part of my mortification.’ So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier never behaves in an underhand manner. When asked whether something agrees with them, they say it doesn’t when it doesn’t. Or they say it does when it does. Thus they don’t tell a deliberate lie. So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier agrees with the way that the Realized One or their disciple teaches Dhamma when they make a valid point. So they’re pure on that point.

Furthermore, a mortifier is not angry and hostile ...

offensive and contemptuous ... envious and stingy ... devious and deceitful ... obstinate and vain ... they don’t have wicked desires ... and wrong view ... they’re not attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go. So they’re pure on that point.

What do you think, Nigrodha? If this is so, is the mortification in disgust of sin purified or not?” “Clearly, sir, it is purified. It has reached the peak and the pith.” “No, Nigrodha, at this point the mortification in disgust of sin has not yet reached the peak and the pith. Rather, it has only reached the shoots.”

### **2.3. On Reaching the Bark**

“But at what point, sir, does the mortification in disgust of sin reach the peak and the pith? Please help me reach the peak and the pith!”

“Nigrodha, take a mortifier who is restrained in the fourfold restraint. And how is a mortifier restrained in the fourfold restraint? It’s when a mortifier doesn’t kill living creatures, doesn’t get others to kill, and doesn’t approve of killing. They don’t steal, get others to steal, or approve of stealing. They don’t lie, get others to lie, or approve of lying. They don’t expect rewards from their practice, they don’t lead others to expect rewards, and they don’t approve of expecting rewards. That’s how a mortifier is restrained in the fourfold restraint.

When a mortifier has the fourfold restraint, that is their mortification. They step forward, not falling back. They frequent a secluded lodging—a wilderness, the root of a tree, a hill, a ravine, a mountain cave, a charnel ground, a forest, the open air, a heap of straw. After the meal, they return from alms-round, sit down cross-legged with their body straight, and establish mindfulness right there. Giving up desire for the world, they meditate with a heart rid of desire, cleansing the mind of desire. Giving up ill will and malevolence, they meditate with a mind rid of ill will, full of compassion for all creatures, cleansing the mind of ill will. Giving up dullness and drowsiness, they meditate with a mind rid of dullness and drowsiness, perceiving light, mindful and aware, cleansing the mind of dullness and drowsiness. Giving up restlessness and remorse, they meditate without restlessness, their mind peaceful inside, cleansing the mind of restlessness and remorse. Giving up doubt, they meditate having gone beyond doubt, not undecided about skillful qualities, cleansing the mind of doubt.

They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then they meditate spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion ... They meditate spreading a heart full of rejoicing ... They meditate spreading a heart full of equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

What do you think, Nigrodha? If this is so, is the mortification in disgust of sin purified or not?” “Clearly, sir, it is purified. It has reached the peak and the pith.” “No, Nigrodha, at this point the mortification in disgust of sin has not yet reached the peak and the pith. Rather, it has only reached the bark.”

#### **2.4. On Reaching the Softwood**

“But at what point, sir, does the mortification in disgust of sin reach the peak and the pith? Please help me reach the peak and the pith!”

“Nigrodha, take a mortifier who is restrained in the fourfold restraint. They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then they meditate spreading a heart full of love ... compassion ... rejoicing ... equanimity. They recollect many kinds of past lives, that is, one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world evolving, many eons of the world contracting and evolving. They remember: ‘There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There, too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn

here.’ And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

What do you think, Nigrodha? If this is so, is the mortification in disgust of sin purified or not?” “Clearly, sir, it is purified. It has reached the peak and the pith.” “No, Nigrodha, at this point the mortification in disgust of sin has not yet reached the peak and the pith. Rather, it has only reached the softwood.”

### **3. On Reaching the Heartwood**

“But at what point, sir, does the mortification in disgust of sin reach the peak and the pith? Please help me reach the peak and the pith!”

“Nigrodha, take a mortifier who is restrained in the fourfold restraint. They give up these five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Then they meditate spreading a heart full of love ... equanimity ... They recollect many kinds of past lives, with features and details. With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds: ‘These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They spoke ill of the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never spoke ill of the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.’ And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds.

What do you think, Nigrodha? If this is so, is the mortification in disgust of sin purified or not?” “Clearly, sir, it is purified. It has reached the peak and the pith.”

“Nigrodha, at this point the mortification in disgust of sin has reached the peak and the pith. Nigrodha, remember you said this to me: ‘Sir, what teaching do you use to guide your disciples, through which they claim solace in the fundamental purpose of the spiritual life?’ Well, there is something better and finer than this. That’s what I use to guide my disciples, through which they claim solace in the fundamental purpose of the spiritual life.”

When he said this, those wanderers made an uproar: “In that case, we’re lost, and so is our tradition! We don’t know anything better or finer than that!”

#### **4. Nigrodha Feels Depressed**

Then the householder Sandhāna realized: “Obviously, now these wanderers want to listen to what the Buddha says. They’re paying attention and applying their minds to understand!” So he said to the wanderer Nigrodha: “Nigrodha, remember you said this to me: ‘Surely, householder, you should know better! With whom does the ascetic Gotama converse? With whom does he engage in discussion? With whom does he achieve proficiency in wisdom? Staying in empty huts has destroyed the ascetic Gotama’s wisdom. Not frequenting assemblies, he is unable to hold a discussion. He just lurks on the periphery. He’s just like the nilgai antelope, circling around and lurking on the periphery. Please, householder, let the ascetic Gotama come to this assembly. I’ll sink him with just one question! I’ll roll him over and wrap him up like an empty pot!’ Now the Blessed One, perfected and fully awakened, has arrived here. Why don’t you send him out of the assembly to the periphery like a nilgai antelope? Why don’t you sink him with just one question? Why don’t you roll him over and wrap him up like an empty pot?” When he said this, Nigrodha sat silent, embarrassed, shoulders drooping, downcast, depressed, with nothing to say.

Knowing this, the Buddha said to him: “Is it really true, Nigrodha—are those your words?” “It’s true, sir, those are my words. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of me.” “What do you think, Nigrodha? Have you heard that wanderers of the past who were elderly and senior, the teachers of teachers, said that when the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas of the past came together, they made an uproar,

a dreadful racket as they sat and talked about all kinds of unworthy topics, like you do in your tradition these days? Or did they say that the Buddhas frequented remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest that are quiet and still, far from the madding crowd, remote from human settlements, and appropriate for retreat, like I do these days?”

“I have heard that wanderers of the past who were elderly and senior, said that when the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas of the past came together, they didn’t make an uproar, like I do in my tradition these days. They said that the Buddhas of the past frequented remote lodgings in the wilderness, like the Buddha does these days.”

“Nigrodha, you are a sensible and mature man. Did it not occur to you: ‘The Blessed One is awakened, tamed, serene, crossed over, and extinguished. And he teaches Dhamma for awakening, taming, serenity, crossing over, and extinguishment’?”

## **5. The Culmination of the Spiritual Path**

Nigrodha said: “I have made a mistake, sir. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of me to speak in that way. Please, sir, accept my mistake for what it is, so I will restrain myself in future.” “Indeed, Nigrodha, you made a mistake. It was foolish, stupid, and unskillful of you to speak in that way. But since you have recognized your mistake for what it is, and have dealt with it properly, I accept it. For it is growth in the training of the noble one to recognize a mistake for what it is, deal with it properly, and commit to restraint in the future. Nigrodha, this is what I say:

Let a sensible person come—neither devious nor deceitful, a person of integrity. I teach and instruct them. By practicing as instructed they will realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life, in seven years. They will live having achieved with their own insight the goal for which people from good families rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness. Let alone seven years. Let a sensible person come—neither devious nor deceitful, a person of integrity. I teach and instruct them. By practicing as instructed they will realize the supreme end of

the spiritual path in this very life, in six years ... five years ... four years ... three years ... two years ... one year ... seven months ... six months ... five months ... four months ... three months ... two months ... one month ... a fortnight. Let alone a fortnight. Let a sensible person come—neither devious nor deceitful, a person of integrity. I teach and instruct them. By practicing as instructed they will realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life, in seven days.

## **6. The Wanderers Feel Depressed**

Nigrodha, you might think: ‘The ascetic Gotama speaks like this because he wants pupils.’ But you should not see it like this. Let your teacher remain your teacher.

You might think: ‘The ascetic Gotama speaks like this because he wants us to give up our recitation.’ But you should not see it like this. Let your recitation remain as it is.

You might think: ‘The ascetic Gotama speaks like this because he wants us to give up our livelihood.’ But you should not see it like this. Let your livelihood remain as it is.

You might think: ‘The ascetic Gotama speaks like this because he wants us to start doing things that are unskillful and considered unskillful in our tradition.’ But you should not see it like this. Let those things that are unskillful and considered unskillful in your tradition remain as they are.

You might think: ‘The ascetic Gotama speaks like this because he wants us to stop doing things that are skillful and considered skillful in our tradition.’ But you should not see it like this. Let those things that are skillful and considered skillful in your tradition remain as they are.

I do not speak for any of these reasons. Nigrodha, there are things that are unskillful, corrupted, leading to future lives, hurtful, resulting in suffering and future rebirth, old age, and death. I teach Dhamma so that those things may be given up. When you practice accordingly, corrupting qualities will be given up in

you and cleansing qualities will grow. You'll enter and remain in the fullness and abundance of wisdom, having realized it with your own insight in this very life.”

When this was said, those wanderers sat silent, dismayed, shoulders drooping, downcast, depressed, with nothing to say, as if their minds were possessed by Māra. Then the Buddha thought: “All these foolish people have been touched by the Wicked One! For not even a single one thinks:

Then the Buddha, having roared his lion's roar in the lady Udumbarikā's monastery for wanderers, rose into the air and landed on Vulture's Peak. Meanwhile, the householder Sandhāna just went back to Rājagaha.

## 26. Cakkavatti Sutta

The Wheel-Turning Monarch

### 1. Taking Refuge in Oneself

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Magadhans at Mātulā. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants: “Mendicants!” “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“Mendicants, be your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge. And how does a mendicant do this? They meditate observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. That’s how a mendicant is their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge. That’s how they let the teaching be their island and their refuge, with no other refuge.

You should roam inside your own territory, the domain of your fathers. If you roam inside your own territory, the domain of your fathers, Māra won’t catch you or get hold of you. It is due to undertaking skillful qualities that this merit grows.

### 2. King Daḷhanemi

Once upon a time, mendicants, there was a king named Daḷhanemi who was a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extended to all four sides, he achieved stability in the country, and he possessed the seven treasures. He had the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He had over a thousand sons who were valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigned by principle, without rod or sword.

Then, after many years, many hundred years, many thousand years had passed, King Dalhanemi addressed one of his men: ‘My good man, when you see that the heavenly wheel-treasure has receded back from its place, please tell me.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied that man. After many thousand years had passed, that man saw that the heavenly wheel-treasure had receded back from its place. So he went to King Dalhanemi and said: ‘Please sire, you should know that your heavenly wheel-treasure has receded back from its place.’ So the king summoned the crown prince and said: ‘Dear prince, my heavenly wheel-treasure has receded back from its place. I’ve heard that when this happens to a wheel-turning monarch, he does not have long to live. I have enjoyed human pleasures. Now it is time for me to seek heavenly pleasures. Come, dear prince, rule this land surrounded by ocean! I shall shave off my hair and beard, dress in ocher robes, and go forth from the lay life to homelessness.’

And so, after carefully instructing the crown prince in kingship, King Dalhanemi shaved off his hair and beard, dressed in ocher robes, and went forth from the lay life to homelessness. Seven days later the heavenly wheel-treasure vanished.

Then a certain man approached the newly anointed aristocrat king and said: ‘Please sire, you should know that the heavenly wheel-treasure has vanished.’ At that the king was unhappy and experienced unhappiness. He went to the royal sage and said: ‘Please sire, you should know that the heavenly wheel-treasure has vanished.’ When he said this, the royal sage said to him: ‘Don’t be unhappy at the vanishing of the wheel-treasure. My dear, the wheel-treasure is not inherited from your father. Come now, my dear, implement the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch. If you do so, it’s possible that—on a fifteenth day sabbath, having bathed your head and gone upstairs in the stilt longhouse to observe the sabbath—the heavenly wheel-treasure will appear to you, with a thousand spokes, with rim and hub, complete in every detail.’

## **2.1. The Noble Duties of a Wheel-Turning Monarch**

‘But sire, what are the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch?’ ‘Well then, my dear, relying only on principle—honoring, respecting, and venerating principle,

having principle as your flag, banner, and authority—provide just protection and security for your court, troops, aristocrats, vassals, brahmins and householders, people of town and country, ascetics and brahmins, beasts and birds. Do not let injustice prevail in the realm. Pay money to the penniless in the realm. And there are ascetics and brahmins in the realm who avoid intoxication and negligence, are settled in patience and gentleness, and who tame, calm, and extinguish themselves. From time to time you should go up to them and ask: “Sirs, what is skillful? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? Doing what leads to my lasting harm and suffering? Doing what leads to my lasting welfare and happiness?” Having heard them, you should reject what is unskillful and undertake and follow what is skillful. These are the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch.’

## **2.2. The Wheel-Treasure Appears**

‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied the new king to the royal sage. And he implemented the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch. While he was implementing them, on a fifteenth day sabbath, he had bathed his head and gone upstairs in the stilt longhouse to observe the sabbath. And the heavenly wheel-treasure appeared to him, with a thousand spokes, with rim and hub, complete in every detail. Seeing this, the king thought: ‘I have heard that when the heavenly wheel-treasure appears to a king in this way, he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. Am I then a wheel-turning monarch?’

Then the anointed king, rising from his seat and arranging his robe over one shoulder, took a ceremonial vase in his left hand and besprinkled the wheel-treasure with his right hand, saying: ‘Roll forth, O wheel-treasure! Triumph, O wheel-treasure!’

Then the wheel-treasure rolled towards the east. And the king followed it together with his army of four divisions. In whatever place the wheel-treasure stood still, there the king came to stay together with his army. And any opposing rulers of the eastern quarter came to the wheel-turning monarch and said: ‘Come, great king! Welcome, great king! We are yours, great king, instruct us.’ The wheel-turning

monarch said: ‘Do not kill living creatures. Do not steal. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not lie. Do not drink alcohol. Maintain the current level of taxation.’ And so the opposing rulers of the eastern quarter became his vassals.

Then the wheel-treasure, having plunged into the eastern ocean and emerged again, rolled towards the south. ... Having plunged into the southern ocean and emerged again, it rolled towards the west. ...

Having plunged into the western ocean and emerged again, it rolled towards the north, followed by the king together with his army of four divisions. In whatever place the wheel-treasure stood still, there the king came to stay together with his army. And any opposing rulers of the northern quarter came to the wheel-turning monarch and said: ‘Come, great king! Welcome, great king! We are yours, great king, instruct us.’ The wheel-turning monarch said: ‘Do not kill living creatures. Do not steal. Do not commit sexual misconduct. Do not lie. Do not drink alcohol. Maintain the current level of taxation.’ And so the rulers of the northern quarter became his vassals.

And then the wheel-treasure, having triumphed over this land surrounded by ocean, returned to the royal capital. There it stood still by the gate to the royal compound at the High Court as if fixed to an axle, illuminating the royal compound.

### **3. On Subsequent Wheel-Turning Monarchs**

And for a second time, and a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, and a seventh time, a wheel-turning monarch was established in exactly the same way. And after many years the seventh wheel-turning monarch went forth, handing the realm over to the crown prince.

Seven days later the heavenly wheel-treasure vanished.

Then a certain man approached the newly anointed aristocrat king and said: ‘Please sire, you should know that the heavenly wheel-treasure has vanished.’ At that the king was unhappy and experienced unhappiness. But he didn’t go to the royal sage

and ask about the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch. He just governed the country according to his own ideas. So governed, the nations did not prosper like before, as they had when former kings implemented the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch.

Then the ministers and counselors, the treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, and advisers gathered and said to the king: ‘Sire, when governed according to your own ideas, the nations do not prosper like before, as they did when former kings implemented the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch. In your realm are found ministers and counselors, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, and advisers—both ourselves and others—who remember the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch. Please, Your Majesty, ask us about the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch. We will answer you.’

#### **4. On the Period of Decline**

So the anointed king asked the assembled ministers and counselors, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, and advisers about the noble duties of a wheel-turning monarch. And they answered him. But after listening to them, he didn’t provide just protection and security. Nor did he pay money to the penniless in the realm. And so poverty grew widespread. When poverty was widespread, a certain person stole from others, with the intention to commit theft. They arrested him and presented him to the king, saying: ‘Your Majesty, this person stole from others with the intention to commit theft.’ The king said to that person: ‘Is it really true, mister, that you stole from others with the intention to commit theft?’ ‘It’s true, sire.’ ‘What was the reason?’ ‘Sire, I can’t survive.’ So the king paid some money to that person, saying: ‘With this money, mister, keep yourself alive, and provide for your mother and father, partner and children. Work for a living, and establish an uplifting teacher’s offering for ascetics and brahmins that’s conducive to heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven.’ ‘Yes, Your Majesty,’ replied that man.

But then another man stole something from others. They arrested him and presented him to the king, saying: ‘Your Majesty, this person stole from others.’

The king said to that person: 'Is it really true, mister, that you stole from others?' 'It's true, sire.' 'What was the reason?' 'Sire, I can't survive.' So the king paid some money to that person, saying: 'With this money, mister, keep yourself alive, and provide for your mother and father, partner and children. Work for a living, and establish an uplifting teacher's offering for ascetics and brahmins that's conducive to heaven, ripens in happiness, and leads to heaven.' 'Yes, Your Majesty,' replied that man.

People heard about this: 'It seems the king is paying money to anyone who steals from others!' It occurred to them: 'Why don't we steal from others?' So then another man stole something from others. They arrested him and presented him to the king, saying: 'Your Majesty, this person stole from others.' The king said to that person: 'Is it really true, mister, that you stole from others?' 'It's true, sire.' 'What was the reason?' 'Sire, I can't survive.' Then the king thought: 'If I pay money to anyone who steals from others, it will only increase the stealing. I'd better make an end of this person, finish him off, and chop off his head.' Then he ordered his men: 'Well then, my men, tie this man's arms tightly behind his back with a strong rope. Shave his head and march him from street to street and square to square to the beating of a harsh drum. Then take him out the south gate and make an end of him, finish him off, and chop off his head.' 'Yes, Your Majesty,' they replied, and did as he commanded.

People heard about this: 'It seems the king is chopping the head off anyone who steals from others!' It occurred to them: 'We'd better have sharp swords made. Then when we steal from others, we'll make an end of them, finish them off, and chop off their heads.' They had sharp swords made. Then they started to make raids on villages, towns, and cities, and to infest the highways. And they chopped the heads off anyone they stole from.

And so, mendicants, from not paying money to the penniless, poverty became widespread. When poverty was widespread, theft became widespread. When theft was widespread, swords became widespread. When swords were widespread, killing living creatures became widespread. And for the sentient beings among

whom killing was widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people lived for 80,000 years, but their children lived for 40,000 years.

Among the people who lived for 40,000 years, a certain person stole something from others. They arrested him and presented him to the king, saying: 'Your Majesty, this person stole from others.' The king said to that person: 'Is it really true, mister, that you stole from others?' 'No, sire,' he said, deliberately lying.

And so, mendicants, from not paying money to the penniless, poverty, theft, swords, and killing became widespread. When killing was widespread, lying became widespread. And for the sentient beings among whom lying was widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for 40,000 years had children who lived for 20,000 years.

Among the people who lived for 20,000 years, a certain person stole something from others. Someone else reported this to the king: 'Your Majesty, such-and-such person stole from others,' he said, going behind his back.

And so, mendicants, from not paying money to the penniless, poverty, theft, swords, killing, and lying became widespread. When lying was widespread, backbiting became widespread. And for the sentient beings among whom backbiting was widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for 20,000 years had children who lived for 10,000 years.

Among the people who lived for 10,000 years, some were more beautiful than others. And the ugly beings, coveting the beautiful ones, committed adultery with others' wives.

And so, mendicants, from not paying money to the penniless, poverty, theft, swords, killing, lying, and backbiting became widespread. When backbiting was widespread, sexual misconduct became widespread. And for the sentient beings among whom sexual misconduct was widespread, their lifespan and beauty

declined. Those people who lived for 10,000 years had children who lived for 5,000 years.

Among the people who lived for 5,000 years, two things became widespread: harsh speech and talking nonsense. For the sentient beings among whom these two things were widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for 5,000 years had some children who lived for 2,500 years, while others lived for 2,000 years.

Among the people who lived for 2,500 years, desire and ill will became widespread. For the sentient beings among whom desire and ill will were widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for 2,500 years had children who lived for 1,000 years.

Among the people who lived for 1,000 years, wrong view became widespread. For the sentient beings among whom wrong view was widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for 1,000 years had children who lived for five hundred years.

Among the people who lived for five hundred years, three things became widespread: illicit desire, immoral greed, and wrong thoughts. For the sentient beings among whom these three things were widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for five hundred years had some children who lived for two hundred and fifty years, while others lived for two hundred years.

Among the people who lived for two hundred and fifty years, three things became widespread: Lack of due respect for mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, and failure to honor the elders in the family.

And so, mendicants, from not paying money to the penniless, all these things became widespread—poverty, theft, swords, killing, lying, backbiting, sexual misconduct, harsh speech and talking nonsense, desire and ill will, wrong view, illicit desire, immoral greed, and wrong thoughts, and lack of due respect for

mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, and failure to honor the elders in the family. For the sentient beings among whom these things were widespread, their lifespan and beauty declined. Those people who lived for two hundred and fifty years had children who lived for a hundred years.

## **5. When People Live for Ten Years**

There will come a time, mendicants, when these people will have children who live for ten years. Among the people who live for ten years, girls will be marriageable at five. The following flavors will disappear: ghee, butter, oil, honey, molasses, and salt. The best kind of food will be finger millet, just as fine rice with meat is the best kind of food today.

The ten ways of doing skillful deeds will totally disappear, and the ten ways of doing unskillful deeds will explode in popularity. Those people will not even have the word ‘skillful’, still less anyone who does what is skillful. And anyone who disrespects mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, and fails to honor the elders in the family will be venerated and praised, just as the opposite is venerated and praised today.

There’ll be no recognition of the status of mother, aunts, or wives and partners of teachers and respected people. The world will become promiscuous, like goats and sheep, chickens and pigs, and dogs and jackals.

They’ll be full of hostility towards each other, with acute ill will, malevolence, and thoughts of murder. Even a mother will feel like this for her child, and the child for its mother, father for child, child for father, brother for sister, and sister for brother. They’ll be just like a deer hunter when he sees a deer—full of hostility, ill will, malevolence, and thoughts of killing.

Among the people who live for ten years, there will be an interregnum of swords lasting seven days. During that time they will see each other as beasts. Sharp swords will appear in their hands, with which they’ll take each other’s life, crying ‘It’s a beast! It’s a beast!’

But then some of those beings will think: ‘Let us neither be perpetrators nor victims! Why don’t we hide in thick grass, thick jungle, thick trees, inaccessible riverlands, or rugged mountains and survive on forest roots and fruits?’ So that’s what they do. When those seven days have passed, having emerged from their hiding places and embraced each other, they will come together in one voice and cry: ‘How fantastic, dear being, you live! How fantastic, dear being, you live!’

## **6. The Period of Growth**

Then those beings will think: ‘It’s because we undertook unskillful things that we suffered such an extensive loss of our relatives. We’d better do what’s skillful. What skillful thing should we do? Why don’t we refrain from killing living creatures? Having undertaken this skillful thing we’ll live by it.’ So that’s what they do. Because of undertaking this skillful thing, their lifespan and beauty will grow. Those people who live for ten years will have children who live for twenty years.

Then those beings will think: ‘Because of undertaking this skillful thing, our lifespan and beauty are growing. Why don’t we do even more skillful things? What skillful thing should we do? Why don’t we refrain from stealing ... sexual misconduct ... lying ... backbiting ... harsh speech ... and talking nonsense. Why don’t we give up covetousness ... ill will ... wrong view ... three things: illicit desire, immoral greed, and wrong thoughts. Why don’t we pay due respect to mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, honoring the elders in our families? Having undertaken this skillful thing we’ll live by it.’ So that’s what they do.

Because of undertaking this skillful thing, their lifespan and beauty will grow. Those people who live for twenty years will have children who live for forty years. Those people who live for forty years will have children who live for eighty years, then a hundred and sixty years, three hundred and twenty years, six hundred and forty years, 2,000 years, 4,000 years, 8,000 years, 20,000 years, 40,000 years, and finally 80,000 years. Among the people who live for 80,000 years, girls will be marriageable at five hundred.

## **7. The Time of King Saṅkha**

Among the people who live for 80,000 years, there will be just three afflictions: greed, starvation, and old age. India will be successful and prosperous. The villages, towns, and capital cities will be no more than a chicken's flight apart. And the land will be as crowded as hell, just full of people, like a thicket of rushes or reeds. The royal capital will be our Benares, but renamed Ketumati. And it will be successful, prosperous, populous, full of people, with plenty of food. There will be 84,000 cities in India, with the royal capital of Ketumati foremost. And in the royal capital of Ketumati a king named Saṅkha will arise, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion will extend to all four sides, he will achieve stability in the country, and possess the seven treasures. He will have the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He will have over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he will reign by principle, without rod or sword.

## **8. The Arising of the Buddha Metteyya**

And the Blessed One named Metteyya will arise in the world—perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed— just as I have arisen today. He will realize with his own insight this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—and make it known to others, just as I do today. He will teach the Dhamma that's good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased. And he will reveal a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure, just as I do today. He will look after a Saṅgha of many thousand mendicants, just as I look after a Saṅgha of many hundreds today.

Then King Saṅkha will have the sacrificial post that had been built by King Mahāpanāda raised up. After staying there, he will give it away to ascetics and brahmins, paupers, vagrants, travelers, and beggars. Then, having shaved off his hair and beard and dressed in ocher robes, he will go forth from the lay life to

homelessness in the Buddha Metteyya's presence. Soon after going forth, living withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, he will realize the supreme end of the spiritual path in this very life. He will live having achieved with his own insight the goal for which people from good families rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

Mendicants, be your own island, your own refuge, with no other refuge. Let the teaching be your island and your refuge, with no other refuge. And how does a mendicant do this? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. That's how a mendicant is their own island, their own refuge, with no other refuge. That's how they let the teaching be their island and their refuge, with no other refuge.

## **9. On Long Life and Beauty for Mendicants**

Mendicants, you should roam inside your own territory, the domain of your fathers. Doing so, you will grow in life span, beauty, happiness, wealth, and power.

And what is long life for a mendicant? It's when a mendicant develops the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to higher mind, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort. Having developed and cultivated these four bases for psychic power they may, if they wish, live on for the eon or what's left of the eon. This is long life for a mendicant.

And what is beauty for a mendicant? It's when a mendicant is ethical, restrained in the code of conduct, and has appropriate behavior and means of collecting alms. Seeing danger in the slightest flaw, they keep the rules they've undertaken. This is beauty for a mendicant.

And what is happiness for a mendicant? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. This is happiness for a mendicant.

And what is wealth for a mendicant? It's when a monk meditates spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion ... rejoicing ... equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. This is wealth for a mendicant.

And what is power for a mendicant? It's when a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life. And they live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. This is power for a mendicant.

Mendicants, I do not see a single power so hard to defeat as the power of Māra. It is due to undertaking skillful qualities that this merit grows.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

## 27. Aggañña Sutta

### The Origin of the World

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in the Eastern Monastery, in the stilt longhouse of Migāra’s mother. Now at that time Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja were living on probation among the mendicants in hopes of being ordained. Then in the late afternoon, the Buddha came downstairs from the longhouse and was walking meditation in the open air, beneath the shade of the longhouse.

Vāseṭṭha saw him and said to Bhāradvāja: “Reverend Bhāradvāja, the Buddha is walking meditation in the open air, beneath the shade of the longhouse. Come, reverend, let’s go to the Buddha. Hopefully we’ll get to hear a Dhamma talk from him.” “Yes, reverend,” replied Bhāradvāja.

So they went to the Buddha, bowed, and walked beside him. Then the Buddha said to Vāseṭṭha: “Vāseṭṭha, you are both brahmins by birth and clan, and have gone forth from the lay life to homelessness from a brahmin family. I hope you don’t have to suffer abuse and insults from the brahmins.” “Actually, sir, the brahmins do insult and abuse us with their typical insults to the fullest extent.” “But how do the brahmins insult you?” “Sir, the brahmins say: ‘Only brahmins are the highest caste; other castes are inferior. Only brahmins are the light caste; other castes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others. Only brahmins are Brahmā’s rightful sons, born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā. You’ve both abandoned the best caste to join an inferior caste, namely these shavelings, fake ascetics, riffraff, black spawn from the feet of our Kinsman. This is not right, it’s not proper!’ That’s how the brahmins insult us.”

“Actually, Vāseṭṭha, the brahmins are forgetting their tradition when they say this to you. For brahmin women are seen menstruating, being pregnant, giving birth, and breast-feeding. Yet even though they’re born from a brahmin womb they say: ‘Only brahmins are the highest caste; other castes are inferior. Only brahmins are

the light caste; other castes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others. Only brahmins are Brahmā's rightful sons, born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.' They misrepresent the brahmins, speak falsely, and make much bad karma.

## **1. Purification in the Four Castes**

Vāsetṭha, there are these four castes: aristocrats, brahmins, merchants, and workers. Some aristocrats kill living creatures, steal, and commit sexual misconduct. They use speech that's false, divisive, harsh, and nonsensical. And they're covetous, malicious, with wrong view. These things are unskillful, blameworthy, not to be cultivated, unworthy of the noble ones—and are reckoned as such. They are dark deeds with dark results, criticized by sensible people. Such things are seen in some aristocrats. And they are also seen among some brahmins, merchants, and workers.

But some aristocrats refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, and committing sexual misconduct. They refrain from speech that's false, divisive, harsh, and nonsensical. And they're content, kind-hearted, with right view. These things are skillful, blameless, to be cultivated, worthy of the noble ones—and are reckoned as such. They are bright deeds with bright results, praised by sensible people. Such things are seen in some aristocrats. And they are also seen among some brahmins, merchants, and workers.

Both these things occur like this, mixed up in these four castes—the dark and the bright, that which is praised and that which is criticized by sensible people. Yet of this the brahmins say: 'Only brahmins are the highest caste; other castes are inferior. Only brahmins are the light caste; other castes are dark. Only brahmins are purified, not others. Only brahmins are Brahmā's rightful sons, born of his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā.' Sensible people don't acknowledge this. Why is that? Because any mendicant from these four castes who is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their own goal, utterly ended the fetters of rebirth, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—is said to

be the best by virtue of principle, not without principle. For principle, Vāseṭṭha, is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

And here's a way to understand how this is so.

King Pasenadi of Kosala knows that the ascetic Gotama has gone forth from the neighboring clan of the Sakyans. And the Sakyans are his vassals. The Sakyans show deference to King Pasenadi by bowing down, rising up, greeting him with joined palms, and observing proper etiquette for him. Now, King Pasenadi shows the same kind of deference to the Realized One. But he doesn't think: 'The ascetic Gotama is well-born, I am ill-born. He is powerful, I am weak. He is handsome, I am ugly. He is influential, I am insignificant.' Rather, in showing such deference to the Realized One he is only honoring, respecting, and venerating principle. And here's another way to understand how principle is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

Vāseṭṭha, you have different births, names, and clans, and have gone forth from the lay life to homelessness from different families. When they ask you what you are, you claim to be ascetics, followers of the Sakyan. But only when someone has faith in the Realized One—settled, rooted, and planted deep, strong, not to be shifted by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world—is it appropriate for them to say: 'I am the Buddha's true-born son, born from his mouth, born of principle, created by principle, heir to principle.' Why is that? For these are terms for the Realized One: 'the embodiment of truth', and 'the embodiment of holiness', and 'the one who has become the truth', and 'the one who has become holy'.

There comes a time when, Vāseṭṭha, after a very long period has passed, this cosmos contracts. As the cosmos contracts, sentient beings are mostly headed for the realm of streaming radiance. There they are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

There comes a time when, after a very long period has passed, this cosmos expands. As the cosmos expands, sentient beings mostly pass away from that group of radiant deities and come back to this realm. Here they are mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and they remain like that for a very long time.

## **2. Solid Nectar Appears**

But the single mass of water at that time was utterly dark. The moon and sun were not found, nor were stars and constellations, day and night, months and fortnights, years and seasons, or male and female. Beings were simply known as 'beings'. After a very long period had passed, solid nectar curdled in the water. It appeared just like the curd on top of hot milk as it cools. It was beautiful, fragrant, and delicious, like ghee or butter. And it was as sweet as pure manuka honey. Now, one of those beings was reckless. Thinking, 'Oh my, what might this be?' they tasted the solid nectar with their finger. They enjoyed it, and craving was born in them. And other beings, following that being's example, tasted solid nectar with their fingers. They too enjoyed it, and craving was born in them.

## **3. The Moon and Sun Appear**

Then those beings started to eat the solid nectar, breaking it into lumps. But when they did this their luminosity vanished. And with the vanishing of their luminosity the moon and sun appeared, stars and constellations appeared, days and nights were distinguished, and so were months and fortnights, and years and seasons. To this extent the world had evolved once more.

Then those beings eating the solid nectar, with that as their food and nourishment, remained for a very long time. But so long as they ate that solid nectar, their bodies became more solid and they diverged in appearance; some beautiful, some ugly. And the beautiful beings looked down on the ugly ones: 'We're more beautiful, they're the ugly ones!' And the vanity of the beautiful ones made the solid nectar vanish. They gathered together and bemoaned: 'Oh, what a taste! Oh, what a taste!' And even today when people get something tasty they say: 'Oh, what a taste! Oh,

what a taste!’ They’re just remembering an ancient traditional saying, but they don’t understand what it means.

#### **4. Ground-Sprouts**

When the solid nectar had vanished, ground-sprouts appeared to those beings. They appeared just like mushrooms. They were beautiful, fragrant, and delicious, like ghee or butter. And they were as sweet as pure manuka honey.

Then those beings started to eat the ground-sprouts. With that as their food and nourishment, they remained for a very long time. But so long as they ate those ground-sprouts, their bodies became more solid and they diverged in appearance; some beautiful, some ugly. And the beautiful beings looked down on the ugly ones: ‘We’re more beautiful, they’re the ugly ones!’ And the vanity of the beautiful ones made the ground-sprouts vanish.

#### **5. Bursting Pods**

When the ground-sprouts had vanished, bursting pods appeared, like the fruit of the kadam tree. They were beautiful, fragrant, and delicious, like ghee or butter. And they were as sweet as pure manuka honey.

Then those beings started to eat the bursting pods. With that as their food and nourishment, they remained for a very long time. But so long as they ate those bursting pods, their bodies became more solid and they diverged in appearance; some beautiful, some ugly. And the beautiful beings looked down on the ugly ones: ‘We’re more beautiful, they’re the ugly ones!’ And the vanity of the beautiful ones made the bursting pods vanish.

They gathered together and bemoaned: ‘Oh, what we’ve lost! Oh, what we’ve lost—those bursting pods!’ And even today when people experience suffering they say: ‘Oh, what we’ve lost! Oh, what we’ve lost!’ They’re just remembering an ancient traditional saying, but they don’t understand what it means.

## **6. Ripe Untilled Rice**

When the bursting pods had vanished, ripe untilled rice appeared to those beings. It had no powder or husk, pure and fragrant, with only the rice-grain. What they took for supper in the evening, by the morning had grown back and ripened. And what they took for breakfast in the morning had grown back and ripened by the evening, so the cutting didn't show. Then those beings eating the ripe untilled rice, with that as their food and nourishment, remained for a very long time.

## **7. Gender Appears**

But so long as they ate that ripe untilled rice, their bodies became more solid and they diverged in appearance. And female characteristics appeared on women, while male characteristics appeared on men. Women spent too much time gazing at men, and men at women. They became lustful, and their bodies burned with fever. Due to this fever they had sex with each other.

Those who saw them having sex pelted them with dirt, ashes, or cowdung, saying: 'Get lost, filth! Get lost, filth! How on earth can one being do that to another?' And even today people in some countries, when a bride is carried off, pelt her with dirt, ashes, or cowdung. They're just remembering an ancient traditional saying, but they don't understand what it means.

## **8. Sexual Intercourse**

What was reckoned as immoral at that time, these days is reckoned as moral. The beings who had sex together weren't allowed to enter a village or town for one or two months. Ever since they excessively threw themselves into immorality, they started to make buildings to hide their immoral deeds. Then one of those beings of idle disposition thought: 'Hey now, why should I be bothered to gather rice in the evening for supper, and in the morning for breakfast? Why don't I gather rice for supper and breakfast all at once?'

So that's what he did. Then one of the other beings approached that being and said: 'Come, good being, we shall go to gather rice.' 'There's no need, good being! I

gathered rice for supper and breakfast all at once.’ So that being, following their example, gathered rice for two days all at once, thinking: ‘This seems fine.’

Then one of the other beings approached that being and said: ‘Come, good being, we shall go to gather rice.’ ‘There’s no need, good being! I gathered rice for two days all at once.’ So that being, following their example, gathered rice for four days all at once, thinking: ‘This seems fine.’

Then one of the other beings approached that being and said: ‘Come, good being, we shall go to gather rice.’ ‘There’s no need, good being! I gathered rice for four days all at once.’ So that being, following their example, gathered rice for eight days all at once, thinking: ‘This seems fine.’

But when they started to store up rice to eat, the rice grains became wrapped in powder and husk, it didn’t grow back after reaping, the cutting showed, and the rice stood in clumps.

## **9. Dividing the Fields**

Then those beings gathered together and bemoaned: ‘Oh, how wicked things have appeared among beings! For we used to be mind-made, feeding on rapture, self-luminous, moving through the sky, steadily glorious, and we remained like that for a very long time. After a very long period had passed, solid nectar curdled in the water. But due to bad, unskillful things among us, the savory nectar vanished, the ground-sprouts vanished, the bursting pods vanished, and now the rice grains have become wrapped in powder and husk, it doesn’t grow back after reaping, the cutting shows, and the rice stands in clumps. We’d better divide up the rice and set boundaries.’ So that’s what they did.

Now, one of those beings was reckless. While guarding their own share they took another’s share without it being given, and ate it. They grabbed the one who had done this and said: ‘You have done a bad thing, good being, in that while guarding your own share you took another’s share without it being given, and ate it. Do not do such a thing again.’ ‘Yes, sirs,’ replied that being. But for a second time, and a

third time they did the same thing, and were told not to continue. And then they struck that being, some with fists, others with stones, and still others with rods. From that day on stealing was found, and blaming and lying and the taking up of rods.

## **10. The Elected King**

Then those beings gathered together and bemoaned: ‘Oh, how wicked things have appeared among beings, in that stealing is found, and blaming and lying and the taking up of rods! Why don’t we elect one being who would rightly accuse those who deserve it, blame those who deserve it, and expel those who deserve it? We shall pay them with a share of rice.’

Then those beings approached the being among them who was most attractive, good-looking, lovely, and illustrious, and said: ‘Come, good being, rightly accuse those who deserve it, blame those who deserve it, and banish those who deserve it. We shall pay you with a share of rice.’ ‘Yes, sirs,’ replied that being. They acted accordingly, and were paid with a share of rice.

‘Elected by the people’, Vāsetṭha, is the meaning of ‘elected one’, the first term to be specifically invented for them. ‘Lord of the fields’ is the meaning of ‘aristocrat’, the second term to be specifically invented. ‘They please others with principle’ is the meaning of ‘king’, the third term to be specifically invented. And that, Vāsetṭha, is how the ancient traditional terms for the circle of aristocrats were created; for those very beings, not others; for those like them, not unlike; legitimately, not illegitimately. For principle, Vāsetṭha, is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

## **11. The Circle of Brahmins**

Then some of those same beings thought: ‘Oh, how wicked things have appeared among beings, in that stealing is found, and blaming and lying and the taking up of rods and banishment! Why don’t we set aside bad, unskillful things?’ So that’s what they did. ‘They set aside bad, unskillful things’ is the meaning of ‘brahmin’, the first term to be specifically invented for them. They built leaf huts in a

wilderness region where they meditated pure and bright, without lighting cooking fires or digging the soil. They came down in the morning for breakfast and in the evening for supper to the village, town, or royal capital seeking a meal. When they had obtained food they continued to meditate in the leaf huts. When people noticed this they said: ‘These beings build leaf huts in a wilderness region where they meditate pure and bright, without lighting cooking fires or digging the soil. They come down in the morning for breakfast and in the evening for supper to the village, town, or royal capital seeking a meal. When they have obtained food they continue to meditate in the leaf huts.’ ‘They meditate’ is the meaning of ‘meditator’, the second term to be specifically invented for them. But some of those beings were unable to keep up with their meditation in the leaf huts in the wilderness. They came down to the neighborhood of a village or town where they dwelt compiling texts. When people noticed this they said: ‘These beings were unable to keep up with their meditation in the leaf huts in the wilderness. They came down to the neighborhood of a village or town where they dwelt compiling texts. Now they don’t meditate.’ ‘Now they don’t meditate’ is the meaning of ‘reciter’, the third term to be specifically invented for them. What was reckoned as lesser at that time, these days is reckoned as better. And that, Vāseṭṭha, is how the ancient traditional terms for the circle of brahmins were created; for those very beings, not others; for those like them, not unlike; legitimately, not illegitimately. For principle, Vāseṭṭha, is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

## **12. The Circle of Merchants**

Some of those same beings, taking up an active sex life, applied themselves to various jobs. ‘Having taken up an active sex life, they apply themselves to various jobs’ is the meaning of ‘merchant’, the term specifically invented for them. And that, Vāseṭṭha, is how the ancient traditional term for the circle of merchants was created; for those very beings, not others; for those like them, not unlike; legitimately, not illegitimately. For principle, Vāseṭṭha, is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

### **13. The Circle of Workers**

The remaining beings lived by hunting and menial tasks. ‘They live by hunting and menial tasks’ is the meaning of ‘worker’, the term specifically invented for them. And that, Vāseṭṭha, is how the ancient traditional term for the circle of workers was created; for those very beings, not others; for those like them, not unlike; legitimately, not illegitimately. For principle, Vāseṭṭha, is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

There came a time when an aristocrat, brahmin, merchant, or worker, deprecating their own vocation, went forth from the lay life to homelessness, thinking: ‘I will be an ascetic.’ And that, Vāseṭṭha, is how these four circles were created; for those very beings, not others; for those like them, not unlike; legitimately, not illegitimately. For principle, Vāseṭṭha, is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

### **14. On Bad Conduct**

An aristocrat, brahmin, merchant, worker, or ascetic may do bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They have wrong view, and they act out of that wrong view. And because of that, when their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

An aristocrat, brahmin, merchant, worker, or ascetic may do good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They have right view, and they act out of that right view. And because of that, when their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

### **15. The Qualities That Lead to Awakening**

An aristocrat, brahmin, merchant, worker, or ascetic who is restrained in body, speech, and mind, and develops the seven qualities that lead to awakening, becomes extinguished in this very life.

Any mendicant from these four castes who is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their own goal, utterly ended the fetters of rebirth, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—is said to be the best by virtue of principle, not without principle. For principle, Vāseṭṭha, is the best thing about people in both this life and the next.

Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra also spoke this verse:

‘The aristocrat is best of those people  
who take clan as the standard.  
But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
is best of gods and humans.’

That verse was well sung by Brahmā Sanaṅkumāra, not poorly sung; well spoken, not poorly spoken; beneficial, not harmful, and I agree with it. I also say:

The aristocrat is best of those people  
who take clan as the standard.  
But one accomplished in knowledge and conduct  
is best of gods and humans.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja were happy with what the Buddha said.

## 28. Sampasādanīya Sutta

Inspiring Confidence

### 1. Sāriputta's Lion's Roar

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Nālandā in Pāvārika's mango grove. Then Sāriputta went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Sir, I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there's no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.”

“That's a grand and dramatic statement, Sāriputta. You've roared a definitive, categorical lion's roar, saying: ‘I have such confidence in the Buddha that I believe there's no other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening.’ What about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who lived in the past? Have you comprehended their minds to know that those Buddhas had such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?” “No, sir.”

“And what about all the perfected ones, the fully awakened Buddhas who will live in the future? Have you comprehended their minds to know that those Buddhas will have such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?” “No, sir.”

“And what about me, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha at present? Have you comprehended my mind to know that I have such ethics, or such qualities, or such wisdom, or such meditation, or such freedom?” “No, sir.”

“Well then, Sāriputta, given that you don't comprehend the minds of Buddhas past, future, or present, what exactly are you doing, making such a grand and dramatic statement, roaring such a definitive, categorical lion's roar?”

“Sir, though I don’t comprehend the minds of Buddhas past, future, and present, still I understand this by inference from the teaching. Suppose there were a king’s frontier citadel with fortified embankments, ramparts, and arches, and a single gate. And it has a gatekeeper who is astute, competent, and clever. He keeps strangers out and lets known people in. As he walks around the patrol path, he doesn’t see a hole or cleft in the wall, not even one big enough for a cat to slip out. They’d think: ‘Whatever sizable creatures enter or leave the citadel, all of them do so via this gate.’ In the same way, I understand this by inference from the teaching: ‘All the perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas—whether past, future, or present—give up the five hindrances, corruptions of the heart that weaken wisdom. Their mind is firmly established in the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. They correctly develop the seven awakening factors. And they wake up to the supreme perfect awakening.’

Sir, once I approached the Buddha to listen to the teaching. He explained Dhamma with its higher and higher stages, with its better and better stages, with its dark and bright sides. When I directly knew a certain principle of those teachings, in accordance with how I was taught, I came to a conclusion about the teachings. I had confidence in the Teacher: ‘The Blessed One is a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained. The Saṅgha is practicing well.’

### **1.1. Teaching Skillful Qualities**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches skillful qualities is unsurpassable. This consists of such skillful qualities as the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, the four right efforts, the four bases for psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path. By these a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life. And they live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. This is unsurpassable when it comes to skillful qualities. The Buddha understands this without exception. There is nothing to be understood beyond this whereby another ascetic or brahmin might be superior in direct knowledge to the Buddha when it comes to skillful qualities.

## **1.2. Describing the Sense Fields**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the description of the sense fields is unsurpassable. There are these six interior and exterior sense fields. The eye and sights, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and touches, and the mind and thoughts. This is unsurpassable when it comes to describing the sense fields. The Buddha understands this without exception. There is nothing to be understood beyond this whereby another ascetic or brahmin might be superior in direct knowledge to the Buddha when it comes to describing the sense fields.

## **1.3. The Conception of the Embryo**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the conception of the embryo is unsurpassable. There are these four kinds of conception. Firstly, someone is unaware when conceived in their mother's womb, unaware as they remain there, and unaware as they emerge. This is the first kind of conception.

Furthermore, someone is aware when conceived in their mother's womb, but unaware as they remain there, and unaware as they emerge. This is the second kind of conception.

Furthermore, someone is aware when conceived in their mother's womb, aware as they remain there, but unaware as they emerge. This is the third kind of conception.

Furthermore, someone is aware when conceived in their mother's womb, aware as they remain there, and aware as they emerge. This is the fourth kind of conception. This is unsurpassable when it comes to the conception of the embryo.

## **1.4. Ways of Revealing**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the different ways of revealing is unsurpassable. There are these four ways of revealing. Firstly, someone reveals by means of a sign: 'This is what you're thinking, such is your thought, and thus is

your state of mind.’ And even if they reveal this many times, it turns out exactly so, not otherwise. This is the first way of revealing.

Furthermore, someone reveals after hearing it from humans or non-humans or deities: ‘This is what you’re thinking, such is your thought, and thus is your state of mind.’ And even if they reveal this many times, it turns out exactly so, not otherwise. This is the second way of revealing.

Furthermore, someone reveals by hearing the sound of thought spreading as someone thinks and considers: ‘This is what you’re thinking, such is your thought, and thus is your state of mind.’ And even if they reveal this many times, it turns out exactly so, not otherwise. This is the third way of revealing.

Furthermore, someone comprehends the mind of a person who has attained the immersion that’s free of placing the mind and keeping it connected. They understand: ‘Judging by the way this person’s intentions are directed, immediately after this mind state, they’ll think this thought.’ And even if they reveal this many times, it turns out exactly so, not otherwise. This is the fourth way of revealing. This is unsurpassable when it comes to the ways of revealing.

### **1.5. Attainments of Vision**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the attainments of vision is unsurpassable. There are these four attainments of vision. Firstly, some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they examine their own body up from the soles of the feet and down from the tips of the hairs, wrapped in skin and full of many kinds of filth. ‘In this body there is head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bones, bone marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, diaphragm, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, undigested food, feces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine.’ This is the first attainment of vision.

Furthermore, some ascetic or brahmin attains that and goes beyond it. They examine a person's bones with skin, flesh, and blood. This is the second attainment of vision.

Furthermore, some ascetic or brahmin attains that and goes beyond it. They understand a person's stream of consciousness, unbroken on both sides, established in both this world and the next. This is the third attainment of vision.

Furthermore, some ascetic or brahmin attains that and goes beyond it. They understand a person's stream of consciousness, unbroken on both sides, not established in either this world or the next. This is the fourth attainment of vision. This is unsurpassable when it comes to attainments of vision.

## **1.6. Descriptions of Individuals**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the description of individuals is unsurpassable. There are these seven individuals. One freed both ways, one freed by wisdom, a direct witness, one attained to view, one freed by faith, a follower of the teachings, a follower by faith. This is unsurpassable when it comes to the description of individuals.

## **1.7. Kinds of Striving**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the kinds of striving is unsurpassable. There are these seven awakening factors: the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity. This is unsurpassable when it comes to the kinds of striving.

## **1.8. Ways of Practice**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the ways of practice is unsurpassable. ~Painful practice with slow insight, ~painful practice with swift insight, ~pleasant practice with slow insight, and ~pleasant practice with swift insight. Of these, the painful practice with slow insight is said to be inferior both ways: because it's painful and because it's slow. The painful practice with swift insight is said to be inferior because it's painful. The pleasant practice with slow insight is said to be

inferior because it's slow. But the pleasant practice with swift insight is said to be superior both ways: because it's pleasant and because it's swift. This is unsurpassable when it comes to the ways of practice.

### **1.9. Behavior in Speech**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches behavior in speech is unsurpassable. It's when someone doesn't use speech that's connected with lying, or divisive, or backbiting, or aggressively trying to win. They speak only wise counsel, valuable and timely. This is unsurpassable when it comes to behavior in speech.

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches a person's ethical behavior is unsurpassable. It's when someone is honest and faithful. They don't use deception, flattery, hinting, or belittling, and they don't use material possessions to pursue other material possessions. They guard the sense doors and eat in moderation. They're fair, committed to wakefulness, not slacking off, energetic, and meditative. They have good memory, eloquence, range, retention, and thoughtfulness. They're not greedy for sensual pleasures. They are mindful and self-disciplined. This is unsurpassable when it comes to a person's ethical behavior.

### **1.10. Responsiveness to Instruction**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the different degrees of responsiveness to instruction is unsurpassable. There are these four degrees of responsiveness to instruction. The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: 'By practicing as instructed this individual will, with the ending of three fetters, become a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.' The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: 'By practicing as instructed this individual will, with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, become a once-returner. They will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.' The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: 'By practicing as instructed this individual will, with the ending of the five lower fetters, be reborn spontaneously. They will be extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world.' The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: 'By practicing as

instructed this individual will realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements.’ This is unsurpassable when it comes to the different degrees of responsiveness to instruction.

### **1.11. The Knowledge and Freedom of Others**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the knowledge and freedom of other individuals is unsurpassable. The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: ‘With the ending of three fetters this individual will become a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening.’ The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: ‘With the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, this individual will become a once-returner. They will come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering.’ The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: ‘With the ending of the five lower fetters, this individual will be reborn spontaneously. They will be extinguished there, and are not liable to return from that world.’ The Buddha knows by investigating inside another individual: ‘This individual will realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements.’ This is unsurpassable when it comes to the knowledge and freedom of other individuals.

### **1.12. Eternalism**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches eternalist doctrines is unsurpassable. There are these three eternalist doctrines. Firstly, some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect many hundreds of thousands of past lives, with features and details. They say: ‘I know that in the past the cosmos expanded or contracted. I don’t know whether in the future the cosmos will expand or contract. The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise.’ This is the first eternalist doctrine.

Furthermore, some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect their past lives for as many as ten eons of the expansion and contraction of the cosmos, with features and details. They say: ‘I know that in the past the cosmos expanded or contracted. I don’t know whether in the future the cosmos will expand or contract. The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise.’ This is the second eternalist doctrine.

Furthermore, some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect their past lives for as many as forty eons of the expansion and contraction of the cosmos, with features and details. They say: ‘I know that in the past the cosmos expanded or contracted. I don’t know whether in the future the cosmos will expand or contract. The self and the cosmos are eternal, barren, steady as a mountain peak, standing firm like a pillar. They remain the same for all eternity, while these sentient beings wander and transmigrate and pass away and rearise.’ This is the third eternalist doctrine. This is unsurpassable when it comes to eternalist doctrines.

### **1.13. Recollecting Past Lives**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the knowledge of recollecting past lives is unsurpassable. It’s when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they recollect their many kinds of past lives. That is: one, two, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand rebirths; many eons of the world contracting, many eons of the world evolving, many eons of the world contracting and evolving. They remember: ‘There, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn somewhere else. There,

too, I was named this, my clan was that, I looked like this, and that was my food. This was how I felt pleasure and pain, and that was how my life ended. When I passed away from that place I was reborn here.’ And so they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. Sir, there are gods whose life span cannot be reckoned or calculated. Still, no matter what incarnation they have previously been reborn in—whether physical or formless or percipient or non-percipient or neither percipient nor non-percipient— they recollect their many kinds of past lives, with features and details. This is unsurpassable when it comes to the knowledge of recollecting past lives.

#### **1.14. Death and Rebirth**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches the knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings is unsurpassable. It’s when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn —inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds: ‘These dear beings did bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. They spoke ill of the noble ones; they had wrong view; and they chose to act out of that wrong view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. These dear beings, however, did good things by way of body, speech, and mind. They never spoke ill of the noble ones; they had right view; and they chose to act out of that right view. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.’ And so, with clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn —inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds. This is unsurpassable when it comes to the knowledge of death and rebirth.

#### **1.15. Psychic Powers**

And moreover, sir, how the Buddha teaches psychic power is unsurpassable. There are these two kinds of psychic power. There are psychic powers that are

accompanied by defilements and attachments, and are said to be ignoble. And there are psychic powers that are free of defilements and attachments, and are said to be noble. What are the psychic powers that are accompanied by defilements and attachments, and are said to be ignoble? It's when some ascetic or brahmin—by dint of keen, resolute, committed, and diligent effort, and right focus—experiences an immersion of the heart of such a kind that they wield the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again; going unimpeded through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it was water; walking on water as if it was earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the Brahmā realm. These are the psychic powers that are accompanied by defilements and attachments, and are said to be ignoble.

But what are the psychic powers that are free of defilements and attachments, and are said to be noble? It's when, if a mendicant wishes: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the unrepulsive in the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate perceiving the repulsive in the unrepulsive and the repulsive,' that's what they do. If they wish: 'May I meditate staying equanimous, mindful and aware, rejecting both the repulsive and the unrepulsive,' that's what they do. These are the psychic powers that are free of defilements and attachments, and are said to be noble. This is unsurpassable when it comes to psychic powers. The Buddha understands this without exception. There is nothing to be understood beyond this whereby another ascetic or brahmin might be superior in direct knowledge to the Buddha when it comes to psychic powers.

### **1.16. The Four Absorptions**

The Buddha has achieved what should be achieved by a faithful person of good family by being energetic and strong, by manly strength, energy, vigor, and exertion. The Buddha doesn't indulge in sensual pleasures, which are low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. And he doesn't indulge in self-mortification,

which is painful, ignoble, and pointless. He gets the four absorptions—blissful meditations in the present life that belong to the higher mind—when he wants, without trouble or difficulty.

### **1.17. On Being Questioned**

Sir, if they were to ask me: ‘Reverend Sāriputta, is there any other ascetic or brahmin—whether past, future, or present—whose direct knowledge is superior to the Buddha when it comes to awakening?’ I would tell them ‘No.’

But if they were to ask me: ‘Reverend Sāriputta, is there any other ascetic or brahmin—whether past or future—whose direct knowledge is equal to the Buddha when it comes to awakening?’ I would tell them ‘Yes.’ But if they were to ask: ‘Reverend Sāriputta, is there any other ascetic or brahmin at present whose direct knowledge is equal to the Buddha when it comes to awakening?’ I would tell them ‘No.’

But if they were to ask me: ‘But why does Venerable Sāriputta grant this in respect of some but not others?’ I would answer them like this: ‘Reverends, I have heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: “The perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas of the past and the future are equal to myself when it comes to awakening.” And I have also heard and learned this in the presence of the Buddha: “It’s impossible for two perfected ones, fully awakened Buddhas to arise in the same solar system at the same time.”’

Answering this way, I trust that I repeated what the Buddha has said, and didn’t misrepresent him with an untruth. I trust my explanation was in line with the teaching, and that there are no legitimate grounds for rebuke or criticism.”

“Indeed, Sāriputta, in answering this way you repeat what I’ve said, and don’t misrepresent me with an untruth. Your explanation is in line with the teaching, and there are no legitimate grounds for rebuke or criticism.”

## 2. Incredible and Amazing

When he had spoken, Venerable Udāyī said to the Buddha: “It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! The Realized One has so few wishes, such contentment, such self-effacement! For even though the Realized One has such power and might, he will not make a display of himself. If the wanderers following other paths were to see even a single one of these qualities in themselves they’d carry around a banner to that effect. It’s incredible, sir, it’s amazing! The Realized One has so few wishes, such contentment, such self-effacement! For even though the Realized One has such power and might, he will not make a display of himself.”

“See, Udāyī, how the Realized One has so few wishes, such contentment, such self-effacement. For even though the Realized One has such power and might, he will not make a display of himself. If the wanderers following other paths were to see even a single one of these qualities in themselves they’d carry around a banner to that effect. See, Udāyī, how the Realized One has so few wishes, such contentment, such self-effacement. For even though the Realized One has such power and might, he will not make a display of himself.”

Then the Buddha said to Venerable Sāriputta: “So Sāriputta, you should frequently speak this exposition of the teaching to the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. Though there will be some foolish people who have doubt or uncertainty regarding the Realized One, when they hear this exposition of the teaching they’ll give up that doubt or uncertainty.” That’s how Venerable Sāriputta declared his confidence in the Buddha’s presence. And that’s why the name of this discussion is “Inspiring Confidence”.

## 29. Pāsādika Sutta

### An Impressive Discourse

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the land of the Sakyans in a stilt longhouse in a mango grove belonging to the Sakyan family named Vedhañña.

Now at that time the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta had recently passed away at Pāvā. With his passing the Jain ascetics split, dividing into two factions, arguing, quarreling, and fighting, continually wounding each other with barbed words: “You don’t understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You’re practicing wrong. I’m practicing right. I stay on topic, you don’t. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you’ve thought so much about has been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You’re trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!” You’d think there was nothing but slaughter going on among the Jain ascetics. And the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta’s white-clothed lay disciples were disillusioned, dismayed, and disappointed in the Jain ascetics. They were equally disappointed with a teaching and training so poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha, with broken monument and without a refuge.

And then, after completing the rainy season residence near Pāvā, the novice Cunda went to see Venerable Ānanda at Sāma village. He bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

Ānanda said to him: “Reverend Cunda, we should see the Buddha about this matter. Come, let’s go to the Buddha and tell him about this.” “Yes, sir,” replied Cunda.

Then Ānanda and Cunda went to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and told him what had happened.

### **1. The Teaching of the Unawakened**

“That’s what happens, Cunda, when a teaching and training is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha. Take the case where a teacher is not awakened, and the teaching is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha. A disciple in that teaching does not practice in line with the teachings, does not practice following that procedure, does not live in line with the teaching. They proceed having turned away from that teaching. You should say this to them: ‘You’re fortunate, reverend, you’re so very fortunate! For your teacher is not awakened, and their teaching is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha. But you don’t practice in line with that teaching, you don’t practice following that procedure, you don’t live in line with the teaching. You proceed having turned away from that teaching.’ In such a case the teacher and the teaching are to blame, but the disciple deserves praise. Suppose someone was to say to such a disciple: ‘Come on, venerable, practice as taught and pointed out by your teacher.’ The one who encourages, the one who they encourage, and the one who practices accordingly all make much bad karma. Why is that? It’s because that teaching and training is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha.

Take the case where a teacher is not awakened, and the teaching is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha. A disciple in that teaching practices in line with the teachings, practices following that procedure, lives in line with the teaching. They proceed having undertaken that teaching. You should say this to them: ‘It’s your loss, reverend, it’s your misfortune! For your teacher is not awakened, and their teaching is poorly explained and poorly

propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha. And you practice in line with that teaching, you practice following that procedure, you live in line with the teaching. You proceed having undertaken that teaching.’ In such a case the teacher, the teaching, and the disciple are all to blame. Suppose someone was to say to such a disciple: ‘Clearly the venerable is practicing following the method and will succeed in completing that method.’ The one who praises, the one who they praise, and the one who, being praised, rouses up even more energy all make much bad karma. Why is that? It’s because that teaching and training is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha.

## **2. The Teaching of the Awakened**

Take the case where a teacher is awakened, and the teaching is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a fully awakened Buddha. A disciple in that teaching does not practice in line with the teachings, does not practice following that procedure, does not live in line with the teaching. They proceed having turned away from that teaching. You should say this to them: ‘It’s your loss, reverend, it’s your misfortune! For your teacher is awakened, and their teaching is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a fully awakened Buddha. But you don’t practice in line with that teaching, you don’t practice following that procedure, you don’t live in line with the teaching. You proceed having turned away from that teaching.’ In such a case the teacher and the teaching deserve praise, but the disciple is to blame. Suppose someone was to say to such a disciple: ‘Come on, venerable, practice as taught and pointed out by your teacher.’ The one who encourages, the one who they encourage, and the one who practices accordingly all make much good karma. Why is that? It’s because that teaching and training is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a fully awakened Buddha.

Take the case where a teacher is awakened, and the teaching is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a

fully awakened Buddha. A disciple in that teaching practices in line with the teachings, practices following that procedure, lives in line with the teaching. They proceed having undertaken that teaching. You should say this to them: ‘You’re fortunate, reverend, you’re so very fortunate! For your teacher is awakened, and their teaching is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a fully awakened Buddha. And you practice in line with that teaching, you practice following that procedure, you live in line with the teaching. You proceed having undertaken that teaching.’ In such a case the teacher, the teaching, and the disciple all deserve praise. Suppose someone was to say to such a disciple: ‘Clearly the venerable is practicing following the method and will succeed in completing that method.’ The one who praises, the one who they praise, and the one who, being praised, rouses up even more energy all make much good karma. Why is that? It’s because that teaching and training is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a fully awakened Buddha.

### **3. When Disciples Have Regrets**

Take the case where a teacher arises in the world who is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is fully awakened. But the disciples haven’t inquired about the meaning of that good teaching. And the spiritual practice that’s entirely full and pure has not been disclosed and revealed to them with all its collected sayings, with its demonstrable basis, well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans. And then their teacher passes away. When such a teacher has passed away the disciples are tormented by regrets. Why is that? They think: ‘Our teacher was perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. His teaching was well explained, but we didn’t inquire about the meaning, and the spiritual practice was not fully disclosed to us. And then our teacher passed away.’ When such a teacher has passed away the disciples are tormented by regrets.

### **4. When Disciples Have No Regrets**

Take the case where a teacher arises in the world who is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. The teaching is well explained and well propounded,

emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is fully awakened. The disciples have inquired about the meaning of that good teaching. And the spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure has been disclosed and revealed to them with all its collected sayings, with its demonstrable basis, well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans. And then their teacher passes away. When such a teacher has passed away the disciples are free of regrets. Why is that? They think: 'Our teacher was perfected, a fully awakened Buddha. His teaching was well explained, we inquired about the meaning, and the spiritual practice was fully disclosed to us. And then our teacher passed away.' When such a teacher has passed away the disciples are free of regrets.

### **5. On the Incomplete Spiritual Path, Etc.**

Now suppose, Cunda, that a spiritual path possesses those factors. But the teacher is not senior, long standing, long gone forth, advanced in years, and reached the final stage of life. Then that spiritual path is incomplete in that respect.

But when a spiritual path possesses those factors and the teacher is senior, then that spiritual path is complete in that respect.

Now suppose that a spiritual path possesses those factors and the teacher is senior. But there are no senior monk disciples who are competent, educated, assured, have attained sanctuary, who can rightly explain the true teaching, and who can legitimately and completely refute the doctrines of others that come up, and teach with a demonstrable basis. Then that spiritual path is incomplete in that respect.

But when a spiritual path possesses those factors and the teacher is senior and there are competent senior monks, then that spiritual path is complete in that respect.

Now suppose that a spiritual path possesses those factors and the teacher is senior and there are competent senior monks. But there are no competent middle monks, junior monks, senior nuns, middle nuns, junior nuns, celibate white-clothed laymen, white-clothed laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, celibate white-clothed laywomen, white-clothed laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures. ... There are

white-clothed laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures, but the spiritual path is not successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans ... the spiritual path is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans, but it has not reached the pinnacle of material possessions and fame. Then that spiritual path is incomplete in that respect.

But when a spiritual path possesses those factors and the teacher is senior and there are competent senior monks, middle monks, junior monks, senior nuns, middle nuns, junior nuns, celibate laymen, laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, celibate laywomen, laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures, and the spiritual path is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans, and it has reached the pinnacle of material possessions and fame, then that spiritual path is complete in that respect.

I, Cunda, am a teacher who has arisen in the world today, perfected and fully awakened. The teaching is well explained and well propounded, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is fully awakened. My disciples have inquired about the meaning of that good teaching. And the spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure has been disclosed and revealed to them with all its collected sayings, with its demonstrable basis, well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans. I am a teacher today who is senior, long standing, long gone forth, advanced in years, and have reached the final stage of life.

I have today disciples who are competent senior monks, middle monks, junior monks, senior nuns, middle nuns, junior nuns, celibate laymen, laymen enjoying sensual pleasures, celibate laywomen, and laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures. Today my spiritual life is successful and prosperous, extensive, popular, widespread, and well proclaimed wherever there are gods and humans.

Of all the teachers in the world today, Cunda, I don't see even a single one who has reached the pinnacle of material possessions and fame like me. Of all the spiritual communities and groups in the world today, Cunda, I don't see even a single one

who has reached the pinnacle of material possessions and fame like the mendicant Saṅgha. And if there's any spiritual path of which it may be rightly said that it's endowed with all good qualities, complete in all good qualities, neither too little nor too much, well explained, whole, full, and well propounded, it's of this spiritual path that this should be said.

Uddaka, Rāma's son, used to say: 'Seeing, one does not see.' But seeing what does one not see? You can see the blade of a well-sharpened razor, but not the edge. Thus it is said: 'Seeing, one does not see.' But that saying of Uddaka's is low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless, as it's only concerning a razor. If there's anything of which it may be rightly said: 'Seeing, one does not see,' it's of this that it should be said. Seeing what does one not see? One sees this: a spiritual path endowed with all good qualities, complete in all good qualities, neither too little nor too much, well explained, whole, full, and well propounded. One does not see this: anything that, were it to be removed, would make it purer. One does not see this: anything that, were it to be added, would make it more complete. Thus it is rightly said: 'Seeing, one does not see.'

## **6. Teachings Should be Recited in Concert**

So, Cunda, you should all come together and recite in concert, without disputing, those things I have taught you from my direct knowledge, comparing meaning with meaning and phrasing with phrasing, so that this spiritual path may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. And what are those things I have taught from my direct knowledge? They are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation, the four right efforts, the four bases for psychic power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven awakening factors, and the noble eightfold path. These are the things I have taught from my own direct knowledge.

## **7. Reaching Agreement**

Suppose one of those spiritual companions who is training in harmony and mutual appreciation, without fighting, were to recite the teaching in the Saṅgha. Now, you might think: 'This venerable misconstrues the meaning and mistakes the phrasing.'

You should neither approve nor dismiss them, but say: ‘Reverend, if this is the meaning, the phrasing may either be this or that: which is more fitting? And if this is the phrasing, the meaning may be either this or that: which is more fitting?’ Suppose they reply: ‘This phrasing fits the meaning better than that. And this meaning fits the phrasing better than that.’ Without flattering or rebuking them, you should carefully convince them by examining that meaning and that phrasing.

Suppose another spiritual companion were to recite the teaching in the Saṅgha. Now, you might think: ‘This venerable misconstrues the meaning but gets the phrasing right.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss them, but say: ‘Reverend, if this is the phrasing, the meaning may be either this or that: which is more fitting?’ Suppose they reply: ‘This meaning fits the phrasing better than that.’ Without flattering or rebuking, you should carefully convince them by examining that meaning.

Suppose another spiritual companion were to recite the teaching in the Saṅgha. Now, you might think: ‘This venerable construes the meaning correctly but mistakes the phrasing.’ You should neither approve nor dismiss them, but say: ‘Reverend, if this is the meaning, the phrasing may be either this or that: which is more fitting?’ Suppose they reply: ‘This phrasing fits the meaning better than that.’ Without flattering or rebuking, you should carefully convince them by examining that phrasing.

Suppose another spiritual companion were to recite the teaching in the Saṅgha. Now, you might think: ‘This venerable construes the meaning correctly and gets the phrasing right.’ Saying ‘Good!’ you should applaud and cheer that mendicant’s statement, and then say to them: ‘We are fortunate, reverend, so very fortunate to see a venerable such as yourself, so well-versed in the meaning and the phrasing, as one of our spiritual companions!’

## **8. The Reasons for Allowing Requisites**

Cunda, I do not teach you solely for restraining defilements that affect the present life. Nor do I teach solely for protecting against defilements that affect lives to

come. I teach both for restraining defilements that affect the present life and protecting against defilements that affect lives to come. And that's why I have allowed robes for you that suffice only for the sake of warding off cold and heat; for warding off the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles; and for covering the private parts. I have allowed alms-food for you that suffices only to continue and sustain this body, avoid harm, and support spiritual practice; so that you will put an end to old discomfort and not give rise to new discomfort, and will keep on living blamelessly and at ease. I have allowed lodgings for you that suffice only for the sake of warding off cold and heat; for warding off the touch of flies, mosquitoes, wind, sun, and reptiles; and to shelter from harsh weather and enjoy retreat. I have allowed medicines and supplies for the sick for you that suffice only for the sake of warding off the pains of illness and to promote good health.

## **9. Indulgence in Pleasure**

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetics who follow the Sakyan live indulging in pleasure.' You should say to them: 'What is that indulgence in pleasure? For there are many different kinds of indulgence in pleasure.'

These four kinds of indulgence in pleasure, Cunda, are low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. They don't lead to disillusionment, dispassion, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. What four?

It's when some fool makes themselves happy and pleased by killing living creatures. This is the first kind of indulgence in pleasure.

Furthermore, someone makes themselves happy and pleased by theft. This is the second kind of indulgence in pleasure.

Furthermore, someone makes themselves happy and pleased by lying. This is the third kind of indulgence in pleasure.

Furthermore, someone amuses themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. This is the fourth kind of indulgence in pleasure.

These are the four kinds of indulgence in pleasure that are low, crude, ordinary, ignoble, and pointless. They don't lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetics who follow the Sakyan live indulging in pleasure in these four ways.' They should be told, 'Not so!' It isn't right to say that about you; it misrepresents you with an untruth.

These four kinds of indulgence in pleasure, when developed and cultivated, lead solely to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. What four?

It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is the first kind of indulgence in pleasure.

Furthermore, as the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, a mendicant enters and remains in the second absorption. It has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unification of mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. This is the second kind of indulgence in pleasure.

Furthermore, with the fading away of rapture, a mendicant enters and remains in the third absorption. They meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' This is the third kind of indulgence in pleasure.

Furthermore, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, a mendicant enters and remains in the fourth absorption. It is without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. This is the fourth kind of indulgence in pleasure.

These are the four kinds of indulgence in pleasure which, when developed and cultivated, lead solely to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment.

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetics who follow the Sakyan live indulging in pleasure in these four ways.' They should be told, 'Exactly so!' It's right to say that about you; it doesn't misrepresent you with an untruth.

### **10. The Benefits of Indulgence in Pleasure**

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'How many fruits and benefits may be expected by those who live indulging in pleasure in these four ways?' You should say to them: 'Four benefits may be expected by those who live indulging in pleasure in these four ways. What four? Firstly, with the ending of three fetters a mendicant becomes a stream-enterer, not liable to be reborn in the underworld, bound for awakening. This is the first fruit and benefit. Furthermore, a mendicant—with the ending of three fetters, and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion—becomes a once-returner. They come back to this world once only, then make an end of suffering. This is the second fruit and benefit. Furthermore, with the ending of the five lower fetters, a mendicant is reborn spontaneously and will become extinguished there, not liable to return from that world. This is the third fruit and benefit. Furthermore, a mendicant realizes the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life, and lives having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements. This is the fourth fruit and benefit. These four benefits may be expected by those who live indulging in pleasure in these four ways.'

## **11. Things Impossible for the Perfected**

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetics who follow the Sakyan are inconsistent.' You should say to them: 'Reverends, these things have been taught and pointed out for his disciples by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, not to be transgressed so long as life lasts. Suppose there was a boundary pillar or an iron pillar with deep foundations, firmly embedded, imperturbable and unshakable. In the same way, these things have been taught and pointed out for his disciples by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha, not to be transgressed so long as life lasts. A mendicant who is perfected—with defilements ended, who has completed the spiritual journey, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, achieved their own goal, utterly ended the fetters of rebirth, and is rightly freed through enlightenment—can't transgress in nine respects. A mendicant with defilements ended can't deliberately take the life of a living creature, take something with the intention to steal, have sex, tell a deliberate lie, or store up goods for their own enjoyment like they did as a lay person. And they can't make decisions prejudiced by favoritism, hostility, stupidity, or cowardice. A mendicant who is perfected can't transgress in these nine respects.'

## **12. Questions and Answers**

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'The ascetic Gotama demonstrates boundless knowledge and vision of the past, but not of the future. What's up with that?' Those wanderers, like incompetent fools, seem to imagine that one kind of knowledge and vision can be demonstrated by means of another kind of knowledge and vision. Regarding the past, the Realized One has knowledge stemming from memory. He recollects as far as he wants. Regarding the future, the Realized One has the knowledge born of awakening: 'This is my last rebirth. Now there are no more future lives.' If a question about the past is untrue, false, and pointless, the Realized One does not reply. If a question about the past is true and substantive, but pointless, he does not reply. If a question about the past is true, substantive, and beneficial, he knows the right time to reply. And the Realized One replies to questions about the future or the present in the same way.

And so the Realized One has speech that's well-timed, true, meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. That's why he's called the 'Realized One'. In this world—with its gods, Māras, and Brahmās, this population with its ascetics and brahmins, its gods and humans—whatever is seen, heard, thought, cognized, searched, and explored by the mind, all that has been understood by the Realized One. That's why he's called the 'Realized One'. From the night when the Realized One understands the supreme perfect awakening until the night he becomes fully extinguished—through the natural principle of extinguishment, without anything left over—everything he speaks, says, and expresses is real, not otherwise. That's why he's called the 'Realized One'. The Realized One does as he says, and says as he does. Since this is so, that's why he's called the 'Realized One'. In this world—with its gods, Māras and Brahmās, this generation with its ascetics and brahmins, gods and humans—the Realized One is the undefeated, the champion, the universal seer, the wielder of power.

### **13. The Undeclared Points**

It's possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: 'Is this your view: "A Realized One exists after death. This is the only truth, everything else is wrong"?' You should say to them: 'Reverend, this has not been declared by the Buddha.'

The wanderers might say: 'Then is this your view: "A Realized One doesn't exist after death. This is the only truth, everything else is wrong"?' You should say to them: 'This too has not been declared by the Buddha.'

The wanderers might say: 'Then is this your view: "A Realized One both exists and doesn't exist after death. This is the only truth, everything else is wrong"?' You should say to them: 'This too has not been declared by the Buddha.'

The wanderers might say: 'Then is this your view: "A Realized One neither exists nor doesn't exist after death. This is the only truth, everything else is wrong"?' You should say to them: 'This too has not been declared by the Buddha.'

The wanderers might say: ‘But why has this not been declared by the ascetic Gotama?’ You should say to them: ‘Because it’s not beneficial or relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. It doesn’t lead to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That’s why it hasn’t been declared by the Buddha.’

#### **14. The Declared Points**

It’s possible that wanderers who follow other paths might say: ‘But what has been declared by the ascetic Gotama?’ You should say to them: ‘What has been declared by the Buddha is this: “This is suffering”—“This is the origin of suffering”—“This is the cessation of suffering”—“This is the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.”’

The wanderers might say: ‘But why has this been declared by the ascetic Gotama?’ You should say to them: ‘Because it’s beneficial and relevant to the fundamentals of the spiritual life. It leads to disillusionment, fading away, cessation, peace, insight, awakening, and extinguishment. That’s why it has been declared by the Buddha.’

#### **15. Views of the Past**

Cunda, I have explained to you as they should be explained the views that some rely on regarding the past. Shall I explain them to you in the wrong way? I have explained to you as they should be explained the views that some rely on regarding the future. Shall I explain them to you in the wrong way? What are the views that some rely on regarding the past? There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: ‘The self and the cosmos are eternal. This is the only truth, everything else is wrong.’ There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: ‘The self and the cosmos are not eternal, or both eternal and not eternal, or neither eternal nor not eternal. The self and the cosmos are made by oneself, or made by another, or made by both oneself and another, or they have arisen by chance, not made by oneself or another. Pleasure and pain are eternal, or not eternal, or both eternal and not eternal, or neither eternal nor not eternal. Pleasure and pain are made by oneself, or made by another, or made by both

oneself and another, or they have arisen by chance, not made by oneself or another. This is the only truth, everything else is wrong.’

Regarding this, I go up to the ascetics and brahmins whose view is that the self and the cosmos are eternal, and say: ‘Reverends, is this what you say: “The self and the cosmos are eternal”?’ But when they say: ‘Yes! This is the only truth, everything else is wrong,’ I don’t acknowledge that. Why is that? Because there are beings who have different opinions on this topic. I don’t see any such expositions that are equal to my own, still less superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher exposition.

Regarding this, I go up to the ascetics and brahmins who assert all the other views as described above. And in each case, I don’t acknowledge that. Why is that? Because there are beings who have different opinions on this topic. I don’t see any such expositions that are equal to my own, still less superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher exposition. These are the views that some rely on regarding the past.

## **16. Views of the Future**

What are the views that some rely on regarding the future? There are some ascetics and brahmins who have this doctrine and view: ‘The self is physical and sound after death, or it is non-physical, or both physical and non-physical, or neither physical nor non-physical, or percipient, or non-percipient, or neither percipient nor non-percipient, or the self is annihilated and destroyed when the body breaks up, and doesn’t exist after death. This is the only truth, everything else is wrong.’ Regarding this, I go up to the ascetics and brahmins whose view is that the self is physical and sound after death, and say: ‘Reverends, is this what you say: “The self is physical and sound after death”?’ But when they say: ‘Yes! This is the only truth, other ideas are stupid,’ I don’t acknowledge that. Why is that? Because there are beings who have different opinions on this topic. I don’t see any such expositions that are equal to my own, still less superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher exposition.

Regarding this, I go up to the ascetics and brahmins who assert all the other views as described above. And in each case, I don't acknowledge that. Why is that? Because there are beings who have different opinions on this topic. I don't see any such expositions that are equal to my own, still less superior. Rather, I am the one who is superior when it comes to the higher exposition. These are the views that some rely on regarding the future, which I have explained to you as they should be explained. Shall I explain them to you in the wrong way?

I have taught and pointed out the four kinds of mindfulness meditation for giving up and going beyond all these views of the past and the future. What four? It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. These are the four kinds of mindfulness meditation that I have taught for giving up and going beyond all these views of the past and the future.”

Now at that time Venerable Upavāṇa was standing behind the Buddha fanning him. He said to the Buddha: “It's incredible, sir, it's amazing! This exposition of the teaching is impressive, sir, it is very impressive. Sir, what is the name of this exposition of the teaching?” “Well, Upavāṇa, you may remember this exposition of the teaching as ‘The Impressive Discourse’.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, Venerable Upavāṇa was happy with what the Buddha said.

## 30. Lakkhaṇa Sutta

### The Marks of a Great Man

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Sāvattḥī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery. There the Buddha addressed the mendicants:

“Mendicants!” “Venerable sir,” they replied. The Buddha said this:

“There are thirty-two marks of a great man. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other. If he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea, he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world.

And what are the thirty-two marks?

He has well-planted feet.

On the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail.

He has projecting heels. He has long fingers. His hands and feet are tender. His hands and feet cling gracefully. His feet are arched. His calves are like those of an antelope. When standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees. His private parts are retracted. He is gold colored; his skin has a golden sheen. He has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don't stick to his body. His hairs grow one per pore. His hairs stand up; they're blue-black and curl clockwise. His body is as straight as Brahmā's. He has bulging muscles in seven

places. His chest is like that of a lion. The gap between the shoulder-blades is filled in. He has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree: the span of his arms equals the height of his body. His torso is cylindrical. He has an excellent sense of taste. His jaw is like that of a lion. He has forty teeth. His teeth are even. His teeth have no gaps. His teeth are perfectly white. He has a large tongue. He has the voice of Brahmā, like a cuckoo's call. His eyes are deep blue. He has eyelashes like a cow's. Between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool.

His head is shaped like a turban.

These are the thirty-two marks of a great man. A great man who possesses these has only two possible destinies, no other.

Seers outside of Buddhism remember these marks, but they do not know the specific deeds performed in the past to obtain each mark.

### **1. Well-Planted Feet**

In some past lives, past existences, past abodes the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He firmly undertook and persisted in skillful behaviors such as good conduct by way of body, speech, giving and sharing, taking precepts, observing the sabbath, paying due respect to mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, honoring the elders in the family, and various other things pertaining to skillful behaviors. Due to performing, accumulating, heaping up, and amassing those deeds, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. There he surpassed the other gods in ten respects: divine life span, beauty, happiness, glory, sovereignty, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. When he passed away from there and came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark of a great man: he has well-planted feet. He places his foot on the ground evenly, raises it evenly, and touches the ground evenly with the whole sole of his foot.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. He has the following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a

thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea—free of harassment by bandits, successful and prosperous, safe, blessed, and untroubled—he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. And what does he obtain as king? He can't be stopped by any human foe or enemy. That's what he obtains as king. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He can't be stopped by any foe or enemy whether internal or external; nor by greed, hate, or delusion; nor by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world. That's what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Truth, principle, self-control, and restraint;  
purity, precepts, and observing the sabbath;  
giving, harmlessness, delighting in non-violence—  
firmly undertaking these things, he lived accordingly.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,  
where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.  
After passing away from there to here,  
he steps evenly on this rich earth.

The gathered soothsayers predicted  
that there is no stopping one of such even tread,  
as householder or renunciate.  
That's the meaning shown by this mark.

While living at home he cannot be stopped,  
he defeats his foes, and cannot be beaten.  
Due to the fruit of that deed,  
he cannot be stopped by any human.

But if he chooses the life gone forth,  
seeing clearly, loving renunciation,  
not even the best can hope to stop him;  
this is the nature of the ultimate man.”

## **2. Wheels on the Feet**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He brought happiness to many people, dispelling threats, terror, and danger, providing just protection and security, and giving gifts with all the trimmings. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: on the soles of his feet there are thousand-spoked wheels, with rims and hubs, complete in every detail and well divided inside.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a large following of brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a fully awakened Buddha. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a large following of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“In olden days, in past lives,  
he brought happiness to many people,  
ridding them of fear, terror, and danger,  
zealously guarding and protecting them.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,  
where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.

After passing away from there to here,  
wheels on his two feet are found,

all rimmed around and thousand-spoked.  
The gathered soothsayers predicted,  
seeing the prince with the hundred-fold mark of merits,  
that he'd have a following, subduing foes,

which is why he has wheels all rimmed around.  
If he doesn't choose the life gone forth,  
he'll roll the wheel and rule the land.  
The aristocrats will be his vassals,

flocking to his glory.  
But if he chooses the life gone forth,  
seeing clearly, loving renunciation,  
the gods, humans, demons, Sakka, and monsters;

fairies and dragons, birds and beasts,  
will flock to his glory,  
the supreme, honored by gods and humans.”

### **3–5. Projecting Heels, Etc.**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He gave up killing living creatures, renouncing the rod and the sword. He was scrupulous and kind, living full of compassion for all creatures. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these three marks: he has projecting heels, long fingers, and his body is as straight as Brahmā's.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He's long lived, preserving his life for a long time. No human foe or enemy is able to take his life before his time. That's what he

obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He's long lived, preserving his life for a long time. No foes or enemies—nor any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world—is able to take his life before his time. That's what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Realizing for himself the horrors of death,  
he refrained from killing other creatures.  
By that good conduct he went to heaven,  
where he enjoyed the fruit of deeds well done.

Passing away, on his return to here,  
he obtained these three marks:  
his projecting heels are full and long,  
and he's straight, beautiful, and well-formed, like Brahmā.

Fair of limb, youthful, of good posture and breeding,  
his fingers are soft and tender and long.  
By these three marks of an excellent man,  
they indicated that the prince's life would be long:

‘As a householder he will live long;  
longer still if he goes forth, due to  
mastery in the development of psychic power.  
Thus this is the sign of long life.’”

## **6. Seven Bulges**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was a donor of fine and tasty foods and drinks of all kinds, delicious and scrumptious. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: he has bulging

muscles in seven places. He has bulges on both hands, both feet, both shoulders, and his chest.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He gets fine and tasty foods and drinks of all kinds, delicious and scrumptious. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He gets fine and tasty foods and drinks of all kinds, delicious and scrumptious. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He used to give the very best of flavors—  
scrumptious foods of every kind.  
Because of that good deed,  
he rejoiced long in Nandana heaven.

On returning to here, he got seven bulging muscles  
and tender hands and feet are found.

The soothsayers expert in signs declared:  
‘He’ll get tasty foods of all sorts

as a householder, that’s what that means.  
But even if he goes forth he’ll get the same,  
supreme in gaining tasty foods of all sorts,  
cutting all bonds of the lay life.’”

### **7–8. Tender and Clinging Hands**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He brought people together using the four ways of being inclusive: giving, kind speech, taking care, and equality. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these two marks: his hands and feet are tender, and they cling gracefully.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue is inclusive, cohesive, and well-managed. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue is inclusive, cohesive, and well-managed. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"By giving and helping others,  
kindly speech, and equal treatment,  
such action and conduct as brought people together,  
he went to heaven due to his esteemed virtue.

Passing away, on his return to here,  
the young baby prince obtained  
hands and feet so tender and clinging,  
lovely, graceful, and good-looking.

His retinue is loyal and manageable,  
staying agreeably all over this broad land.  
Speaking kindly, desiring happiness,  
he practices the good qualities he's adopted.

But if he gives up all sensual enjoyments,  
as conqueror he speaks Dhamma to the people.  
Devoted, they respond to his words;  
after listening, they practice in line with the teaching."

## 9–10. Arched Feet and Upright Hair

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. His speech was meaningful and principled. He educated many people, bringing welfare and happiness, offering the teaching. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these two marks: his feet are arched and his hairs stand up.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is the foremost, best, chief, highest, and finest of those who enjoy sensual pleasures. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is the foremost, best, chief, highest, and finest of all sentient beings. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“His word was meaningful and principled,  
moving the people with his explanations.  
He brought welfare and happiness to creatures,  
unstintingly offering up teaching.

Because of that good deed,  
he went to heaven, and there rejoiced.  
On return to here two marks are found,  
of excellence and supremacy.

His hairs stand upright,  
and his ankles stand out well.  
Swollen with flesh and blood, and wrapped in skin,  
they beautify above the feet.

If such a one lives in the home,  
he becomes best of those who enjoy sensual pleasures.

There'll be none better than him;  
he'll live having mastered all India.

But going forth the peerless renunciate  
becomes best of all creatures.  
There'll be none better than him,  
he'll live having mastered the whole world.”

## **11. Antelope Calves**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was a thorough teacher of a profession, a branch of knowledge, conduct, or action, thinking: ‘How might they quickly learn and practice, without getting exhausted?’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: his calves are like those of an antelope.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He quickly obtains the things worthy of a king, the factors, supports, and things befitting a king. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He quickly obtains the things worthy of an ascetic, the factors, supports, and things befitting an ascetic. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“In professions, knowledge, conduct, and deeds,  
he thought of how they might swiftly learn.  
Things that harm no-one at all,  
he quickly taught so they would not get tired.

Having done that skillful deed whose outcome is happiness,  
he gains prominent and elegant calves.  
Well-formed in graceful spirals,

he's covered in fine rising hairs.

They say that person has antelope calves,  
and that this is the mark of swift success.  
If he desires the things of the household life,  
not going forth, they'll quickly be his.

But if he chooses the life gone forth,  
seeing clearly, loving renunciation,  
the peerless renunciate will quickly find  
what is fitting and suitable.”

## **12. Delicate Skin**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He approached an ascetic or brahmin and asked: ‘Sirs, what is skillful? What is unskillful? What is blameworthy? What is blameless? What should be cultivated? What should not be cultivated? Doing what leads to my lasting harm and suffering? Doing what leads to my lasting welfare and happiness?’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: he has delicate skin, so delicate that dust and dirt don’t stick to his body.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has great wisdom. Of those who enjoy sensual pleasures, none is his equal or better in wisdom. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has great wisdom, widespread wisdom, laughing wisdom, swift wisdom, sharp wisdom, and penetrating wisdom. No sentient being is his equal or better in wisdom. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“In olden days, in past lives,

eager to understand, he asked questions.  
Keen to learn, he waited on renunciates,  
heeding their explanation with pure intent.

Due to that deed of acquiring wisdom,  
as a human being his skin is delicate.  
At his birth the soothsayers expert in signs prophesied:  
'He'll discern delicate matters.'

If he doesn't choose the life gone forth,  
he'll roll the wheel and rule the land.  
Among those with material possessions who have been educated,  
none equal or better than him is found.

But if he chooses the life gone forth,  
seeing clearly, loving renunciation,  
gaining wisdom that's supreme and eminent,  
the one of superb, vast intelligence attains awakening."

### **13. Golden Skin**

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He wasn't irritable or bad-tempered. Even when heavily criticized he didn't lose his temper, become annoyed, hostile, and hard-hearted, or display annoyance, hate, and bitterness. He donated soft and fine mats and blankets, and fine cloths of linen, cotton, silk, and wool. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: he is gold colored; his skin has a golden sheen.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He obtains soft and fine mats and blankets, and fine cloths of linen, cotton, silk, and wool. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He obtains soft and fine mats and blankets, and

fine cloths of linen, cotton, silk, and wool. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Committed to good will, he gave gifts.  
In an earlier life he poured forth cloth  
fine and soft to touch,  
like a god pouring rain on this broad earth.

So doing he passed from here to heaven,  
where he enjoyed the fruits of deeds well done.  
Here he wins a figure of gold,  
like Inda, the finest of gods.

If that man stays in the house, not wishing to go forth,  
he conquers and rules this vast, broad earth.  
He obtains abundant excellent cloth,  
so fine and soft to touch.

He receives robes, cloth, and the finest garments  
if he chooses the life gone forth.  
For he still partakes of past deed’s fruit;  
what’s been done is never lost.”

#### **14. Retracted Privates**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He reunited long-lost and long-separated relatives, friends, loved ones, and companions. He reunited mother with child and child with mother; father with child and child with father; brother with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, and sister with sister, bringing them together with rejoicing. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: his private parts are retracted.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has many sons, over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has many sons, many thousands of sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"In olden days, in past lives,  
he reunited long-lost  
and long-separated friends and family,  
bringing them together with joy.

By means of these deeds he went to heaven,  
where he enjoyed happiness and merriment.  
After passing away from there to here,  
his private parts are retracted.

Such a one has many sons,  
over a thousand descendants,  
valiant and heroic, devastating foes,  
a layman's joy, speaking kindly.

But if he lives the renunciate life  
he has even more sons following his word.  
As householder or renunciate,  
that's the meaning shown by this mark."

The first recitation section is finished.

## 15–16. Equal Proportions and Touching the Knees

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He regarded the gathered population equally. He knew what they had in common and what was their own. He knew each person, and he knew the distinctions between people. In each case, he made appropriate distinctions between people: ‘This one deserves that; that one deserves this.’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these two marks: he has the proportional circumference of a banyan tree; and when standing upright and not bending over, the palms of both hands touch the knees.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, lots of money and grain, and a full treasury and storehouses. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is rich, affluent, and wealthy. He has these kinds of wealth: the wealth of faith, ethical conduct, conscience, prudence, learning, generosity, and wisdom. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Observing the many people in a community,  
he weighed, evaluated, and judged each case:  
‘This one deserves that.’  
That’s how he used to draw distinctions between people.

Now standing without bending  
he can touch his knees with both hands.  
With the remaining ripening of the fruit of good deeds,  
his circumference was that of a great tree.

Learned experts in the many different  
signs and marks prophesied:

‘The young prince will obtain  
many different things that householders deserve.

Here there are many suitable pleasures  
for the ruler of the land to enjoy as householder.  
But if he gives up all sensual enjoyments,  
he will gain the supreme, highest peak of wealth.’”

### **17–19. A Lion’s Chest, Etc.**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He desired the good, the welfare, the comfort, and sanctuary of the people, thinking: ‘How might they flourish in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, teachings, and wisdom; in wealth and grain, fields and land, birds and beasts, children and partners; in bondservants, workers, and staff; in family, friends, and kin?’ Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these three marks: his chest is like that of a lion; the gap between the shoulder-blades is filled in; and his torso is cylindrical.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He’s not liable to decline. He doesn’t decline in wealth and grain, fields and land, birds and beasts, children and partners; in bondservants, workers, and staff; in family, friends, and kin. He doesn’t decline in any of his accomplishments. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He’s not liable to decline. He doesn’t decline in faith, ethics, learning, generosity, and wisdom. He doesn’t decline in any of his accomplishments. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“His wish was this: ‘How may others not decline  
in faith, ethics, learning, and intelligence,  
in generosity, teachings, and much good else,

in coin and corn, fields and lands,  
  
in children, partners, and livestock,  
in family, friends, and kin,  
in health, and both beauty and happiness?’  
And so he ever desired their success.

His chest was full like that of a lion,  
his shoulder-gap filled in, and torso cylindrical.  
Due to the well-done deeds of the past,  
he had that portent of non-decline.

Even as layman he grows in corn and coin,  
in wives, children, and livestock.  
But once gone forth, owning nothing, he attains  
the supreme awakening which may never decline.”

## **20. Excellent Sense of Taste**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He would never hurt any sentient being with fists, stones, rods, or swords. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: he has an excellent sense of taste. Taste-buds are produced in the throat for the tongue-tip and dispersed evenly.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He is rarely ill or unwell. His stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He is rarely ill or unwell. His stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Not with fist or rod or stone,  
or sword or beating to death,  
or by bondage or threats  
did he ever harm anyone.

For that very reason he rejoiced in heaven,  
finding happiness as a fruit of happy deeds.  
With taste-buds well formed and even,  
on his return here he has an excellent sense of taste.

That’s why the clever seers said:  
‘This man will have much happiness  
as householder or renunciate.  
That’s the meaning shown by this mark.’”

## **21–22. Deep Blue Eyes**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. When looking at others he didn’t glare, look askance, or avert his eyes. Being straightforward, he reached out to others with straightforward intentions, looking at people with kindly eyes. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these two marks: his eyes are deep blue, and he has eyelashes like a cow’s.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? The people look on him with kindly eyes. He is dear and beloved to the brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? The people look on him with kindly eyes. He is dear and beloved to the monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“With not a glare or glance askance,  
nor averting of the eyes;  
straightforward, he reached out straightforwardly,  
looking at people with kindly eyes.

In good rebirths he enjoyed the fruit  
and result, rejoicing there.  
But here he has a cow’s eyelashes,  
and eyes deep blue so fair to see.

Many soothsayers, men clever  
and learned in prognostic texts,  
expert in cow-like lashes, indicated he’d  
be looked upon with kindly eyes.

Even as a householder he’d be regarded kindly,  
beloved of the people.  
But if he becomes an ascetic, not lay,  
as destroyer of sorrow he’ll be loved by many.”

### **23. Head Like a Turban**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He was the leader and forerunner of people in skillful behaviors such as good conduct by way of body, speech, giving and sharing, taking precepts, observing the sabbath, paying due respect to mother and father, ascetics and brahmins, honoring the elders in the family, and various other things pertaining to skillful behaviors. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: his head is shaped like a turban.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a large following of brahmins and

householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a large following of monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"Among people of good conduct, he was the leader,  
devoted to a life of principle among the principled.  
The people followed him,  
and he experienced the fruit of good deeds in heaven.

Having experienced that fruit,  
he acquires a head shaped like a turban.  
The experts in omens and signs prophesied:  
'He will be leader of the people.

Among people then, as before,  
they will bring presents for him.  
If he becomes an aristocrat, ruler of the land,  
he'll gain the service of the people.

But if that man goes forth,  
he'll be sophisticated, proficient in the teachings.  
Devoted to the virtues of his instruction,  
the people will become his followers.'"

#### **24–25. One Hair Per Pore, and a Tuft**

"Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from lying. He spoke the truth and stuck to the truth. He was honest and trustworthy, and didn't trick the world with his words. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of

existence he obtained these two marks: his hairs grow one per pore, and between his eyebrows there grows a tuft, soft and white like cotton-wool.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has many close adherents among the brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has many close adherents among the monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That's what he obtains as Buddha." That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

"In past lives he was true to his promise,  
with no forked tongue, he shunned lies.  
He never broke his word to anyone,  
but spoke what was true, real, and factual.

A tuft so very white like cotton-wool  
grew prettily between his eyebrows.  
And never two, but only one,  
hair grew in each of his pores.

Many soothsayers learned in marks  
and expert in signs gathered and prophesied:  
'One like this, with tuft and hair so well-formed,  
will have many as his close adherents.

Even as householder many people will follow him,  
due to the power of deeds in the past.  
But once gone forth, owning nothing,  
as Buddha the people will follow him.'"

## 26–27. Forty Gapless Teeth

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from divisive speech. He didn’t repeat in one place what he heard in another so as to divide people against each other. Instead, he reconciled those who were divided, supporting unity, delighting in harmony, loving harmony, speaking words that promote harmony. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these two marks: he has forty teeth, and his teeth have no gaps.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue cannot be divided. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue cannot be divided. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He spoke no untruth causing friends to split,  
creating disputes that foster division,  
acting improperly by fostering quarrels,  
creating division among friends.

He spoke kind words to foster harmony,  
uniting those who are divided.  
He eliminated quarrels among the people,  
rejoicing together with the united.

In good rebirths he enjoyed the fruit  
and result, rejoicing there.  
Here his teeth are gapless, close together,

forty standing upright in his mouth.

If he becomes an aristocrat, ruler of the land,  
his assembly will be indivisible.

And as an ascetic, spotless and stainless,  
his assembly will follow him, unshakable.”

### **28–29. A Large Tongue and the Voice of Brahmā**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from harsh speech. He spoke in a way that’s mellow, pleasing to the ear, lovely, going to the heart, polite, likable and agreeable to the people. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these two marks: he has a large tongue, and the voice of Brahmā, like a cuckoo’s call.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He has a persuasive voice. His words are persuasive to brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He has a persuasive voice. His words are persuasive to monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He never spoke a loud harsh word,  
insulting, quarrelsome,  
causing harm, rude, crushing the people.  
His speech was sweet, helpful, and kind.

He uttered words dear to the mind,  
going to the heart, pleasing to the ear.

He enjoyed the fruit of his good verbal conduct,  
experiencing the fruit of good deeds in heaven.

Having experienced that fruit,  
on his return to here he acquired the voice of Brahmā.  
His tongue was long and wide,  
and his speech was persuasive.

Even as householder his speech brings prosperity.  
But if that man goes forth,  
speaking often to the people,  
they'll be persuaded by his fair words.”

### **30. A Lion-Like Jaw**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He refrained from talking nonsense. His words were timely, true, and meaningful, in line with the teaching and training. He said things at the right time which were valuable, reasonable, succinct, and beneficial. Due to performing those deeds he was reborn in a heavenly realm. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained this mark: his jaw is like that of a lion.

Possessing this mark, if he stays at home he becomes a wheel-turning monarch. And what does he obtain as king? He can't be destroyed by any human foe or enemy. That's what he obtains as king. And what does he obtain as Buddha? He can't be destroyed by any foe or enemy whether internal or external; nor by greed, hate, or delusion; nor by any ascetic or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world. That's what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“Neither nonsensical nor silly,  
his way of speaking was never loose.

He rejected what was useless,  
and spoke for the welfare and happiness of the people.

So doing he passed from here to be reborn in heaven,  
where he enjoyed the fruit of deeds well done.  
Passing away, on his return to here,  
he gained a jaw like the finest of beasts.

He became a king so very hard to defeat,  
a mighty lord and ruler of men.  
He was equal to the best in the city of the Thirty-Three,  
like Inda, the finest of gods.

One such as that is not easily beaten by fairies,  
demons, spirits, monsters, or gods.  
If he becomes of such a kind,  
he illuminates the quarters and in-between.”

### **31–32. Even and White Teeth**

“Mendicants, in some past lives the Realized One was reborn as a human being. He gave up wrong livelihood and earned a living by right livelihood. He refrained from falsifying weights, metals, or measures; bribery, fraud, cheating, and duplicity; mutilation, murder, abduction, banditry, plunder, and violence. Due to performing, accumulating, heaping up, and amassing those deeds, when his body broke up, after death, he was reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. There he surpassed the other gods in ten respects: divine life span, beauty, happiness, glory, sovereignty, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. When he came back to this state of existence he obtained these two marks: his teeth are even and perfectly white.

Possessing these marks, if he stays at home he becomes a king, a wheel-turning monarch, a just and principled king. His dominion extends to all four sides, he achieves stability in the country, and he possesses the seven treasures. He has the

following seven treasures: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the jewel, the woman, the treasurer, and the counselor as the seventh treasure. He has over a thousand sons who are valiant and heroic, crushing the armies of his enemies. After conquering this land girt by sea—free of harassment by bandits, successful and prosperous, safe, blessed, and untroubled—he reigns by principle, without rod or sword. And what does he obtain as king? His retinue is pure. This includes brahmins and householders, people of town and country, treasury officials, military officers, guardsmen, ministers, counselors, rulers, tax beneficiaries, and princes. That’s what he obtains as king.

But if he goes forth from the lay life to homelessness, he becomes a perfected one, a fully awakened Buddha, who draws back the veil from the world. And what does he obtain as Buddha? His retinue is pure. This includes monks, nuns, laymen, laywomen, gods, humans, demons, dragons, and fairies. That’s what he obtains as Buddha.” That is what the Buddha said.

On this it is said:

“He abandoned wrong livelihood, and created  
a way of life that’s fair, pure, and just.  
He rejected what was useless,  
and lived for the welfare and happiness of the people.

Having done what’s praised by the clever, the wise, and the good,  
that man experienced the fruit in heaven.  
Equal to the best in the heaven of Thirty-Three,  
he enjoyed himself with pleasure and play.

From there he passed back to a human life.  
With the remaining ripening of the fruit of good deeds,  
he obtained teeth that are even,  
gleaming, bright, and white.

Many soothsayers regarded as wise men  
gathered and predicted of him:

‘With twice-born teeth so even, brightly gleaming, and white,  
his retinue will be so pure.

As king, his people will also be pure,  
when he rules having conquered this earth so broad.  
They won’t harm the country,  
but will live for the welfare and happiness of the people.

But if he goes forth he’ll be an ascetic free of ill,  
his passions quelled, the veil drawn back.  
Rid of stress and weariness,  
he sees this world and the next.

Those who do his bidding, both lay and renunciate,  
shake off wickedness, impure and blameworthy.  
He’s surrounded by pure people, who dispel  
stains, callousness, sin, and corruptions.’”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the  
Buddha said.

## 31. Siṅgāla Sutta

Advice to Sigālaka

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, in the Bamboo Grove, the squirrels' feeding ground. Now at that time the householder's son Sigālaka rose early and left Rājagaha. With his clothes and hair all wet, he raised his joined palms to revere the quarters— east, south, west, north, below, and above.

Then the Buddha robed up in the morning and, taking his bowl and robe, entered Rājagaha for alms. He saw Sigālaka revering the quarters and said to him: “Householder's son, why are you revering the quarters in this way?” “Sir, on his deathbed my father said to me: ‘My dear, please revere the quarters.’ Honoring, respecting, and venerating my father's words, I rose early and left Rājagaha and, with my clothes and hair all wet, raised my joined palms to revere the quarters—east, south, west, north, below, and above.”

### 1. The Six Quarters

“Householder's son, that's not how the six quarters should be revered in the training of the noble one.” “But sir, how should the six quarters be revered in the training of the noble one? Sir, please teach me this.”

“Well then, householder's son, listen and pay close attention, I will speak.” “Yes, sir,” replied Sigālaka. The Buddha said this:

“Householder's son, a noble disciple gives up four corrupt deeds, doesn't do bad deeds on four grounds, and avoids six drains on wealth. When they've left these fourteen bad things behind they have the six quarters covered. They're practicing to win in both worlds, and they succeed in this world and the next. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

## **2. Four Corrupt Deeds**

What four corrupt deeds have they given up? Killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying: these are corrupt deeds. These are the four corrupt deeds they've given up." That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

"Killing, stealing,  
telling lies,  
and committing adultery:  
astute people don't praise these things."

## **3. Four Grounds**

"On what four grounds do they not do bad deeds? One does bad deeds prejudiced by favoritism, hostility, stupidity, and cowardice. When a noble disciple is not prejudiced by favoritism, hostility, stupidity, and cowardice, they don't do bad deeds on these four grounds." That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

"If you act against the teaching  
out of favoritism, hostility, cowardice, or stupidity,  
your fame shrinks,  
like the moon in the dark fortnight.

If you don't act against the teaching  
out of favoritism, hostility, cowardice, and stupidity,  
your fame swells,  
like the moon in the bright fortnight."

## **4. Six Drains on Wealth**

"What six drains on wealth do they avoid? Habitually engaging in the following things is a drain on wealth: drinking alcohol; roaming the streets at night; frequenting festivals; gambling; bad friends; laziness.

## **5. Six Drawbacks of Drinking**

There are these six drawbacks of habitually drinking alcohol. Immediate loss of wealth, promotion of quarrels, susceptibility to illness, disrepute, indecent exposure; and weakened wisdom is the sixth thing. These are the six drawbacks of habitually drinking alcohol.

## **6. Six Drawbacks of Roaming the Streets at Night**

There are these six drawbacks of roaming the streets at night. Yourself, your partner and children, and your property are all left unguarded. You're suspected of bad deeds. Untrue rumors spread about you. You're at the forefront of many things that entail suffering. These are the six drawbacks of roaming the streets at night.

## **7. Six Drawbacks of Festivals**

There are these six drawbacks of frequenting festivals. You're always thinking: 'Where's the dancing? Where's the singing? Where's the music? Where are the stories? Where's the applause? Where are the kettle-drums?' These are the six drawbacks of frequenting festivals.

## **8. Six Drawbacks of Gambling**

There are these six drawbacks of habitually gambling. Victory breeds enmity. The loser mourns their money. There is immediate loss of wealth. A gambler's word carries no weight in public assembly. Friends and colleagues treat them with contempt. And no-one wants to marry a gambler, for they think: 'This individual is a gambler—they're not able to support a partner.' These are the six drawbacks of habitually gambling.

## **9. Six Drawbacks of Bad Friends**

There are these six drawbacks of bad friends. You become friends and companions with those who are scoundrels, drunkards, addicts, frauds, swindlers, and thugs. These are the six drawbacks of bad friends.

## 10. Six Drawbacks of Laziness

There are these six drawbacks of habitual laziness. You don't get your work done because you think: 'It's too cold! It's too hot. It's too late! It's too early! I'm too hungry! I'm too full!' By dwelling on so many excuses for not working, you don't make any more money, and the money you already have runs out. These are the six drawbacks of habitual laziness."

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

"Some are just drinking buddies,  
some call you their dear, dear friend,  
but a true friend is one  
who stands by you in need.

Sleeping late, adultery,  
making enemies, harmfulness,  
bad friends, and avarice:  
these six grounds ruin a person.

With bad friends, bad companions,  
bad conduct, hanging out in bad places,  
a man falls to ruin  
in both this world and the next.

Dice, women, drink, song and dance;  
sleeping by day and roaming at night;  
bad friends, and avarice:  
these six grounds ruin a person.

They play dice and drink liquor,  
and consort with women loved by others.

Associating with the worse, not the better,  
they diminish like the waning moon.

A drunkard, broke, and destitute,  
thirsty, drinking in the bar,  
drowning in debt,  
will quickly lose their way.

When you're in the habit of sleeping late,  
seeing night as time to rise,  
and always getting drunk,  
you can't keep up the household life.

'Too cold, too hot,  
too late,' they say.  
Neglecting their work like this,  
the young miss their chance.

But one who considers hot and cold  
as nothing more than blades of grass—  
he does his manly duty,  
and happiness never fails."

## **11. Fake Friends**

"Householder's son, you should recognize these four enemies disguised as friends:  
the taker, the talker, the flatterer, the spender.

You can recognize a fake friend who's all take on four grounds.

Your possessions end up theirs.  
Giving little, they expect a lot.  
They do their duty out of fear.  
They associate for their own advantage.

You can recognize a fake friend who's all take on these four grounds.

You can recognize a fake friend who's all talk on four grounds. They're hospitable in the past. They're hospitable in the future. They're full of meaningless pleasantries. When something needs doing in the present they point to their own misfortune. You can recognize a fake friend who's all talk on these four grounds.

You can recognize a fake friend who's a flatterer on four grounds. They support you equally in doing bad and doing good. They praise you to your face, and put you down behind your back. You can recognize a fake friend who's a flatterer on these four grounds.

You can recognize a fake friend who's a spender on four grounds. They accompany you when drinking, roaming the streets at night, frequenting festivals, and gambling. You can recognize a fake friend who's a spender on these four grounds."

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

"One friend is all take,  
another all talk;  
one's just a flatterer,  
and one's a friend who spends.

An astute person understands  
these four enemies for what they are  
and keeps them at a distance,  
as they'd shun a risky road."

## **12. Good-Hearted Friends**

"Householder's son, you should recognize these four good-hearted friends: the helper, the friend in good times and bad, the counselor, and the one who's compassionate.

You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's a helper on four grounds. They guard you when you're negligent. They guard your property when you're negligent. They keep you safe in times of danger. When something needs doing, they supply you with twice the money you need. You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's a helper on these four grounds.

You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's the same in good times and bad on four grounds. They tell you secrets. They keep your secrets. They don't abandon you in times of trouble. They'd even give their life for you. You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's the same in good times and bad on these four grounds.

You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's a counselor on four grounds. They keep you from doing bad. They support you in doing good. They teach you what you do not know. They explain the path to heaven. You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's a counselor on these four grounds.

You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's compassionate on four grounds. They don't delight in your misfortune. They delight in your good fortune. They keep others from criticizing you. They encourage praise of you. You can recognize a good-hearted friend who's compassionate on these four grounds.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“A friend who's a helper,  
one the same in both pleasure and pain,  
a friend of good counsel,  
and one of compassion;

an astute person understands  
these four friends for what they are  
and carefully looks after them,  
like a mother the child at her breast.

The astute and virtuous  
shine like a burning flame.

They pick up riches as bees  
roaming round pick up pollen.  
And their riches proceed to grow,  
like an ant-hill piling up.

In gathering wealth like this,  
a householder does enough for their family.  
And they'd hold on to friends  
by dividing their wealth in four.

One portion is to enjoy.  
Two parts invest in work.  
And the fourth should be kept  
for times of trouble.”

### **13. Covering the Six Quarters**

“And how, householder’s son, does a noble disciple cover the six quarters? These six quarters should be recognized: parents as the east, teachers as the south, partner and children as the west, friends and colleagues as the north, bondservants and workers as beneath, and ascetics and brahmins as above.

A child should serve their parents as the eastern quarter in five ways, thinking: ‘I will support those who supported me. I’ll do my duty for them. I’ll maintain the family traditions. I’ll take care of the inheritance. When they have passed away, I’ll make an offering on their behalf.’ Parents served by the children in these five ways show compassion to them in five ways. They keep them from doing bad. They support them in doing good. They train them in a profession. They transfer the inheritance in good time. Parents served by their children in these five ways show compassion to them in these five ways. And that’s how the eastern quarter is covered, kept safe and free of peril.

A student should serve their teacher as the southern quarter in five ways: by rising for them, by serving them, by listening well, by looking after them, and by carefully learning their profession. Teachers served by their students in these five ways show compassion to them in five ways. They make sure they're well trained and well educated. They clearly explain all the knowledge of the profession. They introduce them to their friends and colleagues. They provide protection in every region. Teachers served by their students in these five ways show compassion to them in these five ways. And that's how the southern quarter is covered, kept safe and free of peril.

A husband should serve his wife as the western quarter in five ways: by treating her with honor, by not looking down on her, by not being unfaithful, by relinquishing sovereignty to her, and by presenting her with adornments. A wife served by her husband in these five ways shows compassion to him in five ways. She's well-organized in her work. She manages the domestic help. She's not unfaithful. She protects his earnings. She's expert and tireless in all her duties. A wife served by her husband in these five ways shows compassion to him in these five ways. And that's how the western quarter is covered, kept safe and free of peril.

A respectable person should serve their friends and colleagues as the northern quarter in five ways: giving, kind speech, taking care, equality, and not using tricky words. Friends and colleagues served by a respectable person in these five ways show compassion to them in five ways. They guard them when they're negligent. They guard their property when they're negligent. They keep them safe in times of danger. They don't abandon them in times of trouble. They honor their descendants. Friends and colleagues served by a respectable person in these five ways show compassion to them in these five ways. And that's how the northern quarter is covered, kept safe and free of peril.

A master should serve their bondservants and workers as the lower quarter in five ways: by organizing work according to ability, by paying food and wages, by

nursing them when sick, by sharing special treats, and by giving time off work. Bondservants and workers served by a master in these five ways show compassion to them in five ways. They get up first, and go to bed last. They don't steal. They do their work well. And they promote a good reputation. Bondservants and workers served by a master in these five ways show compassion to them in these five ways. And that's how the lower quarter is covered, kept safe and free of peril.

A respectable person should serve ascetics and brahmins as the upper quarter in five ways: by loving deeds of body, speech, and mind, by not turning them away at the gate, and by providing them with material needs. Ascetics and brahmins served by a respectable person in these five ways show compassion to them in five ways. They keep them from doing bad. They support them in doing good. They think of them with kindly thoughts. They teach them what they do not know. They clarify what they've already learned. They explain the path to heaven. Ascetics and brahmins served by a respectable person in these five ways show compassion to them in these five ways. And that's how the upper quarter is covered, kept safe and free of peril.”

That is what the Buddha said. Then the Holy One, the Teacher, went on to say:

“Parents are the east,  
teachers the south,  
wife and child the west,  
friends and colleagues the north,  
  
servants and workers below,  
and ascetics and brahmins above.  
By honoring these quarters  
a householder does enough for their family.

The astute and the virtuous,  
the gentle and the articulate,  
the humble and the kind:

they're who win glory.

The diligent, not lazy,  
those not disturbed by troubles,  
those consistent in conduct, the intelligent:  
they're who win glory.

The inclusive, the makers of friends,  
the kind, those rid of stinginess,  
those who lead, train, and persuade:  
they're who win glory.

Giving and kindly words,  
taking care here,  
and treating equally in worldly conditions,  
as befits them in each case;  
these ways of being inclusive in the world  
are like a moving chariot's linch-pin.

If there were no such ways of being inclusive,  
neither mother nor father  
would be respected and honored  
for what they've done for their children.

But since these ways of being inclusive do exist,  
the astute do regard them well,  
so they achieve greatness  
and are praised.”

When this was said, Sigāḷaka the householder's son said to the Buddha: “Excellent, sir! Excellent! As if he was righting the overturned, or revealing the hidden, or pointing out the path to the lost, or lighting a lamp in the dark so people with good eyes can see what's there, the Buddha has made the teaching clear in many ways. I

go for refuge to the Buddha, to the teaching, and to the mendicant Saṅgha. From this day forth, may the Buddha remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.”

## 32. Āṭānāṭiya Sutta

The Āṭānāṭiya Protection

### 1. The First Recitation Section

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Rājagaha, on the Vulture’s Peak Mountain. Then, late at night, the Four Great Kings—with large armies of spirits, fairies, goblins, and dragons—set guards, troops, and wards at the four quarters and then, lighting up the entire Vulture’s Peak with their beauty, went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. Before sitting down to one side, some spirits bowed, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their joined palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent.

Seated to one side, the Great King Vessavaṇa said to the Buddha: “Sir, some high spirits have confidence in the Buddha, some do not. Some middling spirits have confidence in the Buddha, some do not. Some low spirits have confidence in the Buddha, some do not. But mostly the spirits don’t have confidence in the Buddha. Why is that? Because the Buddha teaches them to refrain from killing living creatures, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and drinking alcohol. But mostly they don’t refrain from such things. They don’t like that or approve of it. Sir, there are disciples of the Buddha who frequent remote lodgings in the wilderness and the forest that are quiet and still, far from the madding crowd, remote from human settlements, and appropriate for retreat. There dwell high spirits who have no confidence in the Buddha’s dispensation. To give them confidence, may the Buddha please learn the Āṭānāṭiya protection for the guarding, protection, safety, and comfort of the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.” The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had consented, on that occasion Great King Vessavaṇa recited the Āṭānāṭiya protection.

“Hail Vipassī,  
the glorious seer!  
Hail Sikhī,  
compassionate for all beings!

Hail Vesabhū,  
cleansed and austere!  
Hail Kakusandha,  
crusher of Māra’s army!

Hail Koṇāgamana,  
the accomplished brahmin!  
Hail Kassapa,  
freed in every way!

Hail Aṅgīrasa,  
the glorious Sakyan!  
He taught this Dhamma  
that dispels all suffering.

Those in the world who are extinguished,  
truly discerning,  
not backbiters; such people  
being great of heart and rid of naivety,

revere that Gotama;  
he who is helpful to gods and humans,  
accomplished in knowledge and conduct,  
great of heart and rid of naivety.

Where rises the sun—  
Aditi’s child, the great circle,  
who in his rising

dispels the night,  
and of whom, when sun has risen,  
it's said to be the day—

there is a deep lake  
an ocean, where water flows.  
So they know that in that place  
there is an ocean where waters flow.

From here that is the eastern quarter,  
so the people say.  
That quarter is warded  
by a great king, glorious,

the lord of the fairies;  
his name is Dhataratṭha.  
He delights in song and dance,  
esteemed by the fairies.

And he has many mighty sons  
all of one name, so I've heard.  
Eighty, and ten, and one—  
all of them named Inda.

After seeing the Awakened One,  
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun,  
they revere him from afar,  
the one great of heart and rid of naivety.

Homage to you, O thoroughbred!  
Homage to you, O highest of persons!  
You've seen us with clarity and kindness.  
The non-humans bow to you.

We've been asked many a time,  
'Do you bow to Gotama the victor?'

And so we ought to declare:  
'We bow to Gotama the victor,  
accomplished in knowledge and conduct!  
We bow to Gotama the awakened!'

It's where the departed go, they say,  
who are dividers and backbiters,  
killers and hunters,  
bandits and frauds.

From here that is the southern quarter,  
so the people say.  
That quarter is warded  
by a great king, glorious,

the lord of the goblins;  
his name is Virūḷha.  
He delights in song and dance,  
esteemed by the goblins.

And he has many mighty sons  
all of one name, so I've heard.  
Eighty, and ten, and one—  
all of them named Inda.

After seeing the Awakened One,  
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun,  
they revere him from afar,  
the one great of heart and rid of naivety.

Homage to you, O thoroughbred!  
Homage to you, O highest of persons!  
You've seen us with clarity and kindness.  
The non-humans bow to you.  
We've been asked many a time,  
'Do you bow to Gotama the victor?'

And so we ought to declare:  
'We bow to Gotama the victor,  
accomplished in knowledge and conduct!  
We bow to Gotama the awakened!'

Where sets the sun—  
Aditi's child, the great circle,  
who in his setting  
closes the day,  
and of whom, when sun has set,  
it's said to be the night—

there is a deep lake  
an ocean, where water flows.  
So they know that in that place  
there is an ocean where waters flow.

From here that is the western quarter,  
so the people say.  
That quarter is warded  
by a great king, glorious,

the lord of the dragons;  
his name is Virūpakkha.  
He delights in song and dance,  
esteemed by the dragons.

And he has many mighty sons  
all of one name, so I've heard.  
Eighty, and ten, and one—  
all of them named Inda.

After seeing the Awakened One,  
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun,  
they revere him from afar,  
the one great of heart and rid of naivety.

Homage to you, O thoroughbred!  
Homage to you, O highest of persons!  
You've seen us with clarity and kindness.  
The non-humans bow to you.  
We've been asked many a time,  
'Do you bow to Gotama the victor?'

And so we ought to declare:  
'We bow to Gotama the victor,  
accomplished in knowledge and conduct!  
We bow to Gotama the awakened!'

Where lovely Uttarakuru is,  
and the beautiful Mount Meru,  
humans born there  
are unselfish, not possessive.

They do not sow the seed,  
nor do they draw the plough.  
The rice eaten by people  
ripens in untilled soil,

free of powder or husk, pure,  
fragrant, with only the rice-grain.  
They eat that food  
after cooking it in a 'parrot's beak'.

Having prepared a cow with hooves uncloven,  
they're drawn about from place to place.  
Having prepared a beast with hooves uncloven,  
they're drawn about from place to place.

Having prepared a woman-drawn carriage,  
they're drawn about from place to place.  
Having prepared a man-drawn carriage,  
they're drawn about from place to place.

Having prepared a girl-drawn carriage,  
they're drawn about from place to place.  
Having prepared a boy-drawn carriage,  
they're drawn about from place to place.

Having ascended their vehicle,  
that king's servants  
tour about in every quarter,

provided with vehicles,  
elephant, horse, and divine.  
And there are mansions and palanquins  
for that great and glorious king.

And he has cities, too,  
well-built in the sky:  
Āṭānāṭā, Kusināṭā, Parakusināṭā,  
Nāṭasuriyā, and Parakusiṭānāṭā.

To the north is Kapīvanta,  
and Jonogha lies beyond.  
And there's Navanavutiya, Ambara-ambaravatiya,  
and the royal capital named Ālakamandā.

The Great King Kureva, dear sir,  
has a capital named Visāṇā,  
which is why the great king  
is called 'Vessavaṇa'.

These each individually inform the King:  
Tatolā, Tattalā, Tatotalā,  
Ojasi, Tejasi, Tatojasi,  
Sūra, Rājā, Ariṭṭha, and Nemi.

There is a lake there too named Dharaṇī,  
from whence the clouds rain down,  
and the rains disperse.  
There is a hall there too named Bhagalavatī,

where the spirits frequent.  
There the trees are ever in fruit,  
with many different flocks of birds.  
Peacocks and herons call out there,  
and the sweet cuckoos too.

One bird cries out 'Live, live!',  
another 'Lift up your heart!'  
There are cocks and kookaburras,  
and in the wood the lotus-crane.

The parrots and mynah cry out there,

and the 'little stick-boy' birds.  
Kuvera's pond of rushes  
is lovely all the time.

From here that is the northern quarter,  
so the people say.  
That quarter is warded  
by a great king, glorious,

the lord of spirits;  
his name is 'Kuvera'.  
He delights in song and dance,  
esteemed by the spirits.

And he has many mighty sons  
all of one name, so I've heard.  
Eighty, and ten, and one—  
all of them named Inda.

After seeing the Awakened One,  
the Buddha, Kinsman of the Sun,  
they revere him from afar,  
the one great of heart and rid of naivety.

Homage to you, O thoroughbred!  
Homage to you, O highest of persons!  
You've seen us with clarity and kindness.  
The non-humans bow to you.  
We've been asked many a time,  
'Do you bow to Gotama the victor?'

And so we ought to declare:  
'We bow to Gotama the victor,

accomplished in knowledge and conduct!  
We bow to Gotama the awakened!’”

This, dear sir, is the Āṭānāṭiya protection for the guarding, protection, safety, and comfort of the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

The monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen should learn this Āṭānāṭiya protection well and completely memorize it. If anyone who does so is approached while walking, standing, sitting, or lying down by any non-human being with malicious intent—including males, females, boys, girls, ministers, counselors, and servants among the spirits, fairies, goblins, and dragons— that non-human will receive no homage or respect in any village or town. And they will receive no ground or dwelling in my capital of Ālakamandā. Nor will they get to go to the conference of the spirits. In addition, the non-humans would not give or take them in marriage. They’d heap personal abuse on them, drop an empty bowl on their head, and even split their head into seven pieces!

For there are, dear sir, non-humans who are fierce, cruel, and violent. They don’t obey the Great Kings or their men or their men’s men. They’re said to be rebelling against the Great Kings. They’re just like the bandits in the king of Magadha’s realm who don’t obey the king, his men, or his men’s men, and are said to be rebelling against the king. If any non-human being with malicious intent—including males, females, boys, girls, ministers, counselors, and servants among the spirits, fairies, goblins, and dragons—approaches a monk, nun, layman, or laywoman while walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, one ought to yell, cry, and scream to the spirits, great spirits, generals, great generals: ‘This spirit’s got me! This spirit’s entered me! This spirit’s annoying me! This spirit’s harassing me! This spirit’s hurting me! This spirit’s harming me! This spirit won’t let me go!’

To what spirits, great spirits, generals, great generals?

‘Inda, Soma, and Varuṇa,  
Bhāradvāja, Pajāpati,

Candana and Kāmaseṭṭha,  
Kinnughaṇḍu and Nighaṇḍu,

Panāda and Opamañña,  
and Mātali, the god’s charioteer.  
Cittasena the fairy,  
and the kings Nala and Janesabha,

Sātāgira, Hemavata,  
Puṇṇaka, Karatiya, and Guḷa;  
Sivaka and Mucalinda,  
Vessāmitta, Yugandhara,

Gopāla, Supparodha,  
Hiri, Netti, and Mandiya;  
Pañcālacaṇḍa, Āḷavaka,  
Pajjunna, Sumana, Sumukha,  
Dadhimukha, Maṇi, Māṇivara, Dīgha,  
together with Serīsaka.’

This, dear sir, is the Āṭānāṭiya protection for the guarding, protection, safety, and comfort of the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen. Well, now, dear sir, I must go. I have many duties, and much to do.” “Please, Great Kings, go at your convenience.”

Then the Four Great Kings got up from their seats, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right side, before vanishing right there. And before the other spirits present vanished, some bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right side, some exchanged greetings and polite conversation, some held up their joined palms toward the Buddha, some announced their name and clan, while some kept silent.

The first recitation section is finished.

## 2. The Second Recitation Section

Then, when the night had passed, the Buddha told the mendicants all that had happened, repeating all the verses spoken. Then he added:

“Mendicants, learn the Āṭānāṭiya protection! Memorize the Āṭānāṭiya protection! Remember the Āṭānāṭiya protection! The Āṭānāṭiya protection is beneficial, and is for the guarding, protection, safety, and comfort of the monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.”

That is what the Buddha said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what the Buddha said.

## 33. Saṅgīti Sutta

Reciting in Concert

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was wandering in the land of the Mallians together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants when he arrived at a Mallian town named Pāvā. There he stayed in Cunda the smith's mango grove.

Now at that time a new town hall named Ubbhaṭaka had recently been constructed for the Mallians of Pāvā. It had not yet been occupied by an ascetic or brahmin or any person at all. The Mallians of Pāvā also heard that the Buddha had arrived and was staying in Cunda's mango grove. Then they went up to the Buddha, bowed, sat down to one side, and said to him: "Sir, a new town hall named Ubbhaṭaka has recently been constructed for the Mallians of Pāvā. It has not yet been occupied by an ascetic or brahmin or any person at all. May the Buddha be the first to use it, and only then will the Mallians of Pāvā use it. That would be for the lasting welfare and happiness of the Mallians of Pāvā." The Buddha consented in silence.

Then, knowing that the Buddha had accepted, the Mallians got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right. Then they went to the new town hall, where they spread carpets all over, prepared seats, set up a water jar, and placed a lamp. Then they went back to the Buddha, bowed, stood to one side, and told him of their preparations, saying: "Please, sir, come at your convenience."

Then the Buddha robed up and, taking his bowl and robe, went to the new town hall together with the Saṅgha of mendicants. Having washed his feet he entered the town hall and sat against the central column facing east. The Saṅgha of mendicants also washed their feet, entered the town hall, and sat against the west wall facing east, with the Buddha right in front of them. The Mallians of Pāvā also washed their feet, entered the town hall, and sat against the east wall facing west, with the Buddha right in front of them. The Buddha spent most of the night educating, encouraging, firing up, and inspiring the Mallians with a Dhamma talk. Then he

dismissed them: “The night is getting late, Vāsetṭhas. Please go at your convenience.” “Yes, sir,” replied the Mallians. They got up from their seat, bowed, and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on their right, before leaving.

Soon after they left, the Buddha looked around the Saṅgha of monks, who were so very silent. He addressed Venerable Sāriputta: “Sāriputta, the Saṅgha of mendicants is rid of dullness and drowsiness. Give them some Dhamma talk as you feel inspired. My back is sore, I’ll stretch it.” “Yes, sir,” Sāriputta replied.

And then the Buddha spread out his outer robe folded in four and lay down in the lion’s posture—on the right side, placing one foot on top of the other—mindful and aware, and focused on the time of getting up.

Now at that time the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta had recently passed away at Pāvā. With his passing the Jain ascetics split, dividing into two factions, arguing, quarreling, and fighting, continually wounding each other with barbed words: “You don’t understand this teaching and training. I understand this teaching and training. What, you understand this teaching and training? You’re practicing wrong. I’m practicing right. I stay on topic, you don’t. You said last what you should have said first. You said first what you should have said last. What you’ve thought so much about has been disproved. Your doctrine is refuted. Go on, save your doctrine! You’re trapped; get yourself out of this—if you can!” You’d think there was nothing but slaughter going on among the Jain ascetics. And the Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta’s white-clothed lay disciples were disillusioned, dismayed, and disappointed in the Jain ascetics. They were equally disappointed with a teaching and training so poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha, with broken monument and without a refuge.

Then Sāriputta told the mendicants about these things. He went on to say: “That’s what happens, reverends, when a teaching and training is poorly explained and poorly propounded, not emancipating, not leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is not a fully awakened Buddha. But this teaching is well explained

and well propounded to us by the Blessed One, emancipating, leading to peace, proclaimed by someone who is a fully awakened Buddha. You should all recite this in concert, without disputing, so that this spiritual path may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.

And what is that teaching?

### **1. Ones**

There are teachings grouped by one that have been rightly explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. You should all recite these in concert, without disputing, so that this spiritual path may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans. What are the teachings grouped by one? ‘All sentient beings are sustained by food.’ ‘All sentient beings are sustained by conditions.’ These are the teachings grouped by one that have been rightly explained by the Blessed One, who knows and sees, the perfected one, the fully awakened Buddha. You should all recite these in concert, without disputing, so that this spiritual path may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.

### **2. Twos**

There are teachings grouped by two that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by two?

Name and form.

Ignorance and craving to be reborn.

Views about being reborn and views about not being reborn.

Lack of conscience and prudence.

Conscience and prudence.

Being hard to correct and having bad friends.

Being easy to correct and having good friends.

Skill in offenses and skill in rehabilitation from offenses.

Skill in meditative attainments and skill in emerging from those attainments.

Skill in the elements and skill in attention.

Skill in the sense fields and skill in dependent origination.

Skill in what is possible and skill in what is impossible.

Integrity and scrupulousness.

Patience and gentleness.

Friendliness and hospitality.

Harmlessness and purity.

Lack of mindfulness and lack of situational awareness.

Mindfulness and situational awareness.

Not guarding the sense doors and eating too much.

Guarding the sense doors and moderation in eating.

The power of reflection and the power of development.

The power of mindfulness and the power of immersion.

Serenity and discernment.

The basis of serenity and the basis of exertion.

Making an effort, and not being scattered.

Failure in ethics and failure in view.

Accomplishment in ethics and accomplishment in view.

Purification of ethics and purification of view.

Purification of view and making an effort in line with that view.

Inspiration, and making a suitable effort when inspired by inspiring places.

To never be content with skillful qualities, and to never stop trying.

Knowledge and freedom.

Knowledge of ending and knowledge of non-arising.

These are the teachings grouped by two that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

### 3. Threes

There are teachings grouped by three that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by three?

Three unskillful roots: greed, hate, and delusion.

Three skillful roots: non-greed, non-hate, and non-delusion.

Three ways of performing bad conduct: by body, speech, and mind.

Three ways of performing good conduct: by body, speech, and mind.

Three unskillful thoughts: sensuality, malice, and cruelty.

Three skillful thoughts: renunciation, love, and kindness.

Three unskillful intentions: sensuality, malice, and cruelty.

Three skillful intentions: renunciation, love, and kindness.

Three unskillful perceptions: sensuality, malice, and cruelty.

Three skillful perceptions: renunciation, love, and kindness.

Three unskillful elements: sensuality, malice, and cruelty.

Three skillful elements: renunciation, love, and kindness.

Another three elements: sensuality, form, and formlessness.

Another three elements: form, formlessness, and cessation.

Another three elements: lower, middle, and higher.

Three cravings: for sensual pleasures, for continued existence, and to terminate existence.

Another three cravings: sensuality, form, and formlessness.

Another three cravings: form, formlessness, and cessation.

Three fetters: identity view, doubt, and misapprehension of precepts and observances.

Three defilements: sensuality, desire for continued existence, and ignorance.

Three realms of existence: sensual, form, and formless.

Three searches: for sensual pleasures, for continued existence, and for a spiritual path.

Three kinds of discrimination: 'I'm better', 'I'm equal', and 'I'm worse'.

Three periods: past, future, and present.

Three extremes: identity, the origin of identity, and the cessation of identity.

Three feelings: pleasure, pain, and neutral.

Three forms of suffering: the suffering inherent in painful feeling, the suffering inherent in conditions, and the suffering inherent in perishing.

Three heaps: inevitability regarding the wrong path, inevitability regarding the right path, and lack of inevitability.

Three darkneses: one is doubtful, uncertain, undecided, and lacking confidence about the past, future, and present.

Three things a Realized One need not hide. The Realized One's behavior by way of body, speech, and mind is pure. He has no misconduct in these three ways that need be hidden, thinking: 'May others not know this of me.'

Three possessions: greed, hate, and delusion.

Three fires: greed, hate, and delusion.

Another three fires: a fire for those worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, a fire for householders, and a fire for those worthy of a teacher's offering.

A threefold classification of the physical: visible and resistant, invisible and resistant, and invisible and non-resistant.

Three choices: good choices, bad choices, and imperturbable choices.

Three individuals: a trainee, an adept, and one who is neither a trainee nor an adept.

Three seniors: a senior by birth, a senior in the teaching, and a senior by convention.

Three grounds for making merit: giving, ethical conduct, and meditation.

Three grounds for accusations: what is seen, heard, and suspected.

Three kinds of sensual rebirth. There are sentient beings who desire what is present. They fall under the sway of presently arisen sensual pleasures. Namely, humans, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. This is the first kind of sensual rebirth. There are sentient beings who desire to create. Having repeatedly

created, they fall under the sway of sensual pleasures. Namely, the Gods Who Love to Create. This is the second kind of sensual rebirth. There are sentient beings who desire what is created by others. They fall under the sway of sensual pleasures created by others. Namely, the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others. This is the third kind of sensual rebirth.

Three kinds of pleasant rebirth. There are sentient beings who, having repeatedly given rise to it, dwell in pleasure. Namely, the gods of Brahmā's Group. This is the first pleasant rebirth. There are sentient beings who are drenched, steeped, filled, and soaked with pleasure. Every so often they feel inspired to exclaim: 'Oh, what bliss! Oh, what bliss!' Namely, the gods of streaming radiance. This is the second pleasant rebirth. There are sentient beings who are drenched, steeped, filled, and soaked with pleasure. Since they're truly content, they experience pleasure. Namely, the gods replete with glory. This is the third pleasant rebirth.

Three kinds of wisdom: the wisdom of a trainee, the wisdom of an adept, and the wisdom of one who is neither a trainee nor an adept.

Another three kinds of wisdom: wisdom produced by reflection, learning, and meditation.

Three weapons: learning, seclusion, and wisdom.

Three faculties: the faculty of understanding that one's enlightenment is imminent, the faculty of enlightenment, and the faculty of one who is enlightened.

Three eyes: the eye of the flesh, the eye of clairvoyance, and the eye of wisdom.

Three trainings: in higher ethics, higher mind, and higher wisdom.

Three kinds of development: the development of physical endurance, the development of the mind, and the development of wisdom.

Three unsurpassable things: unsurpassable seeing, practice, and freedom.

Three kinds of immersion. Immersion with placing the mind and keeping it connected. Immersion without placing the mind, but just keeping it connected. Immersion without placing the mind or keeping it connected.

Another three kinds of immersion: emptiness, signless, and undirected.

Three purities: purity of body, speech, and mind.

Three kinds of sagacity: sagacity of body, speech, and mind.

Three skills: skill in progress, skill in regress, and skill in means.

Three vanities: the vanity of health, the vanity of youth, and the vanity of life.

Three ways of putting something in charge: putting oneself, the world, or the teaching in charge.

Three topics of discussion. You might discuss the past: 'That is how it was in the past.' You might discuss the future: 'That is how it will be in the future.' Or you might discuss the present: 'This is how it is at present.'

Three knowledges: recollection of past lives, knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings, and knowledge of the ending of defilements.

Three meditative abidings: the meditation of the gods, the meditation of Brahmā, and the meditation of the noble ones.

Three demonstrations: a demonstration of psychic power, a demonstration of revealing, and an instructional demonstration.

These are the teachings grouped by three that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

#### **4. Fours**

There are teachings grouped by four that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by four?

Four kinds of mindfulness meditation. It's when a mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world.

Four right efforts. A mendicant generates enthusiasm, tries, makes an effort, exerts the mind, and strives so that bad, unskillful qualities don't arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen are given up. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities arise. They generate enthusiasm, try, make an effort, exert the mind, and strive so that skillful qualities that have arisen remain, are not lost, but increase, mature, and are completed by development.

Four bases of psychic power. A mendicant develops the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to enthusiasm, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to higher mind, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to energy, and active effort. They develop the basis for psychic power that has immersion due to inquiry, and active effort.

Four absorptions. A mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they

enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' Giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness.

Four ways of developing immersion further. There is a way of developing immersion further that leads to blissful meditation in the present life. There is a way of developing immersion further that leads to gaining knowledge and vision. There is a way of developing immersion further that leads to mindfulness and awareness. There is a way of developing immersion further that leads to the ending of defilements.

And what is the way of developing immersion further that leads to blissful meditation in the present life? It's when a mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption ... second absorption ... fourth absorption. This is the way of developing immersion further that leads to blissful meditation in the present life.

And what is the way of developing immersion further that leads to gaining knowledge and vision? A mendicant focuses on the perception of light, concentrating on the perception of day regardless of whether it is night or day. And so, with an open and unenveloped heart, they develop a mind that's full of radiance. This is the way of developing immersion further that leads to gaining knowledge and vision.

And what is the way of developing immersion further that leads to mindfulness and awareness? A mendicant knows feelings as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. They know perceptions as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. They know thoughts as they arise, as they remain, and as they go away. This

is the way of developing immersion further that leads to mindfulness and awareness.

An what is the way of developing immersion further that leads to the ending of defilements? A mendicant meditates observing rise and fall in the five grasping aggregates. ‘Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the ending of form. Such are feelings ... perceptions ... choices ... consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the ending of consciousness.’ This is the way of developing immersion further that leads to the ending of defilements.

Four immeasurables. A mendicant meditates spreading a heart full of love to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of love to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will. They meditate spreading a heart full of compassion ... rejoicing ... equanimity to one direction, and to the second, and to the third, and to the fourth. In the same way above, below, across, everywhere, all around, they spread a heart full of equanimity to the whole world—abundant, expansive, limitless, free of enmity and ill will.

Four formless states. A mendicant, going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite’, enters and remains in the dimension of infinite space. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite’, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception.

Four supports. After reflection, a mendicant uses some things, endures some things, avoids some things, and gets rid of some things.

Four noble traditions. A mendicant is content with any kind of robe, and praises such contentment. They don't try to get hold of a robe in an improper way. They don't get upset if they don't get a robe. And if they do get a robe, they use it untied, unstupefied, unattached, seeing the drawback, and understanding the escape. And on account of that they don't glorify themselves or put others down. A mendicant who is expert, tireless, aware, and mindful in this is said to stand in the ancient, original noble tradition.

Furthermore, a mendicant is content with any kind of alms-food ...

Furthermore, a mendicant is content with any kind of lodgings ...

Furthermore, a mendicant enjoys giving up and loves to give up. They enjoy meditation and love to meditate. But they don't glorify themselves or put down others on account of their love for giving up and meditation. A mendicant who is expert, tireless, aware, and mindful in this is said to stand in the ancient, original noble tradition.

Four efforts. The efforts to restrain, to give up, to develop, and to preserve. And what is the effort to restrain? When a mendicant sees a sight with their eyes, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of sight were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of desire and aversion would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of sight, and achieving its restraint. When they hear a sound with their ears ... When they smell an odor with their nose ... When they taste a flavor with their tongue ... When they feel a touch with their body ... When they know a thought with their mind, they don't get caught up in the features and details. If the faculty of mind were left unrestrained, bad unskillful qualities of desire and aversion would become overwhelming. For this reason, they practice restraint, protecting the faculty of mind, and achieving its restraint. This is called the effort to restrain.

And what is the effort to give up? It's when a mendicant doesn't tolerate a sensual, malicious, or cruel thought that has arisen, but gives it up, gets rid of it, eliminates

it, and exterminates it. They don't tolerate any bad, unskillful qualities that have arisen, but give them up, get rid of them, eliminate them, and exterminate them. This is called the effort to give up.

And what is the effort to develop? It's when a mendicant develops the awakening factors of mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity, which rely on seclusion, fading away, and cessation, and ripen as letting go. This is called the effort to develop.

And what is the effort to preserve? It's when a mendicant preserves a meditation subject that's a fine basis of immersion: the perception of a skeleton, a worm-infested corpse, a livid corpse, a split open corpse, or a bloated corpse. This is called the effort to preserve.

Four knowledges: knowledge of the present phenomena, knowledge of what follows, knowledge of others' minds, and conventional knowledge.

Another four knowledges: knowledge about suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.

Four factors of stream-entry: associating with good people, listening to the true teaching, proper attention, and practicing in line with the teaching.

Four factors of a stream-enterer. A noble disciple has experiential confidence in the Buddha: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' They have experiential confidence in the teaching: 'The teaching is well explained by the Buddha—realizable in this very life, immediately effective, inviting inspection, relevant, so that sensible people can know it for themselves.' They have experiential confidence in the Saṅgha: 'The Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is practicing the way that's good, straightforward, methodical, and proper. It consists of the four pairs, the eight individuals. This Saṅgha of the Buddha's disciples is

worthy of offerings dedicated to the gods, worthy of hospitality, worthy of a teacher's offering, and worthy of greeting with joined palms. It is the supreme field of merit for the world.' And a noble disciple's ethical conduct is loved by the noble ones, uncorrupted, unflawed, unblemished, untainted, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion.

Four fruits of the ascetic life: stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection.

Four elements: earth, water, fire, and air.

Four foods: solid food, whether coarse or fine; contact is the second, mental intention the third, and consciousness the fourth.

Four bases for consciousness to remain. As long as consciousness remains, it remains involved with form, supported by form, founded on form. And with a sprinkle of relishing, it grows, increases, and matures. Or consciousness remains involved with feeling ... Or consciousness remains involved with perception ... Or as long as consciousness remains, it remains involved with choices, supported by choices, grounded on choices. And with a sprinkle of relishing, it grows, increases, and matures.

Four prejudices: making decisions prejudiced by favoritism, hostility, stupidity, and cowardice.

Four things that give rise to craving. Craving arises in a mendicant for the sake of robes, alms-food, lodgings, or rebirth in this or that state.

Four ways of practice: painful practice with slow insight, painful practice with swift insight, pleasant practice with slow insight, and pleasant practice with swift insight.

Another four ways of practice: impatient practice, patient practice, taming practice, and calming practice.

Four basic principles: contentment, good will, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

Four ways of taking up practices. There is a way of taking up practices that is painful now and results in future pain. There is a way of taking up practices that is painful now but results in future pleasure. There is a way of taking up practices that is pleasant now but results in future pain. There is a way of taking up practices that is pleasant now and results in future pleasure.

Four spectrums of the teaching: ethics, immersion, wisdom, and freedom.

Four powers: energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

Four foundations: wisdom, truth, generosity, and peace.

Four ways of answering questions. There is a question that should be answered definitively. There is a question that should be answered analytically. There is a question that should be answered with a counter-question. There is a question that should be set aside.

Four deeds. There are deeds that are dark with dark result. There are deeds that are bright with bright result. There are deeds that are dark and bright with dark and bright result. There are neither dark nor bright deeds with neither dark nor bright results, which lead to the end of deeds.

Four things to be realized. Past lives are to be realized through recollection. The passing away and rebirth of sentient beings is to be realized through vision. The eight liberations are to be realized through direct meditative experience. The ending of defilements is to be realized through wisdom.

Four floods: sensuality, desire for rebirth, views, and ignorance.

Four bonds: sensuality, desire for rebirth, views, and ignorance.

Four detachments: detachment from the bonds of sensuality, desire for rebirth, views, and ignorance.

Four ties: the personal ties to covetousness, ill will, precepts and observances, and the insistence that this is the only truth.

Four kinds of grasping: grasping at sensual pleasures, views, precepts and observances, and theories of a self.

Four kinds of reproduction: reproduction for creatures born from an egg, from a womb, from moisture, or spontaneously.

Four kinds of conception. Someone is unaware when conceived in their mother's womb, unaware as they remain there, and unaware as they emerge. This is the first kind of conception. Furthermore, someone is aware when conceived in their mother's womb, but unaware as they remain there, and unaware as they emerge. This is the second kind of conception. Furthermore, someone is aware when conceived in their mother's womb, aware as they remain there, but unaware as they emerge. This is the third kind of conception. Furthermore, someone is aware when conceived in their mother's womb, aware as they remain there, and aware as they emerge. This is the fourth kind of conception.

Four kinds of reincarnation. There is a reincarnation where only one's own intention is effective, not that of others. There is a reincarnation where only the intention of others is effective, not one's own. There is a reincarnation where both one's own and others' intentions are effective. There is a reincarnation where neither one's own nor others' intentions are effective.

Four ways of purifying a teacher's offering. There's an offering to a teacher that's purified by the giver, not the recipient. There's an offering to a teacher that's purified by the recipient, not the giver. There's an offering to a teacher that's

purified by neither the giver nor the recipient. There's an offering to a teacher that's purified by both the giver and the recipient.

Four ways of being inclusive: giving, kind speech, taking care, and equality.

Four ignoble expressions: speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical.

Four noble expressions: refraining from speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical.

Another four ignoble expressions: saying you've seen, heard, thought, or cognized something, but you haven't.

Another four noble expressions: saying you haven't seen, heard, thought, or cognized something, and you haven't.

Another four ignoble expressions: saying you haven't seen, heard, thought, or cognized something, and you have.

Another four noble expressions: saying you've seen, heard, thought, or cognized something, and you have.

Four persons. One person mortifies themselves, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves. One person mortifies others, committed to the practice of mortifying others. One person mortifies themselves and others, committed to the practice of mortifying themselves and others. One person doesn't mortify either themselves or others, committed to the practice of not mortifying themselves or others. They live without wishes in the present life, extinguished, cooled, experiencing bliss, having become holy in themselves.

Another four persons. One person practices to benefit themselves, but not others. One person practices to benefit others, but not themselves. One person practices to

benefit neither themselves nor others. One person practices to benefit both themselves and others.

Another four persons: the dark bound for darkness, the dark bound for light, the light bound for darkness, and the light bound for light.

Another four persons: the confirmed ascetic, the white lotus ascetic, the pink lotus ascetic, and the refined ascetic of ascetics.

These are the teachings grouped by four that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

The first recitation section is finished.

## **5. Fives**

There are teachings grouped by five that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by five?

Five aggregates: form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness.

Five grasping aggregates: form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness.

Five kinds of sensual stimulation. Sights known by the eye that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing. Sounds known by the ear ... Smells known by the nose ... Tastes known by the tongue ... Touches known by the body that are likable, desirable, agreeable, pleasant, sensual, and arousing.

Five destinations: hell, the animal realm, the ghost realm, humanity, and the gods.

Five kinds of stinginess: stinginess with dwellings, families, material possessions, praise, and the teachings.

Five hindrances: sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt.

Five lower fetters: identity view, doubt, misapprehension of precepts and observances, sensual desire, and ill will.

Five higher fetters: desire for rebirth in the realm of luminous form, desire for rebirth in the formless realm, conceit, restlessness, and ignorance.

Five precepts: refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and drinking alcohol, which is a basis for negligence.

Five things that can't be done. A mendicant with defilements ended can't deliberately take the life of a living creature, take something with the intention to steal, have sex, tell a deliberate lie, or store up goods for their own enjoyment like they did as a lay person.

Five losses: loss of relatives, wealth, health, ethics, and view. It is not because of loss of relatives, wealth, or health that sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. It is because of loss of ethics or view that sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

Five endowments: endowment with relatives, wealth, health, ethics, and view. It is not because of endowment with family, wealth, or health that sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. It is because of endowment with ethics or view that sentient beings, when their body breaks up, after death, are reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

Five drawbacks for an unethical person because of their failure in ethics. Firstly, an unethical person loses substantial wealth on account of negligence. This is the first drawback. Furthermore, an unethical person gets a bad reputation. This is the second drawback. Furthermore, an unethical person enters any kind of assembly

timid and embarrassed, whether it's an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third drawback. Furthermore, an unethical person dies feeling lost. This is the fourth drawback. Furthermore, an unethical person, when their body breaks up, after death, is reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell. This is the fifth drawback.

Five benefits for an ethical person because of their accomplishment in ethics. Firstly, an ethical person gains substantial wealth on account of diligence. This is the first benefit. Furthermore, an ethical person gets a good reputation. This is the second benefit. Furthermore, an ethical person enters any kind of assembly bold and self-assured, whether it's an assembly of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, or ascetics. This is the third benefit. Furthermore, an ethical person dies not feeling lost. This is the fourth benefit. Furthermore, when an ethical person's body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm. This is the fifth benefit.

A mendicant who wants to accuse another should first establish five things in themselves. I will speak at the right time, not at the wrong time. I will speak truthfully, not falsely. I will speak gently, not harshly. I will speak beneficially, not harmfully. I will speak lovingly, not from secret hate. A mendicant who wants to accuse another should first establish these five things in themselves.

Five factors that support meditation. A mendicant has faith in the Realized One's awakening: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' They are rarely ill or unwell. Their stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. They're not devious or deceitful. They reveal themselves honestly to the Teacher or sensible spiritual companions. They live with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and gaining skillful qualities. They're strong, firmly applied, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. They're wise. They have the wisdom of arising and

passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering.

Five pure abodes: Aviha, Atappa, the Gods Fair to See, the Fair Seeing Gods, and Akaniṭṭha.

Five non-returners: one who is extinguished in-between one life and the next, one who is extinguished upon landing, one who is extinguished without extra effort, one who is extinguished with extra effort, and one who heads upstream, going to the Akaniṭṭha realm.

Five kinds of emotional barrenness. Firstly, a mendicant has doubts about the Teacher. They're uncertain, undecided, and lacking confidence. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the first kind of emotional barrenness. Furthermore, a mendicant has doubts about the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... the training ... A mendicant is angry and upset with their spiritual companions, resentful and closed off. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth kind of emotional barrenness.

Five emotional shackles. Firstly, a mendicant isn't free of greed, desire, fondness, thirst, passion, and craving for sensual pleasures. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the first emotional shackle. Furthermore, a mendicant isn't free of greed for the body ... They're not free of greed for form ... They eat as much as they like until their bellies are full, then indulge in the pleasures of sleeping, lying, and drowsing ... They live the spiritual life hoping to be reborn in one of the orders of gods, thinking: 'By this precept or observance or mortification or spiritual life, may I become one of the gods!' This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth emotional shackle.

Five faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Another five faculties: pleasure, pain, happiness, sadness, and equanimity.

Another five faculties: faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

Five elements of escape. Take a case where a mendicant focuses on sensual pleasures, but their mind isn't eager, confident, steady, and decided about them. But when they focus on renunciation, their mind is eager, confident, steady, and decided about it. Their mind is in a good state, well developed, well risen, well freed, and well detached from sensual pleasures. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of sensual pleasures, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from sensual pleasures is explained.

Take another case where a mendicant focuses on ill will, but their mind isn't eager ... But when they focus on love, their mind is eager ... Their mind is in a good state ... well detached from ill will. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of ill will, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from ill will is explained.

Take another case where a mendicant focuses on harming, but their mind isn't eager ... But when they focus on compassion, their mind is eager ... Their mind is in a good state ... well detached from harming. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of harming, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from harming is explained.

Take another case where a mendicant focuses on form, but their mind isn't eager ... But when they focus on the formless, their mind is eager ... Their mind is in a good state ... well detached from forms. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of form, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from forms is explained.

Take a case where a mendicant focuses on identity, but their mind isn't eager, confident, steady, and decided about it. But when they focus on the ending of identity, their mind is eager, confident, steady, and decided about it. Their mind is in a good state, well developed, well risen, well freed, and well detached from identity. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of identity, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from identity is explained.

Five opportunities for freedom. Firstly, the Teacher or a respected spiritual companion teaches Dhamma to a mendicant. That mendicant feels inspired by the meaning and the teaching in that Dhamma, no matter how the Teacher or a respected spiritual companion teaches it. Feeling inspired, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. This is the first opportunity for freedom.

Furthermore, it may be that neither the Teacher nor a respected spiritual companion teaches Dhamma to a mendicant. But the mendicant teaches Dhamma in detail to others as they learned and memorized it. ... Or the mendicant recites the teaching in detail as they learned and memorized it. ... Or the mendicant thinks about and considers the teaching in their heart, examining it with the mind as they learned and memorized it. ... Or a meditation subject as a basis of immersion is properly grasped, attended, borne in mind, and comprehended with wisdom. That mendicant feels inspired by the meaning and the teaching in that Dhamma, no matter how a meditation subject as a basis of immersion is properly grasped, attended, borne in mind, and comprehended with wisdom. Feeling inspired, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. This is the fifth opportunity for freedom.

Five perceptions that ripen in freedom: the perception of impermanence, the perception of suffering in impermanence, the perception of not-self in suffering, the perception of giving up, and the perception of fading away.

These are the teachings grouped by five that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

## **6. Sixes**

There are teachings grouped by six that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by six?

Six interior sense fields: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six exterior sense fields: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts.

Six classes of consciousness: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind consciousness.

Six classes of contact: contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six classes of feeling: feeling born of contact through the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Six classes of perception: perceptions of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts.

Six bodies of intention: intention regarding sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts.

Six classes of craving: craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts.

Six kinds of disrespect. A mendicant lacks respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, the training, diligence, and hospitality.

Six kinds of respect. A mendicant has respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, the training, diligence, and hospitality.

Six neighborhoods near happiness. Seeing a sight with the eye, you linger in the neighborhood of a sight that's a basis for happiness. Hearing a sound with the ear ... Smelling an odor with the nose ... Tasting a flavor with the tongue ... Feeling a touch with the body ... Knowing a thought with the mind, you linger in the neighborhood of a thought that's a basis for happiness.

Six neighborhoods near sadness. Seeing a sight with the eye, you linger in the neighborhood of a sight that's a basis for sadness. ... Knowing a thought with the mind, you linger in the neighborhood of a thought that's a basis for sadness.

Six neighborhoods near equanimity. Seeing a sight with the eye, you linger in the neighborhood of a sight that's a basis for equanimity. ... Knowing a thought with the mind, you linger in the neighborhood of a thought that's a basis for equanimity.

Six warm-hearted qualities. Firstly, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with bodily kindness, both in public and in private. This warm-hearted quality makes for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.

Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with verbal kindness, both in public and in private. This too is a warm-hearted quality.

Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with mental kindness, both in public and in private. This too is a warm-hearted quality.

Furthermore, a mendicant shares without reservation any material possessions they have gained by legitimate means, even the food placed in the alms-bowl, using them in common with their ethical spiritual companions. This too is a warm-hearted quality.

Furthermore, a mendicant lives according to the precepts shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. Those precepts are uncorrupted, unflawed, unblemished, untainted, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion. This too is a warm-hearted quality.

They live according to the view shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. That view is noble and emancipating, and brings one who practices it to the complete ending of suffering. This warm-hearted quality too makes for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.

Six roots of quarrels. Firstly, a mendicant is angry and hostile. Such a mendicant lacks respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, and they don't fulfill the training. They create a dispute in the Saṅgha, which is for the hurt and unhappiness of the people, for the harm, hurt, and suffering of gods and humans. If you see such a root of quarrels in yourselves or others, you should try to give up this bad thing. If you don't see it, you should practice so that it doesn't come up in the future. That's how to give up this bad root of quarrels, so it doesn't come up in the future.

Furthermore, a mendicant is offensive and contemptuous ... They're envious and mean ... They're devious and deceitful ... They have wicked desires and wrong view ... They're attached to their own views, holding them tight, and refusing to let go. If you see such a root of quarrels in yourselves or others, you should try to give up this bad thing. If you don't see it, you should practice so that it doesn't come up in the future. That's how to give up this bad root of quarrels, so it doesn't come up in the future.

Six elements: earth, water, fire, air, space, and consciousness.

Six elements of escape. Take a mendicant who says: 'I've developed the heart's release by love. I've cultivated it, made it my vehicle and my basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Yet somehow ill will still occupies

my mind.’ They should be told, ‘Not so, venerable! Don’t say that. Don’t misrepresent the Buddha, for misrepresentation of the Buddha is not good. And the Buddha would not say that. It’s impossible, reverend, it cannot happen that the heart’s release by love has been developed and properly implemented, yet somehow ill will still occupies the mind. For it is the heart’s release by love that is the escape from ill will.’

Take another mendicant who says: ‘I’ve developed the heart’s release by compassion. I’ve cultivated it, made it my vehicle and my basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Yet somehow the thought of harming still occupies my mind.’ They should be told, ‘Not so, venerable! ... For it is the heart’s release by compassion that is the escape from thoughts of harming.’

Take another mendicant who says: ‘I’ve developed the heart’s release by rejoicing. I’ve cultivated it, made it my vehicle and my basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Yet somehow negativity still occupies my mind.’ They should be told, ‘Not so, venerable! ... For it is the heart’s release by rejoicing that is the escape from negativity.’

Take another mendicant who says: ‘I’ve developed the heart’s release by equanimity. I’ve cultivated it, made it my vehicle and my basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Yet somehow desire still occupies my mind.’ They should be told, ‘Not so, venerable! ... For it is the heart’s release by equanimity that is the escape from desire.’

Take another mendicant who says: ‘I’ve developed the signless release of the heart. I’ve cultivated it, made it my vehicle and my basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Yet somehow my consciousness still follows after signs.’ They should be told, ‘Not so, venerable! ... For it is the signless release of the heart that is the escape from all signs.’

Take another mendicant who says: ‘I’m rid of the conceit “I am”. And I don’t regard anything as “I am this”. Yet somehow the dart of doubt and indecision still

occupies my mind.’ They should be told, ‘Not so, venerable! Don’t say that. Don’t misrepresent the Buddha, for misrepresentation of the Buddha is not good. And the Buddha would not say that. It’s impossible, reverend, it cannot happen that the conceit “I am” has been done away with, and nothing is regarded as “I am this”, yet somehow the dart of doubt and indecision still occupy the mind. For it is the uprooting of the conceit “I am” that is the escape from the dart of doubt and indecision.’

Six unsurpassable things: the unsurpassable seeing, listening, acquisition, training, service, and recollection.

Six recollections: the recollection of the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, ethics, generosity, and the deities.

Six consistent responses. A mendicant, seeing a sight with their eyes, is neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware. Hearing a sound with their ears ... Smelling an odor with their nose ... Tasting a flavor with their tongue ... Feeling a touch with their body ... Knowing a thought with their mind, they’re neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware.

Six classes of rebirth. Someone born into a dark class gives rise to a dark result. Someone born into a dark class gives rise to a bright result. Someone born into a dark class gives rise to extinguishment, which is neither dark nor bright. Someone born into a bright class gives rise to a bright result. Someone born into a bright class gives rise to a dark result. Someone born into a bright class gives rise to extinguishment, which is neither dark nor bright.

Six perceptions that help penetration: the perception of impermanence, the perception of suffering in impermanence, the perception of not-self in suffering, the perception of giving up, the perception of fading away, and the perception of cessation.

These are the teachings grouped by six that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

## **7. Sevens**

There are teachings grouped by seven that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by seven?

Seven kinds of noble wealth: the wealth of faith, ethical conduct, conscience, prudence, learning, generosity, and wisdom.

Seven awakening factors: mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity.

Seven prerequisites for immersion: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness.

Seven bad qualities: a mendicant is faithless, shameless, imprudent, uneducated, lazy, unmindful, and witless.

Seven good qualities: a mendicant is faithful, conscientious, prudent, learned, energetic, mindful, and wise.

Seven qualities of a good person: a mendicant knows the teachings, knows the meaning, knows themselves, knows moderation, knows the right time, knows assemblies, and knows people.

Seven qualifications for graduation. A mendicant has a keen enthusiasm to undertake the training ... to examine the teachings ... to get rid of desires ... for retreat ... to rouse up energy ... for mindfulness and alertness ... to comprehend theoretically. And they don't lose these desires in the future.

Seven perceptions: the perception of impermanence, the perception of not-self, the perception of ugliness, the perception of drawbacks, the perception of giving up, the perception of fading away, and the perception of cessation.

Seven powers: faith, energy, conscience, prudence, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

Seven planes of consciousness. There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and diverse in perception, such as human beings, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. This is the first plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and unified in perception, such as the gods reborn in Brahmā's Group through the first absorption. This is the second plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and diverse in perception, such as the gods of streaming radiance. This is the third plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and unified in perception, such as the gods replete with glory. This is the fourth plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond perceptions of form. With the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fifth plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite space. Aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the sixth plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness. Aware that 'there is nothing at all', they have been reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is the seventh plane of consciousness.

Seven persons worthy of a teacher's offering: one freed both ways, one freed by wisdom, a direct witness, one attained to view, one freed by faith, a follower of the teachings, and a follower by faith.

Seven underlying tendencies: sensual desire, repulsion, views, doubt, conceit, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.

Seven fetters: compliance, repulsion, views, doubt, conceit, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.

Seven principles for the settlement of any disciplinary issues that might arise. Removal in the presence of those concerned is applicable. Removal by accurate recollection is applicable. Removal due to recovery from madness is applicable. The acknowledgement of the offense is applicable. The decision of a majority is applicable. A verdict of aggravated misconduct is applicable. Covering over with grass is applicable.

These are the teachings grouped by seven that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

The second recitation section is finished.

## **8. Eights**

There are teachings grouped by eight that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by eight?

Eight wrong ways: wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion.

Eight right ways: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

Eight persons worthy of a teacher's offering. The stream-enterer and the one practicing to realize the fruit of stream-entry. The once-returner and the one practicing to realize the fruit of once-return. The non-returner and the one practicing to realize the fruit of non-return. The perfected one, and the one practicing for perfection.

Eight grounds for laziness. Firstly, a mendicant has some work to do. They think: 'I have some work to do. But while doing it my body will get tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. This is the first ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has done some work. They think: 'I've done some work. But while working my body got tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the second ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has to go on a journey. They think: 'I have to go on a journey. But while walking my body will get tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the third ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has gone on a journey. They think: 'I've gone on a journey. But while walking my body got tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the fourth ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, but they didn't get to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, but I didn't get to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is tired and unfit for work. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the fifth ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, and they got to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, and I

got to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is heavy and unfit for work, like I've just eaten a load of beans. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the sixth ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant feels a little sick. They think: 'I feel a little sick. Lying down would be good for me. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the seventh ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has recently recovered from illness. They think: 'I've recently recovered from illness. My body is weak and unfit for work. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. This is the eighth ground for laziness.

Eight grounds for arousing energy. Firstly, a mendicant has some work to do. They think: 'I have some work to do. While working it's not easy to focus on the Buddhas' instructions. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized.' They rouse energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. This is the first ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has done some work. They think: 'I've done some work. While I was working I wasn't able to focus on the Buddhas' instructions. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' They rouse up energy ... This is the second ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has to go on a journey. They think: 'I have to go on a journey. While walking it's not easy to focus on the Buddhas' instructions. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' They rouse up energy ... This is the third ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has gone on a journey. They think: 'I've gone on a journey. While I was walking I wasn't able to focus on the Buddhas' instructions.

I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' They rouse up energy ... This is the fourth ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, but they didn't get to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, but I didn't get to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is light and fit for work. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' They rouse up energy ... This is the fifth ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, and they got to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, and I got to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is strong and fit for work. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' They rouse up energy ... This is the sixth ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant feels a little sick. They think: 'I feel a little sick. It's possible this illness will worsen. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' They rouse up energy ... This is the seventh ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has recently recovered from illness. They think: 'I've recently recovered from illness. It's possible the illness will come back. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized.' They rouse energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. This is the eighth ground for arousing energy.

Eight reasons to give. A person might give a gift after insulting the recipient. Or they give out of fear. Or they give thinking, 'They gave to me.' Or they give thinking, 'They'll give to me.' Or they give thinking, 'It's good to give.' Or they give thinking, 'I cook, they don't. It wouldn't be right for me to not give to them.' Or they give thinking, 'By giving this gift I'll get a good reputation.' Or they give thinking, 'This is an adornment and requisite for the mind.'

Eight rebirths by giving. First, someone gives to ascetics or brahmins such things as food, drink, clothing, vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; and bed, house, and lighting. Whatever they give, they expect something back. They see an affluent aristocrat or brahmin or householder amusing themselves, supplied and provided with the five kinds of sensual stimulation. They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of well-to-do aristocrats or brahmins or householders!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it and develop it. As they've settled for less and not developed further, their thought leads to rebirth there. But I say that this is only for those of ethical conduct, not for the unethical. The heart's wish of an ethical person succeeds because of their purity.

Next, someone gives to ascetics or brahmins. Whatever they give, they expect something back. And they've heard: 'The Gods of the Four Great Kings are long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the Gods of the Four Great Kings!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it and develop it. As they've settled for less and not developed further, their thought leads to rebirth there. But I say that this is only for those of ethical conduct, not for the unethical. The heart's wish of an ethical person succeeds because of their purity.

Next, someone gives to ascetics or brahmins. Whatever they give, they expect something back. And they've heard: 'The Gods of the Thirty-Three ... the Gods of Yama ... the Joyful Gods ... the Gods Who Love to Create ... the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others are long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the Gods Who Control the Creations of Others!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it and develop it. As they've settled for less and not developed further, their thought leads to rebirth there. But I say that this is only for those of ethical conduct, not for the unethical. The heart's wish of an ethical person succeeds because of their purity.

Next, someone gives to ascetics or brahmins such things as food, drink, clothing, vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; and bed, house, and lighting. Whatever

they give, they expect something back. And they've heard: 'The Gods of Brahmā's Group are long-lived, beautiful, and very happy.' They think: 'If only, when my body breaks up, after death, I would be reborn in the company of the Gods of Brahmā's Group!' They settle on that thought, stabilize it and develop it. As they've settled for less and not developed further, their thought leads to rebirth there. But I say that this is only for those of ethical conduct, not for the unethical. And for those free of desire, not those with desire. The heart's wish of an ethical person succeeds because of their freedom from desire.

Eight assemblies: the assemblies of aristocrats, brahmins, householders, and ascetics. An assembly of the gods under the Four Great Kings. An assembly of the gods under the Thirty-Three. An assembly of Māras. An assembly of Brahmās.

Eight worldly conditions: gain and loss, fame and disgrace, praise and blame, pleasure and pain.

Eight dimensions of mastery. Perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the first dimension of mastery.

Perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the second dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the third dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the fourth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. They're like a flax flower that's blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the fifth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. They're like a champak flower that's yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the sixth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. They're like a scarlet mallow flower that's red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the seventh dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. They're like the morning star that's white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that's smoothed on both sides, white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the eighth dimension of mastery.

Eight liberations. Having physical form, they see visions. This is the first liberation.

Not perceiving physical form internally, they see visions externally. This is the second liberation.

They're focused only on beauty. This is the third liberation.

Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fourth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth liberation.

These are the teachings grouped by eight that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

## 9. Nines

There are teachings grouped by nine that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by nine?

Nine grounds for resentment. Thinking: 'They did wrong by me,' you harbor resentment. Thinking: 'They are doing wrong by me' ... 'They will do wrong by me' ... 'They did wrong by someone I love' ... 'They are doing wrong by someone I love' ... 'They will do wrong by someone I love' ... 'They helped someone I

dislike' ... 'They are helping someone I dislike' ... Thinking: 'They will help someone I dislike,' you harbor resentment.

Nine methods to get rid of resentment. Thinking: 'They did wrong by me, but what can I possibly do?' you get rid of resentment. Thinking: 'They are doing wrong by me ...' ... 'They will do wrong by me ...' ... 'They did wrong by someone I love ...' ... 'They are doing wrong by someone I love ...' ... 'They will do wrong by someone I love ...' ... 'They helped someone I dislike ...' ... 'They are helping someone I dislike ...' ... Thinking: 'They will help someone I dislike, but what can I possibly do?' you get rid of resentment.

Nine abodes of sentient beings. There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and diverse in perception, such as human beings, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. This is the first abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and unified in perception, such as the gods reborn in Brahmā's Group through the first absorption. This is the second abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and diverse in perception, such as the gods of streaming radiance. This is the third abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and unified in perception, such as the gods replete with glory. This is the fourth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are non-percipient and do not experience anything, such as the gods who are non-percipient beings. This is the fifth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond perceptions of form. With the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite space. This is the sixth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite space. Aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the seventh abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness. Aware that 'there is nothing at all', they have been reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is the eighth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of nothingness. They have been reborn in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the ninth abode of sentient beings.

Nine lost opportunities for spiritual practice. Firstly, a Realized One has arisen in the world. He teaches the Dhamma leading to peace, extinguishment, awakening, as proclaimed by the Holy One. But a person has been reborn in hell. This is the first lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn in the animal realm. This is the second lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn in the ghost realm. This is the third lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn among the demons. This is the fourth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn in one of the long-lived orders of gods. This is the fifth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn in the borderlands, among barbarian tribes, where monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen do not go. This is the sixth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. And a person is reborn in a central country. But they have wrong view and distorted perspective: 'There's no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There's no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There's no afterlife. There are no duties to mother and father. No beings are reborn spontaneously. And there's no ascetic or brahmin who is well attained and practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.' This is the seventh lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. And a person is reborn in a central country. But they're witless, dull, stupid, and unable to distinguish the well said from the poorly said. This is the eighth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But he doesn't teach the Dhamma leading to peace, extinguishment, awakening, as proclaimed by the Holy One. And a person is reborn in a central country. And they're wise, bright, clever, and able to distinguish the well said from the poorly said. This is the ninth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Nine progressive meditations. A mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of seclusion, while placing the mind and keeping it connected. As the placing of the mind and keeping it connected are stilled, they enter and remain in the second absorption, which has the rapture and bliss born of immersion, with internal clarity and confidence, and unified mind, without placing the mind and keeping it connected. And with the fading away of rapture, they enter and remain in the third absorption, where they meditate with equanimity, mindful and aware, personally experiencing the bliss of which the noble ones declare, 'Equanimous and mindful, one meditates in bliss.' Giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth

absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite’, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite’, they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling.

Nine progressive cessations. For someone who has attained the first absorption, sensual perceptions have ceased. For someone who has attained the second absorption, the placing of the mind and keeping it connected have ceased. For someone who has attained the third absorption, rapture has ceased. For someone who has attained the fourth absorption, breathing has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of infinite space, the perception of form has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of infinite consciousness, the perception of the dimension of infinite space has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of nothingness, the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, the perception of the dimension of nothingness has ceased. For someone who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling, perception and feeling have ceased.

These are the teachings grouped by nine that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert.

## 10. Tens

There are teachings grouped by ten that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert. What are the teachings grouped by ten?

Ten qualities that serve as protector. Firstly, a mendicant is ethical, restrained in the code of conduct, and has appropriate behavior and means of collecting alms. Seeing danger in the slightest flaw, they keep the rules they've undertaken. This is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is very learned, remembering and keeping what they've learned. These teachings are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased, describing a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. They are very learned in such teachings, remembering them, reinforcing them by recitation, mentally scrutinizing them, and comprehending them theoretically. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant has good friends, companions, and associates. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is easy to correct, having qualities that make them easy to correct. They're patient, and take instruction respectfully. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is expert and tireless in a diverse spectrum of duties for their spiritual companions, understanding how to go about things in order to complete and organize the work. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant loves the teachings and is a delight to converse with, being full of joy in the teaching and training. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is content with any kind of robes, alms-food, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant lives with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and gaining skillful qualities. They are strong, firmly applied, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is mindful. They have utmost mindfulness and alertness, and can remember and recall what was said and done long ago. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Ten universal dimensions of meditation. Someone perceives the meditation on universal earth above, below, across, non-dual and limitless. They perceive the meditation on universal water ... the meditation on universal fire ... the meditation on universal air ... the meditation on universal blue ... the meditation on universal yellow ... the meditation on universal red ... the meditation on universal white ... the meditation on universal space ... They perceive the meditation on universal consciousness above, below, across, non-dual and limitless.

Ten ways of doing unskillful deeds: killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; covetousness, ill will, and wrong view.

Ten ways of doing skillful deeds: refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; refraining from speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; contentment, good will, and right view.

Ten noble abodes. A mendicant has given up five factors, possesses six factors, has a single guard, has four supports, has eliminated idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth, has totally given up searching, has unsullied intentions, has stilled the physical process, and is well freed in mind and well freed by wisdom.

And how has a mendicant given up five factors? It's when a mendicant has given up sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. That's how a mendicant has given up five factors.

And how does a mendicant possess six factors? A mendicant, seeing a sight with their eyes, is neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware. Hearing a sound with their ears ... Smelling an odor with their nose ... Tasting a flavor with their tongue ... Feeling a touch with their body ... Knowing a thought with their mind, they're neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware. That's how a mendicant possesses six factors.

And how does a mendicant have a single guard? It's when a mendicant's heart is guarded by mindfulness. That's how a mendicant has a single guard.

And how does a mendicant have four supports? After reflection, a mendicant uses some things, endures some things, avoids some things, and gets rid of some things. That's how a mendicant has four supports.

And how has a mendicant eliminated idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth? Different ascetics and brahmins have different idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth. A mendicant has dispelled, eliminated, thrown out, rejected, let go of, given up, and relinquished all these. That's how a mendicant has eliminated idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth.

And how has a mendicant totally given up searching? It's when they've given up searching for sensual pleasures, for continued existence, and for a spiritual path. That's how a mendicant has totally given up searching.

And how does a mendicant have unsullied intentions? It's when they've given up sensual, malicious, and cruel intentions. That's how a mendicant has unsullied intentions.

And how has a mendicant stilled the physical process? It's when, giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. That's how a mendicant has stilled the physical process.

And how is a mendicant well freed in mind? It's when a mendicant's mind is freed from greed, hate, and delusion. That's how a mendicant is well freed in mind.

And how is a mendicant well freed by wisdom? It's when a mendicant understands: 'I've given up greed, hate, and delusion, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, exterminated them, so they're unable to arise in the future.' That's how a mendicant's mind is well freed by wisdom.

Ten qualities of an adept: an adept's right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right immersion, right knowledge, and right freedom.

Reverends, these are the teachings grouped by ten that have been rightly explained by the Buddha. You should all recite these in concert, without disputing, so that this spiritual path may last for a long time. That would be for the welfare and happiness of the people, for the benefit, welfare, and happiness of gods and humans.”

Then the Buddha got up and said to Venerable Sāriputta: “Good, good, Sāriputta! It's good that you've taught this exposition of the reciting in concert.”

That is what Venerable Sāriputta said, and the teacher approved. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what Sāriputta said.

## 34. Dasuttara Sutta

Up to Ten

So I have heard. At one time the Buddha was staying near Campā on the banks of the Gaggarā Lotus Pond together with a large Saṅgha of five hundred mendicants. There Sāriputta addressed the mendicants: “Reverends, mendicants!” “Reverend,” they replied. Sāriputta said this:

“I will relate the teachings  
up to ten for attaining extinguishment,  
for making an end of suffering,  
the release from all ties.

### 1. Groups of One

Reverends, one thing is helpful, one thing should be developed, one thing should be completely understood, one thing should be given up, one thing makes things worse, one thing leads to distinction, one thing is hard to comprehend, one thing should be produced, one thing should be directly known, one thing should be realized.

What one thing is helpful? Diligence in skillful qualities.

What one thing should be developed? Mindfulness of the body that is full of pleasure.

What one thing should be completely understood? Contact, which is accompanied by defilements and is prone to being grasped.

What one thing should be given up? The conceit ‘I am’.

What one thing makes things worse? Improper attention.

What one thing leads to distinction? Proper attention.

What one thing is hard to comprehend? The heart's immersion of immediate result.

What one thing should be produced? Unshakable knowledge.

What one thing should be directly known? All sentient beings are sustained by food.

What one thing should be realized? The unshakable heart's release.

So these ten things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

## **2. Groups of Two**

Two things are helpful, two things should be developed, two things should be completely understood, two things should be given up, two things make things worse, two things lead to distinction, two things are hard to comprehend, two things should be produced, two things should be directly known, two things should be realized.

What two things are helpful? Mindfulness and situational awareness.

What two things should be developed? Serenity and discernment.

What two things should be completely understood? Name and form.

What two things should be given up? Ignorance and craving to be reborn.

What two things make things worse? Being hard to correct and having bad friends.

What two things lead to distinction? Being easy to correct and having good friends.

What two things are hard to comprehend? What are the causes and conditions for the corruption of sentient beings, and what are the causes and conditions for the purification of sentient beings.

What two things should be produced? Two knowledges: knowledge of ending, and knowledge of non-arising.

What two things should be directly known? Two elements: the conditioned element and the unconditioned element.

What two things should be realized? Knowledge and freedom.

So these twenty things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

### **3. Groups of Three**

Three things are helpful, etc.

What three things are helpful? Associating with good people, listening to the true teaching, and practicing in line with the teaching.

What three things should be developed? Three kinds of immersion. Immersion with placing the mind and keeping it connected. Immersion without placing the mind, but just keeping it connected. Immersion without placing the mind or keeping it connected.

What three things should be completely understood? Three feelings: pleasant, painful, and neutral.

What three things should be given up? Three cravings: craving for sensual pleasures, craving for continued existence, and craving to exterminate existence.

What three things make things worse? Three unskillful roots: greed, hate, and delusion.

What three things lead to distinction? Three skillful roots: non-greed, non-hate, and non-delusion.

What three things are hard to comprehend? Three elements of escape. Renunciation is the escape from sensual pleasures. The formless is the escape from form. Cessation is the escape from whatever is created, conditioned, and dependently originated.

What three things should be produced? Three knowledges: regarding the past, future, and present.

What three things should be directly known? Three elements: sensuality, form, and formlessness.

What three things should be realized? Three knowledges: recollection of past lives, knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings, and knowledge of the ending of defilements.

So these thirty things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

#### **4. Groups of Four**

Four things are helpful, etc.

What four things are helpful? Four situations: living in a suitable region, relying on good people, right determination, and past merit.

What four things should be developed? The four kinds of mindfulness meditation. A mendicant meditates by observing an aspect of the body—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world. They meditate observing an

aspect of feelings ... mind ... principles—keen, aware, and mindful, rid of desire and aversion for the world.

What four things should be completely understood? Four foods: solid food, whether coarse or fine; contact is the second, mental intention the third, and consciousness the fourth.

What four things should be given up? Four floods: sensuality, desire for rebirth, views, and ignorance.

What four things make things worse? Four bonds: sensuality, desire for rebirth, views, and ignorance.

What four things lead to distinction? Four kinds of detachment: detachment from the bonds of sensuality, desire for rebirth, views, and ignorance.

What four things are hard to comprehend? Four kinds of immersion: immersion liable to decline, stable immersion, immersion that leads to distinction, and immersion that leads to penetration.

What four things should be produced? Four knowledges: knowledge of the present phenomena, knowledge of what follows, knowledge of others' minds, and conventional knowledge.

What four things should be directly known? The four noble truths: suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the practice that leads to the cessation of suffering.

What four things should be realized? Four fruits of the ascetic life: stream-entry, once-return, non-return, and perfection.

So these forty things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

## 5. Groups of Five

Five things are helpful, etc.

What five things are helpful? Five factors that support meditation. A mendicant has faith in the Realized One's awakening: 'That Blessed One is perfected, a fully awakened Buddha, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, holy, knower of the world, supreme guide for those who wish to train, teacher of gods and humans, awakened, blessed.' They are rarely ill or unwell. Their stomach digests well, being neither too hot nor too cold, but just right, and fit for meditation. They're not devious or deceitful. They reveal themselves honestly to the Teacher or sensible spiritual companions. They live with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and gaining skillful qualities. They're strong, firmly applied, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. They're wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering.

What five things should be developed? Right immersion with five factors: pervaded with rapture, pervaded with pleasure, pervaded with mind, pervaded with light, and the basis for reviewing.

What five things should be completely understood? Five grasping aggregates: form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness.

What five things should be given up? Five hindrances: sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt.

What five things make things worse? Five kinds of emotional barrenness. Firstly, a mendicant has doubts about the Teacher. They're uncertain, undecided, and lacking confidence. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness, commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the first kind of emotional barrenness. Furthermore, a mendicant has doubts about the teaching ... the Saṅgha ... the training ... A mendicant is angry and upset with their spiritual companions, resentful and closed off. This being so, their mind doesn't incline toward keenness,

commitment, persistence, and striving. This is the fifth kind of emotional barrenness.

What five things lead to distinction? Five faculties: faith, energy, mindfulness, immersion, and wisdom.

What five things are hard to comprehend? Five elements of escape. A mendicant focuses on sensual pleasures, but their mind isn't eager, confident, steady, and decided about them. But when they focus on renunciation, their mind is eager, confident, steady, and decided about it. Their mind is in a good state, well developed, well risen, well freed, and well detached from sensual pleasures. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of sensual pleasures, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from sensual pleasures is explained.

Take another case where a mendicant focuses on ill will, but their mind isn't eager ... But when they focus on love, their mind is eager ... Their mind is in a good state ... well detached from ill will. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of ill will, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from ill will is explained.

Take another case where a mendicant focuses on harming, but their mind isn't eager ... But when they focus on compassion, their mind is eager ... Their mind is in a good state ... well detached from harming. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of harming, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from harming is explained.

Take another case where a mendicant focuses on form, but their mind isn't eager ... But when they focus on the formless, their mind is eager ... Their mind is in a good state ... well detached from forms. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of form, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from forms is explained.

Take a case where a mendicant focuses on identity, but their mind isn't eager, confident, steady, and decided about it. But when they focus on the ending of identity, their mind is eager, confident, steady, and decided about it. Their mind is in a good state, well developed, well risen, well freed, and well detached from identity. They're freed from the distressing and feverish defilements that arise because of identity, so they don't experience that kind of feeling. This is how the escape from identity is explained.

What five things should be produced? Right immersion with five knowledges. The following knowledges arise for you personally: 'This immersion is blissful now, and results in bliss in the future.' 'This immersion is noble and spiritual.' 'This immersion is not cultivated by corrupt people.' 'This immersion is peaceful and sublime and tranquil and unified, not held in place by forceful suppression.' 'I mindfully enter into and emerge from this immersion.'

What five things should be directly known? Five opportunities for freedom. Firstly, the Teacher or a respected spiritual companion teaches Dhamma to a mendicant. That mendicant feels inspired by the meaning and the teaching in that Dhamma, no matter how the Teacher or a respected spiritual companion teaches it. Feeling inspired, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. This is the first opportunity for freedom.

Furthermore, it may be that neither the Teacher nor a respected spiritual companion teaches Dhamma to a mendicant. But the mendicant teaches Dhamma in detail to others as they learned and memorized it. That mendicant feels inspired by the meaning and the teaching in that Dhamma, no matter how they teach it in detail to others as they learned and memorized it. Feeling inspired, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. This is the second opportunity for freedom.

Furthermore, it may be that neither the Teacher nor ... the mendicant teaches Dhamma. But the mendicant recites the teaching in detail as they learned and memorized it. That mendicant feels inspired by the meaning and the teaching in that Dhamma, no matter how they recite it in detail as they learned and memorized it. Feeling inspired, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. This is the third opportunity for freedom.

Furthermore, it may be that neither the Teacher nor ... the mendicant teaches Dhamma ... nor does the mendicant recite the teaching. But the mendicant thinks about and considers the teaching in their heart, examining it with the mind as they learned and memorized it. That mendicant feels inspired by the meaning and the teaching in that Dhamma, no matter how they think about and consider it in their heart, examining it with the mind as they learned and memorized it. Feeling inspired, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. This is the fourth opportunity for freedom.

Furthermore, it may be that neither the Teacher nor ... the mendicant teaches Dhamma ... nor does the mendicant recite the teaching ... or think about it. But a meditation subject as a basis of immersion is properly grasped, attended, borne in mind, and comprehended with wisdom. That mendicant feels inspired by the meaning and the teaching in that Dhamma, no matter how a meditation subject as a basis of immersion is properly grasped, attended, borne in mind, and comprehended with wisdom. Feeling inspired, joy springs up. Being joyful, rapture springs up. When the mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, one feels bliss. And when blissful, the mind becomes immersed. This is the fifth opportunity for freedom.

What five things should be realized? Five spectrums of the teaching: ethics, immersion, wisdom, freedom, and knowledge and vision of freedom.

So these fifty things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

## **6. Groups of Six**

Six things are helpful, etc.

What six things are helpful? Six warm-hearted qualities. Firstly, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with bodily kindness, both in public and in private. This warm-hearted quality makes for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.

Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with verbal kindness.

Furthermore, a mendicant consistently treats their spiritual companions with mental kindness.

Furthermore, a mendicant shares without reservation any material possessions they have gained by legitimate means, even the food placed in the alms-bowl, using them in common with their ethical spiritual companions.

Furthermore, a mendicant lives according to the precepts shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. Those precepts are uncorrupted, unflawed, unblemished, untainted, liberating, praised by sensible people, not mistaken, and leading to immersion.

Furthermore, a mendicant lives according to the view shared with their spiritual companions, both in public and in private. That view is noble and emancipating, and leads one who practices it to the complete ending of suffering. This warm-hearted quality makes for fondness and respect, conducing to inclusion, harmony, and unity, without quarreling.

What six things should be developed? Six recollections: the recollection of the Buddha, the teaching, the Saṅgha, ethics, generosity, and the deities.

What six things should be completely understood? Six interior sense fields: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

What six things should be given up? Six classes of craving: craving for sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and thoughts.

What six things make things worse? Six kinds of disrespect. A mendicant lacks respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, the training, diligence, and hospitality.

What six things lead to distinction? Six kinds of respect. A mendicant has respect and reverence for the Teacher, the teaching, and the Saṅgha, the training, diligence, and hospitality.

What six things are hard to comprehend? Six elements of escape. Take a mendicant who says: 'I've developed the heart's release by love. I've cultivated it, made it my vehicle and my basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Yet somehow ill will still occupies my mind.' They should be told, 'Not so, venerable! Don't say that. Don't misrepresent the Buddha, for misrepresentation of the Buddha is not good. And the Buddha would not say that. It's impossible, reverend, it cannot happen that the heart's release by love has been developed and properly implemented, yet somehow ill will still occupies the mind. For it is the heart's release by love that is the escape from ill will.'

Take another mendicant who says: 'I've developed the heart's release by compassion. I've cultivated it, made it my vehicle and my basis, kept it up, consolidated it, and properly implemented it. Yet somehow the thought of harming still occupies my mind.' They should be told, 'Not so, venerable! ... For it is the heart's release by compassion that is the escape from thoughts of harming.'

Take another mendicant who says: 'I've developed the heart's release by rejoicing. ... Yet somehow negativity still occupies my mind.' They should be told, 'Not so, venerable! ... For it is the heart's release by rejoicing that is the escape from negativity.'

Take another mendicant who says: 'I've developed the heart's release by equanimity. ... Yet somehow desire still occupies my mind.' They should be told, 'Not so, venerable! ... For it is the heart's release by equanimity that is the escape from desire.'

Take another mendicant who says: 'I've developed the signless heart's release. ... Yet somehow my consciousness still follows after signs.' They should be told, 'Not so, venerable! ... For it is the signless release of the heart that is the escape from all signs.'

Take another mendicant who says: 'I'm rid of the conceit "I am". And I don't regard anything as "I am this". Yet somehow the dart of doubt and indecision still occupies my mind.' They should be told, 'Not so, venerable! Don't say that. Don't misrepresent the Buddha, for misrepresentation of the Buddha is not good. And the Buddha would not say that. It's impossible, reverend, it cannot happen that the conceit "I am" has been done away with, and nothing is regarded as "I am this", yet somehow the dart of doubt and indecision still occupy the mind. For it is the uprooting of the conceit "I am" that is the escape from the dart of doubt and indecision.'

What six things should be produced? Six consistent responses. A mendicant, seeing a sight with their eyes, is neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware. Hearing a sound with their ears ... Smelling an odor with their nose ... Tasting a flavor with their tongue ... Feeling a touch with their body ... Knowing a thought with their mind, they're neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware.

What six things should be directly known? Six unsurpassable things: the unsurpassable seeing, listening, acquisition, training, service, and recollection.

What six things should be realized? Six direct knowledges. A mendicant wields the many kinds of psychic power: multiplying themselves and becoming one again; appearing and disappearing; going unimpeded through a wall, a rampart, or a mountain as if through space; diving in and out of the earth as if it was water; walking on water as if it was earth; flying cross-legged through the sky like a bird; touching and stroking with the hand the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful; controlling the body as far as the Brahmā realm.

With clairaudience that is purified and superhuman, they hear both kinds of sounds, human and divine, whether near or far.

They understand the minds of other beings and individuals, having comprehended them with their own mind.

They recollect many kinds of past lives, with features and details.

With clairvoyance that is purified and superhuman, they see sentient beings passing away and being reborn—inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in a good place or a bad place. They understand how sentient beings are reborn according to their deeds.

They realize the undefiled freedom of heart and freedom by wisdom in this very life. And they live having realized it with their own insight due to the ending of defilements.

So these sixty things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

## **7. Groups of Seven**

Seven things are helpful, etc.

What seven things are helpful? Seven kinds of noble wealth: the wealth of faith, ethical conduct, conscience, prudence, learning, generosity, and wisdom.

What seven things should be developed? Seven awakening factors: mindfulness, investigation of principles, energy, rapture, tranquility, immersion, and equanimity.

What seven things should be completely understood? Seven planes of consciousness. There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and diverse in perception, such as human beings, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. This is the first plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and unified in perception, such as the gods reborn in Brahmā's Group through the first absorption. This is the second plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and diverse in perception, such as the gods of streaming radiance. This is the third plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and unified in perception, such as the gods replete with glory. This is the fourth plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond perceptions of form. With the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fifth plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite space. Aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the sixth plane of consciousness.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness. Aware that ‘there is nothing at all’, they have been reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is the seventh plane of consciousness.

What seven things should be given up? Seven underlying tendencies: sensual desire, repulsion, views, doubt, conceit, desire to be reborn, and ignorance.

What seven things make things worse? Seven bad qualities: a mendicant is faithless, shameless, imprudent, uneducated, lazy, unmindful, and witless.

What seven things lead to distinction? Seven good qualities: a mendicant is faithful, conscientious, prudent, learned, energetic, mindful, and wise.

What seven things are hard to comprehend? Seven qualities of a good person: a mendicant knows the teachings, knows the meaning, knows themselves, knows moderation, knows the right time, knows assemblies, and knows people.

What seven things should be produced? Seven perceptions: the perception of impermanence, the perception of not-self, the perception of ugliness, the perception of drawbacks, the perception of giving up, the perception of fading away, and the perception of cessation.

What seven things should be directly known? Seven qualifications for graduation. A mendicant has a keen enthusiasm to undertake the training ... to examine the teachings ... to get rid of desires ... for retreat ... to rouse up energy ... for mindfulness and alertness ... to comprehend theoretically. And they don’t lose these desires in the future.

What seven things should be realized? Seven powers of one who has ended the defilements. Firstly, a mendicant with defilements ended has clearly seen with right wisdom all conditions as truly impermanent. This is a power that a mendicant who has ended the defilements relies on to claim: ‘My defilements have ended.’

Furthermore, a mendicant with defilements ended has clearly seen with right wisdom that sensual pleasures are truly like a pit of glowing coals. ...

Furthermore, the mind of a mendicant with defilements ended slants, slopes, and inclines to seclusion. They're withdrawn, loving renunciation, and they've totally done with defiling influences. ...

Furthermore, a mendicant with defilements ended has well developed the four kinds of mindfulness meditation. ...

Furthermore, a mendicant with defilements ended has well developed the five faculties. ...

Furthermore, a mendicant with defilements ended has well developed the seven awakening factors. ...

Furthermore, a mendicant with defilements ended has well developed the noble eightfold path. ... This is a power that a mendicant who has ended the defilements relies on to claim: 'My defilements have ended.'

So these seventy things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

The first recitation section is finished.

## **8. Groups of Eight**

Eight things are helpful, etc.

What eight things are helpful? There are eight causes and reasons that lead to acquiring the wisdom fundamental to the spiritual life, and to its increase, growth, development, and fulfillment once it has been acquired. What eight? It's when a mendicant lives relying on the Teacher or a spiritual companion in a teacher's role.

And they set up a keen sense of conscience and prudence for them, with warmth and respect. This is the first cause.

When a mendicant lives relying on the Teacher or a spiritual companion in a teacher's role—with a keen sense of conscience and prudence for them, with warmth and respect—from time to time they go and ask them questions: 'Why, sir, does it say this? What does that mean?' Those venerables clarify what is unclear, reveal what is obscure, and dispel doubt regarding the many doubtful matters. This is the second cause.

After hearing that teaching they perfect withdrawal of both body and mind. This is the third cause.

Furthermore, a mendicant is ethical, restrained in the code of conduct, and has appropriate behavior and means of collecting alms. Seeing danger in the slightest flaw, they keep the rules they've undertaken. This is the fourth cause.

Furthermore, a mendicant is very learned, remembering and keeping what they've learned. These teachings are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, meaningful and well-phrased, describing a spiritual practice that's entirely full and pure. They are very learned in such teachings, remembering them, reinforcing them by recitation, mentally scrutinizing them, and comprehending them theoretically. This is the fifth cause.

Furthermore, a mendicant lives with energy roused up for giving up unskillful qualities and gaining skillful qualities. They are strong, firmly applied, not slacking off when it comes to developing skillful qualities. This is the sixth cause.

Furthermore, a mendicant is mindful. They have utmost mindfulness and alertness, and can remember and recall what was said and done long ago. This is the seventh cause.

Furthermore, a mendicant meditates observing rise and fall in the five grasping aggregates. 'Such is form, such is the origin of form, such is the ending of form. Such is feeling, such is the origin of feeling, such is the ending of feeling. Such is perception, such is the origin of perception, such is the ending of perception. Such are choices, such is the origin of choices, such is the ending of choices. Such is consciousness, such is the origin of consciousness, such is the ending of consciousness.' This is the eighth cause.

What eight things should be developed? The noble eightfold path, that is: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right immersion.

What eight things should be completely understood? Eight worldly conditions: gain and loss, fame and disgrace, praise and blame, pleasure and pain.

What eight things should be given up? Eight wrong ways: wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, and wrong immersion.

What eight things make things worse? Eight grounds for laziness. Firstly, a mendicant has some work to do. They think: 'I have some work to do. But while doing it my body will get tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. This is the first ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has done some work. They think: 'I've done some work. But while working my body got tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the second ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has to go on a journey. They think: 'I have to go on a journey. But while walking my body will get tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the third ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has gone on a journey. They think: 'I've gone on a journey. But while walking my body got tired. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the fourth ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, but they didn't get to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, but I didn't get to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is tired and unfit for work. I'd better have a lie down.' ... This is the fifth ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, and they got to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, and I got to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is heavy, unfit for work, like I've just eaten a load of beans. I'd better have a lie down.' ... They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the sixth ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant feels a little sick. They think: 'I feel a little sick. Lying down would be good for me. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the seventh ground for laziness.

Furthermore, a mendicant has recently recovered from illness. They think: 'I've recently recovered from illness. My body is weak and unfit for work. I'd better have a lie down.' They lie down, and don't rouse energy ... This is the eighth ground for laziness.

What eight things lead to distinction? Eight grounds for arousing energy. Firstly, a mendicant has some work to do. They think: 'I have some work to do. While working it's not easy to focus on the Buddhas' instructions. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized.' They rouse energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. This is the first ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has done some work. They think: 'I've done some work. While I was working I wasn't able to focus on the Buddhas' instructions. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' ... This is the second ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has to go on a journey. They think: 'I have to go on a journey. While walking it's not easy to focus on the Buddhas' instructions. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' ... This is the third ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has gone on a journey. They think: 'I've gone on a journey. While I was walking I wasn't able to focus on the Buddhas' instructions. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' ... This is the fourth ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, but they didn't get to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, but I didn't get to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is light and fit for work. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' ... This is the fifth ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has wandered for alms, and they got to fill up on as much food as they like, coarse or fine. They think: 'I've wandered for alms, and I got to fill up on as much food as I like, coarse or fine. My body is strong and fit for work. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' ... This is the sixth ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant feels a little sick. They think: 'I feel a little sick. It's possible this illness will worsen. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy.' ... This is the seventh ground for arousing energy.

Furthermore, a mendicant has recently recovered from illness. They think: 'I've recently recovered from illness. It's possible the illness will come back. I'd better preemptively rouse up energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the

unachieved, and realizing the unrealized.’ They rouse energy for attaining the unattained, achieving the unachieved, and realizing the unrealized. This is the eighth ground for arousing energy.

What eight things are hard to comprehend? Eight lost opportunities for spiritual practice. Firstly, a Realized One has arisen in the world. He teaches the Dhamma leading to peace, extinguishment, awakening, as proclaimed by the Holy One. But a person has been reborn in hell. This is the first lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn in the animal realm. This is the second lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn in the ghost realm. This is the third lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But person has been reborn in one of the long-lived orders of gods. This is the fourth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But a person has been reborn in the borderlands, among barbarian tribes, where monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen do not go. This is the fifth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. And a person is reborn in a central country. But they have wrong view and distorted perspective: ‘There’s no meaning in giving, sacrifice, or offerings. There’s no fruit or result of good and bad deeds. There’s no afterlife. There are no duties to mother and father. No beings are reborn spontaneously. And there’s no ascetic or brahmin who is well attained and practiced, and who describes the afterlife after realizing it with their own insight.’ This is the sixth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. And a person is reborn in a central country. But they're witless, dull, stupid, and unable to distinguish the well said from the poorly said. This is the seventh lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

Furthermore, a Realized One has arisen in the world. But he doesn't teach the Dhamma leading to peace, extinguishment, awakening, as announced by the Holy One. And a person is reborn in a central country. And they're wise, bright, clever, and able to distinguish the well said from the poorly said. This is the eighth lost opportunity for spiritual practice.

What eight things should be produced? Eight thoughts of a great man. 'This teaching is for those of few wishes, not those of many wishes. It's for the contented, not the discontented. It's for the secluded, not those who enjoy company. It's for the energetic, not the lazy. It's for the mindful, not the unmindful. It's for those with immersion, not those without immersion. It's for the wise, not the witless. This teaching is for those who don't enjoy proliferating, not for those who enjoy proliferating.'

What eight things should be directly known? Eight dimensions of mastery. Perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the first dimension of mastery.

Perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the second dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limited, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: 'I know and see.' This is the third dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally, limitless, both pretty and ugly. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the fourth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. They’re like a flax flower that’s blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on both sides, blue, with blue color, blue hue, and blue tint. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the fifth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. They’re like a champak flower that’s yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on both sides, yellow, with yellow color, yellow hue, and yellow tint. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the sixth dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. They’re like a scarlet mallow flower that’s red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on both sides, red, with red color, red hue, and red tint. Mastering them, they perceive: ‘I know and see.’ This is the seventh dimension of mastery.

Not perceiving form internally, someone sees visions externally that are white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. They’re like the morning star that’s white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. Or a cloth from Bāraṇasī that’s smoothed on both sides, white, with white color, white hue, and white tint. This is the eighth dimension of mastery.

What eight things should be realized? Eight liberations. Having physical form, they see visions. This is the first liberation.

Not perceiving physical form internally, someone see visions externally. This is the second liberation.

They're focused only on beauty. This is the third liberation.

Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. This is the fourth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the fifth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. This is the sixth liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the seventh liberation.

Going totally beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling. This is the eighth liberation.

So these eighty things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

## **9. Groups of Nine**

Nine things are helpful, etc.

What nine things are helpful? Nine things rooted in proper attention. When you attend properly, joy springs up. When you're joyful, rapture springs up. When the

mind is full of rapture, the body becomes tranquil. When the body is tranquil, you feel bliss. And when you're blissful, the mind becomes immersed. When your mind is immersed, you truly know and see. When you truly know and see, you become disillusioned. Being disillusioned you become dispassionate. Being dispassionate you're freed.

What nine things should be developed? Nine factors of trying to be pure. The factors of trying to be pure in ethics, mind, view, going beyond doubt, knowledge and vision of the variety of paths, knowledge and vision of the practice, knowledge and vision, wisdom, and freedom.

What nine things should be completely understood? Nine abodes of sentient beings. There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and diverse in perception, such as human beings, some gods, and some beings in the underworld. This is the first abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are diverse in body and unified in perception, such as the gods reborn in Brahmā's Group through the first absorption. This is the second abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and diverse in perception, such as the gods of streaming radiance. This is the third abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are unified in body and unified in perception, such as the gods replete with glory. This is the fourth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that are non-percipient and do not experience anything, such as the gods who are non-percipient beings. This is the fifth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond perceptions of form. With the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity,

aware that 'space is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite space. This is the sixth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite space. Aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they have been reborn in the dimension of infinite consciousness. This is the seventh abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness. Aware that 'there is nothing at all', they have been reborn in the dimension of nothingness. This is the eighth abode of sentient beings.

There are sentient beings that have gone totally beyond the dimension of nothingness. They have been reborn in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. This is the ninth abode of sentient beings.

What nine things should be given up? Nine things rooted in craving. Craving is a cause for seeking. Seeking is a cause for gaining material possessions. Gaining material possessions is a cause for assessing. Assessing is a cause for desire and lust. Desire and lust is a cause for attachment. Attachment is a cause for possessiveness. Possessiveness is a cause for stinginess. Stinginess is a cause for safeguarding. Owing to safeguarding, many bad, unskillful things come to be: taking up the rod and the sword, quarrels, arguments, fights, accusations, divisive speech, and lies.

What nine things make things worse? Nine grounds for resentment. Thinking: 'They did wrong by me,' you harbor resentment. Thinking: 'They are doing wrong by me' ... 'They will do wrong by me' ... 'They did wrong by someone I love' ... 'They are doing wrong by someone I love' ... 'They will do wrong by someone I love' ... 'They helped someone I dislike' ... 'They are helping someone I dislike' ... Thinking: 'They will help someone I dislike,' you harbor resentment.

What nine things lead to distinction? Nine methods to get rid of resentment. Thinking: 'They did wrong by me, but what can I possibly do?' you get rid of

resentment. Thinking: 'They are doing wrong by me ...' ... 'They will do wrong by me ...' ... 'They did wrong by someone I love ...' ... 'They are doing wrong by someone I love ...' ... 'They will do wrong by someone I love ...' ... 'They helped someone I dislike ...' ... 'They are helping someone I dislike ...' ... Thinking: 'They will help someone I dislike, but what can I possibly do?' you get rid of resentment.

What nine things are hard to comprehend? Nine kinds of diversity. Diversity of elements gives rise to diversity of contacts. Diversity of contacts gives rise to diversity of feelings. Diversity of feelings gives rise to diversity of perceptions. Diversity of perceptions gives rise to diversity of intentions. Diversity of intentions gives rise to diversity of desires. Diversity of desires gives rise to diversity of passions. Diversity of passions gives rise to diversity of searches. Diversity of searches gives rise to diversity of gains.

What nine things should be produced? Nine perceptions: the perceptions of ugliness, death, repulsiveness in food, dissatisfaction with the whole world, impermanence, suffering in impermanence, not-self in suffering, giving up, and fading away.

What nine things should be directly known? Nine progressive meditations. A mendicant, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unskillful qualities, enters and remains in the first absorption ... second absorption ... third absorption ... fourth absorption. Going totally beyond perceptions of form, with the ending of perceptions of impingement, not focusing on perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite space. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', they enter and remain in the dimension of infinite consciousness. Going totally beyond the dimension of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing at all', they enter and remain in the dimension of nothingness. Going totally beyond the dimension of nothingness, they enter and remain in the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception. Going totally

beyond the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, they enter and remain in the cessation of perception and feeling.

What nine things should be realized? Nine progressive cessations. For someone who has attained the first absorption, sensual perceptions have ceased. For someone who has attained the second absorption, the placing of the mind and keeping it connected have ceased. For someone who has attained the third absorption, rapture has ceased. For someone who has attained the fourth absorption, breathing has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of infinite space, the perception of form has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of infinite consciousness, the perception of the dimension of infinite space has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of nothingness, the perception of the dimension of infinite consciousness has ceased. For someone who has attained the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, the perception of the dimension of nothingness has ceased. For someone who has attained the cessation of perception and feeling, perception and feeling have ceased.

So these ninety things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One.

## **10. Groups of Ten**

Ten things are helpful, ten things should be developed, ten things should be completely understood, ten things should be given up, ten things make things worse, ten things lead to distinction, ten things are hard to comprehend, ten things should be produced, ten things should be directly known, ten things should be realized.

What ten things are helpful? Ten qualities that serve as protector. First, a mendicant is ethical, restrained in the code of conduct, and has appropriate behavior and means of collecting alms. Seeing danger in the slightest flaw, they keep the rules they've undertaken. This is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is learned. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant has good friends, companions, and associates. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is easy to correct, having qualities that make them easy to correct. They're patient, and take instruction respectfully. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is expert and tireless in a diverse spectrum of duties for their spiritual companions, understanding how to go about things in order to complete and organize the work. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant loves the teachings and is a delight to converse with, being full of joy in the teaching and training. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is content with any kind of robes, alms-food, lodgings, and medicines and supplies for the sick. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is energetic. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is mindful. They have utmost mindfulness and alertness, and can remember and recall what was said and done long ago. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

Furthermore, a mendicant is wise. They have the wisdom of arising and passing away which is noble, penetrative, and leads to the complete ending of suffering. This too is a quality that serves as protector.

What ten things should be developed? Ten universal dimensions of meditation. Someone perceives the meditation on universal earth above, below, across, non-

dual and limitless. They perceive the meditation on universal water ... the meditation on universal fire ... the meditation on universal air ... the meditation on universal blue ... the meditation on universal yellow ... the meditation on universal red ... the meditation on universal white ... the meditation on universal space ... They perceive the meditation on universal consciousness above, below, across, non-dual and limitless.

What ten things should be completely understood? Ten sense fields: eye and sights, ear and sounds, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and touches.

What ten things should be given up? Ten wrong ways: wrong view, wrong thought, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindfulness, wrong immersion, wrong knowledge, and wrong freedom.

What ten things make things worse? Ten ways of doing unskillful deeds: killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; covetousness, ill will, and wrong view.

What ten things lead to distinction? Ten ways of doing skillful deeds: refraining from killing living creatures, stealing, and sexual misconduct; avoiding speech that's false, divisive, harsh, or nonsensical; contentment, good will, and right view.

What ten things are hard to comprehend? Ten noble abodes. A mendicant has given up five factors, possesses six factors, has a single guard, has four supports, has eliminated idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth, has totally given up searching, has unsullied intentions, has stilled the physical process, and is well freed in mind and well freed by wisdom.

And how has a mendicant given up five factors? It's when a mendicant has given up sensual desire, ill will, dullness and drowsiness, restlessness and remorse, and doubt. That's how a mendicant has given up five factors.

And how does a mendicant possess six factors? A mendicant, seeing a sight with their eyes, is neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware. Hearing a sound with their ears ... Smelling an odor with their nose ... Tasting a flavor with their tongue ... Feeling a touch with their body ... Knowing a thought with their mind, they're neither happy nor sad. They remain equanimous, mindful and aware. That's how a mendicant possesses six factors.

And how does a mendicant have a single guard? It's when a mendicant's heart is guarded by mindfulness. That's how a mendicant has a single guard.

And how does a mendicant have four supports? After reflection, a mendicant uses some things, endures some things, avoids some things, and gets rid of some things. That's how a mendicant has four supports.

And how has a mendicant eliminated idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth? Different ascetics and brahmins have different idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth. A mendicant has dispelled, eliminated, thrown out, rejected, let go of, given up, and relinquished all these. That's how a mendicant has eliminated idiosyncratic interpretations of the truth.

And how has a mendicant totally given up searching? It's when they've given up searching for sensual pleasures, for continued existence, and for a spiritual path. That's how a mendicant has totally given up searching.

And how does a mendicant have unsullied intentions? It's when they've given up sensual, malicious, and cruel intentions. That's how a mendicant has unsullied intentions.

And how has a mendicant stilled the physical process? Giving up pleasure and pain, and ending former happiness and sadness, they enter and remain in the fourth absorption, without pleasure or pain, with pure equanimity and mindfulness. That's how a mendicant has stilled the physical process.

And how is a mendicant well freed in mind? It's when a mendicant's mind is freed from greed, hate, and delusion. That's how a mendicant is well freed in mind.

And how is a mendicant well freed by wisdom? It's when a mendicant understands: 'I've given up greed, hate, and delusion, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, exterminated them, so they're unable to arise in the future.' That's how a mendicant's mind is well freed by wisdom.

What ten things should be produced? Ten perceptions: the perceptions of ugliness, death, repulsiveness in food, dissatisfaction with the whole world, impermanence, suffering in impermanence, not-self in suffering, giving up, fading away, and cessation.

What ten things should be directly known? Ten grounds for wearing away. For one of right view, wrong view is worn away. And the many bad, unskillful qualities that arise because of wrong view are worn away. For one of right intention, wrong intention is worn away. ... For one of right speech, wrong speech is worn away. ... For one of right action, wrong action is worn away. ... For one of right livelihood, wrong livelihood is worn away. ... For one of right effort, wrong effort is worn away. ... For one of right mindfulness, wrong mindfulness is worn away. ... For one of right immersion, wrong immersion is worn away. ... For one of right knowledge, wrong knowledge is worn away. ... For one of right freedom, wrong freedom is worn away. And the many bad, unskillful qualities that arise because of wrong freedom are worn away.

What ten things should be realized? Ten qualities of an adept: an adept's right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right immersion, right knowledge, and right freedom.

So these hundred things that are true, real, and accurate, not unreal, not otherwise were rightly awakened to by the Realized One. This is what Venerable Sāriputta said. Satisfied, the mendicants were happy with what Sāriputta said.

THE LONG DISCOURSES ARE COMPLETED.

